

Terrorism, Politics and the Law

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Abstract

The trend and ferocity of recurrence of terrorist attacks (insecurity) in our society today constitutes a monumental threat to humanity and our collective existence. This paper examined terrorism holistically, it examined the definitional perspective; incidents of terrorists attacks; political undertone; causes of terrorism; increasing deadliness of terrorist attacks; impact of terrorism. This paper also examined legal and institutional regimes for combating terrorism; the future of terrorism with concluding remarks. The aims of this paper is to reawaken global consciousness to increasing deadliness of terrorist activities and the need to collectively rise up against it. This is a desk-based research which relies on both primary and secondary sources of data which have been subjected to contentual and contextual analysis. It is the finding of this author among others that terrorism must not be politicised, rather, it must be frontally and genuinely deterred through effective strategies and collaborative efforts. And also, that the problem of terrorism cannot be solved by measures taken within the criminal justice sector alone.

Keywords: terrorism, incidents, politics, causes, deadliness, legislations.

Introduction

More than 2000 years ago, the first known acts of what we now call terrorism were perpetrated by a radical offshoot of the Zealots, a Jewish sect active in Judea during the first century AD. The Zealots resisted the Roman empire's rule of what is today Israel through a determined campaign primarily involving assassination. Zealots' fighters used Sica, a primitive dagger to attack their enemies in broad-daylight, often in crowded market places or a feast day – essentially, wherever there were people to witness the violence. Thus, like modern terrorists, the Zealots intended their actions to communicate a message to a wider target audience: the Roman occupation forces and any Jew who sympathized or collaborated with the invaders¹.

Between 1090 and 1272 an Islamic movement known as the Assassins used similar tactics in their struggle against the Christian Crusaders who had invaded what is today part of Syria. The Assassins embraced the same notion of self-sacrifice and suicidal martyrdom evident in some Islamic terrorist groups today. They regarded violence as a sacramental or divine act that ensured its perpetrators would ascend to a glorious heaven should they perish during the task². The word "terrorism" was first used in France to describe a new system of government adopted during the French Revolution (1789 – 1799). The regime *de la terreur* (Reign of Terror) was intended to promote democracy and popular rule by ridding the revolution of its enemies and thereby purifying it. However, the oppression and violent excesses of the *terreur* transformed it into a feared instrument of the state.

From that time on, terrorism has had a decidedly negative connotation. The word, however, did not gain wider popularity until the late 19th century when it was adopted by a group of Russian revolutionaries to describe their violent struggle against Tsarist rule³. Terrorism then assumed the more familiar anti-governmental associations it has today. Terrorism is designed to threaten the personal safety of its target audience. It can tear apart the social fabrics of a country by destroying business and cultural life and the mutual trust upon which a society is based. All terrorist acts involve violence or equally important the threat of violence committed by individuals⁴, non-governmental organization⁵ or the state⁶. The terrorists attempt not only to sow panic but also to undermine confidence on the government and political leadership of their target country. The aim of a terrorist is to frighten and thereby intimidate a wider audience such as rival ethnic or religious group, an entire country and its political leadership or the international community as a whole. Uncertainty about where and the next terrorist attack will occur generates a fear that terrorism experts call "vicarious victimization."

A common response to this fear is the refusal to visit shopping malls; attend sporting events; go to theatre, movies, or concerts, or travel either abroad or within one's own country⁷. Through the publicity generated by their violence, terrorists seek to obtain the leverage, influence and power they otherwise lack. This paper examines among others the history of terrorism, causes, increasing deadliness of terrorism, incidents or waves of terrorism, nuclear weapon proliferation, and impact of terrorism. Anti-terrorism legal framework, the future of terrorism and other salient issues are examined in this paper.

Definitional Perspective

There is no consensus as to the definition of terrorism in International Law. There is no universally accepted definition of "terrorism" or of "terrorist act". The aphorism "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" underscores how the use of the term terrorism can be highly subjective depending on one's sympathies⁸. At the same time terrorist acts including murder, kidnapping, bombing and arson – have long been defined in both national and international law as crimes.

However, some working definitions have been proffered. The League of Nations 1937 Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism was adopted obviously as an anti-terrorism measure. Unfortunately the Convention never came into force. However, Article 1 (2) thereof defined terrorism as:

"Criminal acts directed against a state and intended to or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular person, or a group of persons or the general public."

Chief Bassiouni also defined terrorism as:

'an ideologically-motivated strategy of internationally proscribed violence designed to inspire terror within a particular segment of a given society in order to achieve a power-outcome or to propagandize a claim or grievance irrespective of whether its perpetrators are acting for or on behalf of themselves or on behalf of a state'.⁹

The International Law Commission has given terrorism a very broad/wide definition by defining it to include:

- i. *'Any act causing death or grievous bodily harm or loss of liberty to a Head of state, persons exercising the prerogatives of the Head of state, their hereditary or designated successors, the spouse of such persons, or person charged with public functions or holding public positions when the act is directed against them in their public capacity.*
- ii. *Act calculated to destroy or damage public property or property devoted to public purpose*
- iii. *any act likely to imperil human lives through the creation of public danger, in particular the seizure of aircraft, the taking of hostages and any form of violence directed against persons who enjoy international protection or diplomatic immunity.*
- iv. *the manufacture, obtaining, possession or supplying of arms, ammunition, explosives or harmful substances with a view to the commission of a terrorist act.'*

In year 2000, the United Kingdom (UK) enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2000, which introduced a wider definition of terrorism. The act covers some non-violent forms of action such as interference with the water or power supplies, since such acts may risk life and health¹⁰.

The UK Anti-Terrorism Act, 2000 provides comprehensively that:

1. In this Act "terrorism" means the use of threat of action where:
 - a. the action falls within subsection (2)
 - b. the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and
 - c. the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing in political, religious or ideological cause.
2. Action falls within this subsection if it:
 - a. involves serious violence against a person
 - b. involves serious damage to property
 - c. endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action.
 - d. creates serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or
 - e. is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.

3. The use or threat of action falling within subsection (2) which involves the use of fire arms or explosives is terrorism whether or not subsection 1(b) is satisfied.
4. In this section:
 - a. “action” includes action outside the United Kingdom
 - b. a reference to any person or to property is a reference any person or property, wherever situated.
 - c. a reference to the public includes a reference to the public of a country other than the United Kingdom and
 - d. “the government” means the government of the United Kingdom, of a part of the United Kingdom, of a country other than the United Kingdom.

It is observed that the provisions of the UK Anti-Terrorism Legislation (2000) appear wider/broader in scope than even the international law definition and is therefore preferable.

It should be noted that terrorism has grown to cover a much wider field of criminal activities. In this wise, aircraft hijacking, hostage taking, maritime terrorism (piracy), terrorist bombing, fund raising for terrorism, kidnapping, are all terrorist crimes. Recent events around the world have shown that terrorists are becoming more inventive and more effective and their acts seemingly unpredictable¹¹. Also, not all terrorist acts or incidents involve plane or cars hijacking or hostage taking, hence, random killing of ordinary citizen without use of explosives/bombs, fire-arms, chemical or biological weapons should surely be a terrorist act.

It is instructive to mention at this juncture that even the campus cultist menace, nefarious and heinous activities would qualify as terrorist crimes. Nigerian higher institution campuses can be listed as terrorist enclaves and consequently placed on terrorist watch list. And what is more, the celebrated legal luminary and president, West African Bar Association, Mr. Femi Falana has described Nigerian leaders as terrorists who have hijacked the political leadership of the country for their selfish interest. According to Falana, “Mr. President has been kidnapped while Nigeria has also been hijacked by a clique of political terrorists at the corridor of power”¹²

Incidents of Terrorists’ Attacks

Acts or incidents of terrorism have become a recurring decimal and a daily phenomenon. The following are a few instances:

(i) Individual and Groups Terrorism

A wave of suicide attacks began in 1981 in Beirut, Lebanon, when a group called al-Dawa used a car bomb to blow up the Iraq Embassy. Al-Dawa was a terrorist organization composed of Shia-Muslims from Iraq. The Beirut attack killed 61 people and wounded more than 100 others. In 1983 a truck filled with explosives drove into the US Embassy in Beirut, killing 49 and wounding 120 others.

It was followed later that year by a suicide bombing of U.S. marine barrack in Beirut which killed 241 persons. A group called Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for both attacks. Another suicide bombing destroyed Jewish Community Centre in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1994, killing 96 persons¹². More recently, Al-Qaeda staged suicide attacks on the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, causing nearly 300 deaths; on a U.S. Navy Warship the U.S.S Cole in 2000 in Yemen causes 19 deaths; and the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in 2001, causing about 3,000 deaths. The bombers of the World Trade Centre believed they were attacking the symbolic heart of American economic power in the world¹³. American federal agents raided a cabin near Lincoln Montana, on April 3, 1996 and apprehended Theodore Kaczynski, a 53-year-old recluse who has at one time taught mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley. Kaczynski was suspected of being the Unabomber, the terrorist whose bombs had killed three people and injured 23 others over 17 years¹⁴. He was subsequently prosecuted. In 1995, there was a poisonous gas attack in a Tokyo Subway Train, one of several in a series of mass attacks that terrorized Japan¹⁵.

With respect to early terrorism, Alexander II of Russia was assassinated in 1881 by a bomb thrown into his carriage by a member of revolutionary group – Narodnay Volya¹⁶. The assassination of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife, Czech Countess Sophie Chotek precipitated World War 1. They were killed by Serbian nationalist, Gavnilo Princip in Sarajevo, Bosnia, the part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire¹⁷. One of the worst air disasters in history occurred on December 21, 1988, when Pan-Am Flight 103 exploded over the town of Lockerbie, Scotland and crashed. The New York – bound jumbo jet had just taken off from London’s Heathrow International Airport with 244 passengers and 15 crew members.

Burning debris rained down over the small town in South-West Scotland, killing 11 residents. An investigation revealed that the explosion was caused by a bomb placed on board the airliner by at least two people who were believed to be members of an Arab terrorist group. The bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995 was one of the worst acts of terrorism in United States history, killing 168 people and injuring 850 others. In June 1997 former U. S. soldier Timothy McVeigh was found guilty of the bombing and given a sentence of death¹⁸. On March 11, 2004 terrorists launched a series of coordinated bombings on commuter trains in Madrid, Spain. It was the deadliest assault by terrorists against civilians in Spanish history, killing at least 191 people and injuring more than 1500¹⁹.

Other recent instances of acts of terrorism include: The suicide bombing that killed people in Kabul, Afghanistan. Two body guards of former Vice-president Ahmadzia Massoud were among the dead²⁰. Also, series of three car bombs exploded near heavily guarded central Baghdad Locations Killings four people and injuring 14 others²¹. On December 3rd, 2009, a suicide bomber struck at a medical graduation ceremony at Mogadishu's Benadir University and claimed 22 lives²². One of the worst blows ever to American's Intelligence Community occurred when a suicide bomber killed seven CIA officers in Afghanistan in what appears to be a revenge for the killing of Baitullah Mehsud and the killing of al-Qaeda²³. In the same vein, a home made bomb attack on a court in Southern Italy was attributed to the local Mafia trying to re-assert its power in the region²⁴. According to one of the court prosecutors, Guiseppe Pignatone, he told La Stampa Newspaper that the attack seems to be an angry protest against initiatives undertaken by Judges in the Region in the fight against organized crime²⁵. Pignatone said in 2009 the authorities arrested 49 local Mafia members, including 11 who were Italy's most dangerous criminals and seized/confiscated assets worth around 300 million Euros (\$15bn) from the organization²⁶.

That "the hand of God" directs the affairs of men (albeit remotely) was affirmed on Christmas Day (December 25, 2009) when a lethal bomb contraption aboard flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit, Michigan malfunctioned thus sparing the lives of about 300 passengers and crew on board. The courier of the parcel of death was Alfa Umar Farouk Abdulmuttalab, a 23-year old Nigerian and son of a former Federal Commissioner and ex-chairman of First Bank of Nigeria Plc. The culprit has since been arraigned before a US District Court where he pleaded not guilty to six counts charge²⁷ United States President Barrack Obama confirmed that Umar Farouk Abdulmuttalab is a member of al-Qaeda and had been trained by the Islamic militant network²⁸. Shortly before Umar Farouk Abdulmuttalab's abortive suicide bomb attack on a Trans-Atlantic Jetliner, another Nigerian Ahmed Olayiwola also made a failed attempt to detonate parcel bombs at the headquarters of Super Screen Television in Lagos on December 22, 2009. Upon being arrested, Olayiwola said he was inspired by a movie titled "Under Siege" which has six bomb scenes that described how to make home-made and sophisticated bombs²⁹.

The recent attack on Superscreen TV is a quick reminder of the death in 1986 of Mr. Dele Giwa, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine through a parcel bomb. Still on terrorism in Nigeria, there are also cases of the confused, disillusioned fanatics and religious extremists, unleashing terror and sectarian violence on the rest of the society. We have recently witnessed the Boko-Haram uprising, the Kala-kato disturbances and many other outbursts of religious madness which claimed thousands of innocent souls³⁰. Also, just on Tuesday, January 13, 2010, three British Oil workers and a Columbian were kidnapped in Abia State of Nigeria.^{31a} Also, on Friday 20 September, 2013, a Nigerian Village of Benisheik in Borno-State, North-East Nigeria was attacked by extremist Islamic militants called Boko-Haram leaving 140 dead as Army Soldiers had to retreat from the "superior firepower" in worrying development.^{31b} Again, on 29 September, 2013, as many as 50 students were killed while sleeping in their dormitory in Yobe State College of Agriculture, Gujba, Yobe-State of Nigeria.^{31c} According to Associated Press, since 2010, more than 1.700 people have been killed in attacks by Islamist insurgents in Nigeria.^{31d} Incidents of terror attacks can hardly be exhausted. The foregoing are catalogues of terrorism at individuals and groups levels.

(ii) Government Terrorism

Apart from individuals and groups or organizations, states too are perpetrators of terrorism. In fact, states are responsible for more terror and violence of non-state groups.

During the 1920s and 1930s terrorism became associated with the repressive practices employed by dictatorial states than with the violence of non-state groups like the anarchist. The word terrorism was used to describe the wanton violence and intimidation inflicted by the Nazi, Fascist and Totalitarian regimes that respectively came to power in Germany, Italy, Soviet Union.

The repressive means these governments employed against their citizens includes – beating, unlawful detention, torture, so-called death squad and other forms of intimidation. Such practices by governments against their own citizens continue today³². Nigerians suffered from the terror regimes of military particular Abacha's regime which ordered summary and extra-judicial execution of the Ogoni eight in 1995. Another terrorist regime is the one unleashed by Sudanese President leading to the arrest warrant issue against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court³³.

Some states have attained notoriety as sponsors of terrorism. For instance: The Republic of Yemen boasts of rich repertoire of terrorists activities. It is a renowned hotbed of terrorism and a base of the al-Qaeda. Yemen is in the Arab world. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is yet another terrorist enclave and home of the Taliban. The Taliban brand of Islam produces a "jihad culture" of Islamic radicalism and revolution³⁴. Lebanon is another country reeling under activities of competing terrorists' organizations such as radical Shiite Militia Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, al-jihad, Japanese Red Army etc³⁵.

Prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US State Department listed Iraq as state sponsor of terrorism. Pakistan is a terrorist enclave, also home of the Talibans. Terrorism in Pakistan began in the 1980s primarily with the Soviet-Afghan war. After the Afghan war the Pakistani establishment continues to organize, support and nurture the Mujahedeen groups. It must be mentioned that Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iraq and Pakistan are Asian countries³⁶. Algeria in North Africa is a country with a history of rabid terrorist activities conducted through numerous Islamic militant groups seeking to overthrow the current secular regime and establish an Islamic State³⁷. Libya is another African country labeled as a terrorist nation and even the public denunciation of terrorism by Ghaddafi in 1999 did not seem to matter³⁸. The terror watch-list released by American Department of State on January 4, 2010, consists of 14 sovereign nations. They were divided into two categories; namely: "state sponsors of terrorism" and "countries of interest" and Nigeria fell into the latter category³⁹. It is humbly submitted at this junction that as far as terrorism is concerned there is no saint nation in the world. Therefore a country would belong to either of the categories or to both.

While granting a British Broadcasting Corporation interview on January 16, 2008, the then US Homeland Security Secretary, Michael Chertoff, said he had seen "home grown terrorism begin to rise in Europe" and that Washington was aware of the real risk that Europe will become a platform for terrorists⁴⁰. No wonder Umar Farouk Abdulmuttallab was indoctrinated while a student in the University of London.

Although, America claims it is at war with terrorism, yet America uses terrorist tactics to subdue its perceived enemies and uses its weight to perpetrate terrorism the world over. For instance the American Invasion of Iraq in 2003 was widely described a terrorist act. What is more, the Iraq war had no mandate or UN Security Council Resolution backing it up⁴¹. Also, the twenty year old John Walker Lyndn, a pro-Taliban fighter arrested and charged for terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11 is an American citizen, a white, based in America, who chose to join foreign enemies to fight against his own country. Again, Robert Hassen, who was prosecuted and sentenced on May 9, 2002 to life imprisonment without parole for spying the defunct Soviet Union and Russia, is a white American. So are the five men charged in Court on January 4, 2010 by the Pakistan authorities for active collusion with the Taliban and al-Qaeda within Pakistan⁴². The case of Unabomber is of equal relevance too⁴³ imprisonment without parole for spying the defunct Soviet Union and Russia, is a white American. So are the five men charged in Court on January 4, 2010 by the Pakistan authorities for active collusion with the Taliban and al-Qaeda within Pakistan⁴². The case of Unabomber is of equal relevance too⁴³. All these are indications that America is not entirely safe even from within – with its own citizen or those European states as potential threats. In short, incidents of terror attack are a daily phenomenon and the list can hardly be exhausted.

Abdulmutallab's Episode – Political Undertone

With respect to Abdulmutallab's issue and the listing of Nigeria in the terror watch list of America. It is humbly submitted that Nigeria should look inwards and see whether there are other traces of terrorism in the country and try to nip them in the bud. Nigeria has to take stock and look at the security situation before she tries to make a case (or noise) with the US for listing Nigeria as a terrorist country.

For me as an individual, I think the US did not make any mistake by listing Nigeria as a terrorist country. All the sectarian killings in the North Nigeria since 1987, culminating in the Boko Haram uprising and the recent' Kalakato in Bauchi State were all good examples of terrorist activities.

The country started noticing the offshoot of several Islamic fundamentalists groups in the Northern part especially in Zamfara, Bauchi, Kano, Yobe, Katsina, Kebbi and Jigawa States in the 80s. The notorious Hisban, Salafist group Al-sunna Wal Jamma etc set up camps in these states⁴⁴. In 2008, the then Inspector General of Police of Nigeria, Mike Okiro informed Nigerians that based on intelligence reports gathered, the country was soon to be a major threshold of Al-Qaeda. While the chaos was going on in the North, another form of terrorism was being perpetrated in the South-South by the self-styled “freedom-fighters” cum terrorists from the Niger Delta region⁴⁵. At the same time kidnapping was booming in the South-Eastern Nigeria.

In November 2002, Nigeria was scheduled to host the Miss World Beauty Pageant, but riot by Islamic fundamentalist in the Northern states of Kaduna and Zamfara left over 200 civilians dead as well as death threats issued and this was beamed to the whole world. Also, in September 2007, the American Embassy through its consular in Nigeria stated that the country was under threat of being turned into a terrorist haven by Islamic fundamentalists⁴⁶. All these warning signals were repeatedly ignored by the government of Nigeria. Even as I write here now there is an ongoing sectarian crisis in Jos, Plateau State with over 300 people already dead – see Punch, Wednesday, January 20, 2010, front page, pp.28 & 58. In any case, every country is a potential conduit for terrorist attack. Terrorism in itself is not a sole preserve of a class, clan, society, religion, race or country: anyone can be a terrorist. Hence, there is globalization of terrorism and global terrorism assumed a new dimension after the September 11, 2001 attack on the US by al-Qaeda.

Be that as it may, the US reaction to the Abdulmuttalab’s failed-suicide mission by listing Nigeria in terror watch list yielded more to politics than logic and the necessities of national security. Classification of countries as exporter of terrorism are partly politics-based and partly reality-based⁴⁷. Not only is the list filled with countries that have adversarial relations with the US, those countries can actually barter (i.e. negotiate) their way out of the list. For instance, North Korea for long was on the list. One of the carrots the US dangled was that North Korea would be dropped from the list if it shuts down its nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons programmes. Negotiation, barter for that? After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on US, the drumbeat of the invasion or sanctions of Iraq began almost immediately. Of course, Saudi-Arabia, the country of nationality of most of the al-Qaeda terrorists was never in danger of an invasion or sanctions.

If Nigeria deserves to be on America terror watch list, the question then arises as to why more countries including Ghana and Netherlands are not on the heavy scrutiny list. After all, Omar Farouk Abdulmuttalab bought his travel ticket in Ghana, and traveled through Netherlands just as he traveled through Nigeria. Also, Abdulmuttalab was indoctrinated and trained elsewhere including London where he schooled and many of the September 11 terrorists had sojourned in Europe⁴⁸. London is highly infested with violent Islamic extremists. Of particular interest here is the case of late US Senator, Edward M. Kennedy, a member of one of the most celebrated families in America and one of the most recognisable figures in American public life. Yet he was twice kept from boarding flights in the US because his name was on the terror watch list. If a Senator Kennedy could be kept from boarding a flight, it is only logical that a Mutallab would be allowed on one⁴⁹. The forgoing and more explain the politics of terrorist watch list.

Finally, it was glaring there was a great monumental security lapse on the part of America for instance, how come Abdulmutallab got American visa when he was among the 550,000 suspects in the Terrorist Identities Databank kept by the National Counter Terrorism Centre in the US? How come all the information given to the CIA by the suicide bomber’s father were treated with levity? In September 2009, America’s National Security Agency intercepted a conversation among al-Qaeda leaders of a plot in Yemen to use a Nigerian man in a future terrorist strike⁵⁰. Yet America missed it. It is high time America first declare itself a terrorist haven.

Causes of Terrorism

Terrorism has occurred throughout history for a variety of reasons. Its causes can be historical, cultural, political, social, psychological, economic, or religious – or any combination of these. Some countries have been particularly susceptible to terrorism at certain times as Italy and West Germany were during the 1970s. Terrorist violence escalated precipitously in those two countries for a decade before declining equally dramatically⁵¹. In broad terms, the causes that have commonly propelled people to engage in terrorism are grievances borne out of political oppression, cultural domination, economic exploitation, ethnic discrimination, and religious persecution. Perceived inequalities in the distribution of wealth and political power have led some terrorists to attempt to overthrow democratically elected governments to achieve a fairer society.

Leftwing terrorist groups of the 1960s and 1970s with such aims included the Germany's Baader-Meinhof Gang, Italy's Red Brigades, and the Weather Underground in the U.S.⁵². Other terrorists have sought to fulfill some mission that they believe to be divinely inspired. For instance the Japanese religious cult Aum Shinrikyo. Some terrorists are motivated by very specific issues, such as opposition to legalized abortion, gay marriage etc. Extremists who oppose legalized abortion in the United States have attacked clinics and murdered doctors and other employees in hopes of denying women the right to abortion.⁵³.

Increasing Deadliness of Terrorist Attacks

Though while terrorists may have become less active, they also become alarmingly more lethal. One key factor behind this trend is the amount of terrorism motivated by religious views, as were the attacks on New York City's World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia on September 11, 2001. Terrorism motivated by religion has frequently led to acts of violence with higher levels of fatalities than the incidents of violence perpetrated by many secular (non-religious) terrorists organisations⁵⁴. Another factor that has contributed to terrorism's rising deadliness is the ease of access to a range of low-tech and high tech weapons (i.e. nuclear weapon proliferation). At the low- end of the weapons spectrum, terrorists rely on guns and bombs while at the high-end of the spectrum terrorist such as al-Qaeda seek to acquire chemical, biological and even nuclear weapons⁵⁵.

Suicide attacks differ from other terrorist operations, because the perpetrator's own death is a requirement for the attack's success. Suicide bombers therefore are typically highly motivated, passionately dedicated individuals who decide voluntarily or upon persuasion to surrender their lives in fulfillment of their mission⁵⁶. An increase of suicide attacks has contributed to terrorism's rising death count. In 1968, Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) attempted to address the problem, but the number of countries possessing has grown since the treaty went into effect.

Impact of Terrorism

Although most terrorist groups have failed to achieve their long-term strategic aims, through terrorism, terrorism has an occasion brought about significant political changes that might otherwise have been impossible. Moreover, despite the claims of governments to the contrary, terrorism has sometimes also proven successful on short-term, tactical level: winning the release of prisoners, wresting political concessions from otherwise resistant government or ensuring that causes and grievances that might otherwise have been ignored or neglected were addressed⁵⁷. For instance, as a result of the terrorism perpetrated by the Sri-Lankan notorious terrorist gang-Tamil Tiger the Sri-Lankan President has wooed Tamils with power sharing⁵⁸. Sri-Lankan President Malinda Rajapaksa on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 proposed power-sharing arrangements for minority Tamils. The president also promised to create a second chamber in parliament to allow more Tamil representatives which would enable them have a say in law-making⁵⁹.

In 1970, in Canada, the terrorist group FLQ kidnapped a Quebec politician, Pierre Laporte and a British diplomat, James Cross and demand the release of FLQ members who were jailed. Canadian government rejected the kidnappers' demands and invoked the War Measures Act which authorized mass arrest and deployment of army troops in the street of Montreal. Laporte was murdered by his captors while Cross was released in exchange for their safe passage to Cuba. Laporte's killers were later tracked down, arrested and convicted of murder⁶⁰.

Terrorism was used by some nationalist movements in the anti-colonial era just after World War II when British and French Empires in Africa, Asia and the Middle East dissolved. Countries as diverse as Israel, Cyprus, Kenya, Algeria owed their independence to those movements. Evidence of terrorist success can also be seen in the examples of Gerry Adams and Martins MC Guinness in Northern Ireland and Yasir Arafat in the Middle East. Adams and MC Guinness were President and Deputy President respectively of the political wing of the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland and they both won election to the British Parliament in 1997. Arafat as leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), won international recognition for PLO⁶¹. Through tactical victories and political achievements, each of their organizations demonstrated how a series of terrorist acts can propel to world attention long-standing causes and grievances.

Legal and Institutional Regimes for Combating Terrorism

(i) National Legislation

There are plethora of legal regimes ranging from national, regional to international which criminalize terrorism.

Starting with domestic legislation, several countries have legislation specifically promulgated to fight terrorism. For instance, the United States has Anti-Hijacking Act 1974, which criminalize hijacking as a terrorist act with maximum punishment of death sentence⁶². There are a host of other American Anti-Terrorism statutes but of particular relevance here is the Patriot Act 2001. Patriot Act is an anticrime and anti-terrorist legislation enacted soon after the September 11, 2001, terrorists attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The bill was signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 26, 2001⁶³. Another response to the attack by the US government was the establishment of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under the Homeland Security Act 2002. The Homeland Agency is the primary agency responsible for directing US government's effort to prevent and respond to terrorism⁶⁴.

In the fight against terrorism, the United Kingdom (UK) has introduced severe legislation to deal with the "troubles" in Northern Ireland for instance, the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974 which gave the police extended arrest, search and detention powers and created ability to control movement of persons between Britain and Northern Ireland. The 1974

Act was replaced by a more comprehensive statute in 2000 by the Terrorism Act 2000 which remains largely in force, although now complemented by the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 in response to the events of September 11, 2001.

The 2001 Act increased police powers in respect to the arrest and detention of foreign nationals, leading to a derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and a subsequent outcry from eminent human rights lawyers and academics⁶⁵. Other U.K Anti-Terrorism legislations include Terrorism Act 2006, The Counter-Terrorism Bill 2008; and the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Bill which received a royal assent on 14 December, 2011. In the fight against terrorism in Canada, the Canada Federal anti-terrorism statutes provide for the establishment of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) which is the Canadian government's institution with primary responsibility for the country's security and intelligence and within this context for counter terrorism⁶⁶. In South African, the Terrorism Act of South Africa No 83 of 1967 also criminalizes all forms of terrorism with stiff penalty.

In Nigeria, several sections of the Criminal Code Act, Law of Federation of Nigeria (2004) criminalize and punish some acts of terrorism e.g. Assassination (murder)⁶⁷, kidnapping⁶⁸, attempt to destroy property with explosive⁶⁹, preparation to commit crimes with explosive⁷⁰ etc. However, Nigeria's first ever Anti-Terrorism Act was passed by the National Assembly in 2011. This was in response to the spate of terrorist attacks all over the country. The 2011 Act gave great powers to law enforcers in this regard.^{70a} Again, Nigeria's Parliament has amended the existing Terrorism Prevention Act of 2011 by replacing it with the Terrorism Prevention Amendment Act 2013.^{70b} The 2013 Act imposed death penalty for anyone convicted of acts of terrorism in response to the growing menace of extremist Islamic militants in the country. The Act gives Federal High Court exclusive jurisdiction over the offence of terrorism. terrorism. Apart from federal laws, some states in Nigeria have enacted state laws on terrorism.^{71c}

In a related development, research expert in aviation-targeted terrorism – Dr. Moneke Joseph – Sunny has made case for establishment of anti-terrorism squad⁷¹. Dr. Moneke who gave the advice in Abuja also said that Nigeria must take "drastic steps" to establish an anti-terrorism force" separate from the anti-terrorism arm of the Nigeria Police to combine intelligence gathering with practical responses in times of terror attacks⁷². The expert who had participated in investigations into a series of air crashes, in the country in the past, described Nigeria as 'a nation already at the primary stage of terrorism.' He cited the cases of unresolved sectarian disputes in Nigeria as evidence of primary terrorism⁷³.

(ii) Regional Legislation

Apart from national anti-terrorism statutes, regional anti-terrorism instruments also exist. For instance, the European Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism (ECST) 1977; the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) 1950; Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism 2006; African Charter on Human and Peoples Right, 1981; the American Convention of Human Rights 1969, Organization of American States Convention 1971, Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism 2002; the 1978 Bonn Declaration under which the European Community states resolved that if a country failed to fulfil its obligations under the 1970 Convention for Suppression of Unlawful Seizures of Aircraft, immediate action should be taken to cease flights to that country.

Organization of African Union Convention on the Prevention and combating of Terrorism at Algiers July 1999; and the Protocol to that Convention 2004; ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism 2007 (it came into force in May 2011 and on 22 January 2013 all ASEAN members have signed the Convention); Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism 1998; Convention on the Organization of Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism 1999. All the foregoing instruments criminalize terrorism in all its forms and ramifications and call for cooperative efforts of the global community to curb the menace.

(iii) International Legislation⁷⁴

In addition to both the national and regional instruments against terrorism there are other international anti-terrorism legislations and legal instruments. They include: The International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (New York 1979), Article 1 States that:

“Any person who seizes or detains and threatens to kill, to injure or to continue to detain another person (hereafter referred to as “the hostage” in order to compel a third party, namely, a natural or juridical person, or group of persons, to do or abstain from doing any act as an explicit or implicit condition for the release of the hostage commits the offence of taking of hostages (hostage taking) within the meaning of this convention.”

Article 2, criminalizes attempts and participation in hostage-taking.

Another instrument is the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons including Diplomatic Agents (New York, 1973). This convention criminalizes any intentional commission of murder, kidnapping or other attack upon the person or liberty of an internationally protected person including their premises, means of transport. Threat to commit any such attack and an attempt to commit such attack amounts to a crime.

Another relevant one is the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (Rome, 1988). Threat to commit any such act will also be an offense.

Again, there is the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1998). This Convention which came into force on May 23, 2001, represents recognition of the ever-growing international demand for new measures to prevent and prosecute terrorists. Article 2 states that:

‘Any person commits an offence within the meaning of this convention if that person unlawfully and intentionally delivers, places, discharges or detonates an explosive or other lethal device in, onto or against a place of public use, a state or government facility, a public transportation system or an infrastructure facility: with the intention to cause death or serious bodily injury; or with the intent to cause extensive destruction of such a place, facility or system, where such destruction results in or is likely to result in major economic loss’.

Under Article 9, the offences in Article 2 are deemed to be included as extraditable in any extradition treaty. Also, under Article 8 if a state in which a suspected offender is present does not extradite him, then a domestic prosecution must be commenced.

The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism 1999 is yet another instrument. This convention criminalizes funding of terrorism. Article 2 (1) creates an offence “if a person by any means directly or indirectly unlawfully and willingly, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out:

- a. an act which constitutes an offence within the scope of and as defined in one of the treaties listed in the Annex or
- b. any other act...”

Since hijacking is a form of terrorism, some anti-hijacking conventions are also relevant here, they include: The Tokyo Convention on Crimes and Certain other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft 1963. According to Article 1, the Tokyo Convention was introduced not only to deal with illegal acts on board aircraft but also any other acts which jeopardizes or may jeopardize the safety of the aircraft, persons or property on board. Under this convention unlawful acts includes acts which are “about to be committed.” Another anti-hijacking convention is the Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft 1970 which came into force in 1971.

Article 1 provides that:

“any person who on board an aircraft in flight.

- a. unlawfully, by force or threat thereof or by any other form of intimidation, seizes or exercises control of, or attempts to perform any such act, or
- b. in an accomplice of a person who performs or attempts to perform any such act commits an offence.

Under Article 2, contracting parties undertakes to make the offence punishable by severe penalties.

The Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation 1973 is yet another relevant convention in this regard.

Apart from conventional regimes, there are also several statements against terrorism by both the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations which take the form of repeated condemnation of terrorists terrorism and repeated calls for increased international co-operation to prevent and punish terrorism⁷⁵. On September 28, 2001, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1373 under its Chapter VII jurisdiction requiring all states (not just UN members states) to:

- i. prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts;
- ii. criminalize the willful financing of such acts;
- iii. freeze assets of persons or entities involved in such acts;
- iv. refrain from supporting anyone involved in terrorist acts;
- v. deny safe haven to those involved in terrorist acts.
- vi. prevent the use of their territory for terrorist purposes.
- vii. ensure that terrorists are brought to justice
- viii. assist criminal proceedings and investigations relating to terrorism
- ix. prevent the movement of terrorist by maintaining effect border controls

Other international instruments relating terrorism and counter-terrorism include the 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection; 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorists Bombings; the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism; the 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation; 2010 Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft. The last but not the least here is the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism which is currently under negotiations.

Many of the international human rights instruments are also relevant to terrorisms (albeit indirectly), in that they enshrine the right to life and to security of the person and of the property. It is pertinent to observe here that laudable as the legal framework is there are, of course, difficulties associated with enforcement of such international rules as may be agreed upon, since some states have supported terrorist activities⁷⁶. Hence, it is enforcement rather than definition that constitutes the main barrier to the progress.

Happily enough, there is no limitation period for the prosecution of terrorism suspect this was made possible by the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity⁷⁷.

The Future of Terrorism

Terrorism has existed for at least 2000 years and is likely to remain a fixture on political agenda both domestic and international for years to come. Terrorism provides a means by which the weak can confront much stronger opponents. It therefore has an enduring appeal to the alienated and the disenfranchised, the aggrieved and revengeful, the powerless and the would-be-powerful⁷⁸. In addition, it is relatively inexpensive to conduct while offering a vast potential pay off: the ability to evoke fear and alarm and inflict pain and suffering in the hope of compelling agreement to demands made⁷⁹.

Terrorism, moreover, is evolving constantly to overcome governmental counter-measures designed to defeat it. Terrorism thus involves an ongoing search for new target and unidentified vulnerabilities in its opponents. This quest also raises the possibility that terrorists may pursue unconventional means of attack, such as chemical, biological, or radiological (radioactivity spreading) weapons or nuclear weapons⁸⁰.

Future terrorist tactics could include cyber-terrorism (sabotage using computers to destroy computer networks or systems) or electronic warfare that targets critical infrastructure, such as communications, and power facilities or societies in general. Throughout the world, terrorism reinvents itself in new and more dangerous forms.

As older groups are defeated or exhausted, more radical and more violent successors often take their place. Although, terrorism likely can never be eradicated, countering its threat requires continuing vigilance. The highly individual nature of terrorism's causes, the diversity of its perpetrators and the complexity of its fundamental characteristics present enormous challenges to those who must effectively counter this menace.

Concluding Remarks

It is important to note that terrorism is terrorism whether the act succeeds or fails, whether the acts have been completed or are "about to be committed"⁸¹. At this stage it is not too great a stretch of imagination and law to label terrorism "a crime against humanity" on the basis that it forms "part of a systemic attack on a civilian population" and the entire humanity. Terrorism as an international crime has attained the status of *jus-cogens* and attracts universality jurisdiction as an extraditable offence. Interestingly, by virtue of the 1968 Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes against Humanity no statutory limitation (i.e. no statute bar) shall apply to the prosecution of any arrested or apprehended terrorist suspect, irrespective of the offence.

At this stage, it is now important more than ever before that all states become parties to all existing anti-terrorism treaties; sure international cooperation and also there is the need for periodic and constant review of the existing local and international anti-terrorism legislations. Counter-terrorism measures should also be strengthened both at national and international levels to avoid system failure. Counter-terrorism is the policies and methods used to deter and defeat terrorism. Counter-terrorism involves the use of information gathering, law enforcement, diplomacy, military force and pro-active security. Besides eliminating existing terrorists, effective counter-terrorism also attempts to discover and remove the causes that motivate terrorists.⁸²

The governments must seek effective strategies to curtail the nuisance and destructiveness of such demented elements in the society and save the world the physical, psychological and emotional stress as well as huge human and economic losses caused by their activities. America and its allies in the industrialized world, who view economic and political backwardness as the staple source of terrorist tendencies, also need to realize that isolation of certain third world countries for purposes of harsh and discriminatory treatment is, at best, only one of several necessary steps towards guaranteeing security of the homeland. The then US Homeland Security Secretary, Michael Chertoff on a BBC interview on January 16, 2008 said he had seen 'home-grown terrorism begin to rise in Europe and that Washington was aware of the real risk that Europe will become a platform for terrorist'.

Even though the US is the most frequently targeted by the terrorist, whatever strategies Washington deems appropriate for the containment of terrorism, it is important not to unduly aggravate old animosities or engender a climate of distrust and fear around the world. In its war against al-Qaeda, the Taliban and similar organizations, the US is determinedly shouldering a global responsibility, a fact profoundly appreciated by the international community. Let the rest of the world be encouraged to be wholly supportive and not unduly polarized by reckless compartmentalization. Again, the solution to terrorism does not lie in blackmail neither does it lie in listing a nation on terrorist watch list. The solution lies in the realization that the world will be safer when politics is taken out of war against terrorism. Eternal vigilance is the price for liberty.

Notes

1. Encarta Encyclopedia; R. Friedlander, Terrorism, Dobbs Ferry, 1979.
2. Claire De Than and Edwin Shorts, International Criminal Law and Human Rights, Sweet & Maxwell, 2003, pp.232 – 256.
3. Hoffman, Bruce, “Terrorism” Microsoft® student 2009
4. See for example the Unabomber case of 53 year old Theodore Kaczynski, a one man terrorist whose bombs had killed three people and injured 23 others over 17 years. See Hoffman, Bruce, “Terrorism” Microsoft® student 2009 (DVD).
5. See for instance Al-Qaeda Terrorist Network headed by Osama bin Laden – godfather of global terrorism, see also the Japanese cult – the Aum Shinrikyo, the Taliban, Tamil-Tiger of Sri-Lanka etc.
6. See for instance Afghanistan the home of the Talibans; Republic of Yemen, Pakistan, Iraq etc.
7. See Encarta Yearbook of July 1998.
8. See M. Shaw, International Law, 4th ed., 1997, p.802
9. Legal Responses to International Terrorism: United Nations Procedural Aspect, 1988.
10. See <http://www.google.co.uk>; see also Legal Aspects of International Terrorism (eds AE Evans & J Murphy), Lexington K.Y. 1978. Terrorism is generally defined as politically motivated violence by clandestine groups or individuals against civilian or non-combatant personnel – Encarta Yearbook December 1997.
11. Nigerian Leaders are terrorists – Falana” PUNCH Monday January 19, 2010, p.9, also available at www.punchng.com
12. See generally the Terrorism Act (UK) 2000 Available@<http://www.terrorism.com>
13. Blast Rips World Trade Centre, Los Angeles Times, October 2001, p.14
14. Ibid
15. Prof. Richard A. Falkenrath, The Threat of Chemical and Biological Weapon, Encarta Yearbook, July 1998.
16. See Encarta Encyclopedia
17. Ibid
18. Availabel at <http://www.fema.gov/hazards/terrorsim/terro.shtm> see also June 1997 Encarta Yearbook
19. Microsoft® Encarta® 2009
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21. “Car bombs kill four in Baghdad”, available on: www.punchontheweb.com visited on 15th December, 2009
22. “Class resumes at Mogadishu University after Bombing” Punch, Tuesday, December 15, 2010, p.56
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24. “Italy bomb blast handwork of Mafia”. Punch, Tuesday, January 5, 2010, p.46
25. Ibid
26. Ibid
27. “Terror: Abdulttalab’s Trial continues” Punch, Monday, January 11, 2010, p.6
28. “Abdulttalab, a member of al-Qaeda-Obama”, Punch, January 2, 2010, p.4
29. “Olayiwola TV Station Bomber Under Siege” Punch, January 10, 2010, p.4
30. See the PUNCH, Monday, January 11, 2010, Back page. Opinions have been expressed that both Boko- Haram and Kala-kato are remnants of the Maitasine sect in the Northern Nigeria see PUNCH, Monday, January 11, 2010, back page.
31. (a). “Gunmen kidnap three Britons, Columbian in Asia” PUNCH, Wednesday, January 13, 2010, p.6
(b). Associated Press in Benisheik, Friday 20 September, 2013. Available @ theguardian.com
(c). Associated Press in Gujba, Sunday 29 September, 2013. Available @ theguardian.com.
(d). Ibid.
32. Microsoft® Encarta® 2009.
33. “ICC issues Arrest Warrant for Sudanese President”, PUNCH, Thursday, March 15, 2009, p.48
34. See www.punchontheweb.com visited Thursday, January 14, 2010. see also Microsoft® Encarta® 2009.
35. Ibid, see also <http://www.terrorism.com>
36. Ibid
37. Ibid
38. Ibid
39. “America’s terror watch list” PUNCH, Wednesday, January 13, 2010, p.14
40. Ibid
41. Iraq war had no mandate” PUNCH, Wednesday, January 13, 2010, p.60
42. “America’s terror watch list,” op.cit.
43. “Unabomber”. Microsoft® student 2009 (DVD).
44. available @ www.punchng.com; see also PUNCH, Sunday, January 17, 2010, p.15
45. The Terrorist State called Nigeria” PUNCH, Sunday, January 17, 2010, p.15
46. available @ www.punchng.com.

47. Ibid
48. "Abudllamuttalab and America's Over Kill", Punch Thursday, January 14, 2010, p. 14-A Professor of Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Buckingham, Anthony Glees placed Farouk's radicalization squarely at the doorsteps of University College London (UCL) FOR FAILING TO ROOTOUT Islamic extremism on campus. He said further "I believe, Farouk Abdulmutallab's radicalization from a devout Muslim to a suicide bomber took place in the United Kingdom and I believe al-Qaeda.
49. see www.punchng.com
50. Ibid
51. available at <http://www.terrorism.com>
52. Ibid
53. Ibid
54. Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009
55. Spector, Leonard S. "Nuclear Weapon Proliferation", Microsoft ® Student 2009. Other Terrorist groups such as Japanese Aum Shinikyo already have carried out terrorist attack using biological and chemical weapons.
56. See Hoffman, Bruce, "Terrorism" Microsoft ® Student 2009 (DVD).
57. Kaplan, David E., and Marshall Andrew, The Cult at the End of the World. The Incredible Story of Aum, Arrow Books, 1996.
58. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Reports, Tuesday, January 12, 2010.
59. "Sri-Lankan President woos Tamil with Power Sharing", PUNCH, Wednesday, January 13, 2010, p.60
60. Heibert Daniel J. and Reed Maureen, "Canada" Microsoft ® Student 2009 (DVD)
61. <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror>
62. Anti-Hijacking Act (US) 1974.
63. See USA – Patriot Act 2001. Other Anti-terrorism Federal Laws in the U.S include: SAFETY ACT 2002; Border Protection Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005; REAL ID Act of 2005; Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act of 2006; Military Commissions Act of 2006; USA-PATRIOT Act amended March, 2006.
64. See USA – Homeland Security Act 2002.
65. Claire de Than and Edwin Shorts, op.cit pp. 248 – 249. See Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 (U.K)
66. See <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/terror>. Canada Anti-Terrorism Act 2001, Bill S-7 Combating Terrorism Act 2012.
67. See section 316 Criminal Code LFN 2004 where murder is punishable with death
68. See section 364, Ibid where kidnapping is punishable with ten years imprisonment
69. See section 452, Ibid where attempt to destroy property with explosives is punishable with fourteen years imprisonment.
70. (c) For instance Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, Laws of Rivers-State of Nigeria among others.
71. "Abdulmuttalab: Expert makes case for anti-terrorism squad". PUNCH, Tuesday, January 19, 2010, p.7
72. Ibid
73. Ibid
74. Claire de Than & Edwin Shorts op. cit. pp. 238 – 248.
75. See the General Assembly Resolution of September 18, 2001; the Secretary Council Resolution 1378 which condemned the Taliban for allowing Afghanistan to be used as a base for terrorism and its export.
76. See Security Council Resolution 1070 (1996) adopted with regards to Sudan which reaffirmed that the suppression of international terrorism including those in which states are involved is essential for the maintenance of international peace and security
77. Provides that "no statutory limitation shall apply to war crimes or crimes against humanity in respective of the date of their commission.
78. <http://www.Terrorism.com>.
79. Ibid
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81. See the case of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman and others who were convicted for plotting to destroy several sites in New York. Sheik's Trial was the longest terrorism trail in American history before he was later sentenced to life jail – Los Angeles Times, October 2, 1995.
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