



INDIA AND THE WAR ON TERROR

Presentation for 2nd Annual Conference on Terrorism and Global Security:
The Ongoing Afghanistan War, the War on Terror, and from Clausewitz to Beyond New Centers of Gravity
14-15 September, 2011, *International Security Beyond 9/11*, Washington DC

SUNIL SONDHI

ssondhi@mac.du.ac.in

**MAHARAJA AGRASEN COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**



OBJECTIVES

- Nature of Terrorism in India
- Impact of War on Terror in India
- Counterterrorism Strategy for India

Terrorism in South Asia

- Impetus of global terrorism continues to emanate from South and West Asia.
- Terrorism in South Asia is for the most part rooted in the region.
- It has long been used for separatism, right- and left-wing politics, and religious extremism.
- Lately transnational terrorism is playing a significant role.
- Cross-border ethnic ties, globalized financial networks, and widely accessible communications technologies used by terrorist networks.

Regional Incapacities

- Limited response capacities of governments and law-enforcement agencies
- Grievances about widespread corruption, underdevelopment, and socio-economic marginalization.
- Problematic role of the state.
- Relationships among states characterized by suspicion, mistrust, and, hostility.
- Linkages between terrorism, political violence, development, governance.

Impact of War on Terror

- Terrorist networks in India, Pakistan, Sr Lanka, Bangladesh under pressure.
- Indian efforts to convince US administration about Pak complicity.
- Ambivalence in US responses, as it needs Pakistan as a frontline state against terrorism.
- Revived calls from separatist forces for US mediation in Kashmir.
- Security environment in the Af-Pak region has taken a turn for the worse.

Pakistan's Proxy War in India

- Pakistan has contributed significantly to the ongoing campaign against al-Qaeda.
- It has been reluctant to eliminate other terrorist groups operating in India and Afghanistan.
- The protection of the terrorist infrastructure has given fresh lease of life to terrorism in India
- It has supported extremist groups simply because it is powerless to prevent it but at other times with full knowledge and consent
- Pakistan is the epicenter for security challenges facing South Asia, and, the whole world, in the early 21st century.

Internal Conflicts in India

- Kashmir is the most visible and intense of the conflicts and has both intrastate and interstate dimensions.
- Insurgency movements in Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Assam.
- India's response, resorting to coercive military means to quell the unrest, has not always helped the situation.
- In recent years, a corridor has formed in India's tribal belts from the north to the south, under the influence of Naxalites.

State Weakness in India

- Lack of institutional provision of security, justice and basic services.
- Lack of territorial consolidation and control over population groups.
- Lack of coercive power to impose order and to repel challenges to state authority.
- Lack of agreement on national identity and social purpose.

Governance Deficit

- Inadequate training for police, judges, prosecutors, investigators, and other criminal justice officials.
- Incapacity of courts in the country to handle terrorism related cases in a timely manner.
- Slack regulation of informal money transfer systems such as hawala or hundi.
- Ineffective interagency coordination mechanisms.
- Lack of national counterterrorism databases to enable law enforcement officials to remain informed of terrorist events.
- No access to global police communications system at border crossings in the region.

Absence of National Strategy

- India's police and internal security system is highly fragmented and often poorly coordinated.
- Federal political system leaves most policing responsibilities to the states.
- Local police and counterterrorism forces are often poorly trained and equipped.
- Local personnel are frequently hired on the basis of political patronage and are notorious for high levels of corruption.

Case of Mumbai and Delhi

- There was significant intelligence suggesting attacks in Mumbai in 2008 and Delhi in 2011.
- This information was ignored by several key actors because it was deemed unactionable.
- Even when Mumbai and Delhi police tried to take preventive action, they lacked the manpower and equipment.
- Inter agency coordination was lacking in both incidents.
- Long response time and the emergence of disastrous siege in Mumbai.

For Effective Counterterrorism Strategy

- The first objective of counter-terrorism in India should be to break the collective mental paralysis that terrorist violence imposes.
- India needs to increase the rate of terrorist neutralization so that it should exceed the rate of terrorist recruitment.
- Effective counter-terrorist response is possible only when the police intelligence and response capabilities have been strengthened.
- Dramatically bolstering the institutional capacity of India's counterterrorism apparatus requires international collaboration.

Challenges to Counterterrorism

- Lack of political resolve to fight terrorism without making any compromise.
- Terrorist organizations in India have thrived under political patronage in the past.
- Lack of political and social consensus on the necessity of eliminating terrorism.
- Political leadership lacks the will to push past bureaucratic and state-centric rivalries.
- Political class is focused on the cut-throat electoral competition that characterizes Indian politics.

Conclusion

- The global war on terrorism has checked and put the terrorist networks under pressure in South Asia.
- Thoroughgoing institutional reform is required in India to fight terrorism effectively.
- More financial and human resources are required as India faces higher threat level.
- Political elite needs to be focused more on combating terrorism than on vote bank politics.
- The process of bolstering Indian counterterrorism capabilities will be long and difficult.