**Cross-Border Terrorism in India**

Cross-border terrorism has emerged as a great threat to the security of India. Terrorism originating from across the border has slowly attempted to strangle the democracy and sovereignty of India.

By its nature, the term “terrorism” is bound up in political controversy. It is a concept with a very negative connotation. Because terrorism implies the killing and maiming of innocent people, no country wants to be accused of supporting terrorism or harbouring terrorist groups. At the same time, no country wants what it considers to be a legitimate use of force to be considered terrorism. An old saying goes, “One person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter.”

While there is no universal definition of terrorism, various experts point out that there are common elements to most terrorist acts. Acts of terrorism usually are committed by groups who do not possess the political power to change policies they view as intolerable. Middle Eastern terrorism intensified in the 1970s in response to defeats of Arab nations in wars with Israel over the Palestine issue. Convinced that further wars were futile, a number of countries, including Egypt, sought peace with Israel. This enraged groups within those countries dedicated to the defeat of Israel, who then turned to terrorism.

Terrorists choose targets and actions to maximise the psychological effect on a society or government. Their goal is to create a situation in which a government will change its policies to avoid further bloodshed or disruption. For these reasons, terrorists often choose methods of mass destruction, such as bombings, and target transportation or crowded places to increase anxiety and fear.

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the USA on September 11, 2001 brought transnational terrorism to attention. This kind of terrorism is also known as cross-border terrorism. Cross-border terror groups do not confine themselves either territorially or ideologically to a particular country or region. They are global in orientation, readily moving funds, men and material from one place to another.

Groups like the Palestine nationalist groups and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) also crossed state borders to launch attacks, to smuggle arms and to seek refuge. The IRA got weapons from Libya and launched attacks across Britain; it also launched a one-off attack in Germany and plotted an assault on British forces in Gibraltar. Palestinian ‘terrorists’ crossed into Israeli territory, or what they considered Palestinian territory, and sought refuge in states like Egypt and Syria. They hijacked aeroplanes across the world, took hostage Israeli contestants at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, and infamously hijacked an Italian cruise ship in 1985.

However, these groups were politically and organisationally tied to a particular territory. As international experts Ray Takeyh and Nikolas Gvosdev put it, these groups pursued largely ‘irredentist aims’ and built up their memberships ‘from a specific population—even if they sought the sponsorship of a foreign patron for arms and logistical support’.

Today’s cross-border groups view territory expediently, as a base from which they can organise their campaigns and plot their attacks. The new breed of Islamic terror groups are, according to Takeyh and Gvosdev, ‘explicitly global’—in the sense that they have broadly anti-Western views rather than locally defined objectives, and their members hail from different states rather than from a distinct community with distinct interests.

Where the armed groups of old sought to build or remake nation states, today’s cross-border terrorists feed off the demise of state authority. Where national liberation movements sought to redraw state boundaries, cross-border groups think nothing of moving from one failed state to another. Where the earlier violent groups focussed their energies on achieving limited local aims, even as they carried out international operations, today’s terror groups talk about ‘spreading jihad’ around the globe.

Some analysts believe that it was Western intervention in, the third world, specifically the “humanitarian intervention’ of the post-Cold War period, that encouraged the emergence of today’s cross-border terrorists.

By undermining state authority and notions of sovereignty, humanitarian intervention created the space for the rise of non- state actors. And by internationalising local conflicts, Western intervention did much to encourage the flouting of traditional borders and the movement of armed groups between territories.

Through the process of weakening state authority and internationalising conflicts, Western intervention has given rise to a new kind of terrorist—terrorists who, as Pentagon officials put it, ‘respect no borders, no boundaries and no state institutions’, who feed off the absence of state authority and move across territories in the execution of their ‘global’ campaigns.

According to Dr. Thomas P.M. Barnett, a Professor at the Naval War College, US, the world may be divided into three areas, the core, the seam and the gap states, based on their level of globalisation.

Core states are those thick with network connectivity, financial transactions, liberal media flows and collective security. States in this category feature stable governments, rising standards of living and more deaths by suicide than murder. Core states include North America, much of South America, the European Union, Russia, Japan, and Asia’s emerging economies (most notably China and India), Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Gap states are those where globalisation is thinning or absent, plagued by politically repressive regimes, widespread poverty and disease, routine mass murder and most important—the chronic conflicts that incubate the next generation of global terrorists.

Seam states are those, lying between the Core and Gap, which are in transition to being fully globalised. Seam states include: Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia.

The results of these efforts show an overwhelming concentration of activity in the regions of the world excluded from globalisation’s growing core. These areas are the Caribbean Rim, virtually all of Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, the Middle East, Southwest Asia and much of Southeast Asia. Most of the nations in this area have demographics skewed very young and most are labelled, “low income” or “low middle income” by the World Bank (i.e., less than $3,000 annual per capita).

Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda sprang to life in Sudan and Afghanistan, which by any standards are two of the most disconnected countries in the world. A look at other places where US Special Forces have recently been deployed includes northwestern Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen which all fall in the same category. Dr. Barnett’s message is: “A country’s potential to warrant a US military response is inversely related to its globalization connectivity.”