Emerging of Corona Virus Pandemic from Lens of

Counter-Terrorism

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Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism

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This article consists of two halves; in first half I have carried out descriptive analysis while in second half I tried to go with diagnostic analysis. This article presents a broad over-look of narratives and perceptions emerging from COVID-19 outbreak particularly the street talking and rumours that heighten up the 'fear' up to level of 'terror' about the speculation that it might be case of intentional Biological-terrorism. The article also made an attempt to examine about the post COVID-19 circumstances which might be providing an ideal fuel to make the 'Fourth Wave of Terrorism' so swift; this idea was well elaborated by American Professor; David Charles Rapoport, who attempted to exhibit the (last) 'Fourth Wave of Terrorism' largely by focusing on certain political events that usually go off within the definite time frame of the professed religious wave.

Introduction

Ever since the Corona virus outburst occurred, the entire world has been facing a state of severe shock and panic, because so far, over thousands of new confirmed cases and hundreds of deaths have been reported from all over the world. Regardless of the city of China, Wuhan, which came about to be the epicentre of the pandemic, quarantined and all flights to China suspended, the virus had appeared to be as strong to cross the international borders and now has gone spread to whole world.

Subsequently, rumours mills have started running on full speed and streets were talking everywhere. Well, most spine-chilling and scary conspiracy theory was that, this virus was predicted much earlier in novel written in 1981 book 'The Eyes of Darkness' by Dean Koontz [i]. The picture from the book went viral on social media in no time and netizens couldn't help but freak out because the similarity was weird and the proof was hard to sack apparently.

The internet / social media were indeed, overflowing with manoeuvring theories about the Corona virus, and, maybe, one of the highest-flying ones was that the virus could be a bio-terrorism tool. More surprisingly, a group of Chinese scientists in Canada were found accused of serious spying, according to 'The Telegraph' [ii] therefore, were stripped of their entrée to Canada's National Microbiology Lab

(NML) which is famous to work on some of the most fatal pathogenic-agents. This 'policy breach' supposed to become cause of highlighting the bio-terrorism program of number of countries including China. Here its noteworthy that the creator of Bio Weapons Act (BWA) Dr Francis Boyle also claimed that 'the Corona virus could be an offensive biological warfare / terrorism tool with modernDNA-genetic-engineering.[iii]

Yet again, these sorts of claims about corona virus being a biological tool for terrorism or war are seemed to be unsubstantiated. On the online forums, however, sceptics have been sharing qualms that the virus COVID-19 could have started off from Wuhan Institute of Virology, which is China's only bio-safety laboratory of level- four (that is the highest-level classification of labs) that is studying the deadliest viruses. Apart from it, the US senator Tom Cotton was the first well-known personality who came out publicly and supported the theory on Fox News and he claimed that the virus could certainly have invented from the lab [iv]. Soon after Mr. Cotton returned from his words, but it is not astonishing rather it's sort of story that echo with an escalating chorus of voices in US who consider China as a mounting threat for US like Soviet-level, resonating the anti-Communist approach of the Cold-War Era.

Though, quite a lot of netizens have also been found alleging that COVID-19 was a conscious attempt by China to control her population. However, again the claims are unsubstantiated. It's important to know that in Bio-terrorism biological weapons — infectious agents; such as bacteria, insects, viruses and fungi are employed with the purpose to kill or debilitate humans of targeted country in order to achieve a strategic or deliberate advantage over the enemy, either by just giving threats to them or by actual deployments. Here it's noteworthy that Customary International Humanitarian Law prohibits the use of any Biological weapon in war even and deemed it as serious war crime. [v]

It has been so long since early cases in point of using, chemicals, toxins and diseases as agents of creating mass fear — mass killings and/or even mass executions. There are indeed present the several historical

and even current examples of using toxins in mass murder, or using transmittable diseases in terrorism / warfare without even intentionally knowing about killing agents; microbes like bacteria or virus. Allegedly for instance, the first ever registered case of using such inhuman method can be traced back to fourteenth century when Tatar Army, which was so frantic to get triumph after almost three years of cordon, they threw corpses or cadaver of plague sufferers to the Caffa city[vi], sourcing a massive outbreak of this infection within the city. Although the most key part went off afterwards; as few of them (soldiers) could somehow find a way out to get away on boats – the Caffa was a port city situated on the brink of Crimea Sea – to Italy, they were oblivious of the reality that they were all already got infected. Even so, most of them couldn't survive with their compromised immune system and so they died along the way, however infected rats and residuals or remaining bodies caused one the most serious plague waves all over the Europe. [vii]

Most importantly, the overriding point is that now in our current world, it has turned to be just a matter of hours to leave London and lands wherever your destination place is, thousands of miles away, even though before appearance of the initial symptoms of your disease. If truth be written, the most horrendous aspect of any transmittable disease could be its embryonic stage – latent period.

Then again, bearing in mind the exceptional velocity of ever-growing and emerging biological technologies, now dozens of developed countries hold the capability to develop an intelligent virus equipped with tailored features in laboratory in order to remain overlooked on the victim's / vector's body for quite a time, and barely manifest itself after it contaminated a large number of people in surroundings. Further captivatingly, such types of customized viruses can be engineered or planned for aiming to halt a particular organ or to metastasize within the host entire system. All the more, due to virtues of genetic engineering; synthetic DNA or recombinant DNA technology it can be planned in keeping with the genetic map of targeted people within a given region.

However, considering the entire depiction with broader angle, it's not makes any difference whether the terror agent is toxic, biological or chemical. For the reason that potential to manufacture and employ

bacteria, virus or toxin by malevolent actors, explicitly terrorists or criminals, might bring catastrophic outcomes. We have been witnessing previously such cases one of those, we had to witness in Japan during 1990s – the Aum Shinrikyo Cult. [viii]

Indeed, if we really want to put a stop to such disasters in future, first we need to find out the latent actors who could resort to such nasty actions, secondly probe the possible ways, and thirdly also carry out its Cost Benefit Analysis – to discover or make out their motivation behind, and risks for which these potential actors are operating.

Is COVID-19 terrorism related case? – Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)

Obviously, probable examples that may pop up in everyone's mind are terrorists and criminal elements other than looking more thoroughly, state actors are also to be found at top among the likely cases. Recently as we witnessed in the case of Covid-19 outbreak, suppose if one deems it as an occurrence of bio-terrorism/biological-warfare act, the likelihood of involvement of terror elements or criminal organizations appears to be little, by reason of the complication of manufacturing process and off course the extremely advanced technologies were requisite to construct such virus in lab at the first place anywhere. Also, very soon after the incident of terrorism any terrorist organization usually claims the liability of such assault to earn the standing for its organization, and same in case of any criminal organization which may insist for ransom much prior to releasing the virus – or else it won't be of use for them, except they already have its cure; in form of vaccine or any antidote ready to sell out. However, in any case, honestly writing being both; microbiologist and counter-terrorism researcher it doesn't seem me plausible.

Taking into consideration another facet of scenario that in the case of a pandemic, finding out its core cause and the zero patients in this global and interconnected world is much difficult if at all possible; state actors may fall back on such malicious choices due to several reasons. Such as they may possibly try to set off a secret biological war against another hostile country or countries, so as to cause; socio-

political chaos, economic interruptions, craft power void in a definite region, or forcing another actor to run off a area, or either simply to get pleasure from the monetary benefits of exporting the vaccine or antidote to sufferers.

There will be apparently some severe consequences in case that some sort of tangible proof come up showing any track of involvement of an actor – either a sovereign state or a pharmaceutical company; however, in such types of cases, typically states start to throw charge at each other anyway.

Here it's noteworthy that any kind of news impinges on the open markets because its global world now, also over and above the more the news is important it will be having deeper impacts on market. In case of Covid-19, in recent times we observed a serious slump in global stock markets; specially oil markets all over the globe – which concurred with Russia – her ambivalence move towards the cutting supply decision prepared by Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)[ix] – as well as Saudi Arabia's response to the entire narrative. These all aspects on the whole brought in a severe plunge in different markets as very initial post Covid-19 outbreak response.

Here primary question is who seized the finest advantage of or either exploited such scenario? Here we see the all oil and gas producers (OPEC countries) are as main sufferers or losers, but it sounds as if; one (the alleged executor) had ever predicted it before it happens, then he would have sold it out at the highest price and would have bought it back now at the least price once more – after the price collapse, but it doesn't have any substantiated proof rather its mere speculation – keeping least in mind president Trump ordered to accumulate the US oil reserves.

No doubts, for a moment it seems pretty compelling, but does it really sound rational to ears? What are the risks and costs – its complete cost benefit analysis? As a matter of fact, the virulent disease of any precarious virus; one like Covid-19 – capable of having two-week dormant period in a highly occupied country like China be able to cause ruthless trouble in nearly every corner of the globe; in truth, the advanced economy you will be having, the severe your confronts would be for sure. However the repercussion of such outburst are significantly wide: firstly it causes drop off in oil prices which may

bring about serious budget deficits in economies of oil-dependent states – like Iran, Russia, and Saudi Arabia; secondly it suspends the making process and subsequently the sale chains of countries – like China; thirdly, it trims down the count of tourists travels which will accordingly give rise to budget deficits in countries who are tourist-dependent – like most of European Union (EU) and Turkey; lastly but not the least off course it becomes the reason for severing socio-economic costs, in particular for more occupied countries – like US, China, and Russia.

In general, if any state actor chooses to set off a biological war or state sponsored terrorism against hostile state, via a microbial agent which has the competence to source a worldwide pandemic, it strongly needs to believe the leeway of back-firing with same tool indoors of its own state in many ways. In a unified world, like the one we are breathing in, such lethal conducts may cause gigantic responses and effects in number of ways, obviously one might not be able to foresee all of those. Hence, taking into account such sort of heavy cost along with the threat of being traced-back; charging for executing such horrendous act, the likelihood of state sponsor-ship in the case of COVID-19 will be measured relatively little – but still possible. Obviously, it's not like generating a normal computer-virus; like Stuxnet – that might or might not propel back on your face; rather it is the most serious matter – matter of human lives.

But we are also witnessing the blame-game that is going on; United States (US) is putting blame on China, that corona virus has come from laboratory of Wuhan Institute of Virology, while US President Donald Trump's claimed that US has enough evidence also, and his position is that China should have done further to caution and shield the world on or after the pandemic which they didn't according President Trump.[x] Though, China has been kept denying from it and even US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo; a former CIA chief, has told ABC News that he is entirely agreed with a declaration from the US Intelligence Community regarding open scientific consensus, that the COVID-19 virus is not synthetic or genetically modified rather it just originated in Wuhan lab, because China is running second-rate laboratories according to Pompeo.[xi]

Post-corona virus era & probability of increasing violent-extremism and religious-terrorism

The whole world is quiet at the moment for the reason that the sudden but rapid spread of COVID-19 has closed the schools and industrial units all over and now people are working from their homes remotely without commuting in over-packed trains/buses. All the major events have been cancelled and so, sports games had to postpone as well. All over the world, now most of the people prefer to refrain from going outside for enjoying parties or bringing children in parks. In crux, whole world has been shut down completely which never happened before in recent history of mankind. This lethal outbreak has tremendously damaged the entire world's economy. [xii]

The all big companies, educational institutions and individual business holders are feeling the strong need for altering their working styles, bringing in idea of remote-working and virtual learning, so shifting their businesses and education online, in order to keep their economy and system running even in any situation; including crisis like COVID-19. More importantly, we will also need to tackle with social factor; the changing family relationships as people would be working from home. Writing historically, dozens of epidemics in past have killed millions of people indeed but also have left serious social impacts leading to 'Cultural Revolutions' and indeed, cultural serves to maintain peace and harmony in any society.

Previously world was like 'Global Village' where people to people communication was beyond any limit, and most of countries were used to spending long-hours in offices and also their people have been working-overtime, for decades, honestly writing this been deemed for long as a sign of victory. But now this workaholic-culture is about to alter because of the corona virus. All the big multinational companies are beginning to admit, that they can essentially rely on remote-work without any reluctance as it would be most cost-effective also. Therefore, moves by Japan's leading companies; such as Unicharm and Panasonic already started to initiate remote-working, also which has remained on top in headlines. [xiii]

Here is the question arises abruptly, does the whole world seems to be fully prepared for the post-corona era? I think that's the important question each international security organization especially United Nations (UN) should have to think about it and devise a comprehensive plan during this long-lasting battle against COVID-19. Because what lies ahead right after the corona virus? Probably it could be nightmare; I am writing it being a CT analyst.

We all know about terrorist organizations; particularly behavioural patterns of Islamic State (IS), Al-Qaeda etc. though, which have lost their actual battle on ground but still their splinters cells are very active on social media or on all other on-line forums. They have been chasing after the young talented minds and aiming them on on-line forums previously as well.[xiv] Off-course all the people are not vulnerable to their brutal narratives but few of us are undoubtedly, because of lacking of critical thinking and rational comparative analytical powers and so they easily fall into prey of their catchy temptations – usually religious based. Now by virtue of corona factor, triple number of more people would be vulnerable to these lethal agenda carrying terror organizations, as mentioned above business, educations etc. is trying to be shifted on-line everywhere. Moreover, as the states will start to lift the lockdowns and easing the restrictions, there would be welcoming us a serious economic crisis or can say much expected economic repression; by keeping in mind the limitations of budgeting issues, administrations of number of companies, organizations and industrial units will start immediately downsizing of their staffs in order to cut down their extra expenses; resulting in rendering millions of people as jobless.[xv] These jobless people who have recently suffered from quarantine's psychological impacts also, will be more prone towards temptations of terror organizations.

As its common fact, that social media facilitate it more to get access to large number of people, to reach out the people who are not lie in physical propinquity, and to find and convene people who contribute to your interests, doesn't matter how fringe or extreme those interests might be. Accordingly, these terror organizations might try to transform their story-lines or narratives according to current ground-based

circumstances. They can adopt agendas from more sensitive sorts of already revealed prophesies in religions, what they have been doing in past also. As Saudi authorities announced that HAJJ pilgrimage might have to be cancelled this year;[xvi] it already have started the hype on social media platforms as there are solid prophecies in Islamic doctrine, those depicts it might be lying more closer to one of the signs of the day of judgment – (Qiyaamah) is the 'abandonment' of the HAJJ.[xvii] That's why few of YouTubers are making videos – and creating chaos among masses; cancellation of HAJJ due to COVID-19 is a marker that the 'End Times' is drawing nearer.[xviii] Here its noteworthy that, splinters cells of apocalyptic terror organizations; like IS and Al-Qaeda which already have drawn their narrative-lines from Islamic prophesies, above all, Islamic prophesies related to 'Black Flag Army'[xix] that will rise from Khorasan, so accordingly, they chose their terror organizations flags as black and tried to make active themselves in Khorasan area of Afghanistan; so if, one still thinks that they now won't make the most of the current chaotic circumstances, would be naïve. In order to deal with this upcoming challenge, we first need to seriously address the religious-terrorism that might ignite the apocalyptic wave of terrorism in near future.

Religious-terrorism or Apocalypse

In the 1970s, David C. Rappoport came up with unique approach to study terrorism, primarily his approach proposed unique-insights (from the 1st century to the present-day) into the religious-connotation [xx] of terror campaigns; while on the contrary , the first generation of terrorism-scholars — like Walter Lacquer, Martha Crenshaw, Alex Schmid, and others — mostly looked at terrorism as a solely political occurrence, but Rapoport was the first one who argued that religion was and is a vital cog of terrorist-violence.[xxi] At that time it deemed as he was a voice in the wilderness. Astonishingly, even in the wake of Iranian Revolution in the 1979, later the rise of Al-Qaeda, and subsequently the War on Terror, most of the influential terrorism scholars continued to discuss that terrorism as axiomatically political occurrence and so, the leaders of religiously-motivated militant organizations were certainly

clever political-operators who contrived religion for political raison d'être. Similarly, current circumstances (in perspective of post corona virus situation) are exceptionally favourable for orthodoxy to exploit the religious doctrines that might serve to interests of apocalyptic-extremist or terrorists organizations.

David C. Rapoport who is well-known religious-terrorism [xxii] scholar suggested an additional argument for what sets apart religious from secular-terrorism. He speculates about rationalization and instances of religious-terrorism that diverge from long-established forms; just as religious-terrorists exercise sacred texts and primarily exploit (religious) historic examples / prophesies those are not seen in secular-terrorism.[xxiii] Nonetheless, secular-terrorism, quite the opposite, extends a culture of behavioural actions and precincts that hold down the possibility of violent proceedings. More significantly, this argument of David C. Rapoport falls back on the inner aspects of religion means within religion itself—like as its scriptures and customs[xxiv] — its striking that he could not explain why these internal religious qualities validate and so, mandate violence by some religiously motivated groups at some time and but not others. In simple words, his argument is totally devoid of factors exterior or peripheral to a religious group as well as how these dynamics may bear on explaining the disparity of peace and violent behaviour within religions.

Apart from traditional-terrorism [xxv] only religious-terrorists groups have found to be having an apocalyptic[xxvi] objectives; as their primary target is to cause catastrophic demolition to people, chattels, and the physical environment by looking forward to fomenting the end of time (Yawm al-Qiyāmah) and thus by doing so, they deemed as they are steering in religious pledges of a new world — this quest is exceptionally a religious, on top of perhaps it's the most frequent stereotype of religiously-motivated terrorism[xxvii].Apocalyptic groups are mainly inspired or hankered after the coming of the messiah, Al-Mahdi and Christ — and will concur with the end of the world.[xxviii]

Well, to cut a long story short Rappoport's above mentioned unique approaches gave dawn to the exclusive concept — wave theory[xxix], where Rappoprt described the terrorism into four waves.[xxx] He described fourth wave as purely religiously-motivated terrorism where he stressed at the superiority of sacred-text or prophesies in the religious faiths as the leading factor in exciting and nourishing terrorist-violence. Likewise, he categorically demonstrated the fact, heretofore terrorism is entirely modern phenomenon, and he considered it as timeless-reaction to existential terrorization that is beyond the Faithfull's ability to survive without conciliation or disposing of their faith. [xxxi]

All the major three Abrahamic faiths; Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are impacting our world indeed by shaping apocalyptic-narratives of people who are more inclined towards religion. It's fact that all these three religions have given birth to prophecies which forecasted an ending to human history on world. Similarly, all three religions predicted the arrival of God's agent (Al-Mahdi, Messiah and Christ) who will lead to a' Golden Age' on earth. Other than, the overall deduction from apocalyptic predictions of all three religions seems to be quite similar to some extent — hence no doubt, the adherents of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity might have a lot in common. Instead, their prophets also shared their visions / forecasts of a potentially violent path to the end of world— a line from where orthodoxy draw their story-lines mostly in each of three religions. [xxxii]

By and large, the diverse descendants of Abraham — Muslim, Jew, and Christian — at present classify themselves into two contrasting camps or school of thought. Out of which, usually, one advance in the establishment as well as focuses on recuperating the world and moreover, ameliorating the dour situation of poverty, disease, war, hatred, and crime. While the other acts to be as becoming misery of the world and be dependent on the hope of divine intrusion, anticipating the certainty of 'heavenly violence' to get rid of unbelief. So in crux you can assume that both camps indeed, study the similar prophecies of their prophets but interpret them absolutely in opposite ways.

Here it's worth mentioning that it's not the prophets themselves—who command the minds but rather it's the 'schools of interpretation' that pursue in their wake. Likewise, each of the religious faiths gave birth to 'Fundamentalists' also—i.e., those who have faith in the 'factual interpretation' of the prophecies — in addition to, each faith also gave birth to more 'moderate followers' who respect and treasure the early predictions but who also retain space for a more peaceful, ecumenical, and optimistic version. Since these religious faiths are so dominant in the 'state ideologies' that trigger the political realities of our day, for this reason, their disparate outlooks regarding end of human history continue to influence our world because these have been taken up by various 'terrorists' groups' in past for imposing their agenda.

But now as we faced or suffered from COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, and that compelled the all the orthodox of religious faiths to deem it in the perspective of 'End of Times' and co-relate it with their faith's prophesies. So, here is the great time or more room available to be occupied by the religious extremist groups or terrorists' groups worldwide.

Though, absolutely there is no dearth of 'apocalyptic scenarios' in the entire world but 'Middle East'[xxxiii] more probably seems to be ideal one, once again for such kind of terrific situation, as two major religious faiths have their representatives there, as well as previously we have been witnessing the IS and Al-Qaeda that emerged with same apocalyptic narratives. And other than, Islamic Jihad which is allegedly propped up by Iran and Hezbollah in the region; brandishes its own; the ending of the Zionist entity — marked as an example of 'an apocalyptic thoughts'. Whereas when it comes to ethnic cleansing, IS comes into mind. No doubt, IS has carried out vile crimes and has transformed rural areas of (Iraq) Sinjar into 'killing fields' [xxxiv] soaked in blood during its violent campaign to eradicate all traces of humans (with ethnicity) non-Arabs and (with religious faith) non-Sunni Muslims."

The current expanded war-time in the world where Jesus walks is equally deemed as encouraging to end-time imaginings and fantasies. Thus, the revival of confrontation to confiscate the Muslim's presence

[xxxv] from the Temple-Mount [xxxvi]; while saving exclusive Jewish entrée to the Western-Wall [xxxvii] is also a factor that augments the religious-extremism. [xxxviii]

Over and above, very recently Israeli health minister (who is from United Torah Judaism party) Yaakov Litzman also expressed out his believes openly that 'The Messiah will cure corona virus'; he further said that the healing for the baffling corona virus will proceed with the Messiah [xxxix], according to him who will exonerate the Jewish-community of their troubles. Furthermore, in his press conference (held in February 2020), he made an apocalyptic claim that the Earth is nearing to its end and so, time is approaching for Messiah to descend upon the world. [xl]

On the other side, these above mentioned apocalyptic-ideologies might get spark through social media anytime because social media undoubtedly, is hospitable particularly to the rise of apocalyptic and millenarian [xli] ideologies, given the traits discussed in this article thoroughly, but IS presence has remained highly systematic at online platforms [xlii] and huge bricks-and-mortar establishment therefore, have a propensity for obscuring the picture in future as well. Other than that, some of the techniques that IS has been employing have wider efficacy for all extremist groups or ultra-orthodox (particularly future terrorists' groups too) — of all stripes. Nevertheless, the combination of social contagion, [xliii] temporal acceleration [xliv], and immersion [xlv] forms an influential set of facilitating mechanisms for its millenarian or apocalyptic message.

It's noteworthy that despite the fact that IS represented the first-ever momentous deployment of modern-media; such as social media for accomplishing its purpose, it indubitably would not be the last one.[xlvi] Some other (expected) apocalyptic-movements particularly in current time may knowingly imitate the IS model, however social media may also be found suiting organically to moving forward extremist-indoctrination among exposed audiences or people at risk (as worldwide heavy unemployment is expected due downsizing of major companies all over the world as post-corona effects [xlvii]). More significantly matter to ponder upon is social media's post-format and length-restrictions, that let themselves be adjusted or structurally simplified the narrative-messages automatically, credit goes to off

course mobile technology of the twenty first century. As it permits for an unbroken connection to others, may be sitting thousands of miles away from you, but only all, who might contribute to the similar extremist vision, given that back up and personal-corroboration.

Certainly, such apocalyptic-movements can attain key mass audience by quickly drawing thousands of 'adherents' who can join-in in coordinated actions and may also make themselves available in order to assemble in physical spaces anywhere. [xlviii] Eventually, 'persistence' is generally a key to making for use of the social media factors and that's the area in which IS has excelled; [xlix] by producing huge volumes of content, even at a constant pace, over an extensive period of time.

Conclusion

Terrorism has emerged as the regular weapon of Fifth Generation warfare (5GW) [l] that discerns no borders or rarely has a face. So, no need to be astonished at all as it could be in any form; biological, state sponsored, religious, ethnic, apocalyptic and many more. But the debate which initially turned the rumours factory on that COVID-19 is the case of conscious biological-terrorism, does not seem to be standing true apparently, neither it has proved so far by any state (exclusively neither by China nor by US) through biological evidence (laboratory oriented proves), nor any terror group is having the technology and expertise to engineer it in lab, and neither any claim came up for COVID-19 from any terror organization. Also, it doesn't seem to be case of State Sponsored Terrorism so far, because all the states are suffering from COVID-19 [li] — after-effects like economic repression, unemployment issues & heavy budget deficits etc. [lii]

Anyhow, these kinds of conspiracy theories keep thriving on our panic of the uncertain, and on our inclination to demand complete proof that something is not the case; while it's not easy to prove anything percent wrong. It's worth writing that though people are raising fingers towards China but world history also embraces the ugly truth of biological-weapons that needs to be recalled back now, as it had been used once by the Japanese against China [liii] — so therefore, China is the most recent state, en masse, who has faced the bio-weapons usage against it by a foreign power.

Though, COVID-19 brought in lots of conspiracies theories that baffled the people, however it has also awaken the need of developing 'Biological Defence System' among number of states to avert the threat of any biological attack on them in future.[liv] That is alarming and could be very dangerous indeed in terms of future perspective.

And undoubtedly, the world after corona virus could be bit supportive or fertile for extremist religious groups carrying 'apocalyptic designs' in their narrative-lines or drawing a message from their religious prophesies related to 'End Times'. Those extremist groups might take the advantage of this time (post corona virus era) to exploit religious prophesies i.e like related to cancellation of hajj pilgrimage in Islamic doctrine and they can draw the vulnerable people at online forums towards their malicious agendas as well. As previously, the IS has been using heavily the social media as propagating tool to stimulate a nous of "apocalyptic time" among its followers online. It's brutal campaign key elements were; such as instilling a sense of temporal-acceleration and pending onset of 'End Times Scenarios', influencing the dynamics of communal contagion and stern confidence on beliefs that was having an innately viral appeal, and also, was giving a vehicle for followers outside its terrains to engross themselves in a exceedingly idealized version of its 'millenarian project', the so-called Caliphate. So the IS was the first group to make use of these augmenting strategies on social media at manufacturing scale, however, it would probably not be the final. Because current time is already supporting the ideas [lv] that is related to 'End Times is approaching' and accordingly, you can find number of videos on YouTube which has been recently uploaded in this regard.

More importantly, a fake announcement message came up on social media very recently by using the name of Afghan Taliban, [lvi] and it was claimed in message that they will start Ghazwa-e-Hind [lvii] after Eid-ul-Fitr which is a living example of apocalyptic-terror-wave which is much likely to be started now in Post Corona Era. And, it's striking, that for making propaganda about Ghazwa-e-Hind, [lviii] social media was chosen intentionally by terror elements because they know the accessibility, efficacy and significance of social media which has gone exceeded to regular media since last decade. So, its future

possibility can't be ruled out now that now onwards all types of extremist elements will be purposely employing social media for propagating about their apocalyptic designs.

On the other side, while it may be completely logical to sack (fundamentalist view or) readings of history as it takes the ways of translucent maneuvering of events and data, as mere projections of religious fanaticism and millenarian enthusiasm.[lix] It is important for whole world now to draw attention towards the fundamentalists' devotion or orthodox and the narrative-lines they have constructed, [lx] and pay attention towards the minutiae they have imbedded in the narrative to add force to its apocalyptical or eschatological themes or agendas. Even more than the general public, in all three major religious faiths, fundamentalists are noticed to be in the activist mode and are immersed with historical events and give significant time and allocate resources for indoctrinating new recruits and cultivating the devout with moral and religious lessons.

So cut long story short, world needs to think about whether it is prepared for post-corona era or not? Because severe narrative-clash might lie ahead after the corona virus that could ignite the Fourth Wave of Terrorism (David Charles Rapoport's theory) more that will be fueling up by religions — ancient doctrines / prophesies / past predictions about End Times in different faiths. And accordingly, the primordial apocalyptic-prophecies which are casing the symbol of 'global jihad' frame the religiously-motivated-terrorism as a lethal threat or use of force with the purpose of influencing or pressurizing governments and/or communities towards relevant religious goals. Likewise, three major religions (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) with three challenging and competing claims — that previously remained as a hot recipe for conflict since centuries, might serve for future conflicts too. Adding more, by keeping in view recent spikes in terrorism bombing and killing in entire world we need to think who should be blame for it? Muslims will lay the blame on the Jews and west, while the west will blame on Muslim world and so on. But question is when will this cycle ends? so long as people believes only in their religion and they deem it, is the lone true religion while considering all others as false, honestly

writing there will be hardly world peace ever, and terrorism won't be ended at all and all anti-terrorism effort will be futile.

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[vi] Wheelis M Biological warfare before 1914. In: Geissler E, Moon JEvC, editors. Biological and toxin weapons: research, development and use from the Middle Ages to1945. London: Oxford University Press; 1999. p. 8–34

[vii] Slack P Responses to plague in early modern Europe: the implications of public health. In: Mack A, editor. Time of plague; the history and social consequences of lethal epidemic disease. New York: New York University Press; 1991. p. 111–31.

[viii] Aum Shinrikyo: The Japanese cult behind the Tokyo Sarin attack. Accessed at 2nd March,2020,

[ix] Accessed at 24 April, 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/business-52350082.

[x] Accessed at 5thMay, 2020.https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/trump-threatens-action-china-covid-19-200503101120358.html.

[xi] Pompeo says 'enormous evidence' for unproven theory that coronavirus came from lab. Accessed at 5TH May, 2020.https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/pompeo-enormous-evidence-unproven-theory-coronavirus-lab/story?id=70472857.

[xii] 70% of Dubai companies expect to go out of business within six months due to coronavirus pandemic, survey says; more can be read at https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/21/coronavirus-dubai-70percent-of-companies-expect-to-close-in-six-months.html.

[xiii] How is Japan adapting to remote working and learning? Accessed at 23rd April, 2020. https://www.technologyrecord.com/Article/how-is-japan-adapting-to-remote-working-and-learning-104057.

[xiv] Noreen Laghari had reportedly been contacted by militants through social media, read more about her at, https://www.dawn.com/news/1327453.

[xv] Airlines downsize to skeletal levels, focus on preserving cash. Accessed at 20th March,2020. https://www.freightwaves.com/news/airlines-downsize-to-skeletal-levels-focus-on-preserving-cash.

[xvi] Hajj pilgrimage could be cancelled because of coronavirus. Accessed at 2nd April, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/01/hajj-pilgrimage-could-be-cancelled-because-of-coronavirus-islamic.

[xvii] Accessed at 5th May,2020. https://sunnah.com/bukhari/25/79.

[xviii] For example this video has been upload on Mar 20, 2020. And its views have been reached up to 2,451,440 views, that depicts people's panic about End times prophesies. Video can be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TinfGUwZgI.

[xix] How ISIS Got Its Flag. Accessed at 2nd February, 2020. https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/isis-flag-apocalypse/406498/.

[xx] Rapoport, D. C. Introduction. Religious terror. In D. Canadian Broadcasting Corp., 1971

[xxi] Rapoport, D. C.Introduction. Religious terror. In Rapoport, D. C. & Alexander, Y., The morality of terrorism: religious and secular justifications. New York: Pergamon, 1982.

[xxii] It's characterised as brutal acts of illogical, unrestrained, and indiscriminate-violence, this stems from two open challenges in the previous-literature: 1st is inconsistent attention towards apocalyptic-terrorism, and a lack of clear-distinction between religious-terrorism and its secular counterpart.

[xxiii] Rapoport, D. C. & Alexander, Y. (Eds.). The morality of terrorism: Religious and secular justifications. New York: Pergamon Press, 1982

[xxiv] David C. Rapoport, "Sacred Terror: A Contemporary Example from Islam," in Walter Reich (ed.), Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 103-130.

[xxv] Left, Right and Ethnic-Separatist

[xxvi] showing or describing the total destruction and end of the world, or extremely bad future events

[xxvii] Religiously motivated terrorism can be defined as: the threat or use of force with the purpose of influencing or coercing governments and/or populations towards saliently religious goals.

[xxviii] David C. Rapoport, "Why Does Religious Messianism Produce Terror?" in Paul Wilkinson and Alasdair M. Stewart (eds.), Contemporary Research on Terrorism (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987).

[xxix] David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism." In *Terrorism Studies: A Reader*, eds. John Horgan and Kurt Braddock (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 43.

[xxx] Ist wave(1879-world war 1:Anarchist wave), 2nd wave (1920s -1960s : Anti-colonial Wave), 3rd wave(1960s- early 1980s: New Left Wave), 4TH wave (1979- Till Today: Religious Wave)

[xxxi] Rapoport's thesis was first published in 2001, refined in 2002 (perhaps the most well-known version), and later republished and further refined in 2004 and 2008. See: Rapoport, David C., "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism. *Current History*, 100, no. 650 (2001): 419–424; David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11"; David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism." In *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, eds. Audrey K. Cronin and James M. Ludes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 46–73; Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism."

[xxxii] What are the Abrahamic religions? By:John Dennehy, Accessed at 4th February, 2020, https://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/what-are-the-abrahamic-religions-1.913816

[xxxiii] Covid-19 and the Middle East's 'Cold War' By: @ialmarashi , accessed at 5th May 2020, https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/covid-19-and-the-middle-east-s-cold-war-35995.

[xxxiv] Iraq crisis: Islamic State accused of ethnic cleansing, accessed at 17th March,2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29026491

[xxxv] Many holy sites are near the Haram Al Sharif – a hill in the old city – including Al Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall. For Muslims, Al Aqsa Mosque is their third-holiest site. They believe the Prophet Mohammed PBUH came to the mosque from Makkah during his night journey — Al Isra Wa Al Miraj. The shrine of the Dome of the Rock is only a few steps away where the Prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven.

[xxxvi] Not only are the exiles of Israel returning to the Promised Land, but preparations to build the Third Temple are progressing through the efforts of the Temple Institute and the Temple Mount Faithful Movement. The Holy Temple in Jerusalem was never simply a building or structure, but an earthly dwelling place for the Divine Presence of God.

[xxxvii] Millions of Jews, meanwhile, visit Jerusalem to pray at the Western Wall, a remnant of the mount on which the Holy Temple once stood. Jews believe that this was the location of the foundation stone from which the world was created, and where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

[xxxviii] Jerusalem's Temple Mount, Center of Conflict by Scott Ashley, accessed at 20th March,2020, https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-magazine/jerusalems-temple-mount-center-of-conflict

[xxxix] Rapoport, D. C.Terror and the messiah; an ancient experience and modern parallels. In Rapoport, D. C. & Alexander, Y. (Eds.), The morality of terrorism: Religious and secular justifications. New York: Pergamon,

[xl] Israeli Health Minister's Cure for COVID-19? The Messiah by Netta Ahituv, accessed at 20th March,2020, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-coronavirus-health-cure-1.8703719.

[xli] The Millenarian ideology is best characterized as a series of movements whose belief systems and societal engagement are structured around the end of the world and the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ.

[xlii] ISIS may be quashed on the ground, but it's still a 'problem' online, EU security official says, more can be read at https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/06/isis-is-still-a-problem-online-eu-security-official-julian-king.html.

[xliii] Intense social contact and prolonged interaction spreads apocalyptic memes in an impactful, life-changing manner. Social media empowers such contact over wide geographical areas and also makes contact with potentially violent people safer for the curious.

[xliv] A belief that prophesied events preceding or accompanying the end of history are imminent or already underway, and that the clock is literally running out. Social media helps accomplish this through the pace of postings and updates relative to older forms of media.

[xlv] The diminishment and eventual replacement of normal existence with a heightened experience of an alternate interpretation of reality.

[xlvi] J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census," The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, Analysis Paper No. 20, March 2015.

[xlvii] The US unemployment rate has risen to 14.7%, with 20.5 million jobs lost in April, as the coronavirus pandemic devastated the economy, more can be read at https://www.bbc.com/news/business-52591262.

[xlviii] Ghazwa-e-Hind: Al Qaeda's final Jihad plan for India, By: Ahmad Shah Ghani Zada, accessed at 20th April 2020, https://www.khaama.com/ghazwa-e-hind-al-qaedas-final-jihad-plan-for-india-6425/.

[xlix] Piazza, James A. and Ahmet Guler. 2019. "The Online Caliphate: Internet Usage and ISIS Support in the Arab World." Terrorism and Political Violence (May). https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2019.1606801.

[l] Fifth-generation warfare (5GW) is the battle of perceptions and information. 5GW is also a cultural and moral war, which distorts the perception of the masses to give a manipulated view of the world and politics.

[li] The global pandemic and accompanying economic crisis have knocked states and cities across the country back on their heels. States are haemorrhaging money to stand up medical systems and field unemployment claims while watching their revenue plummet. People have been ordered to stay at home, meaning sales tax revenues are way down, and as layoffs take hold, revenue from income tax is falling as well. Tax Day for 2019 filings has been delayed until July, another blow to state budgets. Lost tourism seasons represent money lots of places won't get back.

[lii] States and cities are "falling off a cliff" as the economic crisis sets in, By: Emily Stewart, accessed at 20th April,2020,https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/4/16/21223398/state-city-budgets-coronavirus-economic-crisis-ppp-cares-act.

[liii] Japan guilty of germ warfare against thousands of Chinese, accessed at 20TH April, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/aug/28/artsandhumanities.japan.

[liv] India needs robust bio-defence strategies against terror or natural outbreaks, Read more at https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-needs-robust-bio-defence-strategies-against-terror-or-natural-outbreaks-say-experts/articleshow/75399856.cms?from=mdr.

[lv] END OF THE WORLD: Jerusalem third temple 'fulfils Biblical prophecy' of the end times, by Sebastian Kettley, read more at, https://www.express.co.uk/news/weird/1043186/End-of-the-world-prophecy-Jerusalem-third-temple-Bible-apocalypse.

[lvi] More can be read at this link, https://dailypakistan.com.pk/17-May-2020/1133871.

[lvii] Ghazwa-e-Hind refers to an indoctrinated view of a final apocalyptic war and the term is used by jihadi circles, even on the web. The al- Qaeda network, which was created by Arab rebels, is now having fresh recruits from Kashmir-centric groups.

[lviii] Not only Kashmiri groups but Taliban and Al-Qaeda affiliates have stakes in the larger scheme of Ghazwa-e-Hind where India is regarded as next battleground in the 'End of Times' battle. This ideology is likely to be used to drive Taliban and al-Qaeda affiliates into Kashmir

[lix] In The Chosen Peoples: America, Israel, and the Ordeals of Divine Election, that the history of Zionism, an ostensibly secular movement, is streaked with apocalyptic expectation and, often enough, a fatal linkage of messianic hope to the idolatry of land, as noted and deplored by the great Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz.

[lx] Starting in 1967, Israel's Orthodox fringe launched settlements on the Occupied West Bank with messianic zeal. Relentlessly secular Labor governments accommodated them, perhaps because these cities upon hills reminded them of their heroic Zionist days in kibbutzim.

Author Introduction

Sonia Faiz is a Counter Terrorism Analyst at ITCT for South Asia Desk. Sonia holds M. Phil degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan. She carried out her research work in 'Counter-terrorism Narrative'; also, she has been playing a key role as messenger of Pakistan's counter-terrorism narrative campaign in main stream Pakistani media since media itself used to be confused or pro-Taliban. Previously, she also has served with a number of governmental organizations as a researcher in counter-terrorism affairs. Earlier, she chose pen name 'Eiman Malik' for her journalistic/literary writings and currently she is associated with ARY News as one of their key bloggers.

Sonia is the sister of Shaheed Lieutenant Faiz Sultan (Martyred).