

Defining “Terrorism” and the “State Sponsors” of Terrorism

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Theme: [Terrorism](#)

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Terrorism is a fragile subject in today's society of chemical, physical, and countless other types of warfare. The United States' view of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism did not officially begin until 1982. The US State Department placed Cuba on the list of nations thought to be providing critical support to terrorist groups.

However, even experts do not believe that Cuba supports terrorist activity: it has neither attempted to block nor seize terrorist assets. The Cuban government has not taken action against those accused of belonging to Al-Qa'eda or any other terrorist groups and thus Cuba has developed a neutral stance for terrorism.

Cuba does not allow the US to bully it to change and alter its definition of terrorism according to US views. Even though America does not like the Cuban friendship with US state sponsor-of-terrorism list members North Korea and Iran, Cuba remains solid on its position. Cuba considers that all terrorist acts are actions against the life, health, and safety of innocent people, which jeopardize the functioning and stability of national institutions, and cause damage to the economic activity of all nations.

To date, the UN has not successfully determined a solid definition for the term “terrorism”. However, UN committees are working on a solution to terrorism, and a universal way to define it that includes all “sides of the story”. In a December 2004 UN report, the need to invent a strategy to combat terrorism was realized. Not only must it address factors that facilitate terrorism, but the UN also must leave room to incorporate peoples' fundamental human rights.

Just more than a week ago, on September 30th, the US assassinated American citizen Anwar al-Awlaki, whom President Obama claimed was a terrorist. However, he had not presented evidence, al-Awlaki was not charged, and there was no court trial (as the Nazis were given), which is a violation of the universal laws of human rights.

In a 2005 September Summit meeting, Secretary-General Kofi Annan used the Madrid train bombings as an example of the need to define terrorism. He proposed 5 “pillars” of battling terrorism. These were to: defend human rights while countering terrorism; give states the means to prevent terrorism; deter states from supporting terrorist groups; deprive terrorist groups of the supplies to carry out an attack; and prevent active groups from resorting to terrorism. At this meeting, nations agreed on a clear condemnation of terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes.”

If there is no true definition of terrorism, there can be no way to solve it. There will always

be one group of people who will frighten (i.e., terrorize) another group. For example, a burglar terrifies a startled homeowner and the policeman terrifies the burglar, so thus, to the burglar the policeman is a terrorist, by definition. A state that defines a person as a terrorist does not mean that another state does the same, or even agrees. For instance, South Africa, the USA and the UK considered Nelson Mandela a terrorist, and up until 2008 the US still barred him from entering the country - except to visit the UN headquarters - because of his designation as a terrorist. Menachem Begin, the Prime Minister of Israel from 1977-1983, was placed on the terrorist "Wanted Poster" in 1948, with a price tag on his head for £100,000 (\$155,820). The British called George Washington a terrorist, but to Americans, he is a hero.

How can we know who is right? Today, Martin McGuinness, leader of the IRA (Irish Republican Army), which planted bombs and killed more than 2,000 British innocent citizens, is now running to be president of Ireland.

In the Muslim world, President Ronald Reagan called the mujahadeen (now Taliban) "courageous Afghan valuable freedom fighters" when they were fighting the Russians (because America was in the Cold War against the Soviets). Today the mujahadeen are again fighting against the occupation of their country - by the Americans - so now they are re-labelled terrorists. Same reason for fighting, but in the 80's it was against the USSR, not the US; when the tables are turned it is labelled 'terrorism'.

The definition of 'terrorism' can never be permanently written if the goalposts are always changing. The best that can be done is keep things controlled, and not to invade other countries, thus provoking the people into anger and rage. This almost always causes terrorism.

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Terrorism in Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949:

- <http://www.un.org/terrorism/background.shtml>
- <http://www.un.org/unitingagainstterrorism/chap2.htm#a>
- <http://terrorism.about.com/od/cuba/a/Cuba.htm>
- <http://www.salon.com/news/yemen/index.html?story=/opinion/greenwald/2011/09/30/awlaki>
- <http://www.interpol.int/Public/BioTerrorism/UnRes1540Laws/Cuba.pdf>
- <http://www.periodico26.cu/english/index.php/features/1480-cuba-reaffirms-in-the-un-its-position-on-terrorism-.html>
- BBC News - Islamist cleric Anwar Awlaki 'killed in Yemen'

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