Terrorism Based on Ideology: A Framework for Analysis

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Abstract

Traditionally, the sociology scholars tend to ignore or underestimate the role played by ideology is social phenomena, and this tendency can be seen among the political sciences scholars as well. Robert Jervis believes that one of the reasons for weakness of analysis of terrorism based on ideology is ignorance of this case in texts and literature of liberal arts and specifically political sciences and international relations: "Terrorism based on ideology has created some challenges for modern political sciences because less attention has been paid to discussions related to ideology, and the experts in this realm are less interested in them". But the evolutions during the last decades of the 20th century and such events as the Islamic revolution of Iran increased the level of attention to this forgotten factor. In fact, for the first time a revolution with religious and ideological components happened across the world that surprised the thinkers in this scope and caused them to consider religion and ideology as two influential variables in their calculations. The present paper attempts to theoretically study the manner of formation of terrorism based on ideology.

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Introduction

Ideology has been defined in different forms by scholars. Mark Juergensmeyer considers the emphasis on common experience of individuals in specific societies as the most important factor existing in ideology, (Jervis, 2002: 37). Jonathan For suggests that ideology has four specific functions: to create a value-centered attitude toward different problems, to create a base for action, based on those values; to create organizational loyalty toward the group; and to produce legitimacy for individuals and organizations and their actions. Meanwhile, ideology has the duty to create order and power among individuals as well as feeling of tranquility among them, (Fox, 1998: 43). Although in the literature of terrorism there is disagreement on almost every case, and consensus rarely appears, the feature completely clear is that not all terrorists have ideological motivations. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that ideology is one of central bases of new terrorism, which accordingly can be more dangerous; suicide terrorism as a major branch of new terrorism has reached an increasing growth during recent years. Although suicide terrorism constitutes of only three percent of terroristic actions between 1980 and 2003, it has caused the amazing number of 48 percent of murders during that time period, (Pape, 2005: 6). Some researchers believe that generally, the ideological terrorism has a direct relation with suicide terrorism, while others reject this idea, (Bloom, 2005: 215). According to a comparative study, the suicide terroristic actions taking place during 1980 to 2003, only less than half of them had ideological roots, (Bloom, 2005: 210). Nevertheless, the number of victims of suicide terrors based on ideology is higher than the number of victims of secular suicide terrors. As a whole, ideology can enhance suicide terrorism in the form of individual as well as organizational, yet it should be noticed that ideological

components are clearly visible in both, secular terrorism and ideology-based terrorism in order to achieve their ideals. Another issue related to terrorism based on ideology, is the suicide terrorism which has been seen in premodern terrorism such as Hashashin and Sygaries. But in the new terrorism, this form is extensively followed. In other words, the difference between new suicide terrorism and other forms is that it takes place systematically within the framework of an organization and group, while in the past, it usually had an individual form, (Merari, 2000). Although suicide actions are conducted in both, ideological, and non-ideological terrorism, its importance and frequency is higher in religious cases. Of course, regarding effectiveness, this type of terrorism has been more successful than other types. In the past, the operators of such attack were young people, but nowadays, it has changed. On the other side, the sex composition of the operators also has changed, (D. Zedalis, 2004). Employment of women in suicide terrorism has faced some challenges according to different religions, but during recent years, regarding the higher possibility of camouflaging and unexpectability, and more public pity toward women, employment of women has remarkably increased. On the other side, terrorists cannot relinquish the high number of women in their groups, (Ramachandran, 2004). Another factor contributing to more complication of behavior of terrorists is the technologic advancements. Tools and materials used due to those advancements have increased. In Pakistan also, we have been witnessing the increase of such operations during the last two years, through which they use suicide techniques of terrorism in tribal disputes. In the South Eastern Asia also, this process has remarkably increased. During recent years, subgroups such as Jondollah have used this way of terrorism in some cases inside countries. Certainly this approach doesn't have an extensive

background. In fact, it takes roots from other groups such as Salafids and Vahabids in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The religious and ideological explanation of these groups causes young people to easily become trapped by the groups and lose their lives for them. On the other hand, it should be noted that media have played an undeniable role in instillation of existence of an ideological relation between terrorism and ideology.Suicide terroristic operations are often attributed to ideological radical and fundamentalist individuals with idealistic attitudes by media, (Richardson, 2006: 117). After the cold war the form of emergence of ideological upraising remarkably changed. During that period, ideological tribal and racial movements and supports based on specific identities highly increased. This case was ignored by many secular thinkers. During that period a lot of attempts were taken in the direction of modernization and elimination of dependence of some societies on the West, and this approach led to the enforcement of ideological approaches. On the other hand, many values and traditions went under the invasion of globalism, contributing to an extensive alienation and frustration in societies. For example, in the United States of America the rightist ideological movement's formation was formed in opposition to the public distrust in anti-moralistic operations of the government. In Christianity also ideological radical attitudes were formed in USA after the Second World War through which missionaries and Christians warned about racial intercourse and the intrigue of Jews, and considered the Christian identity as being in danger and as a result, the radicalistic and hostile movements were created, (Barkun, 1997: 4). Magnus Ranstorp believes in the presence of relation between the formation of the ideological awareness and the process of globalization, "The rapid overthrow of traditional, cultural, and social attachments among and between different

societies as a result of globalization, along with the historical heritage and political suppression, as well as economic injustice, and social gaps and restlessness among radical religious communities contribute to the formation of extensive movements as the consequents of feeling of instability, vulnerability, and unexpectedness of the present and future", (Ranstorp, 1996: 45-46). Regarding these explanations we have been witnessing the expansion of different religions across diverse places in the world. For instance, Islam was radicalized in opposition to Westernizing and anti-Western movements expanded in different forms. This problem, accompanied with failing states in the Middle-East contributed to intensity of radicalism in some groups. On the other hand, in a condition those governments became unable to give service to their people, the terroristic groups attempted to provide people with those services in order to obtain legitimacy and introduce those governments as inefficient. Terrorism based on ideology has some serious threatening toward governments as opposed to secular terrorism. Ideological terrorism usually seeks systematic changes in governments because it takes under question the intellectual base of governments. The ideological terrorism doesn't follow the replacement of state-nations by new ones; rather, it attacks the foundation of state-nations, (Kumar Das, 2004: 247).

1. Theoretical Approach toward the Impression of Ideology on Terrorism

Generally speaking, three different theoretical approaches can be mentioned in relation to the role of ideology in terrorism as follows: primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism. Primordialists believe that cultural similarities and differences contribute to convergence and divergence among nations and governments. Accordingly, different tribal, religious, lingual,

and… lead to formation of feeling of unity among the individuals within groups so that they focus on antagonism, and ultimately resort to violence. Other groups and sects with similar features try to put aside their disputes in order to create a single power against enemies. This, contributes to emergence of extensive straggles among groups and ultimately terrorism appears. Primordialists suggest that many non-Western governments try to eliminate the effects of cold war on their societies and even to separate elites who are under the influence of the West. They also attempt to set aside the secularism originating from the time of cold war and the Western civilization, and to produce a new identity for themselves by resorting to their suppressed ideology and traditions. They suggest that serious disputes will emerge in multicultural societies such as Bosnia, Indonesia, Nigeria, or Sudan among rival cultures, and thus, internal conflicts and wars will begin, finally contributing to the fall of their entire countries, or at least, one culture will dominate upon others or conflicts become persistent among them. On the other hand, in such a condition, it is possible that a third party supports a specific subculture and makes the conditions more complicated, or probably another government intervenes, other civilizations emerge, and the conflicts continue. Generally, according to this theory, struggles have roots in cultural and perceptional differences. Other factors such as dissimilarity of traditions, ideology, and world view in diverse groups inside a country along with some facilitating conditions lead to violence, and in its the worst form, terrorism.

The second group is the thinkers in the scope of instrumentalism, who believe that divergence in ideological traditions and their world view is not the reason for terrorism and political disputes. In fact, they don't deny the importance of the role played by ideological movements and the increase of their number at the present, rather, they consider this condition as the

consequence of economic, social, and political inequality, and injustice among nations. For this reason,they don't believe that terroristic operations originate from ideological differences, rather, they suggest that the major factor of such operations is the political disputes, as well as unequal distribution of power and wealth among internal groups. This group believes that, internally, ideology becomes radicalized in societies when economy comes to stagnation, societies face divergence, or governments fall.

Individuals also incline toward ideology to find tranquility when they are exposed to mental and physical threats and poverty, or become marginalized. In these conditions ideology is employed as an instrument to relieve pains of individuals. On the other side, some elites who criticize the status quo, attempt to mobilize displeased individuals, using ideology in order to obtain political advantages. They motivate people against specific individuals or specific operations by introducing their opponents as "enemies", and by resorting to some ideological concepts. Such processes can be seen in rich countries, less than in poor or underdeveloped countries. Ted Robert Gurr writes on this case: "It is difficult to find the roots of ethnical-political disputes, and one cannot easily attribute them to a specific factor. In fact, such factors as historical hostility, or ideological divergence, are highlighted mainly because the leaders employ them in the direction of mobilization of individuals and groups. In other words, those factors are not the main reasons for dispute", (Fuller, 1995: 145-158). Instrumentalists believe that leaders and elites attract the accompaniment of people by instrumentally employing sacred traditions, and ethnical-ideological, and cultural cases that are highly present in all societies. But it must be noted that merely the presence of such ideological concepts cannot act as the motivators of terroristic and volitional operations, rather, they need the existence of

economic, social, and political gaps in the society. In other words, in a society with different difficulties, leaders can employ the ideological factor. In this condition, the relationship between ideology and violence is not of its direct type. On the other hand, instrumentalists point to the disputes and struggle among those countries, to prove their claims, that are ideologically similar. The tribal disputes in Somali or the genocides in Ruanda are instances of such conflicts. What is visible in those aggressive operations is the competition of local elites who resort to any attempt in order to obtain power. Joseph Ney suggests on this case "We are not witnessing the formation of a new and coherent order, rather, some kind of divergence and localization is happening that does not follow the logic of civilizational war of Huntington, rather it originates from slight differences and self-conceits.".

In other words, little distinctions among groups contribute to conflicts and terrorism, rather than extensive disputes; as an instance, the disputes among Shiites and Sonnies or between Catholics and Protestants will be more important, (Hasenclever, 2000: 643-646). As a whole, instrumentalists suggest that, experimental evidence cannot prove the hypothesis given by primordialists on the presence of direct impact of ideological power on the formation of terrorism. Belief in a transcendental and Godly origin associated with specific political, social, and social conditions, is of high importance in the formation of terroristic operations. On the other hand, the power produced by ideological mobilization has a direct relationship with the role played by elites and leaders of any society. As mentioned above, in international relations system, no objective and practical instance of civilizational and cultural coalition has come to existence within a specific scope. Nevertheless, instrumentalists suggest that arrival of ideology in conflicts will cause their atmosphere to become more complicated and more

serious. According to this approach, some terroristic operations that happened in Iran after the Islamic revolution by such groups as Forghan, and Hypocrites(Monafeghin) can be explained. Certain interpretations of a single ideology in the direction of interests of elites and leaders of these operations have been the factor of the activities of such groups. The third theoretical approach on the relation between ideology and terrorism lies between the two above-mentioned theories, based on constructivism. Constructivists consider social conflicts and terrorism as the product of the knowledge structure such as ideology, ethnics, nationalism and soon. These structures that consist of perceptions, imaginations, social common knowledge, create concepts of "self" and "others" on the base of value-centered concepts for actors influencing on their strategic choices, (Hasenclever, 2000: 647). For example, the knowledge structures help us differentiate friends from enemies in any specific struggle. This differentiation has direct impression on the manner of management of that struggle. Constructivists and primordialists have two common thinking ways:

1) Both of them believe that power and benefits play a fundamental role to explain politics. Although sometimes critics ignore this case.Constructivist never deny the role of individual and material motivations in social behavior of man. What constructivists pay attention to is that power and interests have roots in knowledge structures that give meaning to it, (Hasenclever, 2000: 648).

2) Both of them consider the role of political leaders as important. Both suggest that terrorism is not formed by itself and in vacuum. Terroristic extensive operation comes to existence only when leaders find the only way to achieve their goals in perfect mobilization of groups in order to establish their strategies. Without presence of determined leaders, groups may attempt

to riot, but they cannot make a systematic attempt. On the other hand, without mobilization of groups, leaders won't be able to control and organize terroristic operations. Whenever leaders consider terroristic operations as useful for their purpose, they employ ideological traditions in order to motivate and encourage people to introduce their own actions as legitimate. On the other hand, Constructivists are not in agreement with Instrumentalists in some directions. For example, Instrumentalists suggest that leaders can attempt to mobilize people and groups and explain their own tasks by manipulating ideological traditions, while Constructivists emphasize that ideological traditions are inter mental structures with certain life time that differ in different social and discoursal conditions. According to Vent those traditions are not separable from the perception of agents who apply them. For this reason, they can only have limited impression on those traditions and interpretations to motivate groups. In other words, the interpretation of them has a specific framework that not everybody can cope with it without having specialized capabilities. In such conditions, some opposing approaches also may appear that represent interpretations against the perception of political elites. For instance, in conditions that leaders ask people to become ready to participate in a war, some elites may introduce it as opposed to God's will. It is the audience who decide in the final analysis. Constructivists consider ideology as an intervening variable that influences the behavioral choices of individuals during a conflict. Accordingly, the impact of ideology on terrorism can be important; from one side ideology can intensify terroristic operations by explanation of armed, rough operations, while from the other side it can reduce the roughness of those operations by rejecting violence, (Hasenclever, 2000: 648-649). Regarding the above-mentioned theories, and taking the theory represented by

Constructivists on the relation between ideology and terrorism, and with emphasis on the role of ideology as an intervening variable, employing the theory of Jurgensmeyer on violence ideology, we will try to answer the question of relation between ideology and terrorism.

2. The Relation between Ideology and Terrorism

Ideology brings the feeling of tranquility and meaningfulness to the lives of individuals and societies. It represents hope, virtue, and loyalty among individuals. Of course, it may sometimes contribute to rough operations, in the direction of protection of ideological values. Some groups with religious ideology show reflection to the invasion of so-called pagan enemies toward their sanctities. These reflections are generally more intense than that of secular ideologies, (Juergensmeyer, 2002: 151). Some scholars, who study on the role of ideology in the formation of terrorism, suggest that ideology is independent variable that can enhance violence. Ideology plays the role of motivating and mobilizing people. Nevertheless, the relation between ideology and terrorism is very complicated and it is not easy to understand. Jurgensmeyer considers the ideological violence as part of the universal struggle between good and evil, happening in a real time and place, and in many cases the people involved in it, resort to some ideologies in order to explain their own tasks, (R. Pillar, 2003: 65). Another base of violence is the imagination of being besieged by outsiders and enemies. In ideological societies, this feeling is frequently present that their ideological foundations are being attacked, and there is a continuous threat against them, (Ranstorp, 2002: 130). The concept of being besieged among extremists sometimes originates from the need to separate themselves from the outside world, for example Salafids define a two-fold world of themselves and others as the border between purity and filthiness. Those delimitations cause terrorists to

allow themselves to physically eliminate others, because in their viewpoint, they aren't worthy of living and should be eliminated. This thinking way originates from some universal dialectical thinking that has roots in fight of believers against pagans, order against disorder, justice against injustice and soon. This two fold worldview contributes to facilitation of complete fighting against enemy and can lead to immense violence, (Venzke, 2003: 13). Ii other words, in this viewpoint, reality cannot be understood, rather, it is a continuous identity meaning that if something does not seem as reality, so it is undoubtedly unreal, thus coexistence of reality and unreal would be impossible. As results, the followers of this ideology will continue fighting until the complete elimination of enemies. This type of interpretations and explanations are visible among some groups who are fighting against the Islamic system. Jondollah, pointing to its Salafid Islamic and radical teachings, defines itself as opposed to the Shiite government in the Islamic Republic of Iran, so that it is willing even to kill the innocent Sonnies in order to achieve its goals. On the other hand, ideology can help rough operations using its capability to attract loyalty of individuals. Raya port believes that ideology can act as the factor of loyalty and commitment of individuals toward their group so that it has a higher level of ability to mobilize individual comparing to any government. The ideology-based terrorism believes in the presence of an ideal reality on the earth. A salient instance of that case is the case of Amo Shinrikio group (the superior reality) in Japan that was established by Soko Asahara in 1987. Asahara's aim was to create an ideal society in order to correct the present corrupted society by establishing his group. In fact, he was determined to establish the Shambhala kingdom as an ideal society consisting of individuals who have obtained spiritual power. In 1989 Asahara could spread his terroristic operations by

establishing companies and attracting money and obtaining exemptions from governmental inspection. The ideological inclinations of this group originate from Buddhism, associated with a mixture of East and West mystical beliefs. The leaders of Aom Shinrikio believe that man can obtain some degree of knowledge and awareness. They also believe in God of Hinduism, Shiva. The importance of Shiva is in that he is the god of destruction, and all destructive operations can be attributed to him, (Sopko, 1995). The ideological violence can, on the other hand result from all religions that have superiority feeling toward others. In this direction Christianity is not an exception to the rule, because some believe that secularistic components such as human-right concepts, democracy, free trade, and… have penetrated into Christianity and the Western governments use them to impose their ideologies to non-Christian and even Christian nations. Also many scholars suggest that terrorism has only political goals and employ ideology merely to explain their operations. As a whole, for many terrorists, ideology can act as a tool to achieve their goals. In other words, ideology, organizations, and ideological rituals are all mechanisms to facilitate the consequences of terroristic operations, (Jurgensmeyer, 2004: 34-38). Generally, ideology can facilitate terroristic tasks through four main ways as follows:

1) Determining the scope of conflict and dispute

Although ideology often is not the main cause of terroristic operations, it acts as a tool for explanation of some political disputes. In other words, terrorists define their disputes within an ideological framework instead a political framework. This, causes some followers of terroristic groups to sacrifice themselves to achieve their goals. In other words, some individuals replace their personal dreams by superior benefits to exalt their goals, and consequently, they do anything to achieve their objectives. The more

terrorists are successful in this transition, the easier they can mobilize individuals in the direction of their goals, (Jurgensmeyer, 2004: 34-38). As an example, groups such as Hypocrites (Monafeghin), and Jondollah act against the Islamic Republic while Taleban and Alghaedeh are active in such countries as Afghanistan.

2) Legitimization of rough operations

Ideology can facilitate terroristic goals by spiritual explaining and legitimizing of its operations, in order to make them easy to understand and accept by others. Thus, terrorists explain their operations in a two-fold framework consisting of fighting between good and bad or truth and evil. They consider their enemies as illegitimate and satanic while introduce their own operations as legitimate and lawful. In other words, they try to spread antipathy toward others in their group. This inclination is completely visible even among secular terrorists, so that they attempt to excommunicate other sects and groups and conduct suicide operations against them. This can be seen among Hinduism against Budaism, (Brooks, 2002: 18-20).

3) Determining final award for followers

Ideology is considered not only as the factor or legitimization, representing superior dimensions to terroristic operations, but also determines some awards for their fighters. This can be witnessed among all terroristic groups who are based on specific ideologies. As an instance, the Indian Siks define their final reward in the form of ideological experience originating from the conflict itself, and their understanding of a participation greater than the presence of individuals. On the other hand, ideology points to the eternal reward and a valuable repayment for its followers. This makes it possible to

explain the ideological terroristic operations as reasonable, (Lincoln, 2003: 98).

4) Symbolization and creation of rites

The most important role played by ideology in the formation of terrorism is helping to encourage individuals through ideological rites and symbols that have the capability to gather and mobilize individuals under a single flag. All terroristic groups face the challenge of formation of single identity for individuals with personal social, different characteristics. Ideology can create this function in a good manner for terroristic groups. Anthropologists believe that components that are based on faith and idea, such as symbols, rites, and ideological organizations can play role, more than any other factor, in the formation of collective commitment. Thus, it is not surprising to witness the formation of such rites even among secular terroristic groups. Regarding these concepts, members of groups is willing to sacrifice himself in the way of religious and ideological goals of the group. On the other hand, the ideological ideals and induction of eternity to champions, causes the members to be encouraged toward presence and action in a specific group. For this reason, groups that take suicide actions enhance the legends related to the immolation of individuals and focus on them as essential for the prosperity of their nations, (Matthew, 2007: 267- 283). Finally, the formation process of terrorism based on ideology can be explained as follows:

The first stage originates from difficulties that, according to terrorists, are present within the societies. With their specific interpretations on diverse difficulties of the society, terrorists consider the functioning of governments as the cause of backwardness of people or other group in ethnical, religious, lingual grounds, or introduce governments as the factor of suppression, and

thus, through some attempts, try to improve those deviations, and try all probable choices in this direction. In the second stage their normal choices come to a dead end. In this stage, they come to the conclusion that there is no effective resolution to the existing problems. Here, individuals may enter political groups or specific social movements and follow their operations in the framework of those groups and movements. Failure of them in this direction eventually can make them frustrated, in such a way that they consider the universe as meaningless and take them to the third stage. The third stage is the time of satanization of enemies and the beginning of the fight. Now hardships take the form of absolute evil, and ideology gives the final resolution that is fight against evil or enemies. Frustrated individuals in this stage consider the "Satan" as the only factor of their failure, and employing ideological teachings get ready to fight against him.The fourth stage is the stage of representation of the symbolic power of that ideology. In this period individuals try to arise against evil employing power symbols. This stage may consist of demonstrations and even change of officials and governments and in extreme cases can consist of terroristic operations, (Juergensmeyer, 2000: 185). In fact, the ideology-based approach of terrorism believes that the beginning point of terrorism is the time when it finds itself under the invasion, besiege, or humiliation, while all common ways of preventing from them seems to be closed. In such conditions the prelude of creation of extremist sub-cultures is provided, within which, excited and suppressed members give up all normal paths of political and social activities of religious and non-religious traditions for the benefit of radicalism. Those sub-cultures have two duties: teaching new viewpoints that explain extremist positions, and representing skills necessary to apply those positionings. Of course,the mere emergence and growth of extremist

sub-cultures doesn't mean that the terroristic groups have been created, but it is one condition that prepares grounds for their growth. With preparation of other conditions including further radicalization of the culture for internal or external reasons, the environment becomes more highly intemperate, and preludes and "raw materials" for terrorism are prepared. In other words, extremist sub-cultures need only one intellectual and organizational mutation to become terrorists. In fact, they accept the same values and norms as terrorists do, they have the same political and historical background as terrorists have, but, due to bottlenecks and dead ends that their culture is facing, and due to failure of common resolutions they represent more irreconcilable conclusions that, in their viewpoint, can achieve the final goal. They find resolutions in resorting to offbeat ways along with rejecting conciliation and conservatism. Thus concerning the formation of terrorism, concentric circles can be imagined within which, the public culture of oppressed groups, extremist sub-cultures (ideological or secular), and terroristic groups are located inside each other and each inner circle is fed by its outer circle or has interaction with it, and receives spiritual and material support, and at the same time separates its own share, and pursues its own extremist positions to prepare itself moral patterns and practical skills. Therefore the retaining wall between these circles has some porosity that facilitates the selective attraction. Within ideological cultures, these groups usually gather under the flag of extremism, while in non-ideological cultures, they become organized in anti-movements. Resorting of these extremist groups to massacre weapons contributes to the deterioration of conditions and occurrence of more extensive tragedies, (Morgan, 2004: 29-43).

Conclusion

The ideological terrorism resorts to quasi religious and ideological elements to legitimatize its operations, so that considers terroristic operations inside or outside a country as highly essential. Huffman says in this regard: "Ideological decrees for terrorism, are the main characteristics of new terroristic activities", (Hoffman, 1994: 372). Now, question is what elements are there in ideology that are abused by terroristic thinking. Some of them include: All religions somehow believe in the eternal conflict between true and untrue. Another belief is about the determinative role of man in this battle between good and evil, through which, righteous individuals are separated from wicked persons. The third is belief in a sensitive period of time in the history as the final battle between darkness and light. Although none of the above-mentioned has terroristic meaning, terrorists explain their operations using unrealistic claims about the arrival of the time when the battle between good and evil on the earth will end to the victory of good, explain their operations. On the other hand, many scholars believe that the formation of terrorism originating from ideology-based terrorism associated with modern technology is highly destructive. Ideological terrorists don't have the limitations of secular terrorists; they consider their enemies as an identity to be destroyed and not to reconcile. Thus employment of massacre weapons to destroy enemies is considered as a holy duty, originating from their religious faith. Rapaport suggests that since ideological terrorists consider themselves as involved in the battle between good and evil and believe that their reward will be great for taking part in that battle, then they don't have common limitations that other terroristic groups have. In fact, they pursue the increase of number of victims through their operations at any cost.

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