

The Prospects of Nuclear Terrorism

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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the creation of non-state Islamic militant organizations and the clash between US militarism and Islamic jihadists particularly Al-Qaeda. This study explains the use of terrorist activities by radical Islamic terrorist organization Al-Qaeda in pursuit of their ideological goals. However, the significance lies in how terrorists, particularly Al-Qaeda, seek guidance from regular armies handling nuclear forces to delegate launch to kill authority (empowered with the decision to use the nuclear device) to terrorists' foot soldiers? A brief section also discusses hypothetical scenarios of how Al-Qaeda may, take advantage of India's ignorance and join hands with insurgents to acquire nuclear material- from Indian nuclear plants. How Al-Qaeda can trigger nuclear war in South Asia? It also discusses the hypothetical scenario of terrorists' possession of nuclear weapons and their possible usage in various ways- against the US or its allies. The importance of the few aspects of hypothetical scenarios of nuclear terrorism has increased in the wake of bargaining between the US government and the Afghan Taliban for the release of the US detained soldiers. The study also focuses on lessons gained by Al-Qaeda from the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster.

Key Words: *Ideology, Conflict, Terrorism, United States, Al-Qaeda*

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Introduction

In the 21st century, the world has witnessed the rise of non-state terrorist organizations. These actors bear significance for two reasons, for example, i) these terrorist organizations have challenged teachings of the realist school of thought that only states are the primary actors in the international system. ii) Non-state actors are involved in carrying out terrorist activities across the globe therefore they have become part of strategic studies.

This study claims that terrorist organizations require attention because in certain ways their activities are similar to states. The first similarity stems from, for instance, these organizations maintain a propaganda wing similar to the ministry of information of any established government. Second terrorist organizations are generating revenue through drug trafficking, kidnappings for ransom collect extortion money and charity funds. Collected funds are utilized to sustain their resistance against the ruling government in their efforts to topple it. In organized states revenue collection is the duty of the ministry of finance. The genesis of these organizations and their activities can be best understood by Francis Fukuyama's famous writing, *The End of History*.¹ "Ideological evolution,"² asserts Fukuyama drives humans to continuously make efforts to create an ideal society free from internal challenges.

The Rise of Conservatives in Post 9/11 Era

Modern era conflicts are mostly ideologically driven to transform the status quo. Ideology is also playing an important role in the US. This study claims that neo-conservatism has played a dominant role in US foreign policy.³ Conservatives in the US want a world dominated by America. Conservatives want to implement an American variety of democracy across countries. After critically examining the conservatives' agenda this study claims that there are various types of conservatives including the traditional school, neo-conservatives and the neo-neo-conservatives with different policies, approaches and belief systems of the world. Conservatives remained

¹Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: 1992).

² Quoted in, Jacinta O'Hagan, *Conceptualizing the West in International Relations: From Spengler to Said* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 138.

³Inder Jeet Parmar, "A Neo-Conservative-Dominated US Foreign Policy Establishment?" in *the United States Foreign Policy and National Identity in the 21st Century*, ed. Kenneth Christie (New York: Routledge, 2008), 37.

suppressed during the cold war because of the presence of the Soviet Union. Despite their presence in the time of various US governments, this group could not implement its agenda i.e. to spread democracy to Eastern European states and the Middle East. Group's ambitions were capped because of the Soviet Union. Neo-Conservatives gained prominence in the post cold war era because there was no country to put a limit to US foreign policies. Neo-conservatives gained prominence during President H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton's era, for instance, due to US involvement particularly in the Middle East and later in Balkans' region. Neo-neo-conservatives pursued a more unilateral and militarist approach in the post 9/11 era. In this era radical Islam has emerged as the main challenge to US national security, national values, and liberal democratic principles.

This group, during the President George W. Bush-era comprised of top US officials including Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Armitage.⁴This influential group has also been called a web of webs, circle within circles, this study claims that the group functioned as a government within the government. Its members shared a similar belief system- the US should remain at the top of world affairs. The elite group surrounded President G. W. Bush and therefore influenced his foreign policies to a larger extent. The Bush administration's foreign policies were backed and implemented with the support of US military might i.e. pre-emptive and preventive strikes. Bush administration waged wars against states and terrorist organizations posing a challenge to the US. Al-Qaeda gained prominence in US foreign policy. It provided justifications to the US to wage war against Afghanistan, in 2001, carry out drone attacks in Pakistani tribal areas and Yemen to wipe out Al-Qaeda top leadership. Bush administration, this study claims, relied upon military might to resolve problems concerning US foreign policy and to achieve American objectives or if necessary secure US national interests.

In the post 9/11 era, neo-neo-conservatives took steps by overstepping the US constitution because the US declared war against Al-Qaeda. In such circumstances, the US Constitution authorizes the American President to take extra-judicial steps. US government acquired the assistance of the American media (print, electronic- radio, and TV), think tanks i.e. The American Enterprise

⁴Ibid, 42.

Institute and the Project for the New American Century, and universities to promote neo-neo-cons agenda.

Al-Qaeda's Objectives

The concept to fight for the glory of religion gave birth to Muslim extremist groups. However, Al-Qaeda received worldwide attention due to its methods of recruitment and innovation in launching attacks. Al-Qaeda is opposed to the man-made laws and wants to implement its brand of Sharia. It is evident from the following statement issued by its slain leaders. i.e. In December 2004, Al-Qaeda slain chief Osama Bin Laden categorically stated that democracies and constitutional governments are equally unacceptable (to Al-Qaeda) as they are manmade setups rather than the "law of God." In January 2005 Al-Zarqawi, slain Al-Qaeda leader in Iraq, declared "democracy as a rival religion to Islam."⁵ In terms of Islamic terrorist organizations i.e. Al-Qaeda has emerged leading terrorist groups of radical Muslims. Its declared objectives include the expulsion of infidels from Holy Lands of Muslims. Its second stated objective is to link together Muslim radical groups across the globe.⁶ Third, it aims to penetrate within Muslim populated areas to topple the central authority. Failure to fill the vacuum, according to Al-Qaeda leadership, would result in Un-Islamic groups' penetration which would undermine the cause of Muslim Ummah.⁷

Al-Qaeda in Pakistan

Perhaps Pakistani tribal areas were inhibited by Al-Qaeda leaders due to the vacuum. Furthermore, there were reports that Al-Qaeda operatives entered Libya. Al-Qaeda's Al Nusra Front in Syria is known for different names including Jabhat Fatah al-Sham after July 2016 and Al-Qaeda in Syria or Levant. Al-Qaeda's franchise in Yemen, known as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, received a major setback in January 2020. It was claimed that its leader Qassim al-Rimi, was killed in a US

⁵Christopher Blanchard, "Al-Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology," *Constitutional Research Service*, Washington, D.C, July 9, 2007, accessed April 19, 2014, http://tracking.tfxiq.net/in.php?kwd=al+qaeda%3A+statements+and+evolving+ideology+by+christopher+blanchard%2C+pdf&ref1=726576697a6572&ref2=4300x1015xPK&ref3=5539a5a1ef2546958e6202d6879d7953&capn=rv_u_i_meta_0001&uid=7212P%2F4BvkEidOL4FA%2FFPxZb4JVIFpiDVXwxykfJlevnav01OMhMI%2F8Dpdw9wRJt9R6XuFYtYepqDGVsEzRP7w.

⁶Gus Martin, *Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies* (London: SAGE, 2014): 173.

⁷Ryan Clarke, *Crime-Terror Nexus in South Asia: States, Security and Non-State Actors* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 155.

drone strike. Rimi received training in Afghanistan and tried to kill the American ambassador to Yemen. Al-Qaeda's franchise under Rimi has tried to attack the US and Europe and still wants to attack these areas.⁸

Al-Qaeda and its affiliate organizations posed critical security threats to Pakistan in the post 9/11 era. It successfully recruited foot soldiers, planted terrorist groups and enhanced allies' operational capabilities to target Pakistani armed forces.⁹The organization's potent affiliated group in Pakistan included Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Various religious and criminal groups allied the banner of TTP. Moreover, they fought against the Pakistani government to implement, according to one of their stated goals, their brand of Sharia (Islamic version). Pakistan, as per their belief, would have become a safer place. Other terrorist groups of Muslims want restoration of the Caliphate system. It will also help them in achieving the objective of Ummah.

The Islamic concept of Ummah in the West may be compared to, as defined by Fukuyama, "Universal Community of Mankind."¹⁰ Their strong belief is that their ideology has the inherited specialty to cure internal loopholes of the societies thus the world, after implementing their ideology, would become a better and safer place.

Nuclear Terrorism

Herman Kahn warned the international community of the hazards of nuclear weapons uses by saying it had to "think of the unthinkable."¹¹His threat perception can be further expanded by including the possible use of nuclear weapons particularly by non-state actors. Further, such use would have dire consequences for the victim state. Possibility of nuclear terrorism stems from the enormous resources (mention nuclear reactors spread across the globe) of highly enriched uranium,

⁸Rukmini Callimachi, Eric Schmitt and Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Strike at Leader of Qaeda in Yemen,"*The New York Times*, (January 31, 2010).

⁹Clarke, *Crime-Terror Nexus in South Asia*, 158.

¹⁰O'Hagan, *Conceptualizing the West in International Relations*, 138.

¹¹Anthony H. Cordesman, "Red Lines, Deadlines, and Thinking the Unthinkable: India, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea, and China," *CSIS*, accessed April 19, 2014, http://tracking.tfxiq.net/in.php?kwd=red+lines%2C+deadlines%2C+and+thinking+the+unthinkable%3A+india%2C+pakistan%2C+iran%2C+north+korea%2C+and+china%2C+pdf&ref1=726576697a6572&ref2=4300x1015xPK&ref3=5539a5a1ef2546958e6202d6879d7953&capn=rv_ui_meta_0001&uid=2e2bRmlXYGwAMoPG2pBjFG7bv9YPhS8YrJgvo7dmg%2FA1T6ATbiZzFoAsASso%2FeIfCD3%2FaYlouZEEEnKt7R%2FwkWQ.

plutonium, and other nuclear material and technology. Fears have been expressed over the poor security arrangement of nuclear facilities situated in former Soviet republics.¹² Non-state actors' quest to carryout nuclear terrorism leaves no doubt those traditional tools to curb nuclear proliferation need to be polished. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has adopted new techniques that require close support of the international community to effectively functions and deny the right to non-state actors from acquiring nuclear material. The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a fundamental tool kit against the spread of nuclear weapons. It empowers sovereign states to search for any aircraft, ship or other means of transportation on suspicions to control illicit nuclear trade.¹³ US is implanting effective tools with the support of local business fraternity, through Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, to halt the entry of illegal nuclear material in the US main homeland.¹⁴

Nuclear Terrorism threat to US National Security

Nuclear terrorism is considered as one of the potent threats to US national security. Fear that terrorists may use nuclear material date back to the cold war era. Such fears are evident from the national intelligence estimates of 1986 stating that minute (terrorists) groups if they get hold of nuclear material or weapon, would use it.¹⁵ Fear of nuclear terrorism was expressed by President George W. Bush and Presidential Candidate Senator John Kerry during their 2004 campaign for Presidential elections. Both feared that terrorists would use nuclear material or weapons if it falls in their hands.¹⁶ Coercive measures were used to overthrow governments, in Iraq and Libya, to deter threats of a weapon of mass destruction (WMD).¹⁷ US National Security Strategy of 2002

¹²Joseph Cirincione, "A New Non-Proliferation Strategy," *SAIS Review*, 25, No. 2, (Summer-Fall, 2005), 157.

¹³Tom Sauer, "The Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime in Crisis," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 18, No. 3, (2006), 335.

¹⁴Kenneth N. Luongo and Isabelle Williams, "The Nexus of Globalization and Next- Generation Nonproliferation," *The Nonproliferation Review*, 14, No. 3, (2007), 469.

¹⁵William Tobey, "Building A Better International Nuclear Security Standard," *US-Korea Institute*, (2012), 4.

¹⁶Transcript: First Presidential Debate, September 30, 2004, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/debateferee/debate_0930.html.

¹⁷Sverre Lodgaard, *Nuclear Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation: Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free- World?* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 80.

updated in 2006 ascertained the proliferation of nuclear proliferation as a prime threat to America.¹⁸ President Barrack Obama also expressed his resolve, in his speech delivered in Prague in May 2009, to make a nuclear-free world.¹⁹ In 2010, Obama expressed fears of nuclear terrorism stating that "the single biggest threat to US security, both short-term, medium-term and long-term" emanates from nuclear terrorism.²⁰ However, this situation would occur only if terrorists acquire and transport WMD to the US mainland or develop WMD in the US. The second-tier commander may also decide to launch a nuclear strike as he would have been delegated with the authority to possess and use the nuclear device if the situation requires their use.

If Al-Qaeda leadership would not have been targeted in Afghanistan, as David Albright has highlighted, it may have developed limited expertise to manufacture WMD.²¹ Perhaps the US visualized that Al-Qaeda from its bases in Afghanistan would launch a nuclear attack on US main homeland or its assets abroad. US forces' priority in Afghanistan had been to get hold of material obtained from Al-Qaeda sanctuaries and secure it. Data obtained was critically analyzed to access whether it contains information about possible development or attainment of nuclear weapons? i.e. General Tommy Franks, the then Commander of US Army in Afghanistan informed media that (US intelligence and armed forces) searched 100 sites including 50 suspected locations possibly utilized to produce WMD.²² US officials obtained data from hardcopies, hand notes, videos, and other documents. However, limited data concerning US interest was acquired perhaps Al-Qaeda leaders and operatives may have destroyed the valuable information.²³ There had been reports that after US operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, SEAL Team Six officials took a large cache of laptops hard-drives and other notes maintained by Osama Bin Laden. One can, therefore, speculate that US experts would have critically analyzed the data to access organisation's plans involving nuclear

¹⁸Sauer, "The Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime in Crisis," 335.

¹⁹David Cliff, Hassan Elbahtimy and Andreas Persbo, *Irreversibility in Nuclear Disarmament: Practical Steps against Nuclear Rearmament* (London: VERTIC, 2011), 10.

²⁰"U.S. President Barack Obama Warns of Nuclear Terrorism," *BBC News*, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8614695.stm>.

²¹David Albright, "Al-Qaeda's Nuclear Program: Through the Window of Seized Documents," *Policy Forum Online*, November 6, 2002, http://nautilus.org/archives/fora/Special-Policy-Forum/47_Albright.html#sect2.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

terrorism. Since leftover data was secured by Pakistani authorities, possibly by intelligence officials, Americans would have possibly contacted top-ranking Pakistani intelligence officials in this regard.

Al-Qaeda's Protracted Strategy to Carryout Nuclear Terrorism

In their attempt to highlight their complaints, agenda and achieve their goals, terrorists resort to using violence. One of the threats posed by these terrorists' to global peace is the possible use of nuclear weapons particularly by Al-Qaeda. Among terrorist organizations, Al-Qaeda is one of the most enthusiastic terrorist groups which want to acquire nuclear weapons/ material to carryout nuclear terrorism. Al-Qaeda can adopt a strategy to acquire nuclear material, but it will have to perhaps wait for a long period. Al-Qaeda can plant sleeping cells in various countries, near nuclear power plants, across the planet. Sleeping cells will be assigned with a special task to wait for an appropriate time when any of the nuclear power plants will be hit with a natural calamity. Since the protection layer, of the devastated nuclear power plant, will also be weakened and local administration would be engaged in providing relief services to the masses in the area it will be easy for Al-Qaeda sleeping cells to operate and acquire nuclear material. The international community should analyze this scenario and remain prepare to deal with such a situation.

Measure or protection layer has been drawn to halt the spread of nuclear material from falling into wrong hands. Measures have been adopted to detect illegal trafficking of nuclear material and confiscate it.²⁴Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) also enjoys a consensus that the proliferation of nuclear weapons should be stopped and effective measures, few mentioned above, should be utilized in this regard. Effective implementation of nuclear safeguards has helped the international community to timely detect the illicit nuclear activities and save itself from hazards of nuclear terrorism and blackmailing. Few instances of, state involvement in, cheating includes Libya, Iraq, Iran and North Korea. It is pertinent to mention that all these states, being members of the NPT carried out illegal activities in violation of the treaty's statutes. Article II of the treaty forbids Non-Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS) from acquiring nuclear assistance leading to the development of acquisition of strategic weapons.²⁵It is in this background the international community is

²⁴Danielle Peterson et al., eds. "Export Controls and International Safeguards: Strengthening Nonproliferation through Interdisciplinary Integration," *Nonproliferation Review*, 15, No. 3, (November 2008), 515.

²⁵Sauer, "The Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime in Crisis," 334.

making efforts to avert non-state actors from gaining access to WMD or crude nuclear devices. Non-state actors are employing all possible efforts in their quest to make their dream come true, by carrying out nuclear terrorism.

Nuclear Weapons Cannot Deter Nuclear Terrorism

During the entire course of Cold War nuclear weapons were used as a deterrent force.²⁶ However, the renewed threat of the possibility of falling nuclear weapons into the hands of terrorists is that nuclear weapons cannot deter terrorists from using these weapons²⁷ because terrorist's communication and command (nerve) centers remain unidentifiable. Further, they do not have established government setup,²⁸ which is an additional feature of their ability to act or operate against a well-established deterrent force. Sovereign states, on the other hand, would be in highly vulnerable situations vis-à-vis terrorists if, any of the terrorist groups or any splinter (terrorist) group, get control over WMD. Likely scenarios, of terrorist possession of nuclear devices, include the transfer of either nuclear device or fissile material by a nuclear state. Tom Sauer has highlighted this threat in his article. To shed light on such a scenario he has termed North Korea, Iran and Pakistan as politically unstable states and internationally not good citizens.²⁹ However, to save the world from nuclear terrorism nuclear material across the globe should be protected. Terrorists would try to acquire it, as asserted by Joseph Cirincione, wherever they find nuclear facilities as an easy target.³⁰

Indian Nuclear Complexes Attracts Al-Qaeda

Before proceeding further Hindu religious fundamentalists should also be glanced due to the activities of Hindu extremists targeted against the Indian-Pakistani Muslim population in India i.e. Hindu religious extremists demolished ancient Babri Masjid under the Umbrella of BJP, Indian

²⁶Dipankar Banerjee, "Addressing Nuclear Dangers: Confidence Building Between India-Pakistan," *India Review*, 9, No. 3, (July- September 2010), 359.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Tom Sauer, "A Second Nuclear Revolution: From Nuclear Primacy to Post-Existential Deterrence," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32, No. 5, (October 2009), 753.

³⁰Cirincione, "A New Non-Proliferation Strategy," 158.

serving military Colonel was apprehended for his involvement in Samjhota Express Carnage, carrying Pakistani passengers to Pakistan. Indian religious fundamentalists consider sub-continent as a single entity, they do not believe in partition, and therefore want reunification. Colonel Prohit's involvement requires attention whether Hindu extremists can, with support of inside elements, acquire nuclear devices? Furthermore, whether they will use it against their arch-rivals Muslims living in Pakistan? Or they would use the strategic weapon to blackmail Pakistani state?

India is faced with counterinsurgency operations. Al-Qaeda terrorists may join hands with insurgent networks operating in Northern Indian. Attacks, on Indian nuclear facilities, can be planned and executed. The consequences of attacks on Indian nuclear facilities can hypothetically be explained in the following ways. Firstly, terrorists after acquiring nuclear material would use it to spread nuclear radiation. Second, as it is evident from past incidents i.e. Pakistan was held responsible for 2001 terrorists attack Indian parliament, 2008 Mumbai attacks and recent Pulwama suicide bombing in February 2019. Consequentially, Pakistan would be alleged for sponsoring terrorism against India. The case against Pakistan will be pleased to declare it as a rough state with international support. Third, India may operationalize its conventional force by launching the Land Warfare Doctrine orchestrated in December 2018. Fourth, after nuclear material usage by terrorists, India may launch a nuclear attack, in the light of its nuclear doctrine which calls for massive retaliation in response to chemical, nuclear or biological weapons, on Pakistan. Implementation of the third and fourth scenarios would result in India-Pakistan's total war.

Indian security planners, dealing with nuclear policies, should, therefore, decide to limit fissile material production. Likely effects of Indian decision to protect nuclear complexes and reduction in fissile material will be,

- (a) Chances of falling nuclear material into the hands of terrorists would be lower, India, therefore, can help itself to avert nuclear terrorism on Indian soil.
- (b) New Delhi's vertical proliferation and qualitative changes compel China and Pakistan to make qualitative and quantitative improvements in their nuclear forces.

(c) Indian decision to limit fissile material production would result in slowing the pace of arms expenditure,³¹ both states can upgrade the lives of their poor masses.

(d) Likely chances that non-state actors would bring both India-Pakistan to the brink of war would also be reduced.

(e) Accidental nuclear attack, as a result of misperception or miscalculation, would also be lower.

(f) Indian reliance on nuclear forces dissuades China to implement Article VI of the nonproliferation regime (NPT) therefore the dream of NPT universalization is far from becoming a reality.

Nuclear Blackmail vs. Nuclear Terrorism

Other possible reactions of terrorists, after either gaining control or developing a nuclear weapon, may be anticipated in the following three ways. The first response may be to demand the release of high-value terrorists detained by various governments-(It would be nuclear blackmail, as wrong hands would be imposing their ill-wills on their opponents. It is for this reason deemed necessary to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons). Some of the high-value terrorists include Abu Zubaydah, according to November 2013 reports he is detained at Guantanamo Bay. Zubaydah was captured in a joint operation carried by Pakistani and US authorities in March 2002 in Faisalabad, Pakistan.³² He was operations chief of Al-Qaeda, an expert in using various explosive material, sophisticated weaponry, terrorists' recruiter and close aide of deceased Bin Laden. Abu Zubaydah is also alleged of supporting Khalid Sheikh Muhammad's planner of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US.³³ Abu Faraj al Libi was captured in 2005 he is currently detained at Guantanamo Bay. Abu

³¹S. Paul Kapur, "More Posture than Review: Indian Reactions to the US Nuclear Posture Review," *Nonproliferation Review*, 18, No. 1, (March 2011), 71.

³²Jamie Tarabay, "The Case Against Abu Zubaydah," *AlJazeera America*, November 7, 2013, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/11/5/the-case-againstabuzubaydah.html>.

³³*Ibid.*

Faraj has served as a close associate of deceased Bin Laden and Al Zawahiri. Furthermore, he served in the capacity of Al-Qaeda Operation's chief in Iraq.³⁴

Second, launch to kill option, by a terrorist, can either be authorized by the top terrorists' leadership or second-tier commander. Herman Kahn has asserted that the dispute or conflict between two states (in this study non-state actor) would lead them to raise the escalation ladders if they share a recently hostile history.³⁵ If one applies this scenario to American- Al-Qaeda rivalry it can result in dangerous consequences. It is believed that Al-Qaeda operatives' would use WMD or crude nuclear weapons. Seeds of this rivalry, from Al-Qaeda's perspective, have already been rooted in President Bush's declaration of war against Al-Qaeda, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the US, and later killing top Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. The overall situation for escalation is ripe. Both share a recent hostile history and both are arch-rivals, therefore, nuclear weapons can be used against the United States.

The decision to pull the nuclear trigger can be made by terrorists due to the fear that their location has been traced by the challenged state-during the course of negotiation. Such use of nuclear weapons may be made due to the fear of countermeasures of the challenged government or traditional use it or lose it a phenomenon. It may be termed as "retaliatory action."³⁶ Retaliation will be aimed to punish the home government for launching an attack against terrorists to neutralize the threat of nuclear terrorism. It is pertinent to mention that the victim state, of nuclear terrorism, despite maintaining assured second-strike capability will be ineffective. The second strike assured nuclear forces will not work against terrorists .i.e. terrorists do not maintain a declared state and if non-state actors are religiously motivated they will prefer to die in achieving their cause.³⁷ The concept of martyrdom is not new i.e. Hasan bin al-Saba raised the army of organized assassins in the name of "radical Ismaili version of Islam." His followers infiltrated from the mountains of Northern Persia to urban centers of Persia, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine. To achieve their objectives

³⁴"The Guantanamo Docket,"*The New York Times*, accessed April 10, 2014,<http://projects.nytimes.com/guantanamo/detainees/10017-abu-faraj-al-libi#>.

³⁵Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2010),52.

³⁶Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military Technology and International Relations* (Hampshire: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1987),135.

³⁷Sauer, "A Second Nuclear Revolution," 755.

their methodology had been either to kill or be killed.³⁸ Their methodology has left a profound impact on religiously-motivated terrorist groups particularly Muslims.

Pakistan's nuclear and security establishments have learned several lessons from these incidents. It has beefed up the security of its nuclear installations. The recruitment process has been made foolproof to avoid possible induction of individuals keeping sympathies for a particular religious group. Strict scrutiny process will erode the possibility that rough elements may seek inside support concerning technical know-how or transfer of fissile material. Additional techniques to counterterrorism can be planting/ mushrooming of as many agents as possible. This technique was adopted by Israeli counterterrorism agency Shin Bet to eliminate terrorism. It was an impressive technique wherein the Israeli agency reduced the level of violence from 20 attacks per week to 1 per year.

Third, the possible reaction may be to use a nuclear device, without making demands or creating a hostage-like situation, as soon as it is possessed by the terrorists. The decision to carry out terrorist strikes, involving nuclear or fissile material, may be made in hesitate. Several factors can influence terrorist decision i.e. advancement of technology has enabled states to detect nuclear or fissile material, which therefore cannot be transferred without the state's support. If, terrorists somehow steal or take control of radioactive material it can, as mentioned earlier, be easily detected. Due to the psychological pressure, intense situations and heightened security terrorists may not be able to achieve their potential targets. However, the use of a crude nuclear device would or nuclear bomb would cause considerable damage it would also gain significant media attention. Perhaps, after the 9/11 attacks, terrorists will now never be able to cause huge destruction by using traditional conventional means. They have used all possible means to cause damage and gain the attention of the media. Al-Qaeda, under its new chief perhaps has not carried out significant achievement. The organization's silence may be interpreted as its leadership is on the run due to the disturbance created by the drone strikes. However, Al Zawahiri, the new commander of the organization perhaps may be planning a masterpiece, involving nuclear material, to catch the world by surprise and shock it.

³⁸Martin, *Essentials of Terrorism*, 141.

Conclusion

Enormous material has been produced on nuclear terrorism and Al-Qaeda, which is regarded as a desperate non-state actor, attempting to acquire nuclear material. The agenda behind this quest is to implement its nefarious design, to hit its target with nuclear crude device or weapon. However, the landscape of probe, to avert the possible scenario of nuclear terrorism, should be broadened. The international community in its effort to avoid nuclear terrorism should keep strict check and balance on all terrorist groups irrespective of their religion, race, color, or creed, due to their technical expertise. Al-Qaeda analysts/ operatives can dig this vacuum and hire their services, to transport nuclear material/ technology at the target site, by offering monetary benefits.

Governments should also educate and train their masses to keep an eye on their surroundings as effective counterinsurgency can only be pursued with public support. Once public sympathies to terrorists are denied, as a result, terrorist recruitment will also be declined which will effectively reduce the chances of terrorism including the likely scenarios involving nuclear terrorism.