

Impact of Globalisation on Terrorism: Counterterrorism Strategies in Canada and India



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Abstract

Globalisation is a distinctive and important development in the contemporary world history which basically represents a tendency towards greater integration of the world. A globalised world is one in which political, economic, cultural and social events become more and more interconnected and also one in which they have more impact. It is said to have contributed to the growth of terrorism from a regional phenomenon into a global one.

Terrorism is a complex phenomenon in which violence is used to obtain political power to redress grievances that may have become more acute through the process of globalisation. Globalisation has enhanced the technical capabilities of terrorists and given them global reach, but has not altered the fundamental fact that terrorism represents the extreme views of a minority of the global population. In other words, globalisation has changed the scope of terrorism but not its nature. The benefits that globalisation provides terrorists are neither one-sided nor absolute. The same technologies and process also enable more effective means for state to combat them.

Terrorism and counterterrorism campaigns try their best to gain legitimacy domestically and internationally. The challenge for the global community is how to utilise its advantages to win the war of ideas that motivates and sustains those responsible for the act of terrorism.

Canada and India figure amongst the countries where national security is perceived to be threatened by terrorism. Consequently, both these countries have evolved their own strategies to combat the menace.

This paper seeks to examine the relationship between globalisation and terrorism and the counterterrorism approach of Canada and India in the emerging scenario.

Keywords: Globalisation, Terrorism, Counterterrorism Strategies, Transnational Terrorism, Resilience Against Terrorism

Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization is a 'distinctive and important development in contemporary world history' which is impacting the lives of people across the globe in unprecedented ways (Scholte 2000:18). It is said to have contributed to the growth of terrorism from a regional to a global phenomenon (Kiras 2014: 391). Although it is difficult to determine as to how and to what extent globalization is responsible for the growth of terrorism, but there is no denying the fact that technologies associated with globalization have been used by terrorists to promote their self-defined goals. In particular, technologies have increased the ability of terrorists groups to work together, share information and conduct operations that are more deadly, distributed and difficult to combat than in the past. It is however, felt that technological advantage is not one-sided and states can use technology to diminish the global impact of terrorism. Both India and Canada are the victims of terrorism in greater or lesser degrees and have evolved their own counterterrorism strategies. This paper is an attempt to examine the relationship between globalization and terrorism and the counterterrorism strategies in Canada and India.

Definitions of Globalization & Terrorism

Globalization and terrorism both are complex phenomena subjected to wide range of interpretations.

There are at least five broad definitions of globalization

Globalization as 'internationalization i.e. increased interaction and interdependence between people of different countries (See Hirst & Thompson 1996:48); globalization as liberalization i.e. a process of removing government imposed restrictions on movements between countries of money, goods, services and capital in order to create an

open, borderless world economy (Sander 1996:27); globalization as 'universalisation i.e. the process of spreading various objects and experiences to people at all corners of the earth (Gamble 1994:ix, 8-9); globalization as modernization i.e. a process of homogenization of world cultures as per western or American norms (Taylor 2000); and globalization as deterritorialization i.e. the spread of supraterritorial' or 'transworld relations i.e. a distinct type of space-time compression (Scholte 2000; 46-48).

In fact, globalization is a multidimensional phenomenon basically representing a tendency towards greater integration of the world. It is a 'process of interconnectedness between societies such that events in one part of the world increasingly have effects on people and societies far away. A globalized world is one in which political, economic, cultural and social events become more and more interconnected and also one in which they have more impact' (Smith et al. 2014:8).

Like globalization, definitions of terrorism vary widely but all start from a common point of departure. First and foremost, it is characterized by the use of violence. In the words of David Robertson, 'terrorism is the use of violence politically as a means of pressurizing a government and/or society into accepting a radical political or social change' (1993:458). It denotes rule by terror or an attempt to instil fear among people with a desire to eventually coercing them into submission to accept a particular viewpoint. 'The purpose for which violence is used, and its root causes, is where most of the disagreements about terrorism begin' (Kiras:392).

The perpetrators of terrorist acts- may be the individuals, the groups or the state- often claim to be fighting for a noble cause. However, terrorism is defined by the act, not by the description of a perpetrator. Whatever be its nature or content , it is always a reprehensible act for the simple reason that it is against the civilized norms of human behaviour. It is synonymous with 'wanton killings, blood-letting, atrocities and uncalled for destruction of property' (Singh 1990:165). The quantum of terror spread by the terrorists of today is much more than what it was earlier because of the use of new technologies and new techniques for destructive purposes. Terrorism has thus, become a deadly phenomenon.

Relationship between Globalization and Terrorism

The extent to which globalization is responsible for the growth of modern terrorism is difficult to determine. This is because of disagreement over social, 'cultural and political changes brought about by globalization including, increasing interconnectedness and homogeneity in the international system. There is, however, 'little doubt that the technologies associated with globalization have been used to improve the effectiveness and reach of terrorist groups' (Kiras:393).

Historically, terrorists have used readily available means to permit small number of individuals to spread fear as widely as possible. However, till the early twentieth century terrorists and act of terrorism hardly had an impact beyond national borders. But the expansion of commercial air travel, the availability of televised new coverage, and convergence of political

REMARKING : VOL-1 * ISSUE-9*February-2015 and ideological interests among extremists, led to the birth of transnational terrorism by the late 1960s. Terrorism thus, grew from a local to a transnational threat. Air travel gave terrorists unprecedented mobility and televised new coverage expanded the audience who could witness the theatre of terrorism in their own homes.

At the end of the cold war, while the Marxist-Leninist transnational terrorism witnessed a decline in scale and intensity, militant Islamic terrorism, symbolized by the group Al Qaeda and enabled by globalization was growing into a global phenomenon. Al Qaeda received global recognition as a result of its attacks conducted in New York and Washington on September 11,2001. Recently ISIS has emerged as the most deadly international terrorist group representing Islamic terrorism. These groups often use cultural, economic and religious implications of globalization as their motivating force and to provide justification for killing non-combatants. It is, however, a matter of intense discourse whether and to what extent globalization is responsible for the growth of global terrorism.

Cultural Explanations

Many commentators argue that 'globalization' is leading to 'cultural synchronization' as per Western and American norms and thereby threatening local values and cultures (Hamelink 1983:57; Tomlinson 1995; Guehenno 1995:57). For many terrorist groups 'violence is the only method of preserving traditions and values against a cultural tsunami of western products and materialism (Kiras: 395)

In fact, the social changes associated with globalization and the spread of free market capitalism appear to overwhelm the identity or values of groups who perceive themselves as the losers in the new international system. In an attempt to preserve their threatened identity and values, groups actively distinguish themselves from despised 'others'. At the local level, this cultural friction may translate into conflicts divided along religious or ethnic lines to safeguard identity' (Ibid: 395-396)

It is, however, difficult to agree with the likes of Samuel Huntington who describes the emerging scenario in terms of clash of two distinct civilizations- the liberal Western Civilization and the Islamic one. (See Huntington 1993:32). In fact, Huntington describes a degree of homogeneity within the Islamic world that simply does not exist. Theologically and socially, the Islamic civilization' contains a number of deep fault lines that impede the cooperation required to challenge the West. The extremely bloody sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia's in Iraq and militant Islamic calls to kill non-combatants and fellow Muslims show the fissures within the Muslim community. Such actions call into question the morality of the means and therefore legitimacy of the militant Islamic groups (Lahoud et al.2011:21-42). Therefore, not everyone agrees that defence of culture or identity is the primary motivating force behind global terrorism.

Economic Explanations

More than the so called defence of culture or identity, many people consider economic aspects as

the crucial motivating factor behind global terrorism. Although globalization provides access to a world market for goods and services, the net result has also been perceived as the form of Western economic imperialism due to the dominance of the United States and the Western countries at international economic institutions such as WTO, World Bank, IMF etc. Moreover, political decisions by the leaders of underdeveloped countries to deregulate or privatize industries to be competitive globally may lead to significant social and economic upheaval. The citizens may shift loyalties to illegal activities such as terrorism if the state breaks its social contract with them (Junaid 2005:143-4).

Most of all, it is believed that `terrorist violence is motivated by inequalities of the global economy`. Terrorist attacks against the World Trade Centre in 1993 and 2001 are considered to be reactions not against the policies of the United States per se, but rather a blow against an icon of global capital (Rabasa, Chalk, et al. 2006:86-93). One study suggests that a sense of alienation and lack of opportunity among some Muslim males is a contributing factor in their decision to turn to violence globally. Within militant Islamic groups, however, most leaders and senior operatives attended graduate schools around the globe in fields as diverse as engineering and theology, and were neither poor nor downtrodden` (Sageman 2004:73-4, 95-6). It suggests that `while the ideology, leadership, and facilitation are still the purview of the relatively privileged within terrorist groups, economic and ethnic factors may increasingly become the means by which the next generation of terrorists are recruited.` (Kiras:396-7).

Religion and New Terrorism

As globalization spreads and societies become more and more interconnected, some groups perceive a threat to their religious identity. Such kind of perception has led to the emergence of what is called `new terrorism` which some authors use to explain the `global jihad`. It is held that in this globalised world Muslims have a choice either to accept western beliefs or preserve their religious purity by rebelling.

Believers in the global jihad view the rulers of `Islamic Countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or Iraq as apostates who have compromised their values in the pursuit and maintenance of secular, state based power. The only possible response is to fight against such influences through jihad. In this so called jihad, religion is used as a motivating force to kill as many of the non-believers and unfaithful as possible` (Laqueur 1996:32-3). Religion provides terrorist groups `the mandate and sanction of the divine to commit otherwise illegal or immoral acts`. Their ultimate purpose, however, is to obtain political power in order to conduct political, social, economic and religious reforms according to Sharia law (Kiras:397).

Globalization, Technology and Terrorism

While it is difficult to determine accurately as to what extent cultural, economic and religious implications of globalization are responsible for the growth of modern terrorism, it can be said with

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certainty that `terrorism has become much more pervasive worldwide due to the processes and technologies of globalization. The technological advances associated with globalization have improved the capabilities of terrorist groups to plan and conduct operations with far more devastation and coordination than their predecessors could have imagined (Ibid: 397-8).

Breakthroughs in the field of information and communication technologies like internet, mobile devices, laptops, tablets, software applications and wireless technologies have transformed the speed, volume and range of information sharing and sophistication of propaganda materials as never before. It has enabled the terrorist groups to share their messages, goals and grievances throughout the World Wide Web and thereby increase their reach and appeal to a large audience and gain more and more sympathy for their cause. It has also enabled them to mount coordinated attacks in different countries or different locations of a same country. The technologies of globalization are also used by terrorist cells and leaders for strengthening their security in a number of ways, including distributing elements in a coordinated network, remaining mobile and using clandestine and encrypted communications.

The reduced size and increased capabilities of personal electronics and fast mode of travel and transport also give terrorists mobility advantages. And most of all globalization has enabled some terrorist groups to acquire, manufacture and use weapons of mass destruction including biological and chemical weapons to increase the lethality of their attacks.

Collective Response to Terrorism

During the Cold War, states plagued by transnational terrorism responded individually and collectively to combat the phenomenon by passing anti-terrorism laws, taking preventative security measures at airports, and creating special operations counter-terrorism forces. However, a normative approach to tackling the problem, founded on the principles of international law and collective action was less successful and most initiatives and responses were largely unilateral, regional and ad hoc in nature. On September 8, 2006 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the form of a resolution and plan of action. It is a unique global instrument aimed at enhancing national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. It was for the first time that all member states agreed to a common strategic approach to fight terrorism, not only sending a clear message that terrorism is unacceptable in all its forms and manifestation but also resolving to take practical steps individually and collectively to prevent and combat it. Those practical steps include a wide array of measures ranging from strengthening state capacity to counter terrorist threats to better coordinating United Nations System`s counter-terrorism activities (UNGA Res-60/288).

Even today, however there exists a great disagreement among state leaders regarding the nature of the terrorist threat and the best approach to tackle it.

Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Canada

Although Canada has had a relatively peaceful history it is not immune from terrorism. Canadians have been the victims of hundreds of terrorist acts (Azzi 2011:1). There exist a number of international and domestic extremist groups in Canada-some engage in terrorist activity on Canadian soil, or support terrorism beyond Canada's borders. Some have worked to manipulate or coerce members of Canadian society into advancing extremist causes hostile to Canada's peace, order and good governance` (BRAT: 3)

Terrorism is, therefore, perceived to be a `serious and persistent threat to the security of Canada and its citizens. Canadians expect their government to respond to threats in a manner that preserves their freedom and security (3-4). Over the years Canada has evolved a Counter-Terrorism strategy which is based on the core principle of building resilience against terrorism. The ultimate goal is a Canada where individuals and communities are able to withstand violent extremist ideologies, and where society is resilient to a terrorist attack, if one occurs. Counter-terrorism activities are also guided by the principles of respect for human rights and the rule of law and the treatment of terrorism as a crime. Working through partnerships is central to a success of the strategy. It would include collaboration with Canada's international partners, security intelligence and federal, provincial and municipal law enforcement agencies, all levels of government and civil society. In particular, the relationship between security intelligence and law enforcement communities has strengthened over time. (Ibid: 3).

The strategy operates through four mutually reinforcing elements: prevent, detect, deny and respond.

Prevent

Activities in this area focus on addressing the factors that may motivate individuals to engage in terrorist activities.

Detect

This element focuses on identifying terrorists, terrorist organizations and their supporters, their capabilities and the nature of their plans.

Deny

Activities in this area focus on denying terrorists the means and opportunities to pursue their activities.

Respond

This element focuses on developing Canada's capacities to respond proportionately, rapidly and in an organized manner to any terrorist activity, reduce the impact and severity of the activity and ensure a rapid return to normal life (Ibid).

Canada has thus evolved coherent and effective counterterrorism strategies over the years to safeguard their national interests.

India's Response to Terrorism

The scourge of terrorism has haunted the Indian policy makers since independence as it poses a serious threat to our national security and our people (See Tyagi: 1). Terrorism found in India includes ethno-nationalist terrorism, religious terrorism, left-wing terrorism and narco-terrorism. The

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regions with long-term terrorist activities have been Jammu & Kashmir, east central and south central India (Naxalism) and the Seven Sister States (i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura). As of 2013, 205 of country's 608 districts were affected by terrorist activity` (TII:1). At the moment, Islamic terrorist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda, active in the Indian subcontinent, are perceived to be a major challenge for India especially in the backdrop of some youths getting swayed by it (HMO India).

India has witnessed one of the world's highest levels of terrorist violence during the last three decades with the unique hybrid of both domestic and international terrorism. Two audacious attacks one on the Indian parliament in 2001 and the other in Mumbai in 2008, along with score of smaller ones that have left thousands died over the past ten years alone, have unsurprisingly brought into question the effectiveness of India's security and intelligence agencies in counterterrorism` (Tyagi:2).

In fact, counterterrorism measures in our country are hampered by four constraints: `lack of political consistency, consensus, political consensus, lack of operational capacity and lack of operational coordination. Our policy vacillates between coercive and conciliatory stances on a purely ad hoc and reactive basis. Any attempt by the central government to mount an offensive strategy has invariably been scuttled due to lack of domestic political consensus and international support (Tyagi:2).

We also lack anti-terrorism legislation similar to the `US Patriot Act, 2001` which deals with terrorist funding among other issues. In 2002, our parliament passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) expanding the government's powers in combating terrorism. Some measures such as the ability to keep terror suspects in custody without bringing them to trial, met with objections, and the law was repealed in 2004 after allegations that officials were abusing their powers. However, after the recent spate of terrorist acts, some of our politicians are calling for the law to be restored.

Some Indian states such as Maharashtra and Karnataka have other laws. `Maharashtra Central of Organized Crime Act` (MCOCA) and the Karnataka Control of Organized Crime Act, that are used to try suspected terrorists. The MCOCA was also extended to Delhi in 2002. However, some lawyers have alleged that MCOCA is even more draconian than POTA and has often been misused by the investigative agencies. It goes to show that our antiterrorism legislations have lacked in legitimacy and wider acceptability.

Thus, India's counterterrorism strategy so far has been episodic, i.e. soon after the attack the government appears to take short term measures. But what we need is to evolve an effective and coherent strategic response to terrorism (Kaplan et al. 2008:1-2)

Conclusion

All in all, it can be said that terrorism remains a complex phenomenon in which violence is used to obtain political power to redress grievances that may

have become more acute through the process of globalization. Globalization has increased the technical capabilities of terrorists and given them global reach, but has not altered the fundamental fact that terrorism represents the extreme views of a minority of the global population. In other words, globalization has changed the scope of terrorism but not its nature. The social, economic and religious implications of globalization are used as excuses by terrorists to motivate their ranks and justify their barbaric acts. So the challenge before the global community is to win the war of ideas that motivates and sustains terrorism. The processes and technologies of globalization can assist in delegitimizing the pedagogy that incites terrorism and increase the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures by greater cooperation and co-ordination among the members of the international community.

Both Canada and India perceive terrorism as a serious and persistent threat to their national security and their citizens. While Canada has evolved an effective, comprehensive and coherent strategy to combat terrorism, we in India have failed to do so. We need to bolster our institutional capacity to combat terrorism effectively and comprehensively.

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