

The Challenge of Armed Groups in South Asia

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Why focus on Armed Groups

- “If they do not threaten Armageddon, they can nevertheless still take societies and their economies on a costly sojourn to one of the rings of hell.” John Arquilla
- Have forced states to adopt Preventive form of national security strategy

Why Focus on Armed Groups?

- Pose most direct challenge to the authority of the state.
- Enhanced capability to do widespread violence
- Rising importance in the post-Cold War period (9/11 only underscored the global reach and lethality of the activity of some of these groups).
- Insights into changing forms of violent behavior

Why Focus on armed groups

- Can disrupt peace processes and cause deterrence break down (December 13 attack on Indian parliament is a case in point).
- Have given new lease of life to “Asymmetric warfare”
- The veil of anonymity surrounding their activities has complicated the retaliatory response, posing the possibility of it being misdirected.
- State can only do “consequence management”.

Issues involved in the study of armed groups

- How to categorize and characterize armed groups: organisation, identity, type of violence, goals, purposes, recruitment methods.
- Armed groups characteristics vary according to goals, size, and methods

Categorizing Armed Groups

- Trans-national Agenda.
- Local grievances
- Secessionist and national liberation movements
- Mercenary militias
- Anti-state agendas
- Criminal syndicates

Armed Groups in South Asia(BD)

- GROUPS WITH MARXIST ORIENTATION:
- 1. PBCP- PURBO BANGLAR COMMUNIST PARTY
- 2.PBCP-HAQUE GROUP
- 3.BCP- BIPLOBI COMMUNIST PARTY (Revolutionary Communist Party).
- PURBO BANGLAR SARBAHARA PARTY

Armed Groups in South Asia (BD)

- B. Religious Groups:
 - 1. Jammatul Mujahideen of Bangladesh(JMB)
 - 2. Jagarta Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB)
 - 3. Jihad Party (JP)
 - 4.Harkat Ul Jihad-i- Islami, Bangladesh (HUJI-B)
 - 5. Hizbut Touhid (HT)
- C. Ethnic Groups:
 - 1. Shanti Bahini (Armed cadre of PCJSS)
 - 2. United People's Democratic Front (UPDF)

Armed Groups in South Asia (India)

- AM AI BADR
- ALUMAR Mujahideen (AUM)
- DUKHTERAN-E-MILLAT
- HIZBU-UL- MUJAHIDEEN
- THE HAKKAT UL ANSAR
- JAISH-E-MOHMMED (JeM)
- .JKIF
- JKLF
- JAMAIT-UL-MUJAHIDEEN
- LASHKAR-E-TOIBA (LeT)

Armed Groups in South Asia (India)

- 1. PEOPLES'S WAR GROUP (PWG)
- 2. MAOIST COMMUNIST CENTRE
- 3. STUDENT ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF INDI (SIMI)
- 4. UNITED LIBERATION FRONT OF ASSAM (ULFA)
- 5. NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF BODOLAND (NDFB)
- 6. NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF NAGALAND (NSCN-IM)
- 7. PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (PLA)

Armed Groups in South Asia (India)

- 8. UNITED LIBERATION FRONT (UNLF)
- 9. REVOLUTIOARY PEOPLE'S ARMY (RPA)
- 10. NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF TRIPURA (NLFT)
- 11. NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF NAGALAND (NSCN-k)
- 12. KANGLEI YAOL KANBA LUP (KYKL)
- 13. KAMTAPUR LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (KLO)
- 14. PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF KANGLEIPAK (PREPAK)

Armed Groups in South Asia (Nepal)

- 1. COMMUNIST PARTY OF NEPAL (MAOIST)

Armed Groups in South Asia (Sri Lanka)

- 1. BATTI-AMPARAI LIBERATION TIGERS (BALT)
- 2. LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM (LTTE)
- 3. EELAM PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION FRONT (EPRLF)
- 4. JANATHA VIMUKTHI PERAMUNA (JVP)
- 5. BATTI-AMPARAI LIBERATION TIGERS (BALT) – KARUNA FACTION.

Armed Conflict in South Asia

Country	Region	Date	Causes of Conflict	Horizontal Inequality	Casualties/Deaths	IDPs
India	Naga Mizo Bodo Meitei Assamese	1956-1975 1966-1986 1967-993 1978-2000 1983-2000	Secessionist.	Economic, political	23,590 since 1979	170,000
India	Punjab- Khalistan	1981-1992 1986	Secessionist	Political	10,000-18,000	
India	Gujarat	2002	Communal	Political	1,000	150,000
Pakistan	Balochistan,	1970s; active since 2000.	Political/ Ethnic	Political, Economic,		
Pakistan	Karachi Hyderabad	1980s	Sectarian/Reli gious	Political, Social, Economic	1,760 since 1985	
Bangladesh	Chittagong Hill Tracts	1970s	Political/Ethni c	Political, Economic		
Nepal	75 districts in Nepal	1996; Active	Political: Urban/rural	Economic, Political	11,900	
Sri Lanka	Provinces in the North	1983; fragile ceasefire since 2002	Secessionst	Economic, Political, Social	80,000 since 1973	362,000
Bhutan	Southern Bhutan	1990	Ethnic	Cultural, Political		100,000
Pakistan	FATA, Pak-Afghan Border	Since 2001	GWOT; Anti-State agenda	Economic, political,	At least 2,000	Several hundred

Challenges in dealing with Armed Group

- Negotiate or not to negotiate
- 4 D's:
- De-legitimise,
- De-weaponize,
- Disarm,
- Demobilize
- Reintegrate into society

Twin Challenges of Disarmament and Demobilization:

- Disarmament plays two key roles in any peace-building effort:
- 1) through the removal of the means by which conflict has been prosecuted, thus preventing the re-ignition of conflict; and
- 2) the creation of a stable environment, thus strengthening confidence –and security building among combatants.

Disarmament...contd

- Verification of disarmament plays three important roles in post-conflict settlements.
- First, it is a determination of compliance or non-compliance.
- Second, it is a deterrent to cheating as the parties will be aware that they will be caught.
- Third, it is an effort at confidence-building, enabling the parties to demonstrate their compliance.

- **Role of weaponry.** In addition to the role they play in conflict, guns have become symbols of:
- superiority and prestige;
- symbols of successful transition to manhood;
- signifiers of masculinity and machismo;
- a reliable form of currency used to obtain cows, land, or a wife;
- a means of securing a livelihood (e.g; through hunting or cattle raiding);
- a desirable way to defend personal and family security.
- These socio-cultural roles that guns have come to play in our society call for a sensitive management of the light-weapons problems.

- **Demobilization:** It is the formal disbanding of military formations and the individual level, as the process of releasing combatants from a mobilized state. This process may involve the complete disbanding of military units, or their reduction in size.
- For success in the medium to long term, demobilization should include efforts to assist former combatants to reintegrate into society. Reintegration is the most effective way to break former combatants' ties to their former fighting units and allows a means for them to provide for their dependents

Demobilization

- “It is critical that the number of weapons available in the country and the people with arms be reduced for sustainable peace as easy access to weapons and militarily trained persons have become major social issues. In it lies the potential for creating further problems and even new conflicts in the future. Arms reductions and demobilization are not only critical in the North but also in the South”

Demobilization

- “As far as arms reduction is concerned the parties could opt for a graduate phased approach with a long term plan for simultaneously reducing the quantity of weapons and implementing agreed upon provisions. One of the useful tools in this regard is a third party guarantor. Another option available is to integrate fully or partially the fighting formations of the LTTE into the national army or to create a regional police force with the remaining members of the LTTE.”

Reintegration of combatants

- “Many peace agreements fail to address the issues of the combatants, whose status is reduced to a great extent in the post-conflict period. This problem is acute relation to underage cadres and women soldiers as they seldom play a role in peace negotiations. Many former cadres, however, yearn to have a say in the future of the communities on behalf of which they were fighting. In other words they want space in the political sphere. Hence it is imperative to devise strategies to ensure the well-being of former cadres and members of the armed forces. What is necessary is to help them reintegrate with the communities by way of financial incentives, training, skills development and employment opportunities while expanding the political space to accommodate those with political aspirations.”

- Most of the combatants in armed conflict have known nothing other than fighting in their adult lives. Often they are at best semiliterate and have no marketable skills or experience of seeking work. Any reintegration of the former combatants into society will have to provide them with a role of equivalent status to the one they had during the conflict, or at least positively recognize the role they played in the conflict
- A major form of disability found among former combatants is psychological, including trauma and mental illness. Problems that have been identified among former combatants include post-traumatic stress disorder, stress created by “returning hero syndrome” (where the family of a returnee expects that person to now improve the family fortunes), and depression and alienation after years away from their communities

- Two repercussions of a **failed demobilization**.
- First, common citizens may suffer from “micro-insecurity”, where individuals fear that they will be the victim of crimes perpetrated by former combatants. Such fears are increased if demobilized combatants retain their arms.
- The second challenge pertains to “macro-insecurity”, which is the fear that the state might be challenged by insurrection. This suggests that it is vital for the sustainability of the new political order in the post-conflict society that former combatants are effectively reintegrated into the society

Frantz Fanon:

- “The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinarily reciprocal homogeneity. The reign of violence will be more terrible in proportion to the size of the implantation from the mother country. The development of violence among the colonized people will be proportionate to the violence exercised by the threatened colonial regime.”

Structural perspective on violence

- Ted Honderich: “Is it yet more tasteless to make another remark about the day of September 11, when 3,000 were killed at the Twin Towers and the Pentagon? On that day, if death by starvation for 2001 were spread evenly throughout the year, 23,000 people died of hunger...Each was as individual as each of the 3,000.”
(Quoted in Imtiaz Ahmed, 2005: 23).

Albert Camus on suicide terrorism:

- “There is but one truly philosophical problem and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest – whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories – comes afterwards.”

Suicide Bombing

- Edward Said:
- “this is now transcending the political and moving into metaphysical. And it is a leap that I think is very important to keep one’s eyes on, because it suggests the kind of cosmic quality – and, I would also say, demagogical quality – of the minds at work here. They refuse to engage in or have no interest in dialogue or political organization or persuasion of the sort that makes political change and improves one’s situation versus this kind of thing which is bloody minded destruction for no other reason than to do it.”

NSA: Emerging Challenges

- How do we police the New World Disorder.
- Is Military the “last, best hope” for us?
- The material capability to harm is no longer the exclusive preserve of the state – it has become diffused and created the strategic challenge of the “problem of the few”.
- Should the state be reinforced as the primary security actor?

Studying armed conflict from NTS Perspective

- Motivation – a complex issue
- Psychological, Institutional and System-level perspectives
- How best to tackle the challenges posed by armed group activities – GWOT has its limitations.
- 3 Gs (guards, gates, and guns) are not enough
- A holistic perspective is needed

Armed Groups from NTS Perspective

- Problem of the few
- State not a “black box”
- Open and deconstruct it
- Fragility and vulnerability of the state
- Empower people without disempowering the state
- Non-statist but holistic perspective on security
- De-legitimise violence through non-violent resolution of conflict