



## LOW-COST OPERATIONS LAST RESORT FOR TERRORIST

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International specialists have made an estimate for the economic cost of terrorism to be at least \$750 to \$870 billion per year, whether from direct or indirect losses. Despite the emphasis of strategic and economic specialists, it is difficult to quantify the costs borne by the global economy as a result of the steady growth of terrorist operations. They have highlighted the indirect effects, especially the losses of stocks in stock exchanges due to the increasingly growing concern about political stability.

### LACK OF DEFINITION

No such clear and specific definition of low-cost terrorist operations is made available; all that we are aware of is that they are low-cost terrorist operations given the availability of tools and methods in the local markets. They include operations with a limited effect up to operations with a destructive effect, according to their intended goal. Telling examples of low-cost terrorist operations with limited effect include the attack on a hotel, a prominent political assassination, a suicide attack as happened in London, the assassination of a great scholar as happened in Iraq, or the bombing of a place of worship, which are key goals.

### CAUSES AND MOTIVES

There are many reasons that drive terrorist organizations to carry out low-cost terrorist operations, including the most notorious ones:

1. The poor economic condition of the terrorist organization, as it forces such organizations to suspend large and expensive operations and adopt low-cost operations to communicate a message that such organization is still active, as is currently happening in Iraq. DAESH adopted this type of terrorist operations.

2. The organization is defunct and moribund, which prompts it to set a goal that will restore its glory that is fading away, even if through low-cost and limited-impact operations.
3. The intensity of guarding and security oversight, which prevents such organizations from carrying out large-scale operations, as happened in London.
4. Lack of time; a terrorist group may be forced to carry out a terrorist act at a specific time, without having sufficient time for planning, preparation and implementation, and it will be satisfied with a small, low-cost terrorist operation, as happened in the bombing of a mosque in Kuwait.
5. Individual action; especially by new recruits. An individual from a terrorist organization carries out a terrorist operation without the aid of a sophisticated plan with great impact, as happened in the Marathon in the United States.
6. A solid plan; the availability of some factors, such as strong financial control, for example, leads to the development of a robust plan that does not require expensive costs to be paid for by the terrorist organization, as happened in the 9/11 Attacks in the United States.

## IMPACT OF LOW-COST OPERATIONS

### First: The 9/11 Attacks

It is the most notorious event in contemporary history; it has changed the course of events around the world on the security, political, economic and cultural levels. It is a group of terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, 2001, targeting the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the United States Department of Defense (Pentagon) in Virginia, after hijacking four airliners, two of which hit the towers, and the third hit the Pentagon building, and the fourth one missed the goal; it fell and exploded in Pennsylvania. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for these attacks.

### Estimated Cost

A report developed by Pierre Lombo, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Economics at the University of Copenhagen and director of a think-tank at the Copenhagen Consensus Center reveals that the cost of Al-Qaeda's attack on the United States was estimated at \$500 thousand, including the subsistence costs, costs of developing a flight training plan, setting goals, as well as compensation for families of victims. While the

losses resulting from these operations were estimated to be up to \$100 billion. Other losses include the losses of trade in general, and the loss of the stock market in particular, human losses and lives.

### **The key direct effects of the 9/11 Attacks**

- A. The impact of tourism in the United States over the years following the attacks.
- B. Aviation is internationally affected, with security procedures changed and strict laws to protect aircraft from hijacking were issued accordingly.
- C. Change in the general security pattern around the world; security measures have taken the highest levels of caution.

### **Second: London Bombings**

On July 7, 2005, four bombings were carried out in London, at a peak time, by four suicide bombers. Three of them were on the London Underground, and the fourth was on a public bus.

#### **Estimated Cost**

The total cost of these operations was estimated at only \$ 4,200. The financial losses are estimated at 2.5 billion dollars, in addition to the suspension of public transport and tunnels for a period of three days. The operation resulted in the death of about 50 people, and the injury of 700 others, causing great terror and turmoil.

### **Third: Kuwait Mosque bombing**

It is a suicide bombing that targeted the Imam Al-Sadiq Mosque, in Al-Sawaber in the State of Kuwait, in Ramadan in 1436 AH (2015), carried out by a DAESH terrorist.

#### **Estimated Cost:**

It was estimated at no more than \$300. The human cost was the death of 27 people and the injury of 227 others. This terrorist operation has caused glaring security confusion, strict precautionary security measures in all outlets and a massive campaign of arrests.

### **Fourth: cost of the suicide bombing**

The cost of a single suicide bombing operation generally does not exceed \$ 150, while this cost corresponds to an average loss of \$ 150 million, including security measures, compensation, repairs, and treatment costs, according to the Copenhagen report.

## RISKS OF LOW-COST OPERATIONS

1. Direct losses; they are generally limited, whether human or material losses, but the resulting effects are very costly.
2. Horror and tightened security measures.
3. Development and economic disruption for a limited period, and the fears that this may snowball into the future.
4. Tourism and trade are affected.
5. The stock market is affected.

An important question arises in this context: Is it possible to eliminate these low-cost operations, especially those with a large impact? The answer: It is very difficult to eliminate such operations because of the great flexibility that terrorists display. However, tightening security measures on important targets makes such terrorists choose less important targets.

For instance, if the security measures were severe on an oil refining station, the bombing of a commercial fuel station will be carried out instead, which brings about huge and terrifying effects. The tightening of procedures against an important sovereign ministry results in the bombing of a market, a commercial complex, or an important transportation network. The purpose of these operations is to send an explicit message to the target governments that such organizations are present and active.

## CHARACTERISTICS AND ADVANTAGES

Low-cost terrorist operations are characterized by advantages, including:

- A. Ease of obtaining equipment and tools from the local market, which enables those of limited knowledge and experience to implement such operations easily.
- B. Ease of movement with tools without arousing suspicion, such as a handbag, equipment box or metal tubes.
- C. Ease of financing without making banking institutions or security agencies cautious and suspicious. Such operations usually do not cost more than \$10,000, which does not require a permit.

- D. Difficulty in identifying executors by selecting new recruits from terrorist groups with no security precedents.
- E. Difficulty in protecting all potential targets because of the very high cost, and the loss of the human ability to secure all of these targets, even using the latest cameras and technologies for security surveillance.

## PROTECTION AND PREVENTION SOLUTIONS

The most important question remains: What is the best and most appropriate solution to combat such low-cost operations, protect our children and protect our communities from their destructive effects? The answer: The solution is based on two main aspects: awareness and international cooperation.

### First: Raising Awareness

It is the best and most useful procedure, manifested in the following matters:

1. Educating and sensitizing communities about these dangers and destructive events, and the need to inform the security and governmental authorities of any imminent danger. In the State of Kuwait, a young man informed the security authorities of a possible threat, which was a group of his teenage friends (it turned out that they were recruited into some terrorist groups) blew up some mosques and churches. As soon as this young man learned about their plan, he along with his father immediately informed the security authorities to warn them of their threat.
2. Educating young people about the real goals behind these terrorist organizations; they are nothing but fuel for it, deceived by them, coveting martyrdom and entering heaven! If such terrorists believed in their calls, they would advance to carry out what they call other for, and sacrifice themselves, not young inexperienced youth, who are in the prime of their lives!
3. Making educators with experience in education and psychology aware of the need to monitor students' behavior, and notice any behavioral changes that occur to them. This includes expressing anger at society, or sympathizing with criminal behavior. Then the evaluation of such behavior comes into play according to the experience of specialists, without exposing the student to violence or isolation.

Experience has shown that this has dangerous adverse consequences on the behavior of youth.

4. Educating parents about the need to monitor the behavior of their children, enlightening them about the threats of such terrorist organizations, and cooperating with the competent authorities to report any incoming contacts that are intended for their recruitment.
5. Raising awareness of officials of the importance of maintaining complete secrecy, when informing someone about such groups or potential operations.

## **Second: International cooperation**

It is based on key drivers including:

1. Sharing security and intelligence information among countries to contribute to curbing many of those dangerous and horrific terrorist operations.
2. Encouraging communities to cooperate with the competent security authorities, and to report any gatherings or suspicious movements.
3. Increasing the budget of the International Police (INTERPOL) and build the capacities of its personnel; as this directly contributes to the prevention of such terrorist attacks.
4. Sincere and serious political will in the countries in the field of combating terrorist financing.
5. Increasing international cooperation in the field of drug control and illegal trade to dry up the sources of terrorist financing.
6. Taking strict measures against charitable societies (Islamic, Christian, or Hindu) that support such terrorist organizations and finance their activities.
7. Generous spending on security measures; whatever money is spent, it remains relatively little compared to the desired great results, on top of which is the realization of security and safety.