

Title: The Global Fight Against Terror: An Analysis of the Effectiveness of Counter-terrorism Governance

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Research Question:

What does counter-terrorism governance currently look like at the national, regional, and global levels, how effective has it been, and what are some possible ways forward?

Importance:

Since 9/11, intense efforts have been undertaken at all levels of government to strengthen and expand counterterrorism governance. While these efforts are correlated with a reduction in terrorist activity worldwide, attacks continue to occur, groups continue to form and recruit new members, and transnational threats remain abundant. As a result, counter-terrorism governance continues to be a necessary and important aspect of global security governance. Understanding what our efforts so far have wrought and why the threat of terrorism persists is crucial to better understanding and addressing terrorism and other transnational threats.

Research Findings:

Generally, counter-terrorism governance seems to have been fairly effective, especially when one considers the recent decline in al-Qaeda. Nonetheless, terrorism remains a strong threat in many parts of the world, and there is certainly room for improvement within this governance regime. Two of the biggest problems in counter-terrorism governance seem to be the lack of legitimacy of the overall regime and the lack of capacity of many states to implement counter-terrorism efforts. While these problems necessitate different solutions depending on the particular issue area, the general ways forward for counter-terrorism governance consist of continued technical and monetary assistance to states struggling to implement counter-terrorism efforts and continued attempts by the Western world to promote the legitimacy of the regime.

Implications:

This working paper engages in a discussion of counterterrorism governance that is meaningful to practitioners of public policy and the general public. For policy practitioners, this working paper offers a reflective take on the challenges and successes of enhancing the governance of counterterrorism around the world, while offering constructive ways for security actors to move forward. For the general public, this working paper sheds light on the extensive, and yet not widely understood, world of counterterrorism policy. Transnational terrorism and the responses to it have had an immense impact on 21st century society and culture. The research and analysis of this working paper provide the public with the tools to judge for themselves whether outcomes are matching investments and will hopefully spur engagement in the debates of how we should move forward.