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DEMOCRACY AND TERRORISM

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Democracy and Terrorism

Dr. Bhanwri Sharma*

Lecturer, Political Science, Seth R.L. Saharia Government P. G. College, Kaladera

Abstract – Terrorism poses unique challenges to the liberal democratic state. Bound by rule of law and its due process, democratic regime cannot resort to the same bloody methods used against it, in combating terrorism. The vulnerability of democracy to terrorism is the focus of the article.

Keywords – Terrorism, Democracy, Challenges

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It is widely accepted and an examination of recent history shows democracy's peculiar vulnerability to terrorism. Bound by rule of law and its due process, democratic regime cannot resort to the same bloody methods used against it, in combating terrorism. Terrorists are looking for state authority, but sovereign states must select their counter-terrorist policies wisely in order not to compromise their own ideals. Comparative analyses show that with certain anti-and counter-terrorist strategies implemented by the state, democratic states must have consensus. If western democracy in reaction to terrorism take police state-like steps, then the perpetrators have arguably accomplished their aims. Are democracies more vulnerable to terrorism? What is the relationship between democracy and terrorism? This article is an attempt to understand the relation between the two.

It is important to understand the conditions promoting terrorism. Terrorism is a widespread type of political activity that for the international community, has immense human and economic costs. Our definition of terrorism is however very restricted relative to other types of political aggression, such as interstate conflicts or civil wars. There is a shortage of agreement on the determinants of terrorism in literature [11]. The restricted systemic awareness of terrorism hinders the opportunity to provide decision makers with sound counterterrorism policy prescriptions. In particular, it is vital to provide a better understanding of the relation between democracy and terrorism, since promoting democracy has become essential for a large part of the international community. Maybe the fostering of democracy could be combined with counterterrorism measures if democracy contributes to a greater chance of terrorism. However, it may be that the connection is spurious, that having a form of political system often appears to raise a state's risk of terrorism, but that other explanatory variables are more significant.

The delineation of the two words is attempted to explain why democracy promotes or deters extremism and their connotations provide an important impact on the phenomenon.

TERRORISM

There are several typical characteristics of terrorist attacks that can be emphasized, but terrorism is a challenging term to define: they include an intellectual aspect, use violence or at least a threat of violence, are typically perpetrated by a coordinated organization (or at least by a group made up of powerful leaders and loyal followers), and are usually targeted at people rather than belligerent groups.

Terrorism is referred to as terrorism because it undermines the target entity's normative principles about the usage of military force, according to Donald Hanle,"[1] .

Heymann limits his use of terrorism "to political violence in or against true democracies."[2]" He deduces the following characteristics of terrorism - politically motivated; carried out by groups, but not by individuals; actions are an integral part of a larger strategy; directed at non-combatants; and to maintain religious fervor," He concludes that "terrorism is an unlawful type of covert warfare carried out by a sub-state organization to change the go-go policies, personnel, framework, or philosophy."[3]

DEMOCRACY

As a form of governance as well as a way of life, democracy envisages equality, which in turn is spelled out as some human rights in a society. The celebration of freedom through Democracy is embedded in its claim to institute a restricted government. Typically, the argument is backed by a series of structural structures intended to promote the participation of citizens in government ranks, place strain on them and, most notably, hold them under

continuous public vigil. Democracy is summed up by the following characteristics -

Equality of belief, speech, organization, protest, and other civil liberties, including security against political terror and unjustified imprisonment; a rule of law in which all people are treated fairly and fair process is safe; political independence and neutrality of the judiciary and other 'horizontal oversight' structures that regulate the misuse of authority, such as electronic accountability.[4]

RELATION BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND TERRORISM

The relation between democracy and terrorism and the vulnerability of democracies before terrorism is the point of concern here. Some researchers like Eyerman[5], Hamilton and Hamilton[6] and Ross[7] argue that democracies are less likely to experience terrorist incidents, while others like Eubank and Weinberg[8], Li[9] and Pape[10] contend that democracies provide a fertile ground for terrorism and hence are more likely to be targeted. Most empirical evidence[11] provides support for the latter argument: democracies are more prone to terrorism than are other regime types. However, there is little agreement as to how extremism is promoted by democratic regimes. This paper provides a deeper look at the partnership between extremism and democracy. It explores what democracies are, rendering them especially susceptible to terrorism.

In the interaction between liberalism and terrorism, there are two primarily divergent views. Although some have claimed that democracy discourages and thwarts extremism, others claim that democracy offers favorable conditions for its growth.

Those who claim and contend that terrorism is motivated by the absence of opportunities for the expression of political concerns[12], Thus, dissenters are less inclined to turn to extremism in open cultures, where freedom of speech is promoted. People of either class are eligible to enter political parties by nonviolent methods, influence public policies, cast ballots, and demonstrate. There also are outlets for voicing dissent and engaging in decision-making. In turn, democracy offers ways to accomplish one's political aims by legal means, rendering extremism less appealing to future offenders.[13] Those residing inside democracy could be less inclined to respond to extremism, since political engagement increases the government's responsiveness and transparency by elections. Because of a general sense of contentment among people, the presence of civil liberties may often minimize terrorist activity.[14] In general, the root causes of extremism are reduced by possibilities for free speech, since people of democratic societies are more likely to be happy in the first place.

In claiming that liberalism would promote extremism, the second opinion is the reverse of the above. Many researchers have concluded, particularly over the past decade, that democratic states are more likely to be terrorist targets. From this point of view, there are different aspects of democratic regimes which promote terrorism. Firstly, democracies encourage terrorist organizations to participate in their criminal acts with reasonable ease by supplying their people with freedom of organization, speech and movement.[15] The commitment to civil liberties in democratic societies can be used by terrorist groups to organize and carry out their attacks without being noticed.[16] The capacity of terrorist groups to coordinate and carry out their operations is limited under authoritarian governments, while democracies have a permissive climate. Second, there are typically greater structural limitations placed on democratic governance than those imposed on other forms of regimes. Although these restrictions are meant to protect democratic citizens against their leaders' excessive exercise of influence, they often impede the acts and capacity of democratic governments to tackle terrorism.[17] Terrorist groups perceive democracies as soft targets that can be pressured to give into their demands due to the sensitivity of democracies to costs. Pape[18] (2003,2005) It indicates that terrorist groups appear to threaten governments more often because they recognize that their requests are typically fulfilled by western democracies. Especially sensitive incidents are potentially democratic transitions, when the fragile state tries to resolve the possible resistance of domestic and foreign entities hostile to the transformation or its results. In reality, several scientists have shown that new democracies are especially susceptible to internal conflicts.[19]

ROLE OF MEDIA

Today, the media has a vital position to play in facilitating the successful functioning of government and in promoting the cause of terrorism.

Another aspect that is believed to promote terrorism in democracy is freedom of the press. Freedom of the press could have an extra beneficial causal impact on terrorism. Terror organizations became practically redundant without media coverage. Widespread apprehension and panic are central components of the policy of terrorism. Margaret Thatcher simply alluded to the press as 'oxygen' for jihadists.[20] Since in most democracies there is free press, terrorists have increased incentives inside those nations to expand in, travel to and execute their abuse. Through their recruitment, coaching, and preparation methods, dramatic media coverage often serves the attackers. Therefore, the newspaper is unwittingly involved in achieving the agendas of terrorism.

Terrorism attacks are more likely to be recorded in depth by the free press in open countries, unlike in authoritarian regimes. Therefore, press freedom in democracy offers advertising-hungry jihadists with a powerful incentive to produce widespread fear.[21] In a democracy, however, the media has an incentive to

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report not only transparently, but also sensationally.[22] Media freedom highlights the question of alleged underreporting of militant threats in areas where the press is not open. In the face of media controls and strong government surveillance, terrorism attacks are less likely to be recorded in non-democratic countries.[23] Therefore, journalistic prejudice could lead researchers to the misguided inference that civil liberties potentially relate in the long run to terrorist activity. Therefore, rather than because of reasons unique to democracies, a strong association between the extent of democracy and the amount of terrorism attacks could be attributed to sheer underreporting in non-democracies.

However, Quan Li indicates that the optimistic influence of civil liberties could be the emergent phenomenon of a central feature of democratic governance: the degree of structural limitations on the government's decision-making authority. Whereas freedom of action in a non-democracy is dependent on the elite's approval, all branches of government as well as the domestic population are responsible for the representative government. As Li claims,' There are more veto players in democracy than in autocracy regarding government policies. Such political restrictions prohibit a breach of civil liberties by the democratic government.'[24] The scope of civil liberty, in other terms, is essentially decided by the severity of these restrictions. However, it is much more important that structural limitations undermine the capacity of the government to combat terrorism. Checks and balances compel a wider spectrum of domestic interests to be more responsive to the democratic government. Due to political incentives as well as fair play principles, the democratic government is reluctant to indulge in counterterrorist operations that might be viewed as undermining fundamental democratic values. In the other side, totalitarian governments are less limited and more capable of finding extremist groups and destroying them. Therefore, Capitalist states are less inclined to implement counter-terrorist measures that are as stringent as those imposed by non-democratic governments.

In conclusion, it may also be said that there have been certain signs that extremism in democratic cultures is more likely to occur. Engene argued in his analysis that political openness in Western Europe promoted extremism.[25] However, it is perhaps most telling that when a political structure was established, the aggression of the Basque nationalists intensified, even though it was originally present under an oppressive government, and that the violence persisted into the 21st century despite more than two decades of democracy. Sandler says that governments tended to suffer further from such political aggression as research takes into consideration the severity of terrorism attacks.[26]

In his analysis of suicide bombing, Pape indicated that this peculiar sort of aggression was practically confined to democratic states. Though suicide attacks have taken place in less transparent democratic structures such as Pakistan and Lebanon (when the nation was in disarray), such attacks tend to have become more common in democracies.[27]

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Corresponding Author

Dr. Bhanwri Sharma*

Lecturer, Political Science, Seth R.L. Saharia Government P. G. College, Kaladera

bhanwri@gmail.com

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