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Definition of Terrorism

Terrorism has been around for hundreds of years, with each year bringing in new methods, ideologies and practices. The roots and the first practices of 'terrorism' can be traced back to the 1st century. Throughout this essay, I will provide a definition of terrorism and look back at the origins of a terrorist organisation that goes by the name of Al Qaeda and their methods, practices, events they have organised and carried out, their present time activity and what the future holds for the group, Al Qaeda. Terrorism is when an individual or an organization commit unlawful offences surrounding violence or causing fear and intimidation, usually against civilians in order to show off and make clear their political or religious views. Al Qaeda is a worldwide known terrorist organization that has been causing acts of violence and fear for a number of years to show their political and religious views. 'Al-Qaeda merged with a number of other militant Islamist organizations, including Egypt's Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group, and on several occasions its leaders declared holy war against the United States.' (Britannica.com, 2021) These islamist terrorist groups all formed together shortly after the soviet union withdrew their invasion of Afghanistan during the Afghan War. The Afghan war took place from 1979 to 1996. 'Civil war raged after the withdrawal, setting the stage for the Taliban's takeover of the country in 1996.' (Taylor, 2021) Quite evidently, the aftermath of the USSR invasion into Afghanistan in 1976 caused a large ripple effect of war, post-withdrawal in 1996 throughout the already troubled and dangerous nation. Due to this war, a civil war had broken out and an already battered and broken down government could not sustain their control over the country therefore leaving a gap in the market for islamic militant groups to all seize control of certain areas of the country. The largest and most feared being Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda did not

believe in any foreign countries' militaries or citizens being in their country post afghan war and has a true sense of belief that the Jewish community and christian community work together to combat their religious beliefs. Due to this, and how strongly members of Al Qaeda's believe in their cause, the group leaders gave their sanction to attacks on innocent foreign civilians and attacks on international land. A large competitor to the taliban militants has been the United States ever since the islamic militant groups originally formed. Due to their growing hatred for each other and their activity, Al Qaeda launched the one of the deadliest and largest terrorist attacks ever on the American World Trade centres. The sparked the United States to commit to invading Afghanistan and combat Al Qaeda in its own lands. The United States first deployed troops in 2001 with a sole goal and objective, and that was to dismantle and eradicate Al Qaeda and ensure they do not set up a safe area of operations for the terrorist group to operate and coordinate from.

Following the september 11th attacks on the world trade centre towers in New York City, the US military deployed troops in Afghanistan to prevent further attacks occurring and take down those responsible for taking so many innocent lives. Nearly 3000 people died and around 6000 people were injured as a result of those attacks occurring on september the 11th. 'Within the space of an hour, Al Qaeda inflicted more direct damage on the US than the Soviet Union had done throughout the cold war' (Prospect Magazine, 2021) This statement shows the extent of the damage caused by Al Qaeda, and how carefully and how perfectly planned their attack was. There was one sole intention from these attacks and there always is with their attacks as they almost always

seem to succeed and when they do, they cause significant damage. One method used throughout the terrorist group Al Qaeda, and the most used method, is called martyrdom. A martyr is someone who will suffer the loss of their own life for a cause they believe in or on the demands of their superiors. A martyr will usually have one sole intention and that's to take others lives and to cause as much damage and fear as possible for the exchange of their own life. Martyrdom is when a martyr commits their task in taking their own life for their cause of belief for political or ideological reasons. 'In southern Afghanistan, a suicide bomber targeted the convoy of provincial council chief Attajan Haqbayat in Zubal, killing at least three people and wounding 12 others, including children.' (Aljazeera, 2021)

The war waged on terrorism by the United States began after the september 11th attacks happened on the world trade centre towers. 'A tape attributed to Bin Laden by US officials praises the majority of these and warns US allies against following the "oppressive American government".' (Guardian.co.uk, 2021) During the year of 2004, the leaders of Al Qaeda urged muslims to come together and combat the United States army and rise against them. The leaders and founders of Al Qaeda included Osama Bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam. During the year of 2004, Al Qaeda had an attack foiled by the french government which included a large scale biological chemical attack which further worried the world and allies of the United states further.

The structure of Al Qaeda comes with several elements of radical islamic ideology and operate globally with their attacks and messages of radical islam. Post-United States

invasion into Afghanistan, they had lost many of their high ranking members and their leaders with some of these being in charge of international operations. Due to this, Al Qaeda went many years without conducting any international operations or attacks. This is also due to the fact that the Iraqi Al Qaeda affiliates ignore the main organizational structure of Al Qaeda. This took a huge chunk out of the main organizational structure of Al Qaeda through reputation, strength and numbers. This caused a collapse in Al Qaeda's power and as a whole weakened them down to smaller groups of terrorists working in small cells to operate. 'Al Qaeda now a marginalized organization, Sageman argued, the most potent jihadist threat to the West now emanated from "bunches of guys." ' (Barr, 2021) These small groups remained a large threat due to their radicalized ideology towards the west and operated from resources provided to them by bigger organizations and from their own will and doing. Despite that, some argue that Al Qaeda is flexible and able to strike whenever they want and when they want. Some suggest that Al Qaeda had bounced back from their loss of high ranking personnel and soldiers and remain with a strong infrastructure and still have the ability to strike Europe and the United States with ease. 'The lack of consensus on these questions within the analytic community impedes our ability to anticipate the behavior of al-Qaeda and its affiliates, and to counter their future operations.' (Barr, 2021)

In 2006, Al Qaeda celebrated the fifth anniversary of the september 11th attacks on the world trade centres in New York by announcing that it had recruited a large amount of new members which proves to be an impressive level of growth for an organization

whose numbers tend to be estimated by counterterrorism analysts to be in the low thousands. However Al Qaeda actually hadn't done so. They were brought in from a new alliance with the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat. The GSPC is a jihadist group that for years had been fighting and targeting the regime in Algeria. The GSPC had joined and become brand new allies with the Al Qaeda organization. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's second in charge made this statement revolving the new recruitment and alliance with the GSPC. ' "May this be a bone in the throat of American and French crusaders, and their allies, and sow fear in the hearts of French traitors and sons of apostates." ' (Byman, 2021)

Al Qaeda have always been the largest radical islamic terrorist organization, however they are not the only radical islamic terrorist organization around. There are a number of radical islamic terrorist organizations however the second biggest group go by the name of Islamic State (IS) The Islamic State's influence across the world spreading. Even in many Muslim countries where infact the Islamic State ideology and power does not have a strong presence, its rise is radicalizing people across the world is making an already largely troubled region worse. The Islamic State's successes, power and influence in both Syria and Iraq alarmed the entire world and especially the United States. This then prompted an already hesitant Obama to again become even more militarily involved in Iraq and Syria despite their already fairly large presence. Despite that, there is one radical islamic group who the Islamic State's rise in fame and power causes a large issue and spanner in the works and that is Al Qaeda. Although Al Qaeda would largely be expected to be over the moon and backing the creation and

emergence of a strong jihadist group that is extremely violent with their methods such as beheading, burning and drowning on live feeds and across the internet. However, in reality the Islamic State's rise in power and fame doesn't make Al Qaeda comfortable with their ideology, their fame, their power and in their own territory. The very powerful and influential Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi rejected Al Qaeda's law and rule which then prompted Islamic State to later declare a caliphate. The two large and powerful radical islamic groups are now in competition for their strength in their religious movements. But how do they compare? Al Qaeda Was originally created to fight off the soviet invasion of Afghanistan and not as a terrorist organization. Then Al Qaeda were not happy with the United States due to their dealing and relation to Israel. This then prompted their leader Osama Bin Laden to bring the battle to America on their home soil therefore turning into an international terrorist organization. Al Qaeda's determination on bringing the fight to the so called "far enemy" otherwise known as the United States rather than fighting the so called "near enemy." This was a different methodology from a traditional radical islamic agenda. This startled local jihadists and changed the whole method of fighting for their cause and this prompted all local radicalized islamic people to start pledging their allegiance to the Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. This enabled local radicalized terrorists to improve their armoury. Joining Al Qaeda meant an improvement and strength boost and this is all because of their then granted access to a large selection of assets. This includes funding, weaponry, knowledge and expertise and more sophisticated and better training. Al Qaeda training camps were the best of the best in efficiency, effectiveness and teaching of the cause. The best jihadist education any jihadist could want or need. Jihadists

looking to join Al Qaeda did not take much persuasion due to the fact of safety in fighting in a far away battle rather than any sort of local islamic regime, the choice to join was a simple and easy decision, the thought process behind it is to fight a far away battle and live to fight another day. However, Islamic state was formed when the Syrian conflict and chaos began in 2011, syrian terror groups begged and prompted Iraqi jihadists to take part in the conflict, which then enabled Al Baghdadi to take leadership of the Iraqi jihadists in late 2010 and began their operations by initially sending small amounts of numbers of fighters into Syria to build an organisation for their group and establish their presence. Syria was in complete and utter turmoil and chaos, and the Iraqi jihadists had eventually managed to build themselves a safe and secure base to conduct operations there, this enabled them to increase their funding and increase their influence to then gain new recruits to fight for their cause. Their ambitions continued to get larger side by side with their fast growing terrorist organisation, their organisation spread vast across Syria alongside Iraq. These Iraqi jihadists, by the time of 2013 started calling themselves the 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' to show how large their organisation's orientation had grown to be and continued to grow due to the fact of less pressure in Iraq with the withdrawal of the United States Military.

In summary, and to conclude, it is clear that Al Qaeda are in fact a through and through terrorist organisation. The definition of terrorism includes the words violence and intimidation from political views and that suits what Al Qaeda do and the reasoning for it quite literally exactly. Also my other reasoning for this is down to the amount of attacks the organisation actually carried out and the fact that they had converted from fighting

for their own soil against the soviet invasion in the Afghan War to fighting the so called "Far Enemy." The amount of international operations to cause terror and large scale of innocent death proves the factor of the organisation in fact being a terrorist organisation. Al Qaeda's hatred for european governments, the United States government and the Israeli government has driven their cause to become an international operating group and that has fueled all jihadis to join and fight for the ideology of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda quite literally fit into the bracket of defined terrorism due to their operations and the severity of them. Terrorism is a large issue in Islamic countries and has been for a large number of years, and the frightening thing is that they are so hard to prevent and dismantle due to their intelligence of terrorism and operations, brainwashing, recruitment, training and even the knowledge of their own terrain. They can operate their difficult terrains to fight off those attempting to dismantle their organisations and most of the time ambush militaries deployed and get out within seconds and be completely untraceable. Groups such as Al Qaeda obtain funding so easily and so fast it's so hard to predict what technology they do have a hold of and can or will use. It's a fight against the unknown and is difficult to stop for the armies fighting off the terrorist organizations. Following on from that, terrorist organisations sometimes will join forces and spread their influence across the many surrounding countries in a very fast pace due to their similar enemies and ideologies.

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