

Poppy: The fuel for terrorism

The war against terrorism can never be won in Pakistan because this war is against the drug abuse population of Pakistan. Afghanistan is one of the biggest opium producers in the world. It is easy to make money by exporting the opium. Most of the victims are of the young generation, especially males.

MD. MOZZAMMEL HAQUE

TERRORISM can be defined in different ways. It could be "the surprise threat or use of seemingly random violence against innocents for political ends by a non-state actor." International terrorism, on the other hand, implies acts of terrorism that include international consequences where terrorists go abroad to strike their targets. The definition of terrorist is specific, but there is no exact definition of terrorism. The phrase "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" exemplifies the subjectivity that lies with defining certain groups as terrorists. In the same way that technology is enabling the terrorists, the developed world is turning to technology as a principal defense against destructive individuals and groups.

In the short term, at least, the future for terrorism is good. For a number of reasons, the developed world should be keeping an eye over its shoulder in the coming years. We are now living in a time when the rich are getting richer faster than at any other time in history, when extraordinary population increases are producing multitudes of poor people who have access to television and are aware of how people in the developed world live. This rapidly growing technology is an amplifier of the economic and theological differences that people feel, and these perspectives are likely to only become more acute in the coming decade as the have/have-not divide broadens. We know that drugs, crime and terrorism can be linked, as they are in Afghanistan, or that money laundering

can provide the resources for criminal and terrorist networks. Bribery in Russia has helped terrorists to succeed in their attacks. It appears that this environment will become even more volatile in the near future as weapons of mass destruction become available to those groups that want to use them. The war against terrorism can never be won in Pakistan because this war is against the drug abuse population of Pakistan. Afghanistan is one of the biggest opium producers in the world. It is easy to make money by exporting the opium. Most of the victims are of the young generation, especially males. The most effective response to the terrorism problem requires a two-front strategy that has short-term and long-term components: dealing with the current terrorists and dealing with the fundamentals that produce and encourage terrorism. Almost all of the governmental effort is focused on the short-term problem and not the long-term one, so it is reasonable to presume that if the fundamentals that encourage terrorism are not addressed in a significant way the problem will grow. Poverty is clearly a huge problem for the planet. However, I don't think that we know yet if poverty directly causes terrorism. Few terrorists seem to be poor; on the contrary, they seem to be

well-educated and upper class. Indeed, if poverty spawns terrorism, there should be a lot more terrorism in the world. Terrorism is a form of crime, so it is useful to look at the links between poverty and crime. Surprisingly, research shows that poverty itself doesn't seem to cause crime. However, there is evidence of direct causality between increases in inequality in a society and increases in crime. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders. Numerous studies have shown that the best long-term approach to some of the most intractable problems the world faces is to increase education in less-developed countries, particularly of girls. When they become mothers, educated girls raise their families differently, they value education, and they have different values and goals. They also have fewer children. It is a very fundamental way to change whole systems. Young males are the prime victims. It is possible that males accept drugs and are motivated easily by the others. To find the proper solution, we need counseling for the young generation by the



Dangerous crop.

teachers, elite persons of the society and parents, and foster an understanding relationship between the young and the old in the society. Our government must motivate the young generation against drugs and take necessary actions against drug

trafficking and the criminals who brainwash the young generation through drugs to encourage terrorism. Md. Mozzammel Haque is Erasmus Mundus "AtoSIM" Master Course, Faculty of Science, University of Amsterdam.

Role of youth in climate change activism

Human activity is the prime cause of global warming along with natural disasters. As a youth community, we are the next generation; we are concerned about global warming. We feel that we, and future generations, will be the ultimate bearers of the impact of global warming and the related climate change.

SHARIFUL ISLAM

LAST September 29, I was invited from Bangladesh to attend a "Youth Training Workshop on Climate Change" in Bangkok, Thailand. There were 24 of us from 14 countries (Bangladesh, Australia, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Burma, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Korea, Japan, Thailand). I also joined "Inter-faith Consultation on Climate Change" on October 1-2 in Bangkok. Both were organised by the Asian Resource Foundation (ARF), the Archbishop of Uppsala Primate Church of Sweden and Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN). Climate is dynamic and is changing. Nowadays, climate change is one of the most burning issues in the world. Human activity is the prime cause of global warming along with natural disasters. As a youth community, we are the next generation; we are concerned about global warming. We feel that we, and future generations, will be the ultimate bearers of the impact of global warming and the related climate change. Many individuals, private institutions, NGOs and some governments have already initiated, or are going to initiate, action plans to make people aware of the severity of the problem and to get them involved in facing it. Experts, scholars, religious leaders agree that current efforts are not enough to solve

this multi-dimensional problem. Every day, a lot of debate over the causes of rising global warming is taking place. The scientists who are studying and doing research on climate change all over the world are finding evidence from tree rings, pollen samples, ice cores and sea sediments of such changes. The causes of climate change can be divided into two categories: • Natural causes: There are some natural factors responsible for climate change. For example, continental drift, volcanoes, ocean currents, the earth's tilt and comets and meteorites. • Human causes: In the atmosphere, carbon dioxide is the most prominent greenhouse gas. Changes in land use pattern, deforestation, land clearing, agriculture and other activities (use of synthetic products, lifestyle and consumption behaviour) have all led to a rise in the emission of carbon dioxide. The youth are forming a united unit through a range of strong social and institutional bonds. Progress on mitigation of climate change can be and must be pursued on a variety of hierarchical levels -- personal, community and political. The youth will have to take on their share of responsibility to help the communities as well as humanity. They need to move for the cause of humanity and serve humanity with their dynamism,



Youth to the fore.

strength and vigour. The youth will have to take over the leadership in order to bring about changes in the current predicament. They can also play a vital role in climate change. • Every youth should be a servant of the society he lives in. The youths who are still studying should devote

themselves during their vacation to the services of humanity. • They can raise awareness about climate change through organising different types of events, e.g. tree plantation, essay competition, rally, seminar, symposium and so on, under the theme "Save the World."

This would serve to bring the youth in communities together to perform their duties towards the social cause and community development. • Local youths can organise a week of voluntary events to educate people on climate change and discuss what each individual can do to make a difference. • They can clarify the concept of sustainable development and its importance in making the planet safe for the next generation. Moreover, youth can drive people of the society towards progressive policies such as energy saving innovations, effective recycling schemes, and changes in the education curriculum to reflect new challenges being faced by the society. • The youth can build an effective partnership with the media to increase public awareness on youth action for climate change. They can produce environment related documentary films and science fiction movies focusing on the eventual consequences of climate change on the living beings of the world, and showing the people best practices so that they can adapt as per their local needs. • The computer is one of the most effective alternatives for arousing awareness among children as well as communities. Youth can create different types of environment related computer games with causes and effects of climate changes. • Youth communities may mobilise community demand for incorporation of climate change as a subject

for all levels in the national educational curriculum. Furthermore, youth can take initiative to approach, through their respective government organisations, UN bodies including UNDP and Unesco to take initiative to build an international understanding among members of the next generation regarding climate change education. • Youth have enthusiasm, imagination and abundant energy to develop communication network and get respective local communities involved under this network in facing the challenges of the climate change. • Youth are adaptable. They, as a part of their daily lives, can quickly adopt a low carbon life style and a career choice. Youth can receive this message and practice it in their lives and encourage other people for practicing it in their lives. Climate change is a global problem, we need a global solution. The role of youth is not only to work for sustainable development locally or nationally but also to work for developing such a network that will make the movement of sustainable development international and global. In addition, if the youth become the driving members of the faith communities then they, through their knowledge and awareness building activities, can play an effective role in driving the community towards a sustainable as well as peaceful future. Thus, youth can make our planet safe for themselves and for the future generations as well. Shariful Islam is a student of Economics, 4th Year, University of Dhaka. Email: shariful06islam@gmail.com

Speeding at 20km/hr!

So, given my two and a half hours of observation and thinking time, the only stark reality that stood out was that there were just too many people. Too many people and too few roads. With the average influx of population into our glorious capital piling in by the millions every year; high-rise buildings with dwindling parking spaces is not helping at all.

FARIHA KHANDAKER

10:00 AM seemed to be a good enough time to head out if I was to get to work from Uttara to Karwan Bazaar by the most 11:30 in the morning. So how long did it take me? I was at work in no less than two and a half hours. In two areas of my route, my mode of transport was at a standstill for half an hour at each of the two signals respectively. If I were to complain about bad driving, then it would take out two thirds of the people who actually drive. Then again, by percentage the number of less-educated traffic officers would, if statistically proven, certainly be a lot higher. Not to mention the temper tantrums that people are simply provoked into as a result: with the scorch-

ing heat to top things off. So, given my two and a half hours of observation and thinking time, the only stark reality that stood out was that there were just too many people. Too many people and too few roads. With the average influx of population into our glorious capital piling in by the millions every year; high-rise buildings with dwindling parking spaces is not helping at all. New cars are being shipped in to suffice the need of higher incomes of a small-concentrated mass, and lowered restrictions and generous government leniency over the years are giving incentive to what exactly? The questions that come crawling in from all directions, when evaluated, cannot be deemed any higher than

sheer common sense. We have a severe problem! Many people addressing it by words: yes. By action: no. Just how much is the budget for infrastructural development? We cannot establish a proper signalling system for road transportation in the city, and there are plans for an underground subway? Seriously? It seems as though the government is rapidly trying to fast pace itself to join in with the big guns from the rest of South Asia, in terms of bragging rights. India has a subway system, so can't we, right? Moreover, the government is setting out a 2.2 billion dollar scheme to deal with the traffic congestion. Now we're talking. But wait, the communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain said that it would take about four years for the entire process with all its added work to be set in motion, even though finance officials have approved the budget. Well, we all know what usually happens to these projects, which tend to linger for years at a time to finally, if ever, take any effect. Meanwhile, vehicles that even the grim reaper would not hitchhike in are re-emerging in full flow. People are still reading 'no-parking' signs as 'please do park here', and I am certain that a great

number of the traffic officers are colour blind. The only benefits from these long hours in traffic are booming FM radio stations. Even the government's decision to get the army involved at some point has failed to take much effect. Whatever happened to the establishing efficient training programs for those responsible for maintaining order on the streets; the traffic officers need to be taught that each signal at a juncture should have equal time lapse as opposed to free flow on one side for thirty minutes while the rest of the four-way is sitting there swatting flies. It is a fact that Bangladesh is one of those few developing countries, which is in dire need of decentralization. Dhaka is already straining at the pressure of being the absolute centre of commerce, education, diplomacy and politics. It can no longer sustain itself as the dream city for rural-urban migration for a better livelihood. If there is effective government planning that focuses on developing cities in other districts, like Comilla, Sylhet, Barisal, and even Chittagong, then there would not be a flooding in of people with high hopes and higher disappointments later on. If possible, let each district become the hub for a different sector so



A depressing sight.

that our country can finally look at some form of actual specialisation. On the other hand, every government wants what is best for the nation. So maybe I'm just being unable to see the bigger picture where by 2021, in our

'digital' nation, it will easily be possible to travel from Uttara to Karwan Bazaar in a matter of a just a few minutes. Excellent! Fariha Khandaker is an Editorial Assistant for The Daily Star.