

Navigating International Terrorism: India's Counter-Terrorism Policies, Partnerships and Prospects

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Abstract

One of the major problem world is facing since the end of the 20th century is terrorism. Neither as a problem within international law nor in form of political phenomenon terrorism is a new term. This paper analyses how terrorism has today become the pronounced challenge to world peace and particularly to India's national security. Through a counter – terrorism regime terrorism as a circumstance must be doomed, confronted, combated, controlled, and in due course should be abolished at all levels – national, regional and international. Situations necessary for abolishing terrorism must accordingly be well informed and strengthened unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally regionally, nationally.

The objective of this research is to examine the trajectory of India's counterterrorism policies and international collaborations, emphasizing the effectiveness of its strategies in the face of evolving global threats. By exploring new dimensions of India's counterterrorism framework, the study aims to provide innovative perspectives on enhancing policy implementation and strengthening global partnerships to combat international terrorism more efficiently.

Keywords - *Terrorism, India's counter-terrorism framework, Policy, Partnership, Prospects.*

Introduction

Terrorism comes from the French word terrorism and originally referred specifically to state terrorism as practiced by the French government during the reign of terror.

In the Indian context, terrorism very precisely is defined as an act of violence to terrorise which aims to induce fear among the individuals and government by using lethal weapons which may cause death or injuries or may cause damage to the people and their property. In simple terms, an act of terrorism is equal to the peacetime equivalent of war, or crime.

Realists emphasize the state/non-state dichotomy in their view of terrorism. They view terrorism as a violent challenge to established order by non-state actors, driven by a bid for power.

Liberals also focus on non-state actors in their analysis of terrorism. They place greater emphasis on ideology rather than simple power-seeking as the primary motivation. Liberals recognize the role of terror organizations in influencing political or religious ideology, fostering a sense of injustice and hostility.

Critical Theorists like Noam Chomsky and Falk argue that terrorism can be done by both non-state actors and state actors. Noam Chomsky criticizes the USA as the 'first terrorist state in the world.' Emphasize the significance of 'state terrorism' (wholesale terrorism) over 'non-state' (retail terrorism) due to states' greater coercive capacity.

Origin of International Terrorism

The origin of terrorism is understood through the trajectory of four waves.

Anarchist wave (1878–1919) the 1st wave beginning from the late 19th century was characterised by anarchism as a motive and assassination as a method. This included the killing of the Austrian Archduke Sarajevo in 1914 which sparked World War I.

The Anti-Colonial wave (1920s–early 1960s) the 2nd wave was primarily a reaction to decolonization after WWI & WWII and involved groups fighting for national self-determination.

The New Left wave (mid-1960s–1990s) the 3rd wave came in response to the criticism of the US in Vietnam & Israel in the Middle East. This wave gave terrorism a transnational character and the most popular method used in it was 'hijacking'.

The Religious Wave: The 4th wave began with the Iranian revolution in 1979. In this wave, the reassertion of the theme of the martyrdom has happened and along with it the terrorists have turned to suicide bombings as their preferred attack method.

In the present international scenario this challenge of terrorism is looming over most of the developed and developing countries. The human cost of terrorism has been felt in every part of the globe. India by witnessing serious loss of life and property has suffered the brunt of terrorism. Thus, as a result of this turmoil, there comes the need to navigate international terrorism using countering terrorist regimes before it gets too late as we need to catch up with the barbarism's modern form.

Types of Terrorism

Political Terrorism: It is terrorism when a group or a political party resort to organized violence to destabilize the existing political order, to establish a new order. The Irish Republic Army (IRA) or the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) are seen as the incarnation of this sort of terrorism.

State Terrorism: When the government of a state resorts to organized violence to eliminate the opponent to establish its control is called as state terrorism. In a cost-benefit analysis, from the viewpoint of the perpetrator, the state-sponsored terrorism is the most efficacious form of terrorism. In nineteenth century the state sponsored terrorism was widely employed in Central Asia. In the sponsorship of political violence of different natures in their enemy countries, the countries like North Korea, Iran, Sudan and Iraq. Since Independence in 1947 India is also meeting this challenge from Pakistan.

Religious Terrorism: Current terrorist activities globally are largely driven by religious motivations. Individuals involved in such terrorism, whether wholly or partially influenced by religious beliefs, view brutality as a sacred obligation or a holy deed. For example, organisations like ISIS. In this regard in places like Southeast Asia, South Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the United States since the 1970s the Islamic terrorism could be identified.

International Terrorism: It is also known as cross-border terrorism as it contains terrorist activities that have a transnational impact. In international terrorism there is the involvement of people from more than one country. In India, Mumbai witnessed International Terrorism on 26 November 2008 when the terrorists from neighbouring states attacked hotels, roads, railway stations and restaurants.

Means of Terrorism

The first means are the nuclear weapons. Although no nuclear-based terrorist attacks have occurred, since the late 1990s, Al-Qaeda has attempted to acquire nuclear materials, reportedly with state assistance from countries like Pakistan.

The second means is the biological weapons which instigate bio-terrorism, which is enabled by advances in biotechnology, it is the planned release of viruses, bacteria, or pathogens to cause illness or death. A bio- terrorism attack is an intentional act that releases infectious agents to harm humans, animals, or plants.

The third means is suicide terrorism. The 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi spotlighted the LTTE's brutal suicide tactics, with further suicide attacks following, including the 1993 killing of Sri Lankan President Premadasa. By the 1990s, Jihadi groups had also embraced suicide terrorism.

India's Counter Terrorism Regime and its Need

Terrorism is like an age-old tale. You can't keep venomous snakes in your yard and assume they'll harm only your neighbours; eventually, they'll strike the very hand that shelters them. As terrorism seems like a cancer harming the roots of mankind thus India through its counterterrorism regime, pays attention on removal of this evil of terrorism from society.

It is been continuously maintained by India that addressing the root causes of terrorism is essential to eliminating its threat. In drafting General Assembly Resolution 40/6 in 1987 India had played a significant role and has always recognized the distinction between terrorism and self-determination movements while remaining cautious of terrorism fuelled by mercenaries aimed at undermining territorial integrity.

Following the 1993 Declaration of Human Rights India asserted that terrorism was the greatest roadblock to the actualization of human rights. During the 1995 General Assembly plenary, India criticized the UN for failing to protect democracies from extremist and violent threats.

Focusing on state-sponsored terrorism, recognizing the threat far earlier than many developed nations India has introduced the Draft International Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism in year 1996. A draft resolution on Terrorism and Human Rights was also co-sponsored by India in 1997, which was further adopted in 1999. In 2000, India's Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism was debated in the General Assembly.

In 2002, India addressed the measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction by introducing a co-sponsored a Draft Resolution on Hostage Taking . In 2006, India endorsed the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the UN General Assembly.

India has always adhered to the global counter-terrorism framework, consistently submitting reports to relevant UN committees on the actions it has taken at both domestic and global levels to combat terrorism. In highlighting the oppositions posed by non-compliance with anti-terrorism conventions and advocating for punitive measures against states that support terrorism India has always been outspoken.

India remains dedicated to countering terrorism and this could be seen in the form of its information exchange, capacity building for border security, curbing illicit financial flows, international cooperation ,preventing the misuse of modern technologies, and collaborating on investigations and judicial procedures.

India's Counter-Terrorism Policies

Terrorism seems like a cancer eating away the very roots of mankind and thus India through its counterterrorism regime, focuses on eradicating this evil of terrorism from society

In its counter-terrorism structure, India has adopted a hybrid counter-terrorism strategy that incorporates both criminal justice counter-terrorism, which addresses acts of terrorism within a law enforcement framework, and militaristic counter-terrorism, which views terrorism as a national security threat to be countered through the use of armed forces. By utilizing both approaches, India aims to strengthen its counter-terrorism efforts.

In response to the increasing threat of terrorism, India implemented a range of counter-terrorism measures over key years. After the 2008 Mumbai attacks, coastal security was strengthened with responsibilities shared among the Navy, Coast Guard, and marine police. To handle terrorist-related offences in 2009 the National Investigation Agency was formed and to centralize security data NATGRID and National Investigation Agency was launched . The same year, four National Security Guard (NSG) hubs were set up to ensure faster response times in crises. The Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), originally established in 2001, was expanded to improve intelligence sharing. Furthermore, the Navy established the Joint Operations Centre in 2008 to monitor India's vast coastline. These coordinated measures highlight India's commitment to a proactive and structured counter-terrorism approach.

India's Strategic Partnership in Countering Terrorism

Terrorism is a sort of dynamic and complex occurrence. The methods of attack, choice of targets, related motivations, support and financing mechanisms of terrorism are often evolving, thereby compounding the challenges of ensuring the existence of an effective strategy to counter it.

In this situation, global cooperation is of paramount importance in order to get relief from this looming challenge.

To bolster its counter-terrorism efforts, India has forged critical bilateral and multilateral cooperation that helps to increase its capability to address this multifaceted threat on a global scale. Through these alliances, India collaborates with key nations and international organizations to share intelligence, strengthen security frameworks, and implement coordinated actions aimed at dismantling terror networks.

Bilateral: India holds Joint Working Group meetings on counter-terrorism with the United Kingdom, France, and the United States.

Multilateral

In BRICS India has been proactively addressing terrorism in multilateral forums, including BRICS, which has led to positive outcomes. This includes the establishment of five sub-working groups focusing on critical areas such as terrorist financing, online terrorism, radicalization, foreign terrorist fighters, and capacity building.

In 2022, India organized a special meeting of the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to address emerging threats, including terror financing through cryptocurrency and the use of drones in modern terrorism. India also presented recommendations for the CTC's consideration which consisted: Of undertaking effective and sustained efforts to combat terror financing, ensuring coordination between the UN's normative initiatives and other platforms, such as the FATF preventing the Security Council's sanctions regime from being compromised by political factors, foster international cooperation and collective actions against terrorists and their supporters, including the dismantling of terrorist safe havens, strengthen multilateral efforts to address the links between transnational organized crime and this threat of terrorism, like arms and illicit drug trafficking.

India has consistently supported programs aimed at countering terrorism, demonstrating the adherence to advancing multilateral efforts in the battle against this threat. India's financial contributions are directed toward strengthening the initiatives of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), particularly the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (CTTP) and the Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT).

Hence, to neutralise any threat of terrorism India should play an active role. The world must unite and take firm multilateral actions, ensuring that terrorist groups are confronted with a hard hand.

Prospects for India's Counter-Terrorism Strategy

As the global landscape of terrorism continues to evolve, the prospects for effectively countering this threat rely on both adaptive strategies and strengthened international collaboration. Exploring these prospects involves examining the opportunities and potential obstacles that shape the path forward in mitigating terrorism's impacts worldwide.

It would be a good first step to accept and ratify the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) proposed by India and it is also the need of the hour to counter a global scourge.

Combating terrorism is a joint responsibility of Central, state and local governments in India and this act envisages Centre and state partnership in the investigation of terrorist cases. At regional as well as sub-regional levels inter-state efforts are collectively needed. Only by the sustained international efforts terrorism can be countered and the United Nations may be best suited for taking forward effective global efforts combating terrorism.

To achieve a sustainable impact, it is necessary to approach counter-terrorism regimes through a phased strategy- addressing immediate oppositions in the short term, establishing foundational changes in the medium term and fostering enduring advancements for the long term.

To combat domestic terrorism effectively in the short term, targeted police and intelligence-led operations are essential, focusing on apprehending key operatives and disrupting leadership. Concurrently, fostering international cooperation is expository for eliminating safe havens, cutting off financial resources, and limited access to weapons for terrorist groups. Additionally, identifying and safeguarding potential targets within vulnerable sectors is imperative to strengthen national security and resilience.

In the medium term, India must enhance the capabilities and strength of its intelligence apparatus and the police forces as well as increase its focus on fine-tuning mechanisms for coordinated action and efficient flow of information.

In the long run, if the challenge of terrorism confronting India is understood in terms of contestations over identity and assertions of distinct identities then a counter-terrorism strategy has to involve the propagation of the idea of India as a vibrant society and a democratic polity where all groups are equal stakeholders and where there is enough room for all groups to celebrate their specific identities.

Challenges in Framework for Thinking about the counter-terrorism Strategy @ 21st Century India

As the tentacles of International Terrorism has engulfed the entire world and has taken a global shape thus it's been felt that international terrorism is not one region's or one nation's problem. The external linkages and global dynamics of international terrorism have made it an alarming challenge to the security, existence of mankind, development and world peace. Recognising the global scale and interconnected nature of terrorism, India must navigate a complex landscape of challenges that hinder effective counter-terrorism efforts. Key among these challenges is-

Firstly, there is lack of globally accepted definitions for what consists of terrorism, which give rise to phrases like one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter', 'terrorism to some is heroism to others', 'today's terrorist is tomorrow's noble prize winner', and so on. Acts of terrorism are viewed very differently, the way the blind men defined an elephant.

Secondly expanding terrorism through the internet is also a looming challenge as the internet offers a largely unregulated space where by making use of numerous websites and social media platforms terrorists can spread propaganda, shaping their strategies to target potential recruits.

Thirdly, as evidence of IMF and World Bank estimates global money laundering between 2 to 4 trillion dollars annually, it shows that terror financing is posing a threat to counter terrorism framework. Terrorists exploit charities, alternative remittance systems, and even unregulated cryptocurrency, posing risks to public trust and global financial system.

Fourthly, as the world is heading towards becoming a digital village where data acts as the new oil hence cyber-attacks are becoming rampant in this case terrorists exploit cyberspace by attacking networks and using sensitive information to pressure governments or intimidate citizens for political or social gains. The 17th September 2024 Hezbollah pager attack in Lebanon is an alarm in this regard.

Conclusion

There is a need of unified global response to effectively counter International terrorist. It is critical to reject any notion of "good" versus "bad" terrorists. A crime is a crime, and a terrorist is a terrorist; one who perform crimes averse to humanity thus cannot have any religion.

A well-defined, comprehensive and integrated strategy is needed for tackling International terrorism. India in its forward march from the road of Atmanirbhar Bharat to the road of developed and progressive Vikasit Bharat@2047 requires global peace as peace is the basic need of a civilised society. A painless and peaceful tomorrow is possible only if all countries make a joint concerted creek down counter-terrorism regime to wipe that ulcer of terrorism. In order to bring a sense of long lasting peace in the world this challenge should be tackled globally. The challenge is absolute, so must be the response of the civilised world. Hence, it is rightly remarked by Kofi Annan the former secretary general of The United Nations Organisation that “Respect for rule of law, human rights and the fundamental freedom are the essential tools in the effort to combat terrorism”.

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