

American Airlines Boeing 767, Flight 11
Boston to Los Angeles, crashes into
Tower One of World Trade Center
between the 93th and 99th floors

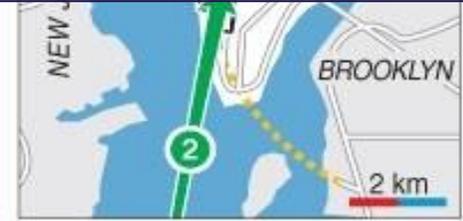
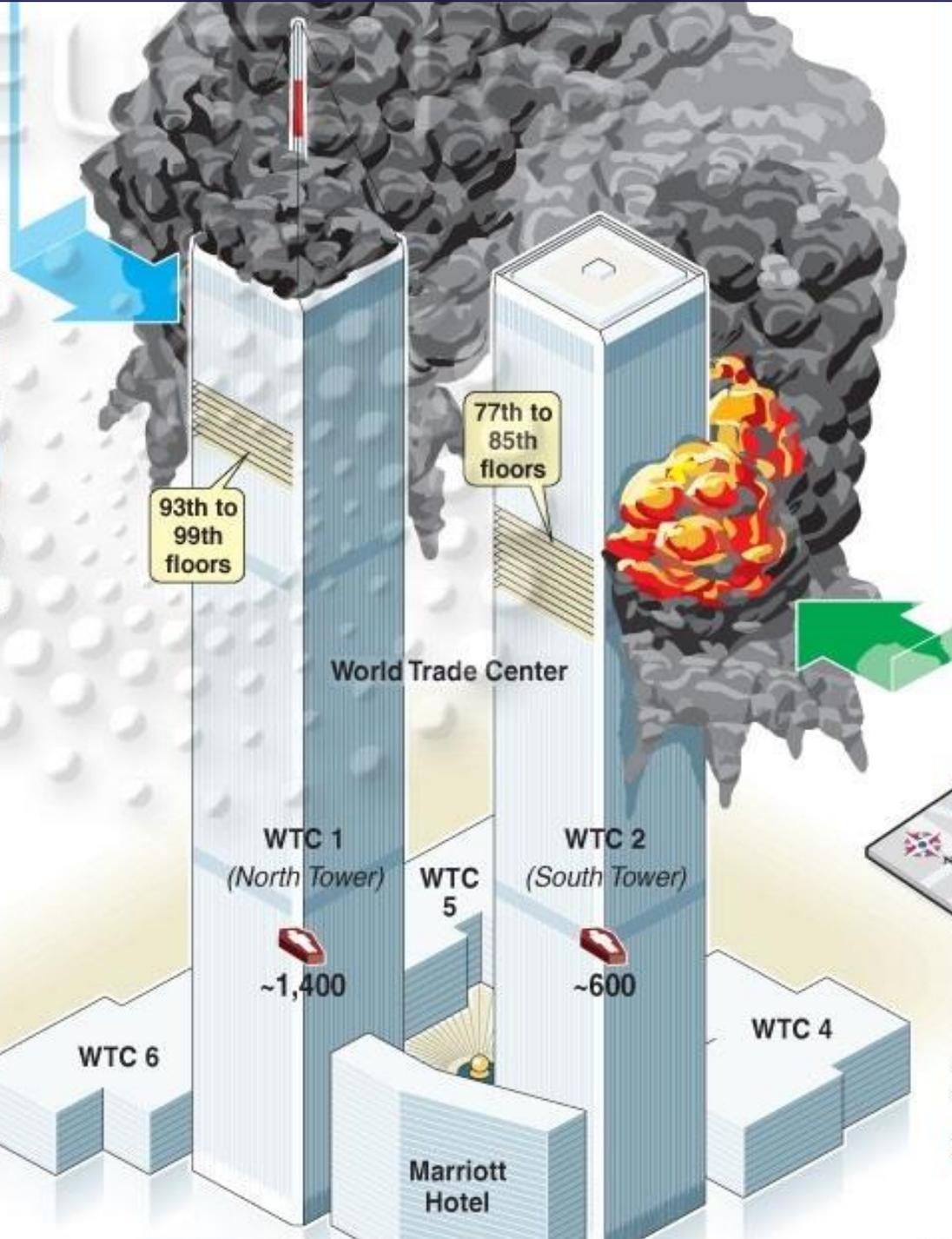
United Airlines Boeing 767, Flight 175
Boston to Los Angeles, crashes into
Tower Two between 77th and
85th floors

War on Terror: An Endless Struggle?

92
(including
5 hijackers)

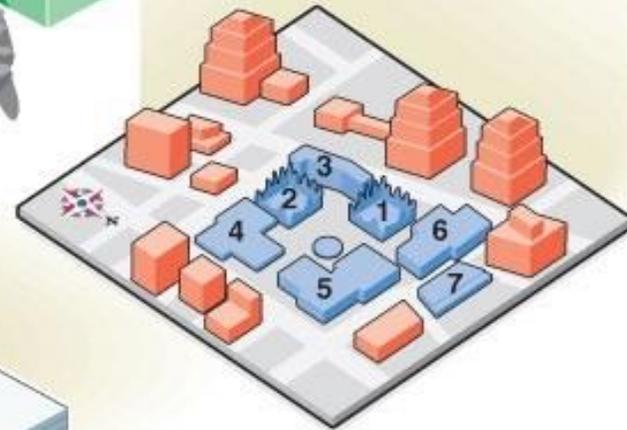
(5 hijackers)

Ambreen Shabbir



WORLD TRADE CENTER

- 1 North Tower, 110 floors
- 2 South Tower, 110 floors
- 3 Marriott Hotel, 22 floors
- 4 Southeast Plaza Building, Nine floors
- 5 Northeast Plaza Building, Nine floors
- 6 U.S. Customhouse, Eight floors
- 7 Salomon Brothers Building, 47 floors



-  Buildings collapsed or partially collapsed
-  Major damage



Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism

اسلام کے تھیولوجی آف کاؤنٹر ٹیرورزم

The term 'terrorism' has become a cliché now. Everywhere around the globe, preventing, eradicating, and fighting terrorism is a country's top priority. In many countries, a whopping budget is assigned to tackle with the utmost concern of rising terrorism. States are feverishly working on tactics and strategies to eliminate this curse. However, regardless of these efforts, we are nowhere closer to reaching total peace.

Among all this, a question conspicuously arises that why terrorism, despite being the most highlighted and the most pressing issue, is still ensnaring the world like some incurable disease?

Regardless of the ongoing war on terror and stringent counter-terrorism strategies, terrorism still prevails. The threat of destruction still looms large. The eradication of terrorism remains a dream unfulfilled; a step towards it thwarts us two steps back.

Why is it so?

Is there anything we have been doing wrong all along, or more correctly, our states are doing wrong?

The problem is such that the states, in lieu of fighting and eliminating the culprits, tend to generate more terrorists. Why is total peace still an unfulfilled dream?

Moreover, the world is confused over the definition of terrorism. One state's terrorist is another state's freedom fighter. The perpetrators of violent acts have been regarded as freedom fighters, such as the struggle for independence in the decolonization era. The confusion has actually been used by many groups as a tactic. So, is terrorism a tactic to achieve certain goals?

If so, then why some groups are tagged as terrorists while some are not?

Why fighters in Kashmir are terrorists, but Bhagat Singh is an Indian hero? History is replete with such dichotomy. So, the task of defining terrorism, and then agreeing to it revolves around understanding and agreeing all the aspects of terrorism.

As mentioned earlier, there is a dichotomy regarding tagging a group as terrorists. One example of the dichotomy of labelling a sub-national group as a terrorist or a freedom fighter as an instrument to snub the resistance or to support it were the Hungarian rebels, who were freedom fighters for the Western bloc but terrorists for Russia. Further examples include struggles in Nicaragua and Angola.

Terrorism is not a new concept, neither was it alien before 9/11. Instead, it was very much discussed in the pre-9/11 decade. However, the history of terrorism dates back to the medieval times, the times of the Zealots and the Assassins.

Then, we get a trace of the politically motivated non-state actors using violence to achieve their ends and inculcate fear among the public in the 1870s and 80s, with the French anarchists' movement which persisted for 40 years. Next, we have the 'anti-colonial wave' where the dichotomy between the states on the term started.

Then, we saw the 1960's New Left Wave, and it juxtaposed with the religious wave. Another such incidence is Arab Spring as the Gulf called this drive a terrorist one. However, other states called it a heroic struggle for democracy.

The reasons mainly attributed to modern terrorism are poverty and religion, but there are other factors too. Religion and poverty are rather tools used by these groups to invite more people to join them. The major motive is to attain power. Furthermore, if we follow the pattern of the rise of the non-state actors, there are undoubtedly other things that are common among all these groups.

Mostly, war-ridden areas are susceptible to give birth to the militant groups. Also, foreign infiltration, whether physical or virtual gives rise to these groups.

Above all, the life loss ensuing from the foreign invasions (though the motive is always the liberation of these people), which we know as the collateral damage also results in the development of these groups.

We also got ISIS after the Iraq war, which became a mammoth in the backdrop of the Syrian conflict. We had Al-Qaeda after the Soviet invasion which strengthened after the power vacuum created by Soviet withdrawal. Another thing which is common among the formations of these actors and others involved in subversive activities is that such groups have always had the back of some state or even a bunch of states.

The central fact, which remains unnoticed by the states, is that fighting terrorists is not conventional warfare. This is irregular warfare, a guerrilla war, and the strategy needs to be adaptive to that. The spring offensive by the Taliban are the tactics of guerrilla warfare.

Furthermore, the terrain also plays a vital role in this kind of warfare. This factor is also not paid much attention. The camouflage uniform prepared by the US for Afghan soldiers missed an important factor, i.e., Afghanistan has only 2.1% forests while the camouflage pattern was the typical one adapting to forests.

Ending terrorism is possible only when states completely understand the dynamics and aspects of modern terrorism. Also, when states decide to confine themselves to their own policies rather than interfering in another state. Everybody reaps what he or she sows, but the problem here is that the common person is paying the debts of their governments' mistakes.

World peace implies no terrorism, and that means no terrorism in every part of the world. A tough job though, it is the need of the time. But to acquire global zero, or total peace, we have to realize that every life matters, be it Nigerian, Afghani, Asian, or European.

When we realize this, we would be way closer to our goal of world peace than we are now.

Photo: Reuters