

Chapter 25: Terrorism and globalization

- Agreement on what constitutes terrorism continues to be difficult given the range of potential motivations for acts involving violence.
- Terrorism, or acts of violence by sub-state groups, is distinguished from criminal acts on the basis of the purpose for which violence is carried out, namely political change.
- Terrorist groups succeed when their motivations or grievances are perceived to be legitimate by a wider audience. Disproportionate or heavy-handed responses by states to acts of terrorism often increase support for terrorist groups.
- The definition of globalization, like that of terrorism, is open to subjective interpretation, but the technologies associated with globalization have undeniably increased terrorist capabilities.
- Terrorism is a form of political violence to achieve disproportionate effects with limited means.
- The majority of transnational terrorist attacks from 1979 onwards targeted Western citizens and symbols.
- Trends in terrorism since 1968 include greater casualties, increasing sophistication, and suicide attacks.
- Transnational Marxist-Leninist groups have been replaced by global militant Islamic terrorist groups.
- Experts disagree on what violent Islamic extremism precisely represents.
- Cultural, economic, and religious factors provide necessary explanations for globalized terrorist violence, but they are insufficient individually.
- 'New' terrorism uses religion as a motivator and to provide the justification for killing non-combatants.
- The ultimate purpose for modern violent Islamic extremism is obtaining political power in order to conduct widescale reform according to Sharia law.
- Elements of globalization that permit the rapid exchange of ideas and goods are also exploited by terrorist groups.
- The internet and social media allow terrorists to reach and influence audiences instantaneously and recruit new followers.
- The technologies associated with globalization allow terrorists to operate in a highly distributed global 'network' to share information, conduct highly coordinated, lethal attacks, and permit a high degree of mobility and security.
- Globalization may allow some terrorist groups to acquire, manufacture, and use weapons of mass destruction to conduct catastrophic attacks in the future.
- Globalization does not convey advantages to terrorists alone.
- States should utilize their advantages against terrorists individually and collectively.
- Differences among states regarding the threat of terrorism, and how best to respond to it, reflect subjective characterizations based on national biases and experiences.
- Combating the appeal of ideas that inspire terrorism is crucial.