Managing National Security Threats in a Changing Global Landscape

Bikash Chandra Das

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Abstract

This article explores how national security has expanded beyond conventional military threats to include cyberattacks, terrorism, climate change, economic instability, and geopolitical competition. Focusing on Bangladesh, it explains how rapid digitalization creates cybersecurity risks, while extremist violence continues to require intelligence sharing, counter-radicalization, and stronger domestic security capacity. Climate change is presented as another security concern because floods, cyclones, displacement, and resource pressures can intensify social and economic instability. The article also discusses the vulnerability of Bangladesh to global economic shocks and the strategic pressures created by its position between major regional powers. It argues that these interconnected threats cannot be managed by a single institution or through military power alone. Effective national security requires coordination among defense, law enforcement, intelligence, diplomacy, disaster management, civil society, and the private sector. The article ultimately advocates an integrated and adaptable security strategy that builds institutional resilience while strengthening international cooperation and long-term national stability.



In the modern and dynamic world of globalization, the concept of national security threats has been made more multifaceted. These threats have changed greatly in the last few decades and this has necessitated governments to change their approach and structure in dealing with security. Previously, the issue of national security was usually narrowed down to military threats, including the invasion of a territory or widespread wars. But, today security issues have a much broader scope of problems, such as cyber threats, terrorism, climate change, economic instability, and changes in geopolitics. Such a dynamic and inter-dependent security environment requires a more holistic approach to handling security threats to the nation. In the case of a country such as Bangladesh, which experiences a combination of both internal weaknesses and external shocks, management of these emerging threats is of utmost importance.

Development of cyber threats has been one of the greatest transformations in the nature of the threats of national security. As the use of digital technologies is growing, cyberattacks threatening the national security fall upon governments, corporations, and individuals equally. These attacks involve the data breach and financial fraud to large-scale cyberattacks that may affect the critical infrastructure. Bangladesh is a country that meets high cyber threats due to the fast-evolving digital economy and the rise in internet use. Rising cybercrime and hackers as well as state-sponsored activities target nations with developing digital structures, so cybersecurity is now a priority. Cybercrime threat is increasingly becoming a threat to national security as well as may have consequences of destabilizing the economy and undermining people trust on digital systems. Bangladesh, in turn, will have to reinforce its cybersecurity systems, enhance digital literacy, and have effective legal frameworks in place that will help fight cybercrime and cyber terrorism.

Terrorism is also a significant security issue in the modern international environment together with cyber threats. Terrorism, whether domestic or international, is a menace that is always eminent in Bangladesh. Extremist ideologies have been on the rise over the years in different regions of the world and Bangladesh is no exception to the effects of this potential menace. Terrorist organizations that act on the territory usually attack vulnerable points of the security system in Bangladesh such as civilian locations, religious centers, and governmental facilities. It was an eye-opener that the cafe attack in Dhaka in 2016 reminded the society of how terrorist violence can be used to destabilize and erode the confidence of people. Consequently, the national security policy of Bangladesh needs to be highly focused on counter-terrorism actions, intelligence-sharing, as well as cooperation with other countries. Empowering the domestic security agencies, increasing the intelligence-gathering capacity within the country, and the counter-radicalization initiatives are fundamental in helping to curb the threats of terrorism.

The other immediate national security issue is the effect of climate change. Although this may go unnoticed in classical approaches to national security, climate change is now becoming a significant concern to human security as well as national security. Among the countries that have been highly impacted because of climate change, Bangladesh is included due to the low-lying geography, a large population, exposure to natural disasters, etc. The increasing sea levels, cyclones, floods, and erosion of rivers are a threat to the environment, social, and economic stability of the nation. Displacement of several millions of people under the influence of environmental factors may also enhance the existing social tensions, contribute to the further migration and generate new security issues. In addition, climate-related disasters tend to increase a disruption in food and water supply that may serve as a source of resource conflicts. The national security approach adopted by Bangladesh should, thus incorporate the climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. This includes investing in disaster-resilient infrastructure, improving the early-warning systems, and coming up with policies which would tackle the causes of environmental degradation. Besides, it is of paramount importance to collaborate with other countries because climate change is an international problem that needs to be solved together.

National security is also under a serious threat by economic instability. Bangladesh, as most other countries, is susceptible to world economic changes, including shift in trade patterns, currency devaluation or financial crisis in the world. Economic recession may upset the economy of a country and consequently cause high unemployment rates, social tension and probability of civil war. In the case of Bangladesh which is a fast developing economy with economic growth based on exports, specifically in the textile and garment industries, the global market shocks can be extremely significant. The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the speed at which shocks occurring in a global economy can impact individual national economies, causing supply chain issues, loss of jobs, and poverty. In a bid to deal with economic security, Bangladesh has to diversify its economy, enhance domestic industries and invest in sustainable economic development. Moreover, good governance and financial transparency is important towards the reduction of corruption and

so that economic crises do not trigger into security threats.

The issue of geopolitical changes is also a challenge to the national security especially in the areas where power struggles and strategic rivalries are a common occurrence. The world order is changing with new powers such as China having a greater influence in South Asia, but the old powers such as the United States and India will still be relevant. The geographical position of Bangladesh is between India and Myanmar, which is why it is an important regional security player. Although Bangladesh has in the past enjoyed good relations with its neighbors, even India, it is also forced to deal with the rising presence of China especially in the development of infrastructure and trade agreements. The geopolitical position of Bangladesh makes its national security interconnected with the rest of geopolitical concerns in the region, such as border security, military partnerships and economic relationships. In this regard, a proactive foreign policy should be embraced by Bangladesh that would help the country to maintain a balanced relationship with the regional powers whilst safeguarding the national interests of the country. With high defensive capabilities, diplomacy will also play an important role in controlling security risks within the evolving geopolitical environment.

It is important that a holistic approach is adopted in dealing with these complex security threats. The national security in the modern globalized world does not only concern the military strength but also the aspect of ensuring resilience in every aspect, such as economy, society, environment, and cybersecurity. In the case of Bangladesh, this would entail the creation of an integrated security approach comprising of a military, a diplomatic, and an economic as well as social approach. The key elements of this strategy would be strengthening institutions, establishing a trust relationship with people and fostering social cohesion. It is important that all areas of society withstand shocks be it natural, economic or political to ensure the state security.

A major aspect of this strategy is that there should be good coordination among the government agencies. National security cannot be the work of a single ministry or institution, there should be coordination between the defense, law enforcement, intelligence, foreign affairs and disaster management departments. When such agencies are coordinated, information sharing, efficient resource allocation, and swift and effective responses will be achieved. Also, the civil society has a significant role in the national security, especially in such spheres as counter-terrorism, climate change adaptation, and recovery after a disaster. Involvement of local communities, NGOs, and the private sector in the national security activities will enhance the effectiveness of the national security policies and make the society, which are all covered by the polices, to participate in the safeguarding of the national security.

The other important element of national security management in the evolving global environment is the importance of international cooperation. No nation could solve security threats in a world where they are not confined by geographical boundaries. To sustain its ties with the neighboring nations, regional blocs

such as the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the international ones such as the United Nations, Bangladesh needs to maintain its ties with them. International collaboration in matters like climate change, counter-terrorism, and cybersecurity will be necessary in dealing with security threats of such challenges.

Finally, the management of national security threats in the changing global environment is a complicated issue that needs a holistic and dynamic approach. Bangladesh should deal with the classical security threats, including the military threats, but also become accustomed to the new ones, such as cybercrime, climate change, and economic instability. Combining all elements of security into one approach will make Bangladesh more resilient and will guarantee that the national security system is ready to meet the demands of the changing environment in the world. This not only involves reinforcing national defense and security agencies but also a strong society that can generate a response to crises and create a long-term stability. Such a skill to manoeuvre through these multidimensional and intertwined challenges will play a pivotal role in securing and prosperity of Bangladesh in the future.