

Counter Terrorism Approaches: With Reference to Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Counter Terrorism Approaches in the context of Bangladesh is now the demanding topic of this year. Based on at least two decades of terrorist activities, now there is a blazing demand raised by scholars, think-tank, and civil society to revisit the approaches on counter-terrorism. The words counter-terrorism denotes to violent repressively condemns to terrorist such as killing, arresting, sanctioning, confining. But this paper will go beyond the hard approaches, though it agrees on some hard loom but give more emphasis on soft approaches that could root out the problem effectively. The soft approaches will deal with community-oriented approaches to counter-terrorism, counter-extremism and de-radicalization, holistic and case by case initiatives approach. Hard approaches will deal with strategic approaches, such as, the policies, measures, and stages to counter-terrorism. The community-oriented approaches acknowledge the local dimension of terrorism and suggest cooperation buildup approaches as the method to correct this local terrorism. Counter-extremism and de-radicalization include Counter ideology initiatives, communication theory or different storytelling initiative to counter ideology, and rehabilitation solution model. The holistic approaches will accredit the reality that no nation can move ahead alone in countering terrorism. Though the case by case approach is simply the combination of both hard and soft approaches, it also emphasizes on softness to counter-terrorism.

Keywords: Terrorism, Counter-terrorism Approaches, Hard Approaches, Soft Approaches

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INTRODUCTION

In Bangladesh, terrorism has become a concern issue since the prevalence of countrywide sequential bomb blasts in 2005 (The Daily Star, 2005), but in 2016 Gulshan attack and Sholakia attack has drowned the greater international attention (Sattar, 2016). Bangladesh as a nation has made great sacrifices in her War of Liberation in 1971 to establish democracy and secularism (Shobhan, 2016), where terrorism is the

denunciation of democracy, secularism and of human rights. Protecting the public from terrorism has become a major, highly analyzed and challenging task for the government of Bangladesh in recent time. In a democratic state like Bangladesh, the responsibility of state includes protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual, particularly the right to life that means preventing and detecting terrorism as well as reducing fear. The purpose of this study is to find out innovative counterterrorism approaches beyond that conventional, because terrorism in Bangladesh is very much different than other parts of the world. Every time government officials made their statement that those guys are from local, homegrown and raised up in our society, that's why this paper argue that if they are in this society, then counterterrorism initiatives should be started from society itself. Even though the proposed approaches are long term in nature, it will create a new dimension in the milieu of stakeholders in Bangladesh, which could help the government to take their decision in policy level to ensure safety, security, human rights and democracy in Bangladesh.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is a serious crime. It cannot and should not associate with any nationality, religion or ethnicity (OSCE, 2014:28). No universally agreed-upon and well accepted definition of terrorism is found in international arena, to brand an act as terrorism is to declare not only that it acquires certain characteristics, but also that it can entirely not rationalize by any political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other consideration, (OSCE, 2014:29-31). In connection with those organizational definitions academicians defined terrorism as, the purposeful creation and utilization of terror through violence or the threat of violence for the quest of political alteration (Hoffman, 1998:43). This paper accepts terrorism as violent atrocities conducted by ideologically motivated, radicalized and brainwashed generations, to establish their political philosophy in Bangladesh.

COUNTER TERRORISM APPROACH

Combating terrorism has two faces. First one is an overview of military (hard power), scholars' called it counterterrorism viewed as offensive measures because it involves those actions taken to prevent, deter and respond to terrorism. The second one is conciliatory/diplomatic (soft power) measures for managing conflicts and countering terrorism (Malvesti, 2002). Many scholars' called it counterterrorism as defensive measures (Sandler, 2009), because this measures use to decrease the susceptibility of the life and property of individual from terrorist activities, with the involvement of limited responses and local military or paramilitary forces. Thus soft approach includes conciliation as a counterterrorism strategy, it is important in that it offers broader responses (Sederberg, 1995). However, this paper we accept both the hard approach of arrests, prosecution and prescription and the soft approach of general awareness of the people against the perverted ideologies being advocated, counter-narratives strategy or different story telling initiatives, reconciliation, rehabilitation, holistic and case based initiatives as counter-terrorism approaches, but will give more emphasis on later one.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Counterterrorism approach with using soft power is not a new idea; rather many theorists, analyst, scholars, academicians, and policy makers have already told it. While searching related literature, books, articles, and any other academic works we found a great bunch of

scholars name on this ground. We will evaluate here the literatures which have an indication of soft counterterrorism approaches. Todd Sandler (2009), an American policy makers and terrorism analyst argued that there are two types of policy options; proactive and defensive, where the later one denotes to protect potential targets to reducing damages of attack and former one denotes to targeting terrorists with an aims of weakening their ability, according to him the proactive policy is effectual. Later Boaz Ganor gave three aims of these proactive policies: eliminating terrorism, minimizing damage caused by terrorism and preventing escalation of terrorism (Ganor, 2005:25-26) but recently we found critical problems in implementing it. Another counterterrorism analyst Martha Crenshaw encourages thinking beyond conventional measures (Crenshaw, 2007). Before Crenshaw, Peter Sederberg (1995) also emphasized on similar kind of counter-terrorism methods as soft power; he addressed conciliation is another effective way. According to him, conciliation between the terrorist group and the government could have a better outcome.

Moreover, in supporting soft power, David Omand suggested that a fundamental change in ideology (Omand, 2005) is essentials to address the beyond conventional measures. William Casebeer and James Russell argued that to counter terrorist ideology effectively we need a better storytelling approaches (Casebeer et.al, 2005), a story better from those presented by the terrorist organization to radicalize the youth. Rohan Gunaratna, another terrorism analyst from Sri Lanka further elaborates soft approaches of beyond conventional way, he addressed the engagement of community and building a platform so that it foster an environment where interfaith dialogue can exercise (Gunaratna, 2007). Later, Pressman (2007) said that security cannot be attained by single state, so there is a vigorous importance of allies in international level to resist terrorism. The above mentioned scholastic debates and discussion does not completely or moderately execute in Bangladesh to deal with terrorism. That is the reason this paper will give a glimpse over this issues and try to prove that the soft power is more influential than the conventional hard power to deal with homegrown terrorism in Bangladesh.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED APPROACH

In this section we will show that the recent violent rise of terrorism is not the backlash of internationally operated terrorist organizations one, rather they are all local and homemade one. And there needs cooperative initiatives to address these local terrorist group. We have to believe and acknowledge that the key liability for the multiply of terrorism in any state lies with the nation itself, there is no space for blaming others. Such as, a ten-year-old American boy, who said after the next plane, had strike the Twin Towers on 9/11 shouted: what the reason terrorists are attacking us? We must have conducted something immoral to some community in anywhere (Hashmi, 2016:1). If the problem lays local level, so the policy maker needs to take those counter-terrorism objectives, policies, and measures, those are pursuing through locally (OSCE, 2014: 61-62). Based on this critical argument, now the question arises here that what the local dimension to terrorism is? In defining a local dimension of terrorism, we can say that it always happens somewhere, which is local. Further explanation of it is whether it can be the place where terrorists hide, get supports and run their terrorist activities. Where they attack on and where an individual or a group becomes involved with terrorism. So, these are all local issues.

So if we try to explain the recent terrorism in Bangladesh, we found this local dimension of terrorism. The recent dreadful attack at Dhaka cafe, which brings 28 dead (Stark, 2016), it

is recognized that this attack comes out of nowhere; rather, radicalized home-grown youths were at the back of these recent terror attacks, not the middle east-based terror group (NDTV, 2016). Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan in a telephone interview with The Hindu said the attackers are local boys, they are brainwashed, and these attacks were conducted through these local boys, these are all home-grown terrorists (Bagchi, 2016).

While the problem is a local one, so it needs local community to engage in counter-terrorism activities by taking cooperative initiatives. Such as trust building, between different political parties, various political groups, and communities. If we give explanation of present society system in Bangladesh, we found that there are two major extreme groups one is violently secular and another is rigorously atheist. So first and foremost duty is to build trust among these fragmented societies by formulating and implementing various strategies, policies, and measures, such as interfaith dialogue, trust building workshop. Ensure the engagement of all people either he/ she is an atheist or strong believer, tell them that we are not enemies to each other. Thousands years history of Bangladesh is the history of cooperation, social cohesion and social harmony among Hindu, Muslim, majority, minority, whoever they are. From government to local level people, the scholastic persons to civil society, everyone needs to preach this teaching among people so that they can learn unity, harmony, solidarity and consistency and forsake dishonesty, atrocity, dishonor and humiliate each other. Establishment of a society where Burka and Hijab wearer does not hate the western dress wearer and in the mean time shaved man does not hate the beard one.

COUNTER-RADICALIZATION APPROACHES

In this section we will discuss two methods of counter radicalizations, such as countering ideology and a better story telling initiatives. Countering ideologies involves that violent ideology which leads to religious extremism and a better story telling methods need to ensure that people never get motivated by the misinterpreted story spread by terrorist organizations. To deal with counter-radicalization at first, we have to know what radicalization is. It is a process whereby an individual accepts terrorist violence as a possible perhaps even legitimate action (Borum, 2011; Ferguson et.al, 2015). There is no single way to radicalized all terrorists, nor is there a clear-cut pathway that leads to terrorism (Rahimullah et.al 2013). Rather radicalizations are varied and complex in the case to case, situation to situation and place to place. When people radicalized and involved in terrorism, then the main obligatory for effective counter-terrorism will become the understanding of terrorism those terrorists. In every case, we forget that those terrorists are not mindless robots programmed to kill innocent people just for the sake of killing (Hashmi, 2016). Rather terrorism is ideology-driven violence, different from violent crime and warfare as mentioned earlier. Most terrorists globally and in Bangladesh have been “well-to-do engineers and technocrats, not poverty-stricken madrasa-educated people” (Hashmi, 2016) most of them are radicalized and brainwashed. We must believe that terrorism is a symptom of the disease, not the disease itself (Roy, 2001).

This is why in Bangladesh; it is not enough to eradicate the source but that a fundamental change in ideology is essential. A comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy requires an ideological component. Bangladesh has already taken steps in that direction, for example, Maulana Fariduddin Masoud, chairman of a Bangladeshi Islamic scholars’ organization, issued a religious decree in June that condemns terrorism and militancy (Hussain, 2016). The campaign launched after a meeting with law-enforcement officials, and this Fatwa has

been signed by over 1 lakh Islamic scholars those wanted to promote the peaceful doctrine of Islam. We know that Islam as religion have the same ancestry as Judeo-Christian way of life. The terrible and horrific terrorism exercised by militants can best be ideologically opposed by Islamic scholars. Mulana's can preach peaceful teachings of Islam" (Choudhury T., 2016). Masoud's spiritual announcement should share out from the slums to the high-rises of the country and should advocate this type of philosophy as much as possible.

The second one is counter radicalization using better storytelling initiatives. We know that the origin, expansion, and transformation of terrorist organizations rely on the story they tell to radicalize the youth. We need to take another strategy by creating counter-narratives or counter better stories as to deter, disrupt and defeat terrorist groups (Casebeer & Russell., 2005). So in Bangladesh counter-terrorism specialists should use stories in combating terrorism such as telling youths a better story or creating alternative exemplars that do not advocate violence. For example Maulana Masud story from Al-Quran and Al-Hadith, which advise that whoever slay a person it is same to execute whole humanity. Killing humanity is not something that Islam supports rather it is Haram (strongly prohibited) in Islam. In this consideration, the role of the imam is very crucial because Imam is the religious person who formally leads the Islam in practical activities regarding the belief. The Friday jummah prayer is always appointed by the certain imam who also delivers the khutba (sermon), this khutba has influence to the general populace. If imam in the mosque, teaching them to develop their inner peace and to build healthy family relations which will create a political and ideological structure into nonviolent and peaceful way, then the youth does not get into the radicalized process.

REHABILITATION APPROACH

Now I am going to discuss another model that is very much essential to explain recent Gulshan and Sholakia attack in Bangladesh that is rehabilitation model (Choudhury A., 2016). There are two fundamental reasons behind the recent cause of terrorism, such as government suppression and worldwide incensement of internal conflict. Due to tyrannical suppression subgroups or opponent political sub-parties will get motivated to commit terrorism. The individuals, who were once merely loving members of legal political parties, can gradually transform into radicalized form and get ultra-violent in nature (past two years terrorism during Hartal days) then gradually became foot soldiers of a hardcore domestic terrorist group. In the meantime, the number of internal armed conflicts in the Muslim world (Middle East, Afghan, and Iraq) has raised; there has been a violent rise of extremism-inspired terrorism among disaffected Muslim populations around the world (Bangladesh from 1999 to present).

Based on this problem, the Muslim country like Bangladesh has to develop specialized rehabilitation programs for their citizens who had participated in terrorism and militancy both within their borders and abroad. For example, the people who took part in Afgan-Soviet war a Mujahidin during the 1990s return in Bangladesh, if the then government of Bangladesh rehabilitates those Afghan return Mujahedeen then the JMB will not be organized here in Bangladesh. Encourage participation of all population in the mainstream political life to end political alienation especially the grassroots level population, so that they never feel that they are the outsider. In this rehabilitation process government need to take massive socio-economic development to eradicate poverty and economic disparity.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

We believe that the terrorism cannot fight in an isolated way by any single state; rather it is a fight that should conduct globally, Bangladesh should fight it in a holistic way. Because of two reasons: the apparent international dimension of terrorism and the profile of the terrorists themselves (Ayres, 2016). We should understand that the terrorism is also globalized like the McDonald's franchise. We don't need American chefs to prepare their burgers in distant Bangladesh. And "what's local is global, and globally is local" (Hashmi, 2016). For example numbers of Bangladeshi populace had went to the Afghan Jihad, later became member of Taliban or al Qaeda, and of late, to the ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Moreover, bunch of Bangladeshi men (and some women) has already joined the ISIS in Syria, that we already have seen it on TV and newspaper. This is our arguments here that the transnational form of terrorism is a challenge for any developing nation like Bangladesh.

Moreover, global agenda of different Islamic groups, growing presence of international financial institutions in the country, globalization, the growth of information and communication technology, limitations in monitoring capacities of government agencies and weak political institutions have increased the threat of terrorism in Bangladesh (Kamal, 2013). In this consideration, Bangladesh took some initiatives already, from 2007 it connected with UN organs in dealing with terrorism, in 2006 signed MOU with India, UK, Australia and USA in 2016 US acknowledge its urgency (Herman, 2016) to enhance counter-terrorism. Still, this type of initiatives lies in the dormant position which needs to speed up, and make good allies at international level (Pressman, 2008) by highlighting coordinated intelligence, police and military efforts (Omand, 2005) where information needs to exchange simultaneously.

CASE WISE APPROACH

Treatment of terrorists by their level of culpability, this approach opposes to indiscriminate attack, mass killing, shooting and cross firing to a terrorist. For example, the law and order forces in Bangladesh after the murder of SP Babul's spouse have arrested more than 17,000 suspects' terrorist from all over the country, in the name of countering terrorism. Everyone knows the genuine ill motive of these arrests. But the law enforcement agencies did it with whole impunity. And this type of impunity of the police and rapid action battalion leads to situations of fear and anarchy (Hashmi, 2016). The law enforcement bodies should not publish any story about false success in counterterrorism operations. The party in power should not use blame game against each other. Moreover, recently we found critical problems in implementing laws in proper way. For example, on 1 July during Gulshan attack the Rapid Action Battalion and Border Guard Bangladesh two paramilitary groups along with police responded immediately but failed. In the meantime the whole nation waited for the prime minister to give the approval to deploy the army commandos. This approach argues that the law enforcement agencies should ready in all time and they have to take case wise effective measures to success in countering terrorism

CONCLUSION

After having above all discussion we can say that, terrorism has a similarity with crime, but it is different from crime, because while criminals disallow to publish crime and try to hide it, terrorists boast up their violent acts and atrocities even by making false claims

because terrorism survives with the oxygen of publicity. Terrorism is more political, social, economic and psychological and less motivated by religious ideology or practices because religion doesn't support it. Moreover, terrorism is not carry out for mass poverty. It's not a reaction of the poor society, but a weapon of establishing political beliefs. Those young men and women, who attend in terrorist, want to achieve something that is for their political diversion, not to do sound with their religion. There is no doubt that they are misguided, brainwashed and radicalized. Bangladesh has potentials to turn either way; apply above discussed approaches to counterterrorism and go towards independent graciousness or totalitarian proto-fascism. The latter will promote terrorism, and nurture non-state terrorist actors like al Qaeda, and Islamic State; and the former will offer peace and tranquility in the long run.

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