



TERRORISM ROOTS - THE DEBATE OVER POVERTY'S ROLE

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Assumptions and Definitions

There are many potential causes of terrorism. In Mar 2005, the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security looked at five possible roots or underlying causes: psychology, political, economic, religion, and culture¹. While each of these is a potential cause, many analysts debate about the economic factor: some define it as a direct cause, while others list it as an indirect cause. During his annual statement at the United Nations General Assembly in 2004, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa argued that while the rich believed that

terrorism was the principle threat and challenge to humanity, for the majority of people on the planet poverty and underdevelopment are the real, major threats. Similarly, at the recent annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund, the President of the World Bank argued that even though we have to deal with immediate threats, we must not lose sight of the long-term security issue that confronts us all. The greatest potential source of instability on our planet today is poverty, and the hopelessness and despair that it brings to so many in our world. On the other hand, there are also many who argue that

the link between terrorism and poverty is too weak to be considered casual, because the one does not necessarily lead to the other.

For the purposes of the research paper, four states in south and southeast Asia that are affected by various types of terrorism and insurgency were chosen to analyze the role that economics - Poverty in particular, plays in each. These are Thailand, Nepal, the Philippines and India.

The current war against terrorism and the debate that surrounds this phenomenon has brought to the fore the very question of its definition. It has been argued that for the international community to eradicate terrorism the logical first step is to define it.

Terrorism

The word 'terrorism' is much used in our daily lives through the media of television, newspapers, the internet or conversation and yet it takes on different meaning depending on who is using the word. The cliché that 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' perhaps best describes the dilemma facing the international community that is struggling to find an agreeable definition. Unfortunately, 'terrorism' is a word that is used so often and so loosely that it has lost a clear meaning.

The Oxford Reference Dictionary describes terrorism as 'the systematic use of violence and intimidation to coerce a government or community, especially into acceding to specific political demands'. Since 1936, there have been almost 109 definitions of terrorism. More have appeared since then, including at least six from the US government and 12 from the United Nations (UN).

In March 2005, the UN Secretary General defined terrorism as follows: 'any action constitutes terrorism if it is intended to cause death or bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a Government or an international organization to do

or to abstain from doing any act'. It is interesting to note that Amnesty International, along with other human rights organizations, do not use the term 'terrorism' at all.

There is often confusion between acts of terrorism and national liberation movements. The resistance or national liberation movements resorting to acts of terrorism defeat their own purpose due to the condemnation that comes from the international community. Hence, whatever may be the definition of terrorism, terrorist acts should be punishable irrespective of the specific political purpose and irrespective of whether individuals, liberation movements, or regular armies commit those acts. In other words, no national liberation movement or rebel group should be excused for its terrorist actions.

Poverty

Poverty describes a wide range of circumstances associated with need, hardship and lack of resources. To some people, poverty is a subjective and comparative term; for others, it is moral and evaluative². Poverty is said to exist when people lack the means to satisfy their basic needs. Hence, a person living in the condition of poverty is said to be poor. Therefore, poverty may be seen as the collective condition of poor people, or of poor groups, and in this sense entire nation-states could be regarded as poor.

There are at least four different categories of motives that are common to those who are poor, who are led to violence, often in the form of terrorism. First are those conditions related to poverty: hunger, sickness, and shelter for oneself or one's family³. Major gaps between the resources of haves and have-nots in many countries may well have led to the development and support for various terrorist guerilla groups. People with few material resources, having little to lose, are prime candidates for joining extremist organisations that promise better living conditions as soon as the haves are removed from power.



Undoubtedly, some Muslims living in poverty, especially in the Israeli occupied West Bank, were believed to be enticed by the monetary rewards promised to their families if they were to attack Israeli citizens or soldiers via suicide bombing. The second basic need is for security (Christie, 1997)⁴, the lack of which often leads to fear. Ralph White (1984)⁵ made the distinction between realistic fear and exaggerated fear; the latter is based in a perception of danger that is a distortion of reality (to the extent that reality can be determined). Realistic fear will lead to realistic measures taken by an individual or state to prevent any attack. Meanwhile, an exaggerated fear is by definition partly unrealistic, and therefore, is likely to lead to ineffective measures to avoid the fear event. Thirdly, there is a basic need for self-determination, that is, the ability to make one's own decisions about "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Numerous rebel groups that seek either political power or autonomy often turn to terrorism in hopes of gaining sovereignty. As a side note, the need for self-determination is an issue of power. A fear of losing power may, in fact, be one possible reason for state terrorism, that is, terrorist tactics used by those in power against their populace in order to maintain the suppression of the latter (Saddam Hussein fits this mold). The Fourth basic need is for social respect, that is, others' acknowledgement of the value of one's social identity, of the ethnic, religious, or cultural long histories. The long, ongoing conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland provides a prime example.

However, based the studies done, Mr Alberto Abadie, Associate Professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, found that, in the case between Israel and Palestine, there is no significant relationship between a nation's wealth and the level of terrorism it experiences. Instead, he sees it as hatred, which has inspired an entire generation of Palestinian Arabs.⁷

Interestingly, in 2003, the National Memorial

Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MTPT) and Terrorism Knowledge Base reported only 230 cases of transnational terrorism compared to 1,536 instances of domestic terrorism. Hence, some researchers have suggested that the determinants of the transnational and domestic terrorism might differ. Furthermore, they believe that most of the modern-day transnational terrorism is generated by grievances against rich countries. In addition, in some cases terrorist groups may attack property or nationals of rich countries in order to gain national publicity. As a result, transnational terrorism may predominantly affect rich countries. The same is not necessarily true for domestic terrorism. But this is an indication that poverty has at least an indirect effect on transnational terrorism. Such terrorists could be motivated by relative deprivation - the differences noted between their own poverty and the wealth of the rich countries-thus leading to the transnational terror attacks.

Case Studies

Now that terrorism and poverty have been defined and poverty's role as a motivator of terrorism discussed, let us turn to case studies that focus on the issue of poverty in each of the target states as a potential cause of terrorism.

Thailand

Thailand's population is 75 percent Thai, 14 percent Chinese and 11 percent other nationalities, including a Muslim population of 3.8 percent. Most Thais are Buddhist (95 percent). The unemployment rate is a mere 1.5 percent and the population below the poverty line is 10 percent. The GDP per capita is \$8,100, making Thailand one of the wealthier countries of the Southeast Asian region.

There has been unrest in southern Thailand since January 2004, particularly in the southern provinces of Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani. These regions are home to the Muslim minority in Thailand, many of whom are also ethnic Malays. This region



has been the scene of separatist movements over the last 35 years. The Pattani United Liberation Front (PULO) is the primary separatist movement, which began demanding an independent state for the Muslims in 1970. The Jemaah Islamiya (JI), a regional Jihadi terrorist organisation of Southeast Asia is suspected to be active in southern Thailand. After the Bali bombing in Indonesia in October 2002, it was reported that some of the JI members who had participated in the bombing had met twice in southern Thailand; and there are reports that the JI, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group - the last two are based in the southern Philippines, are working together in the region.

There are four principal reasons that Muslims in southern Thailand could have become involved in terrorist activities. First, the region is already known as the poorest part of the Thai economy. Development and growth have not effectively trickled down to this predominantly Muslim region where 4.5 of the 6 million inhabitants are Muslim. The poverty and underdevelopment has likely helped to spawn terrorism. The proportion of the poor people in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat provinces are 27 percent, 20 percent, and 34 percent respectively, as against national average of 10 percent.⁸

Second, there is cause for concern as many young Thai Muslims have been schooled in Pondoks in the last three decades, resulting in their embracement of the fierier brand of Wahabiism. The Pondoks do not teach the national curriculum, so the Muslim students who graduate have difficulty entering the Thai job market and many of them remain unemployed or get involved in illegal activities such as drug dealing, arm smuggling, or other illicit activities in order to make a living, at the same time supporting terrorist activities.

Third, for years, this region has been engaged in a subtle war of attrition and hit and run operations against 'symbols of central authority' such as

policemen, government officials and soldiers. Some southern Thais in the three Muslim provinces have tried to secede and create a Muslim state.

Fourth, the Thai government has been fighting a war against drugs. It is conceived that part of this drug trade and smuggling is linked to the financing of terrorist activities, creating a relationship between terrorists and drug groups operating in southern Thailand.

To tackle the problem, the Thai government policy involves, first, education development to promote religious knowledge and employment. The government intends to lift the standard of schools by promoting the teaching of general and occupational subjects in addition to Islam. This approach is expected to eventually eradicate illiteracy and poverty. Second, the government is trying to upgrade living standards by creating jobs, developing communities and integrating governance. Third, the government is taking steps to eliminate the conditions and causes which lead to local people feeling separate and unequal. These reforms are challenging, but by analysing the reasoning behind them, the Thai government has clearly linked the terrorism and separatist movement to poverty, and hopes that by eliminating poverty it will be able to solve terrorism problem in its southern region.

Nepal

The prolonged armed insurgency in Nepal has remained the biggest threat to its national development. Starting in 1996 from mid-western districts, the violence has spread rapidly to many parts of the country and has severely disrupted economic activity and development work in many areas. The most irreparable and devastating effect of the armed insurgency has been the humanitarian tragedy. In the last decade, more than 11,000 persons lost their lives and they include: innocent civilians, security personnel, and many of the terrorists themselves.



National and local level elections have not been held due to the instability and frequent changes of caretaker governments.

There are undoubtedly social and economic grievances contributing to the present situation of insurgency in Nepal, but its causes are far more complex. Whatever be the causes for the beginning of the social disorder, there is little doubt that persistent poverty and inequalities have provided a fertile breeding ground for the present crisis. Some of the reasons which helped fuel the crisis are weak impact of various development activities on some areas of the country, inadequate delivery of social services in some of the remote and isolated areas, the slow pace of decentralisation and inadequate community involvement, and inadequate resource allocation for the remote regions.

The other causes of the insurgency in Nepal may be attributed to mass poverty, illiteracy, and feelings of social exclusion, discrimination, unemployment and inequalities among the various sections of Nepalese communities. The poor and illiterate masses have been lured with the slogans of Maoists promising guarantees of social justice, equality, eradication of poverty, etc. Many followers are unaware of the Maoism and any other system of governance. One of the main reasons of the growing strength of the Maoist insurgency is that it has been able to garner the support of the lower caste people, various ethnic communities, the desperately poor, uneducated and unemployed.

The foregoing analysis clearly indicates that there are various reasons for the insurgency in Nepal, including the Maoist/Communist ideology as it adds fuel that exacerbates the struggle. However, poverty plays a pivotal role as it is deeper, more intense, and more severe in rural areas, especially in the hills and mountains of the Western regions. Other factors such as illiteracy, underdevelopment, political instability, and economic disparity, lack of good governance, poor security assessment, and pervasive

unemployment have further compounded the situation.

The Government of Nepal has kept the door open for dialogue with the Maoists. Considering the root cause of the problem is poverty, social discrimination, injustice, and unemployment, the government has focused in the current "10th Development Plan" to address the above issues with special emphasis in these sectors. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is the main focus of the current development plan. It envisages overcoming the various social issues of the Nepalese society. However, the programs and policies are not implemented as expected mainly due to the insurgency situation.

Since the government has greater responsibility to provide security to the citizens and protect their lives, liberties and property, it has been pursuing peaceful means to resolve the problem rather than violent actions. In view of the increased violence of the Maoists, Nepalese government has adopted counter operational programs through unified command of all security agencies, which include Royal Nepal Army, Nepal Police and the national Armed Police Force.

Considering the Maoists activities violent and disruptive to the people and society, Nepalese Government has introduced the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Ordinance 2004. This Ordinance recognises terrorist and disruptive activity as an act or a plan targeted against sovereignty, indivisibility, security or law and order in the Kingdom of Nepal or any part thereof, by causing loss of life, inflicting injury on a person, damaging property, extorting money or spreading panic among the people and outlines punishments for criminal actions.

Philippines

Philippine terrorism has involved hostage taking, piracy, sabotage, assassination, threats,



hoaxes, and indiscriminate bombings or shootings⁹. Along this line, the Philippines government identified the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) as terrorists, but is too cautious to tag the New People's Army (NPA) and the Mindanao Independent Liberation Front (MILF) as terrorist groups despite the fact that their activities fall within the definition of terrorism. Presently, there are ongoing peace negotiations between the government and each of the latter two groups. Nonetheless, the US government has declared NPA as a terrorist group and acceded to remove the MILF from the list upon request of the Philippines government. For the purpose of this case study, the first two organizations, both still considered terror groups in the West, will be examined.

Under the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (RA 8425) signed on 11 December 1997, the "poor" refers to those individuals and families whose incomes fall below the poverty threshold, and/or those who cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic needs of survival, security and enabling. Thus, for the year 2003, a family of five members should have at least a monthly income of P4, 835 (\$87.9 at P55 to \$1)¹⁰.

Abu Sayyaf Organization (ASG)

The ASG was founded in Basilan Province and mainly operates there and in the neighboring provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur and Maguidanao¹¹. It also operates in the Zamboanga peninsula, and members occasionally travel to Manila and other parts of the country. The group expanded its operations to Malaysia in 2000 when it abducted foreigners from a tourist resort. The ASG is estimated to have 200 to 500 members. It split from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the early 1990s under the leadership of Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, who was killed in a clash with Philippine police on 18 December 1998. His younger brother, Khadaffy Janjalani, has replaced him as the nominal leader of the group, which is composed of several semi-autonomous factions.

Considering the technical definition of poverty in the Philippines, the members of the ASG were not poor as they were supported by MNLF before their breakaway. Thereafter, they were largely self-financing through ransom and extortion. Their supporters were categorised into two groups: outside supporters and the mass base. The mass base comprises the people in their area of their operation who provided them food, information, sanctuary, medical, moral support, and the like. This supporting populace is in the provinces of Jolo, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, and parts of Sulu archipelago. Jolo and Tawi-Tawi belongs to the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) while Basilan is part of Region IX.

On the poverty condition of ASG's area of support, the National Statistics and Coordination Board of the Philippines reported that the provinces of Sulu and Taw-Tawi of ARMM; and, Zamboanga del Sur and Norte were included in poorest 44 provinces of the Philippines. However, the Basilan province was not included. During 2003, the ARMM had a population of 2,258,620 and the incident of poverty was 45.7 percent. Meanwhile, Region IX has a population of 3,302,899 and the incident of poverty was 37.9 percent¹².

The reason for poverty in ASG mass bases is weak economic activities as a result of poor law and order situation, poor transportation and communication infrastructures, and lower skill level labor force¹. These regions have experienced long and bitter family and tribal feuds among themselves and sometimes against non- Muslims. This was exacerbated by the secessionist movements and government combat operations against the separatists and Maoist guerillas. Substantial government resources were channeled to maintain peace and order instead of building infrastructure.

With regard to the other grievances, they could be examined by looking at the ideology. The term ideology means the consensus of common grievances



and objectives that the terrorist group is trying to address through violence¹⁴. The ASG first emerged in 1989 under the leadership of Janjalani who was connected with a Muslim fundamentalist movement, Al Islamic Tabligh¹⁵. The movement aimed at establishing an independent Islamic Theocratic State of Mindanao (MIS) and called for deliberate and systematic targeting of South Filipino Christians. However, in practice, the group operates more like criminals than terrorists and is usually satisfied by collecting ransom. The ASG thrives in Region IX and ARMM, which are some of the poorest regions in the Philippines. The core group, however, was disgruntled MNLF leaders who did not agree with Nur Misuari to make peace with the government. The main issue at the time of their breaking away with MNLF was secession and other issues were secondary. Hence, poverty was not a direct cause but other issues could be. By the definition of poverty in the Philippines, they were not among the poor. In fact Janjalani, the ASG founder, was schooled in Egypt and some of his followers have fought in Afghanistan¹⁶. They have received financial assistance from foreign sources. Hence, being not so poor, their grievance was not primarily poverty.

The New People's Army (NPA)

The NPA was founded in 1969 in Nueva Ecija in Luzon and operates nationwide. Although primarily a rural-based guerrilla group, the NPA has an active urban infrastructure to conduct terrorism and uses city-based assassination squads called sparrow units. As of Year 2003, the NPA had a strength of 6000 to 8000 guerillas.

The core members were Maoist ideologues who were determined to establish a communist state. The leaders came from the cross-section of the society who were disillusioned by the poor socio-economic conditions in the Philippines. But most of the leaders were themselves not poor. Most of them were talented people who could always earn a decent

income but because of their idealism, they opted to join the movement. Some of them were university scholars, professors, beauty queens, military officers, and members of prominent families in the Philippines, Consistent with the Maoist principle, that is there should be water for fish to swim into; the NPA movement has mass bases for it to thrive into. The NPA were supported in the depressed areas of the countryside and even in the urban areas.

The NPA's mass bases included the poorest 44 provinces excluding the mass bases of the Muslim separatist movements. The average incident of poverty is 24.70 percent. The poverty in NPA stronghold was in part or in combination caused by uneven distribution of resources particularly land, failure of the agricultural sector to bloom, weak industrial sector, inadequate infrastructure for investment, poor law and order situation, bigger family sizes, etc.

Except for People's Republic of China, in 60's and 70's, there were no known foreign supporters for the NPA. They subsisted on force taxation and voluntary contributions from their local supporters. Politicians, businessmen, and uncooperative poor people were victims of force taxation. In addition, there are legitimate business establishments that provide them support. These establishments may either be their front organisations or forcefully taxed. Thus, we could logically infer that the NPA's core members are not poor by Philippine standard.

Aside from establishing a classless society, the NPA's other grievances are: globalisation, higher taxes, lower wages, high prices of commodities, corruption in the government, violation of human rights, US Imperialism, etc. Removal of US bases was once their grievances; but, they changed this issue to US imperialism after the US Forces left the country in 1992.

Looking at the circumstances of poverty for both the ASG and the NPA, it can be said that there are



similarities between them such that some generalisations can be made. Both have core members that are not so poor and hence poverty could not be considered a main driving factor or grievance. They are motivated to advance the political agenda, which could be attained by several means—including revolution, but they opted to use violence. Further, they operated in poor regions in order to appeal to the local audience and justified their actions for the good of the poor people. On the other hand, the poor people participated indirectly in the acts terrorism. Indirect participation does not indicate intent to commit direct acts of terrorism. Poverty can thus be considered an indirect cause, one which promotes the support of followers, but not one that motivates the actual leaders and advocates of terrorist activity.

India

India is a democracy of almost 60 years now. Yet, India has faced terrorism in Punjab and is presently, grappling with containing it in the northeast and most importantly in Jammu and Kashmir, where, in the last 15 years more than 66,000 - mostly civilians, have died in Jammu and Kashmir alone. Particular terrorist targets of note include the State Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir at Srinagar as well as the Indian Parliament at New Delhi.

The country started from scratch in 1947 with unifying all the 584 princely states, which were not sufficiently developed, as the funds never reached the poor to bring about socio-economic progress. After independence, the country started 5-year plans and provided funds to all the states for their economic and social development. The need is to examine, whether lack of development in these areas resulted in poverty, which could have been the cause of terrorism.

Two important studies, by 'National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi' in 94, and 'International Food Policy Research Institute,

Washington D.C' in 98, dealing with poverty in India, spanning the period 1951-1994, were analysed to detect a link between poverty and terrorism in India.

The studies show that in 1993-94 every third person in India lived in conditions of poverty. Between 1966 and 1994, the national poverty index declined from about 64 to 35 percent.

Most of the decline in poverty since 1970 occurred by 1986-87, with a further modest decline during 1989-90.

Regional disparities in standards of living have been large. For instance, during 1993-94 the proportion of the rural population of the state of Bihar in absolute poverty was about 64 percent, more than two-and-a-half times higher than the proportion in the state of Punjab (25 percent). Some of these differences appear to have persisted historically. Punjab was one of the richest regions even during the late 1950s.

For the rural sector, the good performers in poverty decline were Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, West Bengal, and Gujarat. And amongst the poor performers were the states of Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, etc. In the urban sector, Punjab and Haryana had the highest rate of decline in poverty measures, and the other good performer was Jammu and Kashmir. In sum, both these studies concluded by ranking the states of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir first and second overall in poverty reduction.

Kashmir valley, the hub of present turmoil, is one of the most prosperous regions of the country, where per capita income is far too higher than in any other part of the country and much above the national average. The state has its democratic set up with number of development schemes backed by the Govt at New Delhi. In fact, per capita expenditure on development activities is three times more than that allotted to Bihar. In his article, "The Cause of Terrorism," Jimmy Akin has quoted a study of India, which



demonstrates that terrorism in the sub-continent has occurred in the most prosperous (Punjab) and egalitarian (Kashmir) regions and that, on the other hand, the poorest regions such as Bihar have been free of terrorism.

So then what are the reasons/causes of terrorism in India? In Punjab, where terrorism remained active for over a decade, from 1980-90, the reasons ranged from the future of Chandigarh, territorial adjustments with neighboring states, river water allocation, protection as well as promotion of Sikhism, reducing landholdings and unemployment. Northeast India, consisting of large number of ethnic and tribal groups, was never incorporated into British India. During the British period, Christian missionaries actively converted many of the tribal groups, and with indirect support from colonial Britain, turned these groups rabidly anti-India, resulting in the strong feeling of alienation from the rest of the country. The people feel that the central government should be more active in northeastern affairs.

There are historical reasons for terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir since independence, attained by both India and Pakistan in 1947. The struggle is basically between two conflicting value systems:

- To India, secularism with a peaceful co existence with cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is the most important issue.
- To Pakistan, as an "Islamic Republic, its *raison d'etre* is the "two nation theory" that Muslims cannot and must not be allowed to co-exist with other religions. A Muslim republic—Pakistan, should rule Jammu and Kashmir, a mostly Muslim state.

After independence, India was in the process of re-unification of the 584 princely states, Kashmir being one of them. This required signing of a legal document, the 'Instrument of Accession' by all the princely states. Learning about this development, Pakistan 'Tribesmen' attacked Kashmir in October

1947. The Tribesmen included many Pakistan Army officers and men, in and out of uniform. The regular Pakistan Army provided command and control as well as artillery. Entire villages in Baramula, Rajouri and Poonch were destroyed. As the State of J&K was no match for the Pakistani forces, Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India, accepted the Kashmir ruler's request to join the Indian Union. The Indian forces halted the Pakistan movement and India requested UN intervention in January 1948. UN called for three actions to be followed in the sequential order: First, Pakistan must withdraw all its troops and all non-Kashmiris from Kashmir. Next, India should withdraw the bulk of its troops, retaining those required for law and order; all those who had left Kashmir (on both sides) as refugees should be allowed to return. Thirdly, after these two conditions are met, a plebiscite should determine the wishes of the Kashmiri people in both portions of Kashmir under UN supervision.

The UN resolution has not been followed. India considers Jammu and Kashmir its integral territory, legally embedded to it through "Instrument of Accession" signed by the ruler of the state in 1948.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has objected to the Indian position and embarked on the policy of annexing the state, firstly, by going into full-fledged wars in 1965 and '71. Having failed in these attempts, Pak put in place its policy of annexing Jammu and Kashmir through non-conventional means of sponsoring cross-border terrorism. The genesis of Pak's role in terrorism was President Zia ul Haq's shift towards Islamic ideology in the 1980s. He sought to use radical Islam to conquer Afghanistan, which was under USSR occupation, and Jammu and Kashmir through proxy forces. US aid for removal of USSR forces from Afghanistan was channeled to fundamentalist groups and Taliban. Saudi Arabia also supported financially and helped in opening number of madrassas in Pak, which became breeding grounds to jihadist movement, mainly under the



control of Al Qaeda. Pak also benefited from this arrangement by training terrorists in Afghanistan for unrest in Jammu and Kashmir. After USSR's pull out from Afghanistan in 89, these terrorists, including from Al Qaeda, were diverted by Pakistan to cross-border terrorism in India.

The external powers, due to geo-political reasons, provide moral and material support, including large amounts of funds to undermine the authority of a state. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, evidence has surfaced linking Pakistan to terrorism in the region. So was the case with militancy in Punjab. There are even unsubstantiated reports of Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, and Myanmar involvement in the insurgency in the Northeast region of India. The terrorism in the valley has been built around two-nation theory of Pakistan with a purpose to cede from India. It can, therefore, be concluded that poverty is not the prime motive of terrorism in India and there are other reasons for it.

Analysis and Findings of the Case Studies

Author Walter Laqueur states that 30 years ago, when terrorism expanded as a major ideological tool, it was asserted that terrorism was basically a left-wing revolutionary movement caused by oppression and exploitation¹⁸. This is not often heard by today's theorists; but the belief now gaining ground is the fatal link between poverty and terrorism.

Harvard economist Alberto Adadie argues that economic growth is closely related to a society's ability to manage conflicts¹⁹.

Through the case studies of four countries facing terrorism, poverty was identified as a motivator of terrorism in case of Nepal and Thailand. Nepal case also saw a continuing link with left-wing revolutionary movement, and hence was unable to determine whether poverty or ideology was the bigger contributor there. Thailand also shows links toward separatist ideology as the terrorists are Malay Muslims rather than Thais, even though they are also the

poorest among the Thai population. The experience in the Philippines is even more mixed. Though terrorists generally operate in and receive sympathy from those in the poorest regions, the terrorists themselves are well educated and often motivated by revolutionary ideologies: Maoism or Muslim separatism. And in the final case India, poverty seems to play no role whatsoever. It was shown that terrorism in the sub-continent has occurred in the most prosperous (Punjab) and egalitarian (Kashmir) regions and that, the poorest regions such as Bihar have been free of terrorism. Thus, it is not possible to conclude that poverty is a direct cause of terrorism, but do see it as a contributing factor, especially when it comes to generating sympathy and support for terrorist causes.

In a recent study by Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, the authors concluded that terrorists are generally not poor people and do not come from poor societies. The Indian and Philippines cases supports this view.

An international panel of experts was convened in Oslo, Norway in September 2003 by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs to consider the root causes of terrorism. These experts found that there was only a weak and indirect relationship between poverty and terrorism. The findings concluded that at the individual level, terrorists are generally not drawn from the poorest segments of their societies. Poverty in fact, has frequently been used as justification for social revolutionary terrorists, who claim to represent the poor and marginalised. The experts did identify some conditions and circumstances that give rise to terrorism and called them Preconditions and Precipitants. The Preconditions include a lack of democracy, civil liberties and rule of law. The Precipitants are failed or weak states, often brimming with extremist ideologies of a secular or religious nature; or states undergoing rapid modernisation with a past history of political violence and corruption, often kept in power by influential external actors



upholding their illegitimate ways.

Brookings Institution, in a recent report indicated there are four types of terrorist group's i.e. Leftist groups, Secular groups, Ethnic Separatist groups and Religion based groups. This report makes no mention of the Poverty factor.

Conclusion

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that there is no direct link between poverty and terrorism, though there are certainly indirect links demonstrating its importance as a secondary contributor. Out of four types of terrorist groups mentioned in the Brookings Institution report we find evidence of three of the four within our cases:

- Leftist groups–Maoists in Nepal and Philippines, typically motivated by ideological views with a focus on overthrowing and replacing incumbent governments.
- Secular groups–Though the main face of international terrorism in the 1970s, these have now faded from view.
- Ethnic Separatist groups–Malay Muslims in Thailand, Mindanao Muslims in Philippines, Kashmiri Muslims in India.
- Religion based groups–(same as above) are the biggest concern in recent history and constitute a larger portion of terrorist groups at present. They have also introduced the phenomenon of suicide terror making it more difficult to deter such groups.

The Brookings report makes no mention of the poverty factor, and thus, ideological interests continue to be the prime motivator of terror even though there seems to be a shift from leftist, political ideology to religious or ethnic separatist ideology. In our cases, some groups (like the Malay, Mindanao and Kashmiri) fit into both categories - ethnic and religious, and each could also be labeled as Islamic radicals.

What then, is the solution to the problem of terrorism in the South and Southeast Asian regions? The solution lies in governments identifying and addressing Preconditions and Precipitants prevalent in the society and eradicating them. The Nations must be governed by the international conventions and treaties on terrorism. A recent UN panel, set up to study global threats and recommend changes in the international system, in its report, "A More Secure World – our Shared Responsibility," provides strategy in dealing with terrorism. It is only through this strategy that the Nations would be able to tackle terrorism, the highlights of which are as follows:-

- Dissuade disaffected groups from choosing terrorism to achieve their goals.
- Deny the terrorists the means to carry out their attacks.
- Deter states from supporting terrorists.
- Develop state capacity to prevent terrorism.
- Defend human rights in the struggle against terrorism.

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