# ''War on Terror: The Western Perspective''

# Contents


# Contents

# Acknowledgement:

FATA Research Centre holds regular guest lectures on the significant issues of FATA in collaboration with The Royal Danish Embassy in Pakistan.

FRC is privileged to thank the honorable guest speakers, Dr. Bina D'Costa who took out time from her busy schedules and contributed her research intellects on the issue of ''Western Perspective on the War on Terror''

FRC also would like to thank guests from academia, media and research institutions for their presence and valuable participation in the event.

FRC owes to thank its team for contributing all their efforts in holding the event.

This report is based on the content of speech and address by the speaker and participants at the seminar.

# Profile of Guest Speaker:

**Dr. Bina D'Costa**

**Biography:** Bina D'Costa works on the nexus between development, human rights and security in South Asia. She was previously the Convener of the Bachelor Program in Security Analysis with the Australian National University (ANU) and taught at the Politics and IR program of the School of Culture, History and Languages. She is currently on sabbatical as a visiting fellow at the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies and the Refugee Studies Center, Oxford University.

Dr. Bina has contributed to various projects in Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar, India, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Thailand; and worked as a policy analyst for the Vanderbilt University, UNRISD (United Nations Research in Social Development), UNDP (United Nations Development Program), AUSAID and DFID (Department for International Development, UK). She serves in the editorial board of the International Journal for Transitional Justice and is an associate editor for the International Journal of Feminist Politics.

**Research interests:** War crimes, genocide and struggles for justice; human security, displacement and borders; gender and conflict; children and war; and political violence in social movements.

**Areas of expertise:**

- Gender Specific Studies
- International Law (Excl. International Trade Law)
- Government And Politics Of Asia And The Pacific
- New Zealand Government And Politics
- Studies Of Asian Society
- Studies Of Pacific Peoples' Societies
- International Relations
- Political Theory And Political Philosophy[1]

**Research projects:**

**Political Violence, Displacement and Social Movements:** Bina's large six country fieldwork based project is on violence and human rights movements in Asia. She is investigating various 'justice seeking' processes/movements emerging within displaced communities in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burma, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

**Human Security and Borders:** Bina has been involved in various policy-oriented projects on borders, identity and human security, focusing on refugees, IDPs and Stateless people in South Asia. She works with Indigenous groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and Northeast India, Rohingya, Tamil and Afghan refugee networks.

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[1] https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/d-costa-db

**Children and War:** Bina has conducted extensive field research on 'war babies' with special focus to the War of Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and the children of Partition of India. This project has developed largely out of Bina's activist work. She is involved with human rights groups that focus on children's rights in South Asia[2].

**Publications**

- D'Costa, D 2011, Nationbuilding, Gender and War Crimes in South Asia, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York.
- D'Costa, D 2011, 'Bangladesh in 2010: Digital makeover but continued human and economic insecurity', Asian Survey, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 138-147.
- D'Costa, D & Hossain, S 2010, 'Redress for sexual violence before the international crimes tribunal in Bangladesh: Lessons from history, and hopes for the future', Criminal Law Forum, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 331-359.
- D'Costa, D 2009, 'Frozen in Time?The War Crimes Trial in Bangladesh', in Barbara Nelson & Andrew MacIntyre (ed.), Capturing the year 2009: Writings from the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, Canberra.
- D'Costa, D 2009, 'Book review: Globalization and Feminist Activism', International Feminist Journal of Politics, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 445-447.
- Lee-Koo, K & D'Costa, D, eds, 2009, Gender and Global Politics in the Asia-Pacific, Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, United States.
- D'Costa, D & Lee-Koo, K 2009, 'Critical Feminist International Relations in the Asia-Pacific', in Bina D'Costa and Katrina Lee-Koo (ed.), Gender and Global Politics in the Asia-Pacific, Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, United States, pp. 3 - 18.
- D'Costa, D 2008, 'Transnational Feminism and Women's Rights: Successes and Challenges of a Political Strategy', in Anne Marie Goetz (ed.), Governing Women: Women's Political Effectiveness in Contexts of Democratization and Governance Reform, Taylor & Francis Group, New York, pp. 63-86.
- D'Costa, D 2007, 'Faith, NGOs and the Politics of development in Bangladesh', in Helen James (ed.), Civil Society, Religion and Global Governance: Paradigms of power and persuasion, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, pp. 219-238.
- D'Costa, D 2006, 'Marginalized Identity: New Frontiers in Research for IR?', in Brooks, A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and jacqui True (ed.), Feminist Methodologies for International Relations, Cambridge University Press, New York, pp. pp129-152.
- D'Costa, D 2004, 'Coming to Terms with the Past in Bangladesh: Naming Women's truths', in Luciana Ricciutelli, Angela Miles, Margaret H. McFadden (ed.), Feminist Politics Activism and Vision Local and Global Challenges, Inanna Publications and Education Ltd, Toronto, Canada, pp. 227-247[3].

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[2] http://regnet.anu.edu.au/people/dr-bina-dcosta
[3] https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/d-costa-db

# Main Contents of the Speech

New events that involve the transition of chronological events often create new discourse (s) among people, depending upon the nature and impact of the particular event. If the event has national implications then the debate will be on national level. The 'War on Terror' has generated a complex debate among the rulers and the ruled across the world. In this evaluative report western narratives on 'War on Terror' will be explored.

Conceptually, there are two major schools of thoughts. A dichotomy exists between those who support, and those who condemn of US/NATO 'terror' across the globe that mainly depends upon pro-war and the anti-war sentiment of the masses. This major polarization of views exists between the right wing (strictly speaking, pro-war) and those who are left wing (strictly speaking, anti-war) (Edwards, 2004).

**Anti-war:** *Glenn Greenwald* highlighted two points, in his writing on May 23, 2013[4], about the London killing of a British soldier by two men using a meat cleaver. First, given that the person killed was not a civilian but a soldier of a nation at war (by US standards), it is difficult to devise a definition of "terrorism" that encompasses this attack while excluding large numbers of recent acts by the US, the UK and many of their allies and partners.

Second, despite the self-serving bewilderment that is typically expressed whenever western nations are the targets rather than perpetrators of violence. This problem arises because west has dual standards and it has a different definition for 'terrorism' when the west itself is the perpetrator and totally different when itself is the victim. After the occurrence of such violent incidents the first question arises; why would anyone possibly be as outrageous and savage as to want to attack the Westerns this way, even in their home countries? The answer is actually well-known and well-documented and can be deduced by the authentic statements of different concerned officials. As explained by the CIA ("blowback"), the Pentagon (they "do not 'hate our freedom,' but rather, they hate our policies"), former CIA agents ("we could try invading, occupying and droning Muslim countries a little less, and see if that helps. Maybe prop up fewer corrupt and tyrannical Muslim regimes"), and British combat veterans ("it should by now be self-evident that by attacking Muslims overseas, you will occasionally spawn twisted and, as we saw yesterday, even murderous hatred at home"), decades of bombing, invading, occupying, droning, interfering, imposing tyranny, and creating lawless prisons in other countries generates intense anti-American and anti-western sentiments. This arguably leads to attacks on western nations as well. In the London case, the attacker cited precisely such anger at US/UK aggression as his motive "this British soldier is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth…..the only reason we killed this man is because Muslims are dying daily". America is continually facing threats and endures attacks including from Islamic-motivated extremists. It needs to move off the open-ended, permanent-war footing that has been used to justify invasions and constraints on civil liberties.

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[4] The News Story: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/23/woolwich-attack-terrorism-blowback

The "war on terror" has created a culture of fear in America. The damage these three words have done, a classic self-inflicted wound is infinitely greater than any wild dreams entertained by the fanatical perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks when they were plotting against us in distant Afghan caves. The phrase itself is meaningless. It defines neither a geographic context nor our presumed enemies. Terrorism is not an enemy but a technique of warfare, political intimidation through the killing of unarmed non-combatants.

But the open secret here may be that the vagueness of the phrase was deliberately (or instinctively) calculated by its sponsors. Constant reference to a "war on terror" did accomplish one major objective: It stimulated the emergence of a culture of fear. Fear obscures reason, intensifies emotions and makes it easier for demagogic politicians to mobilize the public on behalf of the policies they want to pursue. The war of choice in Iraq could never have gained the congressional support it got without the psychological linkage between the shock of 9/11 and the postulated existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The sense of a pervasive but otherwise imprecise danger was thus channeled in a politically expedient direction by the mobilizing appeal of being "at war."

To justify the "war on terror" the administration has lately crafted a false historical narrative that could even become a self-fulfilling prophecy. By claiming that its war is similar to earlier U.S. struggles against Nazism and then Stalinism (while ignoring the fact that both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were first-rate military powers, a status al-Qaeda neither has nor can achieve), the administration could be preparing the case for war with Iran. Such war would then plunge America into a protracted conflict spanning Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and perhaps also Pakistan.

The culture of fear is like a genie that has been let out of its bottle. It acquires a life of its own and has a strong demoralizing effect. That is the result of five years of almost continuous national brainwashing on the subject of terror, quite unlike the more muted reactions of several other nations (Britain, Spain, Italy, Germany, Japan, to mention just a few) that also have suffered painful terrorist acts. In on of his justifications for his war in Iraq, President Bush even claimed absurdly that he was to continue waging it lest al-Qaeda cross the Atlantic to launch a war of terror in the United States.

Such fear-mongering, reinforced by security entrepreneurs, the mass media and the entertainment industry, generated its own momentum. The terror entrepreneurs, usually described as experts on terrorism, are necessarily engaged in competition to justify their existence. Hence their task is to convince the public that it faces new threats. That puts a premium on the presentation of credible scenarios of ever-more-horrifying acts of violence, sometimes even with blueprints for their implementation.

To make matters more absurd, large department stores, with their crowds of shoppers, do not have any comparable procedures. Nor do concert halls or movie theaters. Yet such "security" procedures have become routine, wasting hundreds of millions of dollars and further contributing to a siege mentality.

Government at every level has stimulated this self-perpetuating paranoia. The terror "experts" as "consultants" authenticate apocalyptic visions fed to the American public. Hence the proliferation of programs with bearded "terrorists" as the central villains. Their general effect is to reinforce the sense of the unknown but lurking danger that is said to increasingly threaten the lives of all Americans.

The record is even more troubling in the general area of civil rights. The culture of fear has bred intolerance, suspicion of foreigners and the adoption of legal procedures that undermine fundamental notions of justice. Innocent until proven guilty has been diluted if not undone, even U.S. citizens incarcerated for lengthy periods of time without effective and prompt access to due process. There is no known, hard evidence that such excess has prevented significant acts of terrorism, and convictions for would be terrorists of any kind have been few and far between.

In the meantime, the "war on terror" has gravely damaged the United States internationally. For Muslims, the similarity between the rough treatments of Afghan civilians by the U.S. military has prompted a widespread sense of hostility toward the United States in general. It's not the "war on terror" that angers Muslims watching the news on television; it's the victimization of Muslims.

**Pro-war**: John Hawkins[5] writes about such anti-war Europeans; "Our "allies" in Europe have been for the most part with us as long as we were liberating them from the Nazis, protecting them from the Soviets, or helping them to clean up problems in their backyard. However, now we're asking for help and many of our "allies" have made themselves rather scarce. What Bush has done or hasn't done isn't the issue; the issue is that we're asking them for help this time instead of the reverse"[6].

In spite of such kind of resistance against war on terror, the War on Terror received wide acceptance across the political spectrum and the majority of such anti-war on terror opinion has been observed in Europe, especially. This may be the reason that the supporters of US war on terror, in United States of America called those Europeans who are against war on terror as *ungrateful*, *fickle*, *liars*, and *deceivers*, *greedy for profit.*

US supporters of the war on terror are of view that the events of 9/11 could have resulted in global solidarity against extremism and terrorism. A global alliance of moderates, including Muslim ones, engaged in a deliberate campaign both to extirpate the specific terrorist networks and to terminate the political conflicts that spawn terrorism would have been more productive than a demagogically proclaimed and largely solitary U.S. "war on terror" against "Islamic-fascism." Only a confidently determined and reasonable America can promote genuine international security which then leaves no political space for terrorism.

The public opinion against war on terror argues that war is increasing hatred for the US/West among the attacked nations (Muslim nations) during the war. The critics of this war are of the opinion that the extreme dislike for the common men in the West among Muslims non-combatants in these Muslims countries have been treated as combatants during the war on terror. But these anti-war people have been often labeled '*Terror apologist'*, '*Terrorist-lover'* or worse by the pro-war right-wing neoconservatives in the West.

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[5]*John Hawkins* runs *Right Wing News* and *Linkiest*. He's also the co-owner of the *The Looking Spoon*. He is a conservative blogger and columnist. http://townhall.com/columnists/johnhawkins/
[6]John Hawkins, RightWing News, http://www.rightwingnews.com/column-2/answering-50-frequently-asked-questions-about-the-war-on-terrorism-2/

**Conclusion:**

Both pro and anti-war views that exist in the West have the same foundations for their stances. Both prioritize Western freedom and Western security. The Anti and pro-war dichotomy arose primarily from the ashes of 9/11. The failure of intended goals set by US/West to be achieved in their so called "war on terror" also brought the discourse among the Westerners.

Therefore in this connection the natives should sort out effective solutions to conflict management in their areas. Pakistan and Afghanistan should resolve the conflict by themselves and should take the issue to regional forums. Because the foundations of the various perspectives on the War on terror in the West are not atrocities themselves or the victimized, rather these foundations are based on the aftermath of violence appearing in the West.

## List of Participants:

**Registration Form**

**Guest Lecture: ''War on Terror: The Western Perspective''**

**Date:  June 21, 2013**

| S. NO | Name | Designation | Organization |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | M. Zaheer khan | Prog. Manager | FRC |
| 2 | Raheel anees | Admin & finance Manager | FRC |
| 3 | Umair Zahid | Asst. Manager | FRC |
| 4 | Mehran Ali Khan | Senior Researcher | FRC |
| 5 | Nawaf Khan | Research Associate | FRC |
| 6 | Zakia Rubab | Asst. Prog. Manager | FRC |
| 7 | Fatima Zaib | Internee | FRC |
| 8 | Sajjad Haider | Internee | FRC |
| 9 | Alamgir Khattak | Internee | FRC |
| 10 | Taimur Ali Khan | IT Engineer | FRC |
| 11 | Dr. Ashraf Ali | President | FRC |
| 12 | Saifullah Khan | Executive Director | FRC |
| 13 | Mansur Khan | Research Director | FRC |
| 14 | Sharafat Ali | Editor | FRC |
| 15 | Dost Rehman | Student | IIUI |
| 16 | M. Haroon | Student | IIUI |
| 17 | Tahaceen Tayyab | Student | Iqra Uni |
| 18 | Arif Naeem | Student | Iqra Uni |
| 19 | Naeem Qurban | Student | Iqra Uni |
| 20 | Sadia Khan | Research Associate | RAD |
| 21 | Yasmeen Akhtar | Phd Scholar | NDU |
| 22 | Nabeel Alam | Lecturer | Comsat University |

# FATA Research Centre 'Guest Lecture Series'

## Topic: "War on Terror: A Western Perspective"

Date: June 21, 2013
*Timings: 14:00 hrs to 17:30 hrs*
Venue: FRC Head Office Islamabad

Contact: 051-2112853-4, 0343-8511353

**Guest Speaker:**

**Dr. Bina D'Costa, Professor at Australian National University**

| Time | Activities | Owner |
|------|-----------|-------|
| **14:00-14:30** | Arrival of Guests and Registration | Mr. Mehran Ali Khan |
| **14:35 – 14:45** | Welcome, Purpose and Agenda | Mr. M. Zaheer Khan |
| **14:45- 15:00** | Round up introduction | All participants |
| **15:00 – 15:15** | Introduction of FRC projects, Formal welcome to Guest speaker | Dr. Ashraf Ali |
| **15:20 – 15:35** | Lecture on western perspective on "War on Terror" | Dr. Bina D'Costa |
| **15: 40 – 16:15** | Question and Answer | Open |
| **16:20- 16: 50** | Conclusion and word of Thanks | Dr. Ashraf Ali |
| **16:50 – 17:30** | Hi Tea | All participants |