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**How to Achieve Balance when Developing Counter Terrorism Plans and Actions**

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### **How to Achieve Balance when Developing Counter Terrorism Plans and Actions**

Terrorism did not commence on the 11th of September 2001, but that terrible happening changed the world's view on terror. Close to three thousand Americans lost their lives, showing the world that terror had transformed into a global phenomenon that can cause pain and destruction worldwide. The magnitude of the September attack on American soil meant that Americans had to adopt a different approach to fighting against terror because the fight had just become global. However, whereas the attack led to the overall scrutiny of the approach towards the fight against terror, there must be a way that balance can be achieved when developing counter-terrorism plans and actions. The plan starts by balancing the internal security of the nation, the freedom and liberties of the citizens, and ensuring that overseas strategies used to counter-terror activities are practical.

Civil liberties and their reconciliation with the country's security present a paradox because terrorism thrives in democratic countries. The freedom of movement, assembly, and expression prevalent in a liberal democracy is conducive to designing and executing terror-related acts that destabilize and destroy infrastructure and advance retrogressive ideologies (Adelaja et al., 2018). However, the nation's founding fathers did not envisage a situation where the authorities will overlook civil liberties for the sake of the country's peace and stability when formulating counter-terrorism measures. A country that upholds and preserves civil liberties and rights is an enabler of economic prosperity. In this regard, the relevant authorities must formulate counter-terrorism strategies that preserve, uphold, and maintain the rights of the citizens, not only in the country but the world where American troops are deployed. For instance, there is no justification for detaining a terror suspect for years without trial in a country led by the constitution and the rule of law. In article four <sup>1</sup> of the International Covenant on Civil and

**Political rights**, four liberties cannot be derogated under any circumstance. According to Tomuschat (2019), the right to life, autonomy from bondage, torture, and degrading punishment cannot be ignored. These are guidelines that counter-terrorism planners must preserve.

Moreover, there must be a comprehensive approach to the fight against terrorism, especially where troops are deployed overseas. Where one country is allowed to engage in the fight against terror in a foreign land on its own, there may be vested interests. The goal of military action abroad should be to stop terrorists from reaching the country and not jeopardize our values and beliefs. Consequently, military intervention in a foreign jurisdiction should not breed more terrorism. In this respect, there must be a way of holding the military accountable both at home and abroad. One way of achieving accountability is to send the military overseas under one unit, like the United Nations, where different militaries from different countries are under the same command. In addition to that, the military must be accountable to the citizens in their country by regularly updating citizens regarding their military undertaking in foreign lands. However, an effective plan that achieves balance should see the military open itself to investigation and scrutiny by independent bodies, especially regarding their actions overseas, in a manner that is transparent, honest, and devoid of threats and intimidation of other nations. Furthermore, when developing counter-terrorism measures, the public is an important asset. Presently, some counter-terrorism actions are formulated without public participation, but they are implemented so the public cannot understand. When plans are developed with the public's input, they become part of the solution by owning the problem of terrorism and contribute to the vigilance, accountability, and preservation of their civil rights and liberties, hence striking a balance in question.

To sum it up, the current strategies adopted in the fight against terror are not working. They lack public input, lack the necessary balance, and are ineffective. Two decades later, the world is still battling terrorists. A child who was born on the 11th of September 2001 is now twenty years old. This child was born in a region occupied by the United States Army, was raised in a warzone environment, his rights violated, and has probably joined a terror group already. Domestically, there must be a balance between the rights of other citizens and an individual suspected of terrorism, but it is not easy to strike a balance regarding the same. Overseas, military action must not breed more terrorists while jeopardizing the values of our nation. More importantly, the military must be open to scrutiny and investigation.

### References

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