



RESEARCH ARTICLE

INDO-EU COOPERATION ON COUNTER TERRORISM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Today, the world is facing a serious crisis of international terrorism. India and European Union have called for immediate need to redress the issue of terrorism at international and regional levels. For this they have come out with various proposals for the enhancement of peace and stability; one such area is strategic partnership between India and European Union. At this level both at bilateral and multilateral levels have focused on this pertinent issue of terrorism. The author firmly believes that if there is proper cooperation and coordination between them then the chances of containing terrorism through their own and joint methods will be immensely beneficial not only to them but to the entire world.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism in the 21st century requires collective political will of all nations to combat the danger of terror. Terrorism has to be solved through specialized organizations beyond nations. Nations have to find out ways and means. It should also share the responsibility and authority in addressing various aspects, causes of terror and then condemn its forms and manifestations. In this regard, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to Indians in Belgium on March 30, 2016 is notable as he called for an immediate need to redefine the term terrorism at international level and find ways to address the gravity of the issue. He further went to state: "Terrorism is not a challenge to one country or one region. Terrorism is challenging humanity so the need of the hour is that anybody who believes in humanity, all powers, have to come together to fight terror." In order to play a greater political role in international affairs as well as its traditional image as a major economic actor, the EU has been pushing for security cooperation with a number of its ten strategic partners, including India. At the 11th EU-India Summit held in New Delhi on 10 December 2010, the EU and India signed a Joint Declaration on Counter Terrorism.

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This cooperation, however, depends on three key factors:

- The nature of the EU as an actor in counter-terrorism,
- India's threat perceptions and expectations, and
- What the EU can really offer India. The principal aim of this article is to create a better understanding of counter-terrorism in the EU while identifying areas where EU-India cooperation in countering terrorism jointly could be deepened.

Indo-EU Counter Terrorism Cooperation

One can find a certain level of cooperation between the EU and India in the area of counter-terrorism and security. A bilateral working group on counter-terrorism has been established along with security dialogue. Meanwhile, the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator has visited India many times to work for further cooperation. The EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, laid down the provisions of security cooperation during her visit to India in January 2012. Since then, various efforts have been made by the EU officials, as well as EU agencies and bodies (i.e. Europol or Eurojust), and their Indian counterparts. Signing an important Joint Declaration on International Terrorism was an important document which formed the foundation for deepening collaboration. Besides India, the USA is only the

security where EU has such a Joint Declaration. Thus indicates the level of importance given to this relationship. At the 12th EU-India Summit in New Delhi on 10 February 2012, a security roadmap was signed. It outlined cooperation in countering terrorism and cyber-terrorism, and in joint anti-piracy efforts. It acknowledged security cooperation as an important ambit of the EU-India relationship. Containing cyber-threats is also an interesting theme with the potential for in-depth cooperation. Both partners being information societies, India's growing clout as an information technology hub, and the EU's multi-layered structure and organisation, all provide good premises for cooperation. Cooperation in countering cyber-terrorism in particular requires a great deal of public-private partnership. Although countering cyber-terrorism has its own challenges, it may well suit the structure of the EU-India partnership (Khandekar, 2012).

At the multilateral forums, both India and EU are signatories to the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy and are committed to promote its implementation internally and worldwide. They accept the proposed Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism as an international legal framework against terrorism. This is an area where collaborative efforts made within the orbit of strategic partnership. This might inculcate great repercussions at the international level. Both actors have actively in various forums, in the UN system. But what is important is more and more are needed. Though dialogue and cooperation India is currently chairing the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, and both parties are founding members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the potential for multilateral cooperation is thus even greater than existing bilateral exchanges. Europe and India have similar kinds of threats. While al-Qaeda may be considered as the single biggest international threat for Europe, India is more concerned with cross-border terrorism from neighbouring countries. The threat to Indian Security also comes from various ideologies other than radical Islam. Moreover, today Maoist Naxalite terrorism is India's single biggest internal security threat. There are other separatist movements that challenge India's territorial integrity. Traditionally these terrorist grouping working against India, such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), have now become a threat for European countries. Local terrorist groups otherwise operating against India from Pakistan and Afghanistan have well established linkages with those terrorists operating in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa, or in the Gulf. This has posed a threat to Europe and European interests. This provides further imply ample opportunity for the EU and India to cooperate and work vigorously to contain and terrorism.

There is difference in the approach adopted by the EU and India. Though the EU approach to counter-terrorism as inclined towards soft security, India focuses more on hard security. Hard security means making use of all the traditional instruments at its disposal: army, navy, air force, police, intelligence and judiciary. Conversely, the EU does not have any of these at its disposal, except particular intelligence. Cyber-security is a vital aspect of security and counter-terrorism where deeper cooperation could be underscored. Exploring cooperation on deradicalisation, however, remains implausible given the size of India's population and religious

sensitivities. India is very careful to avoid linking terrorist attacks to any particular religious group. For India, Pakistan is an cause source of irritation. The Mumbai 26/11 attacks in particular became a great source of tension in EU-India relations. The December 2008 Council Conclusions on the Mumbai terror attacks in particular gave the Indian government an impression that the EU took Pakistan's side by giving move to her, instead of sympathizing with India's victims. India considers Pakistan as an 'epicenter of global terrorism'. On the other hand, the EU is cautious in its choice of words. By contrast, India's major partners, the UK, France, Germany and the US, have been vocal in their support of India and critical towards Pakistan. Indian officials further point towards the misuse of EU funds to Pakistan for fostering terrorism towards India (Ibid).

The EU is tries to support the civilian dimension of counter-terrorism policies in Pakistan, India in unable to support such kind of policy. Still then, cooperation with the EU is important for India. India's cooperation with the EU must be analyzed from two points: (i) the EU as a model, and (ii) the EU as a stage for dialogue with 27 European nation states. The EU model for cooperation and regular dialogue between 27 Member States is quite effective and cost-efficient. Equally important is that India is also in the process of reforming its own security apparatus. A similar model for Indian federal states could further bring peace and stability. There is a need for in India. Regular dialogue in specialized working groups between the security officials of Indian federal states. It would definitely increase the country's security considerably given that the 2008 Mumbai attacks laid bare coordination gaps within India's security structure. It is unrealistic on the part of India to expect intelligence sharing with the EU. But what India can except is better cooperation with the EU and this will additional value to existing bilateral cooperation with EU Member States.

Extradition treaty between the EU and India could be a good prospect for India in checking terrorism. A single document will enable India to an extradition treaty applicable to 27 countries. India should also have a dialogue with Eurojust as a complement to its security cooperation with the EU. Eurojust as a forum will brings together 27 Member State and will allow for dialogue and facilitate quick legal action across multiple European states. At the moment, any discussion or cooperation between the EU and India on Naxalism has not taken place. But European countries should be made aware of the root causes of Maoist Naxalism in India. The problem arises from grievances which are to do with development and social welfare issues in poor underdeveloped tribal areas. India should also be know to the EU social welfare and development programmes and how they can address the issue in an Indian context. European NGOs have been working in this direction in India. On counter-terrorism cooperation, it is unfair to compare the EU. India's relationship with the US. The fact is that the US is a completely different entity from the EU and India has to learn more from the EU. In some areas, the EU is far more advanced than the US, especially on when in comes to dialogue and coordination among its Member States. Legislation is another area. Counter-terrorism legislation in the EU can be equally shared with India. For examine the EU

legislation has banned the sale of ammonium nitrate across the counter. The implementation of such legislation in India might pose problems. Discussion on the issue forms a good basis for the exchange of ideas. The EU's experience with border management, particularly within the Schengen area, is another dimension. Its border control agency Frontex could serve as a model for India. India can ask for specific expertise from the European Defence Agency (EDA) on explosive devices.

The Naxalite threat put could India's deposits of coal in a number of states at greater risk. Similarly terrorism can also threatens key infrastructure. It is well known that to the Mumbai attacks were not properly managed. Here, India could learn from the EU's expertise on disaster management and risk reduction, in particular in the area of transnational threats. Like the US, India could also cooperate with the EU on the European Civil Protection Mechanism which will facilitate cooperation in disaster response among 31 European states (the EU-27 plus Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). The European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection with its Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network (CIWIN), Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) expert groups at EU level, CIP information-sharing processes, and the identification and analysis of interdependencies could be a positive sign for working against those who tries to break India. Still cooperation between the EU and India needs greater impetus both at the political and technical levels. Within the limited capacity of human resources available and deepening technical cooperation would give further boost to the EU-India declaration on counter-terrorism. It would also foster greater trust on both sides. Political engagement also remains crucial. Regular visits from top EU officials, especially at this early stage of cooperation, would establish firm foundations for cooperation in the future (Ibid).

Counter-Terrorism Cooperation: Changing Paradigms

The EU and India have established a Security Dialogue under the Joint Action Plan (JAP). This has resulted in regular meetings since 2006. A joint working group on counterterrorism along with working groups on cyber security and counter-piracy measures are also included in strategic Dialogue. In recent years issues of nuclear proliferation and disarmament was taken up within the framework of Security Dialogue. Though these are areas have been identified yet no concrete solution has come. The reasons for this could be limited competencies and traditional tools at the EU's disposal regardless security and counter-terrorism. India has been facing cross-border terrorism for a long time, Indian had made seven attempts to discuss these issues with the EU some years ago. Since the had soft corner for Pakistan. Therefore, the issues of was not taken seriously terrorism at bilateral discussions and it was left between India and individual Member States for some dialogue. However, the situation changed after the 11 September 2001 attack in the USA, following which this issue was mentioned in almost all summit meetings (Jain, 2011). In the Joint Declaration on International Terrorism (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/118405.pdf) from December 2010, both the EU and India condemned 'terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever,

wherever and for whatever purpose'. They made their own reservation 'who sponsor, abet and instigate terrorism and provide terrorists safe havens'. They also focussed on 'cooperation in combating International Terrorism, including cross-border terrorism' as one of major political decision in the bilateral partnership. The then European Council President Herman Van Rompuy emphasized that the 'London, Madrid and Mumbai or any other city could be victim of terrorist attack as they attacks showed that knows no boundaries. They also condemn Pakistan and asked Pakistan to move faster on this issue and bring all the perpetrators, who were involved in Mumbai attack.

It seems that for the first time that the EU discussed with India's the core security concerns. Despite these declarations, actual result will depend on the nature of the EU as an actor in counter-terrorism, convergence of the EU and India's threat perceptions and expectations, together with what both could really offer each other (Khandekar, 2012). According to the latest report by the EU Counter-Terrorism (CT) coordinator, the issue of foreign fighters has become its top priority (<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15799-2014-INIT/en/pdf>) Today, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, radical elements in Pakistan, the worsening situation in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, and the domestic situations in Jammu and Kashmir and in the north-east region along with wing extremism have been seen as major security threats by India. The issue becomes worse when it come to radicalisation, financing and networking of terrorist activities. As a result, some formal engagements have already begun. In December 2012 a five-member expert delegation from India met with representatives from Eurojust, Europol, CTC and the EC in The Hague. A structured EU-India cyber consultation has also been launched. The EU has its own limitations and hence looks at the issue of counter-terrorism more as a global action rather than a global war on terror. It focusses on a comprehensive approach which emphasises the root causes of all disease such as lack of democracy, economic opportunities, women empowerment, and illiteracy. Almost all counter insurgency operations have included these issues in their strategies, but immediate cooperation with other partners depend on intelligence sharing, joint exercises and training.

In order to create a more meaningful dialogue, the EU terrorist list of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts could be included to have many of those who are directly accused of terrorist acts in India. The latest list provided by the EU in March 2015 includes Babbar Khalsa, Hizbul Mujahideen, the International Sikh Youth Federation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Khalistan Zindabad Force (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:JOL_2015_082_R_0009&from=EN). The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs has a list of 38 banned terrorist organizations (<http://mha.nic.in/BO>). The inclusion of more terrorist groups targeting India on the EU's own list would strength their cooperation. It would be beneficial for India experts to about inter-state cooperation and cyber security from the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator through existing dialogues. The EU and India could also work together and open on the dead issue on Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN.

Indo-EU Counter Terrorism Cooperation: Potential and Challenges

In spite of being a key economic player across the globe the EU is revisiting the traditional and non-traditional conceptions of security in order to relocate its position as a strategic actor in the areas of security. The potentialities and challenges on India-EU counter terrorism cooperation needs to be properly assessed in such areas as cyber security, counter piracy nuclear proliferation and growing vulnerabilities of State towards terror. Though it has provided a platform for co-ordination of the counter terrorism activities of 28 nations, but the scope is a limited keeping in view that of individual national interests of member states and countries outside EU still prefers bilateral cooperation. In 2003, Europe bought out a security strategy entitled 'A Secure Europe in a better world' (Council of Europe, 2003), that identified five key threats – Terrorism, Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Regional conflicts, State failure, Organized crime. In 2008, this security strategy was revised and further identified two threats namely climate change and cyber security. The European Security Strategy calculated its own security environment and emphasized the necessity of fostering partnerships with ten of its strategic partners including India. Further, with Paris attacks (November 2015) followed by Pathankot (January 2016) and Brussels (March 2016), various internal measures have been taken on a war footing to meet the challenges of European and Indian security. The EU Interior and Justice Ministers at its meeting on 20th November 2015 agreed to implement immediately necessary systematic and coordinated checks at borders, including for EU citizens (Francesco Guarascio and Toby Sterling, 2015). The system check would be done against police databases. The EU is strictly monitoring travel and money transfers and also seeks to store and assess flight data in the future (Deutsche Welle, 2015). Given the migrant crisis that Europe is presently facing, immigration xenophobia and its backlashes are raising its ugly head. In this regard, EU can tap into India's migration problem management (EU to tap into India's migration problem management, 2015). Given the aftermath of London (2004) and Madrid (2005) terror attacks and Mumbai 26/11 terror attacks (2008) and recent terror attack in Paris and Pathankot, it was apt and the need of the hour for India and EU to bring out a Joint Declaration on International Terrorism Brussels. They reaffirmed their "commitments to enhance counter terrorism cooperation, as contained in the 2005 EU India Joint Action Plan, as well as in the 2009 EU-India Summit Declaration" (EU-India Joint Declaration on International Terrorism Brussels, 2010). India and EU also "attach great importance to counter terrorism cooperation within the framework of United Nations and accept universal ratification and full implementation of all UN Counter Terrorism conventions". It was decided to have high level meetings on counter terrorism within security dialogue.

The Sixth EU-India Security Dialogue was held in Brussels on October 25, 2012 and again an EU India practitioner's workshop on Counter terrorism was held in Hague 11-12 December 2012. There were meetings on issues of cyber security, nuclear proliferation and disarmament and counter piracy by Indian and European Union counterparts. In order words, counter terror cooperation depends on three factors, i.e.,

(i) presence of EU as an actor in counter terrorism at international politics; (ii) expectations and perception of India from international cooperation; and (iii) assistance offered by EU to India in combating counter terrorism. Signed, on March 30, 2016, the India-EU Joint Declaration on the Fight against terrorism. This was important for three reasons. First, India and EU called for justice who more involved attacks in Paris, Brussels, Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Mumbai terror. Leaders called for decisive and united actions to be taken against ISIL (Da'esh), Lashkar-e-Tayibba, Jaish-ei-Mohammad, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, the Haqqani Network and other internationally active terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and its affiliates'.¹⁵ Secondly, the declaration is significant because there is an urgent need for a comprehensive approach to address terrorism. It was a major step to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization, disrupt recruitment, terrorist movements and the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, stop sources of terrorist financing, dismantle terrorist infrastructure and prevent supply of arms to terrorists'. Thirdly, both India and EU expressed concern on the rising increased incidence of radicalization of youth and the use of the internet to this end. They emphasized the need to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of information and communication technology, including IT service providers to minimize the use of cyber space for by terrorist groups. In 2015 India-EU dialogue was initiated where discussion took place on such issues like cyber-security, cyber-crime, Internet governance, standards and regulation, capacity building and research and development.

Conclusion

Thus, the major task for both India and EU to work on deadlocked Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN. India and EU anti-terror strategies and tactics can be a model for South Asia. Both India and EU have to face the challenges emanating from the complex architecture of EU at institutional level. Furthermore they lack of evolving valuable systems on both sides for the proper assessment of threats. The convergences of interests for India and EU with regard to sharing, exchanging information and experiences of varied forms on counter terrorism will further carry the peace for actualizing strategic partnership for both sides. As the EU seeks to upgrade its economic ties with India there is also an urgent need to lay great emphasis on political relations and security cooperation. Security has been a top priority for both the EU and India which is well documented in their strategic partnership. Keeping in view the kinds of threats they face, there is a real need to enhance cooperation.

India's attitude to cooperation on counter-terrorism with the EU should be more open and should learn from European experiences of coordination and collaboration at the supranational level. Today, India cannot ignore EU as an actor in counter-terrorist activities. Similarly, the EU needs India also and for EU there is much to learn more from India's decades'-long experience of dealing with terrorism. Terrorist attacks like those that happened in Mumbai Paris and Pathankot are worrying in terms of future trends. They must take coordinated steps to prevent further attacks from taking place either in Europe or India. To deepen bilateral relations on

counter-terrorism, the need is also for more and more dialogue to under each other's threat perceptions globally and in the regional context. Hence, what is needed is security cooperation under the security roadmap must be clearly figured out and with achievable targets.

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