Conflict, Terrorism and Global Peace: Challenges and Prospects

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Today countries are known by enemies they keep and the associations they have with other counties. The meaning, scope and need of security as well as peace have become much broader. The number and type of security providers have grown enormously and the relationship between security providers has become denser and complex phenomenon. Like armed terrorism, states have to contend with eco-terrorism and cyber-terrorism also. All are Intra-continental phenomena of global scope and ramification requiring active collaboration among the defense and constabulary forces, law-enforcement authorities and non-government associations and organizations.

The popular as well as academic discourse on the challenge of terrorism has gained unprecedented momentum in the past year in India. The serial blasts in various Indian cities and the 26/11 attack in Mumbai (which has been dubbed as India’s 9/11 by the media) have placed India as the latest hotspot on the global map of terror. No longer is terrorism a festering issue restricted to the fringes of the country, a bilateral issue between India and her neighbours or an international foreign policy paradigm; it is a clear and present threat facing every single citizen in the country. It is this sense of urgency and the perceived omnipresence of terrorism that sets apart the pre and post 26/11 discourse on terrorism. Remarkably, the literature on terrorism, especially the popular genre, published since 2000s has overwhelmingly focused on direct immediate action against terror rather than on long term socio-economic policy prescriptions. The popular response to terror has displayed a high emotional quotient often favouring authoritarian and military solutions rather than peaceful democratic ones. It has also reflected the increasing skepticism of public regarding the
existing political leadership. However, surmounting the challenge of terrorism requires much more than a quick-fix military solution; nor are authoritative measures sustainable in a plural environment like in India. Thus, the situation warrants a calm estimation of the nature and scope of terrorism facing the nation as well as a coordinated internal and external strategy which can be implemented systematically.

The threshold of the new millennium is the cusp of a new era in World affairs. The business of the world has changed almost beyond recognition over the course of last few decades. Today, there are many more determinants and actors, and their patterns of interaction and associations are far more complex. The locus of power and influence is shifting. The needs, demands and expectations made on government and International organizations by the people of the world can no longer be accomplished through isolated and self-contained efforts. The international policy making stage is increasingly congested as private and public non-state actors jostle alongside national government in setting and implementing the agenda for the new country. The multitude of new actors adds depth and texture to the increasing rich tapestry of international civil society.

In the contemporary world affairs, political frontiers have become less salient both for national governments, whose responsibilities within borders can be held to international security, and for international organizations whose rights and duties can extend beyond borders. The gradual erosion of the once sacrosanct principle of national sovereignty is rooted today in the reality of global interdependence: no country is an island unto itself anymore. It is realized that global interdependence is a must for survival. One country cannot survive without the help of other countries. For any sorts of development, the 21st century is witnessing mass terrorism, conflicts and tensions all over the world. Thus in this regard, fighting against terrorism and resolving conflicts, has become global concern to establish, strengthen and maintain peace and harmony amongst countries around the globe.

**Concept, Genesis and Manifestation of Conflict and Terrorism**

The concept of conflict involves an element of competition and an element of aggression or aggressive activities. Conflict may be conceptualized as a situation existing between two or more societies or groups that are competing over scarce resources when one of the principle aims of the competition is to neutralize, injure or eliminate the competitor. The resources can belong to any aspects of human beings. These may be physical, economic, psychological, and social or any combination thereof. Generally conflicts are characterized by a number of factors. The nature of conflict may vary from one culture to another, one society to another society, one region to another and one sub-continent to another sub-continent.
Dreu & Vilert (1997) advocate that while the Human Relations Approach accepts conflict, the interactionist approach encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil and co-operative group is prone to becoming static, apathetic and nonresponsive to the need for change and innovation. To say that any conflict is completely good or bad is inappropriate and naïve, whether a conflict is good or bad depends on the aims and objectives of conflict and the type of conflicts which exist and operate. The conflicting process can be seen as comprising of some stages, which are interrelated to each other in a very sequential manner.

![Conflict Process and World Peace](image)

**Figure 1: Conflict Process and World Peace**

Terrorism is a manifestation of conflicts. Terrorism as an Ideology is not a recent phenomenon (Terror and hence terrorism) is based on the Latin verb ‘terrere’ and ‘deterre’. Terrere means “40 causes to tremble” and Deterre means “to frighten”. Terrorism is therefore a form of action designed to influence politics and government behaviour. Over a period of the time the term developed in complexity so much so that it became increasingly difficult to define it precisely. The famous clichés are “One man’s guerilla is another man’s freedom fighter” or “a failed freedom fighter is terrorism and a successful terrorist is a freedom fighter” and so on. Generally terrorism is a systematic use of violence to achieve political, social or economics ends. “Terrorism is the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming and menacing the innocent to instill fear for political ends” (Harmon, 2000). Through terrorist activities, violence is created to draw the attention of others. In most of the cases terrorism is used as a means to achieve the goal over which conflict arises.
The world is not free from the shackles of terrorism. Most of the countries are suffering a lot from terrorist activities in one form or the other. The instances are not scanty. Some of the major forms of terrorist activities are associated and scattered as networks over the globe. It is quite evident that the terrorist groups are not operating in isolation. They are being harboured by many associated countries directly or indirectly to establish their position in the world affairs.

**Challenges and Response**

Behind every terrorist action, there is a cause, a political goal. This could not be achieved or articulated through conventional methods of protest and agitation. The Roots of terrorism live in misery, frustration and sense of injustice arising out of neglected cause and political objective which the terrorists bring into public focus by symbolic acts of violence, invariably directed against innocent ones. The close observation of terrorist activities found in some countries clearly reveals that in some cases these activities are inhibited to some extent. The Palestinian terrorists over a period of time grew in scales with unique gang methods that include kamikaze attacks. But Israel’s response was and is equally unique. It adopted a method hitherto unknown to the world community.

The United Nations Organization (UNO) does not recognize terrorists as an oppressed group of people, fighting for real freedom from oppression. Instead, it considers them a threat to a nation’s unity. Moreover the terrorist acts directed against other states amount to intervention are prohibited under article 2 (4) of the same charter. Both these principles are part of the customary international law, binding all the nations irrespective of their consent.

Apart from these general provisions, there are specific provisions too. A 1970 General Assembly Resolution say: “every state has the duty to refrain from organizing or encouraging the origination of irregular forces or armed bands including mercenaries, for incursion into the territory of another states” (United Nations, 1970). Hence the irregular forces, armed bands or mercenaries can easily be translated into terrorists.

American policy on terrorism, till September 11, was not informed. Two examples would prove the point. First, during the heyday of the cold war, the Americans supported those groups in Afghanistan which were opposed to the then President Nazibullah, a Russian installation, simply to counter the growing Russian influence in the region even if it amounted to supporting some thuggish Islamic fundamentalist. Many analysts in home and abroad had warned Americans against such insane moves. And September 11 has shown that they were right. The right time to initiate efforts to install a popular government in Afghanistan was not in December 2001 when America captured Kabul in the operation
‘Enduring Freedom’. Instead it was in mid-nineties, when Nazibullah was murdered in an armed rebellion led by the Taliban.

Had Americans taken the steps what they took later such as, installing popular non-theocratic government in mid nineties, then an incident like that of September 11 could have been averted. After all, Taliban was the brain-child of Pakistan with the overt or covert support of Americans. Under the cloak of America, Taliban thrived and grew until, like Frankenstein’s Monster, it tried to devour its creator.

Second, on Kashmir question (though Americans and their allies in the West prefer to call it a dispute) the victim of terrorism - India was asked to show restrain. And the aggressor, Pakistan was given what B.G Verghese calls carte blanche. Pakistan was never seen as state that sponsored terrorism, even if India was amply armed with empirical evidence.

Terrorism is now a global concern, September 11 has changed the world. And why not? The victim of terror, this time was not a developing country like India or Philippines but the only superpower in the world. Within hours of September 11 attacks, the 15 member UN security council unanimously passed a resolution to deal sternly with those who financially support and harbour terrorists.

In the U.S. revenge spree, it seemed as if it was individual-centric. What the America didn’t seem to realize was that you can’t artificially separate Afghanistan, Bin-Laden, Taliban, ISI and the Laskar-e-Taiba, they are all different heads of the same hydra. In December, the Taliban regime was replaced by an interim government, headed by a Pashtun leader Hamid Karzai. Last, the United States has enacted a tough internal law on terrorism. Under this law, anybody found guilty of helping terrorists would be subjected to rigorous imprisonment without a trial in a regular court.

**Indian Response**

Similar, but not the same measures have been taken by India too. On the first two fronts India could do little. The US preferred Pakistan to India in its war against terrorism largely due to the geopolitical compulsions. And as for freezing the assets of terrorism groups, it is hardly a secret that no terrorist organization has a bank account in the Indian soil. But nonetheless India followed the United States. It also enacted a similar law on terrorism – POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act), which was too repugnant though not without dissent. The opposition failed to feel the need for such a law. A special joint session was convened to see it through the parliament. The plethora of post September 11 counter-terrorism legislation in the US was preceded by a classified briefing of selected Congress man by the intelligence chief on their threat perception and wide ranging bi-partisan consultation. In India, such courtesies and sensitization of the opposition leader are yet to become a part of our political culture.
Apart from this, India started a massive campaign on a diplomatic level against Pakistan. The world and in particular the United States, slowly but surely began to realise that Pakistan was playing a Machiavellian character in the Islamic Jehad in Kashmir and when India’s patience began to exhaust; thanks largely to October 1 attack on Jammu & Kashmir Assembly building, December 13 attack on Parliament and, not least, the Kaluchak massacre in Jammu & Kashmir in May, 2002; it threatened Pakistan with war. Troops were mobilized along the LoC, Navy marched to the waters near Pakistan. In short, India seemed on the eye-ball to eye-ball with Pakistan.

Pakistan meanwhile, realized that it did not help to designate a terrorist as a freedom fighter. Today it stands isolated in the world community. Even the organization of Islamic countries has not come forward for its support. This diplomatic victory needs to be supplemented by a fresh political dialogue with the Kashmir leaders and plebiscite. If the LoC is declared the permanent boundary and the alienation of Kashmiri people is addressed in the form of a greater autonomy, we can at least claim to have protected the rights of the citizens of Kashmir. That might be a plan for a lasting peace.

**Global Governance**

Nowadays the whole world is viewed a global village. The solution to achieve world peace lies in global governance. The United Nations has been the only trusted organization to meet this challenge, therefore solution to conflicts amongst nations lie in global governance. It is very important to realize that the goal of global governance is not the creation of world government, but the creation of an additional system of international decision-making between countries and international organization, which are comprehensive and not merely piecemeal social engineering. The multi-sectoral, democratically accountable including civil society actors, in the shaven management of the troubled and fragile world order. Unless the political parties across the globe realize the folly of their behaviour and work towards an international response, no country of the world will be amenable to the credible structure of international decision. Partnerships are called for between countries, international organization, non-government organizations, other civil society organizations and individuals. The United Nations has the moral legitimacy, political credibility and administration impartiality to mediate, moderate and reconcile the competitive pulls and tensions associated with both the process, and the outcomes of globalization. Security of human beings in the new millennium can provide the conceptual umbrella that brings together the leitmotif of the millennium submit-security, development, environment and governance within one coherent conceptual framework.

**Search for Synergy**

In this period of transition, the United Nations is the focus of the hopes and aspirations for a future where individuals live in peace and harmony.
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The United Nations has the responsibility to protect international peace and promote human development. First recurring refrain in our projects in recent times has been the tension between the twin processes of globalization and localization. Second, there is need for partnership between different actors, including individual at all levels of social setting. Third today’s comprehensive and interconnected nature of major problem require urgent policy measure. Solutions must be individual-centered, within the framework of human security which puts individual first; they must be integrated and coordinated; and they must be holistic in nature; tackling the roots of all problems even while ameliorating the systems of stress and distress.

Towards a World Free of Conflicts & Terrorism

War is one end of conflict and terrorism. The incidence of war is as pervasive as the wish for peace is universal. At any given time, most of the countries are at peace and long to maintain so. Yet, most are also ready to go to war if necessary. The causes of war are many and complex. But there is a great need to resolve conflicts all over the world. We already have the resources and the knowledge that can drastically cut the level of armed violence in the world and make war increasingly rare. What has been missing is a programme for the worldwide systematic and continuing application of these resources and knowledge. Global Action offers such a programme, and it is building a worldwide coalition of interested individual civil society organizations and government to carry it out.

For internal conflicts, it is proposed to have a broad array of conflict prevention measures to be applied by the UN regional security organizations and international courts. For conflict between neighboring states, we recommend force reductions, defensively oriented changes in force structure, confidence-building measures and constrain on force activities tailored to each situation. The possibility of conflict among the major power can be reduced by fostering their cooperation in preventing smaller wars and through step-by-step cuts in their conventional and nuclear forces eliminating their capacity to attacks each with any chance of success.

Global Action’s conflict prevention and conventional disarmament measures will promote nuclear disarmament. Nuclear cuts in turn will facilitate conflict prevention and conventional disarmament. Achievement of nuclear disarmament will most probably require both reduced levels of conflict worldwide and some effective and acceptable way to cut back the conventional forces of the major powers especially their force projection capability with naval and air force. Countries like China, Russia and India are not likely to relinquish their nuclear weapons if the main effect of doing so is to enhance the already large conventional superiority of the United States. Other governments are unlikely to be prepared to reduce their conventional armed forces drastically unless there is evidence that nuclear weapons are on the one-way road to elimination.
Global Action’s deliberate focus is on violent armed conflict. The world also faces fundamental crises of poverty, human rights violation, environment degradation, and discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity and religion. All of these challenges must be met before human security and a just peace can be fully achieved. To meet these challenges, many efforts must be pursued; no single campaign can deal with all of them. But efforts to address these global problems can and should complement and support one another. The abolition of war will make it possible to focus all remaining energy and efforts on resolving the fundamental structural problems.

Need for Human Security

The shift from the ‘Nation Security to the Human Security’ paradigm is of historic importance for each and every country across the globe. As the object of security changes from the state to the individual, the focus changes from security through armaments to security through human development; from territorial security to food, employment and environmental security. The fundamental components of human security against threats to basic as well as esteem needs can be put at risk by external aggression as well as by factors within a country including ‘Security Forces’. Over the course of the 20th century and beginning of 21st century, more than 30 million people were killed in international wars, 07 million in civil wars and additional 170 million by their own governments. It can be visualized that mankind including the developed countries will not be able to live free of fear, will not be secure a sustainable future, as long as over a billion people live in servitude of want. Thus freedom from want is a precondition of the other two elements in the trinity. The safest and most peaceful communities are composed of human beings who have their basic needs and wants satisfied and self esteem and self actualization need to be realized.

The traditional, narrow concept of security leaves aside the most elementary and legitimate concerns of ordinary people regarding the basic needs of life. Many countries divert their enormous amount of national wealth and human resources into armaments and armed forces. There is mania to develop nuclear weapons even though most of the people live below the poverty line. The countries having the same psychological syndrome fail to protect their citizens from prolonged insecurities of hunger, disease, inadequate shelter, crime, unemployment, and social conflict and environment hazards. This is the irony that we live in a transition to security with insecurity. The narrow definition of security also presents falsified images of the policy process. Once security is defined as human security, security policy embraces the totality of state responsibilities for the welfare of citizens from the beginning of the life to the end of life.
International Humanitarian Law and its Intervention

As we have seen that there is a great need to incorporate humanitarian law along with some other strategies to protect human being from all types of suffering. The same has been practiced by some countries like Canada and Japan in attempting to incorporate human security in their foreign policy (Thakur & William, 1999; Tow et. al., 2000). Although some countries are progressive in the direction to endorse strict law to protect the state and dignity of human beings, but others are completely unable to protect even the basic rights of human beings. The Ottawa Treaty is the landmark in the history. It would be unfortunate to understand the Ottawa Treaty from analytic lens of national security instead of human security, so is to judge it by the criteria devised for the evaluation of arms control regimes. Instead, it falls into the stream of measures, which make up international humanitarian law (Thakur & William, 1999). A practical expression of human security was the Ottawa Treaty proscribing the production, stockpiling, use and export of anti-personnel landmines. The first to impose a ban on an entire class of weapons already in wide spread use, the convention was a triumph for an unusual coalition of government, international organizations and non-government organizations (NGOs).

In the major diplomatic land marks like the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel landmines, the Rome Treaty established the international criminal Court and humanitarian interventions in Kosovo and East Timor (Roy, 1999). The impact of NGOs on international public policy has been very evident. The consequence of the rise of NGOs as significant policy-influencing actors is to tilt the balance away from hard to soft security.

The refusal to accept the discipline of universal norm of international humanitarian law is especially difficult to fathom in the case of a country that insists on the right to humanitarian intervention. One cannot accept the doctrine that any one state or coalition can decide when to intervene with force in the internal affair of other countries, far down that path lies total chaos. Nevertheless, the doctrine of national sovereignty in its absolute and unqualified form, which gave the most brutal tyrant protection against attack from outside while engaged in oppression within, has gone with the wind. On the other hand, war in itself is a major humanitarian tragedy that can be justified only under the most compelling circumstances regarding the provocation. The likelihood of success – bearing in mind that goals are metamorphosed in the crucible of war once started - and the consequence that may reasonably be predicted and the burden of proof rests on the proponents of force, not on dissenters.

The UN Security council lies at the heart of the international law-enforcement system. The justification for bypassing it to launch and offence war remains problematic and the precedent that was set remains deeply troubling. Many of
today’s wars are nasty, brutish, anything but short, and mainly internal. The world Community cannot help all victims, but must step in where it can make a difference. However unless the member states of the UN agree on some broad principles to guide interventions in similar circumstance, the Kosovo precedent will have dangerously undermined the world order. Not being able to act everywhere can never be a reason for not acting where effective intervention is both possible and urgently needed. Selective indignation is inevitable, for we simply cannot intervene everywhere, every time. But community support for selective intervention will quickly dissipate if the only criterion of selection is friends (where the norm of non-intervention has primacy) versus adversaries (when the right to intervene is privileged).

International organizations are essential means of managing world affairs more satisfactorily than would be possible under condition of international anarchy or total self-help. The United Nations lies at their legislative and normative centre; if it did not exist we would surely have to invent it, yet its founding visions of a world community equal in rights and united in action is still to be realized.

Innovation of peacekeeping notwithstanding, the United Nations has not fully lived up to expectation in securing a disarmed and peaceful world and sustainable development, which seeks to strike a balance between growth and conservation. The United Nations must be at the centre of effort to achieve sustainable disarmament. The reduction of armaments to the lowest level where the security needs of any one country at a given time, or any one generation over time, are met without compromising the security and welfare of other countries or future generations.

Success that is sustained, requires us all to make a greater commitment to the vision and values of the nations, and to make a systematic use of the UN forum and modalities of managing and ending conflicts. People continue to look to the United Nations to guide them and protect them when the tasks are too big and complex for nations and regions to handle by themselves. The comparative advantages of the UN are its universal membership, political legitimacy, administrative impartiality, technical expertise, convening and mobilizing power, and the dedication of its staff. Its comparative disadvantages are excessive politicization, ponderous pace of decision-making, impossible mandate, high cost structure, insufficient resource, bureaucratic rigidity and institution timidity. Many of the disadvantages are the products of the demands by 188 member states that own and control the organization, but some key members disown responsibilities for giving it the requisite support and resources. For the United Nations to succeed, the world community must match the demands made on the organization by the means given to it.

The United Nations represents the idea that unbridled nationalism and the raw interplay of power must be mediated and moderated in an international
frame work. It is the centre for harmonizing national interest and forging the international interests. Only the UN can legitimately authorize military action on behalf of the entire international community instead of a selected few. But the UN does not have its own military and police force and a multinational coalition of allies can offer a more credible and efficient military force when robust action is needed and warranted.

The United Nations has to strike a balance between realism and idealism. Its decision must reflect current realities of military and economic power. It will be incapacitated if it alienates its most important members. But it will also lose credibility if it compromises core values. The United Nations is the repository of international idealism and utopia is fundamental to its identity. Even the sense of disenchantment and disillusionment on the part of some cannot be understood other than against this background.

**Peace: Far-Sighted Vision**

Peace is an enormous issue for every one. The new millennium has been facing serious problems like conflict, cold war and terrorist activities with a number of unresolved global and regional conflicts threatening the peace around the globe. It is essentially felt need of the time to find potential for peace building and reconciliation.

The culture of mutual suspicion and mistrust is so deep-rooted that no one can get rid of it over night. Although it is very difficult to maintain peace and harmony amongst countries who have been involved in conflict, yet some measures can be taken into consideration to disseminate conflicts. Here the crucial factor is that the leaders are of importance to resolve the issue. Hence the qualities of leadership are important because some type of conflicting situation can be handled by the leaders who are pragmatic in orientations. It can be viewed that the charismatic as well as technocratic type of leader could establish and handle the situation very differently than autocratic ones. Therefore the qualities of leaders could change the capability of resolving conflicts. And most important of all, we are to address the diseases and not just the symptom.

Most of the conflict resolution methods tend to be focused on dealing with the present. But the past events as well as cultural dimension should be taken into consideration while resolving the conflicts. Cairns & Roe (2003) views that even after the fighting has stopped, collective memory plays a role in passing enemy images from one generation to the next. These enemy images can then become central to the sense of identity. The cultural dimension of conflict should be taken into consideration. Thus after the end of conflicts, the respective countries should facilitate all types of exchange programmes with regard to education, culture, art, literature, economic programmes and so on.

Adequate communication is the basis of conflict management. Thus lack of effective communication networks is a very important factor in the origin of
Conflict. Communication involves the meeting of the people with different aims, motives, opinions and points of view. It is the purpose of dialogue to develop understanding to arrive at common view, decisions and agreements, whereby each partner will try to communicate his/her intentions and goals. The starting points of dialogues can be regarded as special conflict situations, which need to be saved through good communication. In the context of communication, specific aspects can be directly related to corresponding sphere of conflict management which includes:

The factual-intellectual aspects consists of:
- conflicts in objectives;
- conflicts with respect to the means towards reaching objectives and
- conflicts with respect to fact.

The socio-emotional aspects consist of:
- relationship problems and
- the emotional state of the communicating parties.

The ethical and cultural aspects consist of:
- conflicts about values and
- differing cultural norms.

It is realized that the means to peace is to be achieved through education, although there is no consensus as to what form such education should take. Since human variables are the prime factors in any situation, it is very important to alter the human variables. Behavioral modification techniques as well as human relations training are to be effectively adopted to change attitudes and behaviours that cause conflict.

Further, there is a great need to change the structural variables to achieve long term effect of conflict management. It is felt that the formal organizational structure has to be changed. Changing formal organizational structure and interaction patterns of conflicting parties through reorganization of political setup, economic setup, creation of coordinating positions, and restructuring various other spheres taking the example of Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries are to be considered seriously.

Invest in Intelligence: Key to Ensuring National & International Security

There is a great need of induction of intelligence culture in every country, in the absence of which, it will be very difficult to anticipate any conflicts or terrorist activities. Intelligence is the systematic collection of information, its simulation and compilation, analysis and assessment to anticipate and to be prepared for the moves of an opponent and the consequence of an adverse development. The effectiveness of intelligence services will depend largely upon the importance attached to it by the political leadership. The national and
international political class, irrespective of party labels, is yet to acquire a basic understanding of their security management and promoting an intelligence culture. Having acquired nuclear weapons, missiles and a large conventional armed force by themselves cannot provide adequate security if the national and international leadership lack the basic understanding and competence as to how to handle them squarely.

CONCLUSION

Every country which has faced the stunning and barbaric act of terrorism, now more or less has the farsighted vision to envisage the repercussion of sticking to the tit for tat formula. It is evident from the modus operandi of terrorist attacks that all the terrorist organizations operating across the length and breadth of the world have one aim - to etch shock in the minds of people to have their concern addressed. Therefore, in such a tangle to lance the abscess of terrorism once and for all and to ensure peace and harmony, the countries of the world must make forum wherein each country will vow to extend their non-partisan co-operation when the time so demands. Finally, everybody should understand that no one country can fight global networks of terrorist on its own. The whole world must come together to wage this battle against terrorism. It is in this context that a careful assessment of the contemporary nature and scope of terrorism is necessary. Further, there is a need to revisit the existing internal and foreign policy strategies of India in order to locate the key areas of action. Last but not the least, the government as well as the civil society has to commit itself to the sincere implementation of the strategy against terror. These three aspects are indispensable if India has to overcome the festering challenge of terrorism.

REFERENCES


