

The Global Dynamics of Terrorism in the Presence of ISIS: A Threat to International and Regional Peace in the Middle East Region

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Abstract

It is an imminent global concern that ISIS is having a lasting impact on all age groups and genders despite the tireless efforts and long-term policies made on the national, regional, and global levels to control its spread, re-emergence capabilities, and cyberattacks. This research will analyze the need to maneuver the counter-terrorism policies regarding the impactful rise of ISIS in view of the changing global dynamics, especially in the Middle East region. It is highly problematic that despite the tireless efforts of the UNO, NATO, and other emerging global powers, ISIS's influence and control of the re-emergence has increased extensively, especially after its downfall in 2019, which has become a massive threat to regional and global peace. Because of the fast-changing dynamics of wars in the Middle East region, ISIS has a loophole to use the population affected by the wars in Syria, Palestine, Iran, Yemen, Lebanon, and even spread to other parts of the region if the regional and global law enforcement organizations do not control the spread. Hence, the global policies need to be analyzed deeply to understand the loopholes in the counter-terrorism efforts and policies, as it is the need of the hour to counter their spread and dominance before it gets out of the hands of the law enforcement agencies.

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1. Introduction

In the present global and regional dynamics, ISIS (Daesh) is a significant and leading threat to global peace and security. The region of the Middle East is under the influence of politically related terrorist activities and violence in the period of the 1980s and 1990s, which significantly stressed on securitization process and the adoption of counterterrorism measures in the region even before the attacks of 9/11, highlighting the dominance of terrorism in the region [7]. The attacks of 9/11 have opened more security concerns focused on the “War on Terror,” have stressed the present and future policies, procedures, and practices to counter terrorism, and especially the prominence of ISIS's escalated attacks in the region. The military focused Global Coalition to defeat ISIS also globally known as Islamic State or Daesh, have succeeded in ending the occupation of ISIS in Iraq and Syria but still there is immense need to counter its expansion and human rights-centered actions and develop hard fought military success in ending its sleeping cells and occupation at global level [17]. ISIS is among the largest and extensively lethal terrorist groups that are known presently, managing its hard-core activities as a so-called Caliphate since 2014, who also attracted more than 40,000 foreign fighters from more than 130 countries as its territories are from Dhaka, Brussels, Jakarta, London, Istanbul, Nice, New York, Paris, Sydney and Orlando along having its controlled territories to more than 14 affiliates in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa [20]. According to the United States Armed Forces' Central Command (CENTCOM), after six months of 2024, “ISIS is on pace to more than double” in view of the attack count in Syria and Iraq claimed only in the year 2023[11]. It represents that its capability and fighter number have doubled since 2024, which highlights that, as of 2025, it has become more lethal and spread massively in the Middle East region and at the global level. In view of CENTCOM's commander, Gen. Michael E. Kurilla, has stressed that the motives that led to the defeat of ISIS are significantly dependent on the “combined efforts of the Coalition and partners,” which represents the future of the counter-ISIS coalition activities and efforts in Iraq [11]. It represented that there is an immense need to counter the ISIS coalition activities in the Middle East region, which are extensively spreading to other areas of the globe and have significantly affected global peace and security concerns. On the other hand, it is significant to highlight that according to Turkiye's intelligence agencies through the assistance of Pakistan, have arrested Abu Yasar al-Turki, a most-wanted terrorist of ISIS, as has been considered the mastermind behind various terrorist attacks in Turkiye and this arrest represents the expansion of ISIS network's not only in Turkiye but it has spread in the middle east region [8]. This joint operation between the two countries has represented a global effort against terrorism and collaborative efforts to strengthen regional security parameters, ultimately enhancing global security dynamics. The findings have highlighted that ISIS is a leading threat to global security, as being capable enough to carry out attacks at global level and dismantle peace o all regions, the findings have concluded significant recommendation that there is immense need to enhance intelligence sharing cooperation's among states, address the leading causes of the conflict, enforcing strict rules and regulations to prosecute such masses and groups involved in terrorist activities, factors leading to social marginalization and political instability[18]. The coalition forces work collectively to ensure regional and global peace, focusing on achieving development and progress standards that promote the progress of every country, ultimately affecting regional and global development and peace parameters. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for the first and only time invoked its collective defence clause (Article 5) in response to the terrorist attacks on the United States of America on 11 September, 2001 whereas its policy guidelines are determined to

have alliance efforts on areas of capabilities, awareness and engagements through increasing counter-terrorism initiatives on aims of deterrence and defence, cooperative security and crisis prevention and management [19]. It heightened the need to focus on collective engagements, policies, and initiatives towards handling terrorist activities of ISIS, ending its sleeper cells, and expansion activities at the regional and global level to aim for progressive peace and security standards. In this research, the mixed method research is carried out, which includes qualitative and quantitative research that proposed ISIS model that have been developed through comprehending the interviews, journals and other credible knowledge to understand the global dynamics of terrorism in view of ISIS as a leading threat to peace parameters in the Middle East region and at the global level, ultimately. This study has concluded that ISIS continued its dominance of gaining more territories in year 2024 despite the long-awaited efforts of the US-led NATO coalition forces, regional collaborations and intelligence sharing and constant improved strategies by using social media influence tactics, instilling fear, violence and brutality to gain territories and ultimately to expand the so-called 'Islamic Caliphate' dominance in its controlled territories. Therefore, this research aims to understand, highlight and dig-out the loopholes of dynamics that led to rise of the ISIS in the middle east region and at the global level with focusing on collective efforts of NATO and joint collective operations, policies, strategies and initiatives to eliminate the menace of terrorism and spread of ISIS at the regional and global level. Thus, there is an immense need to work collectively, extensively, and on coordinated approach is significantly required to be adopted by the international legal actors to combat the threat posed by non-state actors like ISIS and figure out the dynamics of peace and security at the global level to restore peace and justice in its true essence.

2. Understanding ISIS's History as a Global Threat

The history elaborates that the region has been the conflict-ridden zone, which contributed it to be the most affected region by terrorism in the globe, so there is immense need to neutralize acute safety hazards along with developing incentive-based reconciliation program, that will significantly reduce terrorism activities by working on its factors of the present time, which are social, economic and political. There are several factors in the Middle East region, which make it an extensively vulnerable to terrorism among other factors, which are centralized autocratic system that do not provide equality to masses in-terms of ethnicity, tribes and religious dynamics, geographical conditions makes the region at the intersection of three continents contributing it to be a battleground for global energy pirates, that become the reason of increasing rivalries at the local level by creating conflict among same interested groups and social-political needs and issues have been the among the factors[1]. The history tells that ISIS have deepen its hold regionally and globally by dominating territories on territories, instilling its fear in the public is the main aim of ISIS to have its dominance, control and fear so it could easily expand its territories and represent itself to be most lethal, violent and dominant terrorist organization in the globe. The history of ISIS is rooted backed to late 1980's, in which the group's "state" has been first established in 2006 as it managed to advance without any territorial gains whereas it is known for recovery and re-emergence after suffering from territorial losses in 2019 that highlights the need for law enforcement agencies in the United States to control its dominance to territories and lone-wolf attacks as its expanding its depth globally that need to be catered before it gets too late [11]. It is significant to highlight that objective of IS has been to formulate a Salafist-oriented Islamic State by gaining control of Iraq, Syria and other places of the Levant as it expanded its controlled territories through its affiliate groups to enhance its ideology,

which includes ISIS-Khorasan Province (ISK) in Pakistan and Afghanistan, later further expanded to the Islamic State of West Africa (ISWA), that functions in the Sahel region [2]. It represented that in the ambition of gaining one territory over another, it took fear, violence, and brutality as the tools for enforcing the so-called Sharia law to attract masses from all walks of life and every corner of the globe. The region of the Middle East is considered to be the most damaged region by the terrorist groups and same goes for the ISIS as its factions continued its attacks and controlled territories in Yemen, Iraq and Syria while keeping a network of Shia terrorist groups in Libya, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and other countries, which made the region a complex and consistently challenging and changing region for the terrorist groups as even the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq persist to be an active source of terrorist activities in the region[1]. ISIS contributed to represent their own identity, which focuses on Islamic piety and reverence for the Prophet and His companion on the social media platforms and such videos that manifests raw pornographic violence along pious chanting of religious warriors, assuring their discipline of a prison gang whereas focusing on tactical and deception strategies for the skilled intelligence services of Saddam Hussein to attract masses from all over the globe in to their controlled territories and their net[31]. It represented that it manifested its ideology to enforce its so-called Sharia in its controlled territories to regulate its brutalities as an image of Islam in-contrast to the true image of Islam. Even ISIS gained control of more territories and expand at the global level since 2019 as it made its first attacks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique in 2019 in the newly-founded IS Central Africa Province (ISCAP) along with gaining attention of small and least prone provinces in areas of Turkey, Pakistan and India in year 2019 [16]. In another interview, a Syrian woman in Turkey claimed that she hated Westerners and Americans due to the killings of civilians in bombings of Raqqa, and she even wished to return to ISIS to die as a martyr on behalf of ISIS [20]. There are several reasons behind ISIS fighters' recruitments, which are physical, sexual and emotional abuse, physical and emotional neglect, domestic violence, mental illness and substance abuse in home, death of parent as a child, having a father with multiple wives, poverty, mental illness in home, incarcerated member, leaving home early, living with unmarried parents, parental separation or divorce, unemployment or under employment, personal divorce and previous criminality [20]. It represented that there have been underlying factors, causes, and even motivations of the 'Islamic Caliphate', which led masses from different parts of the globe to leave their comfort zone and to become part of ISIS, only to come out of their traumas and to experience under the so-called slogan of the Islamic Caliphate. Cruelty has been the tool that ISIS has used to increase its expansion of territories, as its governance includes a brutal and cruel terror regime, which includes ISIS's strict enforcement of Sharia law, forced marriages, crucifixions, and kidnappings [24]. It represented that ISIS has expanded its dominance of controlled territories for the enforcement of the so-called "Islamic Caliphate," where the enforcement of Sharia law is the basic aim of ISIS against the people in their controlled territories. It is significant to highlight that ISIS has lost 95 percent control of the territory, which it gained control of in 2014 and 2017, and hence lost control of its final territories in Syria and Iraq in 2017 and 2019 simultaneously [16]. In 2015, the air campaign TIDAL WAVE II has been launched by the Global Coalition to combat ISIL, which aimed its capabilities to process and transport oil and gas, which significantly reduced the profit income of the terrorist organization. In the words of Daniel L. Glaser, a former Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes in the United States, ISIS has lost its controlled territories in Iraq but gained resources hold in-return, which affected its expansion strategies ultimately despite losing its territories since Trump administration in 2017, along gaining ISIS-affiliated attacks expansion at the

global level [14] It is significant to highlight that the United States and other European countries are significantly on the hit list by ISIS, same are the apostate monarchies of the Persian Gulf, the Shite government of Iraq and Iran, and the Alawite regime of Syria, which has been the reason that resources and terrorist activities are completely directed to the local and regional countries or players, as said by Zarqawi in several instances, “the road to Palestine passes through Amman “ (WARRICK, 2015, p.65) [24]. It represented that ISIS is in full efforts, skills enhancement through social media, lone-wolf followers, inspirers, and motivators, along with their troops in the controlled states in the Middle East, have instilled its fear in the public, even in the leading global power states in Europe. Therefore, there is an immense need to understand its evolving dominance, as sleeping cells dig out to eliminate it from regional territories and globally, ultimately. In view of database of the Global Terrorism and Trends Analysis Center (GTTAC), have recorded approximately 8,000 attacks in Syria by different 88 terrorist groups in period of January 2018 to October 2024, represented ISIS to be the most dominant actor in terms of group size, attack accuracy and global reach and it also remained dominant in intensifying its operational capabilities and well-established prominence while challenging the HTS’s (Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham) leadership [6]. It represented that ISIS's prominence and deterrence or dominance in the region has increased extensively despite efforts of regional and global powers to counter its expansion and violent activities. Thus, ISIS expansion by its sleeper cells re-emergences, lone-wolf attacks, and controlling more territories needs to be controlled and managed by the law enforcement agencies to stop its expansion and violent activities. ISIS has the same objective of increasing its controlled territories, Matney said, “ISIS, very deliberately, want us to overreact or react in a way that is strategically impossible to maintain. It wants us to use so many resources, that individual countries can’t do it”. In another statement, he said, “The coalition really has been our key tool to countering that strategy,” he continued. “Collectively, we’ve spread the burden of opposing ISIS effectively, and we still are (effective) today” [9]. Therefore, there is an immense need at the regional level to eliminate the expansion of ISIS through gaining dominance of war-torn states, weak governance states, religiously weakened states, and sleeper cells re-emergence along with increase in lone-wolf inspirers is required to be eliminated before its domination and followers will increase due to prevalence of social media and within reach of youngsters. Therefore, the interventional actions of external powers through their counterterrorism measures have led masses to be motivated to become part of such terrorist organizations, as the sorrow of the masses and losses of civilian lives in the so-called War on Terror have significantly rooted in anti-Western feelings and anger, by joining anti-Western terrorist groups. Hence, there is an immense need to understand the causes, factors, and dynamics of the War on Terror, which will assist in restoring peace and security in the Middle East region and ultimately in the globe.

3. ISIS is a Threat in the Middle East Region

Over time, the Islamic State has developed and even expanded at the global level despite the territorial defeat of IS in Iraq and Syria in 2019, which has pushed it to continue its dominance and inspire attacks on the West [16]. It is significant to highlight that US attack on Iraq, the upcoming of radical terrorist groups like ISIS, refugee crisis, Al-Qaeda, civil wars and long-delayed humanitarian crises in Syria, Libya, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq, that undermined economic growth and paralyzed governments in war-torn countries, which causes power gaps, sectarianism and ultimately security and peace laps, and neglected security and sustainable development in the Middle East [1]. It is highlighted that the prevalence of ISIS in the province of Turkey and Afghanistan’s

Khorasan Province makes significant and deep-rooted attack networks and its expanding capability to coordinate attacks outside their areas of controlled territories [16]. Its expansion has multiple factors, which include weak and poor governing states that significantly support the growing affiliates of ISIS that control its dominance in several territories, support the global network through media and even social media prevalence, and hyped propaganda narratives. Therefore, the IS in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is presently making its dominance in Syria after a years-long campaign to regain itself as present shift in the international counterterrorism efforts in Syria and Africa have heightened in developing weakened security systems, which can exploit further by enhancing its strength and dominance in the area of the middle east [16]. It represents that the Islamic State is expanding and growing in its dominance and strength, which will significantly cause inspired-lone wolf attacks and will ultimately cause more external attacks against the United States of America. It has been highlighted by Analyst Charles Lister, senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, who gives a warning that ISIS is making efforts to regroup in a makeshift detention system in the northeast area of Syria [17]. It represents these camps that have some factions with ISIS affiliates that continue to pose a threat to the inhabitants. The ISIS attracted masses globally by waging psychological warfare through online videos of crucifixions and beheadings to attract social media viewers and followers, the objective of these videos has been to create terror in local population, but mainly to force followers to become part of the Caliphate, which represents the extreme interpretation of Islamic justice and this era of brutality started in 2014 by public beheading of American journalist James Foley's sends message of psychological terror to the West to prevent intervention of law enforcement agencies in Syria and Iraq[23]. The group of ISIS, "shadow governance," is active in Syria for extortion activities, taxation invoices to the masses doing local business, and regulating customs duties for commercial trucking is common on main roads, representing the fear in public of ISIS [11]. ISIS continued to enforce its radical interpretations of Islam through terror activities, which involved mass executions, beheadings, and suicide bombings, and its notorious 2014 massacre that killed thousands and captured more population, which has been the largest campaign against ethnic and religious minorities in Mosul and Raqqa [23]. Therefore, such masses get involved in terrorist activities due to hunger and poverty factors, as these camps and prisons are targets for sleeper cells [17]. It is a need of the hour that Iran understands the dynamics of its role of giving safe havens to ISIS as claimed by Tasnim News Agency, the media arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, have claimed that "Israel ordered ISIS to take responsibility for the attack." and even President Ibrahim Raisi in ceremony in honoring the victims claimed that Iran would retaliate and blamed both United States and Israel, which represents in view of analysts and government officials that state has failed to protect its people from terrorism as Iran could not keep his people safe from regional effect of terrorism in devastated manner at large-scale retaliation in the country [25]. It represented that despite efforts and the voice of Iran against terrorism, it could not succeed in protecting its people from the violent terrorist activities of ISIS, and despite taking responsibility and doing security measures and strict policies, it is putting efforts in blaming other countries. "The opinion among the revolutionaries is overwhelmingly upset and not satisfied. Right now, we are getting hit over and we are doing nothing" as said by Aboozar Nasr, a 44-year-old business owner in Qom. Also said, "If the policy is restraint, then officials should stop the threatening rhetoric," he said, "It sounds empty and fake." [25]. It represents that Iran could not buy the trust of its people by blaming Israel for ISIS-related attacks, but not accepting its weak security strategies, policies, and implementation, which led ISIS to have its sleeper cells and lone-wolf attacks. It heightened the need to revise existing policies and strategies to

counter the spread of ISIS, despite collective military operations, initiatives, and strict practices. In the study, the authors have suggested, “the four-dimensional thick recognition model, which comprises self-esteem, historical facts, hubristic parameters, and ontological security dynamics” [15]. Thus, there is immense need to have such models, dynamics and manifestations that are according to the present challenges, recognition of historical factors, causes, understanding the mindset and strategic capabilities of the ISIS, the weapons, computer skills, and the Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities used by the ISIS in the present dynamics of gaining dominance, social media support, popularity to make other inspire to do lone-wolf attacks to deal them militarily, intelligence capabilities, usage of social media, hence to eliminate their dominance and expansion in every sphere.

4. ISIS is a Reason for Reconstructing the Policies of Counter Terrorism

ISIS is the only terrorist organization that to formulated a transnational caliphate in Syria and Iraq, which holds the capabilities to acquire and sustain the territorial gains, which are not seen in other terrorist organizations [13]. It represented that the challenges and dynamics are completely different that have been practiced and experienced by law enforcement agencies in view of other or older terrorist organizations. Terrorism is defined in words of Wight (2009) that, terrorism could not be understood in the form of social and political phenomenon completely by approaches, which decreases it to a matter of psychology of an individual as instating motivations of an individual is to undermine structural factors even ideational or material that contribute and comprises accepting to the phenomenon [21]. ISIS also characterized to have such strategies that have been not functioned before any other terrorist organization; working simultaneously being a state and a terrorist organization, generating funds from three sources, which are oil and gas in its controlled territories, taxation and extortion as a levied taxes for ISIS on the population and its controlled territories, along the capture of more territories like Mosul in 2014 that caused plundering the cash in vaults of banks [13]. The extremist violence is viewed as a threat to life and limb, but also a societal, heritage, and cultural threat, which focuses on public communication in areas of extreme violence that have a lower level of threat perception than areas with lower levels of violence [2]. It represented that in the areas that seem to be less prone to violence or terrorism, they are considered a breeding ground or a sleeping cell of a terrorist organization. It represented that for counter terrorism, understanding, operations, and strategies are required to comprehend the effective and practical solution to combat ISIS in its terrorist activities, lone-wolf attacks, hybrid warfare, and even guerrilla warfare tactics at the regional and global level, which deeply affects the peace and security dynamics. It is significant to highlight that since the Trump rule in 2017, ISIS faced huge territorial losses due to military operations of the United States and allied forces, whereas its attacks continued at the global level [13]. It is essential to recognize that the tectonic changes in the Middle East region, triggered by the “Arab Spring” uprisings, which have severely disrupted traditional rules and regimes, as well as the presence of non-functional governments in developing regions, provide fertile ground for the growth of terrorist organizations [12]. It is alarming that in the period of January 2018 to October 2024, ISIS have conducted 2,036 attacks, which counts 25 percent of incidents in Syria whereas the attacks have significantly increased from 187 in year 2018 to 416 in the first ten months of 2024, which represents persistence and adaptative strategies followed by the ISIS in-regard to geographical pressures and transitions [6]. The strategic capability of ISIS threatens the peace and security concerns for the United States of America. It has been highlighted that, “The (Biden) administration believes that the US has a strategic

stake in Iraq's stability and ISIS threatens that stability" in words of Steven Simon, a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute worked under former President Barack Obama, whereas he also stated that "It is noteworthy mostly because (Anbar operation) was launched as the US and Iraq had agreed on the overall reduction in US troop levels and on a training mission for remaining troops,"[22]. It highlighted the need of advancing the strategic capabilities of the US troops and the allied NATO force to counter the attacks of the ISIS in the regional level and at the global level as even its expansion has been controlled over the Middle East region to some extent but still its sleeping cells are active and lone-wolf attacks are capable enough to disrupt regional and global peace and security dynamics.

The rise in terrorist activities has forced countries to tighten their civil rights and democratic principles to formulate and practice new anti-terrorism legislation, which ensures regional peace and security dynamics. Therefore, countries like Turkey, known for Kurdish separatist conflicts, have enabled centralized power collaboration activities and weakening of opponents through extensive anti-terror laws, whereas other countries like Jordan, Syria, and Egypt have significantly enforced strict laws on political orientation and for minority groups regarding counterterrorism measures [1]. It represented that there is an immense need to have collaborative regional and global efforts to end the menace of ISIS that is spreading even by its lone-wolf attacks and social media attraction, due to regional and global ruling power deficiencies. Amid the territorial gains of ISIS, as ISIS' is working on expanding its Islamic State's territories has been worrisome due to "if it succeeds even in part, al-Qaeda will for the first time have swaths of territory abutting the borders of Israel, Turkey and Iraq—a strategic nightmare for regional and Western security chiefs." [24]. It highlighted that despite coalition forces' military operation and using advanced strategies and planning, ISIS continued to expand its controlled territories, especially in the Middle East region, and its followers have extensively increased despite educating the masses in advanced countries against terrorism and terrorist organizations. ISIS is presently not ruling a territory, but its ideology has extended to several factions, and even still, there is an immensely strong coalition of forces. In the words of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, "I think if we've learned anything over the last 10 years of the coalition, then I would argue that this threat does not go away: It changes and it adapts, as said in other interview, Where we are right now, is we are at a normal and healthy stage we are adapting, too" as said by Alan Matney, DODs coordinator for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS[9]. It concluded that in the present global dynamics, there is an immense need to have collaborative efforts of the United States of America and coalition force to end the menace of ISIS, which need to be contained, need practical policies and procedure to end its continuously expanding strategies and tactics as it contributed significantly to increase the terrorist activities and affect the global peace parameters. The increased terrorist activities and the War on Terror in the Middle East have changed the security and political dynamics, intensified extremist activities, increase in proxy wars, massive humanitarian crisis, resulted in economic turmoil, contained civil liberties and hence contributed to imbalance the power politics because of geopolitical shifts in the region [1]. In the last six months of 2024, ISIS has produced and deployed at least three vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), that has been unnoticed in 2019 and represents highlighted message of enhanced supply chains, logistics and access to safe procedure facilities as even number of IED attacks have been increased also that resulted in coordinated ambushes, complicated collective assaults, pop-ups checkpoints on highways, targeted assassinations and raids [11]. ISIS continued its attacks on civilians in local communities,

critical infrastructures, and security installations, which led to an extensive humanitarian crisis and catastrophic atrocities [2]. It represented that there is an immense need for global and regional efforts to control the spread of ISIS terrorist activities in the Middle East region. In view of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' request to its member states to enhance repatriation efforts to prove the link between counter-terrorism strategies and human rights, "Terrorism represents the denial and destruction of human rights. And so the fight against it will never succeed if we perpetuate the same denial and destruction" [17]. It has been observed that the expulsion of more than 1.5 million Afghans due to a lack of proper documentation in October 2023 resulted in instability in Pakistan, as regional tensions have escalated between both countries, and this increase in the expulsion of Afghans will persistently cause an increase in terrorist activities in Pakistan [2]. Therefore, there is an immense need for law enforcement agencies to review the present policies, security, and peace dynamics, and strengthen the skills and technological advancements of law enforcement agencies to eliminate the penetration of ISIS in the region. "The (Biden) administration believes the US has a strategic stake in Iraq's stability and that ISIS threatens that stability", in view of Steven Simon, known as a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute [22]. It represented that ISIS is a terrorist organization, which has made it difficult for the global powers to take decisions for its elimination in view of its domination and skillful tactics that have not been experienced by any other terrorist organization at the global and regional level, ultimately. Major General Matthew McFarlane's thoughts highlighted that ISIS has been militarily defeated, but its dangerous ideologies are still a threat [17]. It highlighted that ISIS has continued to exercise its advancement strategies by re-emerging from its sleeping cells in war-torn countries, attracting lone-wolf attackers from different parts of the globe, and engaging the law enforcement agencies to continue their military operations and strategies in expanding its controlled territories. The European security forces have dismantled various attack networks linked to the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKAP) and Turkey, and security officials and analysts have warned in 2024 of an extensive risk of Islamic State attacks against the West. It represented that ISIS has managed to increase its attacks, lone-wolf followers, and controlled territories at the regional level [16]. It represents that ISIS has continued to expand its territories, even to completely governed and functional states like Turkey; it represents that its governing and domination tactics have succeeded in not affecting their terrorist and violent activities. Therefore, there is an immense need to understand the strategic, military and geopolitical capabilities of ISIS at the global level, which keep focusing its capabilities in re-emergence in different parts of the globe through its sleeper cells and attacks of lone-wolf masses and above all the media support to radicalize the masses to focus the forces skills and capabilities, AI and advanced strategies to end the terrorist organization causes and factors that significantly effects global peace and security.

5. Need for Reanalyzing the Present Threat to Global Peace

For eliminating and figuring-out the strategies of counter-terrorism, there is immense need to understand the characteristics of the ISIS, which keep it expanding and expanding over time. Therefore, it is elaborated that ISIS has psychological, technological and above all religious dimensions but in its core structures, it poses anti-colonial power dynamics, which is the Islamic state even a Sunni Caliphate, even if ISIS has been eliminated, the idea of "our caliphate" is considered to persist and also return [31]. It represented that for eliminating the ISIS, there is immense need to figure-out its weakness, ending its sleeping cells, sources of funding's, and above all social media sources, which are attracting masses from all over the globe to become part of it to leave their

comfort zones and join the battle fields. There is immense need to defeat ISIS by a militarily-centered Global Coalition to eliminate its expanded territories as it's a persistent threat in Syria and Iraq, hence in the Middle East region and at the global level by focusing on hard-fought military accomplishments through repatriation of all third-country citizens in the squalid detention camps along with prisons in northeast Syria that need to be first joint operation to ease the counter terrorism operations of local law enforcement to gain long-required justice, security and peace manifestation [17]. It represented that there is an immense need in the present dynamics of comprised peace and security parameters, especially in the Middle East region, in view of on-going Palestine-Israel and Iran-Israel war along with expansion of ISIS increased activities in war torn countries like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon and even spreading in other regions of the globe. It is significant to highlight that countries in the Middle East have played dynamic role in defeating ISIS as Iran and Iraq through their law enforcement forces have contributed in resulting heavy loss in terms of lives to ISIS, whereas Turkey also played minor role even the countries which are not allies to the United States have played their role in combating the challenges of securing regional peace and global peace, ultimately [27]. Therefore, counter-terrorism efforts against jihadist groups have been challenging for law enforcement agencies because terrorist organization keep updating their tactics, military strength, and fighter numbers, and their skills, which mimic the successful planning of popular terrorist groups like ISIS that have enhanced a specific model for carrying out destructive tactics [10]. The fight of the globe with ISIS is completely tactically but it has been not successful at strategic level as 80-strong coalition forces have been capable enough to defeat ISIS but it resulted in uncountable victims like still 3000 unknown victims of ISIS are not provided any assistance, the hundreds of thousands of Yazidis in northern Iraq have been not assisted to return to their countries, whereas it's a fact the United States allowed Turkey, which is a NATO-ally to attack northeast Syria and its own Syrian Defence Forces (SDF) partners as allies are attacking on each other that never happened before [27]. It represented that ISIS has understood their power by their skills and fighters by expanding their Caliphate control and luring more recruiters by social media inspiration and lone-wolf attacks in European and Middle Eastern countries despite losing their territories continuously. The end of the Assad regime in 2024 in Syria has been the beginning of several loopholes, which led to the creation of ISIS, a lack of functional government, and a weak governance system, active destabilizing actors in the country that comprise Iran, ISIS, and pro-Assad loyalists [5]. ISIS benefited from the position of Syria in the region, and lack of governing policies, poverty, and hunger have been the leading factors to exploit security vacuums that added up by socio-political uncertainty to intensify chaotic conditions to lure the public towards terrorist activities and by its lethal and violent activities to establish its so-called Caliphate. It represented that weak governing policies and the justice system provide deep loopholes for non-state actors like ISIS to re-emerge their sleeping cells and take advantage of the weak fabric of socio-political and religious understanding of the public for their gains in achieving success in terrorist activities. There is an immense need for the repatriation of all third-country nationals in the Syrian detention camps and prisons, which is significantly required to be the first step to decrease the burden of the local administration and to succeed in the aim of stabilization, justice, and long-required security [17]. It has been believed that managing open democratic institutions during periods of unrest is crucial to counter radicalization, whereas prolonged conflicts have contributed to the damaging of governance and institutional structures in Yemen, Iraq, Libya, and Syria [1]. The decrease in counter-ISIS operational activity mainly with Iran and its proxy militants based in Syria and Iraq, which even carried out at least 185 attacks on the troops of the United States of America

since October 2023, that contributed to limiting the freedom of maneuvering activities mainly in Syria [11]. It has been elaborated by Alan Matney, DOD's coordinator for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, regarding law enforcement strategies that, "When the coalition stood up, we chose a different model," along pointing out that "Now consensus-based multilateral organizations obviously do great things____ and it is worth noting that NATO is a member of the coalition ____ but this consensus can come at a cost for nimbleness, for flexibility" [9]. It highlighted the need to focus on coherent and collaborative military operations, surveillance operations, intelligence sharing meetings, and cooperation to end the sleeping cells' hideouts, the lone-wolf followers' network, and ultimately to end its prominence in the controlled territories. The post-Assad regime in Syria is overwhelmed by a fragile governing system under the impact of a lack of national consensus of ruling powers, a politically unstable environment, and economic crisis, which includes Iran, ISIS, and the most impactful threat is pro-Assad loyalists [5]. It represented that weak governing states and fragile political environment, along with an unaddressed economic crisis, are the two sides of a coin, which could not let the masses come out of ISIS's so-called Islamic Caliphate domination and violence. ISIS has succeeded to be force in Iraq, the group's intensified brutal terrorist campaign, which includes shootings, prison breaks and coordinated car bombs along poor governance of Malik's government, elimination of the Sunni population, lack of strong military powers and strategies and sectarian divide have been the reason's that provided a breeding ground to ISIS to form its strong Caliphate dominance in the affected region [24]. The number of foreign fighters has multiplied, with the group expanding its reach towards Europe and achieving an international level. It represented that ISIS has continued to gain its prominence at the regional and global levels despite the extensive efforts and policies framework of the leading powers. ISIS is in effort and prolong struggle to govern and conquer territory over territory only aimed to create Islamic State as highlighted by the The Times Newspaper analysts, "if it succeeds even in part, al-Qaeda will for the first time have swaths of territory abutting the borders of Israel, Turkey and Iraq, a strategic nightmare for regional and Western security chiefs" [24]. It represented that ISIS has succeeded in gaining dominance of Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, and moving forward, other weak states that have been hit by wars and led by weak governing systems and a lack of the prevalence of justice. ISIS has continued to gain its domination through improving its governance system and daily requirements of its villages by renovation of highways and roads, working to provide the supply of fuel and free community kitchens along with vaccination campaigns, as reported by residents of Syria [21]. It represented that ISIS has provided facilities to villages to make their controlled territories known with positive thoughts and reviews by the public, and mainly to facilitate the movement of its troops. It has been highlighted by the ICG report that a previous US official, "[W]hat once was a Syrian conflict with regional spillover has become a regional war with a Syrian focus." [24]. It represented that ISIS has succeeded in taking control of more territories in war-hit Syria due to its lack of a functional and weak governing system that gives loopholes to ISIS to take control and radicalize the population. In the words of Alan Matney, DOD coordinator for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS about Islamic States strategies and tactics, "Groups like ISIS just continually assess what their strengths are, assess what their weaknesses are, and try to position themselves to take advantage of that," Matney said, "We do the same" [9]. It represented that ISIS has used its strengths, planning, and decision-making capabilities in understanding the weaknesses and loopholes of weak governing states, conflict-ridden states, and uses them as their sleeping cells, domination territories to expand their troop strength and to radicalize masses with their so-called Islamic Sharia principles. The United States of America has succeeded since January 2024, to at least eight ISIS terrorist plans

that have been failed by the interim government due to timely intelligence cooperation by the United States [28]. It is significant to highlight that Turkey has re-stabilized its diplomatic, military, and economic weakness by focusing on improving the governing and justice system and making a goodwill gesture for an overwhelming number of Syrians, as over time, the US thoughts for Syria have changed by tolerating Iranian government and Assad regime, focusing a lot on the Islamic State, ensuring humanitarian assistance but ending military and political aid to the opposition by ending open-ended favor to People's Defense Units (YPG)/Kurdistan's Workers Party (PKK) has been stopped as United States and Israel have to work with durable and constructive approach to the new ruling government in Syria [4]. Therefore, there is an immense need to have such approaches, frameworks, and practical implementations, which could assist in eliminating the spread of ISIS to the Middle East and at the global level. Hence, the law enforcement agencies and analysts at the regional and global level have to formulate such policies and strategies, which could counter the spread of ISIS and its lethal terrorist activities at the global level.

6. Recommendations

In view of global expansion of ISIS mainly in the Middle East, it is recommended to have such policies and practices in Syria after end of Assad regime to ensure that security vacuums are filled, movements and sleeping cells of ISIS are surveilled and neutralized, along with ISIS-link prisoners and in the northeastern camps of Syria need to be monitored and complete implementation of a long-lasting deal with Damascus to ensure peace prevalence after return of the US-led troops[5]. There is immense need to comprehend on the vacuum that ISIS has created by its gaining territories over territories; it elaborated that America faced failures in the Middle East over the last century as there have been attempts by the Islamist rebels or the United State to overcome authoritarian regimes in Syria, Libya and Iraq to enhance power vacuum, which develops emptiness in political domain that have been filled by the ISIS till the United States and its allies collaborate and function effectively to eliminate such terrorist organization and its controlled terrorist holds [31]. There is an immense need for collaborative efforts in intelligence sharing and deconfliction, as well as strong governing policies and a justice system, prevalence of law and order, between Syria's interim government and policymakers, to ensure regional peace. It is need of the hour to develop and enhance international coalition partnership strategies against ISIS to prevent the terror group's re-emergence in the Middle East region, including Syria [5]. There is significant need and understanding initiating and practical deradicalization programs, which could assist masses who have escaped from the ISIS controlled territories to get themselves disengaged from the terrorist organization and to provide preventive measures of re-radicalization in prisons and to provide them rehabilitation to come out of their trauma's and challenging mental and emotional pain due to criminal offences and societal pressure to disintegrate them into society after release from prison [20]. It is need of the hour for the United States, Europe and the regional countries to establish an engagement mechanism, which will enhance the development of a common approach, and directly with the Syrian interim authorities to encourage such measures that contribute towards regional and international stability according to the expectations of the Syrians [5]. Despite hardcore strategies and planning, ISIS has managed to re-emerge in Syria by 2024 and even tripled its number of attacks compared to 2023, which suggests that it has continued to expand its geographical control, recruitment numbers, and operational tactics to grow in strength and impact. Even knowing the risk factors and the geographical loopholes, there is immense need to have a stable and functioning central government in Syria, which is fully-

integrated with its neighborhood and capable enough to resolve its issues as a state and same is focused policy plan by the Middle East, Europe and the United States to address their regional and national issues [28]. The international coalition against ISIS is significantly required to initiate and implement a long-term strategy to prevent the re-emergence of terrorist organizations, particularly in Syria [5]. It represented that there is immense potential in the present hour to end the sleeping cells of ISIS, which provide a breeding ground for the re-emergence of ISIS. According to thoughts of Alan Matney, “The coalition really has been our key tool to countering that strategy,” he continued. “Collectively, we’ve spread the burden of opposing ISIS effectively, and we still are [effective] today.” [9]. Therefore, there is an immense need to figure out such strategies, effective policies, and practices, which could assist in eliminating the menace of ISIS and its sleeper cells in different states of the Middle East and the globe, ultimately.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the global dynamics have significantly evolved over time as ISIS is the leading threat to peace in the Middle East and at the global level due to its uncontrolled dominance over one territory after another. It have changed the dynamics of peace paradigm as the present policies, practices and strategies have failed to control the dominance of ISIS through lone-wolf attack followers, inspired travelers who made journey to ISIS to live Islamic Sharia life under their controlled territories where so-called ‘Islamic Sharia’ is enforced and regulated to immense fear and brutality of ISIS through increasing its dominance expansion to more territories and to be known globally as the most lethal terrorist organization in the globe. The law enforcement agencies at the regional level and the global level are to counter the spread of ISIS and control its spread in weak-governing states, conflict-ridden states, and above all justice lack governing systems are prone to be affected by the ISIS’s dominance as people get inspired by ISIS’s so-called, ‘Islamic Caliphate’ and want it to experience that is absent in their Muslim countries. It’s the need of hour for the leading global powers, policymakers, decision making bodies to re-direct the efforts and skills in understanding the ISIS’s weaknesses, which could assist in eliminating it, taking control of territories under its dominance, giving awareness to masses about true spirit of Islam and de-radicalization and also providing necessities of life along with psychological, social and emotional health prevalence, that does not provide loophole in public to get attract or inspired by such global terrorist organization.

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