

The National and International Strategies of Fighting ISIS in Iraq

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### 1.1 Introduction

Terrorism is considered one of the primary concerns in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and even more problematic is that terrorism is not contained within country borders, but instead extends beyond all borders and has become a global issue. There are more than one-hundred countries that have issues with terrorism within their country borders (Swearngin, 2019). Although the United States has led operations of counterterrorism, religious terrorism of ISIS and al-Qaeda is not any closer to being overcome (Swearngin, 2019). According to reports, there are more than 200,000 jihadist militants that are active in more than 70 of the world's countries. It is problematic that ISIS and al-Qaeda are constructing international networks of terrorist groups that are allied and foreign fighters in the thousands have traveled to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS' fight. Moreover, the terrorists are acquiring the technical skills needed to launch cyberattacks that will cripple the Internet, businesses, and governments around the world (Swearngin, 2019).

ISIL, which is known as ISIS, or the Islamic State, is reported to have been the deadliest of all terrorist groups in the year 2015 killing more than 6,000 individuals with "an average of 6.4 deaths per attack" (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2016, p. 16). ISIS is an acronym for the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (Connable, Lander, & Jackson, 2017). The civil war in Syria that arose during the Arab Spring Movement of 2011 is that which "created the environment that allowed ISIS to emerge" (Connable et al., 2017, p. 14). ISIS is a terrorist group that presents an international threat to peace and security. The emergence of ISIS in Iraq as a full-blown army with a different ideology did not match the Al-Qaeda's doctrine, but there was little difference in their objectives; ISIS was seeking to establish its own state "Caliphate". The main aim was to have a physical presence in the terrains of Syria and Iraq and to exploit the chaos and unrest that

was present in both countries. In order to achieve their aims, it was necessary to destroy the Iraqis' political process and destroy the army by creating disorder. Modern terrorism has to become a major issue in recent international relations and has become a worldwide phenomenon. After the attacks of 9/11, terrorism sought to inflict mass casualties to reflect their new way of conducting violence by relying on suicide attacks. Terrorism has shocked the world and has stepped beyond the bounds of previous atrocities in its aim to spread fear to people worldwide, suggesting that all their violent acts were a bid to attract the attention of many governments through their ferocity and the crimes they committed. In turn, the actions have shown the world a darker side of new terrorism through the use of religion as an excuse for their existence and their political aims.

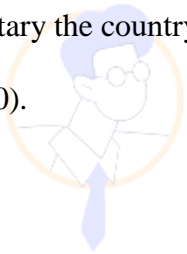
Terrorism is a complex phenomenon with various trends, different forms, and root causes. The aim of defining terrorism is to have a clear perspective of how to deal with it and to avoid further mistakes in the future. In general, terrorism denotes criminal acts and instilling fear among people through its use for political purposes. According to Swearngin (2019), terrorism is difficult to precisely define, yet, according to the Global Terrorism Database, terrorism can be defined "as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation" (Swearngin, 2019, p. 5). It is possible to trace organized terrorism back to the very first century, at which time a group of Jewish zealots, or the Sicarii, sent out a call for the Roman oppressors to be overthrown. The Sicarii used guerrilla warfare against the Romans (Swearngin, 2019). Rapport (2002) in "*The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism*" spoke of four waves of terrorism that have historically occurred, and as such, his writing has become quite influential in the field of studies on terrorism theory (Swearngin, 2019). For example, the first wave of terrorism is

reported to have been represented by Anarchists, people who had previously handed out pamphlets, but later turned to terrorist activities, including assassination (Swearngin, 2019). The second wave of terrorism occurred in the decade of the 1920s following the First World War, and the third wave began during the time of the Vietnam War. The fourth wave and one that is still ongoing is religiously based and perpetrated by Islamic terrorists and is characterized by such as suicide attacks. The religious wave is that which gave birth to such as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda (Swearngin, 2019).

Mannina (2018) reported that although the United States was close to realizing a victory that would be lasting in nature in the Iraq War, former President Obama made a series of mistakes that resulted in a loss of progress. The reinstatement of Nouri al-Maliki in the position of Prime Minister worked not only to disfranchise the minority Sunni group but also shook the Iraqi democracy, already on a foundation that was fragile (Mannina, 2018). The intentions of former President Obama were reported to be ambiguous, although he was intent on removing the U.S. troops by 2011 from Iraq, although he was advised that there should be between ten and twenty thousand troops left in Iraq. The insistence on the remaining troops' legal immunity is reported to have been such that it would never pass the Iraqi parliament. Mannina (2018) reported that it was a deal made in bad faith, and the result is that the U.S. forces then left Iraq, and the terrorist groups arose even stronger than before. There was a need for U.S. forces to remain so they could advise and train the security forces in Iraq, as well as to assist in protecting the borders of Iraq. Although it was certain, according to the SOFA agreement, or status of forces, that the Prime Minister Maliki and former President Bush signed in 2008, that the U.S. troops would be withdrawn in 2011, there was also an agreement that there could be an extension of the timeline. The US presence was essential to ensure a long-term partnership with Iraq amid regional and

global challenges. One of the consequences of the American pullout was the fall of Mosul, which highlighted the failures of Iraqi military institutions.

Although U.S. troops are present in Iraq in 2020, following the U.S having killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, the lawmakers in Iraq are calling for the U .S. to remove its' troops from Iraq, as well as having canceled the agreement that instituted U.S. forces in the country to assist in fighting ISIS (Atlantic Council, 2020). However, the vote was taken publicly, and it is highly likely that some were hesitant to disagree because it would effectively place those individuals in danger of losing their lives. It is related that the deputy director of the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Matthew Kroenig stated that the United States left Iraq previously but that the government of Iraq asked the military to come back to Iraq and should the U.S. remove its' military the country will only fall even further under the terrorists' control (Atlantic Council, 2020).



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