
Emerging Challenges Of Terrorism In South Asia

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Introduction

South Asia is infested with extremists. For years Afghanistan, Pakistan and India are among the ten countries most impacted by terrorism.¹ Groups like LTTE, Maoists in Nepal, ULFA in Assam, *Khalistan* movement etc. have largely been contained or joined the mainstream. However, terrorism based on a very narrow and exclusivist interpretation of Islam by fundamentalists is on the rise.² The Islamic State (IS) is a catalyst in further radicalization of Islamists. This new terrorism of “holy warriors” cannot be deterred only by force instead it provides them useful ammunitions. They believe in certainty of victory seeking glory of God to create a society of their vision *eliminating enemies as a morally justified divine duty and a necessary expedient to achieve the goal.*³ Therefore, they pose unprecedented danger. The ideology of aggressive

Islamists is on the surge with increasing support for the *sharia*; and faster population growth. Muslim population is expected to grow more than twice the world population between 2015 and 2060. They would become the largest religious group by the second half of the century. By 2060 India will have the largest Muslim population (333 million).⁴ Interestingly, a survey across Syria showed that a fifth of those interviewed said that the Islamic State was a “*positive*” influence in the country.⁵ The IS emerged as a unique terror outfit; established a virtual state claiming capability of defeating enemies of Islam.

Impact of Globalization

Globalization, a euphemism for westernization changed social conditions and values. Neo-liberal market fundamentalism deepened the gloom of tragic individualism with the erosion of support systems

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— family or welfare state. Desperation leads to irrational reaction igniting conflicts. Global terrorism is one such reaction mostly guided by religion. For religion provided more hope than any revolutionary ethos. Thus, the “new age terrorist” ideology is more religious, most significant being Islamic fundamentalism. Crucial religious ingredient transformed terrorism into more irrational, fanatical and mass casualty causing. Taliban, Tahrik-e-Tliban Pakistan, Haqqani network, Harkat-ul-Mujahidee/Jamiat-ul-Ansar, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Indian Mujahideen, SIMI, Lashkaer-e-Taiba/Jamaat-ud-Dawa, Al-Faran, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, Hizbut Tahrir, Ansarullah Bangladesh etc. are also reinventing themselves. The situation became murkier with the growing footprints of the IS.

South and West Asia became a laboratory of Islamic radicalism and hotbed of terrorism post-1979 events—beginning of a new Islamic century, Islamic revolution in Iran, siege of the Mecca mosque and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Afghan-Iraq wars and Taliban/Al Qaeda training camps served as a melting pot of various militant strands. Civil wars (Palestine,

Chechnya, Kashmir) created an impression of existential threat to Islam and Muslims. Fundamentalism became the faith to purify Islam to release its vital force. Terrorism is projected as a revival to the legacies of “heroic warriors” defeating Christian crusaders; with the pledge to recreate the golden age of Islam. Terrorism also serves as a means of redemption, a violent response to the violent conditions denying dignity. It empowers powerless celebrating death to overcome a dominated empty life. Terrorists believed that fallen warriors, martyred in battle get a special place in the heaven and a welcome by “72 virgins”. Thus, they embrace the causes and actions of heroic masculinity—terrorism, enacting 9/11 which turned the course of history.⁶ This marked the rise of global model of *jihad*. Radical Islam gained respectability to have punished the enemies of Islam; both the Soviets and Americans. Related ideas are reproduced on ideological internet bazaar to be easily accepted. New forms of religious beliefs and practices are emerging as if the world is moving towards the market economy model of religion in which people consume what they want from various religious producers.⁷ Terrorists invented counter-cultures marking a shift from traditional identity groups to objects, real or imaginary supranational inspiring

faithful ones to become a proud holy warrior.

Support System

Formidable outfits based in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Bangladesh get support from hostile neighbours. Pakistan's brazen support to terrorists targets "Hindu" India—an eternally sworn enemy. The festering wound of Bangladesh dismemberment is still fresh in their psyche. Terrorism is an extended arm of the Pak military in proxy war designs to balkanize India. This has wider support there. Benazir Bhutto in an interview with a French journalist complimented her *bête noire* Zia for proxy war by supporting the separatist movements in Punjab and Kashmir; for Pakistan never forgot the humiliating loss of Bangladesh.⁸ Thus, terrorism is a "legitimate and logical" state-policy of Pakistan. Fundamentalists have tried to convert Bangladesh into another Pakistan. India suffered notorious attacks — serial Mumbai blasts 1993, Kargil infiltration 1999, December 1999 plane hijack to Kandahar, the seat of Taliban, getting release of Azhar Masood, the founder of JeM, Parliament attack 2001, Mumbai carnage 2008, Pathankot January 2016, to name a few instances. However, Pakistan often leveled counter-charges. Sartaj Aziz,

Foreign Affairs Advisor of Pakistan, alleged that, "India is blaming us for non-state actors acting across the border, but India's state actors are spreading violent unrest in Pakistan." He referred to Kulbhushan Jadhav, a former naval officer arrested in Pakistan in March 2016.⁹ Allegations are repeated at the UN by branding India "predator and mother of terrorism supporting and sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan, and other neighbours." Thus, terrorism thrive as a self-inflicting suicidal pathos in the region.

This scenario augurs well for terrorists. Initially inspired by Taliban and Osama bin Laden the IS further revitalized them. *Jihad* became a religious duty and "martyrdom" its reward. South Asian demography, backwardness and geo-politics facilitated coupled with global events emboldened them. On 3 Nov. 1999 Hafiz Saeed declared that, "*the jihad is not about Kashmir only. It encompasses all India... I declare the break-up of India. We will not rest until the whole of India is dissolved into Pakistan.*"¹⁰ In this direction the "Karachi Project" was started in 2003 under the guidance of Pakistan's ISI in collaboration with Lashkari Tayabba (LeT) and Harkat-i-Jihad-i-Islami (HIJI) to use Indian Muslims particularly Indian Mujahideen to launch terror attacks at a higher level

to maintain deniability of involvement of ISI.¹¹ Further the IS has become an overwhelming influence in J&K with online propaganda. In 2016 it announced to expand into Kashmir as part of its broader Khorasan branch.¹² Its flag surfaced in Kashmir during demonstrations after the death of Burhan Wani on 8 July 2016. More important, Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif convened a special cabinet meeting and 19th July was declared a day of mourning for the “martyr”. Such a blatant support to terrorists is blessed by China to keep India embroiled with Pakistan as a part of “string of pearls” strategy. China generally supported Pakistan terror groups at the UN. These gestures are more than publicity ploy. Now terror groups have one more state (IS) besides Pakistan to support.

A document found in Pakistan, titled “A Brief History of the Islamic State Caliphate, The Caliphate according to the Prophet” revealed that the IS planned a terror-war on India to create an end of the world scenario by uniting factions of the Pakistan and Afghan Taliban. The *ghazva-i-hind* (a prophesied battle against India) details chilling future battle plans by beheading rebels against Allah.¹³ This magnifies IS stature because attacking India is

the Holy Grail of South Asian *jihadists*.¹⁴ The menace of terrorism has become global, yet remains undefined and highly contested. Shielded by conceptual vagueness, some countries accept only to have extended moral and diplomatic support to “freedom fighters” against “occupation and repression”. Fellow feelings, human rights, democracy or just war ideas are used to camouflage dirty covert diplomacy. Hence, this calls for a globally accepted definition.

Terrorism is an indiscriminate use of violence to achieve a political objective by creating an environment of fear. It is perceived as a curse of the civilized society, goal is depicted as sectional; methods are denounced as clandestine and sinister. Therefore, terrorism is condemned as illegitimate and immoral. However, all forms of violence (freedom/revolution) or warfare by nation-states aim at creating fear; and therefore cannot claim legitimacy. Thus, there is an element of arbitrariness eluding objectivity. This dilemma was duly echoed in Seymour Gerald’s novel, *Harry’s Game*—one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter. More dubious distinction was brought in this debate in the form of the so called “good and bad” Taliban!

Theoretical Perspective

Both realism and liberalism associate terrorism with non-state actors. Critical theorists consider both state and non-state actors, emphasizing state terrorism as state is the repository of maximum violence claiming monopoly over its legitimate use. This signifies intimate relation between state and violence. Accordingly, terrorism is not only a reaction against state violence but also its reflection. State uses violence against people challenging its power; or to expand influence over other states. Therefore, a legal definition must include violence by states as well. However, states do not accept their acts as terror.¹⁵Contextually, the term became popular with the *reign of terror* in France (1793-94) killing thousands seeking obedience from people.

The roots of terrorism in this region may be traced to the Russo-British great game, Arab-Israel conflict and thriving of two-nation theory. Forefathers of Taliban had formed *Talibulilm* against Durand line (1895) dividing Afghanistan and Pakistan (India). One may safely explain Pakistan's proxy wars in terms of India's midwifery in liberating Bangladesh besides other factors. Pakistan's resolve became stronger with the US designs in Afghanistan.

The border areas of Afghanistan-Pakistan became breeding ground of Islamic fundamentalists to bleed the 'Soviet' atheists' white. Post-cold war events, particularly war on terror emanating from new world order, American slogan created chaos into the crisis ridden region. *Taliban*, *Al Qaeda* (AQ) and the Islamic State emerged as a violent reaction. Taliban and AQ promised liberation to oppressed Muslims and glory to Islam. Moving ahead, the IS pledged both mundane power and salvation for "true" Muslims. Its bold and bloody acts became intolerable even for AQ; but fatally attracted new zealots. Thus, one finds a metamorphosis of terrorism.

The Inspiration

They are mainly inspired by two streams of Sunni Islamic thought contributing to the rise of *jihad* school in the late 20th century. Firstly, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB, Egypt, 1928) founded by Hasan al-Banna was a political movement to capture state power in response to imperialism and declining Islamic values. Hence, Islam was defined as a total system and the final arbiter of life based on the revelation of the Quran and the wisdom of the Holy Prophet in Sunna. Banna proclaimed the MB as a salafiya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth and as a social

idea avoiding doctrinal disputes. Quran, Prophet, God, constitutional government, sharia and martyrdom formed the slogan. They were not so rigorous doctrinally and tolerated Shiaism and Sufism.¹⁶ Later, Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) evolved a more radical version of the MB championing a “total war” against West and home-based enemies. He was a visceral anti-Semite and condemned the US/West on account of their crude materialism, immorality and sexual permissiveness.

For him, modern societies were in a state of *jahiliya* (a period of ignorance before Islam) because they preferred materialism to true Islam. He suggested Muslims to fight by forming a vanguard to establish a true Islamic society. Several radical Islamic groups emerged in countries with larger Muslim population; and called for establishing of Islamic state. The Second stream is Wahabism/Salafism propounded by mid-18th century reformer Mohammad. Ibn Wahab and propagated by the Saudi royal family. Ibn Saud’s forces conquered the Arabian peninsula, spreading Wahabism and destroyed shrines wherever possible because it was considered idolatry. This is a conservative theological movement in Sunni Islam for the purification of the faith by return to the basic doctrines emphasising oneness of

God, opposing idolatry and treating other Muslims as apostates. This is to return to Islam’s first three generations, the *salaf* or pious ancestors. Saudi wealth financed the spread of Wahabism through mosques, *madarsas* and other institutions.¹⁷ A common thread running through the thought of Islamist scholars is that Islam was spread by sword. The Prophet was not only a religious but also a charismatic politico-military leader. Fundamentalists take the collective memory to pledge to regain the glory of Islam. Weak, defeated and dishonoured are impacted most. Terrorism serves to direct rage to oppressors not only as catharsis but is a means to overcome political, economic or cultural domination or may act as compensation to material deprivation.¹⁸ However, terror groups may be united by shared beliefs but they are divided organizationally and even doctrinally. Identity and allegiances shift according to conflicts, scramble for resources and leadership. This leads to proliferation of outfits and rise in individual terror (lone wolves) attacks further complicating the situation. Thus, the study of the politics of terrorism in this region provides an insight into its evolution and related narratives. A comparative study of Taliban, AQ and IS brings coherence to the

understanding of the discourse on terrorism.

Taliban

Afghanistan witnessed anarchy following the Soviet withdrawal. In 1994 young *mujahideens* trained in *madarasas* in Pakistan united against criminal gangs in Kandahar under the leadership of Mullah Omar. Thus, Taliban (students) began with a moral project to bring order based on *sharia*. Legends about Omar were that he was a great warrior and was visited in a dream by the Holy Prophet revealing to lead the country out of chaos. To announce his leadership in 1996, Commander of the faithful, he donned the purported cloak of the Prophet, one of Afghanistan's most cherished Islamic relics, in presence of 1500 religious leaders, including Osama bin Laden.¹⁹ Taliban's ideology was rooted less in principles and more practical in nature. Anti-modernism was an innovation combining *sharia* with *Pashtun* tribal socio-cultural code called *Pashtunwali* prescribing severe personal morality—men to grow beard and offer *namaz* five times a day. Music, dance, kite flying, photography etc. were banned. Women suffered the worst—longer veils, forbidden from work and education, had to be stoned to death on charges of adultery. However, the

Hanafi tradition of Afghans was more tolerant than *salafism* for Shias and Sufis. They opposed the narrow idea of nationhood but championed the cause of Pashtun nationalism. Top posts were captured by Pashtuns. Its economy was based on opium production and taxation. Rigid enforcement of *sharia* was a matter of political expediency based on the *Deobandi* idea that only return to Islam will bring liberation from invasion. Taliban also sought recognition and cooperation from other countries. After seizing power in 1996 Omar wrote a letter to President Clinton assuring that the Taliban had neither the intent nor the capability to attack the US.²⁰ Osama and Al-Qaida (AQ) had become a state within the Taliban state, yet Taliban was not involved in global terrorism, nor adopted the *jihadi* rhetoric of AQ. They doubted even the legitimacy of suicide bombing learnt from AQ. Initially Taliban condemned the 9/11 attack and expressed disbelief of Osama's role. Since then there emerged a thinking of negotiated settlement in Afghanistan. This was duly expressed by Omar in his Eid message in September 2010, "Our upcoming system will be based on mutual interactions with neighbouring Islamic and un-Islamic countries. We will not harm others nor allow others to harm us. Our

government will participate in all regional and global efforts at establishing peace and stability".²¹ Taliban gradually evolved as a broad-based independence movement against invaders instead of emphasizing personal purity and anti-modernism and Shiaism. Now they use latest technology, watch TV and cinema. They are relaxed on women's education and work. Senior Taliban leaders opposed some of the actions and policies of the West. However, younger ones trained in Pakistan are children of *jihad* having closeness with AQ who adopt the discourse of fighting infidel crusaders. Thus, Taliban moved from Islamic fundamentalism to the political ideology of Islamism as a means of liberation. Taliban's credibility for fighting the mighty coalition led by the USA since 2001 is encouraging for its supporters. Even in the face of heavy air power and regular drone attacks Taliban thrives and continues to gain control over more territories.

Al Qaeda

Afghanistan-Pakistan became a fertile ground breeding more radical brand of *salafism*. Many Arabs came in touch with al-Zawahiri and Osama. Both of them met in Peshawar and developed a deeper confidence. Zawahiri was an

ideologue and Osama had organizational skills and resources. They formed Al Qaeda in August 1988 as a global terror outfit. Under the banner of the *World Islamic Front for Combat Against the Jews and Crusaders*, they issued a fatwa in February 1998 to kill Americans and their allies (far enemies) as an individual duty for every Muslim to liberate the al-Aqsa (Jerusalem) and the holy Mecca mosques from their grip, and to oust their armies from all the lands of Islam—fight them altogether until there prevails justice and faith in the name of Allah. Its broader goals included:

(To end the desecrating presence of the US in the Middle East bolstering corrupt and oppressive regimes, supporting Israel, condoning or encouraging the slaughter of Muslims. To destroy Israel that has stolen Muslim land. To convert Muslims to salafi-jihadist world view. To oppose apostate regimes in the Muslim world. Jihad is obligatory for young Muslim males and the community must back the fighters).²²

Al Qaeda (AQ) was conceived as a revolutionary fundamentalist movement to achieve ideological coherence and an organisation to establish a genuinely Muslim state in the Arab world. Osama was not

optimistic about Caliphate nor dreamt of defeating the West. Major terrorist attacks were aimed at projecting AQ as a forceful *jihadi* against infidels. This strategy galvanized Muslims in support of AQ particularly after American attack on Iraq.²³ With a small core group—vanguard and carefully recruited members, Osama changed the course of history.

Osama's Relocation

Osama's relocation in Afghanistan in 1996 proved very fruitful both for AQ and Taliban. It is estimated that \$20 million of the \$30 million AQ's annual pre-9/11 budget went to Taliban. AQ put its military units to fight the remaining enemies of Taliban. The safe haven enabled AQ to knit together the various strands of jihadist movement and proselytize fighters in its interpretation and vision of global jihad. US intelligence officials believed that between 10000 and 20000 foreign volunteers were trained in Afghanistan in AQ camps.²⁴ However, attack on Afghanistan in 2001 mounted tremendous pressure on Osama and his hosts. AQ was splintered and spread over in other countries. Osama was killed in Pakistan on 2 May 2011 by the US. Americans celebrated chanting 'proud to be an American'. Nevertheless, thousands mourned globally as a stirring reminder that

with Osama did not die the ideas he stood for. Those very ideas gave birth to a more ferocious brand of terrorism—the Islamic State.

Islamic State

The Islamic state was proclaimed on 29 June 2014, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as Caliph. The virtual terror state had a complete administrative structure and self-sustaining financial model capturing key oil assets in Syria and Iraq. Oil smuggling, bank loot, transportation and taxes filled its coffers. Only oil revenue was expected to be between \$1 to \$3 million per day. US intelligence estimated that some 15000 fighters from 80 countries flocked to join the group.²⁵ Therefore, neither financial restrictions nor an ordinary army could defeat it.

It's *beyond inhuman* brutality resulted from obsessive adherence to doctrinal matters— association only with "true" Muslims, strict adherence to sharia, Shias being apostates deserving death and to follow the state founded by the Holy Prophet. The Caliphate is not merely a political entity; but is propagated as a path to salvation for those who have pledged to fulfil the obligation. Killings are justified to purify the world and to create a *new dawn*. The founders of the IS hoped the arrival

of Mahdi—a messianic figure leading to Muslim victory before the end of the world.²⁶ Hence, even beheading or sex slavery is a religious duty. Bloodbath in the good/evil battle swelled its support base. Hence, the IS also has cultic elements. Strategic spectacles of violence demonstrated the fantastical power of the leader fearing no authority. The shock value of violence is more important than their aims. Thus, IS seeks power, but power beyond and above what humanity can bestow.²⁷

After all reason has no place in religion. Therefore, excessive obsession with puritanism aimed to establish supremacy. Baghdadi is well versed in Islamic theology and practices. He is a doctorate in Islamic jurisprudence and wrote a book on Quranic recitation and worked in mosques as preacher in Baghdad.²⁸ Thus, the IS upholds ancient Islamic precepts and practices challenging everything modern. They reject national borders, have no faith in international organizations as there is nothing above God and no citizenship besides Islam. In June 2014 they bulldozed an earthen bulwark on Iraq-Syria border symbolizing demolition of nation-state system grafted on West Asia by the Anglo-French agreement 1916 dividing the Arab territories of

the Ottoman Empire. This served to cast the IS as an avenger of history for establishing the Caliphate.

The IS made inroads into South Asia by cultivating local groups and penetrating among radical Muslims imparting more ideological stringency and lethality. Social media is used effectively. About 46000 Twitter accounts were supporting the IS in 2014.²⁹ India banned IS related websites due to radicalization and recruitment. Bangladesh is also an easy target. Jamaat-e-Islami consolidated radical elements and terror group like Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) pledging to the Talibanization of Bangladesh. JMB launched simultaneous bomb blasts in 63 of 64 districts on 17 August 2005 and several suicide attacks later. Evidence of IS cells in Bangladesh killing foreigners and secular bloggers are some alarming indicators of terrorism in the region.³⁰ The Holy Bakery (Dhaka) massacre killing 20 people in 1-2 July 2016 was also claimed by the IS, though the government denied it. Shahidullah Shahid, spokesman of the Pak Taliban along with top commanders defected to the IS in 2014.³¹ Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan founded in 2014 expressed loyalty to the IS. Jamiat-ul-Ansar mounted notorious attacks—Easter

Sunday Lahore Park and Quetta hospital carnage in March and August 2016 respectively. The IS has high hopes with such smaller groups to unite and to provide leadership. Back in January 2015, the IS announced a Khorasanwilayat (province) straddling the Afghan-Pakistan border, historically an area of core AQ operations. Rogue groups or lone wolves having allegiance to the IS have added to competitive attacks, most prominently between Taliban; and the IS establishing a stronghold in Nangarhar on the eastern border with Pakistan becoming most dangerous in Afghanistan.

This scenario revived the influence of AQ encouraging local elements with low-tech individualized attacks. An interesting twist to the tale of terrorism is appended by the Rohingya crisis. Nevertheless, an otherwise serene Maldives also witnessed radicalization and terror these footprints there are visible. According to 2008 Constitution of Maldives Islam is the state religion. Extremists are pushing for full implementation of Sharia. A non-Muslim cannot become a citizen of the Maldives. Mohamed Jameel (Home Minister of President Waheed) accused former President Naseed of undermining and weakening Islam. Fundamentalists

destroyed historical artifacts and Buddhist statues predating the Maldives' conversion to Islam.³² Maldives indicates deepening radicalization in the region. The Sindh province government of Pakistan confirmed the presence of IS in the country.³³ Recent attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan show the growing menace of the IS in the region. More significant are the results of 25 July 2018 elections in Pakistan propelling Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, a provincial party, to the centre-stage truncating the mainstream parties. There are reasons to be apprehensive of the shape of things to come. For Mr. Khan's victory is touted as blessings of the Pakistani deep state, i.e. the army and the ISI. Obviously he always mentioned Kashmir as the core issue while referring to India. He has been a supporter of blasphemy law and flirted with rightwing parties and terror outfits which earned him the moniker "Taliban Khan".³⁴ Yet another challenge that this election threw was the spectacular performance of a new anti-blasphemy party *Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan* which pleaded for the automatic death penalty for anyone deemed to have insulted Islam or Holy Prophet.³⁵ Thus, South Asia is in a new phase of terrorism resulting from a unique process of simultaneous conflict-cooperation among regional and global outfits.

Democracy-deficit South Asian regimes are mainly to blame for the scourge of terrorism. Its geo-politics permit easy externalization of problems. Political rivals blame one another of being soft-peddlers or agents of the hostile neighboring country. There is deep influence of domesticity. Domesticity refers to excessive influence of immediate domestic issues on foreign policy decision-making and diplomatic behaviour for short-term domestic gains calculated in terms of increase in support base.³⁶ Terrorism thrives due to such political myopic vision. This monster sharpened communal conflict, disrupted development and derailed the SAARC.

Conclusion

Terrorism cannot be contained merely by aggressive strategies. They unite them against aggressors.

Resentment generating US *war on terror* produced the IS. This calls for reconciliation, inclusion and reorientation towards *humanist* narratives. Religious leaders maybe roped in to propagate inherent *spiritualism* of religions. Intellectuals and media need to spread *scientific temper* as an antidote to fundamentalism. They would strengthen the roots of *positive peace* to provide a “framework to understand and then to address the challenge” which is defined as “attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies”.³⁷ India’s role is pivotal given its monopoly power—hard and soft. India must win the confidence of neighbours following the policy of *beneficial bilateralism*. Minimally, this demands to revive the SAARC process. India cannot pursue its global aspirations unless it gets rid of regional quagmire. ■

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Just how well is India a South Asia's nuclear-armed state, taking care of their nuclear materials? The history paints a daunting picture of liabilities in the event of a mishap that reoccurred in the past. Since India, like Pakistan, is not a party to the NPT. However, this convergence is destabilizing the South Asian region, and contributing to security challenges for Pakistan. Indo-French strategic partnership mainly spans in the fields of defense, nuclear and space. It is ironic to note their selective choosing of terrorism. France remains oblivious to India's state sponsored terrorism in Pakistan and persecution of Kashmiri Muslims. South Asia as a region has been facing the challenges of transnational terrorism. and extremism " be it religious fundamentalism, separatist or left-wing " for more than three decades. socio-economic development of all South Asian nations. In South Asia, terrorism has a relatively long history that emerged on the security landscape of the region at a time. when the focus of international security was on deterrence, nuclear disarmament. and strategic weapons. Bruce Vaughn Specialist in Asian Affairs Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division. Emerging Trends in the U.S. Security Architecture in Asia: Bilateral and Multilateral Ties with Japan, Australia, and India. Summary. Some analysts have questioned whether U.S. security interests in the Asia Pacific region are best served by its existing framework of bilateral alliances. The region is now facing an array of changes: deepening trade links, the formation of new regional institutions, and increased attention to the threat of Islamic terrorism. Against this backdrop, China's rise represents the How policymakers respond to these emerging security challenges in South Asia will determine the fate of a vast swathe of humanity that has implications beyond South Asia's borders. This three-day online intensive program in partnership with O P Jindal Global University, will provide students an opportunity to engage with some of these issues in depth, and learn from scholars and policy specialists from diverse areas of expertise. This program is being supported by the Australian Consulate, Chennai. In partnership with. Broad Coverage. Receive an overview of Emerging Security Challenges in Sout... As these states face economic and security challenges within their borders, they also face increasing geopolitical competition between Russia, China, and the United States, each looking to the energy-rich market of 70 million inhabitants as the final frontier of globalization. Amidst this intensifying competition, fault lines are likely to emerge and deepen, some of which already have existing rivalries dating back to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. A driving approach for the Alliance in Central Asia has been an emphasis on "stability", which, given the litany of challenges the region faces, may be difficult to maintain.