



Trade-off for Security: Developmental Consequences of post 9/11 Counter Terrorism Measures

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Abstract

Counterterrorism after 9/11 fundamentally changed the governance of security globally, where expansive surveillance, preventive war, and coordinated financial controls became normal. However, these measures also reconfigured development priorities and civil-political rights as well. This paper examines whether unprecedented post-9/11 cooperation reduced insecurity without creating anti-development spillovers, thereby challenging liberal and constructivist arguments that cooperation and norm change can mitigate the security paradox. The paper draws on academic literature and government policies, and institutional documents on fundamental actions (i.e., the USA PATRIOT Act, DHS/NCTC reforms, and UN Security Council Resolution 1373), synthesising them using qualitative interpretative analysis. It follows the impacts of their rule, economy and rights in cases. It finds a persistent trade-off: the growth of surveillance and detention regimes strengthened the erosion of privacy and racialised profiling; the prevention and proxy wars escalated the fragility and humanitarian expenditure of the state; and the redistribution of state resources and aid to the security bureaucracies and military campaigns bottlenecked human development, and terrorists' financing operations added further limitations to it. These forces gave rise to rancour and complaint, recreating insecurity instead of resolving it. The security paradox remained unprevented even with the post-9/11 cooperation; the cooperation resettled and multiplied insecurity with developmental or democratic regressions. The policy of counterterrorism must be made in a reflexive manner, with the clear expectation of surveillance and countermeasures of anti-development and rights damages.

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Introduction

On September 11, 2001, Al-Qaeda, an extremist Islamist group, orchestrated coordinated terrorist attacks against the United States using aeroplanes. The terrorists hijacked four commercial aircraft, two of which crashed into the World Trade Centre Twin Towers in New York City and one into the Pentagon. The fourth, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after passengers attempted to overthrow the hijackers (Yin, 2006). The attacks resulted in nearly 3,000 fatalities and caused substantial physical and economic damage (Hoffman, 2002)^[22]. The attacks demonstrated that non-state actors could commit violent acts with global repercussions, as before that day, terrorism was considered a localised phenomenon with limited scope and strategic goals (Jarvis, 2016; Cronin & Cronin, 2009)^[29, 11]. The attacks, therefore, prompted a global reevaluation of terrorism because they revealed the vulnerability of the most powerful country and its need for comprehensive and proactive

counterterrorism measures (Hoffman, 2002) ^[22].

To this end, the United States and her allies initiated a Global War on Terror (GWOT) by shifting focus on military and foreign policy and renewing emphasis on dismantling transnational terrorist networks and eliminating their leaders (Bossong, 2012). They also implemented various counterterrorism strategies, such as enhanced intelligence sharing, expanded surveillance capabilities, and the establishment of specialised counterterrorism agencies (Bossong, 2012). As Cronin and Cronin put it, the long-term goal is to show that "terrorism is illegitimate and wrong" (2009, p. 11). However, their efforts, although noble and timely in an attempt to protect and prevent further wasting of human lives, had far-reaching consequences on issues of human and economic development as well as democracy.

The above narratives inform the rationale for this research to examine how post 9/11 counter terrorism measures, which were widely accepted by countries across the globe, affected issues of governance, economy and human rights in not only the United States of America but also in other parts of the world. The findings of this research show that despite international cooperation and the fundamental change in how the world perceived terrorism, the 9/11 measures birthed instead of reducing insecurity and anti-development situations.

Literature Review

The term development casts a vast net and can lead to diverse meanings. Hence, it is pertinent to conceptualise what it pertains to within the scope of this study. According to Krasko (2023) ^[34], development is the implementation of state social policy in the attempt to improve the quality of citizens' lives, and this is usually achieved through the utilisation of human resources. Furthermore, Krasko stressed the importance of education in developing human resources towards achieving the goal of improving life quality in any geography. Davletbayeva *et al.* (2025) ^[12] readily agree, arguing that the satisfaction of human needs is the basis of development policies and efforts in a state. Development is arguably impossible without the capitalisation of partnerships and human capital through opportunities for personal development (Gruzina, Firsova and Strielkowski, 2021) ^[20]. Corroborating this, Yang (2011) ^[62] argued that human rights are an integral aspect of development, especially in contemporary society, due to the essential role it plays in protecting citizens within a state. An ideation which is entrenched in the international system through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs, 2015). Contrasting the above arguments, Sayem, Aprianto and Voak (2023) ^[49], supported by Sheku, Knox-Goba and Strasser-King (2024) ^[51] argued that cultural identities and worldview of an individual or group of people informs and influences not only their understanding of development but also how they develop themselves. Societies with development limiting culture will resist progressive development even when its people favour it. This line of thought resonates with the antagonistic stance towards western development which forms a crucial part of terror attacks on the United States of America and other parts of the world (Tulga, 2022) ^[57]. Yet, regardless of this antagonism, many Muslims favour western development.

Consideration of the above assertions inform the stance of this paper that development transcends mere economic

growth through trade and innovation to include equitable growth in socio-personal development and human rights, regardless of culture.

Moving forward, the discourse on development has been situated thus far within the broader contexts of security studies. Ivančik and Andrassy (2023) ^[27], posit that humans must consistently consider their attitude to security, else development can be forestalled. Corroborating this argument, Brown and Grävingholt (2016) ^[5], argued that there is a sharp divide between the developed world and societies mired in conflict. Therefore, a developed state cannot be a long-term conflict-prone state, else development becomes her past attribute, considering that development is dynamic and progressive (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012) ^[1]. The above arguments suggest that without proper consideration for security, development can be impeded to the point of retrogression, in which countries which were hitherto developed would become less developed in comparison with other societies. The above arguments inform the assertion of Adesanmi and Adegbami (2025) ^[2], who argued that beyond human security, governments must achieve security from threats, poverty, diseases, hunger and environmental degradation; concepts which are part of development. Moving forward, the latter duo established a direct positive relationship between the absence of security and the absence of development, arguing that countries who have no security do not develop. Worse, the inability of the state to move beyond human security in times of conflicts can arguably engender insecurity and exacerbation of poverty, diseases and hunger which will manifest into conflicts and become anti development in nature (Lopera-Arbelaeza and Richter, 2024; Saparning, 2025) ^[38, 48]. It based on these narratives that states have repeatedly pursued integration targeted at not only forestalling security but to also ensure that development is attained progressively (Furness and Ganzle, 2017; Putra *et al.* 2019) ^[17, 45]. However, the above arguments fail to capture a nuanced argument which this paper dedicates itself to which is that security informed policies can result in anti socio-economic development in which human rights would be disregarded or sidelined while development is forcibly slowed as resources are channelled into military expenditure. This not only points to the industrial military complex but also fits into the theory of security paradox which is the core thrust of this research.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of security paradox was first coined as the theory of security dilemma by John Hertz (1950) who argued that attempts towards security made by certain states can in many scenarios give rise to insecurity in other states. Juxtaposing realist, constructivist and liberalist opinion, Meng and Zhang (2023), agree with decades old arguments of Hertz. However, they outline that while the realist posits that resulting insecurity is inescapable and impossible to avert, the liberalist argue that such can be reduced through inter state cooperation, the constructivists claim that such manifestations of insecurity can be fundamentally changed through altered belief systems. It is this latter research by Meng and Zhang (2023) that provides a foundation for this research which to disprove the liberalist and constructivist opinions on security paradox. Despite the cooperation of international organisations and the fundamental change on how the world view terrorism, insecurity and anti-

development situations manifested as consequences of the war against terrorism. This argument shifts from the realist arguments of Jervis (1978) as well as that of Haenle and Sher (2023) which holds that the fear of insecurity manifestations in pursuit of global security holds back states from cooperation. It argues instead that even when states have nothing to fear and are willing to cooperate, insecurity manifestations are not reduced. Rather it raises further insecurity and anti-development situations.

Methodology

This research will adopt a qualitative research approach to interrogate how security practices are constructed and pursued to birth insecurity and anti development situation regardless of state cooperation in the international system. To this end, this paper utilised google scholar and search engine to seek out published texts, journal articles, government policies, theses and dissertations relevant to the arguments contained in this paper. Data gathered from these materials were analysed using interpretative analysis to interpret and understand beyond policy design and outcome, how state cooperation towards a well-meaning agenda that is supposed to achieve security and ensure development, is reproducing insecurity and anti-development situations. This is in spite of arguments that cooperation would lead to reduced insecurity and anti-development situations.

US Reaction to 9/11

Being the primary affected state, the United States post 9/11 developed national security policies, which Jackson (2015)^[28] argues are state-centric, and some of them are:

1. The Patriot Act

Signed in October 2001, the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act granted the government expanded surveillance powers, including wiretaps, access to financial and communication records, and the authority to detain non-citizens suspected of engaging in terrorism-related activities (Jackson, 2015)^[28]. The Act aims to strengthen the government's capacity to investigate and prevent future terrorist attacks. As Whitehead and Aden (2002) illustrated, expanding government surveillance powers is a contentious aspect of the Act. The National Security Agency's (NSA) warrantless surveillance programme allowed the interception of domestic and international phone calls and email communications without a court order. The Act also expanded the use of "sneak and peek" search warrants, allowing authorities to conduct searches without notifying the targeted individual, which exposes human privacy more than ever before (Whitehead & Aden, 2002; Hajjar, 2019)^[61,21].

2. The Establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The United States established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to streamline and coordinate the nation's efforts in safeguarding its territory and citizens from terrorism and other threats (Kahan, 2013)^[30]. It consolidated 22 federal agencies and departments and oversaw border security, immigration enforcement, cybersecurity, and emergency response. Mabee (2007)^[39] notes that the DHS meets the US's need for a more unified and coordinated

national security strategy. It helped implement the US-VISIT programme, which captures biometric information from international travellers entering the United States to improve border security and prevent terrorists from entering the country.

3. The 2002 National Security Strategy and the 2004 National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC)

In 2002, the United States also devised a National Security Strategy that articulated a preemption policy against states and non-state actors that threatened the country. This strategy was the premise for the 2003 invasion of Iraq; it justified the attack as a preventative measure against the perceived threat posed by weapons of mass destruction despite authorisation by the United Nations and eventual absence of WMD (Ewing, 2013)^[15]. In 2004, the US founded the National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC) to coordinate intelligence sharing and analysis among counterterrorism-focused government agencies (Silke, 2008)^[52]. The institute aims to enhance information sharing, identify potential threats, and support strategic and operational planning to combat terrorist activities (Waxman, 2009)^[60]. For example, intelligence agencies shared information that led to the arrest of Najibullah Zazi, who had planned a suicide explosion in the New York City subway system in 2009 (Department of Justice, 2010). The US and its allies also had military and covert operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Yemen to target the leadership of terrorist organisations. These operations helped disrupt the capabilities of terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and ISIS. The 2011 Navy Seal operation eliminated Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan (Salt, 2018; Singh, 2015)^[47,53]. Commenting on the GWOT, Singh (2015) says the campaign's objective was to dismantle terrorist networks and prevent future attacks, representing a long-term military and financial resources commitment. Huddy & Feldman (2011)^[23] also added that GWOT broadened the scope of US military operations. The activity also led to the US's reach beyond traditional conflict zones to promote the notion of American exceptionalism, portraying the United States as a moral actor responsible for safeguarding its citizens and promoting global democracy even at the expense of civilian casualties in terrorist enclaves (Rojecki, 2008)^[46]. The government would not have had this power without the people. The "supporters must believe there is no alternative to killing", which is what emboldened the war against terror beyond necessary limits (Cronin & Cronin, p1, 2009)^[11]. This aligns with Sprinzak's position on how citizens enforce their government's action, which legitimises attacks from terrorists' perspectives (2012). But who is to blame? Neria *et al.* (2011)^[43] observed that "terrorist events by design are traumatic events that erode security and safety", and the trauma incense Americans in search for retaliation, which further empowers the rhetoric "there is no alternative to killing" for the US government.

Global Response to 9/11

The allies of the United States of America as well as the country's position as a principal funder and member of the Security Council of the United Nations Organisation, secured her widespread support in the wake of 9/11. Hence, international organisations, US allies and even her traditional rivals in the international system, Russia and China also

moved to either condemn terrorism or refrained from criticising measures that were counter terrorist (Tsygankov, 2006; Clarke, 2010) ^[56,8], a clear indication of passive support. Even Arab nations openly condemned the attack and expressed solidarity (Gerges, 2005) ^[19]. This arguably made the UN response swift and precise without long, drawn-out debates.

The earliest engagement began at the United Nations with the adoption of Resolution 1373. This resolution, adopted on September 28, 2001, established a comprehensive framework to combat international terrorism (Hajjar, 2019) ^[21]. This resolution required member states to take several measures, including criminalising terrorism, seizing the assets of terrorists and their supporters, and enhancing border controls (Hajjar, 2019) ^[21]. It also enhanced international cooperation and coordination against terrorism (Silke, 2008) ^[52]. After the 2004 Madrid train bombings, for instance, Resolution 1373 facilitated the swift mobilisation of resources, leading to the arrest of several attackers (Silke, 2008) ^[52].

The United Kingdom, often considered a safe refuge for terrorists, declared a state of emergency after the 9/11 attacks, and since its Terrorism Act 2000 has been passed, it set grounds for criminalising various terrorism-related activities (Hajjar, 2019; Mason & Poynting, 2006) ^[41,21]. Similarly, Australia enacted the Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002 to strengthen its anti-terrorism laws (Mason & Poynting, 2006). All these precautions were focused on helping governments mirror-image terrorists through their police and military to eventually decapitate them (Cronin & Cronin, 2009, p. 2). The United Nations also instituted the Counterterrorism Committee (CTC) to oversee the implementation of Resolution 1373 (Hajjar, 2019) ^[21]. The CTC helped facilitate technical assistance and capacity-building for member states in their fight against terrorism. It also promotes the exchange of information between nations. For example, the CTC has assisted African and Southeast Asian nations enhance their counterterrorism capabilities and infrastructure (Chertoff *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. The European Union established the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) within Europol to enhance intelligence sharing and operational coordination between member states.

Additionally, surveillance capabilities expanded in major Western countries, including France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Following 9/11, governments increased their surveillance capabilities to monitor and trace terrorists and their supporters (Mabee, 2007) ^[39]. Intelligence agencies incorporated advanced technologies such as metadata analysis, facial recognition, and biometrics to collect information and identify potential threats (Chertoff *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. The metadata analysis enables the military and police to identify patterns and relationships in communication data, while facial recognition technology assists in identifying and tracking suspects (Chertoff *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. At border crossings and other checkpoints, biometric systems such as fingerprint and iris recognition are used to verify the identities of individuals and detect potential terrorists (Chertoff *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. All these supported and advanced wars against terrorists but raised concerns regarding privacy rights and civil liberties. For instance, the US National Security Agency's (NSA) PRISM surveillance programme, which involved collecting internet communications data, prompted significant debate regarding the balance between security and individual privacy (Mabee,

2007) ^[39].

Discussion: Insecurity and Development Challenges

Acts of terrorism in itself have been repeatedly argued to be anti-development in nature. Scholars such as Agu, Mbah and Agu (2023) ^[3], found significant links between terrorism and retrogressive development characterised by increased geopolitical risks, depleted foreign direct investment, tourism cuts and stagnate economic growth. In addition, although al-Qaeda, perpetrators of the 9/11 bombings, do not directly oppose development, it has shunned western capitalism and its vestiges, which include civilization beyond what had been obtainable in the Arabian Peninsula (Tulga, 2022) ^[57] and the bombing of the World Trade Tower by al-Qaeda marked the most iconic expression of this ideology (Krieger and Meierrieks, 2014) ^[35]. It is pertinent to note that the anti-development ideology presented or encapsulated in the 9/11 bombing has since transcended the United States to find a home in virtually every Islamic nation across the globe, including Nigeria where al-Qaeda funds and backs terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Shabab. The consequence of these pro al-Qaeda groups has been nothing short of retrogressive education, disrupted and stagnated oil production and refining, as well as destruction of state infrastructure (Khan, 2024) ^[32]. For these oil-producing economies, this translates into losses in billions of dollars, while for those that are non-producing, this scenario harms industrialisation and development, as critical sectors such as transportation finds itself gravely deprived. Worse, it drives the price of crude oil globally, forcing states to pay more for less (Khan, 2024) ^[32]. Beyond ideology, the most visible consequence of 9/11 terror attacks is the diversion of funds from other economic/development ventures to military and defence investments. According to Shahzad, *et al.* (2019) ^[50], governments of the world have repeatedly increased funding on military and defence for the purpose of combating terrorism, invariably reducing funds for other projects. This argument is central in the United States war on terror in the wake of 9/11. Since its founding, the DHS can be argued to be among the most funded segments of the United States government with a nearly 9% increase in annual spending budget between 2003 and 2011 (Gaibullov and Sandler, 2019) ^[18]. In 2025 alone, the annual budget of the DHS is \$107.9B, with \$62.2B set as net discretionary funding (DHS, 2025). Beyond internal United States funding, the country has also spent billions in foreign aid to other countries, not for the sake of development but for counter terrorism measures. In 2004 alone, Afghanistan and Pakistan received over a billion dollars, with South Asian countries receiving more than twice the same amount between 2002 and 2016 (Shahzad *et al.*, 2019) ^[50]. These funds would have easily been invested in improving the economy and welfare of citizens of the aforementioned geographies. Yet, it was committed to combating terrorism while consequently retarding development and leaving the countries involved impoverished.

Moving forward, the human development dangers of 9/11 can arguably be the most damaging consequence. According to Krasko (2023) ^[34], development can only be achieved when human resources or capital is converted into labour resources targeted at improving both state and the economy. The death toll in 9/11 is estimated to be over 2,00 deaths with about 16,000 injuries (Bardwell and Iqbal, 2021) ^[4]. These are well-

meaning individuals with contributions to the United States economy. Aside from death, human rights, which are a critical marker of a well-developed society was heavily curtailed in the wake of 9/11 and gains in some countries retrogressed. Concerns regarding privacy and human rights over counterterrorism measures increased as the United States launched war against terror invasions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (Singh, 2015; Yin, 2006). Counterterrorism laws and policies have occasionally resulted in human rights violations, such as unlawful detention, torture, and extrajudicial executions (Jackson, 2015, pp. 33-54). For instance, approximately 54 governments and the CIA were involved in transferring at least "119 foreign Muslims from one foreign country to another" till they landed in CIA black sites (Human Rights Watch, 2022). At least 39 men experienced "waterboarding," "walling," rectal feeding' – a form of rape – and other forms of torture". Other inhumane practices include sleep deprivation and prolonged exposure to extreme cold, heat, and noise (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

The debate over racial and religious profiling also exploded, as Arabs and Muslims were subjected to heightened scrutiny, discrimination, and hate crimes due to the perception that their religious or ethnic origin associates them with terrorism (Disha *et al.*, 2011) ^[14]. For context, while the number of reported hate crimes reduced by 18% between 2000 and 2009, the number of hate crimes against Muslims increased by 500% (Crawford, 2023) ^[9]. Anti-Muslim activities, including violence in mosques and other Islamic centres and actions sponsored by government officials, have "markedly increased since late 2015," according to New America (2018). In Britain, the situation is identical. Mason & Poynting (2006) reported that the British tortured and murdered Muslims abroad, and Australia is not an exception either. In Australia, the anti-Muslim reaction was so extreme that Muslim women donning the hijab in public were assaulted, verbally abused, and had strangers of both sexes attempt to rip off their veils (Mason & Poynting, 2006) ^[41]. Some were spit upon, and arson, vandalism, threats, and other racist attacks were carried out by "white thinking" individuals against these newly discovered adversaries. However, most state governments did little or nothing to bring perpetrators of hate crimes to justice (Sprinzak, 2012) ^[55].

Worse, the war against terror movement championed by then United States president, George Bush was utilised by the United States government to achieve operations which would have not ordinarily been achieved in a democratic United States and in the United Nations (Tulga, 2022) ^[57]. The invasion of Iraq on the grounds of terrorism and nuclear weaponry makes a good example. Outside the United States, political leaders and tribal chiefs across South Asia notably used acts of terror and the counter measures which arose from the 9/11 attacks to maintain autocratic rentier hold on societies (Krieger and Meierrieks, 2014) ^[35]. Therefore, strengthening undemocratic processes and escalating state fragility (Fund for Peace, FSI, 2023), which is exacerbated by the tussle for territorial control without which no chief or leader can hold rentier fortune. Such tussle result in either geopolitical conflicts or in some cases render many societies devastated as is the case of Libya following the death of Mummar Gadhafi and the rise of splinter groups jousting to gain control of the country's crude oil resources (Hunt and Curran, 2020) ^[25]. When this scenario arises, democracy is

not only truncated, development in all ramifications is also impeded as human resources are wasted and mineral resources siphoned by splinter groups. Tourism is also affected as tourists will avoid such areas due to safety challenges.

Kaya, Onifade and Akpınar (2022) ^[31] argued that tourism revenue was heavily affected by the 9/11 bombing of the world trade tower due to the drop in demand to see the iconic Building. This informs another development challenge posed by the 9/1 attacks. The heightened attention given to citizens of Muslim nations as well as the racial attacks their immigrants faced are not ideal for boosting tourism demand from those countries to the United States. In the same vein, its capacity to discourage legitimate immigrants from those countries who would add to the economies of the United States and her allies, can also be argued to be anti development due to its negative impact on the economy (Krasko, 2023) ^[34]. Labour force ends up being discouraged while legitimate entrepreneurs also suffer same fate. Furthermore, steep bottlenecks are artificially created in international transactions as a consequence of international guard against terror funding, investments and fraud. Virtually every international financial organisation including the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank among others, have its hands on deck to impede and nab terror financing and terrorists. Yet, their efforts bear little fruit as terror groups improve their financing mechanism on a regular basis, forcing the aforementioned groups and many others to need constant improving of their jurisdiction to ensure effective supervision (Wang and Zhu, 2021) ^[59]. However, such approval of jurisdiction only increases bottlenecks to international development as it limits the easy flow of finances and exchange rate conversion from one country to another.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

9/11 brought about a fundamental shift in global counterterrorism efforts, which resulted in the GWOT and military activities in Afghanistan and Iraq. The UN's role was pivotal in nurturing international cooperation through initiatives and resolutions such as UNSC Resolution 1373 and establishing the UN Counterterrorism Committee. Enhanced cooperation between intelligence agencies across the world facilitated information exchange, cooperative operations, and expanded surveillance capabilities. Nonetheless, these efforts have also generated significant development challenges, including racial profiling and abuse of human rights, as well as trade bottlenecks and increased military expenditure at the expense of other crucial government agencies. Resources which would have been spent on developing various nations of the world were spent on funding military campaigns aimed at ensuring human security. These are despite liberal claims that insecurity and anti-development situations can be reduced by state cooperation, which was not the case with the 9/11 countermeasures.

Therefore, it is necessary that states should stop treating cooperation as a resolution but as a management tool aimed at ensuring better security measures. It is also critical that policies within any cooperation framework must be designed with reflexivity to ensure that it notes points and how they can rebirth insecurity and anti-development situations, which

can arguably birth further conflicts. Invariably, furthering not just the security paradox theory but also the industrial-military complex. For example, as regards terrorism management, beyond merely formulating counter-terrorism policies, states need to ensure that these policies are not trade-offs at the detriment of robust development, which can be argued to be what terrorists desire. When policies with such reflexivity are established, it would shift away from traditional measures to counter terrorism measures like governments' countering of terrorist narratives on social media, which would foster social cohesion and resilience to discourage radicalism and its result, terrorism.

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