

Asian americans and the rise of the national security state research paper exampl...

[Parts of the World, Asia](#)



National security state is a term used to make reference to a condition where a state's aspects of political, economic, intellectual and social life are based on the considerations of national defense and the need to have in place national defense mechanisms and establishing a capacity, through all measures possible, of protecting the state against all its enemies both internal and external. This control of almost all aspects of life in a nation came into being during and after the second world war when a state of mutual suspicion among the war victors, with Russia on one side and the United states on the other. The rise of the national security state has had implications on Asian Americans through the decades that the system has been in implementation.

Asian Americans are a population of the United States whose origins are traceable to the Asia continent. It is a collective term used since the 1960's to refer to the sections of the American population which includes those with Chinese, Japanese and Filipino origins, but was later understood to include all those population groups which had their origins in Asia.

It should be noted that most Asian populations were the targets of hostility from other sections of American population, who felt that Asians were unwanted strangers. The acceptance of Asian Americans into the American society has been a long struggle, and even to this day sections of the Asian American populations are viewed with suspicion depending on the prevailing political circumstances.

Origins of the national security state predate the Second World War. The initial proposition of a stable nation protected from civil and religious wars by a sovereign state was put forward in the seventeenth century. In this

concept, the state was to provide to the citizens a peaceful existence to its citizens through a right given by the citizens to the government to pursue peace with other states and keep the peace through law enforcement in the state in question (Lee, 2005).

The development of the national security state can be traced back to the Second World War when it became apparent to the political class in America that some of their allies in the war were not true to the apparent friendship. The development of the atomic bomb, popularly known as the Manhattan project was done in with the intention of protecting the interests of the American nation, but the process was kept away from the allies of the United States in the war.

The office of the strategic Services, the precursor to the present day central intelligence agency was involved in what may be considered clandestine activities in the war, while targeting the enemy in the war. Its main concern was to protect the interests of the United States interests by ensuring that the war was fought with the least American casualties and expense of resources.

Most of the national security measures in the United States are controlled by the intelligence services. These are composed of the national intelligence program which operates under the provisions of the National security act of 1947, the military intelligence program which is operated under the military of the United States.

The Second World War was waged against the axis powers which included Japan. The United States government pursued a policy of internment towards those individuals in the United States who were of Japanese origins. The

number of those who were interned was more than 110, 000 on the continental United States, especially in the pacific coast. This treatment was authorized by the then president, Franklin D. Roosevelt through an executive order. These acts were carried out immediately after the Japanese forced the Americans into the World War by attacking the Pearl Harbour.

Though years later a commission appointed to look into the matter released findings which indicated that there was little evidence of Japanese American disloyalty, it is a matter of fact that there was an adverse exceptional treatment of Japanese Americans which was conducted in the name of national security. These decisions were based on what at that time was sound policy decisions; there was a belief that the Japanese living in America would be willing to sell out to Japan the operations of the Americans (Min, 2006). The government apologised for these acts in 1988, and provided for the reparations to Japanese Americans who had survived these internments. I should also be noted that since in the war the American military was still segregated, there was in action a battalion of the Japanese that fought in the war. The 100th Infantry Battalion was composed of mainly the Japanese who had been shipped from Hawaii to Oakland, though these men were later classified as enemy aliens, together with all the other Japanese American males.

The treatment of the Japanese during this war is a clear indication of how national security issues had an adverse effect on the Asian Americans. In the pursuit of the security interests of the country, many people suffered as a result of national security policy (Min, 2006).

In modern times, national security is an academic concept which is used to

describe the moves made by a national government to overcome the internal and external threats that face them at any point in time. It is a concept that was initially used in the United States after the Second World War.

The rise in national security can be attributed to the tensions which rose after the Second World War between the communist states and the capitalist states. There was a real concern in the United States that it was open to attack with nuclear weapons, especially after their use in the war. These fears were further made worse by the fact the rise of communism as a threatening ideological movement that was bent on taking over many governments around the world. The focus of the United States national security is mainly on its military apparatus. The country possesses arguably the strongest military in the world. The military element of national security does not only involve the protection of the country against external aggression, but also as a means of enforcing the United Government's policy position through force, an example being the use of military to oust the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2003.

The Vietnam War was fought on ideological issues, the explanation being that it was a fight against the spread of communism. In this war, thirty five thousand Asian Americans served as servicemen in this war in South Vietnam. In this war, the Asian Americans served a very important part in long range reconnaissance since they could be used to pass as Vietnamese. These were despite the fact that in the military, there was a continued discrimination against the Asian Americans who were usually compared to the Viet Cong. It is also on record that Asian Americans were victims of

friendly fire on account of their resemblance to the Viet Cong. The enemies during the war also targeted them, seeing their participation in the war being as traitorous (Min, 2006).

In the Vietnam War, Asian Americans started to participate in a significant way in the national security without being on the receiving end of adverse policies of the government. National security state contributed to the acceptance of Asian Americans into the mainstream military and changed the perception of the American society on the potential contribution of this population towards securing the security interests of the nation (Ripsman and Paul, 2010).

The September 11th attacks in New York opened a new chapter in the national security issue. There was a blame game within the ranks of the intelligence community. There were claims that inter-agency cooperation was low, and the lack of effective information sharing was cited as one of the reasons for the failure of detection of the plans of the terrorists.

Immediately following the attacks, there was the beginning of the war on terror. The regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq were toppled using military force, and these wars dragged on for a period of nearly a decade. In these conflicts, Asian Americans participated without any discrimination. It is estimated that the Asian American population forms about 4.4% of the military, and has participated in all forms of military duties, both combat and non combat. This is an indication of the contribution of the Asian American society to the national security has become more pronounced (Chen et al. 2009).

Political security is another aspect of the national security. It mainly focuses on the stability of the society over which the government has jurisdiction. It

may also be defined as a means of ensuring that the free will of a sovereign people is protected. This will involve protection of the social order, the political system, the constitution and the freedom of the people of a nation. Political security, as a component of national security involves in principle the protection of the established political order and ensuring that it is not adversely disrupted by internal or external political forces. There has been an increase in the number of Asian Americans in political offices in the country. An Asian American was appointed to the cabinet and the implication is that there is more involvement on the political front of Asian Americans in the policy making organs of the nation that deal with national security (Chen et al. 2009).

Environmental security is also a factor of national security. Over the last few decades, the environment has become a critical part of security, and it presents an avenue on which the security of a nation can be compromised. The destroying of an environment can even mean the end of whole populations. It is therefore imperative that a nation should input a considerable amount of resources towards ensuring that environmental security of the nation is ensured.

A nation also needs security for its natural resources. These resources are usually ensures that a nation is able to make industrial and economic progress. There has been a claim that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were a way of ensuring that the United States supply of oil was not disrupted by anti-American regimes. Many of the conflicts between nations, both past and present, are based on quests for natural resources, without which parties in such conflicts would be weaker economically, politically and even

technologically. This means that protection of natural resources forms a critical part of national security and Asian Americans have played a critical role in their protection. This can be aptly described by a policy which was implemented by the American military until the 1970's of recruiting from the Filipino nation (Chen et al. 2009).

Cyber security has become a major issue in all nations on earth in recent years. Technological advancements and the use of the internet have provided an avenue through which sabotage of national interests can occur. It is through the cyberspace that many nations have lost their valuable trade secrets, technological innovations, political plans and other critical information from governments. The protection of the cyber space has becoming one of the most critical elements of cyber security. The dynamic nature of the internet and data sharing means that the security measures that government may have in place become outdated very fast, rendering them vulnerable to attacks. Another aspect of cyber security which makes it critical to national security is that it does not involve the use actual combat like other measures of keeping national security (Chen et al. 2009). It involves a struggle between nations which is fought on the cyber space rather than in actual physical battlefields.

The CIA has been involved in many covert operations which have not been viewed in a positive light in many quarters. The quest for national security has been misused by several organizations, and chief among them being the CIA which has a record of a misuse of its powers to meet its perceived national security obligations. There have been cases of the CIA attempting and sometimes succeeding to take out foreign leaders. This trend has had its

effect on the Asian Americans. During the Vietnam War, the CIA was involved in a program which involved the capture, torture and even murder of the Vietnamese who were perceived to be members of the Viet Cong. These actions led the suffering for many of the Vietnamese Americans who lost their loved ones during the war. The many Asian Americans who lost their lives during the many wars that have been waged by the United States have also had an impact on the lives of their surviving loved ones. Many families have been left destitute and without financial support (Chen et al. 2009). It was the CIA that was responsible for determining whether indeed the Saddam regime in Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. From the findings that came to light later, the information was defective and the regime went ahead and started a military campaign to topple the regime. The cost of the war in terms of human lives has been very high. The impact of this misinformation has had an adverse effect of Americans of Iraq origins. Many have lost their relatives in the war. More losses have been economic and the financial losses have been vast since the country was but destroyed. The CIA's mind control program, which was known as project MKUltra, was a research operation which involved attempts at behavioural engineering. The project ran from 1953 to 1973 when it was official closed. Though it has not been specifically proved to have involved Asian Americans, the period on which it was conducted coincided with the Korean War and the Vietnam War in which there has been documented abuses against Asian Americans (Min, 2006).

The Phoenix program was another CIA invention which was used during the Vietnam War. Its objective was to identify and neutralize the infrastructure of

the Viet Cong. It involved the use of torture and assassinations. The use of torture in attempts to gain intelligence about the Viet Cong between 1965 and 1972 led to the deaths of more than 90, 000 individuals suspected of being members of Viet Cong. These actions done in the interests of national security resulted in the loss of lives of people who were related to Asian Americans. It was a program that abused a section of the population and led to discrimination of the Americans of Vietnamese origins (Min, 2006).

On the other hand, national security issues have changed the manner of handling terrorism suspects. There have been claims of torture and violation of human rights and torture in handling these suspects, most of whom are Asian Americans of Arabic origins. A significant population of the Guantanamo bay detention centre which is used to hold terrorism suspects is Asian American (Arabic origins). There has been a feeling that this population is being targeted due to its heritage and its association with terrorist groups such as Al-Quaeda and Al-Shabaab.

The CIA have periodically made claims to the effect that China was involved in acts of cyber sabotage targeting the United States, and these have always been met with denials from the Chinese. It has been claimed, without any significant proof, that Asian Americans of Chinese origins have been acting as spies for the communist government by hacking into American cyber installations and stealing intelligence, technological and trade information which would otherwise be held away from the public. These claims mean that Asian Americans of Chinese origins are held in high suspicion of cyber sabotage, and are seen as threats to national security (Fujita-Rony, 2007).

The revelations made by Edward Snowden and the wiki leaks have brought

to the fore the fact that the American national security is not only focused to its perceived enemies. This means that the perception that Asian Americans are the main targets of American intelligence has been changed. With revelations that America spies even on its allies, focus has moved away from the Asians (Kim, 2008).

The development of the American society from the Second World War to date has changed perceptions about Asian Americans as regards to national security. The suspicions, and sometimes the suspicions that were directed towards them have declined considerably. This means that the advancements in the national security state have made these stereotypical perceptions come to an end, therefore ensuring that the Asian American population has started enjoying a level of acceptance in the American society that was not enjoyed before.

Asian Americans have also come to be accepted as members of the armed forces without being subjected to the discriminations which they were earlier subjected to decades before. This means that they can make more positive contributions towards the security of their nation. Asian Americans can have the best military education and rise through the ranks without any connection to sabotage activities targeting the nation.

The CIA has now come to accept Asian Americans as operatives in their ranks. The services rendered by these individuals have impacted on improving the security situation of the nation. The historical wrongs committed by various past governments have been apologised and appropriate compensations made. The implication of this is that the government has come to accept that the Asian American population is an

integral part of the American society which needs to be treated with the same level of dignity accorded to other Americans.

The national security state has had an adverse effect on the Asian Americans of Arabic origin. The security apparatus has created the impression in the American society that those of Arabic origin should be treated with a level of suspicion. There have been cases of discriminations against Arabs in employment, education and harassment by security agencies. This has resulted in more complicated lives for the Arab Americans in the United States.

In conclusion, the rise of the national security state has resulted in general improvement of the perceptions of the Asian Americans in the American Society, and more individuals from this population are being integrated into the society. It has also resulted in policy changes which have resulted in the acceptance of Asian Americans in organizations that are involved in policy decision making programs in the nation.

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