

Emerging New Threats in International System: Limitations on State's Capacity

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Abstract

Post cold war international political and security environment has posed challenges in the form of emerging new threats and a new security environment. These threats include but are not limited to terrorism, nuclear proliferation, narcotics and migration. However, the horrible event of 9/11 presented terrorism as the most serious and immediate threat to security in a globalizing world. Technological developments have increased the potential impact of future terror incidents e.g., the dimensions of bioterrorism, nuclear terrorism etc. Two crucial elements to counter these emerging threats comprise of a comprehensive strategy and the state. State is the central element to implement any counter-strategy whatsoever. Nevertheless, states have limitations in this regard. These limitations are driven by state's own national interests, its security perceptions, political, economic and social configurations. This study examines those limitations of state in detail that affect the states response capabilities.

Key words: New Security Threats, Counter-Terrorism, State and Security, 9/11, Terrorism.

Introduction

Emergence of violent non-state actors in post cold war global environment challenged the old militarized approach to security as the "new threats" required revisiting of the approach to deal with them.

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These “new threats” include post cold war regional conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons, terrorism, failing states, transnational criminal organizations, global poverty, environmental degradation, etc. Contrary to the traditional strategies that heavily depend on the militarized element for countering emerging new threats like terrorism, military operation alone often creates more problems than the solution. Insurgencies like situations cannot be dealt with by military alone, rather, it requires a major resolve from the government to address core issues that give rise to militancy and encourage terrorist recruitment. A comprehensive strategy, based on good and effective governance, institutional reform, political inclusion and economic development is required. Any foreign source may provide government services on a limited basis, but it does not and cannot replace role of a civilian government.

Globalization has given a new and very important dimension to this new security environment i.e. that these new threats are no longer the problem of a single country or a region. They require a multilateral and coordinated approach to be resolved. Further, policies of insulation or isolation are no more workable. The scope of inter-state relations has therefore broadened, as the coordination between the states has become the key to respond to these new threats. This however, is not that simple to achieve as it sounds. Central argument of this study is that state responses to these new threats is driven by and limited to every state’s own national interests, its security, political, economic and social configurations.

Scope and organization of Study

The scope of this study is limited to the threat of terrorism. Response of Pakistan to counter terrorism and its limitations is selected as a case study to evaluate the above stated argument. Terrorism is a tactic that uses random violence methodology (Townshend, 2002: 5). Terrorists exploit weaknesses in both developing and developed states to fund, organize, equip and train their recruits, carry out their attacks, and hide from arrest. Building capacity in all the states must therefore be the cornerstone of the global counter-terrorism effort (United Nations, 2006).

The selection of Pakistan has been made as it is a frontline state in war against terror and its population is the victim of terrorist attacks on regular basis. It is also a nuclear capable state with perceived nuclear

proliferation issues (Corera, 2006). Its weak political institutions and economic conditions makes it a state which is going through a whole array of crises i.e. security, economic, identity and democratic.

Pakistan has a special importance in U.S. war against terror. Martin has emphasized Pakistan's importance and argues that Pakistan may be the most pivotal coalition partner during the initial phase of the war on terrorism since it has the longest border with and provides the best access to Afghanistan and in broader sense, Pakistan is crucial because it is the world's second most populous Islamic state, therefore, its cooperation helps prevent the war on terrorism from becoming a conflict between Islam and Christianity (Martin, 2002: 75).

Pakistan is also considered a Category II* sanctuary for global terrorist movements, and has an effective military and intelligence service and thus could serve as an important ally for anti-terrorist operations (Martin, 2002: 75). Study of Pakistan therefore, gives practical insight of the domestic limitations faced by a state in responding to new threats.

This study is organized in such a way that it analyses the event of 9/11 and its implications for Pakistan in first place and then it further expands its focus to other key areas. Security policy of Pakistan in post 9/11 period, its security dilemma, institutional, economic and social factors that hinder or limit counter-terrorism capacity of Pakistan have been analyzed.

Emerging new Threats: 9/11 dimension

The incident of 9/11 presented the destabilizing nature of terrorist threat within and between states (Junaid, 2005). Terrorist organizations are different from nation-states. They are not simple and

* Category I states support terrorist movements as official policy (e.g. Afghanistan and Iraq). Category II states turn a blind eye or allow terrorist movements to exist because of fear, weakness, or sympathy (e.g. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE). Category III states host terrorist activities because their systems of legal and civil rights and their large immigrant communities provide a form of protection (e.g. Germany and the United States).

single political and geographical entities. They are comprised of systems and structure which is diverse, complicated and often transnational in nature. Sympathy to their cause is the basic element that gives them entry into political, religious, business and military circles. Two decades before 9/11 are very important for the study of terrorism.

Afghanistan was a territory that remained ignored for a decade until the horrific event of 9/11 occurred. Pakistan played an important role in the Afghan war of 1980's. FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) of Pakistan that are situated along the Pak-Afghan border were used during that war. This is the same terrain that is the focus of world's attention presently and is under siege for the hunt of terrorists by both US and Pakistan. These ungoverned territories have posed a direct threat to the security of Pakistan itself in the post 9/11 security environment.

9/11 redesigned the politico-ideological contours of world politics (Malik, 2006). It raised serious concerns for Pakistan. It was offered with sharp choices to select from i.e. whether to fully support the US in its campaign against Taliban in Afghanistan or to face the consequences (Jones, 2002). Pakistan decided to support United States. This shows clearly that the decision to facilitate and align with United States was not voluntarily taken rather it was the only viable choice for Pakistan as perceived by the then leadership. This aligning with the US was producing a negative public opinion in Pakistan (Rising, 2007: 358).

Sympathies with the victims of 9/11 were not the driving force or the motive for Pakistan to support the US invasion on Afghanistan rather it was caught in a security dilemma where the top leadership of Pakistan considered it a threat to the security and survival of Pakistan if they refused United States. This was the starting point for a long coordination between the west and Pakistan to hunt down the top leadership of Al-Qaida, which was reported to have taken refuge in Afghanistan. This policy continued without taking into account that this was not the solution but was a part of the problem that was wrongly incorporated in coordinating a counter terrorism strategy. There is another important dimension to this and that is the dimension of political legitimacy and objectivity of the decision by the top leadership in Pakistan. This leads our analysis to the detailed study of factors that

domestically pose limitations to Pakistan's ability to respond to the threat of terrorism.

9/11 Context and Security Policy of Pakistan

Security policy and security perception of a state is a vital element in framing any sort of coordinated policy to counter a threat. Pakistan's security policy has been India-centered and there are reasons for that, which are irrelevant to our discussion. One should also not forget that religion was used as a tool to launch and continue a successful "gorilla" war in Afghanistan against the Soviets that was materially supported by the Americans.

Presently, Pakistan is facing terrorism as a major threat to its national security. One major factor attributed to Pakistan's involvement with 'Jihadi' elements was its involvement in Afghanistan against the occupation of former Soviet Union. It can be argued that Pakistan's involvement was a decision based on the immediate solution strategy and it did not involve the long-term geo-political interests such as access to natural resources of Central Asia. (Ahrari, 2001: 23) argues that when Pakistan became involved in the power struggle in Afghanistan in the late 1970s, Central Asia was not even a factor, since it was then a part of the former Soviet Union, further, one of the reasons why Pakistan became a foremost party to terminating the Soviet occupation of its neighboring state, as previously noted, was that it wanted to establish a friendly government in Afghanistan. Pakistan also wanted to permanently remove the influence of the Soviet Union/Russia and India from Afghanistan and Pakistan succeeded in achieving this objective in 1996 when the Taliban emerged as the new rulers of the neighboring state (Ahrari, 2001: 23).

The real problem for Pakistan was that the designers of the late 1970s strategy were unsuccessful in predicting the shape, size, strength and utility of these organizations for future, especially after completion of their immediate goals. Ahrari argues that President Zia could not have imagined the power and clout that the 'Jihadist' groups have acquired in his own country, and the way the Taliban emerged as a ruling group in Afghanistan and no one could have imagined that the Taliban would use their 'Jihadist' zeal to establish the kind of nexus they have reportedly established with other groups (Ahrari, 2001: 23).

These war-trained human resources were used as an asset by the Pakistani intelligence agencies after they were abandoned by the Americans. This was a big mistake on the part of the Americans as well as Pakistan's intelligence agencies. This created a monster in disguise in terms of long-term domestic, regional and international security environment. With the passage of time, these extremists got out of the control of their own feeding hands. This security tactic ultimately backfired when some of these extremist groups took their arms against Pakistan's security forces and started challenging the state itself. This transition did not happen in a single day. The security implications of this period proved critical in the post 'Lal-masjid' incident period when a strong wave of suicide bombings emerged on the domestic security scene. This scenario has become so complex that it has created a security dilemma for Pakistan. It feels itself sandwiched between an Indian threat on the eastern border and the 'extremists' threat on the western border that is targeting now the main cities of the country.

Security dilemma for Pakistan and Counter-Terrorism

The Mumbai attacks of 2008 and India's threat of surgical strikes within Pakistan provides an example of Pakistan's security difficulties. Political leadership is in a difficult position over the issue of state sovereignty i.e. the case of US drone attacks. This also turns our attention to the important element of state's threat perception in organizing counter terrorism strategy (Foley, 2009). Historically, Pakistan has never deployed its armed forces on its western border as the tribal armed men guarded this. This is no more possible and presently it has not only deployed its troops along the Pak-Afghan border but has also launched a massive military action against the extremists in FATA and Swat. Pakistan does not have the luxury of having required resources available to guard both the borders, especially the Pak-Afghan border, which offers a very difficult terrain to control. Further, movement of its military resources from the eastern to western front is not only cost binding but also divides its security assets. In this security scenario, the option before the military to defend the eastern border is argued to be nuclear. This has seriously hampered its capacity to fully respond to terrorist threat as the military cannot ignore India as a primary security threat.

Future security scenarios for Pakistan are very important for our analysis. According to Martin (2002: 75, 76) the two outcomes for

Pakistan are that in first scenario, Pakistan could emerge from the war on terrorism as a stable, developing state where extremists do not find support or recruits and it could provide a model for other Islamic states and play a leading role in building regional stability and prosperity, in second scenario, Pakistan could disintegrate into a nightmare internal war of ethnic conflict, sectarian violence, and humanitarian disaster, under such conditions, extremists could seize political power, and thus can control nuclear weapons. It is however important to realize that the outcome for Pakistan depends on the strategy and wisdom of the national leadership as well as the contribution by other countries, importantly, U.S. and EU.

After almost one decade, situation for Pakistan is much more complex, fragile and requires immediate correction strategies in terms of revisiting of whole counter-terrorism strategy based on ground realities. Pakistan is in such a complex security position that it cannot simply follow a path advised by the west. Terrorists on the other hand, are taking full advantage of its scattered security assets. Pakistan is in a fragile security condition where the stakes are very high and has to prioritize its own national security agenda to make sure it survives as a state.

Institutional Factors and Counter-Terrorism

Institutional factors count a lot in terms of responding to new threats. Given to the multidimensional and complex nature of the new threats, the strength of institutions in a state defines the basic capacity the state has to respond to these threats. Politics is fundamental to any state system; blocking political activity is like blocking the smoke from a chimney (Salik, 1997).

Travaglio and Altenberg (2003) argue that a state may use two possible legal theories in responding to terrorist acts: it can use a law enforcement approach or use of armed force (conflict management) approach. Further, they also argue that until recently, the law enforcement approach has predominated and this approach considers terrorist events as purely criminal acts to be addressed by various civil government functions - essentially the domestic criminal justice system and its components: police, investigators, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, juries, appellate courts, and a corrections system. Above components and their performance will determine the outcome of the process. Therefore, the importance of internal state machinery is

highlighted in the case of preventing emerging new threats like terrorism.

State role is vital for the outcome of counter-terrorism operations even when a strong and well equipped military like the U.S. military is operating on ground. The role of the military in counterinsurgency operations is to provide a shield, behind which the interagency community can assist the terrorist-affected country in institutional reform and economic development, but that shield is not impermeable or unending, as it was on the Helmand River in Afghanistan, the longer there is no credible government reform or economic development, the more difficult it is to maintain the shield (Dillon, 2007).

Analysis of Pakistan's political system is therefore critical. Institutional study of Pakistan is subdivided in two categories, policymaking institutions i.e. the parliament and policy implementation institutions i.e. the bureaucracy.

a) The Parliament

Parliament as the supreme policymaking institution in Pakistan was never developed. Repeated military takeovers further deteriorated the political development process. Time and again derailment of democratic process has been a problem for Pakistan's political development which seriously hampered the growth of healthy and positive political culture. Even during democratic eras politicians contacted army to intervene in the political process (Khan, 2005: 248). The problem of missing true public representation and political legitimacy has risen from this fragile and complex political environment.

Political legitimacy is required to resolve complex new threats such as terrorism. Democracy plays an important role in determining the capacity and the capability of the state to counter terrorism. Democracy has built-in characteristics that help in strengthening the whole structure of governance, which is a core requirement for enhancing state's responsiveness to emerging new threats like terrorism. A modern democracy is entitled to uphold and defend the legitimizing basis that sustains its authority, as long as it maintains the utmost respect for the principles and procedures appropriate to a form of government based

on tolerance and respect for human rights, otherwise it will undermine the support of the society for the whole system and will lead to playing into the hands of extremists such as terrorists (Reinares, 1998).

It is argued that Musharaf could not counter terrorism appropriately because of his political problems (Cloughley, 2008: 363). In addition, the decisions “enforced” by the military elite of the country may not be accepted by the majority of the people and therefore they may never produce the required output. Considering the institutional arrangement within a state, this also means that if military has taken over the role of the politicians than there is no check on military as an institution and it will take decisions on its own. Failure to strengthen political institutions has not only weakened the democracy but it also proved fatal to the future and stability of the whole state. By this, we mean that its effect was on all the core pillars of the state system including the societal impact. Importantly, this has led to strengthen extremism and the extremists. This damaged the nation and state building and encouraged separatism and violence, a basic ingredient for terrorism. That is how weak political institutions in Pakistan are considered unable to respond to the threat of terrorism effectively.

b) The Bureaucracy

There are problems with the policy implementation institutions or the bureaucracy which is causing problems for Pakistan in responding to the threat of terrorism. Political leadership credibility is an extremely important factor in a state system. It is of critical importance in case of Pakistan where Parliament does not have the “must have” strength and supremacy and where the military has a very strong role in politics. Secondly, inter-organizational coordination is a core to a rapid, organized and focused response to new security threats. However, in case of Pakistan because of the corruption, lack of accountability, old departmental procedures and lack of inter-departmental communication, the overall threat-response capability has become somewhat compromised and poses a built-in the system limitation.

Taking counter-terrorism scenario, there is a serious institutional overlapping in security agencies work, which limits a focused response and contributes in wasting already few available resources. For example, there are separate police intelligence agencies under provincial governments, FIA (Federal Investigation Agency) under Ministry of Interior of Federal Government, ISI (Inter Services Intelligence), MI (Military Intelligence) under the control of Army etc. Their lack of coordination, especially considering the political culture and the military-politicians relations is a serious limitation to effectively workout a coordinated strategy against terrorists.

Economic Factors and Counter-Terrorism

Economic configuration is another area of key concern that decides the ability of a state to effectively respond to new security threats because the ability of the state to fight or respond is dependent on the availability of resources. The failure of regimes to provide for peaceful political change, the phenomenon of economies unable to keep pace with population growth, along with demands for more evenly distributed benefits provide fertile ground for the growth of extremism and political violence. Similarly, unresolved ethnic and nationalist conflicts have traditionally been a leading source of terrorism (Comfort, 2003: 6).

Economic modernization is without doubt affecting the world (Bhutto, 2008). Terrorism has a cyclic effect on economy. It directly affects the economic progress of the state and, on the other hand, due to poor economic condition of a state it limits the availability of resources for that particular state to combat terrorism. FATA (the terrorist strong hold) in Pakistan is long ignored for economic and social development and it is one of the important contributing factors for the recruitment of terrorist in this region. The absence of any employment other than narcotics and arms trade has made this region a heaven for 'criminals'.

The economy of Pakistan was already in a bad shape before the event of 9/11. General Musharaf's government tried to use coordination and facilitation of the US for political legitimacy from the international community and to capture financial assistance from the West in the name of war against terror to revive the economy as in the past General Zia used Afghan war. It did work, though cosmetic and

temporary because core economic development areas were not strengthened and the system was not corruption free. Year 2007 onwards, economic problems of Pakistan began to surface quickly and the common population was faced with electricity and gas crisis, high fuel prices, unemployment, food shortage, day by day degrading law and order situation, increasing suicide attacks on civilians, political turmoil, scandals of corruption and in December 2007, the assassination of popular political leader and twice former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto fueled riots in her province of Sindh. In this economic scenario majority of the population considered their economic survival as their first priority and they took the war against terrorism as “not their war” but the war of Americans and the west.

On the other hand, the Government of Pakistan was finding it difficult to tackle economic crisis prevailing in the country and they had very few resources available to run effective counter-terrorism campaign that has already become another priority concern. Further, the terrorist attacks and specially the suicide bombings resulted in fleeing of foreign investors from the country which further complicated already deteriorating economic conditions. Another important development was the launching of Pakistan Armed forces operation against the militants in SWAT area in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (former North West Frontier Province of Pakistan) which resulted in huge domestic displacement of population, i.e., more than one million IDP's were to be accommodated. This further pressurized the economy.

The ongoing security campaign of Pakistan's security forces in Waziristan territory is questioned from some quarters especially under these economic conditions. Government, on one hand, is trying to respond to terrorism because terrorism is not only now a direct security threat but also damaging economic development and on the other hand, the common man is in trouble from both ends, it is the target of terrorist violence as well as deprived of basic needs of life like clean water, food, health services, etc., and the majority of the population is criticizing the Government for this. This has pushed the Government on back feet and political instability has prevailed which is the last thing, a state like Pakistan would wish in this condition. The credibility of political leadership is also an issue, inside the country and abroad and has complicated coordination against terrorism in this fragile situation. It is also important to mention here that bad economic condition of Afghanistan has also served negatively under the

circumstances, as it is heavily dependent on Pakistan for even most of food supplies. Economic survival has therefore become imperative problem for the current Government to look into while the day by day deteriorating security situation is making this task even more difficult.

Social Factors and Counter-Terrorism

Social factors are also very important and are a serious concern to a state's ability to respond to new threats. Individual rights have high value in a nation-state and cannot be ignored (Ziring, 2007). Viewing poverty as the sole root cause of terrorism is clearly not adequate; the September 11 terrorists were educated and not poor and they were motivated by politico-religious zeal, unrelated to a particular nation or state, most terrorist organizations exist primarily because failed and failing states cannot control areas within their borders (Comfort, 2003: 12).

Terrorism uses fear as a tactic and innocent civilians are the main target of the terrorists to achieve this goal. This means that the social impact of terrorism is very direct and high. Analysis in the case of Pakistan reveal that the problem of countering terrorism in Pakistan has been not so successful even with foreign assistance because of the complex social problems existing in the Pakistani society.

It is a chain reaction. Absence or lack of true political representation leads to weak democratic institutions and corrupt political culture, which in turn leads to economic underdevelopment. Lack of economic opportunities undermines the economic well being and in severe circumstances like Pakistan, it puts economic survival of the common man at stake. This ultimately leads to elitist and corrupt economy where unequal distribution of resources promotes the culture of violence and transforms criminals into organized criminal organizations with a systematic network to infiltrate the society. These criminal organizations remain no more a domestic problem when they are networked and attain transnational character. They then have the ability to form a nexus with terrorists and this mutual relationship is based on complementing each other. In case of Pakistan, the problems from violent culture and other threats rose to such levels that some analysts have even viewed Pakistan as 'failing state' (Waseem, 2005: 11).

Reinares (1998) suggests that the institutional response should also place high priority on communication in order to counteract terrorist propaganda so that the enemy state is rendered incapable of fulfilling one of its primary functions, that of generating a reasonable degree of security for its citizens. Communication, therefore, requires careful consideration while designing internal and external security policies. According to Reinares (1998), the authorities who draw up security policy should bear in mind the implicit messages being communicated when terrorism, by small clandestine groups, becomes a sustained activity. Nevertheless, in industrially-developed societies, such messages are interpreted in different ways by different segments of society both inside and outside the country.

It can now be safely argued that globalization, led by complicated communication networks, swift money transfers and transportation networks strong and fast enough to enable transportation of weapons and illicit materials throughout the globe may also work as a great facilitator for terrorist groups. Globalization in this sense, however, has more serious domestic implications that facilitate terrorism. One of these is the societal reactions to a seemingly unjust and overwhelming economic globalization. Mostly, local religions and culture feel and see the global culture as a threat to their way of life. Communities who are sensitive, proud and value their cultural heritages and beliefs are more prone to this threat. Information revolution, diminishing of national borders and access to global information through global information media such as satellite TV channels and the internet have created a sense of awareness and comparison among the poor. This deprivation and alienation created by globalization may lead to creation of communities who are more vulnerable to the terrorist recruitment.

The case of Pakistan is however much more complex than a simple nexus of organized criminal organizations and the terrorists. The culture of violence as explained above is only one dimension to it. Religious extremism is another very critical dimension. Pakistan has a long history of sectarian violence. The US used Pakistan to intervene in Afghanistan (Samad, 2007: 164). Afghan 'Jihad' converted the already lawless areas of FATA into militant training grounds. The same could be argued with regard to the creation and rise of Taliban from the religious schools. Taliban's own interpretation of religion and its forced implementation was not only aimed at Afghanistan but also at Pakistan. Taliban used the US attack of 2001 to fuel their hatred

against the West in general and Americans in particular, declaring Pakistan as an ally to the West.

Taliban claimed to represent true religious soldiers and this was confusing for a large part of Pakistani population, which did think in early years after 9/11 that it was not their war. Further, killings by the American unmanned planes or Drones fueled hatred in the tribal areas where large numbers of civilians were killed in the attacks. This seriously limited the ability of the government to respond as civilian casualties made the task of terrorist recruitment easy for the terrorists and made it difficult for the government to present itself as a helper of the local population. Moreover, lack of credible democratic system prevented surfacing of moderate public opinion (Abbas, 2005). Social factors are not limited to the above. Poverty for example, education, access to basic resources, etc., all shape the social mix and affect the capability of state to effectively handle the situation.

Conclusion

Above analysis presents a holistic picture of how domestic problems limit the ability of a state to respond to new security threats. Analysis shows that they are all inter-linked and one cannot be separated from the other. Be it security, political, economic or the social factors, all pose different limitations from different angles. Post 9/11 Pakistan shows the exact transition it experienced from within, i.e., from disowning terrorism as a direct threat to its own security to the top national security priority especially after 2007 when the terrorists challenged not only the authority of the state but the whole social and political fabric of Pakistani society. The security infrastructure of the country requires a credible and trustworthy leadership to share sensitive information and to get vision to respond clearly. Mistrust between the political leadership and the military leadership, inter-departmental communication gap, professional ego, non-coordination and scattered approach hamper the ability of a state to respond to threats like terrorism.

New security threats are domestic as well as transnational in nature. Apart from the Pakistan's case, any state that is to respond to new security threats has to be helped in building its own capacity. Further, no new threat can now be left isolated. Technology and its global availability is like a double-edged sword, it can cut both ways. It provides the same tools to the terrorists for more destruction.

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However, countering the threat requires a comprehensive and focused strategy that is coordinated and well communicated to all the stakeholders. Socio-economic factors are of great importance, as the new complex security challenges require a non-militarized approach to resolve these. It is argued by scholars that state's borders are diminishing, but in our view, state is still the most important player and the most reliable circle of containment as far as the new threats are concerned. Nation-building is an important tool that can help in countering emerging new threats like terrorism from inside. It is important to realize that terrorist organizations are eager to exploit the deprived and alienated segments of the society. It is therefore necessary for a state not to lose its focus from common economic, political and religious issues. Communication and integration is the better approach towards rooting out terrorism.

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