

Military service, armed society, and terrorism in US

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OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

American society has experienced two terrorist attacks in the past days. Experts have tried to find a connection between these two different incidents, but to no avail so far. However, in this article, I will try to examine another illuminating relationship, specifically the one between military service in the United States and the tendency to commit terrorist acts. A former army commander has even gone on record saying that the US military service breeds terrorism. So, to better understand the two recent attacks, let's look at them and their roots.



Members of the US military walk towards Bourbon Street in New Orleans where the deadly New Year's Day attack took place earlier.
● JAMES LEYVA/ZUMA PRESS WIRE

1. The suspect of the New Orleans attack, identified by the FBI as 42-year-old US-born citizen Shamsud-Din Jabbar, was a real estate agent from Texas who served for years in the military and experienced financial difficulties and divorce. Yet, in a video posted on YouTube four years ago, Jabbar — speaking with a southern US accent — boasted of his skills as a “fierce negotiator” as he advertised his property management services to potential clients.

The Pentagon said Jabbar had served in the army as a human resource specialist and an IT specialist from 2007 to 2015,

and then in the army reserve until 2020. Five videos have been posted by him on Facebook, one of which emphasizes that he served in the military and another that he lost \$28,000 in trading.

The most important thing to note is that the Pentagon specifically stressed that the terrorist driver, Jabbar, acted alone in the Daesh-inspired attack that killed 14 people. This suggests that there is no official connection between the attacker and Daesh (ISIS).

2. Two days later, news came out that an explosion was heard near the Trump Hotel. Apparently, a

Tesla truck was detonated by a veteran who had also served in Afghanistan. Matthew Livelsberger, a 37-year-old Green Beret from Colorado Springs, Colorado, also wrote in notes he left on his cellphone that he needed to “cleanse” his mind “of the brothers I’ve lost and relieve myself of the burden of the lives I took”. Livelsberger served in the Army from 2006 and deployed twice to Afghanistan.

The explosion caused minor injuries to seven people but virtually no damage to the Trump International Hotel. Authorities again said that Livelsberger acted alone.

Livelsberger’s letters covered a range of topics including political grievances, societal problems, and both domestic and international issues, including the war in Ukraine. He said in one letter that the US was “terminally ill and headed toward collapse”.

Now, we can ask the main question: What is the connection between serving in the US military and terrorism? As you’ve seen so far, both of the terrorists mentioned here had considerable experience of military service in the US military community.

I believe that the American soldiers, especially those who have served outside the US, understand the facts and realities much better than the masses. They have come to the conclusion that American society has huge problems that are frustrating the people.

Effects of military services

According to the results of a scientific study, problematic anger, characterized by excessive frequency, intensity, and duration of anger, poses a marked challenge in military populations as it causes substantial emotional distress and functional interference.

(Given the associations between problematic anger and mental health disorders, chronic pain, and transition challenges, interventions designed to mitigate problematic anger need to be multi-faceted and acknowledge the possibility of maintaining an ongoing connection to military service.)

Other researches also show a significant correlation between military service and the likelihood of committing extremist acts. A study highlighted that military personnel represent about 28% of mass shooters, suggesting that while most

veterans lead peaceful lives, a concerning subset may turn to violence.

Of course, the Pentagon’s statement on this matter should not be ignored. The Pentagon has acknowledged that military service is a strong predictor of becoming involved in extremist activities, particularly among those who have been deployed.

Armed society, terrorism

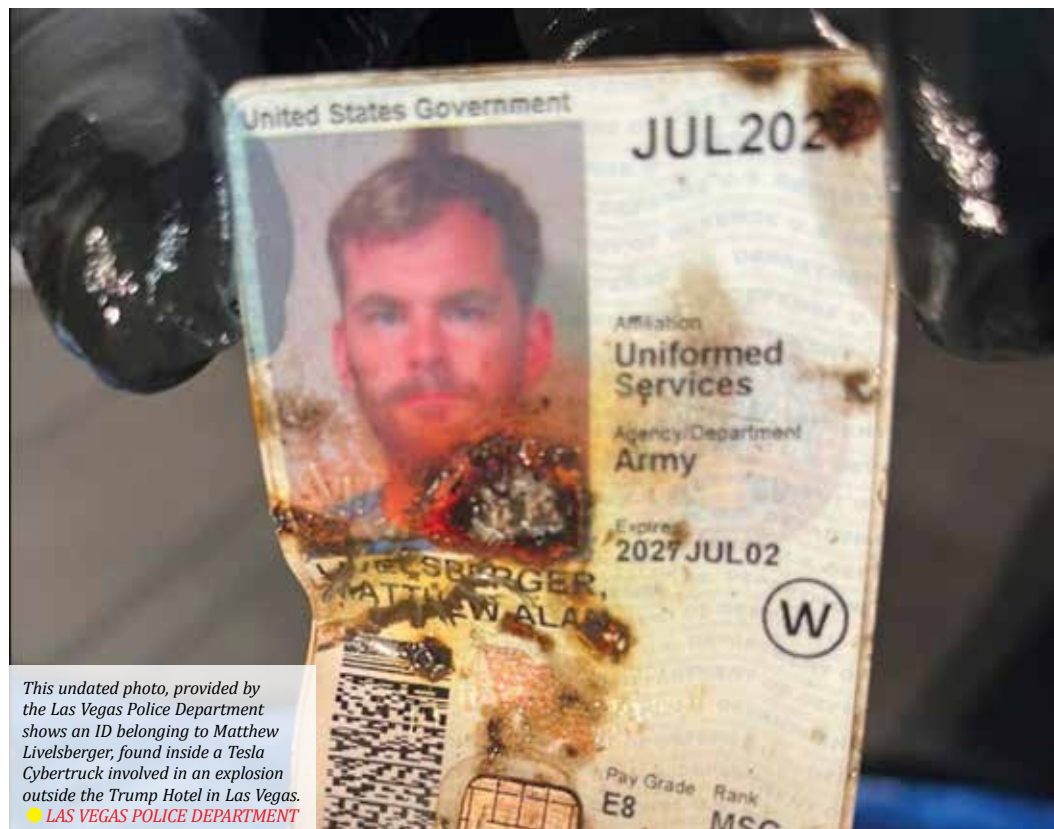
Despite some claims that an armed society is a polite society, it is obvious that one of the strong roots of a terrorist attack is the presence of a large number of weapons in the country. In the two recent cases, both terrorists were born in America. It can be argued that the upbringing of America’s armed society leads to the emergence of terrorists, although due to the government’s strict system of control, they are unable to form a large and coherent terrorist group.

American society is facing various problems, from economic to military and geopolitical. In the meantime, the veterans have experienced that the root of the problems of Americans is not at home but abroad.

Although there is a certain distinction between the two aforementioned American terrorists, either in terms of their way of life or their method of revenge, it seems that they have found the same solution to express anger against the American government and society. They have already seen in Afghanistan how the American government controls and manages terrorist groups. Now that American taxpayers are afraid of the same terrorist groups, both of them chose the path of terror to hit back at American society.



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This undated photo, provided by the Las Vegas Police Department shows an ID belonging to Matthew Livelsberger, found inside a Tesla Cybertruck involved in an explosion outside the Trump Hotel in Las Vegas.
● LAS VEGAS POLICE DEPARTMENT