

Narco-Terrorism in Pakistan: An Organized Crime-Linkage and Counter-Strategies

Nabi Bakhsh Narejo

Abstract:

The paper outlines and introduces the conceptual framework of narcotics and their linkage to terrorism in Pakistan. The factors producing narcotics originating in Afghanistan are discussed as linkages causing terrorism. The secondary analysis focuses on the data discussing various factors causing terrorism in Pakistan. Although there is not significant evidence in empirical terms about the linkages, one can assume from available data that narcotics and terrorism are mutually determining taking example of the case of Afghanistan. The incidents of terrorism occurring articulate that there is involvement of organized criminality in causing and strengthening terrorism, specifically in case of Pakistan.

Keywords:

Pakistan, Afghanistan, Narco-terrorism, Organized Crime, Linkages, Opium Cultivation, Counter-narcotics

Introduction

The phenomenon of terrorism shrouds ambiguity and automatically triggers multiplicity of outlooks, variegated perceptions and dynamic perspectives. Narco-terrorism poses great threat to Pakistan and other Regional countries with and without touching the boundaries and borders. The type of terrorism is financed, fueled or geared through the narcotic cartels having organized criminal nature and profiling.

Globalization has dramatically changed the face of both legitimate and illegitimate enterprise. Criminals by exploiting advances in technology, finance, communications, and transportation in pursuit of their illegal endeavors, have become criminal entrepreneurs. Perhaps the most alarming aspect of this “entrepreneurial” style of crime is the intricate manner in which drugs and terrorism may be intermingled (Casteel, 2003). The global enemy is organized and supported by organized criminal gangs and narcotic cartels. It eludes clear thinking and swindles professionals touching the areas/aspects where crime, violence and terrorism are intermingled and intersected. Terrorism as systematic use or threat of violence continues to hit nerve centers of global community. The phenomenon is highly intricate in its nature acquiring delicate understanding, professionally-focused inputs and persistence in strategically defeating the alluding enemy.

Terrorists are motivated and strengthened through finances. Jihadi organizations are one of the greatest sources of finances to terrorists. They continue

to change their strategies in view of law enforcement reactions (Costigan & Gold, 2007, p 15)

The organized crime may affect society in many ways and manifestations. Drug trafficking is linked to terrorists causing great harm and destruction in society like Pakistan. This article focuses on the link between organized crime (narcotics) and terrorism in Pakistan. The causative factors have been discussed to formulate their linkage to the issue of terrorism in Pakistan. The research involves secondary analysis through description and presentation through graphs and tables.

The law- makers, statesmen, legal professionals, law enforcement agencies and Criminologists are keenly worried and professionally involved in range of efforts aiming at understanding and countering the menace of terrorism. Media responses to terrorism are initially being shaped on paths of professional ethics, neutrality, human rights and care for the victims. There is a continuous drive, drift and shift towards crafting and executing better strategies against terrorism.

Conceptual Framework

Crime has recently been witnessed the greatest of all threats to human society and peace of citizenry on the face of the globe. Organized criminality has emerged as highly complex phenomenon that now attracts all professionals and general public. The phenomena have now been spreading towards the less developed and more centralized societies world around. The networking of criminality is entangled and has become customary in open markets. The patterns of organized crime gangs are now varied in nature, having trans-continental and diverse manifestations. These are the basic characteristics of organized crime. There are vanishing boundaries and definitions making such illegal business look like legitimate enterprise. Besides, there are patterns like money-laundering, illegal weapon sale and trade, and illegal drug-sale are also key inseparable elements to the issue of organized crime. Sophisticated technology has supported this phenomenon, increased opportunities involving illegal profits through human trafficking and arms trafficking. (Padhy, 2006, p 2-4).

The organized crime and terrorism are linked together for achieving multiple inter-connected goals and benefits through organized activities. They include generating finances for organizing their networks and include other tactics like bribing the local officials specially to run their operations smoothly. These groups are wiser enough to access and utilize the advanced technologies in promoting violence, terror and destruction (Padhy, 2006, p 164). Livingston summarizes that 'organized crime involves large, long-standing organizations with diversified roles for its members: a criminal organization derives much of its income from crime; and it relies on violence, real or potential, to accomplish its goals' (Livingston: 1996, p 253).

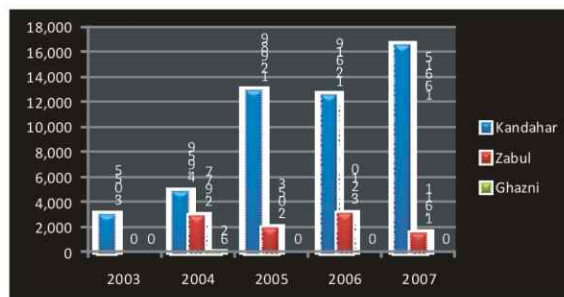
Drug dealing is not just a crime, but a form of business as well. Cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin, marijuana and some other drugs are sold in a network that has close similarity with business organizations. The structure of such organizations looks identical to those of legitimate ones. The organizational structure of a typical drug cartel-organized crime- has three major levels. These levels include the street dealer, the distributors and the cartels (the drug lords). Drug trafficking is controlled by the organized criminal groups who develop alliances for purposes of greater effectiveness and producing enormous benefits. Drug trafficking has become both a transnational and international phenomena. Drug trafficking is the primary means of acquiring large sums of money and power, and is a major cause of both human and financial suffering world wide. The global phenomenon of trafficking has been a problematic area of concern for world community. There is an increasing priority shift of world community towards understanding and addressing seriousness of this issue. (Wright and Miller, 2005:442-3)

Afghanistan Link

Afghanistan has history of turmoil, war, narcotic trade and free weapons which play critical role in destabilizing this land and its near-border countries. The open cultivation impacts locals and border countries. The roots coming from Afghanistan are impacting near regions and international communities. The open cultivation is very profitable, illegal business used by terrorist organizations for furthering their operations in desired countries.

Indicators of Opium Cultivation

Statistics show a rapid increase in poppy cultivation in Kandahar province and terrorists incidents as well. The following chart shows the amount of poppy cultivation and the change in cultivation scale in different years:



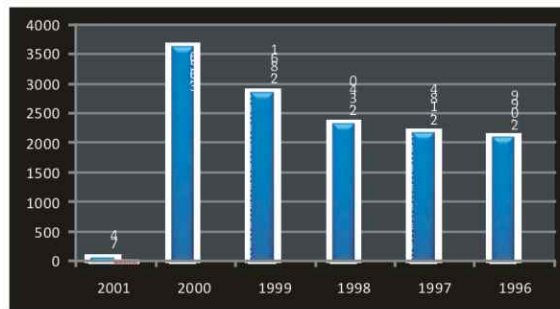
Opium Cultivation in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2007

Source: 2007 Annual Opium Poppy Survey, Executive Summary, UNODC

According to the Annual Opium Survey of UNODC (2007), which studied cultivation of poppy in Afghanistan during the period 2003–2007, the largest crop was grown in 2007 (16615 ha) in Kandahar Province, which was also the major cultivation area during this period. The second major province for poppy cultivation was Zabul in which the biggest crop was ploughed in the year 2006 (3210 ha). Whereas Ghazni has only grown small amount of opium in 2004 (62 ha).

Impact of Narcotics on Pakistan

Pakistan employs a global approach to attacking drug organizations that fuel the terror network. In 2000, Afghanistan produced 70 percent of the world's opium supply and 80 percent of the opiate products destined for Europe. Unlike their counterparts in Colombia, the terrorists in Afghanistan enjoy the benefits of a trafficker-driven economy that lacks even a recognized national government.



Afghanistan Opium Production 2001 - 1996

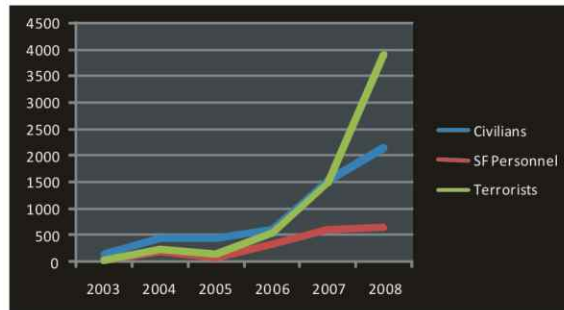
The above graph shows that the opium production in Afghanistan gradually increased starting from 1996 to the maximum in year 2000. Whereas in 2001, opium cultivation almost came to the halt.

According to the United Nations, up to 60% of Afghanistan's opium crop is stored for future sales. Accordingly, the degree to which profits from the drug trade are directed to finance terrorist activities, as well as the extent to which both types of organizations rely upon the same money laundering and smuggling facilitators or systems, is of paramount concern to Pakistan.

Impact of Terrorism on Pakistan

Terrorism as global menace has its impact over Pakistan. However, it is not clear whether or not narcotics are involved in all incidents of terrorism. But it can be

assumed that the terrorists are being financed by the narcotics gangs. In recent years due to war against terrorism, casualties among terrorists have been dramatically increased.



Annual Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan, 2003- 2008

Source: Institute for Conflict Management(SATP)

The above graph depicts how casualties from terrorist activities increase from the years 2003 to 2008. Important is the point here that there has been a major increase in casualties of terrorists in the year 2008 and onwards.

Counter-Narcotics & Terrorism

Recommendations

1. Narcotics and terrorism are mutually linked and reinforced. They are dual enemies of countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan. There is need of priority based focus towards understanding about these issues. They require strict enforcement and counter strategies.
2. Narcotics as trade must be stopped through disruption mechanism and other strategies formulated through research by related professionals and officials.
3. The legitimate alternatives of narcotic cultivation and production are needed to be enforced and ensured so that people sustain on alternative sources of livelihood discouraging narcotic production and trade.
4. The Taliban link to cultivation, production and trade needs to be broken or disrupted to end narcotic trade and its boost up to terrorist activities.
5. The demand reduction mechanism needs to be re-evaluated and enforced.
6. The law enforcement must be incapacitated through professional inputs by criminologists.

7. Terrorism resulting from drug trade support requires multiple approaches and inputs from all stake holders in society.
8. The linkage of Afghanistan narcotics, border infiltration of extremists and trade of arms must also be tackled to prevent and counter terrorists in the region.
9. The terrorism in Pakistan is a result of several other factors like poverty, extremism, religious violence and inequity among provinces.
10. The terrorism is a dynamic challenge that requires dynamic approach including professional attitude of all the concerned citizens and officials.

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Mr. Nabi Bakhsh Narejo is the Assistant Professor & Incharge Department of Criminology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan. He has done his Masters in Applied Criminological Studies from Karachi University, and is presently a doctoral scholar in Applied Criminology at University of Karachi.