

Olivia Cone  
Professor Tara Trask  
POSC 1020  
12 November 2021

### Final Exam

The emergence of international terror networks, and new threats such as 9/11 have become more prevalent in today's society due to the growth of globalization and use of technology to broaden the impact of transnational terrorism's reach and impact. These acts of terror have incited major shifts to the international system, which kickstarted the campaign against global terrorism. The change in priority of international policy caused a ripple effect, casting shifts to the world's global economy, an increase in airport security, and alterations to which countries hold global political power. These dramatic changes in response to 9/11 have all been driven by the incited fear of international terrorism networks themselves. Along with the changes to the international system, this war on terror has imposed a challenge to the realist paradigm, as well as the effectiveness of our previous changes to the international system. With emphasis on the events following the attack on The World Trade Center, this essay discusses the lead up, the changes made to international policy, the effectiveness of these said changes and what the future holds in regards to terrorism.

Following the Cold-War, a new era of globalization began, casting shifts to the world's economic, security and hegemonic structure. The Post Cold-War era promoted the development of non-state actors, and due to the ideological antagonism, we were unable to see what effect these non-state actors would hold in the future. Consequently, many Americans and others around the world had an optimistic ideology about the understood agreement to new world peace and democracy, but that soon came to an abrupt interruption. Beginning with the events that led up to the attack on The World Trade Center, the growth of transnational terrorism was heightened by the world's efforts to have a more globalized economy, making countries that were more integrated into the global economy vulnerable targets to acts of terrorism. The substantial impact globalization has had on the accessibility to trade and travel makes it more accessible for terrorists to strike. Something as simple as the increase in trucks and container vessels that aid international commerce increases the chances of a terrorist smuggling their way into borders undetected. Additionally, an increase in international flights once again raises the chances of hijacking and smuggling persons in and out of the country. Before 9/11 happened, the international procedure in regards to air travel security was essentially non-existent, making this the first major change after the events occurred. One of the more obvious changes to the international system was the expansion in security for air travel, beginning with the suspension of flights for three days following the attack. Once air travel resumed, armed national guard forces and local police forces conducted airport security, and in November 2001 x-ray devices were allocated at airports enforcing even more strict security. All of the improved security measures come at a cost, just as anything else. International businesses took a major blow from decreased travel, leading to a decrease in tourism as well as a decrease in trade. All of the previously listed reasons resulted in a ripple-effect moderate global economic recession, but was fortunately muted in the years following.

Another major change that has been occurring gradually since 9/11 is the shift from unipolarity to multipolarity within the international system. The U.S. hegemonic hold on the

world was challenged due to an accumulation of different factors. One being the direct strike to the US's confidence in their security systems, declining their "chokehold" on the rest of the world, which has knocked the US from being the only country on the geopolitical pedestal. The vulnerability of the United States then instigated the decline of their hegemonic power, which is still in decline today. Studying the third level of analysis, this powershift has created room for multilateral counter-terrorism programs in which the UN Security Council has initiated. The main one being the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), was created in 2001 to attack the surge in modern terrorism. So far, the CTC has done amazing work and has made great changes to the international system in efforts to prevent more attacks, including implementing over 20 resolutions that have been adopted over the past decade. Also, "By January 2021, more than 160 visits to some 100 UN Member States had been conducted since CTED was declared operational 13 years earlier" (United Nations, 2021). These country visits are conducted in order to make sure the member states' counter-terrorism efforts are up to standards, and to provide help to those countries if they are not. Multiple other organizations have been created by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, one being the al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, which focuses on monitoring al-Qaeda and their plans for the future. All of these changes to the international system have been in response to the emergence of power of new actors and transnational organizations, in efforts to serve as a deterrent to other possible threats.

Changes to the international system have been relatively predictable due to the world's tendency to repeat its past mistakes. Beginning with the Peace of Westphalia, these tragic collapses and events over the past four centuries have resulted in the development of new world political systems, technological advances, new nations and states, as well as new forms of governance. However, despite all of the efforts made by previous policy makers, history has still consistently repeated itself in terms of failure. This unsuccessful pattern consists of: "war and conflict followed by efforts to design a system to prevent similar conflicts, followed by the breakdown of that system with the next war" (Russell, 2021). We are constantly reinventing our beliefs and policies after large disasters like this occur, but so far, the rate of effectiveness is lacking. These failures have also challenged the realist paradigm, especially the attack on 9/11. Nation-states are the main focus of realist views, and their relation to each other. With that being said, the attack on the World Trade Center by al-Qaeda has challenged realism and their conceptual "rules" because al-Qaeda is a non-state actor, and they initiated the attack. "This is a problem for realism because its theory is premised on the capacity to retaliate against a territory. And al-Qaeda has no return address" (Caporaso, 2003). Despite all of the failure reformations of the past, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center triggered the most dramatic change in U.S. foreign policy, and created panic among other nations. The most obvious change in the U.S. was the change in priority and the creation of the counterterrorism bureaucracy, which then caused a ripple-like effect for the rest of the world. Because of this largely instigated panic, the entire world has been changed forever. So, have we made enough change for this pattern of failure to be broken? We will know with time, given that these failed events occurred centuries apart.

One of the arguments that can be made stating that there hasn't been any or *enough* change, is due to the fact that global terrorism is still present today. It is not only present, but the presence of al-Qaeda has grown, due to their ideology and motivation. When looking at the third-level of analysis, al-Qaeda has four times the number of Salafi-jihadi terrorist groups than recorded in 2001. According to the records of the United Nations monitoring team, "al-Qaeda's unimpeded growth in Africa, entrenchment in Syria, and presence in at least fifteen Afghan

provinces, as well as its continued close relations with the Taliban" (Hoffman, 2021). Not only are they growing in Africa and Syria, but the threats to the United States are still very much alive and prevalent. For example, the 2019 attack on a U.S. Navy air base in Pensacola killed three people, proving that al-Qaeda is still able to charter, strategize and pose threats all over the world. All of this alludes to the fact that there has been limited change successfully implemented, leaving the international system with the same fear as before 9/11. But this is not necessarily true. The main focal point of my argument revolves around the fact that Governments all across the world have been successful in the prevention of an attack by al-Qaeda on the scale of the 9/11 attacks. With all of the new security implemented in airports, the UN's establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and the start of the war on terror has become a global effort. Specifically for the U.S., we have been protected against these terrorist non-state actors because of the changes made to the domestic and international system. The change in domestic policy and priority has been crucial, as well as the unison of the UN's committees that monitor and limit new actors and threats.

Following patterns of the past and now looking into the future, we have seen a considerable change in power from the West to the East, alluding to Asia's economic emergence and rising hegemonic power. Up until recently, the main geographic focus of the world's counter-terrorism efforts have been primarily in the Middle East, however that has gradually been adjusting since Asia's rise in power. Not only is Asia, specifically China, an economic powerhouse (and threat) to the United States, they also impose the threat of cyberterrorism to the rest of the world. Despite the egotistical threat the US considers China to be, the rest of the world should be concerned as well. According to an interview conducted by NPR, the CIA is establishing a mission center that will focus its efforts on the rising power of China. China's advancements in technology have caused reason to believe that they are currently or will potentially use technology in order to incite more fear, impose their power and cyber-terrorize others across the world. Considering that the CIA is usually private about their goals and efforts, the future threats and actual definition of terrorism will be changing very shortly. All of this information causes an anticipated change to the international system in the near future, specifically to the rules and regulations over technology.

In conclusion, the post Cold-War era instituted an era of globalization and development of technology that has been proven to be an enabling factor to the rise of terrorism. After the attack on 9/11, the political, economic and security systems of the world have been forever changed, in efforts to defeat terrorism. Whether it be an increase in airport security or the gradual shift in power from the West to the East, the repercussions that have spilled into the past two decades have had an everlasting effect on not only the U.S., but other nations as well. Although terrorism is still prevalent in today's society, the international system, whether effective or not, has been and will continue to be developing as transnational terror organizations continue to develop as well.

## Citations

Bova, Russell. "How the World Works: A Brief Survey of International Relations, 3rd Edition." *Pearson*, 2021,  
<https://www.pearson.com/store/p/how-the-world-works-a-brief-survey-of-international-relations/P100003097149/9780134381565>.

Caporaso, James. "Paradigms of International Relations." *International Relations*: 2003,  
[http://faculty.washington.edu/caporaso/courses/203/notes/w1-paradigms\\_of\\_ir.html](http://faculty.washington.edu/caporaso/courses/203/notes/w1-paradigms_of_ir.html).

Davis, Marc. "The Impact of 9/11 on Business." *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 10 Sept. 2021,  
<https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0911/the-impact-of-september-11-on-business.aspx>.

Dewitt, David. "9/11, 10 Years on: How the Attacks Changed Global Governance." *Centre for International Governance Innovation*, 9 Sept. 2011,  
<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/911-10-years-how-attacks-changed-global-governance/>.

Global Memo. "The 9/11 Effect and the Transformation of Global Security." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2021,  
<https://www.cfr.org/councilofcouncils/global-memos/911-effect-and-transformation-global-security>.

Hoffman, Bruce. "How Has the Terrorism Threat Changed Twenty Years after 9/11?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2021,  
<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/how-has-terrorism-threat-changed-twenty-years-after-911>.

Patrick, Stewart. "The Unsung Success After 9/11: Multilateral Cooperation." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2011,  
<https://www.cfr.org/blog/unsung-success-after-911-multilateral-cooperation>.

Schaper, David. "It Was Shoes on, No Boarding Pass or ID. but Airport Security Forever Changed on 9/11." *NPR*, NPR, 10 Sept. 2021,  
<https://www.npr.org/2021/09/10/1035131619/911-travel-timeline-tsa>.

United Nations. "About Us | Security Council." *United Nations*, United Nations, 2021,  
<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/content/about-us-0>.

Wagner, Daniel. "Terrorism's Impact on International Relations." *Terrorism's Impact on International Relations | Expert Commentary | IRMI.com*, 2003,  
<https://www.irmi.com/articles/expert-commentary/terrorism-s-impact-on-international-relations>.