

One Man's terrorist is
Another man's Freedom fighter

Outline

Word count: 2001

1. Introduction:

1.1 Thesis Statement: The conflict in Kashmir; Separation of East Pakistan in 1971; Gaza crises; Ukraine and Russia; US and Soviet Union in Afghanistan; Korean and Vietnam war; Germany and Mussolini's Italy highlight how world has perceived each differently.

2. Historical lens of One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter:

2.1 Kashmir conflict

a) India consider Kashmiri resistance as terrorism, Pakistan views them as freedom fighters.

2.2 Separation of East Pakistan in 1971

a) India/Bangladesh views Mukti Bahini as freedom fighters, Pakistan views them as Terrorists.

2.3 Gaza Crises

a) Palestinians regard Hamas as freedom fighters, Israel considers them terrorists.

2.4 Ukraine and Russia

a) West views Ukrainian Struggle as a fight for freedom, Russia considers it as terrorism.



2.5 U.S and Soviet Union in Afghanistan

a) U.S viewed Taliban as freedom fighters in 1979 Soviet invasion.

b) Taliban ^{framed as} ~~turned into~~ terrorists after 9/11. by West.

2.6 Korean and Vietnam War

a) U.S and Soviet considered themselves as supporters of freedom fighters. and ^{the} other as terrorists.

2.7 Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy

a) German and Italian public considered their respective leaders as freedom fighters against the Treaty of Versailles conditions.

3. Conclusion

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No Universal consensus exists over what constitutes as terrorism and what as freedom fighting. The world perception, over the course of history, has changed, over what is acceptable and what is not. Even during times of intense humanitarian crises, the world has not united over its call for what it deems as freedom struggle and what it considers as simply terrorism. The vagueness of the definition of Terrorism, which ~~as~~ ^{the} United Nations defines it as the fear or use of violence to attain religious, political or economic objectives has divided the world into how each state views the crises. It is under this same vagueness that the struggle for freedom and freedom fighters emerge, aiming to achieve their goals through an armed struggle. Again, just as terrorism does not have universal consensus over what it is, freedom struggle and freedom fighters do not have a definition that is universally grasped. It is under such disagreements that conflicts arise, become intense, and alliances are forged, leading upto moments like World War I and World War II. In this essay, I will argue that the conflict in Kashmir; 1971 Separation of East Pakistan; the Gaza Crises; Russia-Ukraine conflict; US and Soviet Union in Afghanistan; Korean and Vietnam War; and Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, have each been held on different grounds by the same parties. While one has been equated to freedom fighting, others are declared as terrorism.

224



Date:

M T W T F S S

To begin with, Kashmir conflict has been one of the most contentious border dispute between India and Pakistan. Each side has ~~has~~ moved to win over the territory. Over the past 75 years, resistance to Indian aggression in the Kashmiri territories held by India has increased. With the increase in aggression, India's suppression has so increased as well. Hundreds and thousands have been killed by Indian forces. From the early resistance groups to fighters like Burhan Wani, who was assassinated in 2016, India has increasingly blamed Pakistan for supporting them militarily and economically. The weapons recovered by the killed Kashmiri fighters had been made in Pakistan, alleges India. It is under this view that India considers the Kashmiri resistance movement as merely a Pakistani project that is aimed to break away 'the integral part of India', as Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi terms it. Pakistan, on the other hand, considers the resistance struggle as a just movement with a just motive to free the Kashmiri people from the unjust and inhumane suppression of ~~Kashm~~ Kashmir by India. Pakistan considers Kashmir as the integral part of it, 'the jugular vein' as Pakistan's Defence Minister Khwaja Asif has said in National Assembly. Here, both India and Pakistan have a contrasting take on the Kashmir conflict. India views the resistance movement of Kashmiris as terrorism that is aided by Pakistan, whereas Pakistan considers it purely a freedom struggle of the

Kashmir freedom fighters.

Moreover, The separation of East Pakistan has also been an interesting yet controversial chapter in the ^{historically} strained relations between India and Pakistan. Pakistan alleged Indian interference in its internal affairs of handling the East Pakistan crises. 1970 elections and the subsequent chaos and political instability was further exacerbated by India to divide Pakistan by separating its Eastern wing from its western wing. Pakistan viewed Indian interference as one of the factors that fumed what Bengali people, specially Awami league, called 'the freedom struggle'. Had it not been for the obstacles that India has placed over W. Pakistan's reach to its Eastern wing, misunderstandings could have still been resolved. Armed groups such as Mukti Bahini rose up to the occasion to fight the Pakistani forces. The Bangladeshi and Indian leaders viewed Mukti Bahini as the ultimate and just freedom fighters. They provided the requisite support and military ~~sup~~ equipments to fight off the west Pakistani forces. On the other hand, Pakistan considered the 'freedom fighters' of Mukti Bahini as Indian sponsored and rejected the demands set out. Pakistan considered the declaration of the Independence of Bangladesh in March 1971 as an Indian conspiracy and deemed the armed struggle by Bangladeshi 'freedom fighters' as simply terrorism. The Fall of Dhaka in 1971 thus validates the

Statement that one man's (Pakistan) terrorist is another man's (India/Bangladesh) freedom fighter.

The Gaza crises also subscribes to the notion of one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. Ever since 1947, when Jews took refuge in Palestine in the aftermath of Holocaust and British promise to a new homeland in Balfour Declaration, Palestine has become a ground of intense conflict. The 1967 UN map, massacres and genocidal actions by Israeli armed forces against Palestinians throughout the ~~late~~ second half of 20th century and 21st century has given rise to armed resistance movements. These resistance movements of Palestinians have risen due to the world's indifference and continued Israeli aggression. October 7th marked a significant chapter in the freedom struggle of Palestinian people. Hamas, that operates in Gaza, carried out an attack on different Israeli cities. Many Israeli people were killed by Hamas in the attack. Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu considered it to be the most deadly attack on Jews after the Holocaust. Israel in order to take revenge, left 67000+ Palestinians dead. They labelled these people as those who were either Hamas members, or Hamas supporters who they viewed as terrorists. Gazans support for Hamas comes as a result of the only way left to achieve freedom. For Gazans, Hamas is the freedom fighter. For Israel,

Hamas is the terrorist. The blurring of lines between who is terrorist and who is a freedom fighter has led this conflict to go on for 7+ decades now. No consensus remains between two sides over which side is fighting for freedom. Gazans and Israelis blame and label each other as terrorists.

The ongoing Ukraine and Russia war also indicates how much world is divided between calling it a freedom struggle against threat, invasion and terrorism. The conflict that began in 2022 with ~~the~~ Russian invasion of Ukraine's Eastern region has engulfed the entire world into it, although in a divided pattern. Each side has justified its stance as just. Russia, for example, fears for its survival if Ukraine joins NATO. Russia hopes to have a buffer state, at the very least, with NATO so that it can protect itself better. Ukraine on the other hand, wishes to join NATO in order to protect itself from Russian aggression. In 2022, just as the conflict ^{began} so did the world divide over between taking Ukraine or Russian side, between terming it as a freedom struggle against potential NATO attack on Russia or Russian terrorism against Ukraine. The country's whose interests aligned much with Russia, e.g India, choose to remain neutral. The Western countries outrightly condemned the Russian terrorism & vowed to aid Ukraine to defend itself i.e. free fight for its freedom. This stark

difference in calling what freedom struggle or terrorism highlights how difficult it is to clearly defining the side which is right. For Russia and its allies, the war is just and a right step to fight for its freedom and sovereignty. For Ukraine, the Russian invasion is terrorism that the world needs to step in to stop it.

The Soviet and US involvement in Afghanistan has also been an interesting case study. The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led US step in to support the Afghan mujahideen in their 'just' struggle to free themselves from occupation. US funded the training of Afghan mujahideen who were hailed as freedom fighters on state level. Soviet Union was termed as an aggressor, a terrorist who was bent on pursuing its expansionist policy. From International Organizations to different states around the world, Soviet^{Union} was the terrorist while Afghan Mujahideen were the freedom fighters. Nevertheless, Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1991 completely. Fast forward to 9/11, US with its allies vowed to take on Afghanistan to eliminate Osama bin Laden and the Afghan Taliban factions who were supporting him. The same Afghan freedom fighters were now framed as hostile enemies. US, through all its might, invaded Afghanistan. Afghan Taliban were declared as terrorists by International organizations, that were heavily

influenced by the western countries. The stark difference that lay between calling the same group as freedom fighters and terrorists in a span of 10 years ~~approx~~ approximately highlight how quickly circumstances change. Those who fought against Afghan Taliban in the late 20th century now termed them as freedom fighters. Enemies of yesterday became allies of today.

US and Soviet also came head to head in Korean and Vietnam war. North Korea was supported by the communist regime of Soviet Union whereas the capitalist and democratic regime of South Korea was supported by US. Both sides had their respective allies who amplified the side's stance. The invasion of ~~North~~ South Korea by North Korea and its ally Soviet Union dragged US in officially with economic and military assistance. Similarly, in Vietnam, US and Soviet Union supported the opposing side, justifying their support for a 'just' struggle against aggression and attainment of freedom. The label US and Soviet Union put onto the conflict was reciprocated by their respective allies. Economic and military spending boosted in order to crash the other side's 'terrorism'. At last, North Korea and Soviet lost the conflict and could not unify Korea under one banner. In Vietnam, US was unable to install and sustain a

224

pro-west government. The Guerrilla fight, supported by Soviet Union, overthrew the US designs in Vietnam. Narratives were floated throughout the time the war had continued. For example, in US, mass conscription were carried out with banners spread across the country that had slogans like 'Your country needs you'. All of this served to recruit more and more people for what the opposing side viewed as aggression and terrorism. Thus, the 2 conflicts, Vietnam and Korea, indicate how one side depicted the fight as a freedom fight while other side considered it as terrorism.

Last but not the least is the era of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In the aftermath of WWI, treaty of Versailles was signed between the winning side members, UK, US, France and Russia. Germany who had lost the war was imposed heavy fines for war losses. The humiliation felt by the Germans translated into the rise of Hitler. He not only tore apart the treaty's conditions but soon began to threaten its neighbors like France. The war reparations that Germany owed to the winning side of WWI was too huge to pay. In this moment of hopelessness, Hitler gave them hope. He became the 'freedom fighter' for them and promised to take revenge from everyone who had humiliated Germany. On the other, Germany's neighbors and nearby countries such as France

and Great Britain were concerned over what Hitler was upto. The aggressive tendencies of Hitler made them worry about another act of Terror, another war coming up. This dual perception and view of the same situation subscribes to the notion of how one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. Moreover, In Italy, Benito Mussolini's rise was marked due to betrayal over treaty conditions. Italy had joined the WWI on the condition that it would receive more territorial concessions. However, The Treaty of Versailles did not fulfil the promise. The cost of war and poor economic conditions gave rise to Mussolini who vowed to take back Italy's share and make it reach the heights of glory. He wanted to free Italy from the shackles of economic instability and being dictated by western countries. On the other hand, Great Britain, US and France viewed the Fascist dictator's stance as ~~as~~ threatening, aggressive and potentially terrorizing. Thus, the case of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy highlight how each sides view the same circumstances differently ~~and~~ thereby react differently.

To conclude, the vagueness in terms of defining ~~of~~ what freedom fight is and what terrorism is has largely contributed to initiation and exacerbation of conflict. Had there been a universal consensus, conflicts could have been

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66 Avoided. The conflict in Middle East, South Asia, Eastern and Western Europe all signal towards the disagreements over what is a just fight and what is an act of terror.

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