

CROSS-BORDER TERRORISM IN KASHMIR AND INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

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Abstract

Terrorism is an age-old phenomenon but has acquired new dimensions in view of technological and societal changes. The nature, targets, and rhetoric of terrorism have changed dramatically since the end of the cold war and the emergence of globalization. Terrorism today has changed from being a vehicle of intra-state violence to a transnational phenomenon, where a loosely-organized international network of terrorists uses mercenaries, organized crime cartels, sophisticated weaponry, and modern communication to operate from, through and into various countries. To quote Mr. Jaswant Singh, Four democratizations: of easy access to rapid communication, to technology, to easy to travel and a democratization of access to a weapon of destruction,¹ has largely been responsible for the increasing trend towards transnational terrorism.

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Introduction

Conceptualizing Terrorism

With the development in science, technology, and communication knowledge, terrorists and states sponsoring terrorism, are believed to be gaining access to non-conventional weapons of mass destruction like nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Termed as weapons of mass destruction, these are the dream of any terrorist group. One of the most violent and horrendous dimensions of transnational terrorism using modern systems, non-conventional weapons, and having transnational linkages was seen on September 11, 2001. The single act has brought a conceptual change in the terrorism warfare theory where '*Idea terrorism*' has been used.² Radical changes have taken place in the ways in which terrorist acts have been committed against the most powerful country of the world without using conventional terrorism weapons. They used equipment, machines, and tools of terror of modern developed societies as weapons by converting passenger planes laden with aviation fuel into a bomb and converting into a guided missile against World Trade Center/ Pentagon (symbol of US economic and military strengths). With a single coordinated action lasting less than an hour, they caused multi-level damages and achieved several objectives- loss of life and property, loss of the image of the target nation, economic recession and layoffs causing unemployment. One of the most perceptible things that happened was the change in the American way of thinking. It caused social unrest characterized by racial hatred and riots against people of particular origin/ community, and the media gave it worldwide publicity for several months. Such an event would have unprecedented ramifications and response patterns. Today, terrorists and terrorism have assumed the stature of a full-blown '*Frankenstein Monster*'.³

Terrorism is a strategy based on psychological impact. In most cases, their capability is rather slim.⁴ Terrorism wreaks violence, inflicting pain, and suffering that destroys perpetrators and others. Terrorism induces fear and increases poverty, suffering, and loss of life with no apparent gain to anyone. Instead of offering or seeking solutions, terrorism looks to destruction as an answer. In acts of terrorism, human values are lost.

There are five factors that cause terrorism: the first factor is terrorism is caused by frustration and desperation. When people are desperate to achieve a stated goal and fail, desperation brings up violence in them. The second factor is the belief in a non-verifiable concept of merit and heaven: "If I die fighting for God, then I will go to heaven because God wants this action to happen." The third is a staunch belief that "my way is the only way." The fourth factor is ignoring human values in order to achieve a goal and fifth, the lack of respect for life itself.⁵

Terrorism manifests itself in political, religious, and socio-economic inequalities and exploitation. It thrives on grievances, real or imaginary. When the state or the ruling oligarchy fails to redress injustices, infringement of rights of oppression the terrorism is learned. So long as the world of economic, social, and racial indignities remains, the terror per se would always be there. Terrorism has been used by political, religious, nationalistic and ethnic groups and by governments themselves. Terrorism is a worldwide phenomenon. The terrorism is mainly a product of injustice prevailing in society.⁶

Since independence, India has faced a number of terrorists/insurgency-related situations, which have revolved around perceived concepts of secession with the aim of creating separate independent sovereign states. Although we have been able to control such fissiparous tendencies, a dangerous dimension has been added for the last two decades by the involvement of Pakistan in adding and abetting secessionism in Jammu & Kashmir. Having failed in its attempts of annexing Kashmir by force and realizing the futility of carrying out an armed adventure in the existing security scenario, Pakistan resorted to what can be termed as proxy war and cross-border terrorism.

Cross-Border Terrorism in Kashmir

Kashmir is one of the most wonderful creations of nature. Known for its beautiful lakes, snowcapped mountains, its majestic rivers carrying the water of great Himalaya, saffron fields, cherry blossoms, and chinar trees, Kashmir is certainly a “paradise on Earth.” But, more than that it is strategically situated, in the North-East it is bound by Tibet, in the North by Sinkiang province of China and in the north-west by Turkistan, in the West, in the West its borders Pakistan and in the South-Himanchal, and Punjab.

This land of extraordinary scenic beauty is in turmoil today. The angry young men of the valley have taken to the gun. Trained and armed with modern weapons across the border, the misguided youth along with thousands of foreign mercenaries have deeply disturbed the placid water of Jhelum. More than 80,000 lives have been lost for 59 years. Kashmir is an issue that has its roots in the developments leading to and following the partition of India. The nature of the Kashmir problem has undergone a change in keeping with developments in South Asia, on the one hand, and the changing international scenario, on the other. This is clearly manifested in the post-cold war period.

The Kashmir problem remains a bone of contention between the two countries. Kashmir’s annexation by force or by diplomacy has been a key national

objective of Pakistan. According to some articulations, Pakistan can not survive without Kashmir. The Pakistan military and political leaders propagated that the economic wellbeing of Pakistanis inalienably linked to Kashmir.⁷ Sardar Abdul Kayum Khan, the president of Azad Kashmir, said: Pakistan can not exist as an independent entity by withdrawing its claim on Kashmir. It will be turned into virtual hostage to India and its lease of life will depend upon the period, which India will allow to exist.⁸ Z.A.Bhutto also said, the people of Kashmir are part of the people of Pakistan in blood, in flesh, in culture, in geography, in history and in every way and in every form, if necessary Pakistan would to end.⁹ These views generate opinion such as Kashmir's accession to Pakistan was not simply a matter of desirability but of absolute necessity for its separate existence.¹⁰

So-called liberation of Kashmir from Indian rule is considered to be religious duty by Muslim fundamentalists and a section of the Pakistan army. Besides attacking India militarily, she also attempted to ferment rebellion in Kashmir by sending infiltrators into Kashmir in August 1965, but Pakistani strategy failed particularly because Kashmiri themselves did not co-operate in the endeavor.

The withdrawal of Soviet armed forces from Afghanistan and the changing geographical scenario in the late '80s and the internal political developments in Kashmir provided Pakistan an opportunity to pursue its Kashmir policy on its own terms, i.e. - providing moral and material support and training to militant groups to engage India in a proxy war. Pakistan decided to underplay the role of military action. In 1988, the then President of Pakistan, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, placed a draft of secret mission, *Operation Topac* for annexing Kashmir before senior military officials. Outlining the plan to ISI and other officials, Gen. Zia said, "We must adopt an operation, which will destroy the will of the enemy, damage his political capacity and expose him to the world an oppressor."¹¹

In early 1992, the ISI had established a common command over the disparate military arms of organizations that had mushroomed, true to the example set by the *Mujahidin's* of Afghanistan and the general pattern of Islamic militancy elsewhere. It succeeded in the fall of 1991, in mediating and settling an agreement between the military arms of the *Hizb-ul- Mujahidins*, the *Allah Tigers*, and the *Ikhwan-ul-Musalmeen* to launch joint and coordinated operations. Though somewhat tenuous, the ISI control helped in funneling arms, ammunition, and money to the militants, besides conducting training and indoctrination programmes. The training campus had started turning out more hardened and motivated gangs, well-versed in the use of sophisticated weapons, explosives, and radio sets. Whereas a total of 390 cases of terrorism were reported in 1988, the number spurted to 4,971 in 1992. There was

a substantial increase in the incidents against the security forces from 6 in 1988 to a high of 3,413 in 1992. India has lost nearly 47,371 lives to terrorism and extremism between 1994 and 2005. This includes 18,151 civilians, 6,728 security personnel and 22,492 terrorists. The quality and the quantity of arms captured by the security forces, too, is indicative of the growing involution of the ISI. In 1988, only 34 AK-47s (or its later versions), were recovered; the figure went up to a whopping 3,775 in 1992.¹²

Pakistan has been actively providing diplomatic, political, moral, and financial and arms assistance and training to the militants. The financial and military support of Pakistan led to increasing violence in Kashmir. Once considered to be “heaven on earth”, Kashmir became the “abode of killers”. The militancy reached its peak in 1993-1994. In these years the terrorist incidents reached to 8784, but it decreased marginally in 1995 to 8731. In the same year, Charar-e Sharif was destroyed in a massive fire by terrorists. Thousands of Kashmiris took to streets chanting the slogan, “Jo mangega Pakistan, Usko Milega Kabristan.” This incident completed the disenchantment of Kashmiri people from Pakistan. The British opposition leader, Jack Cunningham told, “what is going on in Kashmir today, are well-armed insurrections well supported from outside. It is unacceptable and must stop.”¹³ John Mallot, former Principal Secretary of the US for South Asian affairs, said, “In J&K, militants have restored to terrorist acts, we continue to be a concern by a credible report that the government of Pakistan has been providing sufficient support to some of the militants. Any such support must come to an end for the future of Indo-Pak relations and far solution of the Kashmir issue.”¹⁴ The then US ambassador to India, Frank Wisner, condemned, what he termed as, “export of terrorism in Kashmir.”¹⁵

Not only the decline of popular support of Kashmiris to terrorists but also the concurrence to terrorist incidents decreased. Yet, Pakistan continued its proxy war against India. Perhaps the waning support of the local population provoked ISI, Pakistani army and rulers, to enhance the level of the conflict and to send mercenaries led by Pak regulars in Kargil in 1999. The planned motive of this incursion was to win over Leh and thereafter to capture the entire Kashmir by massive infiltration into it. Pakistani soldiers were camouflages as Mujahidins. A unit of 10-45 soldiers was equipped with battalion-sized firepower. It took more than two months, for the Indian army to evacuate the area through ‘*Operation Vijay*’.

On Oct.12, 1999, a new military regime came in power in Pakistan headed by Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who is considered by the Indian establishment as an architect of Kargil intrusion. In an interview with a T.V. channel, Gen. Musharraf has stated, “If one feels that peace will prevail between India and Pakistan before

resolving the Kashmir issue, then it is an only pipe dream.”¹⁶ In just a few weeks after assuming the power, Gen. adopted an important stand on the Kashmir issue. He said, “For the previous government of Pakistan, Kashmir was just one of many issues in the Indo-Pak relationship. Now, however, for a new regime, it is the sole issue.”¹⁷ In fact, Gen. Musharraf declared that Pakistan would not enter into dialogue with India on any other issue until the Indian government made concrete and useful talks on the Kashmir issue. The government of India tried to put pressure on the military regime through the international community, to rein in the Islamic militancy based in Pakistan who indulges in cross-border terrorism in Kashmir in the name of Jihad.

The Pattern of Global Terrorism, a report brought out by the State Department (USA) has highlighted that elements within Pakistan were supporting terrorism in Kashmir. The Pakistan response to the charge has been ambivalent and it reiterates its long-held position that it is only extending moral, political, and diplomatic support to freedom-fighters in J&K. Through the insurgency in J&K, the Pakistani ruling elites have engaged the Indian military through a low-cost option without the Pakistan military getting directly involved. This proxy war appears to be a part of a long term strategy to bleed India in J&K and keep it perpetually destabilized with the aim to change the *status quo* in J&K.

September 11 event represented a watershed in international perception about terrorism. The terrorist attacks by Laskar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jias-e-Mohamad (JeM), Tahreek-e-Kassak (TeK) on Red Fort, New Delhi, J&K State Assembly House, Srinagar, Indian Parliament House, New Delhi, Swaminarayan Temple, Akshardham in Gujarat, and twin bomb blast July 30 and August 25, 2003, in Mumbai, on December 28, 2005, an attack on the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. An educational institution was targeted for the first time in India. The Ram Janmbhoomi/Babari Mosque complex at Ayodhya in U.P. was attacked by heavily armed militants on July 5, 2005. This attack was foiled by security forces and the attackers were killed. Three blasts in the capital ahead of the festivals of Dipawali and Id on Oct.29, 2005 killed 65 people. Year 2006 alone has seen a series of blasts in sub-urban trains during rush hour in the evening in Mumbai which killed 250 people on July 11, 2006. There were triple bombing at a temple and the railway station at Varanasi. According to home ministry officials, property worth rs. 116.7 million was damaged by terrorists in the first six months of 2006, almost double of 2005.

These horrific acts perpetrated by terrorists aided and abetted by Pakistan defy any logic. The American President, George Bush, has asked Gen. Musharraf, “to take action” against the LeT, JeM, and other terrorist organization, their leaders,

and their financiers.¹⁸ It was in response, to this exhortation that Musharraf first froze the assets of LeT and later arrested its leader. President George Bush said, “It is very important for Musharraf to make a clear statement to the world that he intends to crack down on terror.”¹⁹ Gen. Musharraf reaffirmed, “I give the assurance that no infiltration is taking place across the Line of Control. Pakistan will never allow the export of terrorism anywhere in the world from Pakistan.”²⁰

The Government of India has been seeking a political solution to the problem and took a number of steps towards such a solution, like Atal Bihari Bajpai, the then Prime Minister visit to Lahore, inviting Gen. Musharraf to Agra, unilateral ceasefire against militants, release, and rehabilitation of surrendered militants, several Composite Dialogues on CBMs and nuclear CBMs and the recent proposal to form a bilateral mechanism on terror. Manmohan Singh, the present Prime Minister of India said in the NAM summit held in Havana on September 18, 2006, that Pakistan had given “an explicit commitment that they will work together” with India in combating terror.²¹ Asked if another terror attack in India could jeopardize the peace process again, Singh said: “Life is much more complicated than black and white. We have made an advance, let’s give it a try, and approach all aspects of India-Pakistan relationship with sincerity.”²²

Much will depend on the success of the ongoing peace process with Pakistan and its approach towards support to terrorism and irregular warfare both in India and Afghanistan. If international pressure on Pakistan continues, it may force, Pakistan to change and to reform and democratize its polity. This would clearly be among the foremost tasks in international security in the coming years and an area in which India hopes to work closely with other partners.²³

Combating Terrorism in India: Some Suggestions

Walter Laqueur argues that the only effective weapon against terrorism in the modern era has been the infiltration of their ranks and the use of informers. Counter terrorism’s success in democratic societies is mainly due to advanced computer technology and the cooperation of a population that provides important leads.²⁴ Jennifer Jane is of the view that domestic counter-terrorism measures focus on five key aspects.²⁵

1. The use of exceptional legislation,
2. Maintenance of a vast intelligence network,
3. Development of pre-emptive controls on political activity,
4. Military involvement in civil disturbances, and
5. The development of a media management strategy in times of crisis.

Some of the suggestions that might form part of the combating terrorism in the Indian environment are as follows:

1. Evolving a pro-active national policy to give a clear direction to the counter-terrorism mechanism,
2. National consensus and popular support to deal with terrorism, within the constitutional and sovereignty framework, all the political parties should rise above the vote bank politics and treat terrorism as a threat to national security and leave the policy of appeasement of minorities and states autonomy for some states,
3. India needs to adopt a policy that includes eliminating the cause of militancy, resort to international diplomacy and make it too expensive for Pakistan to exercise this option against India,
4. Strengthening the internal mechanism- reorganizing and modernization the Police Forces and Effective Border Management,
5. Intelligence system,
6. Development with Good Governance,
7. Proper checking of foreign funding to terrorists,
8. Central Agency to monitor investigating of military case
9. Utilisation of development funds,
10. Media management- there should be extensive propaganda in national and international newspapers and journals against terrorists and states sponsoring terrorism by eminent academics.
11. Diplomatic support is an important component of counter-terrorism when terrorism emanates from another country and is sponsored by another country.

Conclusion

Terrorism can be contained and could even be defeated. India has to overcome the general inability of democracies to put together the political will, the resources, and the strategies that are necessary to prevail over terrorism. Most of the indigenous terrorism can be handled through required reforms that would remove economic and caste-based inequalities, good and honest governance, and effective policing. The Government of India should be prepared to raise the threshold of tolerance in relation to cross-border terrorism and to serve credible notice that India is ready to exercise her right of hot pursuit. The determination should be made evident that, if left with no other viable alternative, India would not be averse to adopting the Bush doctrine of pre-emption and take suitable overt or covert action to neutralize the bases of terrorism outside of our national borders. Once India's capabilities and

determination are made clear, the state sponsors of terrorist acts against Indian interests would realize the prohibitively high and unacceptable cost of such sponsorship.

Combating terrorism also requires educating our own people and creating in them an awareness of Pakistan's role and modus operandi— so that they remain alert and co-operate with the counter-terrorism agencies in countering the activities of the ISI in our territory. It also serves the purpose of reassuring the public that the Government is alive to its responsibilities relating to countering the role of the ISI. These efforts should be transparent. They cannot be done secretly. A sustained political campaign must be immediately launched to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Kashmiri people, assuage their feelings of hurt and neglect, and restore their bruised and battered dignity. The people of J&K need to be convinced that their future lies with India. The Government must launch a sustained media campaign, both within the country and abroad, to highlight Pakistan's deep-rooted involvement in fostering terrorism and insurgency in J&K and other parts of India. International pressure must be brought to bear on Pakistan to desist from its nefarious interference in India's internal affairs. Above all, public opinion must be mobilized to express the nation's solidarity with the Kashmiri people in their long drawn out and courageous struggle against Pakistan-sponsored proxy war.

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