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Terrorism 1NC

1. If the U.S. leaves Afghanistan, terrorism will still be a major threat.  
BBC News 2010

(“Afghan paper fears factional fighting if foreign forces withdraw too soon.” Text of article, “Warning from Senator John McCain, Liam Fox,” by state-owned Afghan newspaper Hewad. July 8, 2010. <http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T9787946933&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T9787946945&cisb=22_T9787946944&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=16> LEXIS.)

An assessment of the warnings of John McCain, Liam shows that such concerns truly exist. Many political and military experts believe that determining an exact date for the withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan will cause the war to continue. It is also clear that the international forces cannot stay here forever. However, their withdrawal should be conditional. It means that if the situation is satisfactory, Afghan security forces are capable of ensuring security and can foil foreign terrorist threats to the country, there will be no need for the presence of international forces in Afghanistan. Terrorism still poses a serious threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan, the region and the world. The centres where terrorists are recruited, trained, funded and armed are still active outside Afghanistan. Different fighters, including suicide bombers, are trained in these centres and then sent to Afghanistan to attack internal and international forces, government establishments, highways and civilians. The Afghan military forces are not strong enough to ensure countrywide security. The most serious problem is that the system has not yet politically, economically, militarily and socially stood on its own feet. If the international forces leave prematurely, there is a strong possibility that factional fighting will resume over power. A number of powerful people have already issued threats. If the international forces leave prematurely, they will start fighting one another. This will again claim the lives of innocent Afghans. If the international community, in particular America, wants to pave the way for its withdrawal, it must strengthen the system. International forces can confidently leave the country only when Afghanistan has a strong and self-sufficient system that can foil all internal and foreign threats to its security and stability and implement economic programmes for the prosperity and well-being of people.

2. Al Qaeda is now weak because of the war in Afghanistan.

Reid 2009

(Robert H., a veteran foreign correspondent who covers conflicts in the Middle East, “U.S. says al Qaeda now weak in Afghanistan,” October 07, 2009 <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1A1-D90G6SS00.html>.)

Al Qaeda's role in Afghanistan has faded after eight years of war. Gone is the once-formidable network of camps and safe houses where Osama bin Laden and his mostly Arab operatives trained thousands of young Muslims to wage a global jihad. The group is left with fewer than 100 core fighters, according to the Obama administration, likely operating small-scale bomb-making and tactics classes conducted by trainers who travel to and from Pakistan. Assessing the real strength and threat posed by al Qaeda is at the heart of an evolving policy debate in Washington about whether to escalate the U.S. military presence in this country. The war was launched soon after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to root out al Qaeda and deny the militant movement a safe haven in a Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

3.  Terrorist can’t get weapons of mass destruction or nuclear weapons.

Healy 2010

Gene, Examiner Columnist Gene Healy is a vice president at the Cato Institute and the author of "The Cult of the Presidency," The Washington Examiner, April 6, 2010, “Gene Healy: Terrorism isn't an 'existential threat',” <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columns/Terrorism-isn_t-an-_existential-threat_-89944242.html>.)

When the enemy's best recent shot involves lighting his pants on fire, we shouldn't torture ourselves with nightmarish visions of weapons of mass destruction. Such weapons are exceedingly hard to come by. As political scientist John Mueller notes in his recent book "Atomic Obsession," "no state has ever given another state -- even a close ally, much less a terrorist group -- a nuclear weapon (or chemical, biological, or radiological one either)." And home-grown WMD tend to be ineffective. The Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo had roughly a billion dollars devoted to developing chemical and biological weapons, the most sophisticated such program in the history of terrorism. But when it released sarin gas on the Tokyo subway in 1995, it only managed to kill 12 people. Building a nuclear weapon is even harder. Any group trying to do so faces "Herculean challenges," according to the Gilmore Commission, the advisory panel President Bush set up to assess terror threats in the wake of 9/11. There has been no known case, Mueller points out, of any appreciable amount of weapons-grade uranium disappearing. None of this should be taken as a counsel of complacency. The low risk of terrorist WMD doesn't make guarding against it a waste of time. It makes sense, for example, to boost funding for international efforts to prevent nuclear smuggling, as the Obama administration has done. But when we overreact, we're doing terrorists' job for them.

Terrorism 1NC

4. Terrorism is not an existential threat.

Mueller & Stewart

John, Professor of Political Science at Ohio State University, and Mark G., Professor of Civil Engineering and Director of the Centre for Infrastructure Performance and Reliability at the University of Newcastle in Australia, “Hardly Existential: Thinking Rationally About Terrorism,” April 2, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66186/john-mueller-and-mark-g-stewart/hardly-existential>.)

An impressively large number of politicians, opinion makers, scholars, bureaucrats, and ordinary people hold that terrorism -- and al Qaeda in particular -- poses an existential threat to the United States. This alarming characterization, which was commonly employed by members of the George W. Bush administration, has also been used by some Obama advisers, including the counterterrorism specialist Bruce Riedel. Some officials, such as former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, have parsed the concept further, declaring the struggle against terrorism to be a "significant existential" one. Over the last several decades, academics, policymakers, and regulators worldwide have developed risk-assessment techniques to evaluate hazards to human life, such as pesticide use, pollution, and nuclear power plants. In the process, they have reached a substantial consensus about which risks are acceptable and which are unacceptable. When these techniques are applied to terrorism, it becomes clear that terrorism is far from an existential threat. Instead, it presents an acceptable risk, one so low that spending to further reduce its likelihood or consequences is scarcely justified.

5. Fear of terrorism cause human rights violations and too=powerful government.

Campos 2010

(Paul, professor of law at the University of Colorado, “Undressing the Terror Threat,” The Wall Street Journal, JANUARY 9, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704130904574644651587677752.html>)

No amount of statistical evidence, however, will make any difference to those who give themselves over to almost completely irrational fears. Such people, and there are apparently a lot of them in America right now, are in fact real victims of terrorism. They also make possible the current ascendancy of the politics of cowardice—the cynical exploitation of fear for political gain. Unfortunately, the politics of cowardice can also make it rational to spend otherwise irrational amounts of resources on further minimizing already minimal risks. Given the current climate of fear, any terrorist incident involving Islamic radicals generates huge social costs, so it may make more economic sense, in the short term, to spend X dollars to avoid 10 deaths caused by terrorism than it does to spend X dollars to avoid 1,000 ordinary homicides. Any long-term acceptance of such trade-offs hands terrorists the only real victory they can ever achieve. It's a remarkable fact that a nation founded, fought for, built by, and transformed through the extraordinary courage of figures such as George Washington, Susan B. Anthony and Martin Luther King Jr. now often seems reduced to a pitiful whimpering giant by a handful of mostly incompetent criminals, whose main weapons consist of scary-sounding Web sites and shoe- and underwear-concealed bombs that fail to detonate. Terrorball, in short, is made possible by a loss of the sense that cowardice is among the most disgusting and shameful of vices. I shudder to think what Washington, who as commander in chief of the Continental Army intentionally exposed himself to enemy fire to rally his poorly armed and badly outnumbered troops, would think of the spectacle of millions of Americans not merely tolerating but actually demanding that their government subject them to various indignities, in the false hope that the rituals of what has been called "security theater" will reduce the already infinitesimal risks we face from terrorism. Indeed, if one does not utter the magic word "terrorism," the notion that it is actually in the best interests of the country for the government to do everything possible to keep its citizens safe becomes self-evident nonsense.

6. Pakistan plans on defeating the Taliban.

Haider 2009

(Kamran, writer for Reuters, “Pakistan PM says will defeat Taliban and ensure peace,” May 18, 2009, The Independent, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistan-pm-says-will-defeat-taliban-and-ensure-peace-1687058.html>)

Pakistan's army will finish its offensive against Taliban militants in the Swat valley and ensure peace, Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani said today as he rallied the support of political parties. The offensive, launched this month as international alarm grew over an intensifying insurgency, was making progress and every effort would be made to help the more than 1 million people displaced by the fighting, he said. "The operation against the terrorists is progressing very successfully and those who destroyed the peace of the nation are fleeing in disguise," Gilani said in an opening address to an all-parties conference on the fighting. "Troops will remain in the region until peace is ensured and all the displaced people return home," he said. Militant violence in nuclear-armed Pakistan has surged over the past two years, raising fears for its stability and alarming the United States, which needs Pakistani action to help defeat al Qaeda and bring stability to neighbouring Afghanistan.

Terrorism 1NC

7. The War on Terror has begun to eliminate extremists.

Baker 2008

(Gerard, staff writer for The Sunday Times, “Cheer up. We're winning this War on Terror,” Sunday Times, June 27, 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/article4221376.ece>)

The third and perhaps most significant advance of all in the War on Terror is the discrediting of the Islamist creed and its appeal. This was first of all evident in Iraq, where the head-hacking frenzy of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his associates so alienated the majority of Muslims that it gave rise to the so-called Sunni Awakening that enabled the surge to be so effective. But it has spread way beyond Iraq. As Lawrence Wright described in an important piece in The New Yorker last month, there is growing disgust not just among moderate Muslims but even among other jihadists at the extremism of the terrorists. Deeply encouraging has been the widespread revulsion in Muslim communities in Europe - especially in Britain after the 7/7 attacks of three years ago. Some of the biggest intelligence breakthroughs in the past few years have been achieved from former al-Qaeda supporters who have turned against the movement. There ought to be no surprise here. It's only their apologists in the Western media who really failed to see the intrinsic evil of Islamists. Those who have had to live with it have never been in much doubt about what it represents. Ask the people of Iran. Or those who fled the horrors of Afghanistan under the Talebans.

Withdrawal 🡪 More Terrorism Ext

Withdrawal from Afghanistan would lead to a new terrorist threat in Afghanistan.

Daily Mail 2010

(Quotes Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 12th and current Secretary General of NATO, “British forces' withdrawal from Afghanistan could cause surge in Taliban attacks, Nato warns,” July 13, 2010, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1294258/British-forces-withdrawal-Afghanistan-cause-surge-Taliban-attacks-Nato-warns.html>.)

Mr. Rasmussen, the Nato secretary-general, said that while he understood the desire of elected leaders to bring back their forces, the mission had to continue until the Afghans could take responsibility for their own security. 'We can have our hopes, we can have our expectations, but I cannot give any guarantee as far as an exact date or year is concerned,' he told The Daily Telegraph. 'The Taliban follow the political debate in troop-contributing countries closely. 'If they discover that through their attacks, they can weaken the support for our presence in Afghanistan, they will just be encouraged to step up their attacks on foreign troops.' Mr. Rasmussen, a former Danish prime minister, said that withdrawing too soon from Afghanistan would lead to a renewed terrorist threat from Al Qaeda, and would risk destabilizing neighboring Pakistan 'The Taliban would return to Afghanistan and Afghanistan would once again become a safe haven for terrorist groups who would use it as a launch pad for terrorist attacks on North America and Europe,' he said. Following Mr. Rasmussen's meeting with Mr. Cameron, Downing Street said they had agreed on the 'central importance' of the ongoing international mission in Afghanistan 'to the national security of the UK and all Nato allies'.

There will be a new surge of terrorism if the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan too early.

BBC News 2010

(“USA to brace for new surge of **terrorism if withdraws from Afghanistan**,“ Text of editorial in Dari headlined "Setting a timetable for withdrawal from Afghanistan will embolden the Taleban and prolong the war" and published by Afghan independent secular daily newspaper Hasht-e Sobh, July 8, 2010, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T9787946933&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T9787946945&cisb=22_T9787946944&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=6> LEXIS)

The main concern is that setting a deadline will give concessions to the Pakistani military, which supports the Taleban, and it will open the way for its interference in Afghanistan. Taleban and their allies are now stronger than ever and as Taleban spokesman, Zabihollah Mojahed, says, Taleban have the upper hand. Is withdrawing from Afghanistan in this situation not tantamount to abandoning the field for the Taleban? Surprisingly, the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan is announced at a time when General Petraeus is speaking of victory in the nine year war without telling us how we can tell that this war is being won. There is no doubt that the Taleban interpret this decision as their victory and can use it as an effective propaganda tool to recruit more fighters. The Afghan ambassador is right when he says that too much reliance on an unrealistic timetable will only embolden the enemy and prolong the war. Considering the reconciliatory efforts of the government of Afghanistan, it is not clear who the enemy is. Currently, Taleban have the upper hand despite extensive presence of foreign forces and national army and police. What guarantees are there that the country and the people will be better defended in the absence of these forces? Premature withdrawal of American forces can only boost the morale of the opposition front and make the government of Afghanistan vulnerable. Moreover, the question that has to be asked is how is this decision made nine years later? There is no doubt that if the United States of America withdraws from Afghanistan without ensuring durable peace, it will have to strengthen its defences against terrorism on its own borders. One of the consequences of this premature withdrawal will be violation by the government of Afghanistan for its survival of all the values enshrined in the constitution and a hasty reconciliation deal with the opposition.

Withdrawal 🡪 More Terrorism Ext

If international forces leave Afghanistan, the Taliban and Al Qaeda will start fighting again.

BBC News 2008

(“Afghan paper against withdrawal of foreign forces,” Text of report by M. Motahar entitled "Withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan or the rule of terrorists again" published by private Afghan newspaper Arman-e Melli, December 14, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T9787946933&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T9787946945&cisb=22_T9787946944&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=15>, LEXIS)

During the mojahedin's rule our country was afflicted by the civil war that was imposed on it. After that, the terrorist Taleban group ruled the country for five years and the Afghan people's cries could be heard from a distance. It was a time when many innocent women and children were killed in harsh ways and at that time foreign countries were the observers of this explicit violation of human rights. Some of these countries, including Britain - that talk about democracy and human rights today - did not apply any serious efforts against the terrorists at that time and they supported the terrorist Taleban and Al-Qa'idah group in some ways. After the 11 September attack, the United States apparently realized that the terrorists stationed in Afghanistan were the very serious danger posed to the international security. As a result, the anti-terrorist coalition forces, with the collaboration of the national forces, dissolved the terrorists' system in Afghanistan. However, after a short time, the terrorists got new blood with the collusion of the spying channels in countries near and far. Today, the terrorists are strongly lining up against the national and international forces and their elimination seems impossible. The withdrawal of the international forces is the slogan of the Taleban and Al-Qa'idah and they give religious and lawful justification to all their murders, even the killing of innocent people. There is no doubt that after the withdrawal of the international forces from Afghanistan, the Taleban would soon start fighting the national forces. Their cruelty, fear, bloodshed and revenge on the people would start and such a thing is not seen by history. It is seen right now that some of the government officials who are eager for power, point to the withdrawal of the foreign forces especially the American soldiers, though they denounce the succession cycle. The leading circles in the Afghan government think that they have lost the foreign support. Thus they want to attract the peoples' support by raising the issue of negotiation with the opposition and the withdrawal of the international forces, through which they would be able to be at the helm for some more years and they are not even concerned if this ship is going to sink.

Withdrawing from Afghanistan would just benefit the terrorists and cause an increase in terrorism.

May 2009

(Clifford D., President of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a policy institute focusing on terrorism created immediately following the 9/11 attacks on the United States, “Eight Years and Counting,” National Review, September 10, 2009, <http://article.nationalreview.com/405851/eight-years-and-counting/clifford-d-may?page=2>)

It is a war over ideas as much as it is a war over land. In fact, as real estate, Afghanistan is of minimal value. But what happens there will help determine how we — and our enemies and the millions of people around the world who have not taken sides — understand what this struggle is about and who is likely to prevail. “It was the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that laid much of the imaginative groundwork for 9/11,” Wall Street Journal columnist Bret Stephens points out. “If one superpower could be brought down, why not the other?” General McChrystal and his commander, Gen. David A. Petraeus (a brilliant military mind), know what needs to get done to win the Battle of Afghanistan. They ask only that we provide the troops, weapons, and support. Less certain is whether political leaders on either side of the aisle have a coherent strategy to win the broader conflict. I suspect bin Laden was correct when he observed that most people prefer a strong horse to a weak horse. The strategic implication is that America and the few allies that have any fight left in them need to beat al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other militant Islamists like rented mules. It is a fact of life that generals who win victories attract recruits; losing generals end up alone. What’s more, in a war against religious fanatics — the Taliban is not, as NBC’s David Gregory recently said, a “nationalist movement” — no editorial, no speech, no talking point demonstrates the absence of divine endorsement quite so convincingly as defeat on the battlefield. Any time infidels flee, declaring “This is a war that can’t be won!” or even “This is a war that can’t be won militarily!” the jihadis gain. By contrast, any time jihadis flee because they can’t stand up to “the strongest tribe,” they lose more than that engagement and lines on a map. “We pray that Allah will enable us to destroy the White House, New York, and London,” said Baitullah Mehsud, leader of the Pakistani Taliban. His recent death — killed in Pakistan killed by an American drone launched from Afghanistan — suggests his prayer went unanswered. It suggests, also, that his bellicose interpretation of Islam may be a dead end — both figuratively and literally. It was consequential that American forces and our Iraqi allies defeated al-Qaeda in Iraq (and if democracy promotion is not your top priority, don’t fret that the government there is flawed). It will be useful for us to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan (and don’t expect to leave behind a Costa Rica of the Hindu Kush; just leave behind local forces trained to defend themselves). It is imperative, too, that we exert maximum pressure on the Islamist regime in Tehran that has been waging war against us for 30 years, and is today supporting terrorists from Afghanistan to Iraq to Gaza to Argentina. If this struggle is too much for the present generation, we will deserve what comes in its place. Americans used to say that freedom is not free, that it must be earned by generation after generation. That sounds hokey to 21st-century ears, I know. That doesn’t make it less true.

Withdrawal 🡪 More Terrorism Ext

The U.S. must stay in Afghanistan to fully defeat Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Curtis & Phillips 2009

(Lisa, the Heritage Foundation’s senior research fellow on South Asia, Lisa Curtis specializes in U.S. policy toward India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, and James, Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs at the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation, The Heritage Foundation, October 5, 2009, “Shortsighted U.S. Policies on Afghanistan to Bring Long-Term Problems,” <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/10/shortsighted-us-policies-on-afghanistan-to-bring-long-term-problems>)

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the outcome of the current White House debate on Afghanistan to the future of vital U.S. national security interests. Early discussions have been characterized by wishful thinking about the U.S.'s ability to negotiate a political solution in the near term and confusion about the relationship between al-Qaeda and the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. A shortsighted view of the long-entrenched problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan risks plunging the region into deeper instability, thus reversing recent gains against al-Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban.The success of increased drone strikes against al-Qaeda and senior Taliban leaders in Pakistan's tribal border areas over the last year has apparently led some U.S. officials to mistakenly conclude that these types of operations alone can end the threat from al-Qaeda and its extremist allies. Analysis of the Taliban and its evolution over the last 15 years reveals, however, that its ideology, operational capabilities, and close ties with al-Qaeda and other Pakistan-based extremist organizations allows the movement to wield tremendous influence in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Thus the U.S. cannot hope to uproot extremism from the region without denying the Taliban the ability to again consolidate power in Afghanistan… If the Obama Administration chooses to deny its field commander's request for more troops and instead seeks to engage Taliban leaders in negotiations with the vain hope that these militants will break from their al-Qaeda allies, the results would likely be disastrous. Many Afghans that currently support the Kabul government would be tempted to hedge their bets and establish ties with the Taliban, while Afghans sitting on the fence would be much more likely to come down on the Taliban's side. President Obama must take the long view and avoid shortsighted policies that undermine U.S. friends in Afghanistan and Pakistan while encouraging America's enemies.

Al Qaeda Weak Ext

The U.S. has crushed Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Gerecht 2002

(Reuel Mark, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, “Crushing al Qaeda Is Only a Start,” February 1, 2002, <http://www.aei.org/issue/13538>, Accessed 7/23/10.)

**Before the Afghan War, Osama bin Laden constantly underscored American cowardice in battle.** When "one American pilot was dragged in the streets of Mogadishu," he gleefully remarked, "you left the area in disappointment, humiliation, and defeat." The enormous growth of anti-Americanism and the holy-warrior ethic in the Middle East has in great part been fueled by the widespread perception that the United States is, as bin Laden put it, "a paper tiger." Daisy-cutter bombs, B-52s, and American soldiers in Afghanistan have certainly helped change Middle Eastern views. The Bush administration has demonstrated tenacity toward al Qaeda and the Taliban that bin Laden and Mullah Omar probably didn't expect. In the past, bin Laden referred to the futility of confronting America militarily, and thus the need for sustained "clandestine . . . guerrilla operations." The Saudi holy warrior finally provoked that which he'd most feared. And the inevitable repercussions have already started. In Sudan, Yemen, and Lebanon-all possible future targets of America's war against terrorism-official voices now distance themselves from anti-Americanism and militant Islam. Bin Laden has in defeat publicly fallen from grace. Clerical Iran, the progenitor of modern Islamic terrorism, even gives sermons against the Saudi's methods if not his anti-American spirit.

Al Qaeda is becoming smaller in size and less of a threat.

Flaherty 2010

(ANNE, writer for the Associated Press, “CIA chief Panetta: US has driven back al-Qaida,” June 27, 2010, <http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100627/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_us_afghanistan>)

CIA Director Leon Panetta's assessment comes as President Barack Obama advances a risky new war plan that relies on 98,000 U.S. troops to prop up the Afghan government and prevent al-Qaida from returning. No longer overseeing the commander in chief's mission is Gen. Stanley McChrystal, sacked this past week in a stunning shake-up in U.S. military leadership after his critical comments about the White House. "We're seeing elements of progress, but this is going to be tough," Panetta told ABC's "This Week." He said al-Qaida's evolving attack strategy increasingly relies on operatives without any record of terrorism involvement or those already in the U.S. As for Osama bin Laden, Panetta said it's been years since the U.S. had good intelligence about his whereabouts. Panetta estimated there are fewer than 100 al-Qaida militants operating inside Afghanistan, with the rest hiding along Pakistan's mountainous western border. He said U.S. drone strikes and other spy operations have helped to "take down" half of al-Qaida's senior leaders. "We are engaged in the most aggressive operations in the history of the CIA in that part of the world, and the result is that we are disrupting their leadership," Panetta said.

Al Qaeda is at its weakest point in years.

Flaherty 2010

(ANNE, writer for the Associated Press, “CIA chief says Al-Qaida at weakest point in years,” June 27, 2010, <http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100627/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_us_afghanistan_7>)

CIA Director Leon Panetta said Sunday that al-Qaida is probably at its weakest since the Sept. 11 attacks because of U.S.-led strikes, with only 50 to 100 militants operating inside Afghanistan and the rest hiding along Pakistan's mountainous western border. Panetta said the U.S. hasn't had good intelligence on Osama bin Laden's whereabouts for years and that the terrorist network is finding smarter ways to try to attack the United States. Of greatest concern, he said, is al-Qaida's reliance on operatives without previous records or those living in the U.S. "We are engaged in the most aggressive operations in the history of the CIA in that part of the world, and the result is that we are disrupting their leadership," Panetta told ABC's "This Week." The rare assessment from the nation's spy chief comes as President Barack Obama builds up U.S. forces in Afghanistan to prop up the government and prevent al-Qaida from returning. About 98,000 U.S. troops will be in Afghanistan by fall. Panetta initially said in the interview that the Taliban leadership was at its weakest point since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, when it escaped from Afghanistan into Pakistan. He later corrected himself to say he was talking about al-Qaida.

Not Existential Risk Ext

Terrorists don’t have the means or strength to attack from abroad.

Mueller 2006

(John, Professor of Political Science at Ohio State University, “Is There Still a Terrorist Threat?: The Myth of the Omnipresent Enemy?” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61911/john-mueller/is-there-still-a-terrorist-threat-the-myth-of-the-omnipresent-en>, September/October 2006)

For the past five years, Americans have been regularly regaled with dire predictions of another major al Qaeda attack in the United States. In 2003, a group of 200 senior government officials and business executives, many of them specialists in security and terrorism, pronounced it likely that a terrorist strike more devastating than 9/11 -- possibly involving weapons of mass destruction -- would occur before the end of 2004. In May 2004, Attorney General John Ashcroft warned that al Qaeda could "hit hard" in the next few months and said that 90 percent of the arrangements for an attack on U.S. soil were complete. That fall, Newsweek reported that it was "practically an article of faith among counterterrorism officials" that al Qaeda would strike in the run-up to the November 2004 election. When that "October surprise" failed to materialize, the focus shifted: a taped encyclical from Osama bin Laden, it was said, demonstrated that he was too weak to attack before the election but was marshalling his resources to do so months after it. On the first page of its founding manifesto, the massively funded Department of Homeland Security intones, "Today's terrorists can strike at any place, at any time, and with virtually any weapon." But if it is so easy to pull off an attack and if terrorists are so demonically competent, why have they not done it? Why have they not been sniping at people in shopping centers, collapsing tunnels, poisoning the food supply, cutting electrical lines, derailing trains, blowing up oil pipelines, causing massive traffic jams, or exploiting the countless other vulnerabilities that, according to security experts, could so easily be exploited? One reasonable explanation is that almost no terrorists exist in the United States and few have the means or the inclination to strike from abroad. But this explanation is rarely offered.

Terrorism not a real threat – Americans overreact

Healy 2010

Gene, Examiner Columnist Gene Healy is a vice president at the Cato Institute and the author of "The Cult of the Presidency," The Washington Examiner, April 6, 2010, “Gene Healy: Terrorism isn't an 'existential threat',” <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columns/Terrorism-isn_t-an-_existential-threat_-89944242.html>.)

Well, at the risk of sounding "negative," it's worth remembering that terrorism has always been a weapon of the weak -- and it usually fails. As the analysts at the Human Security Report Project explain, "the overwhelming majority of terrorist campaigns fail to achieve their strategic objectives." And, despite media sensationalism, fatalities from terrorism have actually declined by some 40 percent in recent years. Terrorists bank on overreaction. As Osama bin Laden put it in 2004, "All that we have to do is to send two mujahedeen to the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al Qaeda, in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses." Adam Gadahn, the U.S.-born al Qaeda spokesman, recently called for more "lone-wolf" strikes, because "even apparently unsuccessful attacks on Western mass transportation systems can bring major cities to a halt [and] cost the enemy billions."

Not Exitential Threat Ext

The chance of someone dying because of terrorism is practically zero.

Campos 2010

(Paul, professor of law at the University of Colorado, “Undressing the Terror Threat,” The Wall Street Journal, JANUARY 9, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704130904574644651587677752.html>)

It might be unrealistic to expect the average citizen to have a nuanced grasp of statistically based risk analysis, but there is nothing nuanced about two basic facts: (1) America is a country of 310 million people, in which thousands of horrible things happen every single day; and (2) The chances that one of those horrible things will be that you're subjected to a terrorist attack can, for all practical purposes, be calculated as zero. Consider that on this very day about 6,700 Americans will die. When confronted with this statistic almost everyone reverts to the mindset of the title character's acquaintances in Tolstoy's great novella "The Death of Ivan Ilyich," and indulges in the complacent thought that "it is he who is dead and not I." Consider then that around 1,900 of the Americans who die today will be less than 65, and that indeed about 140 will be children. Approximately 50 Americans will be murdered today, including several women killed by their husbands or boyfriends, and several children who will die from abuse and neglect. Around 85 of us will commit suicide, and another 120 will die in traffic accidents.

The threat of nuclear terrorism is over-exaggerated.

Kitfield 2008

(James, has written on defense, national security and foreign policy issues, three-time winner of the Gerald R. Ford Award for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense, interviewing Brian Michael Jenkins, a longtime terrorism expert with the Rand Corp, “Expert says nuclear terrorism is not a major threat,” National Journal, October 20, 2008, <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1008/102008nj1.htm>)

NJ: To what do you attribute that fear? Jenkins: I concluded that there is a difference between nuclear terrorism and nuclear terror. Nuclear terrorism is about the possibility that terrorists will acquire and detonate a nuclear weapon. Nuclear terror, on the other hand, concerns our anticipation of such an attack. It's about our imagination. And while there is no history of nuclear terrorism, there is a rich history of nuclear terror. It's deeply embedded in our popular culture and in policy-making circles. NJ: So the fear of nuclear terrorism is not new? Jenkins: Almost as soon as the people involved in the Manhattan Project tested an actual atomic bomb they started to wonder about the possibility of someone using it for terrorist purposes. In the 1970s, some talented nuclear weapons designers studied the issue of whether someone outside of a government program could possibly design and build a workable nuclear weapon. They concluded it was possible, and then postulated who might do such a thing -- terrorists! So, in a way, the threat preceded any terrorist actually thinking about the issue. To a certain extent, we educated the terrorists on the subject. NJ: Hasn't Al Qaeda, in particular, focused considerable energy on nuclear weapons? Jenkins: Yes, because terror is the use of violence to create an atmosphere of fear that causes people to exaggerate the strength of the terrorists, and they are very good at that. So in Al Qaeda's media jihad there is a recurrent theme of nuclear terrorism. They realize that if they put the words "terrorism" and "nuclear" in proximity to each other it creates added fear. It also excites their constituency, because nothing excites the powerless more than the idea of ultimate power. NJ: Are you saying that Al Qaeda is interested in nuclear weapons only in the abstract, as a propaganda tool? Jenkins: No. Al Qaeda has actual nuclear ambitions, there is no doubt about that. When Osama bin Laden was in Sudan, he tried to acquire some nuclear material. The efforts were mostly amateurish, and Al Qaeda was the victim of some scams. Qaeda [leaders] also had meetings with some Pakistani nuclear scientists while in Afghanistan. So, clearly, they were thinking about nuclear weapons. If bin Laden were able to acquire a nuclear weapon, I also suspect that he would use it. My larger point is that Al Qaeda has already become the world's first nonstate nuclear power without even having nuclear weapons.

Terrorism Decreasing Ext

Terrorism has decreased significantly since the U.S. invaded Afghanistan.

Baker 2008

(Gerard, staff writer for The Sunday Times, “Cheer up. We're winning this War on Terror,” Sunday Times, June 27, 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/article4221376.ece>)

And yet the evidence is now overwhelming that on all fronts, despite inevitable losses from time to time, it is we who are advancing and the enemy who is in retreat. The current mood on both sides of the Atlantic, in fact, represents a kind of curious inversion of the great French soldier's dictum: “Success against the Taleban. Enemy giving way in Iraq. Al-Qaeda on the run. Situation dire. Let's retreat!” Since it is remarkable how pervasive this pessimism is, it's worth recapping what has been achieved in the past few years. Afghanistan has been a signal success. There has been much focus on the latest counter-offensive by the Taleban in the southeast of the country and it would be churlish to minimise the ferocity with which the terrorists are fighting, but it would be much more foolish to understate the scale of the continuing Nato achievement. Establishing a stable government for the whole nation is painstaking work, years in the making. It might never be completed. But that was not the principal objective of the war there. Until the US-led invasion in 2001, Afghanistan was the cockpit of ascendant Islamist terrorism. Consider the bigger picture. Between 1998 and 2005 there were five big terrorist attacks against Western targets - the bombings of the US embassies in Africa in 1998, the attack on the USS Cole in 2000, 9/11, and the Madrid and London bombings in 2004 and 2005. All owed their success either exclusively or largely to Afghanistan's status as a training and planning base for al-Qaeda. In the past three years there has been no attack on anything like that scale. Al-Qaeda has been driven into a state of permanent flight. Its ability to train jihadists has been severely compromised; its financial networks have been ripped apart. Thousands of its activists and enablers have been killed. It's true that Osama bin Laden's forces have been regrouping in the border areas of Pakistan but their ability to orchestrate mass terrorism there is severely attenuated. And there are encouraging signs that Pakistanis are starting to take to the offensive against them. Next time you hear someone say that the war in Afghanistan is an exercise in futility ask them this: do they seriously think that if the US and its allies had not ousted the Taleban and sustained an offensive against them for six years that there would have been no more terrorist attacks in the West? What characterised Islamist terrorism before the Afghan war was increasing sophistication, boldness and terrifying efficiency. What has characterised the terrorist attacks in the past few years has been their crudeness, insignificance and a faintly comical ineptitude (remember Glasgow airport?)

Pakistan Solves Terrorism Ext

Pakistan is determined to fight and beat the Taliban.

Evans 2010

Tom, CNN Iraq Bureau Chief, “Pakistan determined to fight Taliban, retired general says,” July 23, 2010, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/11/24/pakistan.taliban/index.html>)

The Pakistani people now believe the war against the Taliban is their war, whereas in the past they considered it to be the United States' war, a former Pakistani general with close ties to his country's military told CNN's Christiane Amanpour on Tuesday. Retired Lt. Gen. Talat Masood, who also was an official in the Pakistani Ministry of Defense, told Amanpour, "I think the Pakistani army and the people of Pakistan are truly determined to fight this war and win." "Under no circumstances do they think that there is any future for Pakistan unless this succeeds, so they are fighting for their future rather than anything else," he said. Masood spoke to Amanpour as the Pakistani army presses its offensive into the Taliban stronghold of South Waziristan after a series of deadly bomb attacks across the country, and the United States continues its air strikes from unmanned drones on suspected Taliban targets in Pakistan. U.S. President Barack Obama is on the brink of announcing what is expected to be a big increase in the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Pakistan’s fight against the Taliban is paying off.

Dilanian 2010

(Ken, USA Today reporter, “Pakistan steps up anti-Taliban efforts,” USA Today, March 4, 2010, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-03-04-pressure-pakistan_N.htm>)

U.S. pressure on Pakistan to crack down on Taliban extremists within its borders is paying off, American officials and independent analysts say, paving the way for progress in the war in neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistan's cooperation marks a shift after years of tolerating the presence of homegrown extremists operating openly in the country. The government recently has pressed an offensive in tribal areas home to al-Qaeda, has arrested major Taliban figures and has signed off on airstrikes by pilotless drones that have killed important terrorist suspects. In recent months: - Pakistan on Thursday announced the arrest of the Taliban's former finance minister, days after saying it killed about 75 militants and discovered a network of 156 caves used by the Taliban near the Afghan border. -After downplaying for years the presence of extremist leaders in Pakistani cities, the government last month arrested a number of key Taliban figures, including Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Afghan Taliban's second in command. -U.S. drone strikes have increased to 53 in Pakistan in 2009 from 36 in 2008 and five in 2007, according to statistics compiled by the Long War Journal website. An August strike killed Baitullah Mehsud, a major Taliban leader. Although Pakistan's government hasn't done everything the [United States](http://content.usatoday.com/topics/topic/Places,+Geography/Countries/United+States) has wanted, these developments are "all having an effect," said Richard Holbrooke, the State Department's special representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan. "I think that in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, but particularly in Pakistan, there's been a movement, a shift in sentiment here."

Pakistan is cracking down on Al Qaeda

Wright & Khan 2010

(Tom and Shahnawaz, Wall Street Journal staff writers, “Pakistan Cracks Down on al Qaeda-Linked Groups,” Wall Street Journal, JULY 13, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704288204575363303591010986.html>**)**

Pakistan's most populous province began a crackdown Monday on banned Islamist groups linked to al Qaeda, little more than a week after a suicide bomb attack targeting moderate Muslims here killed more than 40 people. The July 1 attack in Lahore caused widespread outrage; moderate Muslim organizations threatened to arm themselves and fight extremist groups unless the government of Punjab province, in eastern Pakistan on the border with India, took action. Police across Punjab detained 178 people in a continuing operation on Monday, largely members of the banned al Qaeda-linked terrorist organization Sipah-e-Sahaba and an associated group, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, senior provincial police officers said. The raids began Sunday night across the province, with a focus on southern areas where militants have found widespread support. Police said they had closed 22 branches of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, an Islamist organization that they say has acted as a front for Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi activists since the two groups were banned in 2002…Those links began to fray as Pakistan's military, aided by U.S. drone strikes, began a war almost two years ago aimed at dislodging the Taliban and its allies from the tribal regions in the northwest, where they had set up a parallel government. In retaliation, a nexus of Punjabi militants, al Qaeda and Taliban operatives have unleashed a wave of suicide bombings across Pakistan. The attacks, initially aimed at government, police and army targets, have become more indiscriminate in recent months, hitting markets, schools and the Data Gunj Bakhsh shrine.