

US FOREIGN POLICY AND COUNTER-TERRORISM SINCE 9/11 IN THE MAGHREB REGION OF AFRICA: A STUDY OF LIBYA

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Abstract: This paper focuses on examining the US foreign policy and counterterrorism in Libya since the 9/11 that attempts to uncover the ideological propensities, nuances, strategies, and hard and soft measures in conjunction with foreign policy goals that were pursued by the United States towards the Maghreb region since 9/11, particularly towards Libya. Several studies have clearly demonstrated how the discourse of counter terrorism is not monolithic in nature; rather its thrust, semantics and focus and even meanings have undergone significant changes in the annals of US Presidencies since President Truman. Secondly, US discourse of counter terrorism assumes qualitatively different meanings and focus in post 9/11 period compared to pre 9/11 period. It is Patriot Act (2002) in post 9/11 period that continues to provide the foundational discourse of counter terrorism in the USA. An analysis of this Act clearly demonstrates how the very conceptualization of this ACT was guided by the Western intellectual tradition of Orientalism, particularly in relation to Muslim world including the Muslim region of Maghreb and Libya, which broadly operated within the framework of US vs Them. Furthermore, it has been argued that US policy of counter terrorism has proved to be ineffective in countering the challenges of terrorism in the region of Maghreb as well as in Libya. Rather, NATO's military intervention in Libya proved to disaster for its political stability. This paper employs the teachings of theory of realism to explain the United States foreign Policy and counterterrorism in Libya since 9/11. Adopting analytical-historical approach, the paper concludes that the policy implications of "US VS them" framing can lead to policies that focus on military intervention and securitization, neglecting the socio-economic and political factors contributing to terrorism.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Counterterrorism, 9/11, Libya, Terrorism, Maghreb Union.

1. Introduction

The United State has been at forefront since 9/11 in mobilizing international opinion and nations and launching counter terrorism operations against what it considered the forces of terrorism as well as UN listed terrorist groups. It also unilaterally imposed economic sanctions and aggressively mobilized the UN system to further impose sanction on those countries classified as 'abetting terrorism', threat to world peace and stability' and on the charge of producing Weapon of Mass Destruction. It is therefore imperative to examine the various strategies and doctrines related to counter terrorism that USA has been pursuing and making them its foreign policy goals with a view to understand whether such policies, strategies, doctrines, discourses and operations has proved to be helpful in containing the challenges of terrorism, particularly in the Maghreb region and Libya. One of the significant problems which appears to found in the US counter terrorism discourse is that it suffers from high degree of unilateralism, which has led to undermine UN' capability in peacefully resolving the various conflict related issues in the world (Uygur, 2010).

Terrorism is the deliberate use of violence or the intimidation of violence to attain a political objective, with the main aim of causing a psychological effect that extends beyond the immediate victims or targets. There is significant variation in the definitions of terrorism. In 2008, the U.S. government used over 20 distinct definitions, some of which underwent frequent modifications. The U.S. Department of State modified its definition of terrorism seven times in total between 1982 and 2004. Since the early 1900s, counterterrorism ideals,

strategies, and techniques have been a vital aspect of US foreign policy. Nevertheless, since the 9/11 attacks, they have undergone major adjustments. Governments have exploited the amorphous word "terrorism" as a rhetorical weapon to degrade their opponents and offer justification for taking harsh and oppressive measures against them, especially following the events of 9/11. Several new Counter-Terrorism discourses, measures, strategies, tools and policies have been developed in response to this attack in particular and to the theatre of global terrorism in general. The 9/11 took the U.S by surprise and led, to a large extent, to a re-conceptualization of the concept of terrorism and counter terrorism. To this end, counter terrorism was given a global connotation with an extended concept of operation. The 'doctrines of pre-emptive strike' and 'regime change' became two most visible features of American foreign and security policies. The stake holders including academic community, strategist, defence expert, military personnel, policy makers, political class, various think tanks,

and lobby groups within the United States intensely debated the issue of counter terrorism and global security. They mostly differ on the issue of approach to secure the foremost goal of foreign policy: security of USA (Copeland, 2013).

It ranges from unilateralism vs multilateralism on the one hand and return to policy of isolationism vs increased or moderate intervention in global affairs. Hence the United States pursued the policies of unilateralism, military intervention, rigorous involvement in global affairs with advocacy of regime change from 1991- 2008. However, since 2009, partly owing to global economic crisis, the US leaned towards multilateral framework in managing the global order and also attempted to gradually withdraw from shouldering alone the responsibility of global security.

President W. Bush proposed a new policy after the 9/11 attacks in his state of the nation speech to the US Congress early in 2002. It declared that the US will initiate a programme of preemptive military action against any nation known to be harbouring or supporting a terrorist outfit that is hostile to the US. He mentions the "axis of Evil," which he stated comprised of Iran, North Korea, and Iraq. He argued that these three nations posed the largest risk to world peace because they are seeking WMDs and have the potential to sponsor terrorism. The growth of democracy throughout the world is another topic that Bush championed and underscored, declaring in 2005 that "the survival of liberty in our land depends on the success of liberty in other land." The Bush administration hiked defence spending from 304 billion dollars in the fiscal year 2001 to 616 billion dollars in the fiscal year 2008 in conformity with this more interventionist agenda. Obama, however, indicated in a speech at Westpoint in May 2014 that while "the United States will use military force, unilaterally, if necessary, when our core interest demands it," in the event of immediate threats or humanitarian disasters, we must organize allies to take collective action. This declaration provides the cornerstone of Obama's philosophy. Obama's "moral multilateralism" doctrine advised against moral bravado and supported more robust US foreign policy (Bonansinga, 2015).

Another problematic concerning the counterterrorism strategy and policies of the USA is that it has resulted in the militarization of many parts of Maghreb. This has allowed the terrorist groups and other non- state violent elements in the Maghreb, especially in Libya, to send armed groups in order to protect or intercept convoys. While drug revenue has poisoned intercommunity relations, disrupted local economies, and questioned traditional hierarchies and respect for authority, arms trafficking poses a direct threat to regional security. Gaddafi's assassination in 2011 and the overthrow of his administration led to the opening of the Libyan arms market. Since 2015, non-state military actors operating in the Maghreb have increasingly sourced weapons from the National Military Stocks. Militants who steal and flee with lethal military equipment frequently assault military installations. Traffickers, terrorists, and non-state actors are able to take advantage of Libya's highly permeable and unsecured borders due to the security situation there. The U.S. Counterterrorism actions in Libya and the Maghreb has led to the proliferation of drugs, and Human trafficking. The traffickers realizing that a security vacuum exists especially in Libya have used the Maghreb as a route to promote these nefarious practices created by the weakened government as a result of the regime change in Libya since 2011. This corruption is being perpetrated by non-state actors, security operatives, state officials, Civil Servants, defense officials and senior politicians. The ill-gotten wealth is then laundered by purchasing Parliamentary positions to buy legitimacy within the States to fight rival gangs (George, 2013).

Adopting analytical-historical approach analysis as an approach to political science, this paper aims at examining the US foreign policy and counter terrorism since 9/11 in the Maghreb Union in Africa, with Libya as a study.

This paper adopts theory of realism to the study of international relations. Realism perspective on International Relations on the other hand recognizes Nation States as the principal actors in the international system. Realism equally recognizes Multinational Corporations and Multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank as important non-state actors. Realism recognizes the antagonistic and competitive nature of international political relations. States like human beings are selfish and egoistic. States are therefore motivated to act primarily in pursuit of their national interest. Overall, realism theory upholds States as principal actors in the international system, with Multilateral Corporations as key players. In explaining the behavior of States realists place self-interest over morality and ethical considerations. The desire by States to control, dominate and retain power for their benefit is overriding (Jackson, & Sorensen, 2003).

Realism is one of the foremost attempts in understanding international relations. It evolved from the historical writings of Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. These scholars defer in their ideas but there are certain congruencies within the works of classist writers that realist label can be applied. The basic assumptions of the realist theorist are that the state/nation is central to international relations. The idea of power, the importance of matters pertaining to national security, the state as a single, logical actor, and the focus on state organization. The state as sovereign entities should not recognize other authorities above them. Realist also assume that states speak with one voice before the implementation of foreign policy and they are portrayed as rational actors that engage in prioritized cost benefit engagements in international relations. However, other schools of thought have criticized the realist for heavy reliance on power and state as central to international affairs (Putnam, 2020).

The theory of international relations can still benefit from realism. Theorists of international relations can analyze violent conflict and security challenges within the current system using realism's practical and useful framework. Realists believe that only sovereign nation states have the right to monopolize the use of force, which is crucial to understanding how we approach U.S. foreign policy and counterterrorism. States must fend for themselves if they are to survive in relative security within the international space, they cannot rely on other states for protection since international relations is anarchic in nature, and there is a vacuum since there is no central authority, then the nation states remain the only authority and they may come together to form military and security alliance to protect themselves (Snow & Culham, 2021).

At the heart of the realist argument is the presumption that sovereign states have legitimate monopoly to crush any non-state actors or nations that want to hurt its citizens, national and international interests. However, with the emergence of non-state terrorists using violent means to attack civilian population, states have been forced to acknowledge their existence as participants in global struggle for power. Realists believe that states should continue to respond legitimately to all forces of terrorist attacks using all known counter terrorism tools available to them. Since international institutions cannot be relied upon for security of state, therefore it becomes necessary for states to retain the ability to act independently against threats. In summary, as states pursue power advantages and compete internationally, realism remains the best form of understanding counter terrorism and foreign policy in international relations in the contemporary world (Harris, 2021).

2. Foreign Policy

International relations cannot be adequately appreciated without understanding the concept of foreign policy. Though there are diverse positions on what constitute FP as a concept, but the diversity in opinion had not dissociate it from international relation. In some quarters FP is an important element of international relations, why some others see it as a result of the interplay between internal and external environments. Some scholars feel that FP is the product of national interest. Bojang (2018) classified it into three components on FP, which are the "end," the "ways," and the "means" of reaching set goals. It explains that the means are the resources that a state has at its disposal (such as economic and military), the ways are the ideas and strategies (such as coercion and diplomatic tactics) to pursue these desired interests, and the end is a vision of a desired outcome or set of interests in interacting with another state or actor. A framework for policy (FP) is therefore a state's vision of an intended outcome or set of interests in interacting with another state or actor, the ideas and tactics utilized to attain these

aims, and the resources at the state's disposal to guide her engagement with other states.

Ezirim (2010) conceives FP as the category of actions a government takes which deals with defence, security, international political relations and international economic relations. It is the activity whereby a state deals with other States, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and certain individuals. Going by this position, FP is a summary of actions in the areas of security, international politics and economy of a country as touching its relationship with other international actors. Odeen (2013), claim that today, FP is an expression of the complex organization that operates within each state: the purpose and quality of its leaders, the level of its economy and social stability it has, its social and political pluralism and its firmness in the expression of public opinion. This opinion by Odeen also views FP as a product of many complex factors with mostly pluralistic tendencies. Rourke (2008) in a short and precise manner describe FP to include not just the international goals that a country has, but how countries use their national capabilities to achieve those goals. This interpretation of FP connotes that, it is not just a target set to be achieved but the means through which countries achieve set goals on international scene.

Hence, FP is a concept with many interpretations. It is important to state that none of the above positions on FP is right or wrong. They are basically opinions about FP from different lenses. The connection amongst these contributions includes; seeing it as a tool that guide, a means through goals is achieved, basic international relations element and a product of complex intrigues and interest. To cap it all, discussion of FP cannot be exhausted but continue to evolve along periodic realities of states international relations at the global scene.

3. Terrorism

The need to clarify the concept of terrorism is indeed significant due to the spate of insecurity across the globe. There are several forms of insecurity and without clarifying terrorism which is a fragment of it all, will only make the situation worse as means of addressing it may not be clear therefore making insecurity a kind of norm to live with. The apparent definitional deficiency of terrorism provides scope for states and groups to justify their terrorist acts. Ambiguity provides leeway for diverse interpretations of what terrorism is (Akinola and Tella: 2013). Therefore, this subsection considers terrorism from different point of view with the aim of clarifying the ambiguity attached to the concept. Wilkins (1992) argues that "terrorism is the attempt to achieve political, social, economic, or religious change by the actual or threatened use of violence against persons or property". This definition portray terrorism as a medium, with the use of violence as an instrument and to attain a particular change in the society.

Chomsky's categorization of terrorism is worthy of consideration as it gives more expository explanation of the multi-purpose prowess of this concept. Terrorism is categorized into 'retail', carried out by individual terrorist organizations such as the Hezbollah, Al Qaeda, Hamas and Boko Haram and 'wholesale', carried out by a state and its agencies. This position by Chomsky was further clarify using Saint Augustine's story of a pirate captured by Alexander the Great to provide an apt analogy of the concept of terrorism. The emperor asked the pirate: "how dare you molest the sea?" The pirate replied: "how dare you molest the whole world? Because I do it with a little ship only, I am called a thief; you do it with a great navy and you are called an emperor" (Chomsky, 2002).

Kushner (2003) contends that there are as many definitions of terrorism as there are methods of executing it; the term means different things to different people, and trying to define or classify terrorism to everyone's satisfaction is extremely difficult. However, most definitions of terrorism hinge on three factors: the method (violence), the target (civilians or the government) and the purpose (to instill fear and force political or social change). He further portrays terrorist action as:

The calculated use of unexpected, shocking, and unlawful violence against noncombatants (including, in addition to civilians, off-duty military and security personnel in peaceful situations) and other symbolic targets perpetrated by a clandestine member(s) of a subnational group or a clandestine agent(s) for the psychological purpose of publicizing a political or religious cause and/or intimidating or coercing a government(s) or civilian population into accepting demands on behalf of the cause (2003).

Colarik (2006) sees terrorism as “the intentional act of inflicting fear in an individual, group and/or society with the intent to influence a wider audience”. This definition of terrorism pointed out some important features of terrorism. He identifies the following features with terrorism; intentional act, inflicting fear, a targeted population and to influence another set of audience. Looking deeper into these identified features of terrorism, it is clear that Colarik sees terrorism as a purposefully organized event against a deliberate population as victims. Imobighe (2006) make effort in proffering a basis for an acceptable definition. He suggested that four critical elements of terrorism must be investigated by the interpretation that will be considered for it to be acceptable.

4. The United States Foreign Policy in the Maghreb Union

The U.S. foreign policy in the Maghreb region is being driven by security and counter terrorism concerns. There has been a lot of political changes in the Maghreb region since 2011 but the U.S. is not deeply involved in most of the transitions that have been taking place in the government of the Maghreb nations. This is because the U.S. is disappointed and exhausted by failed nation building efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. The U.S. counter terrorism objectives in the Maghreb is not very successful due largely to political instability especially in Libya. Algeria has also experienced a succession crisis. In summary, since the independence of most of the Maghreb nations, they have interacted with foreign powers bilaterally and not in a unified manner despite the formation of the largely unsuccessful Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) in 1989. They all have related with their former colonial masters through discrete foreign policies that reflected the nature of their anti-colonial past. In contrast to Morocco and Tunisia, which have more of a France leaning foreign policy, Algeria picked the nonalignment movements as the cornerstone of its foreign policy. The foreign policies of the Libyan state led by Muammar Ghaddafi was more independent and radical (Dursun, 2021).

Faced with numerous socio-political challenges which created several complicated geopolitical constraints, they were always dependent on the European Union. The region in recent years is gradually moving away from the European Union and United States and looking more towards the Eastern Nations of China and Russia. Increasingly as the U.S. neglects the Maghreb region especially under President Donald Trump, the Gulf states and Turkey have joined China and Russia to increase their presence in the geopolitical space of the Maghreb region. For instance, China has extended the Belt and Roads Initiative to the Mediterranean, China has extended its Maritime Silk Road which requires access to ports, Russia has made its return while the competition among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States (e.g. Qatar versus the UAE), on the one hand, and the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and UAE, Turkey, and Israel, have spilled over onto the Maghreb, thus, domestic challenges and evolving geopolitical dynamics have compelled the Maghreb to seek the support of outside powers to offset their internal instability and to compete with one another (Zoubir, 2022).

5. The United States Foreign Policy in Libya

The foreign relations between Libya and the U.S. have been quite frosty over the past few decades. Due to the Libyan government's alleged support for terrorism against the United States, led by Muammar Ghaddafi, relations between the United States and Libya were not good. The 1988 Lockerbie bombing and the 1986 Berlin attack, both of which the US struck Libya in reprisal, are the two most notorious examples. Today however, relations between the U.S. and Libya have remained cordial since the assassination of the Libyan strong man, Muammar Ghaddafi in 2011. In fact, since the 2012 attack on the American liaison office or mission in Benghazi, the relationship has improved, particularly in the security area. Most Libyans now approve of their country's international relationship with the U.S. Since the civil war, the U.S. sided with the Libyan people against the government of Muammar Ghaddafi and helped in overthrowing his regime. Since that time, the United States has vowed to support the Libyan people and has pledged to working with them to develop a new Libyan state. The U.S.-Libya Declaration of Intent was signed by the United States and Libya on December 2, 2013, with the goal of enhancing law enforcement investigation collaboration and upholding international duties in the fight against crime. Foreign relations between Libya and the U.S. have progressively taken a turn for the better (Wikipedia, 2023).

6. The United States Foreign Policy and Counterterrorism in the Maghreb

The precedent analysis of US counter terrorism discourse demonstrates that USA has combined the three models of counter terrorism in dealing with terrorist groups and threat of other non-state actors in Maghreb, particularly Libya. Three major studies have been conducted analyzing the demise of terrorist groups throughout history and what state actions contributed to their downfall (Goufi, 2022).

7.1 The Coercive Counter terrorism

Following the September 11 attacks, the application of the war paradigm broke from both international law and precedent, which considered terrorism mainly as a criminal justice problem. President George W. Bush remarked that the attacks on the previous day were "more than acts of terror" when he announced a War on Terror on September 12. They were military actions. The United States replied with military action, first invading Afghanistan and subsequently Iraq, as would be anticipated from any act of war. The "war paradigm" started to dominate American policy after 9/11. The United States expended \$8 trillion on counterterrorism warfare between 2001 and 2021. This technique requires a military answer to terrorism and frames it as a military problem. Governments adopt this tactic to invade other nations and eradicate terrorist groups. States devote domestic infrastructure towards the manufacturing of weaponry, supplies, and combat vehicles in order to mobilize resources for the war effort. The war is presented as a threat to the country, and the government justifies unprecedented actions in the name of national security, inciting young people to commit their lives to it (Kaleem, 2022).

You cannot defeat an army with military might; terrorism is a strategy. Terrorism may be embraced by new organisations and people even after certain groups are defeated. The United States' occupation and war-making in largely Muslim countries enhanced the notion that Islam was in peril and enlarged the pool of possible members for groups hostile to American military engagement in the Middle East. "The notion of a war on terrorism...suggests to Muslims abroad that the U.S. is fighting a war on Muslims," a British intelligence official stated. And jihad, or holy war, is the only suitable reaction. Men are encouraged to conduct jihad by battle. War's damage and killing enhance the possibility of terrorism, a trend characterized as "blowback" by U.S. government officials and others. Fighting a foot combat in the Middle East has made it easier for terrorist organisations to recruit new members and has pushed the United States into a "long" or "never-ending war" against a foe that is continually changing (Stevenson, 2020).

7.2 The Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Model

Local and national policing is one of the strongest governmental tools for countering terrorism. It has traditionally been the cause of the failure of forty percent of terror attack outfits. After all, it's frequently against the law to utilize violent measures like bombing, kidnapping, or armed attacks. The purpose of a criminal justice strategy is to utilize the civil court system to fight terrorism. Local police investigate violent plots and crimes, while courts supervise the punishment of perpetrators. Those found guilty are subsequently imprisoned or subjected to different legal ramifications. attacks and attempted assaults are delegitimized when they are handled as ordinary crimes, which pulls attention away from the political or ideological motives and onto the acts themselves (Wilson, 2023).

The criminal justice paradigm may be complex, needing years to complete the appeals process, as it relies on the present legal systems to pursue terror occurrences as crimes. Following the September 11 attacks, numerous Western countries (the United States and Canada in 2001, Australia and Norway in 2002, Sweden in 2003, and the United Kingdom in 2005) adopted distinct criminal categories for terror attacks. A major component of criminal justice definitions of terrorism is typically motivation, which is notoriously hard to demonstrate or dispute. The criminal justice system needs to be perceived as strong and equal in order to minimize violent attacks. As observed by Uduak Williams, in instances where this isn't the case, the model may not be acceptable. For example, in Saudi Arabia, special courts have been formed to address problems connected to terrorism because of anti-terror legislation that makes it easier for the government to prosecute terrorist activities. In practice, these tribunals frequently function less fairly than the

official judicial system. These courts frequently "deviate from the rule of law and democratic standards and give rise to frequent human rights violations" in Iraq, Afghanistan, Cuba, and some parts of Africa (Haripin, Anindya, & Priamarizki, 2020).

The dissolution of the Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult by the Japanese government is widely viewed as an excellent example of counterterrorism via law enforcement. When cult members released sarin gas in a Tokyo tube in 1995, twelve people were murdered and nearly five thousand were wounded. After the bombings, persons involved were relentlessly hunted and detained by Japanese police and intelligence agencies. By 1997, Aum Shinrikyo was entirely decimated, its leaders had been imprisoned, and its finances were in tatters. The group ended its deeds of terror and called itself Aleph. Similarly, in Quebec, Canada, heightened police surveillance led in numerous arrests, imprisonment, and the suspension of some groups' use of violent attacks to boost Quebecois nationalism in 1972 (Wilson, 2023).

7.3 Countering Violent Extremism

Early in 2010 "preventing and countering violent extremism" (P/CVE) became the new paradigm that U.S. counterterrorism specialists accepted. This technique, which is likely the most well-liked among counterterrorism specialists, focuses on a range of concerns that can inspire individuals to become radicalized and join terrorist groups. Using counter-messaging tactics to discourage individuals from getting radicalized, Countering Violent Extremism focuses in particular on the psychology of terrorism and radicalization. Governments employ CVE programmes to use outreach, education, and communications efforts to prevent prospective radicals from utilizing violence. This policy was designed to augment militarized techniques against terrorism, not to replace them. Strategies aimed at avoiding and defeating radical extremism are premised on the assumption that terrorism emerges from a psychological process termed "radicalization," as opposed to a mix of violent actors, the nation-state, and socio-political or economic reasons (US national Archives, 2024).

P/CVE should be refocused on long-term counterterrorism measures, according to Global Centre for Cooperative Security researcher Matthew Schwartz. His modified approach underlines the ways in which states and nonstate actors mutually create violence, shunning strategies that centre on counter-radicalization activities. As stated by Schwartz, "different forms of conflict and political violence, including violent extremism, should be understood as significant factors driven by a state's conduct, particularly its role in maintaining and perpetuating power through various levels of coercion." He adds, however, that, over the past several decades, a wealth of empirical research has provided insights into trends and general theories regarding factors that increase the risk of political violence. In that regard, there is substantial evidence that violence committed by sovereign states in the form of injustice, inequity, discrimination, and oppression, that is, structural violence, or direct violence in the form of abuse by state security services, foreign invasions, and other forms of state sanctioned or -perpetuated [sic] physical violence can serve as structural or proximate drivers of escalating political violence and conflict. These dynamics apply in equal measure to those forms of political violence commonly labeled terrorism.

The World Bank's 2011 World Development report, which determined that state violence in the form of invasion, occupation, and repression is key to terrorist organizations' rationale, gives validity to Schwartz's argument. "Human rights for all and the rule of law" was also recognized by the UN in 2006 as one of the four pillars of the worldwide counterterrorism strategy. According to Schwartz, a state must to recognize its own role in supporting violence before it can effectively battle violent extremist ideology. Counternarratives lack substance and just serve to enhance the assertions made by violent extremists in the absence of this basis. Many governments still have a limited understanding of terrorism and violent extremism, focusing their CVE programmes on stopping the spread of radical ideas and focusing on specific identity groups, particularly Islamic groups, despite these indications towards a strategy aimed at reducing structural and state violence (Bilazarian, 2020).

7.4 Defensive Counterterrorism

The purpose of a preventive counterterrorism paradigm is to prevent terrorist groups from organizing and carrying out attacks. The preventive paradigm does not focus on the "root causes" of terrorist groups' creation, in contrast to the long-term measures outlined below. "Hardening" targets, preserving important infrastructure, and

monitoring persons, cash, and goods that may be used in violent plans are all elements of preventative counterterrorism. Targets are "hardened" by security measures, making them more difficult to attack. This may shift terrorist activity towards "softer" targets but effectively avoids terror strikes against major persons, places, and occasions. Since many large events, same as concerts and sporting events, are privately operated, and infrastructure for key services is generally privately owned, preventive counterterrorism in the United States demands tight engagement with the private sector. Interrupting the networks that offer material support to violent organisations is another method that a preventive approach may lessen the chance of terror attacks. It is feasible to monitor resources like money, food, accommodation, training, weapons, travel documents, and the like in order to discover potential conspiracies and defeat them (Gilli & Tedeschi, 2022).

7.5 Counterterrorism in Libya

For a scant twenty of the previous two centuries, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Libya has been dynamic, engaged, and positive. This is a tragic record with few parallels in the annals of American diplomatic history. Following the failure of futile conversations in the second part of the eighteenth century, which ended in armed combat at the start of the nineteenth century, economic and diplomatic ties between the United States and Libya began on a low note (Ronald, 2002). Libya was subjected to colonial rule and neo-colonialism by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and Turks, and these influences continue to impact Libya's foreign policy today. The Ottoman Turks governed Libya for centuries, and then the Italians invaded the nation for thirty years, and then the French and British held it for nearly 10 years. Although Libya and the United States signed their first formal treaty in 1796, their diplomatic relations have been characterized by conflict, misunderstanding, and ambiguity for over 200 years. Due to Libya's relationship with the USSR and the forces of international communism, the US launched a hostile foreign policy against the country after the Second World War and the Cold War. Libya, an entity founded by the United Nations General Assembly, became the first state in Africa to attain independence from European dominance after World War II. Libya endured political instability from 1951, when the nation acquired independence, until 1969. During this period, there were eleven prime ministers and nearly forty different governments. On September 1, 1969, a young group of military officers led by Muammar Gaddafi deposed the monarchy. After the military takeover in 1969, relations between the US and Libya were tight diplomatically. This tension heightened in 1979 when students stormed the US embassy in Tripoli during the early phases of the Iranian revolution and hostage crisis. After Ronald Reagan was elected president, the relationship took a turn for the bad (Ronald, 2002).

A series of events that began with the nationalization of the western oil sector led in the recall of the US ambassador in 1972 and the evacuation of all US embassy staff from Tripoli following a mob attack that resulted in the embassy being set on fire in December 1979. On December 19, 1979, the US recognized Libya as a state sponsor of terrorism. In the decades that followed, several troops participated in skirmishes. The incident in the Gulf of Sidra occurred on August 9, 1981. In the Libyan-claimed Mediterranean waters, two Libyan aero planes opened fire on US aircraft, which the US planes shot down in reprisal. The United States government increased restrictions on goods of American origin intended for transportation to Libya in March 1982 and barred the importation of Libyan crude oil. The United States put new economic sanctions on Libya in January of 1986. U.S. government assets were put on hold (Wikipedia, 2011).

President Ronald Reagan authorized attacks on specified Libyan targets on April 15, commencing the United States' counterterrorism operations against Libya in punishment for what he believed to be terrorist activities in Libya. A bomb went detonated 10 days previously in a west Berlin nightclub that was popular by US military, leaving two dead and 200 wounded. Reagan ordered military retaliation operations known as Operation El Dorado Canyon after accusing Libyan operatives for the explosion, citing US intelligence sources. About 100 U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps aircraft engaged in the strikes. Bombs were thrown on Benghazi and Tripoli, as well as military sites, training centres, and the houses of servicemen, including the palace of Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi. The operations resulted in major losses and devastation, including the murder of Ghaddafi's infant daughter Hana and the bombing of the French embassy. intervention El Dorado Canyon was considered as the first official rationale for a military intervention by the United States against foreign visitors and its supporters on the basis of counterterrorism. Next, from 1989 to 1993, George Herbert Walker Bush served as the 41st President of the United States.

President H.W. Bush's approach to international affairs was to employ diplomacy as opposed to force or military threats. A well-known diplomat, he was. His principal aims were putting an end to the Cold War, building a new global order, and sheltering smaller nations from bigger ones. In order to set post-cold war norms, his foreign policy was vital. The foundation of multilateral cooperation in international security was compelled by the new global order. The world symbolized by the new alliance was one that was safer from the risk of terrorism, more firm in its pursuit of justice, and more assured in its fight for peace. His purpose was to heal the cold war rifts in relations with erstwhile US foes. This includes linkages to Libya as well as the Middle East as a whole (Blanchard, 2020).

However, there was a substantial shift in US foreign policy and counterterrorism methods internationally, including in Libya, under President W. Bush's administration. The Bush administration developed a new grand strategy towards the Middle East and the rest of the globe using the 9/11 attacks on Washington as justification. It made it conceivable for the United States to deploy hegemonic unilateral power and liberal foreign policy aims to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. Terrorist groups formed in the Middle East and Libya as a consequence of Washington's failure to reign in its activities. Its counterterrorism approach neglected the more serious political and economic challenges at hand. The US administration upgraded its counterterrorism policy in Libya by boosting up its diplomatic efforts. Libya was removed off the list of states that sponsor terrorists as a consequence of counterterrorism cooperation. Under President W. Bush, the US interest section was extended to an Embassy in Tripoli (Boyd, 2023).

Libya collaborated with the US and other countries to halt its attempts to develop WMD and missile technology, and it was a signatory to all 12 of the international treaties and protocols dealing to terrorism. President W. Bush made a strong effort to fight terrorism, both locally and internationally, between 2001 and 2009. Financial assets were seized and some terrorists were found guilty. A committee of the IAEA on safeguards and verification was created in 2005 with cooperation from the international community and George W. Bush to study strategies to strengthen the agency's ability to supervise and enforce adherence to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. In an attempt to fight money laundering and the financing of terrorists, he also helped to organize the Eurasian Group and the Middle East/North Africa Financial Action Task Force. His contributions to the defence of the United States included the establishment of Homeland Security Policies, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), improved port security in the country, increased funding for border security, and increased scanning for nuclear and radiological threats (Arms control association, 2021). The United States of America's counterterrorism approach against Libya was multifaceted since the government was considered as a state sponsor of terrorism. In order to address the Libyan concerns, the administration sought to deploy both bilateral and international tactics. Multilateral sanctions imposed by the UN were used to compel Libya to confess its complicity in various terrorist operations, including the Berlin discotheque and Lockerbie bombings. The panel on the intelligence capabilities of the United States about weapons of mass destruction published a report on March 31, 2005, noting that while investigations had begun under President Clinton, they were escalated under President W. Bush between 1999 and 2000. This was due to fresh information indicating Libya was "reinvigorating its nuclear, missile, and biological (weapons) programmes" (Arms control association, 2021).

8. Conclusion

Finally, the paper concludes that the policy implications of "US VS them" framing can lead to policies that focus on military intervention and securitization, neglecting the socio-economic and political factors contributing to terrorism. However, the paper argues that since the United States war on terror is a global phenomenon, there has been collaboration by the U.S. with diverse international partners, nations and groups in counter-terrorism efforts. The conclusion therefore is that the "US VS them" is not entirely true in the arena of counter-terrorism. The U.S. war on terror is very complex and is influenced by historical, political and strategic factors alongside evolving perspectives and global collaboration. As such, the global war on terror by the U.S. should be looked at in a multifaceted manner.

The U.S. counter-terrorism war is influenced by genuine security concerns of protecting its citizens and interests; Geopolitical interests of maintaining stability in key regions like the Maghreb and Middle East; economic considerations; and domestic political pressures to the government to address terrorist threats. The paper

concludes that the U.S. war on terror was escalated after the 9/11 attacks. Initially the U.S. adopted non-state actors to fight its proxy wars during the cold war era and it was only the 9/11 attacks that made the U.S. to have a policy change towards groups like al Qaeda. The U.S. began to pursue a policy of preemptive military strike, dismantling all terrorist networks and disrupting their operations in order to forestall any future attacks.

9. References

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