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THREAT OF TERRORISM IN SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract:-Terrorism is an ambiguous concept and interoperated by the scholars as per the prevailing conditions. South Asia is one of the region which is facing this problem. Though it is an old concept but it took momentum after the 9/11 attack in US. The socio-economic and political conditions provide base to the terrorist activities in the world. Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, starvation provide food to all inhuman activities. Though various efforts have been made to combat terrorism in the region but it is still facing the problem in different ways, which need further intellectual investigation in the issue.

Keywords:terrorism , interoperated , human civilization .

INTRODUCTION

South Asia is a multi-religious, multi-linguistic, multi cultural and multi dimensional region with full of diversities. It is one of the economically backward and poorest regions in the world. It consists of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. All the countries of the region are facing the problem of terrorism, cross-border terrorism and other kinds of terrorism. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon; it is as old as the human civilization itself and has existed in all ages in one form or another. It may be identified with anarchists, revolutionaries, fundamentalists or dissidents against the established authority, or even ruling tyrants having no tolerance for dissent. The beginning of modern terrorism, especially international terrorism, may rightly be traced to the 1960's when hijackings, kidnappings and such other techniques of international terrorism were employed in Latin American countries. But the international terrorist activities at the end of the 20th century have assumed dangerous proportions, partly, due to the fact that the governments of some countries use terrorism for achieving their foreign policy goals. This is low intensity war designed to bleed the 'enemy' and to sap its vitality.

The word 'terrorism' was first used in 1795. According to the Oxford English Dictionary terrorism has been defined as "a system of terror: government by intimidation: a policy intended to strike terror in those against whom it is adopted: the fact of terrorizing or condition of being terrorized. The Chambers Dictionary defines terrorism as an organized system of violence and intimidation, especially for political ends; the state of fear and submission caused by this. The term terrorism lacks clear definition and always confused with the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination for self determination and national liberation. Sometime it considered to be a freedom struggle and at the same time it is considered as an activity of crime against humanity. As per United Nations it 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 organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

The developing countries through NAM defined and condemned terrorism as a ...criminal act intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular person for whatever purpose, are in any circumstance unjustifiable whatever the considerations or factors that may be invoked to justify them.

Summarily, one can say that it is an organized, systematic crime against humanity with narrow purposes. The terrorist always tries to create a psyche of terror in the mind of the common people by the use of various types of weapons and threats. Terrorism has been categorized in various forms on the basis of methods used namely conventional terrorism, techno terrorism, bio-terrorism, cyber-terrorism and nuclear terrorism. Differences in designing terrorism apart, violence, in any form, that leads to loss of lives of innocent people and damage to national properties, and not acceptable in a civilized society as an expression of dissent.

In the context of changes in the post cold war era, terrorism has acquired new force to influence the world order. The advances in the areas of transport, communication, weaponry, and the impact on society by concentrating on vital functions in critical areas have changed social structure and attitudes. The decline of socialist system, emergence of liberal democracy and

the process of integration have allowed terrorists organizations and activities to move anywhere in the world.

Terrorist activities in South Asia have affected internal security and created governance and security challenges for the whole South Asia. The terrorist activities in one country affect the governance and security in other country. Beside this, terrorism and cross border terrorism have increased in the post cold war era. The issue of cross border terrorism has been the single most factors responsible for sharp deterioration in Indo-Pak relations. Accusations of proxy war, suicide bombings and other acts of sabotage continue to hinder constructive engagement between these two countries. In the Southeastern part of South Asia, terrorism has thrived in the guise of ethnic separatism which has become a major bone of contention between India and Bangladesh. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal has also created tension between India and Nepal. Same has happened in the case of Tamil problem in Sri Lanka which has created new dimensions between India and Sri Lanka. The rise of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan is seriously threatening the existence of its society and state.

Moreover, globalization is facilitating terrorism by making borders more porous, information and communication more available and less expensive, and movement of funds considerably easier in the region. Globalization creates more fertile ground for terrorism by exacerbating ethnic and cultural conflicts. Beside this, the world-wide reassertion of ethnic and religious identity, the numbers of conflict and terrorist groups inspired by nationalism and religion, have increased.

During his speech at Kuala Lumpur in 2003, the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee condemned the terrorist activities and urged for a concerted international effort in the form of an international conference to discuss and agree on measures to combat and defeat the menace of terrorism through collective actions." He emphasized that, it is imperative that we take a clear and unequivocal stand on this scourge. There can be no double standards, no confusion between terrorism and freedom struggles, and no implicit condoning of terrorism through an investigation of its 'root cause'. There can be no justification for terrorism. No political, ideological, religious or ethnic grounds can justify the shedding of the blood of innocent people. We should finally conclude the negotiations at the UN on the Comprehensive Convention on Inter-national Terrorism.

But there are hurdles in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. There is a lack of generally accepted definition of terrorism. In the absence of a clear definition, it is difficult to identify terrorist, terrorist activity and supporters of terrorism. It is also difficult to differentiate between the acts of terrorists and freedom fighters, terrorism and freedom movement. For instance, India and Pakistan are vying for US attention because of Kashmir, and a terrorist state like Algeria thinks supporting the US will give it a certain standing among other nations.

The linkage of terrorism with religion is in itself a problem and creates confusions about the legitimacy of terrorism. In the post cold war world religion seems to be connected with violence everywhere, from the World Trade Centre bombing to suicide attacks in Israel and the Palestinian; assassinations in India, Israel, Egypt, and Algeria; nerve gas in the Tokyo subways; unending battles in Northern Ireland; abortion-clinic killings in Florida; and the bombing of Oklahoma City's Federal building. It requires deep objective investigations to sort out the linkage between terrorism and religion.

The lack of the provision of taking disciplinary actions against its own countries of South Asia is another problem of terrorism. The problems of poverty, hunger, starvation, illiteracy, unemployment and economic backwardness in South Asian countries are providing fodder to terrorism. Poverty provides the ideal breeding ground for religious fundamentalism. It also fuels the fires of social violence and undermines national cohesion. Religious fundamentalism is another problem in combating terrorism in the region.

The lack of proper strategies to counter terrorism and clash between interests among South Asian countries has further aggravated the problem. In fact, strict rules and regulations must be framed for combating of terrorism collectively. But the real application of measures depends on the relations between the countries of the region. The whole of South Asia – India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Afghanistan and Pakistan – is currently going through internal unrest and upheavals due to ethnic conflicts, insurgency movements, religious fundamentalism or just cussed political polarization that encourage and use terrorism. In the era of economic globalization and liberalization the terrorist organizations have developed the ability to finance their activities through charities, drug trade and gun running. The nexus between smuggling and terrorism and the organized form of arms from the East and the West into South Asian nations by seas and across porous land borders resulting in increased terrorists activities is self-evident. The well organized terrorist activities are more responsible for instability and insecurity in the region. The situation further deteriorated due to political double speak, short sightedness and lack of consensus. Some nations carry the belief that some terrorists can be someone else's freedom fighters. Others have used terrorism as an asymmetric war a weapon of the small to bleed bigger nations. But the most significant impetus to terrorism in South Asia has been provided by strategic objectives of neighbouring countries.

In the post 9/11 era, terrorism is gaining new momentum due to changes in terrorist activities and anti- terrorist efforts. In its post 9/11 frenzy, the US homeland security doctrine underwent a significant change when the Bush administration decided to take the war to the terrorists" the aims of US were to secure the life of Americans and to protect them against future attacks from the terrorist organizations and their supporters. The forms and patterns of terrorism experienced in South Asia since early years have been varied ranging from religious extremism to those resulting from ethnic, regional, systemic and politico-ideological rebellions and conflicts. Beside this Pakistan is fighting against own created terrorists and hate mongers who use an obscurantist religious ideology as their philosophy, the federal tribal areas as their sanctuary, and suicide bomb attacks against civilians as their strategy to promote their political agendas.

Though various efforts have been made at the level of SAARC but the region is still facing this challenge on a large scale. SAARC has various achievements to its credit as it has provided a common platform to the South Asian countries and has

increased the interaction and exchange among the countries of the region. But due to clash of national interests South Asia is still facing the problem of terrorism. Terrorism has acquired new dimensions in the region. Therefore in the post cold war era it is important that efforts should be made to combat terrorism from its roots collectively.

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