

Terrorism : A Threat to Democracy in the Post Modern Era

Abstract

In the post modern era, no broad categorization can do full justice to the variety and complexity of Modern phenomena of terrorism. But a comprehensive review of the social science literature on terrorism reveals abundant evidence of currently active groups involved in terrorist activity motivated by one or more of the following- Nationalism, Separatism, Religious fundamentalism, Millennialism, Racism, Vigilantism. In other words, In this era Terrorism is the most challenging phenomena for the entire world.

Keywords: Democracy, Terrorism, Post Modern Era

Introduction

Terrorism is an ambiguous term whose definition implies a political act over the years the term has been used more frequently and today it often seems to be synonymous with "evil". Generally, the term "Terrorism" can be used to describe a "systematic use or threat of violence in order to achieve political goals.' It is a way to fight for political goals in a criminal manner. It has made its target the person, property, places and communication in a bid to paralyse the individual liberty and dignity of person. Terrorism, has no absolute and globally accepted definition and its interpretation can easily be used or abused to suite particular needs. The adage that "one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter" reveals the wide range of variations in its interpretation but if simply stated, terror is extreme or intense fear. It is a psychological state which combines the physical and mental efforts to create dread and insecurity. The matter of terrorism is indicated. The terrorist of yesterday is the hero of today and the hero of yesterday is the terrorist of today. Terrorism in its modern interpretation is a new word for cruel criminal acts. Terror can be committed in the name of Good but basically it is a way to fight for political goals in a criminal manner. The terrorism according to United Nations can be defined as:-

"Any action that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or to compel a government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act"

On December 6, 2001, Justice Ministers of the 25 Member European Union adopted a new common definition of terrorism. It defined terrorism as:-

"Acts committed the aim of seriously intimidating a population, forcing a government or international organisation to abstain from performing any act or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation."

Regardless of the definition of terrorism, democracies must be beware of the danger of transforming the war on terrorism from a means of defending democracy to one the undermines its foundations. Terrorists have killed people of all nationalities faiths and backgrounds. Terrorists aim to achieve objectives through intimidation and fear. They assert that "end justify means" no matter what the cost in human life and suffering. Some examples of terrorists acts involve: The use of explosive device and suicide bombs, the assassination of political, military or media figures, Hostage taking, the hijacking of airplanes or other vehicles, the destructions of infrastructure and communications, the use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. So their methods, too, are different but the mass murder is their explicit objective, their measure of success in their terms, and their methods of recruitment bear more comparison with self-destructive cults than political movements. In other words, "The Post Modern Terrorist" or The Revolution in Terrorist Affairs. Much as Scientific



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technological and social change continually influence the art and science of warfare, so to have these things influenced the behaviour and enhanced the capacities of terrorist. Recent studies suggest that terrorists are becoming increasingly more lethal and violent. These ultra violent acts suggest that the days of constrained or modulated violence are over. The ultra violent is defined as an act that involves killing or planning to kill others "en-masse". This killing is conducted outside the boundaries of warfare and punishment in such a horrific manner as to elicit total revulsion and anger from those who witness or become aware of act.

Democracy lies in the hearts and minds of people. It permeates those hearts and minds, so that no one allows them to be usurped by force or in any other way. Democracy is a condition in which the vast number of people who comprise a nation and ultimately the world submit themselves to institution and of laws of their own making in which they care about each other and the planet on which they live. Democracy is not only an idea, it is also a set of values (Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood) and a way of governing. "Terror" in the sense of a "Terror-regime" is originally another way of governing- without democratic values. It is a threat against democracy which is not threatened as criminal acts but as something, that can suspend democratic rights in societies.

Democracy is not a form of government but a set of principles that guide how we govern ourselves. Terrorism is merely a method of utilizing fear as a means to an end. Terrorist can and indeed are attempting to cause use to ignore those principles as we cater to our fear that terrorism brings. It is when we abandon the principles, even in the short term that will bring the ultimate demise of Democracy. So we should not allow ourselves to publically fear terrorism but instead, we should discipline ourselves to allow the principles of democracy and peace to prevail.

In this era, terrorism poses a direct and indirect threat to Democracy. The direct threat is a result of terrorism's capability to undermine the fundamental security that nations and international organisations are supposed to provide their citizens, which is the foundation of the legitimacy of a government. Terrorism also poses a direct threat to the basic human rights of life and property. But the indirect threat to democracy is by far the most dangerous. The war on terrorism challenges the democratic institutions of the nations and their ability to ensure the security of their citizens without harming innocent people. the terrorist attacks signal a turning point not only in the intensity of global terrorism but also a warning to any enlightened democracy that wishes to combat the threat of terrorism.

Democracy is traditionally seen as a panacea to provide security and civil liberties to citizens and avoid political extremism or terrorism provoked by un-redressed grievances. The oft-cited theory of Democratic peace holds that democracies do not wage war against each other. Democracy is in crisis, insecurity is on the rise and the threat of terrorism is equally menacing in newly democratizing and long democratic countries. Terrorism, and equally

the fight against terrorism, pose a dual challenge to recent and long established democracies: terrorism undermines a cherished goal and objective of democracy that of providing citizens with security and the rule of law, and in responding to terrorism, democracies risk undermining the values of democracy such as the rule of law and human rights that are central to their existence and legitimacy.

Terrorism's greatest power lies in the arbitrary nature of its victims and in the large amount of coverage it receives in the media. Today, in addition to "conventional" terrorism there are also the risks of the use of weapons of mass destruction and cyber-terrorism. The ability to use diverse methods in order to wreak havoc indicators that although terrorism has not yet become an existential world threat, if we did not wake up them that day is not far off.

In my views, we cannot rely exclusively on military power to assure our long term security. Lasting, peace is gained as justice and democracy advance. In democratic and successful societies men and women do not swear allegiance to malcontents and murderers, they turn their hearts and labour to building better lives. And democratic governments do not shelter terrorist camps or attack their peaceful neighbours, they honor the aspirations and dignity of their own people. In our conflict with terror and tyranny, we have an unmatched advantage, a power that cannot be resisted and that is the appeal of freedom to all mankind. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the right to peaceably assemble, serve to empower citizens, legitimize debate and provide alternatives to violence. The fair and independent judicial system present in liberal democracies play a similar role. A truly independent judiciary is a vital check on executive power and a protect or of those exercising their rights to free expression. Ensuring that no group is above the law also gives average citizens a greater stake in their political systems. Absent these democratic attributes, we find conditions that in some instances give rise to sympathy for terrorism. This is especially true in nations where demagogues who preach the language of hate under the guise of religion are the only alternative to corrupt or brutal elite. Today, the change to us comes not exclusively from dictators who make war directly upon us, our allies and our interests it also proceed from dictators who create an atmosphere so poisonous and so brutal that evil sprouts and motivates a small but radicalized cadre to terrorism.

In my opinion, the best way to contest this threat is by building and strengthening the democracy of our society by isolating extremism in its various manifestations, by strengthening the legal framework within which we contest terrorism and by developing more effective means to protect our democracy. There are some following ways:

1. We need to strengthen our democracy through promoting a society which is based upon the true respect of one individual for another, one culture for another, one faith for another, one race for another. It means promoting the view that democracy is the means of making change in our

societies, and it means working to strengthen on democracy so that young people from all communities can see the ways in which their engagement in our societies can bring about democratic change and reduce the alienation which can make individual prey to those who seek to destroy us.

2. We need to take steps to isolate extremist organisations and those individuals who promote extremism. For this it is essential for us to work closely with the main stream faith communities legislation which outlaws incitement to religious or race hatred and make it clear that glorification of terrorism is not a legitimate political expression of view. We wish to encourage faith to pursue their faith openly and directly. We should intend to attack the foci of extremist organisation, whether they are in training camps, imprisons, inbookshops, or in places of worship. We should work with international allies where appropriate, to identify the networks and individuals who are promoting extremism, and use legal power to disrupt and weaken them. We should intend to remove from the India those foreign citizens who are using their time in our country to promote extremism through this course is not legally straight forward. All of these measures will further isolate and weaken those extremists who wish to promote terrorism as an appropriate form of activity.
3. We need to strengthen the legal frame work. For this we need to retain and strengthen our human rights and values which underlie them. But I say at the same time that the right to be protected from the death and destruction caused by indiscriminate terrorism is at least as important as the right of the terrorist to be protected from torture and ill-treatment. I believe that our peoples expect not only the protection of individual rights, but also the protection of democratic values, such as safety and security under the law. We need a legal frame work which seek to address the difficult balance in these rights. We cannot properly fight terrorism with one legal hand tied behind our back, or give terrorists the unfettered right to defend themselves as they promote and prepare violent attacks on our society. For this reason we should proper legal changes in our country which outlaw acts preparatory to terrorism and terrorist training.
4. We need to strengthen our ability to control our borders. That means doing our best to harmonize the biometric data on passports, Visas, ID cards where they exist and perhaps even driving licenses.

Conclusion

In short democracy is the strongest form of society and the most resilient. It is the aspiration of peoples thought out the world. Through democracy extremist terrorism will be defeated. It is our duty to analyse and then determine the means by which this threat can be contested. We have to clarify the values and society which we are defending, identify the threat with which we have to deal, and set out the central means by which we need both to contest

those who seek to destroy us and to build the solidarity and determination which we need to succeed. The most important conclusion to draw from this analyses is that there is not some particular governments policy decision, or even some over all policy stand which we could change and thus somehow remove our society from the terrorist firing line. Their nihilism means that our society could only cease to be a target if we were to give up all those values of freedom and liberty which we have fought to extended over so many years. As we know that the societies which we have built with the values which they embody, are not slight or passing. They are deeply rooted and profound. However, it is the case that these are absolutely enormous changes in one generation which proves that change for the good can happen and moreover that it can happen in very many cases without violence or bloodshed. And the fight for democracy is at the core of this change.

At last terrorism can be a threat to democracy but democracy can be weapon to fight against terrorism. It is the single most important weapon that we have in defending the societies from which we come us our determination and our solidarity.

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