INDIA AND THE WAR ON TERROR

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The Ongoing Afghanistan War, the War on Terror, and from Clausewitz to Beyond New Centers of Gravity

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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, Sri 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.