Terrorism in Southeast Asia

Name

Affiliation

Date

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**Introduction**

The concept of terrorism is not new for the society and it has been a part of the world since ages. It was after the French revolution that the world became aware of the term terrorism. Although it is the weapon and tactic of the weak against the stronger, it is being used as the source of controlling the stronger unit of the society. Terrorists are the production of the radical ideological change of mostly religious or political units of society, which desire mass causalities in the world and are supported by the traditional and global networks. Large scale terrorist activities have wounded the people in different parts of the world after the incident of 9/11, which was one of the biggest terrorists attack. Terrorists try to intimidate the behavior of other segments of society by showing their supremacy and high morality. They attack the innocent people of the society, in order to intimidate the rest of the public. Different parts of the world have been the target of terrorist activities at different times of history. However, in the past three to four decades, terrorism has moved to Southeast Asia, where the terrorists are not only attacking the public but also recruiting the young innocent people in their groups by preaching the false hopes. Indonesia, Philippines, India, and Pakistan may have been specifically the target of terrorist in the Southeast Asian region; however, the people of the whole world have been affected by it.

**Terrorism & Common Crime**

Terrorism is different from common crime, as it is more destructive and long-lasting. it does not only cause physical trauma and loss to a greater section of the society, however, but it also contributes to the psychological trauma as well. Most of the terrorist organizations of the world are financed by the sympathetic groups of the society, which may be the government, private sector, or the non-governmental organizations. In addition to it, the terrorist groups also fund terrorist activities by taking part in other criminal activities. Most of the terrorist organizations of the world are developed on the name of freedom and they recruit the innocent people by making them believe that they are freedom fighters and they are doing something good or their future generations. However, freedom fighters are those who fight against the political or social affairs of their own regime, while the terrorists mostly fight against the forces of the western world. They mostly operate from the Muslim countries of the world and attack the non-Muslim countries because of their belief of being on the right path and getting rid of the evil forces. The roots of terrorism are widespread in the society, however, it was only after the 1960's that the terrorist activities became more deadly, destructive, as well as prevalent across the world. Some of the world incidents triggered the terrorist waves which include the instability and fear of countries after the Second World War, increasing conflict between the powerful countries of the world and modern technology and transportation. Some of the terrorist organizations founded in that era are still active in some parts of the world. The terrorist activities in modern times have decreased to a great extent because of the modern efficient means of counterterrorism (Abuza, 2015).

One of the most important questions in the context of terrorism is that if the terrorists have a specific personality. Numbers of studies on the personality of the terrorists have been conducted by the psychologists; however, no specific terrorist personality has been identified yet. Psychologists are of the view that it is quite important to look at the radical ideology and beliefs of the terrorist groups, in order o explore the motivation of the general groups or individuals of the society behind joining such groups. Moreover, they have identified that the terrorist groups comprise of three types of members. The first one is the charismatic leader, who is narcissistic, socially alienated, arrogant, as well as intelligent. The second is the antisocial groups of the society, who join the terrorist groups in order to use force, due to their personal grudges and goals. The third one is the follower group, who join the terrorist groups in order to fulfill their needs of dependence and acceptance (Smith, 2015).

**Evidence-Based Terrorism Research**

Evidence-Based terrorism research has highlighted the fact that the United States of America has specifically been the target of the terrorist activities of the world. The terrorist activities started with the massive attack of 9/11, which took the lives of thousands of people not only in the United States but across the world. It also caused great psychological trauma to the general public, who were fearful of going out of their homes. The evidence-based research has explored almost four hundred terrorist biographies, which belong to different countries of the world, including United States, Germany, France, Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, and Canada. Moreover, the press accounts of the terrorists have been found in German, French, English, Spanish, Dutch, Turkish, and Arabic languages. They have a number of academic publications as well as corroborated internet connections and accounts (Acharya, 2015).

**Global Salafi Jihad**

Salafi jihadist is one of the most radical and violent terrorist groups of the world, which is actually an Islamist social movement, which believes that it is fighting for fairness and justice in the world. Their motive and goal are to develop a better world which would be based on the lifestyle and teachings of the Prophet of Islam. The jihadist group expanded in four phases. The very first was capturing the control of the states in a peaceful manner while making them their brother in Islam. In the next phase, they attack the near enemies, in order to practice their forgotten duty of fighting against the evil. The third phase is that of the global expansion while taking forward the defensive jihad movement and the fourth phase is the attack and global offense against their far enemies, which included the bin Laden and Zawahiri group. Their main motive is to expel the western world from the Middle Eastern countries of the world. The jihadist group does not hesitate from using violent methods and forces against the non-Muslim groups and government, in order to fulfill their motive of establishing an Islamic state (Banlaoi, 2017).

**Evolution of al Qaeda**

Al Qaeda is the militant groups of the society which was founded by Osama bin Laden, and other violent Arab groups, in order to take action against the invasion of the Soviet forces on Afghanistan. The radical ideology of al Qaeda was similar to that of the Salafi jihadist. Al Qaeda selected or recruited its members by following three processes. In the era of 1988-89, the individual from different parts of the world gathered to fight against the Soviet Union and could not return to their homeland. After being trapped in war, so they formed al Qaeda, along with Osama bin Laden. After that, from 1991-92, the militant groups went to Sudan, after being expelled from Pakistan and carried on their planning and activities. After that, in the ear of 1996-2001, which is also considered as the golden era of the militant group, it switched its strategy from targeting the near to attacking the far enemy. They got the control of the terrorist funding, the training camps, shelter and planning for the staff. They were aware of the fact that Afghanistan is not capable of controlling al Qaeda, therefore, attempted to control the Global Salafi Jihad, while focusing on the far enemies. A study of the individuals who joined such groups revealed the fact that they were actually the protected youth, belonging to the functional units of the society. They did not have a criminal background or any mental illness, which would have played an important role in associating them with violent groups. However, they joined the terrorist groups in order to promote the Islamic jihadism and way of life (Chan, Hui, Lam, & Mui, 2018).

**European Social Conditions**

The troubling conditions of the European world played an important role in laying the foundations of terrorism in different parts of the world. The internal and external conflicts of the European countries made them fight at the political front with each other while supporting and opposing the neighboring countries. The social economic conditions of the counties also played an important role in making the people hostile as they did not have any means to support and protect their families. The conflicting scenarios gave rise to world wars and the western world faced mass killings, wars, and destruction. The situation also gave rise to alienated Muslim in the western world who ultimately joined the radical groups, in order to fulfill their needs of dependence, attachment, and acceptance. After the Second World War, there was rapid immigration of the Muslims from the Muslims countries to the western world. They became the target of the economic crisis; due to the rigid social structure of the European world. They were not included in the western culture or the social system and led the alienated life, which became an important source of flourishing their radical ideologies and taking revenge from the western world, by implementing their own system in the western countries (Millard, 2015).

**Terrorism in the Southeast Asian region**

Terrorism is an undeniable and recurrent threat across the globe, which became even more threatening and intimidating after the incident of the September 11 attacks of the United States of America. The attacks also highlighted the emerging uncertainties and security threats across the world. Jakarta, Madrid, and Bali were among the most sensitive areas of the world after the 9/11 attack, due to the presence of the militant groups. Apart from the Muslim majority areas of the world, Australia was also one of the most sensitive countries which had to deal with the potential threats of terrorism. The lack of state stability of the Southeast Asian countries played an important role in making them the center of the terrorist threat and attacks. The Southeast Asian countries had to face a number of internal and external challenges which include the transnational, as well as diverse internal issues. The challenges did not only made the countries vulnerable to threats but also caused greater concern to their neighboring states. One of the most important reasons for the jihadists moving to the central, as well as Southeast Asia was the collapse of the Soviet Union (Abuza, 2003).

The central Asian countries of the world, which included Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, implemented self-government, after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Russian Federation which emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union was not in the position of taking control of the central Asian countries. The new governments established in the central Asian countries were unable to meet the expectations and needs of the general public as they established the authoritarian rule, which further caused unrest in the society and paved the way for radical religious groups. After 1991, three militant groups emerged with greater strength in Central Asia, which was The Hezb -ul- Tahir, The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Ethnic Uighurs of western China, which actually belonged to central Asian and southeast Asian countries. The three terrorist groups carried out their violent activities in central Asia, Palestine, Uzbekistan, and China as well. After that, the jihadist groups moved to India, where they centered their attention to Jammu and Kashmir, which is a disputed region among Pakistan and India. The internal conflicts and problems of India and Pakistan also paved the way for the violent groups in the territory. India had to face the circumstances of growing violence and terrorism and the internal conflict of the Sikh freedom fighting movement (SarDesai, 2018).

After being active in central Asia for quite a long period, the jihadist movement moved to Southeast Asia. During the 1990s, the jihadist groups of the world centered their attention on Indonesia and formed the militant groups there. One of the most famous and influential militant group was Lashkar Jihad. The Lashkar Jihad was specifically founded to fight against the Christians, in the eastern parts of the world. The second influential militant group was Jamaat Islamiyya, which was founded to fulfill its purpose of implementing the strict Islamic laws in Indonesia.

After Indonesia, the terrorist and militant groups moved to the Philippines. Ideological and religious rebellious forces present in the society caused a greater threat to its peace and stability. The important militant groups in the Philippines included The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which had the goal of establishing the independent Islamic state. The second group was Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and its goal was to create the Islamic society which strictly followed the Islamic laws. The third group was Abu Sayyaf, and its motive was to gain more monetary benefits and was least interested in the religious affair. Although the group claimed to be associated with the jihadist movement, it was actually linked to the criminal activities in the society. Another group was the New People's Army, which wanted to make the Philippines a communist state. The internal conflicts of the Philippines played an important role in attracting terrorism towards Philippines (Vaughn, Chanlett-Avery, Cronin, Manyin, & Niksch, 2005).

Terrorism has been a part of the world since ages; however, it became more prominent, violent and destructive after the Second World War. The Muslims in the western part of the world were alienated and had to face economic and social challenges. They developed the radical ideology and thought that only the Islamic ideology could save the world. They stayed the jihadist movements which fought against the Islamic enemies and alter started fighting against the Muslim countries of the world which were accepting the western culture and system of governance. The Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, as well as Pakistan and India, became the target of the terrorist and faced violence, destruction killings, and psychological trauma.

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