What causes international terrorism? essay

Terrorism is critically considered as a pandemic disease where life and property of every citizen of the global population is always threatened. Every government from poor and rich countries condemns terrorism at the most literal meaning of hatred and defiance. Terrorism is viewed as the ultimate ill of society where a few barbaric men attempts to create chaos in the institutional establishment of democracies, and destabilizes the socio-economic-political foundations of a country. Various scholars are challenged by its deepening quest in investigating what really causes international terrorism, aside from the fact that domestic violence is also attributed as terrorist acts.

Does the perpetrators of domestic violence cross international borders? Then why do terrorists target the international communities? These questions are essential in the investigation of scholars, but must fundamentally address the causes. At hindsight, what has happened in the 9/11 US tragedy was claimed by the Al-Qaeda terrorist groups as led by Osama Bin Laden. It was clear that Al-Qaeda pursues its terrorist acts globally. In a sense, the magnitude and scope of terror crosses international boundaries, in which the wave of terrorism becomes international. What could be the underlying situation causal to the escalation and expansion of terrorism at the global sphere? Indeed, numerous studies point out global terrorist alliance, from which the findings need to substantiate the motives.

Time and again, the government enforcers continue its search to breaking the root cause of terrorism, discovering the relevance of social developments as partly a preemptive measure a priori to counterterrorism. For experiential thoughts of experts, counteracting terrorism with substantial use of force

relinquishes counter productivity due potential human errors, wherein liabilities to human rights is an impending issue. In other words, finding the root cause of terrorism is where counterterrorism can act. Thus, this paper will discuss and examine several empirical findings relating what causes international terrorism. What causes international terrorism? This first section of the paper will review and examine relevant findings that define the characteristics of international terrorism, relating the arguments causal to the existence of terrorism. Further, this section will also concisely address what has been believed as composing the main points that emerge from the discussion. In ' Understanding and Addressing the Underlying Causes of International Terrorism' which was published in 2002 by Director of Policy Studies and Senior Fellow Akiko Fukushima of the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) in Japan has discussed various factors causal to international terrorism.

Akiko Fukushima describes the " underlying causes", as follows: In a sense of injustice and inequality in a certain country can trace the usual suggestive correlation causal to international terrorism, from which the issues of poverty, governance, globalization, conflict of political interests are main factors of violence, pertaining to the desperate yet exploitative use of terrorist leaders in recruiting the less educated and impoverished citizenry, and inculcation of fanatical and extremist religious beliefs that is also attributed by what the people observed from the characters of superpower countries in the global scope" (60). Fukushima (2002) explained that the " portrayed dominant character" of superpower countries depicts indifference with poor and developing nations (61), wherein paving the way for some

individuals to emerge themselves as leaders that influences and agitates the inkling of individuals or groups (62). As cited, what has happened in Afghanistan was central to the leadership of Osama Bin Laden who capably emerged in the socio-religious-culture of Afghans where Al-Qaeda was organized (63).

With the experiential thought of Fukushima (2002) on the underlying causes of international terrorism, it may be perceived that what she described as the " portrayed dominant character" of superpower countries is referring to the globalization of economies, in which the developing countries are unable to participate and therefore becoming poorer or impoverished. It can be analyzed that poverty causes ignorance due underprivileged to social developments, like educational welfare. From this point of view, those individuals who have the educational and social experience in foreign countries, like the United States and Europe, and have fully integrated in the Western cultures can " capitalize" the ability or take advantage of the underprivileged people, specifically those who are less literate or illiterate. Fukushima (2002), has illustrated the conceptual framework in understanding and addressing the underlying causes of international terrorism, as shown in the illustration below: Source: Fukushima, A. (2002: 64) The above illustration depicts what Fukushima (2002) described as the " six elemental causes of terrorism", wherein the terrorist leaders " cling on" fundamentalists' principle in addressing the issue. Accordingly, of all the six elemental causes, religious fanaticism and ethno-cultural beliefs can be critically consider as the most virulent factor in influencing the global Muslim communities (65). Fukushima (2002) exemplified the hypothetical density of

the Muslim population in Southeast Asia, pertaining to the creation of Muslim secessionist movement that originated in the Middle East, specifically the cooptation of the Taliban where Al-Qaeda has been organized in Afghanistan. As an example, terrorist groups has been organized in Southeast Asia, such as the Jemaah Islamiah in Malaysia, Majelis Jujahideen in Indonesia, and Moro National Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines to name a few (65).

These terrorist groups are believed as interlinking with the Al-Qaeda (65). The illustration below shows the hypothesis on how the Muslim population coops in the secessionist movement: Source: Fukushima, A. (2002: 65) As shown in the illustration, the hypothesis of Fukushima (2002) addresses the situation that the Al-Qaeda can expand its " clout" in influencing the global Muslim communities. As cited, the hypothetical density of the Muslim male population in Southeast Asia is vulnerable to Al-Qaeda recruitment and potential global terrorist groups (66). In summary, the empirical finding of Fukushima (2002) lays down the substantial and substantive understanding causal to the establishment of international terrorism. In addition, the empirical findings have included the predictive expansion of terrorist movements worldwide.

With similar findings, Bahukutumbi Raman, a retired Cabinet Secretary of the Government of India and currently the Director of the Institute For Topical Studies, has cited that poverty is just a " pretext and alibi" of terrorist organizations. In the electronic journal of entitled: ' International Terrorism: Root Causes Pretext and Alibi' which was published in 2005 by South Asia Analysis Group (SAAG) web site, Bahukutumbi Raman pointed out that the organizing of terrorist organization originated in Egypt where the Muslim

Brotherhood was organized in 1928 (1). Raman (2005) wrote the following historical findings: Egyptian social and political reformer Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), who was inspired by the teachings of his father as an Imam (prayer leader), founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 as a religious-political organization with the guiding principles of Qur'an (Islamic teachings of Mohammed) and Hadith (Islamic traditions), sought to uphold Islamism that rejects colonialism and social inequality adherent to the Marxist doctrines, nationalization of an Arab state and international recognition of an Islamic world" (1). Accordingly, the war against Palestine during the period 1930s-1940s was supported by the Muslim Brotherhood, in which the assassination of al-Banna in 1949 was attributed. Raman (2005) implied that it was not merely on the poverty issue from which the Muslim Brotherhood supported the toppling of Palestinian monarchy, but the " radicalization" of the movement that adhered the establishment of an Islamic state, out of the so-called nationalization of the Arab countries (2). From this, Raman (2005) quoted al-Banna's statement: The primary obligation of an incumbent leadership is for every Muslim to resist towards the fundamental goal of converting every people to be a Muslim, so as the entire world to be Islamic, and Islam will reign in the corners of the earth" (2). It was evident that the foundations of the Muslim Brotherhood was not meant for socio-economic inequality issue, but highlights the insatiable clamor for a religious secessionism at the " extreme belief", wherein those who cannot be converted will be " resisted" (2).

Therefore, the resistance took place in Middle East, prior to the so-called " Westernization of Arab economies" where domestic political turmoil engulfed

the Arab world (2). Raman (2005) further narrated the historical developments of the Muslim Brotherhood from the 1960's, wherein University scholar and Sheikh Abdullah Azzam led the Jihad (holy war) against the Russians in 1966 (3). As cited, the cobweb of Jihad has inspired many Afghans, like the Mujahedeen (Muslim guerilla warriors) who have found the effective tactical resistance against the Russians (3). Historically, the Jihad was then developed by Azzam which was later improved by Osama Bin Laden in 1999. As emphasized by Raman (2005), the Muslims' religious rights and obligations do not forbid them in acquiring " weapons of mass destruction" or WMD in order to preserve the religious beliefs (3). Likewise, under the leadership of Bin Laden, Muslim countries are obliged to support Jihad by sharing their technologies and advance weaponry, like the encouragement of Pakistan to provide techno-nuclear capabilities (3). It may be analyzed that Al-Qaeda consolidates its power by organizing Muslim alliances and project its power to the Westerners and its allies by way of sporadic assault, in which can further analyze as a tactical offensive of terrorists.

Through this perception, it proves that Islamism wages the violent threat to the non-believers of Islam, in which Al-Qaeda considers themselves as the wrath of Mohammed and keepers of the sovereign demigod; in the personality of Bin Laden to the Al-Qaeda. Based on the arguments of Raman (2005) it shows that the root cause of international terrorism is obviously the Islamist motivation of Al-Qaeda, wherein from the time of the Muslim Brotherhood has propagated the doctrine of " religious domination". This religious domination [being the promotion of an Islamic world] likewise

outlines the dominance of the Muslim against the Christians which can be predicted as religious-racial-cultural in the strictest sense of defining the conflict. The empirical findings of Raman (2005) that stemmed from historical analysis of the religious-racial-cultural context may be viewed to pattern the findings of Fukushima (2002) who insinuated the expansion of Al-Qaeda, pertaining to the hypothetical density of Muslim population. Than can be true since Raman (2005) pointed out the doctrine that states " the fundamental goal of converting every people to be a Muslim, so as the entire world to be Islamic" (2). Overall, it is perceivable that the root cause of international terrorism is entangled in the religious-racial-cultural domination of the Islamic fundamentalist groups, wherein poverty and social inequality is taken for advantage in the midst of the suffering of both Muslim and Christian believers, from which Afghanistan desists social empowerment. The case of the Tamil Tigers This second section of the paper will feature the situation of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, from which relates a case study to compare and contrast the findings that has been discussed above. The findings will further situate the causes of international terrorism, analyzing the domestic conflict in Sri Lanka and its impact to international communities.

Based on the electronic archive of the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka is a mass guerilla movement organized in 1972 that seek establishing autonomous state of Tamil in the Northern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka. In 1985, LTTE has occupied the seaport of Jaffna and its entire Peninsula in Northern Sri Lanka. However, LTTE withdrew the occupation in 1987 and

redirected the attacks towards Colombo capital. The escalated uprising of the LTTE has highlighted the killing of Sri Lanka's 3rd President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993, the assassination of India's 9th Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1999, and the suicide bombings in 2006 which recorded 100 Sri Lankan Navy men killed in the blast (1). In the 2006 celebration of Sri Lankan National Heroes Day, LTTE rebel leader Velupillai Pirapaharan has posted his statement at the Tamil Eelam web site, quoting that " the Sinhala government pursues the conflict while negotiating for peaceful solutions, in which LTTE continues its tactical assaults and question the fraudulent conduct of peace negotiations" (1). Pirapaharan further expressed his doubts on the results of ceasefire negotiations with the Sinhala government, wherein he claimed that LTTE affirmed its tactical defensive position to the massive military campaigns resulting warrantless arrests, sexual abuse to women caught in the crossfire, summary executions of suspected rebels and intensive forced evacuation of villagers from their economic bases, and restriction of food and medicine supplies entry to LTTE occupied areas (1).

In 2008, the peace negotiation that started in 2002 was finally abandoned following the European Union's declaration of LTTE as a terrorist organization (1). Meanwhile, the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) and Institute for Conflict Management (ICM) has reported the LTTE are using highly-technological weaponry which believed to be supplied by Al-Qaeda, together with the provision of instructional warfare training to LTTE (1). SATP and ICM analyzed the conflict situation as worsening, based on the statistical data of casualties related to terrorism. The table shown below illustrates the statistical data: Source: SATP ; ICM (2009: 1) According to SATP and ICM

(2009), the year 2009 statistical data on casualties of terrorist violence indicates that the LTTE massively resists in the pursuance of Sri Lankan government troops, wherein retaliatory actions of LTTE went berserk that accounted the total civilian casualties of 3, 487 than the security force that has only 947 casualties documented in the first quarter of 2009 (2). As cited, while the total numbers of casualties of terrorists total to 2, 181, it may be perceived that the loss of lives from the terrorists can triple the number of civilian casualties due suicide bombings, rating the killing of 15 persons for every single attack of 1 terrorist suicide bomber (2). The wave of terror in Sri Lanka can be considered as a domestic hostility, but the scope of LTTEs alliances with the Al-Qaeda submits to the situation of international terrorism.

In a case study presented by Shehery Banuri, entitled: ' The Nature and Causes of International Terrorism: A Look at why Terrorists Believe Extreme Measures are Necessary' which was published in 2005, has defined terrorism, as follows: " The illegitimate utilization or unlawful use of power through violent means committed by an individual, group, association and organization with willful intent to intimidate, coerce, and attempt to overthrow a legitimate government causing deaths of civilian populace or innocent people, and justify the cause for unknown ideology against the greater interest or public good is a reign of terror" (4). Banuri (2005) correlate the definition of terrorism on the domestic destabilization in Sri Lanka as carrying out the characteristic of " domestic terrorism" which spills or impact the international communities. As cited, the " spilling" of attacks will be motivated by LTTEs alliances with international terrorist networks, like

its connivance with Al-Qaeda in return of providing them the necessary high-powered firearms and ammunitions (7). In which case, the international communities are greatly affected by the threatening effects of terrorist alliances, rooting the situation that Sri Lanka is a Muslim country. Analogous to the LTTE-Al-Qaeda alliances, Banuri exemplified the hostile stance of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against the British-American government, in which similar to Al-Qaeda's condemnation of Arab-American ties (6). Later on, the terrorist groups have found the vulnerability of the Americans and become the target (6). Superficially, IRA and Al-Qaeda wage the war against the colonial powers, but then again they themselves are the dominant treacherous figures against the innocent civilian population of international communities (7). Banuri (2005) further claimed that LTTE's so-called people's war is taken advantage by foreign terrorist groups, like Al-Qaeda, for the simple reason of religious-social consideration, being a Muslim country (8).

It may be noted that the synthesis of Banuri (2005) interlinks the experiential thoughts of Fukushima (2002) and Raman (2005). Therefore, comparing the three empirical findings implies the prognosis that religious-cultural-racial alliances are the fundamental converging point that causes international terrorism. In comparing and contrasting the people's war in Latin American countries with the LTTE political defiance, Banuri claimed that for some extent the Latin American revolution [like in Nicaragua] was solely a socio-political-economic conflict on the implication of popular democratic rights, although the US has financed the proliferation of arms to the CONTRAS (anti-guerilla group) against the Sandinistas (Nicaraguan guerillas) (8).

But, it surfaced that the Sandinistas which longtime led by Cesar Augusto Sandino (1893-1934) has legitimately carried out the protracted war against the " colonizers", from which the popular people's struggle ruled out the domestic conflict (9). Another situation was the winning of domestic independence in the Vietnam War, wherein the US-backed Vietnamese armies were toppled by the Vietcong guerillas which also had strategic alliance with the Soviets in favor of armament supplies, but the Vietnam War won within the domestic war that did not spill the effects to international boundaries in terms of foreign casualties (9). It may be analyzed that the so-called " terrors" of the Vietcong were within the political jurisdiction of Vietnam as a country that has been deployed with the US troops to directly support the domestic war of the Vietnamese. With the above comparative yet contrasting views on domestic hostility that engages varied approach to conflict, referring to alliances, the domestic violence in Sri Lanka can be viewed as a complicated " people's war", wherein the implication of alliance with Al-Qaeda outlines the purpose of mobilizing the Islamist secessionist movement in a Muslim country. As cited, the LTTE union with the " Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyya or HAMAS" manifests the presence of Al-Qaeda (10). At this juncture, Banuri (2005) describes the basis or converging point of terrorist alliance, relating the root causes of terrorism, as illustrated below: Source: Banuri, S.

(2005: 2) The above illustration evidently indicates that the root causes of terrorism develop from the domestic situation of a country, and the potential leadership of individuals can capably create the " causations" (11). It may be reflected that what has happened during the organizing of the Muslim

Brotherhood, the " demand factors" pertains to the abhorrence of colonizers in Egypt, from which Raman (2005) has analyzed the historical patterns of domestic violence at the time the Muslim Brotherhood was established. In the same understanding, the " supply factors" equates on LTTE's political agitation for " autonomy" or independent state, in which the Sri Lankan government may not just simply divide the political jurisdiction on how Sri Lanka can be governed by separate governmental leadership. In addition, the political division of Sri Lanka [within the divides of the LTTE occupation] may be declared as " de facto government", wherein LTTE is an unknown " governmental figure" with regard to foreign recognition.

Of which LTTE's overthrowing of a legitimate democratic government could only just a beginning of a more chaotic situation or political turmoil in Sri Lanka. Findings and conclusion This third and last section of the paper will recapitulate the overall discussions and examinations of empirical findings. The situational analysis on the first section of the paper firstly finds the theories of Fukushima (2002) who stated that the causes of international terrorism is in a sense traces the " usual suggestive correlation" causal to international terrorism, from which the issues of poverty, governance, globalization, conflict of political interests are main factors of violence that is being used as a desperate yet exploitative advantage of terrorist leaders in recruiting the less educated and impoverished citizenry. Moreover, it was implied by Fukushima (2002) that the inculcation of fanatical and extremist religious beliefs also attributes to what the people observed from the characters of superpower countries in the global scope". Meaning, the observed foreign domination is also an added advantage of the terrorist

movement " to win the sympathy" of the people. Furthermore, the historical analogies of Raman (2005) confirms that the primary obligation of an incumbent leadership is for every Muslim to resist towards the fundamental goal of converting every people to be a Muslim, so as the entire world to be Islamic, and Islam will reign in the corners of the earth. The historical analogy therefore finds that the issue of poverty and colonization " favors an alibi" to the so-called claim of terrorists of leading their people's lives towards social development.

On the other hand, the case of Tamil Tigers confirms the situation that a Muslim alliance is strategically established by Al-Qaeda in the domestic political turmoil of a country where the " Muslim brothers" are at stake. The Tamil Tigers' so-called " people's war" can be found as a strategic cover up in furtherance of domestic violence in Sri Lanka, wherein the Tamil Tigers wage war while allying with an Islamist secessionist group. At this point, the result of the alliance can be viewed as joining forces to perpetuate terrorism in order to capsize the " run of events". Meaning, overpowering the domestic political situation of Sri Lanka when the legitimate democratic government is overthrown, from which the Al-Qaeda can freely influence the political will or dictate the Tamil Tigers.

Then when this happens, the so-called " spilling" of chaotic situation will ripple in the international communities, from which Banuri (2005) indicated that the root causes of terrorism develop from the domestic situation of a country where potential leadership capabilities [of individuals or terrorists] can create the " causations". This is what Banuri (2005) insinuates the " ploy" of terrorists to capitalize or take advantage of a domestic chaotic

situation, particularly in Sri Lanka. In conclusion, what causes international terrorism is embroiled in the quest for religious-racial-cultural identity of the Islamic world, seeking to confederate the Muslim faith in the belief of having " God as a sovereign" while the sovereign power of people are neglected and lives are threatened in the punishment of non-believers where Jihad is a holy war. Thus, the most conclusive point to address the causes of domestic and international terrorism is the harmonization of collective efforts towards stabilizing the socio-cultural, economic, political foundations of every country where governments must be empowered by the popular democratic rights, enabling the people as the legitimate defenders and heirs of the state, and retains its fundamental character as the bulwark of democracy.