

Possible Solutions to the Problem of Terrorism

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Abstract

Terrorism is becoming an epidemic of today's world. People today have understood that they are not safe while enjoying leisure in some tourist spot or even while shopping in the malls and this exactly is the target of the terrorists. Terrorism is the political struggle between the weak and the powerful where the former complains that their rights have been snatched away by the latter, thus as their last resort the so called terrorists take up violence. The powerful here refers to the corrupt system. But a question might arise that if Government is their party at dispute then why do the innocent citizens have to die in terrorist attacks? The terrorists do not consider the citizens to be innocents as they are electing hence empowering the corrupt Government, thus they ought to die. But this mass slaughtering or innocent killing must be stopped by any means. Therefore in this write up we would talk of certain case specific and other general solutions of terrorism finally leading us to a more permanent solution which could one day make the world a better place to live in.

KEYWORDS: Terrorism, Innocent killing, Govt. Actions, Counter-terrorism, Care – compassion

“Fighting terrorism is like being a goal keeper. You can make a hundred brilliant saves but the only one shot that people remembers is the one that gets past you...”
—Paul Wilkinson

Introduction

Terrorism is not a very recent affair which threatens the world. Its impact has been quite traumatic among people especially in the past ten years. The terrorists use murder, kidnapping, hijacking and bombing as methods to achieve a political purpose. Such radicals are not just confined to United States, but are found all over the world, in every way, shape and form. The terrorists attack the innocent citizens whom they do not consider as innocents. As they are the tax payers supporting the corrupt government economically and electing them to come into power only to exploit the weak.

The primary reason for terrorist acts is to enforce a change in the nation's government. If terrorists are not satisfied with the operations conducted by the government, they take the matters in their own hands. Again the terrorists also emerge due to hatred towards race, nationality or religion. Moreover since terrorism is so secretive having no fore warning, it has been a real problem to deal with.

While dealing with the probable measures that have been or could be adopted to prevent terrorism, let us start our discussion with certain specific cases of terrorism maintaining their peculiarities and considering the possible solutions.

Now Lord Buddha is his 'Arya Satya' or four noble truths stated that, if there is a problem and if that problem can be traced out, then there ought to be a solution to end that problem. Thus even if terrorism cannot be out rightly eliminated, nevertheless, certain rational solutions can perhaps be thought of. Let us see what these solutions are in the context of the instances of terrorism that have occurred in the past.

Case Specific Solution

Many a time rental moving trucks have been used to carry bombs. In case of bombing of important venues for example, the bombing of WTC and Federal building in Oklahoma, such a technique was used. In such cases still photographs or video tape of the people who rent the trucks could be taken, along with their social security numbers. Again if in every rental car an electronic fuse detector is planted, which would be tied to a national satellite network to let the investigators know what kind of materials the truck is carrying – then such attacks could be curbed to some extent. Moreover, the moment such detecting devices get the signal that there is some hazardous material – then the sensor can relay this message to the Federal Bureau of Investigations – which could then send the bomb squad to the location of the truck, arrest the individuals and arrange to defuse the bomb.

Further, it has been found in the past that the terrorists normally choose parking garages below or inside buildings – thus before the cars enter such government buildings or other important places, screening of vehicles can be made compulsory to avoid untoward incidents. Metal detectors should be used on people entering government buildings and there should be sniffer dogs who could detect bombs in vehicles. All these steps could be taken as preventive measures.

One of the most dangerous types of terrorist attack is hijacking planes. There have been a number of hijackings which have led to bombing of planes in the mid air causing immense damage to life and property. One advantage for the the terrorists regarding this type of attack is that, it is fairly easy to get a bomb into the baggage section of the plane. This is because unlike cabin baggage, the checked-in luggage is not X-rayed for contraband. Some of these bombs work off a timer and ignite the bomb to blow at a pre-determined time. There is a special type of bomb that works on the altitude of the plane. To minimise this problem, it may be suggested that the checked-in luggage should also be scanned for explosives that could be dangerous to the passengers. Lastly the luggage while being loaded in the hold of the aircraft should also go through a strict checking procedure by metal detector. This could finally prevent any bomb from being loaded onto the plane.

Another incident of aircraft bombing takes place when "Suicide Bomber" or the terrorist straps the bomb to his body while alighting the plane so that such bombs can easily escape human visions. They are so focused towards their ideology that they would even sacrifice their own lives in the process. Unfortunately metal detectors too fail to identify plastic explosives that a terrorist often carried on board. Another safe guarding method would be to post sniffer dogs at every enclosure where metal detectors are placed, which could jointly work in terms of detecting and preventing the bombs from reaching the plane.

One of the best ways of preventing terrorist attacks, it may be argued is by monitoring those groups closely for signs of illegal activity. First the USA should

form coalition groups with all other nations to monitor the terrorist organizations of other nations. The FBI can be the main organization to receive and filter out all potential terrorist groups. Once USA is aware of all terrorist groups within and outside the nation, the government can, then, be able to get a tighter hold on terrorist group's activities. As we have to remember that U.S is the breeding ground for terrorist activities.

After identifying these groups all bullets and bomb making equipments have to be confiscated from them. Again, anyone who would like to buy a gun will have to prove his intent of using it – by supplying social security numbers, driving license, finger prints, ballistic of the gun and a picture of themselves taken by the sellers of those guns. Ammunitions should also be subject to the same kind of security.

Factories that produce chemical fertilizers and any other material that could be used in the manufacturing of bombs, would have to have a license to make these items. Forged licenses would be seized and such license holders would be severely punished. In case someone buys large quantities of such items, the scale must be reported and approved by the FBI. As in case of Oklahoma bombing, the vast purchase of ammonia nitrate fertilizer, which was the main component in the bomb, should have aroused a doubt and in case of any such doubt such large quantity would have to be first cleared by the FBI, before being sold.

The terrorists, when identified, must be given tough punishment. They should be locked up for life time since death penalty would just be putting them out of their miseries.

However all such attempts sketched above give some ideas about how to curb terrorist activities. These would prove valid only when put to test, that is to say in real life.

Solutions to be implemented by the Government

After so many consecutive attacks of terrorism now it is the best time to ask ourselves – what we as individuals and as responsible citizens, can do to stop terrorism and also what steps and measures the government can adopt to control it.

Here are some useful steps which can be implemented in our **country**:-

- i) Making military training and Yoga Compulsory in schools and colleges:** Even in countries like U.S.A and Israel there is compulsory military training of youths before they complete graduation. This might be one of the secrets of their success to combat terrorism. Yoga is also needed to be implemented because it is best for mental strength.
- ii) The pay scale of soldiers and policemen has to be increased:** This would help to strengthen their moral character, and hence would help to prevent them from taking bribes. Moreover, the high pay-scale would also attract the strong energetic youngsters to this profession.
- iii) The MILITARY AND POLICEMEN have to be provided with better facilities and equipments.** Modern guns and revolvers should replace the old, outdated ones. The ratio of police vis-à-vis citizen

(1:500) is very low and this calls for an appreciable increase in the number of both police and military forces.

- iv) **Strict actions must be taken against terrorists or any criminal of the country in that regard.** Again internal terrorism such as movements like the NAXAL, ULFAA and BODO – have to be curbed. Moreover a number of FAST TRACK COURTS have to be set up which would impart proper judgment within stipulated time.
- v) **A certain amount of transparency would be required at every stage and for everyone, whatever be his/her status. This however is really lacking in our country today.** Thought-provoking movies and writings are very common today which leave some message to the society. The politicians could certainly learn and rectify themselves. Countries like UAE, JAPAN and CHINA have best legislative and judiciary systems and we should take lessons from them.
- vi) **Constitutional changes:** Since the Indian constitution is flexible, the amendments can be brought about. Such amendments would make the constitution strong and effective. Again a certain age limit should be fixed for the political leaders so that they have to retire after a certain time. Politics should not be taken by the politicians as a business or even as a ladder for getting personal gains.

The problem of terrorism could be curbed if the Governmental policies were transparent and our democracy had been strong. As in most of the cases we find that terrorism is a fight against the Government. The present form of Government in several nations has arisen from their respective Constitutions and conventions. Very little effort has been taken to improve them. A model Government had been talked of even in our ancient scriptures. For example the **Sabha Parva of Mahabharata** emphasizes that good leadership and good governance can only be provided when the leaders make justice, rule of law and good governance their guiding star; and only then can they be in a position of power. The basic principle of Dharma (righteousness) as talked of here applies to every form of Government which has the welfare of people at heart, be it a democracy or a benevolent dictatorship. It further states that, only he has the right to lead who eschews greed for wealth, avoids disorder of sloth, hardness of feeling and procrastination and bears the welfare of the people always at heart. In the Sabha Parva of Mahabharata Narada mentions such criteria of good administration to Yudhishthir. In this context Narada also adds that a person, who lacks faith, is a habitual liar, is careless, puts off decisions, keeps bad company and loses temper easily, or one who does not consult his colleague and is corrupt, is not really a proper leader. Leadership and dharma (righteousness) go hand in hand. In fact in the matter of Government the Mahabharata is an extraordinary document and the Sabha Parva, Anushasan Parva as well as the Shanti Parva of this great epic form the core of Government.

Narada asks Yudhishthir: “I hope that it is after you have conquered your own self that you expect to conquer others?”(Sabha Parva 5.126)—This means that a statesman or an administrator who is not in control of himself cannot lead others.

Narada still goes on to ask, “Do you assign to the ministers who are above reproach, behave as their fore fathers did and are distinguished, the works of the realm that are of the greatest import? (Sabha Parva 5.37).

The pronouncements of the Mahabharata on the quality of governance are quite extraordinary. For example, “Let the king discipline himself. Only then must he discipline his subordinates and subjects; for that is the proper order of discipline” (Anushasan Parva 212.12). Now what should the ruler who is required to discipline himself be like in his personal conduct, the question arises. To quote, “The interest of all his subjects alone is his interest, their wellbeing is his wellbeing, what is pleasant to them is pleasant to him and in their good lies his own good. Everything he has is for their sake for his own sake he has nothing”. (Anushasan Parva 212.26). This can be contrasted with our greedy, self seeking and corrupt ministers of today who have forgotten that power is to be used for promoting the welfare of the people and not to add to their strength as predators preying on the people. In this context we may note that “The power of governance is to be exercised in accordance with Dharma and not arbitrarily” (Sabha Parva 122.40).

Had those in power heeded these words there would have been no 2-G scams nor would the Common Wealth Games shenanigans have occurred.

Golden Rule

Let us now consider the intrinsic nature of **Golden Rule of life**, which, if followed can actually stop terrorism, or, for that matter, any form of violence.

The terrorists kill the innocents and non-combatants, but would they like to be treated in the same way where they and their family members would be slaughtered ruthlessly – the answer is in the negative. But perhaps they would say the same thing namely how they and their family members have suffered equally and that they have now arisen to retaliate.

There is a golden rule of life; if people could follow it then many of the problems would have disappeared. This rule states – ‘do to others as you would have them to you’. If this golden rule was followed, then Hitler’s stand point would not stand as valid. Loving one’s nation, one’s race is perfectly just but loving them at the cost of hating others to the point of exterminating them – is just a perverted manifestation of love. Since Hitler’s race had a glorified history, since his Nation was very powerful, this does not entitle him to reduce the other smaller races or nations to insignificant, undignified non-entities.

Thus the terrorists who fight for their causes and their values think that their cause is too big, before which everything seems worthless, insignificant. Thus destroying others to achieve their own goal does not disturb them. The terrorists contradict their own values and, in the long run, fail to abide by the golden rule. Such a golden rule mentioned above saves every human value from the corruption that comes from the arrogance of detachment and exclusiveness, from the shell of the kind of absolutism that imprisons its vitality.

The golden rule always reminds us how it feels to be in someone else’s shoes and how it feels to be treated as others have been treated and, accordingly, our behaviour would change. Such a golden rule would perhaps change the attitudes of

the terrorists. And it is important for all of us to follow it, to make the world a better place to live in.

“War” is certainly not a solution of terrorism, as the golden rule and war would be contradictory to each other. Our ex-president Abdul Kalam made the same remark at a gathering amidst the members of parliament from different nations to mark the golden jubilee of India’s parliament, where the issues of terrorism had topped the agenda. Kalam mentions that one of the solutions to terrorism is for people to become “enlightened human beings” and, in order to be so we must understand the intrinsic value of the golden rule of life.

New Ethical Rules for the Counter Terrorism War

A new model of warfare – the counter terrorism war requires a new set of rules on how to fight it. We have mentioned that war is no solution to combat terrorism. However, it must be noted that, if no other methods work then, at least, to save human race, war or counter terrorism has to be implemented, as a means of self-defence of the citizens. But such a war should be fought morally.

In fact, the non-terrorists have to create new ethical rules for the international law of armed conflict, which should abide by the concept of the purity of arms.

Terror is easier to fight in non-democratic states. King Hussein used unrestrained force in 1970, with no Supreme Court, and without being exposed to the media and terror stopped in Jordan. Similarly in 1982 in Hama, Syrian President Assad killed 30,000 people and got rid of Islamic fundamentalist terror.

If ethics has to be maintained then the civilians cannot be killed to fight back the terrorists. But the problem is that the terrorists hide behind the innocent citizens, which make their identification difficult. Alternative tactics have to be formulated to avoid or minimize collateral damages. The counter terrorist groups also have an obligation to defend the citizens. It is also the duty of such counter groups to save the lives of our soldiers. Above all, they are obliged to kill the terrorists. Here lies the ethical dilemma.

Again, differentiating between terrorists and non-terrorists is indeed a difficult task. International law states that one may target any soldier. Today, everyone in Israel will agree that one is allowed to kill someone carrying a ticking bomb. In Palestine, the entire Palestinian media supports terror. Now, would it be legitimate to counter attack the terrorists?

For the counter groups, it is essential to know who all belong to the operational terror chain – this would include direct as well indirect terrorists, the latter would comprise persons who produce the explosive, the driver of rented trucks etc. – and they should also be imprisoned.

Thus everyone who is directly and indirectly involved in terror is a legitimate target in this war on terror.

Again the principle of liability comes into consideration. The question arises that how liable is it that someone who has committed ten suicide bombing delivers the eleventh? A bomber, too, until retirement is on the list of liabilities. However, on retirement, the legal system should take care of the said bomber, not the military.

Deterrence is again, a principle to be taken into account. If every terrorist is targeted then this indicates that the terrorists have to worry about their own safety and security.

To Deal or Not To Deal with Terrorists

While thinking of a plausible solution to the problem of terrorism the question arises, should we directly confront the terrorists, go into any kind of negotiation, deal with them or only act from behind where our strategies would always remain unnoticed to them. Here we would mention some of the techniques which can help us to understand them to some extent.

The Policy of No Concession

Here, no-concession does not mean total non-co-operation towards them but means minimum amount of concession that can be sanctioned to the terrorists.¹ No-concession does not mean “no-concession” in the truest sense of the term. If the state gives a deaf ear to the protests of the terrorists then more and more lives of the innocents would be destroyed.

Dealing through the intermediaries

The above point can be explained with the help of an example.

In case of hijacking of TWA flight 848 in June 1985, President Ronald Regan saw little choice but to work through Shia Amal leader Nabih Beri, who acted as an intermediary, even though his public actions and statements made it perfectly clear that he was sympathetic towards the terrorists.

Avoiding Concession of Substance

On the subject of what is to be negotiated, a non-concession policy should be designated to start the terrorist as low as possible on the scale of concession and then to keep the bargaining as far as possible from any concession of substance. For instance it may be necessary to provide medical aids to the injured victims but, when it comes to providing food and water to the passengers or providing the fuel for the take off of the hijacked aircraft, – then the negotiators could hold onto the situation to buy time for finding a reasonable solution.

The Issue of Legitimacy

There are other strong reasons for maintaining a strong policy of non concessions to terrorists. Denial of legitimacy to the terrorist group is a particularly important one. Part of almost any terrorist group strategy gains support for their negotiation from their cause. This is a significant way of achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the public. If the group can do so it would have won half the battle and gain any negotiation in its favour.

Denying Terrorism as a Bargaining Strategy

Refusing to accept terrorism as a bargaining strategy is another important reason for making non-concession.² Specifically, it counsels against giving into terrorist demands on any matter of substance. If we are readily prepared to negotiate with the terrorists on their demand, then this implies that political enemies of murder, intimidation, kidnapping, hostage taking, or destruction of property are acceptable

tools to bring to the bargaining table. Yet every civilized society, certainly all of the democracies, considers terrorist acts as criminal acts. Thus, to abandon a stated policy of non-concessions would be to say, in effect that, we the common men are normally prepared to bargain no matter how the other party leads us to the bargaining table.³

Achieving effective contact

Achieving an effective bargaining contract and dialogue with the terrorists may constitute a tougher hurdle than deciding on what, if any, concessions to make. We may in fact know exactly where the terrorists are. In hijacking or hostage barricade situations we usually do know, but establishing effective contact for bargaining purposes may still be elusive.

Negotiation with terrorists

The Jihadis or the Islamist terrorists seem to be the greatest threat to our lives in the present times. Now the question is how to deal with them to eradicate such a problem. There is no easy or definitive answer to the question whether or not to engage with Islamist terrorists. There is no doubt that selective engagement is risky and fraught with practical difficulties. Talks frequently end in failure and sometimes political embarrassment, especially when terrorists exploit a period of dialogue for operational advantage. The character of contemporary terrorism arguably compounds the problem as productive engagement with loosely networked; ideologically motivated terrorism is more difficult than with traditional, nationalist – separatist movements. Nevertheless, as with all facets of counter terrorism, each case has to be judged on its merits. The war against Al Qaeda cannot be won by military action alone, nor is the ideological dimension of the struggle likely to prove successful in the foreseeable future, if even ultimately, progress in the war on terror will likely involve genuine political accommodation that some Islamist terror groups have long standing political and social grievances that predate the war on terror. Selective engagement could support the process of isolating and marginalizing the most violent extremists that threaten the west, but it will require leaders to take risks by seizing opportunities for dialogue without preconditions with Islamist groups they have publicly frauded as terrorists. Jonathan Powell thus says, it is very difficult for government in democracies to be seen talking to people who are killing their people unjustifiably. But it is precisely the enemies, rather than friends; we need to talk to if we want to resolve a conflict. Moreover talking should not be seen as a reward to be held out or withdrawn. Without context there is no way of making the first step towards peace.

Only through dialogue is it possible to find out where common interests lie and compromise might be possible, or where extreme positions rule out the prospect of any meaningful negotiations, either to limit violence or bring a search for peace. It would help to know the enemies and at best, it might offer a route to a negotiated resolution of an armed conflict and the transformation of terrorists into legitimate political actors. Ex-terrorists such as Menachem Begin, Yasser Arafat and Martin Mc. Guinness have achieved international recognition and status as credible statesman. It was hard to imagine Osama Bin Laden (now encountered) enjoining their ranks, but perhaps not impossible that other, less extreme Islamist leaders, such as Hassan Nasrullah and Ismail Haniyeh, might one day be accorded the same respect.

Fourteen most important technical initiatives that could be adopted against

Terrorism:

1. To develop and utilize robust systems for protection, control and accounting of nuclear weapons and special materials at their sources.
2. To ensure production and distribution of known treatments are preventative for pathogens.
3. To design, test and install coherent, layered security systems for all transportation modes, particularly shipping containers and vehicles that contain large quantities of toxic flammable materials.
4. To protect energy distribution services by improving security for supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems and providing physical protection for key elements of the electric power grid.
5. To reduce the vulnerability and improve the effectiveness of air filtration ventilation systems.
6. To deploy known technologies and standards for allowing emergency responders to reliably communicate with each other.
7. To ensure trusted spokes person will be able to inform the public promptly and with technical authority whatever technical aspects of an emergency are dominant in the public's concerns.

Urgent Research Opportunities To:

1. To develop effective treatments and preventives for known pathogens for which current responses are unavailable and for political emerging pathogens.
2. To develop test and implement an intelligent, adaptive, electric power grid.
3. To advance the practical utility of data fusion and data mining for intelligence analysis, and enhance information security against cyber attacks.
4. To develop new and better technologies (such as Protective gear, sensors, communications) for emergency responders.
5. To advance engineering design technologies and five rating standards for blast and five-resistant buildings.
6. To develop sensor and surveillance systems (for a wide range of targets) that creates useful information for emergency officials and decision makers.
7. To develop new method and standards for filtering air against chemicals and pathogens as well as better methods and standards for documentation.

As time progresses we would have to keep on thinking about newer and better ways to cope up with the problem of terrorism. Now, disengagement from terrorism might occur due to a number of factors where deradicalism is an important one. The

different stages of departure are influenced by emotional intensity, level and type of benefits, multiplicity of roles and potential conflicts. Such disengagement from terrorist groups takes place either at macro-environmental or meso-organizational or micro individual level.

As regards environmental conditions, explanations for departure from terrorism dwell on the efficiency of repressive policies. It has been found that 'hard' repression can produce reverse effects by stiffening individuals as regards their own choices and increasing solidarity outside.

Again split or disputes within the same organization also lead to such disengagement. Environmental conditions interact with organizational evolution. Choosing to go underground implies progressive isolation and the militarization of armed organizations, with increasingly bloody action and elitist, closed ideologies.

Growing fractionization and sectarianism of underground groups create a crisis in emotional relationships and reciprocal solidarity. Individual perceptions and motivations thereof filter through the effects of the environmental and organizational changes on activist career.

Recent history has shown that it is possible to bring some of the most deep-rooted and hardened terrorist movements and campaigns to an end by combining traditional anti-terrorist interventions with initiatives to facilitate disengagement.

Conclusion

The probable thought of solutions, for preventing terrorism would fall within the ambits of either a dialogue with the terrorist group or psychological counselling or anti-corruption measures or counter terrorism. The first option would hardly work as the terrorists do neither have the faith, nor the mental make up to sit for a dialogue with their opponents. Psychological counselling with them would be a tough job as these terrorists seem to be beyond any kind of counselling as their problem lies in the medulla of their brain which imbibes in them hardcore anti-social traits which are incurable; again, anti-corruption measures are themselves subject to corruption. Finally counter-terrorism would once again lead to the loss of lives of the innocents, as they are harmed in the course of collateral damage. Moreover violence would beget further violence – counter terrorism would never solve the problem of terrorism. Hence, these solutions discussed so far seem only ad hoc measures to counter terrorism.

This calls for a more permanent and a long term solution, which perhaps is embedded in Advaita Vedanta of Indian Philosophy. Here it states that underlying all differences men have one thing in common, that is consciousness which tells us that the person gets the same pain on being injured, the way I would get pain if I were injured too. Thus care and compassion towards these underprivileged, bad lives is the solution of terrorism, unless it is used for serving their selfish purposes.

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