

A Detailed Analytical Study of Terrorism and Counterterrorism in South Asia

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Available online at: www.isroset.org

Received: 10/Aug/2022, Accepted: 12/Sept/2022, Online: 30/Sept/2022

Abstract— Terrorism, an international threat, is a never-ending topic of discussion and debate. The threat seems to have its source primarily in the Greater Middle Eastern regions. To analyse the concept of terrorism, it is important to comprehend it thoroughly. It requires understanding the miscreant but not necessarily sympathising with them. This paper tries to analyse the root causes of terrorism by first tracing the origin of the term and its history. A humble effort has been made to venture into the causes that motivate terror inspired activity. If the basis for the same is deciphered, then proper ways of curbing it can also be identified. Group ideology, besides religious motivation, acts as an extremely motivating factor in such cases. A peek into the various terror groups operating in these regions have also been undertaken. The strained relation between the East and the West along with the U.S. intervention has aggravated the causes boosting terrorism. Counterterrorism policies need to be carefully implemented to understand and end this menace from its roots.

Keywords— Terrorism, Greater Middle East, Group ideology, U.S. intervention, Counterterrorism

I. INTRODUCTION

One word that has been oft repeated in the past few years is none other than 'Terrorism'. Nevertheless, it is quite difficult to find an all-encompassing definition of the same. The reason behind it is that with the passage of time, the meaning of terrorism has changed. The fact that it has been historically inconsistent has led to its incertitude. Moreover, terrorism itself is not completely disparate from other forms of violence or unwonted warfare and these similarities often confound people when they try to define what terrorism is. In order to understand terrorism in its entirety, it is imperative to understand the meaning of the term itself and its evolution. This paper has undertaken to decipher the various motivating factors behind terrorism so that proper counter terrorist policies can be implemented.

For understanding the issues, the paper has been organised into various sections. Section I introduces the readers to the topic and helps them understand what is to be expected from this paper. Section II contains the related work carried out for a better overview. It helps in understanding the definition and scope of the research undertaken. Section III contains the methodology used for the findings and a discussion about the nature of such readings. Section IV looks at the results of the discussions undertaken and talks about various ways of combating terrorism. Section V is the conclusion and opens a window for future possibilities of further detailed study.

II. RELATED WORK

Understanding Terrorism

As the 18th Century was beginning to conclude, at the time of the French Revolution, the term 'terrorism' was first used and was associated with the origins of democracy. At that time, it was devoid of any negative implication that it has in the present times. It was then exclusively associated with government related work unlike the present where it is a non-state phenomenon or an act of violence perpetrated by subnational entities. This affirmative use of the term came to an end in July 1794 when the leader of the French Revolution, Maximilien Robespierre, referred to a group of people as 'terrorists' for sabotaging the revolution. Terrorism, henceforth, started to be associated with something evil, abusive and as something that involves violence against common people. It becomes a means to achieve fundamental political change as well. Hence, terrorism gets associated on the one hand with revolutionary organizations that wanted to replace monarchy with democracy and on the other with the Anarchist movement that wanted to bring down the system hoping something better would be created by dint of man's goodness. (1)

Terrorism again takes a shift in the early 20th Century where it also becomes associated with ethno-national separatist movement and irredentist organizations. It is believed that it was terrorism that fuelled World War I. When the heir to the Hapsburg throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was killed by Gavrilo Princip who wanted to establish Bosnia as an independent country, terrorism

shifts from being a government phenomenon to become a tool of the masses. (2) During the 1930s, under the governance of the Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, terrorism becomes once again associated with governments. After World War II, people wanted to free themselves from the manacles of imperialism, to attain freedom from European rule, so terrorism gets associated with anti-colonialists and nationalists. (3) During the 1960s and 70s, terrorism ceases to be associated with governments. It is referred to as two separate groups of terrorists or two separate groups of revolutionaries. Radical left wing or Marxist elements or at the same time, the same type of ethno-nationalist separatist groups that existed in the beginning of the century that resurface in places like Palestine, in Ireland, in Spain, and elsewhere. (4) The concept of terrorism goes through a change yet again and from being an individual terrorist organization it becomes one major conspiracy by the former Soviet Union against the United States. Later state sponsored terrorism becomes rampant with individuals like Colonel al-Gaddafi in Libya, Saddam Hussein in Iraq and so on. It is only in the 1990s that terrorism becomes crucial from a religious perspective. After the incident of 9/11, the term 'War on Terror' becomes popular. (4)

Although terrorism is an extremely complex phenomenon, all the past instances can point towards a few basic characteristics that can be combined to achieve an understanding of what terrorism is. Terrorism, an illegitimate method for sure, primarily pertains to violence committed by an individual or an organization who believe themselves to be a part of a larger cause. It is a calculated planning for manipulating and coercing individuals or organizations to attain fulfilment of their fundamental political objectives. The fear instilled in the minds of innocents have a strong psychological repercussion which is successfully negotiated by the terrorists to fulfil their political agenda. Brian Jenkins (1975) has compared terrorism with a coliseum where the intention of the terrorists is to ensure that a greater number of people should be viewing it rather than dying because of it. (5). Terrorism is strictly non-governmental and is in stark contrast to state terror used by governments to keep a check on their own citizens. Terrorism follows no rules of war just like it has no geographical limitation. Their motive is political change and weapon is the threat of violence. A common opinion is that terrorism is a process of achieving hidden underlying motives. (6) Global Terrorism Database (GTD) believes terrorism to be "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation." (7). Audrey Kurth Cronin believes that for the sake of deploying control over the globalized environments, individuals are resorting to terrorism. She concludes that terrorism is the result of changing paradigm on an international level in different aspects pertaining to various aspects of political, economic, military, ideological, and cultural. (8)

Terrorism's Motivation

There are various reasons that inspire individuals to take up arms and indulge in terrorist activities. The motivation mostly is quite anomalous and extremely personal. But mostly the root cause of such is resentment and a deep sense of injustice. This leads to a feeling of religious veneration and a longing for changing the socioeconomic structure. Many are motivated by a desire for exhibiting their nationalistic emotions or revolutionary passion. Nevertheless, it is difficult to categorize all the terrorists under one umbrella category. Their personalities, just like their reasons, are quite unique and distinctive. But one thing is clear that all these individuals have a very strong feeling of fallacious selflessness. They feel that they have been forced to arm themselves up to safeguard themselves against a rapacious and belligerent enemy. Hence their objective is not only justified but it is also warrantable. (9) One report has highlighted, although because of insufficient data it has not been proved, that youngsters from affluent backgrounds, particularly in the United States, West Europe and Japan, are lured towards fundamentalism as they experience a feeling of wrongdoing towards the poverty-stricken population of the world. (10) Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin believe that two major factors motivate people to opt for terrorism. Firstly, there is a heightened feeling of defending individuals for the injustices meted out to them either on a personal or communal front. Secondly, the desire for modification is influenced by either political or religious factors. These are the two primary reasons that motivate individuals to involve themselves in terror driven activities. These are not mandatory situations but most of the times at least one factor is present. (11)

People guided by a sense of religious devotion, feel that their work is divinely ordained. They believe that whatever they do, even if it is inflicting violence on innocents, is a good work. This sense of sanctimonious devotion and self-sacrifice lures others into joining these terrorist organizations. Their ideology is further strengthened and justified by being in the company of like-minded people. By joining such groups, they feel that they are doing something that gives meaning to their life and a sense of collective understanding of their violence. This cumulative power helps them to feel confident about achieving their objective of rectifying the injustice done to them. Religious figures, all over the world, have had a profound influence on people. Hence, people seem drawn to terrorism if it is directly commanded by these individuals to show their piety and devotion to the Almighty. Their religious ardor, a proof of their religious fidelity, is beyond common understanding. They view themselves as freedom fighters or social liberators. (12) Tullock in his work feels that it is assumed that those who participate in such acts of resistance at the cost of their own welfare are either absurd individuals or are hiding their selfish motives by preaching about their ideals, religion, or passion for their nation. (13) Nonetheless, we must not be under the conviction that terrorists are pliant individuals who are victims of socio-economic injustices. Rather, we need to understand that

they are quite rational in their approach of strategizing their plans to attain their objective. (14) Highly intellectual and idealistic individuals with proper professional qualification are being recruited by terrorist groups to ensure efficient planning but mostly execution of the same is done by people in the lower ranks with insufficient or no education such as the PKK, the LTTE and Arab groups. (10) The same idea is vouchsafed by Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin (2009) when they state that terrorists are mentally sane and normal individuals. It is not necessary that they will mandatorily be from poor, illiterate or insane backgrounds. Most of the leaders are basically from well off backgrounds. (15)

Group motivation also goes a long way in influencing people to involve themselves in acts of terrorism. This participation provides them with an opportunity to fulfill their self-seeking motives. These groups provide the individuals with a sense of superiority by enabling them to do all kinds of anti-social activities that in-turn makes them extremely respectable in the eyes of their fellowmen. Few will be motivated by their principles and a strong passion to ensure the well-being of the entire group. Many, because of their fear of being left out, will blindly follow the ideologies of the group. Post, Sprinzak and Denny had interviewed 35 detained terrorists in the Middle East. Their research has deciphered the fact that the cause becomes so important that the individual submerges his/her identity to the collective. No scope for development pertaining to independent thought process or decision making is allowed. (16)

These individuals are considered as heroes and martyrs. The families of these individuals enjoy not just financial or material benefits but also a heightened sense of respect from their society. The success of an individual is assessed by the devotion that the person has towards 'the cause'. Young men are made to believe that academic or economic achievement is nothing compared to one's nationalistic and religious devotion. Hence, the motive of the organization gets intermingled with the passion of the individual. The limited opportunity provided to them for the attainment of success and elevation of their status, makes them believe that it's the organizational goal that is of utmost importance and that provides them with a motive to live. All scope for individuality is nipped at the bud. Individual success is evaluated by the extent of success that it attributes to the group. Therefore, every individual tries to increase the potential and prospects of the group by heightening its violence to bring the group into prominence. Individual goals and organizational goals merge into one and discriminating it becomes extremely problematic. The group's success or failure is deemed to be the individual's as well. This loss of individuality curbs feelings of remorse or guilt as the same is not expressed by the group.

III. METHODOLOGY

To conduct this study, that is primarily exploratory in nature, a qualitative data analysis has been undertaken.

Data has been taken from various documents and records. Hence, narrative analysis was undertaken to get a clear overview of the situation.

The Middle East, the hub of anxiety and insecurity, has gained a synonymous word in the recent past. The word is 'terrorism'. Research has highlighted that majority of the extremist groups belong to this region. The Middle East has earned a repute of being the highest exporter of terrorism to other parts of the world. Their victims are majorly Israel, the United States and 'the West'. This region is subjected to various socio-economic, political, cultural and educational problems. The terrorist groups use these problems to manipulate the youth into terrorism.

Pakistan has been the breeding ground for countless terrorists from times immemorial. Various militant organizations are either based in Pakistan or are supported by them. When it comes to Pakistan, Deobandism tends to be paralleled with quite a few militant groups that are operating in and from Pakistan. They are Harakat-ul-Ansar, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Harakat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, Jaisha-e-Mohammed, etc. Jamaat-e-Islami is an organization that is fighting in Kashmir. It is associated with Hizbul Mujahideen and the Al-Badr who are waging a war in Kashmir with majority of its members who are ethnically Kashmiris. Ahl-e Hadith is the most important and dangerous group. Their ideology is followed by Lashkar-e-Taiba who were responsible for the Mumbai attack on November 2008 in India. They have not just restricted themselves in India but are also responsible for attacking Americans in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban, a Deobandi group, has its leaders living in major cities of Pakistan and vehemently supported by the Pakistani government. The Pakistani Taliban, again a Deobandi group, is an accumulation of different militant commanders. Their objective is to set Sharia law in Pakistan. Al Qaeda has got safe haven in Pakistan specially after the Americans invaded Afghanistan. Osama Bin Laden's residence was only a mile away from Pakistan Military Academy. Other infamous groups include The Haqqani Network, Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Jundallah (aka Jaysh al-Adl), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and so on. (17)

Yasseen Al Saleh (2003) felt that the U.S. intervention has curbed people from expressing themselves properly. This is fuelled by the absence of a democratic form of government. The citizens feel that their terrorist activity is nothing but a fight towards obtaining nationalistic goals which is aided by the fact that it is validated by the Almighty. (18) Fikri Abdulmadi (1992) is of the opinion that the primary reason behind terrorism is not one but quite a few. He mentions that the period of the Cold War had created a major strife between the East and the West. Arab lands were occupied by the Israelis, the Middle Eastern security intelligence forces were quite ferocious and the horrendous dictatorial rule in the Middle East created a huge resentment that has led to terrorist activity to undo the wrong. Socio-economic distress in various

Middle Eastern countries have fuelled terrorism. (19) Alakra (1993) has stated that lack of equal opportunities, subjugation, and extreme injustice rampant in the region are also deemed to be major reasons which compel people to opt for terrorism. (20) Abdunaser Hariz (1996) has stated that the Middle East has a lot of economic potential and availability of resources. Despite this, many people are left jobless and are not able to lead a fulfilling lifestyle. The situation remains same even for well educated people. This leads to a sense of resentment towards the capitalist system which provides an agenda to the various terrorist groups. A person's ability to utilize the resources solely depends on the personal contacts that he/she has. Rules and laws are inefficient in providing equal opportunities to individuals. (21) Najeeb Alshami (2002) has added to this and stated that foreign powers have united with the rich citizens of the Middle Eastern countries and enhanced their poverty and other socio-economic problems. (22) Ahmad Abualroos (2001) has highlighted certain issues besides economic factors, which is promoting extremism. He feels that there is a political vacuum in the Middle East which boosts religious bigotry, that in turn encourages illiteracy and finally leads to a collapse of the family system. (23) This only nurtures a fundamentalist mind-set in individuals. Juan Linz has stated that the kind of unpredictability in the Middle Eastern regime is nothing but 'sultanism' as level of corruption is very high and there is an unavailability of both civil service competence and liberty. He also mentions that the rulers use majority of the country's wealth and hence economic development, or domestic investment are quite low. (24) Ariel Merari (1998) believes that a shattered family structure is also responsible for involvement in terrorist activities. (25)

The Arab-Israeli Peace Process, the moment it was ceased, has had a major impact as well. The United States have always shown a bias towards Israel over the other regional powers to maintain stability. They have provided diplomatic, economic, and military assistance for the Israeli regime. Their attitude towards the Palestinians have been extremely insulting. This has aggravated a huge sense of discontent in the people. This partisanship has heightened feelings of disgust in the Arabs which is deemed to be the major reason that has caused an influx in the number of terrorists. They believe that only by using arms or terrorist activity can they rightly gain what belongs to them. Some sections of Sunni Muslims who are greatly aggravated and are more rebellious feel that they need to wage Jihad to champion the causes of their wronged fellowmen and to bring back the bygone glory of the Muslims. The Muslims are regularly highlighting their troubled thought about the US led war on terror and the way in which it is jeopardizing Islam. (26)

The United States is determined to instil democracy in the Arab world to curb terrorism. Unfortunately, there is no such data to support such an opinion. The type of regime is not as potent a factor that leads to the rise of terrorism. Potent groups like Al-Qaeda are waging a war not to implement democracy in the Muslim world but to

implement the tenets of an Islamic state. Piazza (2007) opined that the presence of a democratic form of government increases chances of terrorist attacks. (27) He also found out that terrorism cannot be curbed by promoting democracy and free market economics. (28) It claims that if Middle East is blessed with a forbearing democracy, then it is becoming more vulnerable to the dangers imposed upon by terrorism than even the rule of a dictator. Eubank and Weinberg (1994) came out with the hypothesis that the chances of terrorist groups occurring in democracies is three and a half times greater than those occurring in non-democracies. (29) Schmid (1992) has identified the shortcomings of a democracy in combating against terrorism. Democracies grant its citizens with a freedom of movement that helps people to be free from any kind of surveillance. Freedom of association also enables people to easily assemble in groups and identify targets. Procuring of weapons and funds from anonymous bank accounts is also something that is relatively easier in democracies compared to closed societies. (30) In contrast, an authoritarian government can quite easily monitor and control all these issues.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A study on counterterrorism is quite complex and problematic as the nature of terrorism keeps changing over a span of time. The major challenge is not terrorism but the process that we employ to understand the causes of the same. If there is no clear understanding of the problem, then effective counterterrorism policies cannot be implemented. The primary causes behind terrorism's advent and the intentions of its advocates needs to be understood and analysed to eradicate terrorism from its roots. Terrorists create a sense of fear and anger in the minds of individuals. This often leads to impatience while formulating policies related to the major causes of terrorism. (31).

The confidential nature of terrorism makes it difficult to get a complete overview of the same. We need to be aware of certain issues before diving deep into identifying ways of combating terrorism. A path needs to be carved out that will help us deal with the secrecy that surrounds terrorism. An in-depth study on the people involved in such acts and their ways and motivation need to be undertaken. There is a huge obstacle in interviewing these people to get their perspective on their motivation. There is barely any possibility of getting information from the police or secret service agencies. Again, information gained might be half-truths or biased.

Counterterrorism: An overview

Researchers have identified that counterterrorism policies usually opt for either a direct-action approach or a defensive approach. In the first, the terrorist training camps are identified and destroyed, the state sponsors are counterattacked, the terrorists' assets are freed and information is gathered about their whereabouts. The defensive approach usually involves pre-emptive measures

like using metal or bomb detectors to combat their technical efforts and securing the borders. (32). Majority of the policies are based on the first type, i.e., the direct approach. What is noteworthy is that the steps should effectively target the root causes behind terrorism so that any terrorist activity can be nipped in the bud.

Nevertheless, terrorism has led to a huge deal of exasperation in the minds of the youth. Their state of mind can be best understood by the frustration-aggression theory. This theory highlights that a continuous state of frustration will lead to a heightened feeling of aggression. (33) Moreover, this theory also envisages the fact that obligatory strategies may lead to the creation, rather than prevention, of violence. This also implies that if punishment is given then it will lead to group vexation resulting in the use of violence as a form of rebellion. (34) Hence it is important to understand and analyse ways in which this state of frustration is curbed to put an end to terrorism.

Krueger & Malečková (2003) is also of the opinion that terrorism is not an economic problem rather it is a political one. (35) It is believed that if policies are implemented targeting human development, then it will surely curb terrorism. (36) The reason being that a frustrated individual will resort to political methods rather than violent means to bring about any change.

Terrorism's Agenda

In the context of the Middle East, terrorism has emerged primarily because of a cumulative sense of historical oppression, political subordination and widespread disgrace brought upon them by the global powers. Therefore, without resolving these existing issues in the region, it will be impossible to quell the fire of terrorist activities. To put an end to this problem of terrorism, it is important that Muslims should try and promote a real approach towards violence and this process of radicalizing the youth. The education system should inculcate the values of democracy in young minds. The people of these regions now have only one agenda, i.e., a simple everyday normal life. For this reason, their priority now is security, an unequivocal future and comfortable financial position. Democratisation and liberty are taking a backspace now as it is not in tune with their basic requirements. A deeply ingrained political-cultural problem cannot be resolved by military means only. It requires legislative help that will be able to come up with fruitful plans for a better future.

The basic motive of terrorists is to instil fear. This intention is furthered by media's involvement in eking out substantial news items. (37). There are two reasons that have contributed to media's making this violence by terrorists an alluring approach to affect socio-political transformation. Firstly, it has heightened the image of those individuals who rebel against the social and political systems of a society that is both vulnerable and complex. Secondly, the advent of technology has made media a requisite tool that is often used by an individual or group to

augment their mastery and dominion over society within a short span of time and with minimal efforts. (37).

Curbing Terrorism

This situation is best tackled by authoritarian governments as they can curtail rights, like the freedom of the press, and this will stop the circulation of the message that terrorists want to spread. This will handicap the terrorist's motives. In contrast, a democratic government provides terrorists a platform for successfully proclaiming their agenda. The press will never leave such incident and will broadcast the news with all its ferocity because of fewer restrictions imposed on them. There is a trend in democratic societies where these terror-based incidents are reported more often because of limited restrictions imposed on them. (14) This, in turn, will create a sense of fear and panic in the minds of the citizens. This acts as an inducement for further actions of a similar nature. (38) This might also act as an opportunity for encouraging further recruiting and planning of such attacks. The contagion hypothesis also validates this perspective and mentions that when media showers attention on terrorist acts, it increases the chances of such acts as well. (37) This is not the scenario in an authoritarian set-up as the government will be able to stop these terrorist organizations from gaining legitimacy. Hence, it becomes imperative that a greater degree of research takes place in this regard to see the impact that is created by media on terrorism. This will help us understand the motives of the terrorists and how they are using the media as a platform for propagating their objectives. Accordingly, effective counter-terrorism policies can be implemented.

Research highlights that an economy that takes care of the well-being of its citizens can deter the influx of people towards terrorism. Psychological well-being of citizens is also extremely important. The higher the happiness quotient, the lesser the chances of extremism. When the government takes care of the basic requirements like health, education and finances, people's trust on the administration is established. Hence, government policies should be oriented towards establishing proper infrastructure or else resentment will automatically heighten terrorism.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

Despite all this discussion on terrorism and counterterrorism in the Middle East, one thing remains eternally true. It is nearly impossible to establish a completely just and fair society. People will always have some reason or other to complain. This dissatisfaction, combined with evil inspiration, will again lead to an attack on the civilians for fulfilling some objective or the other. The onus of the state is to protect its citizens. To fulfil this, it is mandatory for the government to dissuade and prevent terrorism by shielding the citizens and providing counterterrorism measures. Despite acknowledging the fact that terrorism cannot be exterminated completely, the process of eradicating it should not be shunned. A constant

vigil and policy implementation should continue taking place to deal with this menace called "Terrorism".

Counter-terrorism policies need to be analysed to discern whether it is effective enough to combat terrorism. This analysis will give a clarity on the efficiency of the existing policies. It will also help researchers to recognize and acknowledge ways by which one can dissuade extremist activities and find a focus to probe further into the factors that are causing terrorism

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Amity University, Punjab for encouraging me to carry on with my research work.

Funding Information

This research has not received any financial funding from any source.

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