

Terrorism: a Serious Challenge to Transnational Relations and World Peace

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this essay is to discuss how terrorism can pose, or constitute a challenge to transnational relations, and ultimately to world peace. Currently, when terrorism is thought, analysed and discussed, almost invariably, a particular event, in a form of a calendar date always mentioned: September 11, 9/11. The New York terrorist attacks became an indelible mark and event that always comes to the fore within the disciplines of political theory, political science, and international relations ever since the issue of terrorism is discussed. Terrorism has created multi dimensional approached and issues in world politics which has caused creation of stereotype among the nations. Pakistan Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq specifically have become centres of state terrorism .recently, the organization ISIS has expanded its network throughout the world especially in Europe and Arab countries. The main objective of this organization is to capture the world and exercise its power politics against Muslims and non-Muslims. Al Qaeda and Taliban may be considered as left and right wings of ISIS. United Nations, USA and some other non Muslim countries have seriously taken notice of expansion of power of ISIS in the world. The president of US considers that 2016 the year 2016 would be the end of ISIS and terrorism while extremist groups believe that they would promote their ideas. In short, the war of aggression may be settled down by dialogue, by force and through arbitration of impartial countries for the promotion of peace and tolerance in the world.

Key words: terrorism, state terrorism, extremism, extremist movements

1. INTRODUCTION

Albeit different approaches have been taken, a resurgence interest on terrorism and political violence studies has taken place, with a particular focus on one specific group, its tactics, organization and leadership (Al- Qaeda) (Audrey Kurth Cronin, 2006). This interest also re-invigorated the research on the root causes of terrorism, and its classification, but also on the so called Islamic fundamentalism, Islamism and Political Islam. To be sure, terrorism is far from being a contemporary phenomenon that only gained relevance since 2001. On its domestic or international forms, terrorism has ever been present throughout the different historical periods, and throughout different civilizations, albeit it is widely accepted that it was since the French Revolution that the term entered the political discourse (J. Brent Wilson, 2012), particularly the discourse based on western accounts of political events. The importance of being aware of the historical and contextual background of any terrorist group, particularly of those operating at an international level has gained relevance in the literature, as part of the attempts on theorizing this ever changing phenomenon (Rapoport, David C, 2001).

Hence, in order to discuss the challenge terrorism poses to transnational relations and world peace, it is necessary not to focus exclusively on what is terrorism, on its definitions, but also on what does it mean, how it translates into the power struggles that characterize the world contemporary political affairs.

In order to pursue that, the relevance of context and historical backgrounds are paramount. Thus, on this essay there will be a focus on how to define terrorism, and on how challenging that task is. Subsequently I will try to explain when does terrorism happens, and on this section the importance of context will be taken on board. The following section will try to grasp to what extent transnational relations are threatened by terrorism, namely under the new phenomenon that is *Al-Qaeda*. In the last section I will discuss whether terrorism is effectively the major threat to world peace, *vis a vis* the threat posed by envisaging the world organized under a single hegemonic power. I'll argue that despite of the destructive effects of terrorism, particularly in its contemporary form and organization which brings a batch of new uncertainties to world societies and governments, the real threat to world peace may be caused by the launching of the so called 'war on terror', and the current existence of a unipolar world order.

2. THE CHALLENGE OF DEFINING TERRORISM

The task of defining terrorism can be a challenging one, specifically if we'll take into account the historic-political backgrounds that evolve around the primordial political activities of human societies, which are by definition subjective. In fact, the task of defining terrorism is named as the "black hole" of terrorism studies (J. Brent Wilson, 2012), albeit the absence of a consensual definition did not stop the evolution of the scholarship. Ontological and political obstacles have been faced by the scholars who have engaged on this daunting task. For

instance, Wilson notes that the quests for a perfect definition had in fact thrown scholars into different directions. Moreover, Cronin mentions that despite the high volume of literature on trying to define terrorism, only one conclusion appears to be certain: that terrorism is intended to be a matter of perception, and for that reason, seen differently (Audrey Kurth Cronin, 2010).

In spite the lack of consensus on a single definition for terrorism, it is worth to mention that the etymology of words such as 'terrorism', 'terror', and 'terrorize', for instance, are derived from the form of the Latin verb *terrere*, which is associated with the actions of causing tremble, to tremble and the quality of causing dread (Richard Jackson, Samuel Justin Sinclair, eds, 2012). Moreover, a number of scholars usually mention the definitions of terrorism provided by the renowned *Oxford English Dictionary*; Charles Tilly refers to those as:

"Government by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in Power in France during the Revolution of 1789-94..." and (2) "policy intended to strike with terror those against whom it is adopted." Both definitions point to the asymmetrical deployment of threats and violence against enemies outside the forms of political struggle routinely operating within the current regime (Charles Tilly, 2011).

The above definitions, albeit generalist, open up the possibility for envisaging terrorism as a dual typology, reflecting the divide between regime terror and terror perpetrated by non-state actors (Richard Jackson and Samuel Justin Sinclair, eds, 2009). The twentieth century is perhaps the period of time where we can most easily identify such situations. The atrocities committed by the Nazi German regime, the terror regime put in practice in Soviet Union, namely during the Stalin government, or the purges that took place during China's Cultural Revolution are well documented examples of Terror regimes. Thinking of non-state actors, the past century also offers us panoply of groups who became known worldwide, albeit their involvement was in ethno-nationalistic struggles. I refer here to the IRA (Irish Republican Army), ETA (Basque Separatist) and the Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam. This distinction, however, gains more relevance when I will discuss the terms on what terrorism happens on the following section of the essay.

Perhaps the latest consensus on the definition of terrorism has been put together by consulting different scholars and academics in 2011. Alex Schmid gives account of the definition as: Terrorism refers, on one hand, to a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties (Schmid A, 2012).

The above definition is indeed an encompassing one, and if one will think of the contemporary terrorist events in different parts of the world, from the most mediatised ones of Bali or Madrid to those almost daily terrorist attack in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, which do have little or no impact on the West, this definition seems to correspond to the outcomes and perceptions such events cause in the governments of the targeted populations, but also in the people in general.

I consider the above definition quite apt to describe terrorism, however, I also find necessary to stress that there is an agreement on the fact that any act of violence related to the terrorism moment is always politically motivated, being sought to precipitate political change (Audrey Kurth Cronin, 2002). Here we again find room for discrepancies on possible definitions for terrorism. If it appears that there is consensus on the political motivations use of violence, which is indeed endorsed by the (not surprisingly) highly influential definition of terrorism put forward by the United States State Department. To this high ranked institution in world political affairs, terrorism is defined as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetuated against non-combatant targets by *subnational groups* or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." (Jackson R, 2010), the disagreement comes to whether terrorism is exclusive of non-state actors.

Although much of the current research tends to focus on terrorism as an exclusive action of non-western, non-state actors, the historical accounts of world affairs and conflicts do not entirely support this trend. In fact, Robert Jackson makes an important comment on this tendency that exists towards the exhaustive study of terrorism groups linked to left-wing movements, whereas the study of right-wing groups such as anti-Castro groups, South-African support groups in Angola and Mozambique, and currently some Iraqi death squads is relegated to a second, almost non-existent plan. That appears to be related with the fact that many western scholars simply follow the interests of their own governments, causing a serious bias to the scholarship of terrorist studies (Jackson R, 2010).

Amidst these discrepancies, the debates on the definitions of terrorism allow us to retain important notions. Firstly, regardless of the angle we may approach terrorism, we will be always dealing with politics, power and violence, and that the distinction of politics from violence is a highly controversial issue that has generated a great deal of philosophical debates. This may take us to the discussion of what constitutes violence, and what constitutes power, for instance. Perhaps the account provided by Hannah Arendt can be of use in order to complement and grasp what possible message a terrorist act may have. For Arendt,

(...) power is indeed the essence of all government, but violence is not. Violence is by nature instrumental; like all means, it always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues. And what needs justification by something else cannot be essence of anything. (...) Power needs no justification, being inherent in the very existence of political communities; what it does need is legitimacy (Hannah Arendt, 1970).

From this account, we may think that there is a clear distinction between violence and power. On the other hand, power constitutes a condition for violence to take place, to be performed, and equally violence may constitute a condition for power. This situation again brings to the fore the extreme difficulty that exists on finding a consensual definition for terrorism, particularly if we'll enter into the debate whether terrorism is or not exclusive of non-state actors. Assuming that indeed terrorism is a strategy for political violence, and following the propositions of Walter Laqueur who openly accepts the fact of states have killed and caused more social and material destruction than the so called non-state actors terrorists, or 'terrorism from below' (Richard Jackson, 2013), I sustain that in order to produce a fruitful discussion and research on what is terrorism and its roots causes, anyone seriously committed with terrorism studies should not adopt a final and dogmatic definition of terrorism, adopting instead a critical standing, bearing in mind that an act of violence can be criminal and political at the same time, and that terrorism can be either internal or external to warfare.

As Michael Walzer reminds us 'the systematic terrorizing of whole populations is a strategy of both conventional and guerrilla war, and of established governments as well as radical movements' (Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 2006). With this statement in mind, a researcher of terrorism studies should be apt to deal with diversity of theoretical approaches, but also pay attention, as mentioned earlier to history and context.

3. WHEN DOES TERRORISM HAPPEN?

If we'll follow the theorization of the 'Waves of Terror' proposed by David Rapoport, we are currently can situating ourselves as living under the fourth wave. Briefly, Rapoport (Herman Bryant Maynard, 1996) proposes to approach terrorism within a historical context, which is quite useful for understanding when terrorist events happen. Hence, the first wave started with the French Revolution, having also gained great exponential with the events that took place in Russia, with particular attention to the attacks put in place by the Narodnaya Volya, or The People's Will movement. The importance of this group is usually remarked on the 'culture of terror' that its members created, having ever since inspired other terrorist groups.

The beginning of a second wave of terror is said to be incepted after 1920, extending until 1960's. It was during this period of time that the decolonization processes took place, a period of time where nationalistic, independency movements grew worldwide, and consequently new states emerged in the world map, as a direct result of local, nationalistic struggles, often evolved with terrorism and even war, as on the case of the deadly long war that opposed Portugal to the independence movements in Africa (Guinea, Angola and Mozambique). This war would last until 1974, having resulted on the independence of all former Portuguese colonies in Africa.

Within the so called second wave of terror, it is perhaps worth to refer the case of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), since, despite losing the 1967 war, became an inspirational model for future terrorist movements. Moreover it acquired sympathies throughout the non-western world. We must not forget that those were the times of the Cold War, and the world was divided between the US and the Soviet Union. If indeed the PLO caused a great deal of disruption to the Israeli hegemonic intentions in the Middle East, its defeat actually resulted on the so called third wave, in the terms proposed by Rapoport. This third wave could be envisaged as a consolidation of counterterrorism efforts worldwide. Should the following two event not having taken place, the third wave of terror could perhaps been the last. However, the events in Iran in 1979 which resulted on the Islamic Revolution, together with the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, which left the invaders defeated by 1989, precipitated what became known as the fourth wave of terror, on which we seem to be full surfing.

The systematic formulation proposed by Rapoport, albeit descriptive and historically funded, has the merit of bringing to the fore the fact that terrorism became part and parcel with the history of modernity from the past two hundred years. Undoubtedly, such fact does impact the present fourth wave, which despite being inspired by

religious motives, it also shares the history of political violence with the so called western world. Such fact is important, particularly on discussions drawn on the lines of the 'civilized' West and the rest. Effectively the September 11 terrorist attacks seem to point out to the maturation of this fourth wave, which, as mentioned earlier, was incepted by the events in Iran back in 1979, and the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan. As such, we are in presence of a wave that could inspire religious movements, due to the success of the above mentioned events (Steven Chance, 2004).

However, we must not forget that the so called 'Islamic Terrorism' is not the only kind of terrorism that current operates in the international political arena, albeit that is the scenario put forward not only by the media, but also by western governments in several instances. If we'll focus on the source of motivation, in fact it is possible to identify four types of terrorism currently in operation: left-wing terrorists, right-wing terrorists, ethno nationalist / separatist terrorists and religious or "sacred terrorists" (Steven Chance, 2004). I find quite relevant to retain such information, in order to avoid a biased approach to terrorism, as being an exclusive strategy of certain religiously inspired groups, namely of *Al Qaeda*.

To be sure, the events we witnessed on 9/11 do not fall short of what John Keane named as 'apocalyptic terrorism', which engages 'in a total war against an enemy that was unworthy of negotiation and incapable of compromise. The enemy was seen as both morally null and void and good for nothing but annihilation' (John Keane, 2004). What is quite remarkable is that the launch of the so called 'War on Terror', which aimed to launch a perpetual confrontation, by the George W. Bush, President of the USA at the time, also does not fall short of the 'apocalyptic' motivation of annihilation, with little or no room for negotiations. The famous sentence proffered by the American President, "you are with us or against us", would cause nothing short of a greater resentment amongst the Muslim populations worldwide, which soon after the New York attacks would become victims of a barrage of misconceptions, unfair moral judgements and even life threatening situations. On the other hand, Islam being a religion with a rich and vast theological, conceptual, even political background became under intense scrutiny, often by people with little or no knowledge of Islam and the theoretical fields associated with it. A clear example of it can be found on the use and abuse the concept of *jihad* sufferance since September 11, 2001! (Ayesha Jalal, 2008) Certainly, such facts, albeit presented here in a resumed manner, may fuel the imagination of those less interested on learning from facts, opting instead for a strategy of defamation and dissemination of untruth. Such strategy, together with the response of the so called 'war on terror' geared up the international political affairs to an unprecedented escalate of violence and peace threatening situations, which had not taken place since the end of the Second World War.

Nevertheless, we yet need to pay attention to the historical context that has fuelled the growth of the sources of Islamic terrorism, which prior to the 9/11 attacks had already targeted countries such as Saudi Arabia, Tanzania and Kenya, aiming mostly at US interests. The developments of such events appear to be rooted on the outcomes of the war in Afghanistan in the 1980's, where once again what was at stake was the Cold War, the confrontation between the United States and Soviet Union. Whereas the latter was the invader, with a full army and war strategy in place, the former opted to fight a proxy war by supporting, training and recruiting into the Afghan resistance, Islamic militants from abroad, who gained experience fighting the Red Army. Naturally, with the end of the war, and with the complete disengagement of the United States in Afghanistan and in particularly with those who had fought on its behalf, left not only a totally devastated country behind, a large number of disaffected combatants, and a million plus number of refugees in the neighbour Pakistan. Such facts, together with the way United States kept conducting its foreign policy in the Middle East, particularly by supporting the dictatorial regime of Mubarak in Egypt, together with almost unconditional friendship with the oil rich Saudi Arabia, fuelled for years to come, not only the ideological gap existent between the west and the Islamic world, but also a crescent motivation for revenge, which as we know now was answered with yet more violence.

In fact, the course of action taken by the United States after the New York attacks was not what would make sense under the proclaimed values of the western liberal democratic states, theoretically headed by the United States. As noted by Butler: (...) it made sense after 9/11 to follow two courses of action at once: to find those who planned and implemented the violence and to hold them accountable according to international war crimes standards and in international courts of law, regardless of our skepticism about such institutions. (...). In pursuing a wayward military solution, the United States perpetrates and displays its own violence, offering a breeding ground for new waves of young Muslims to join terrorist organizations. This is poor thinking, strategically and morally (Judith Butler, 2004).

After a decade since 9/11, the above could not have proved more right. Butler prefigures amongst the few American critical scholars who were able to see beyond the effective attack on their motherland, and to

recognize how inadequate would be to pursue such offensive, whose outcomes have been felt in our lives until present time.

On the same vein, Paul Rogers also argues against the strategy chosen by the United States of responding to terrorism with military force, and not privileging the use of international war tribunals (Richard Jackson and Samuel Justin Sinclair, eds, 2009). As we know now, that seems never to have been an option on the table of the past or the present US administration, by the way the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden took place, denying him a trial, and denying the role of the figure of the Justice to take place. Perhaps the correct word to use would be assassination, which certainly will cripple the foundations of the conversation of the so called western liberal democracies for years to come.

Hitherto, we have been approaching the concept of terrorism by mentioning the ontological difficulties associated with its definition, and by situation the concept of terrorism, namely on its most internationalized movements within a historical frame line, just to arrive to a new and contemporary (but not exclusively) kind of terrorism, which could be labelled as religiously motivated terrorism, finding its exponential in the complex organization commonly known as *Al Qaeda*. In order to better grasp how can possibly terrorism be envisaged as a threat to transnational relations and consequently to world peace, a focus on the contemporary terrorist events is necessary. Such events, albeit not exclusively, are greatly influenced by a religiously motivated form of terror, to which we have to come to terms. By understanding what currently is at stake within transnational relations, will facilitate such understanding.

4. TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TERRORISM AND WORLD PEACE

In order to grasp what transnational relations mean in contemporary political affairs, it is necessary to acknowledge the transformations such relations have been exposed at least in the last three decades. From the expansion of the markets, to the dissemination of the *media*, the mass movements of people, geared up the conditions for social sciences to envisage a distinct (albeit not new) phenomenon commonly know to everyone as 'Globalization' (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2006).

Undoubtedly, the effects of globalization have been felt worldwide, and the phenomenon helped to change the way we understand the world, not only by facilitating the way knowledge is disseminated, but also by easing barriers and shaping the identities of communities. Globalization also 'helped' to create a divisive line between the 'Global North' and the 'Global South', between the 'West' and the 'Rest'. Such divisions have been fuelled by a hegemonic neo-liberal world order, rooted in the 'West'. On the other hand, the idea that globalization is an irreversible, linear and homogenizing process has been disseminated, with that becoming more clear when we move from scientific to a political discourse (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2006).

If we assume that that we live in globalized times, and that we have at our doorstep all the electronic and communication facilities (a by-product of the technological knowledge facilitated by globalization) which help fulfilling not only our personal interests and happiness, but also to conduct business and making a living, we need to acknowledge that there is a vast majority of human beings whose deprivation goes well beyond such facilities, causing a serious threat to global security. Poverty has been fuelled by globalization, increasing the levels of inequality and lack of social justice.

In fact, at the level of transnational relations, globalization is primarily envisaged through the lenses of economy, through the lenses of the market, above all understood as an economical process, which not only carved an almost abyssal division between the affluent North and the impoverished South, but also perpetuating the Eurocentric domination and organization of the world order. This is but one of the possible angles we can approach transnational relations with reference to the globalization phenomenon. However, I believe that there is an important link to explore between the transnational relations within a globalization context and terrorism. Such link can be either explored with reference to poverty being at the root-cause of terrorism (Richard Jackson and Samuel Justin Sinclair, eds, 2009), or as a consequence of a world organization that is in place as a consequence of globalization. On this essay I will focus on the later, since, and according to the approach of the 'fourth wave of terror' we are currently experiencing the outcomes of a form of terrorism and political violence that is grounded in religious prepositions, and possible a concurrent world view that challenges those dominated by the 'West'.

I sustain that much of the uncertainty that challenges transnational relations, fuelled by the threat pose by terrorism is the consequence of two major factors. One relates to the fact on how politics is currently envisaged,

nationally and internationally, and the other (partially a consequence of the first) with the fact of the world order being organized in a Unipolar way.

In the past two decades, a tendency for envisaging politics in a consensual and rational way, without space and place for conflictual views to take place has been at the centre of the debates in political theory. Such discussion has been highly influenced by theorists such as Habermas, and Anthony Giddens. A consensus model of politics has been sought not only in domestic politics, but also at the international level. This model refuses to accept that the political is necessarily a confrontation of antagonistic positions, and that the political does involve a relation, a confrontation between a friend and an enemy (Carl Schmitt, 2007).

From this definition of the political, what is important to focus for the purpose of our discussion is precisely the need of recognizing the existence of a 'us' and a 'them'. On Mouffe's words: For Schmitt, the political is concerned with the relation of friend and enemy, it deals with the creation of a 'we' opposed to a 'them'; it is the realm of 'decision', not free discussion. Its subject matter is conflict and antagonism and this indicate precisely the limits of rational consensus, the fact that every consensus is by necessity based on acts of exclusion (Chantal Mouffe, 1993).

I am aware that this distinction between 'friend' and 'enemy' can resonate the rhetoric put forward on the discourse of the Bush Administration after 9/11, in order to justify the course of action the US would put in place, as it has been suggested (Chantal Mouffe, 2005).

However, and drawing on Mouffe's interpretation of Schmitt it is possible to arrive to a different conclusion. Carl Schmitt was himself a rather conservative thinker, and no doubt a polemical political theorist and legalist due to his involvement with the German Nazi Party, of which he was a member. Moreover Schmitt never appeared to regret supporting Hitler (Dyzenhaus D, 1998). Nevertheless, Schmitt would provide the contemporary political thinking with one of the most well funded critiques of liberalism. To be sure, Schmitt criticized liberalism and those associated with it, precisely because of "their use of the concept of 'humanity' as an ideological weapon of imperialist expansion and he saw humanitarian ethics as a vehicle of economic imperialism" (Chantal Mouffe, 2005). Again, it is worth to reflect on Schmitt's words, cited by Mouffe:

When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity, it is not a war for the sake of humanity, but a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent. At the expense of its opponent, it tries to identify itself with humanity in the same way as one can misuse peace, justice, progress and civilization in order to claim these as one's own and to deny the same to the enemy (Carl Schmitt, 2007).

Here, if we'll think of the United States and the waging of the 'war on terror' it has been carried, we can perceive the dire consequences that transnational relations can suffer. In fact, from long ago Schmitt sent us a chilling message, of what would become the contemporary state of international political affairs. Such facts, together with the homogenization of the political arena (nationally and internationally), where little or no room for dissent voices to be heard, with no place or alternative channels for political passions to take place, with little or no respect for different approaches on what constitutes the common good, including different approaches to Human Rights theories.

As such, consensual model of politics seems to go hand in hand with the neo-liberal model of globalization briefly referred above. This model of politics, which reflects a 'post-political vision' (Chantal Mouffe, 2005), does not offer the possibility for the existence of peaceful transnational relations, putting in peril the world peace.

I am aware that perhaps this argument is a less travelled road, and that a more explicit discussion of transnational relations based on two or more countries, for instance between Afghanistan and Pakistan, or between Saudi Arabia and the US for instance, could also illustrate how terrorism is a challenge. However I sustain that transnational relations go beyond the diplomatic channels and institutionalized contacts between two or more countries. Transnational relations also revolve around culture, religion/beliefs, passions and history. Thus, if we want to grasp on how terrorism may indeed impair such relations, we cannot relegate to a second stage what indeed moves them: the political and power relations. Hence, it is the lack of pluralism that currently exists in this 'grand conversation' that transnational relations entail that may be beyond the radicalization of discourses of those who are excluded and not heard within the hegemonic, neo-liberal order.

For instance, it is quite alarming the attempts of trying to silencing Islam as a political discourse, and reducing it to a religious practice, by equating Islam and its teachings as a complete way of life, so dear and important for the Muslim populations, with ‘backwardness’, opposed to a ‘civilized’ western way of life, and the so called project of modernity. Alarming is also the attacks on Muslim Civil Liberties that have taken place within the ‘enlightened’ and ‘democratic’ western societies, amidst a growing cases of Islamophobia in Europe (John L. Esposito, 2010). Such events once associated with the infamous discourse of the ‘clash of civilizations’ have seriously compromised any possibility for assuring a sustainable frame for world peace, rendering transnational relations to the ever possibility of suffering the effects of the radicalization of a group or groups of individuals, who likely did not find the proper channel for having their contestations exposed.

I am not certainly building up an apology for those who have chosen the way of violence, in the case of terrorism, indiscriminate violence, to send their message across. However I do recognize that certainly there were different paths that could had been taken, particularly on the ways the United States and its allies have been conducting their foreign policies towards and within countries of majority Muslim populations, dating back the Cold War era.

Thus, this hegemonic, Uni-polar world order under which we currently live, certainly does not offer any guarantee for any prospects of a prolonged world peace. The US military supremacy, their ruthless way of conducting foreign policy, and their need to keep an enemy in order to keep their hegemonic position will persist. And so will terrorist responses to it. Unless the account of pluralism will not be seriously sought, transnational relations (of different nature), will remain hijacked by the violence of discourses and by the violence of terrorism.

5. CONCLUSION

The present essay tried to expose the challenge terrorism poses to transnational relations and world peace. Different approaches to the concept of terrorism were presented, and a chronological systematization of such landmarks that characterize terrorism in the past two centuries was also presented. The discussion could not avoid the tragic events of September 11 2001. Such events constitute themselves an exponential of terrorist violence hitherto never seen. The answer to those attacks has ever since conditioned the lives of virtually every inhabitant of the planet, but no other people were so severely affects as those living in areas of majority Muslim populations.

The terms of globalization and the way politics are currently envisaged nationally and international, as we have seen, seriously impair the possibilities for a pluralist dialogue to happen within transnational relations. Such lack of pluralism will keep silencing great tranches of the world population, and channels for expressing political passions and alternative visions of this world we all inhabit will be kept at bay from the ‘civilized’, hegemonic west. So long this situation will persist, terrorism, rooted on its historical past and present context will remain a treat to all transnational relations and ultimately to world peace.

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