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SEMESTER IV

Post 9/11 developments: Migration and Human Security

Introduction:

September 11 terrorists attack against United States was a land mark event in the sense that it had profound impact in the way politics was played between nations till date. It particularly affected the immigration and security policy of United States in particular and the world in general. The objective of this chapter is to highlight the changes which took place with respect to the issues of migration and security of the citizens in the wake of post 9/11 attack. Flow of people across the borders is a reality in the present globalization era. No states can shut its borders to foreign nationals. But when immigration becomes a security threat nations have no option but tighten their hold over immigration. Is that what happened after 9/11? How much migration has been affected by 9/11 attack and what has been done by different nations to secure their borders and nationals from foreign nationals with malign intent is what this chapter seeks to find out.

Impact of 9/11 on Migration:

When it comes to immigration before 9/11, security was not the overarching concern in the US or other countries; rather the focus was on economic interest, skilled and unskilled labour, family re-unification etc. cold war not only ended the hostility between the two super powers but also redefined the prevalent notion of security. Wasi eloquently discusses how soon after the end of cold war there was a fierce debate that the security environment had been shifting from being state centric to society centric laying more emphasis on the comprehensive nature of security (Wasi 2012:81). Its focus was said to have changed from security through armament to security through human development and empowerment.

However immediately after 9/11 security regained its prior position and status. Security in the context of international system has always implied the ability of states and society to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity. 9/11 brought to the surface the asymmetric warfare and the growing importance of non-military aspects of state security. 9/11 lay bare the states superiority in dealing with warfare waged by non-state actors. Because terrorism thrives on unconventional technique and strategy, it is reasonable to expect that terrorists will use unexpected and unconventional means to enter the territory (it was air space in the case of 9/11 attack and sea in case of Mumbai attack). The reason why Mumbai attack didn't gain so much attention is not far to seek. India is not the super power like USA. Terrorist's ability to invade the US air space challenged the might of sole superpower. Therefore after 9/11 it became rather fashionable to characterize migration as one of the key security issues. Many commentators have rightly argued that this securitization of immigration by sections of politics, state officials and the media is deliberately done as it serves their vested interests. States are particularly keen to depict migration as a security threat as it helps them to secure public legitimacy and also expand their control over the population (Boswell 2007)

The heightened security threat perception after 9/11 significantly reduced the number of refugees not only in USA but a similar trend was visible worldwide. Dewey in his research pointed out that terrorists' might see the US refugee admissions programme as a soft underbelly for entry into US and so there was a need to check the entry of such individuals (Dewey 2003:176). The 9/11 hijackers entered USA with legally issued visas- a fact that immediately linked immigration with terrorism and national security. This was the sole reason why in the aftermath of 9/11, immigration and counter-terrorism policy became more closely interlinked in the United States.

Little more than a year after the attack, President Bush signed into law the Homeland Security Act of 2002 which created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and brought under one roof 22 federal agencies ranging from the US Coast Guard and Secret Service to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the US Customs Service. Most of the functions of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) which was earlier a Bureau in the US Department of Justice (DOJ) was subsumed within DHS (Mittelstadt etl). The establishment of DHS was considered the largest Government reorganization since the Defence Department was created after the Second World War. The new department's overarching immigration objectives include achieving effective control of US borders and the

expansion of a 'zone of security' beyond US borders, enforcement of immigration laws, strengthening screening of travellers/workers and streamlined lawful admission and improved security by denying immigration benefits to dangerous individuals (Mittelstadt). Some of the measures taken by United States to regulate immigration includes:

- Expanded data collection and screening of international passengers
- Security enhancements to Us travel documents (such as machine-readable biometrically enhanced passports)
- Broadened grounds of inadmissibility based on 'terrorist activity', a term the Congress expansively defined and that DHS and DOJ have broadly interpreted
- A series of post 9/11 programmes and operations that required non-citizens from certain nationalities to present themselves for interviews with federal officials and face additional scrutiny and screening
- New policies permitting the detention of foreign nationals for alleged immigration violations in cases where there was not enough evidence to hold them on criminal charges and increased use of pre-charge detention after the completion of sentences and prolonged detention
- Signing of agreements to share certain law enforcement and intelligence information with nations and groups of nations
- The emergence of shared interoperable databases as a primary tool in all dimensions of immigration enforcement
- Introduction of the US Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) which ranks among the most visible of the post 9/11 travel control initiative which the Government has implemented to reduce security vulnerabilities. Since 2003 the US has collected fingerprints and photographs of all non-citizens entering the US by air, sea or land.

These measures greatly restricted the movement of foreigners into USA. For example prior to the change of regimes in Afghanistan, the number of Afghan refugees was second only to Palestinians among the world's refugee population. Since the US led ouster of Taliban over two million of these refugees as well as six lakhs Internally Displaced People (IDP) has been able to return home (Dewey 2003). Further 9/11 along with the rising numbers of asylum claims has caused most Governments to review and tighten up their own refugee programmes. For example Switzerland came very close to adopting one of the most restrictive asylum laws yet considered in the developed world (Dewey 2003).

There is also descriptive analysis that the events of 9/11 had a negative impact on attitudes towards immigration beyond US borders. Findings from Germany suggests a negative change in public attitudes towards certain minority groups particularly Muslims with the fraction of respondents who would dislike having Muslims as neighbours rising from 12% in June 2001 to 19 % in April 2002. However there is no indication that this increase in social distance towards Muslims translated into more negative attitude towards the group of immigrants or foreigners as a whole, as the fraction of respondents expressing a distaste for foreign or guest worker neighbour remained constant at 11 % (Schulter 2012). It is also interesting to note the findings of Fertig and Schmidt (2011) that the low educated hold relatively more negative attitude towards immigration and immigrants in the German context. Similarly immediately after 9/11 the UK government clearly felt the need to come up with measures that demonstrated their ability to protect citizens from the threat of terrorism which was however soon discontinued.

Impact of 9/11 on Security:

Warfare has changed now. Conventional warfare has replaced non-conventional threats to state sovereignty. Technological innovation has redefined warfare to the extent that without using the forces a nation can wage war against another nation. One of the major changes in the American warfare technique after 9/11 has been the extensive use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAVs) and cyber warfare. According to one report US has dramatically increased drone strikes since 2004, particularly in Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya and Somalia with the intention of eliminating al Qaeda insurgents (Gunaratne 2013).

Another great change in the wake of 9/11 has been that the war on terror is being confused as war on Islam. Terms like 'axis of evil', 'axis of oppression', 'either friend or enemy', 'with me or against me' etc. have become rampant in US foreign policy pronouncements. Strong evidence from aggregate time trend suggests that anti-Muslim sentiments and xenophobic aggression increased considerably among the US population in the wake of 9/11 attack (Schulter 2012). Human Rights Watch data reveals that there was a 16 fold increase in the reported total number of hate crimes against Muslims from 2000 to 2001 (Brosing and Brahler 2002).

Conclusion

Thus one finds that 9/11 changed a lot of things related to the way people crossed borders and perceived security. The threat perception was particularly heightened in US in the wake of 9/11. A series of changes in immigration laws and the implementing agencies was undertaken by USA. The ripple impact was also felt in other parts of the world but mildly and in some cases gradually faded away. In fact September 11 didn't change everything. It made no difference to the pace of globalization. World kept moving towards political, economic, social and cultural integration. Even the notion that Muslims hate the west for its way of life is simply wrong and 9/11 has not changed that. The exhaustive World Value Survey found that more than 90 % of respondents in much of the Muslim world endorsed democracy as the best form of Government (Cole 2006). Further polling by the Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press has found that about half of the respondents in countries such as Turkey and Morocco believed that if a Muslim migrated to US, his or her life would be better (Cole 2006). But yes September 11 changed the way US had conducted its foreign policy; thrust to eradicate terrorism particularly al Qaeda, punishing the countries sponsoring terrorism, preventing the terrorists from raising funds have cumulatively resulted in tight immigration and hardened security policies in US.

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