

V Balachandran

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A Freedom First & Indian Liberal Group publication

Terrorism

By

V. Balachandran

Former Special Secretary,
Cabinet Secretariat

A Freedom First and INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP Publication

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Publisher's Note

Dear Friends,

This is a joint publication of *Freedom First*, published by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, and the Indian Liberal Group. Both organizations are committed to a free society which guarantees the liberty of the individual and his right to live in dignity. Terrorism denies both. The rule of law needs strong and determined governance which, in turn, implies governments' willingness to implement the law and punish the culprits. Any essay that promotes this concept deserves our support and this essay by Mr. V. Balachandran does precisely that.

We publish this on the occasion of the Minoo Masani Birth Centenary year. Minoo Masani fully supported the suppression, with a firm hand, of all forms of violence including terrorism which is its most evil manifestation. We subscribe to the dictum that the end cannot justify the means.

We intend to circulate this booklet not only to those entrusted with the task of maintaining law and order but also to all those who are interested and to organise discussions to educate public opinion on this evil that threatens every one of us. If you would like to participate in the discussions on how to deal with this universal menace, please email us at freedom@vsnl.com or write to us. We shall get in touch with you.

We are grateful to Mr. V. Balachandran for his effort and time in producing this paper and to Mr. Ashok Karnik for the foreword.

S. V. Raju
Editor, *Freedom First* and
President, INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP

Mumbai,
November 20, 2005

Foreword

“Terrorism” is an issue, which is torturing the minds of laymen as well as security experts and political scientists all over the world. Its unending spiral is challenging the concepts of state power, freedom and human rights. It is posing new questions that have found no answers so far.

V. Balachandran, long associated with ‘Intelligence’ work is a student of various security issues and is rated as one of the few scholars having an objective mindset on the issue of “Terrorism”. Others have a more personal involvement in handling terrorism and have a subjective but, all the same, an equally valid point of view. There are bound to be divergent views on how to tackle terrorism. This paper can be a beginning of a valid and educative debate on the subject. There is little public awareness in this country of the complexities involved in tackling terrorism. This paper takes us through the subtleties of defining terrorism to the terrorist mindset.

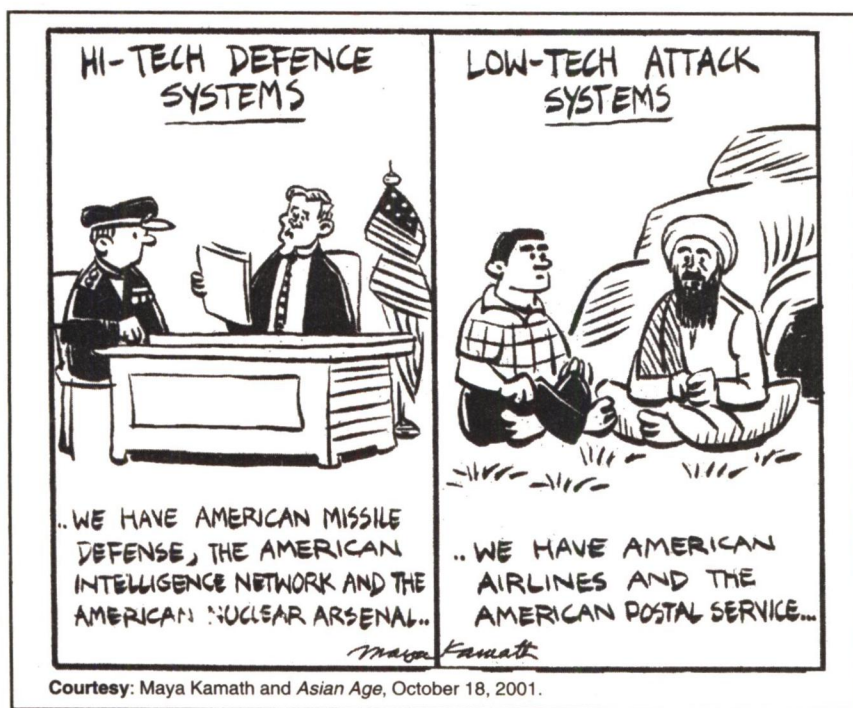
Any discussion on terrorism cries out for answers to questions like

- Is a soft state capable of defeating terrorism?
- Do we require harsher and harsher laws as terrorism thrives?
- Is the ‘end of history’ to be followed by a ‘Clash of Civilizations’ and is terrorism the beginning of such a clash?

Very facile explanations are often offered to sweep the spectre of terrorism under the carpet. Oversimplified responses lead us nowhere. Economic disparities, regional aspirations, cultural divides, religious dogmas etc., are all touted as the 'whys' of terrorism. Each has a part to play in various areas but mere academic analysis provides no way to tackle terrorism. Pursuit of each causative factor leads to new questions. Academic debate is barren. What is needed are practical solutions. Hope this paper facilitates the search.

Ashok Karnik

Mr. Ashok Karnik is retired Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau.



Introduction

No other expression poignantly illustrates the essence of terrorism as the famous IRA message to British Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher after a failed attempt: "Today we were unlucky. But remember, we have only to be lucky once. You have to be lucky always." Similarly no other cartoon expressed the basics of terrorist strategy better than the late Maya Kamath's piece in *The Asian Age* showing President Bush boasting about his latest weapons but bin Laden responding calmly "We have American Airlines and the American Postal System". These two pieces succinctly convey the terrorist mind and methodology. The terrorist is always at an advantage since he captures the adversary by surprise, choosing his own time. On the other hand it is difficult for the security or intelligence services to be alert all the time due to the "alert fatigue" syndrome. This also explains why it appears to the common man that the terrorist always has an upper hand. A terrorist has also to be innovative. Till 9/11 one would never have thought that a terrorist would use an ordinary commercial airliner as a deadly weapon.

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The Cold War and Terrorism

It was only in the mid 1990s that the subject of terrorism started engaging the attention of a majority of governments although the menace of terror had started manifesting much earlier, more seriously from the 1960s onwards. However strident Cold War polemics and the resultant polarization of the world on ideological considerations prevented any meaningful steps by the international community to tackle the menace in a concerted way. Acts of terrorism were described as legitimate struggle for national aspirations depending on which side of the spectrum the affected persons or governments were in. The differences between freedom fighters, guerillas and terrorists blurred on ideological considerations. Leading nations arrayed against each other in the Cold War lined up and lent help to such acts of terrorism by way of funds, training, equipment and even manpower. Other nations, not belonging to the Cold War camps paid no heed to terrorist killings even in their neighbourhood as long as it did not affect them. For example, India was least concerned with the Karen attacks on the Government in Burma, which have been going on for over 50 years. Nor for that matter was Burma concerned with the Naga attacks in India although some of the leading Naga cadres operated from Burmese territory. Jonas Savimbi, a creation of the CIA during the Cold War, described as "Freedom Fighter" by President Reagan and received in the White House in 1980 wrecked Angola with a civil war, which finally felled him in 2002. History proves that efforts were always made to justify terrorist methodology in certain circumstances. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stated in his autobiography "Warrior" that he set an example

for everyone in Qibya in 1953. The notorious “Qibya massacre” was perpetrated by his Unit 101 in which at least 69 Palestinian civilians, mostly women and children were slaughtered. Dr. Iyad Allawi, US nominated interim Iraqi Prime Minister, self-confessed CIA and MI6 agent and leader of the “Iraqi National Accord” (INA) had triggered a bomb attack in a Baghdadi cinema house in 1994 to “impress” the CIA, killing several civilians.

The feeble attempts by the United Nations since 1963 to bring in some sort of international cooperation to tackle various acts of terrorism met with limited success on account of Cold War politics except in certain areas like aviation security.

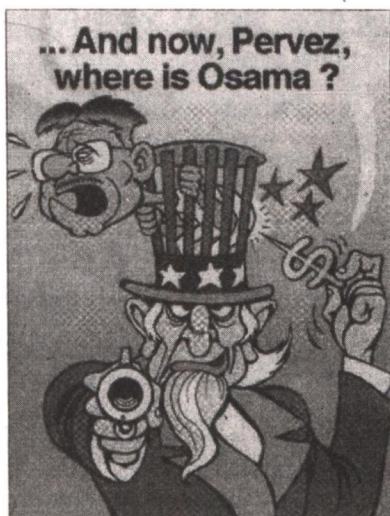
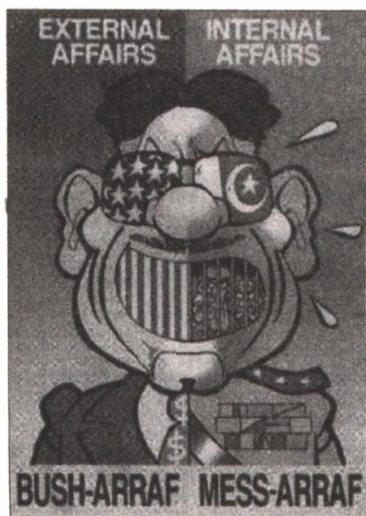
It took more than 34 years for an international consensus to emerge on the vital ingredients of tackling terrorism by way of passing of the 1997 and 1999 Conventions on Terrorist Bombings and Terrorist Financing which were reinforced by UN Resolution No.1373(2001) passed after 9/11. However even those

governments taking meaningful steps to detect and control terrorism are motivated by considerations on how far they are affected by such acts of terrorism and not how humanity in general is suffering. For example the United States’ annual reports on terrorism (“Patterns of Global Terrorism”) released by their Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, which is the most comprehensive compendium of terrorist organizations in the world has a preamble (1996 Amendment to The Export Administration Act of 1979) listing the countries which had cooperated with the US Government, in apprehending, convicting and punishing terrorists responsible for attacking US citizens and interests. That this stipulation tends to cloud their final judgment on certain countries

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supporting terrorism is borne out by the Report for 2000 in which Pakistan, which was criticized for supporting Kashmiri militants and the Taliban, earned high marks for its cooperation with the US to “enhance security for US facilities and personnel”.

IN THE AIR



The joke is on Pakistan. Ask the Internet.

Courtesy: *Asian Age*, 7th June 2002.

Terrorism – Causes?

Polemics on the cause of modern day terrorism are never ending. Caleb Carr, a noted military historian says in his famous book *The Lessons of Terror* that the Jews had brought ‘organized, paramilitary terror into the Palestinian region before the partition of Palestine. He says: “The ease with which the Jewish terrorists turned to murder and mayhem was perhaps understandable, given what was happening in Europe and the tales that were being brought to Palestine by immigrants”. He feels that modern day terrorism is the carry forward of the old military theme on the “destructive war” philosophy in which civilians were deliberately targeted to undermine their support for the policies of their political leaders. Mahmood Mamdani, Director of African Studies, Columbia University, New York and author of a highly acclaimed book *Good Muslims, Bad Muslims. America, The Cold War and The Roots of Terror* has said that 9/11 was the remnant of the Cold War. He told *India Abroad*, New York (May 15, 2004): “I argue that the non-State terrorism financed and supported by America is to be blamed for much of today’s terrorism”. Mamdani is the husband of noted filmmaker Mira Nair. There is perhaps no exaggeration in this since every major terrorist leader now in operation has had his ‘baptism’ in the Afghan ‘Resistance’.

US-led Afghan resistance has always been considered as a reaction to the invasion of that country by the USSR in December 1979 to depose Hafizullah Amin who had killed Taraki to assume power. However this was not so. Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter’s

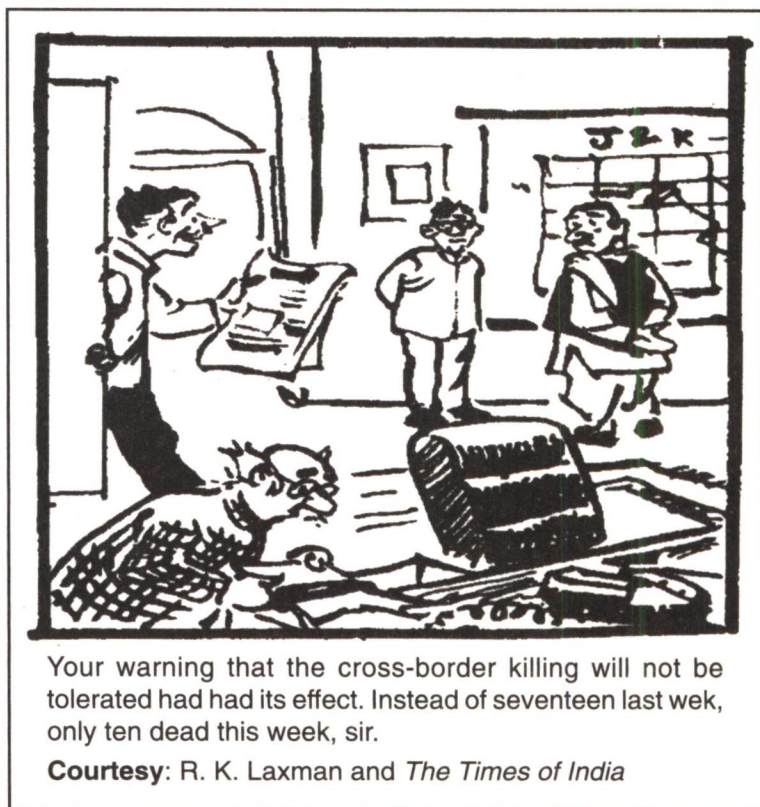
National Security Adviser laid to rest this impression in an interview to the French Weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* (January 15-21, 1998) that President Carter had approved CIA assistance to the enemies of Taraki at least six months before this invasion. "We didn't push the Russians to intervene, *but we consciously increased the probability that they would* – the secret operation was an excellent idea – it had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap. You want me to regret that? *What is more important to the history of the World.....The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet Empire? Some stirred up Moslems or the liberation of the Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?*" (Italics mine)

*Every nation
condemns terrorism
but blames others for
keeping it alive.*

This was well before 9/11. Perhaps Brzezinski must be ruing his remarks in the light of what happened since then.

However in the present context any intellectual dialectics or cause-effect analysis on the origins or causes of terrorism will not lead us anywhere. Most of the UN debates on terrorism are unfortunately marked by such polemics. Every nation condemns terrorism but blames others for keeping it alive. Similarly branding some as "Rogue Nations" without trying to understand their compulsions will also lead us nowhere. It can always be stated that Palestinian terrorism would not have raised its head but for the Israeli occupation of their territories during the Six-Day War of 1967 or that the Hezbollah would not have been encouraged but for the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon in 1978. Or for that matter Hamas, which till 1987 was only a social welfare organization for religious indoctrination, would not have been strengthened but for the deliberate Israeli policy of weakening Arafat. One could argue that the LTTE would not have resorted to terrorism but for Sinhala chauvinism or IPKF intervention.

Similarly it could be said that the Taliban or Osama Bin Laden would not have become such formidable public dangers but for the pumping in of millions of dollars by the US/Saudi/Pak combine to train and equip the ever feuding 'Mujahideen' to take on the Soviet Union in Afghanistan which finally reduced it to an anarchic medieval wasteland. Perhaps such dialectics will only teach us the costly lessons of history and nothing else now.



Defining Terrorism

Any analysis of terrorism should begin with a definition of terrorism. It is said that there are over one hundred definitions. The most acceptable definition which captures the essence of terrorism without partisan interpretation is by the U.S Department of Defense: "Unlawful use of force or violence against individual or property to coerce and intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives". However the US State Department gives another definition, based on US Code title 22, Section 2656(F): The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents usually intended to influence an audience. The term 'international terrorism' means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country." This raises uncomfortable questions. According to this definition, armed attacks by Pakistan supported Kashmiri terrorists on the Indian Army or BSF posts will not be terrorism! It is only because of this narrow definition that the State Department's annual compilation does not list more than 400 or 500 instances of "International Terrorism" the world over. There are however indications now that this definition by the State Department is likely to be changed. On the other hand Caleb Carr says: "Terrorism, in other words, is simply the contemporary name given to and the modern permutation of, warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will to support either leaders or policies that the agents of such violence find objectionable."

Terrorists, Guerillas, Insurgents and Freedom Fighters

We now come to certain expressions like “terrorists”, “guerillas”, “insurgents” and ‘freedom fighters’. The dictionary meaning of “terrorism” is coercive intimidation for political ends or a system that seeks to rule by instilling fear through terror. “Guerilla” is defined as irregular band of partisan soldiers while an “insurgent” aims to organize an uprising against an existing government. “Guerillas” were Spanish and Portuguese resistance fighters against French occupation in the Peninsular Wars (1808-14). Their violence was justified as response to injustice. This itself originated from the Italian “Condottieri” (mercenary soldiers) who were used by different Italian princes prior to the Reformation to wage local wars. The word “terrorism” was used in the wake of the “anarchist” threat in the 19th century. “Urban guerillas” of the 1960s, who evoked sympathy owing to their leftist leanings, were also called “terrorists”. In the 60s-80s the difference between guerillas, insurgents and terrorists blurred as terrorists also claimed to be ‘freedom fighters’ to gain sympathy. Irrespective of any definition, the term “terrorism” denotes attempts to overthrow an established system or government through force.

Students of international terrorism are faced with certain perennial dilemmas. First, when does a terrorist become a freedom fighter? For long, William Safire, eminent American journalist used to call the late Yasser Arafat, a terrorist. In the 1930-40s Jewish underground groups led by former Prime Ministers Begin and Shamir were termed as terrorists but in 1944-45 they became “freedom fighters”. Brian Pearson,

convicted IRA bomber was seen as “Grand Marshal” of the St. Patrick Day Parade at Orange Town, New York on March 17, 2002. Second, do we call the struggle of certain groups, especially non-State actors as terrorism? There are over 50 members of the “Un-represented Peoples’ Organization” (UNPO), popularly known as “Parallel UN”, some of whom like the Nagas, Karens, Kurds, and Shans were carrying on violent struggles against their governments. Do we call them terrorists? Third, do we call State repression as terrorism, example being the brutal suppression of Kurds by Saddam or the Palestinians by Israel? Finally, if we allow re-drawing of national boundaries for certain groups like East Timor, Eritrea etc., do we allow for others? There is no ready answer.

Students of international terrorism are faced with certain perennial dilemmas. First, when does a terrorist become a freedom fighter?

In classical parlance insurgency thrives on local support like the 1946 Telengana uprising which later became the “Peoples’ War Group” (PWG). One could add the insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur also in this group since it started immediately after Indian Independence, as a sizable section of locals

did not accept their merger with the Indian Union. Bad governance in some areas gave fillip to separatist movements like the All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) which gave birth to the terrorist group United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). Unchecked migration from Bangladesh triggered insurgency in Tripura, Assam, and Meghalaya. However several of these so-called insurgency movements undertake terrorist attacks to divide and provoke people when they start losing public support as we have seen in the case of ULFA. Insurgents also use armed pressure to keep the civil population under control to create an artificial impression that they have popular support as we have seen in the case of the LTTE and Kashmiri terrorists.

Common Characteristics

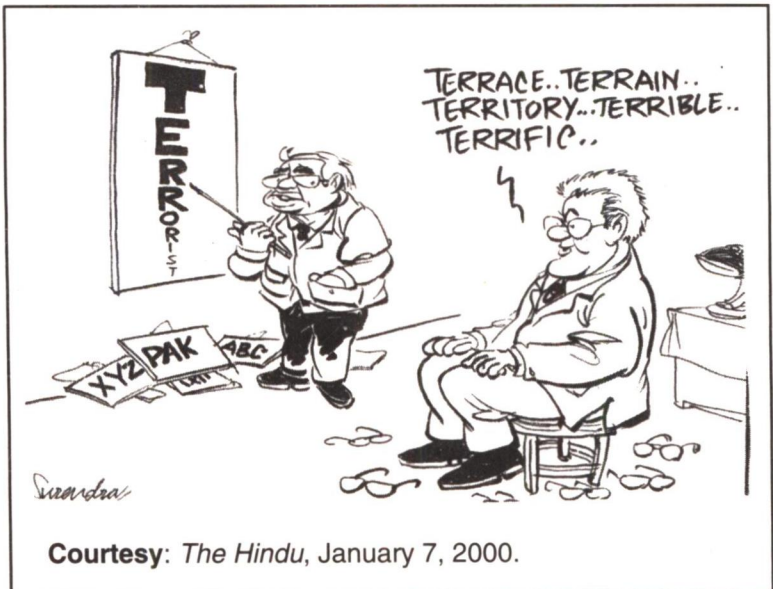
Irrespective of any affiliation, all terrorist groups exhibit certain common characteristics: First, terrorism is big business and self-sustaining. No terrorist group complains of lack of funds. Some terrorist groups like the LTTE have well-established business networks, which give them a steady income. The LTTE has several commercial vessels and they have a monopoly on the sale and distribution of Tamil video films in Europe & North America. Every Jaffna Tamil based abroad has to compulsorily contribute one tenth of his income to the LTTE. They supplement this by abduction for ransom. Our North East “Rebels” collect regular instalments from government contractors and even from government servants. The Peoples’ War Groups who claim to be motivated by ideological considerations also collect funds from industrialists through extortion. We know by now how Osama bin Laden was able to fund his activities. Second, all terrorist groups are able to get recruits, including teenagers either on the basis of ideology, financial gains or threats. The LTTE’s “Baby Brigades” are well known. All major groups recruit teenagers – Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar, Hizbul besides the LTTE. There were reports that the latter was using the cease-fire with the Sri Lankan Government to do the recruitment. Finally, all terrorist groups are able to recalibrate grounds towards new targets as convenient. For Osama it was the Soviet Union first and now it is America. After initially targeting Sri Lanka, the LTTE targeted India by joining hands with Prime Minister Premadasa, only to blow him up at an opportune moment.

At the same time, terrorist groups try to keep the costs of operations low. Peter Bergen states in *Holy War Inc.* (Biography of Osama) that the cost of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing which

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resulted in half a billion dollar property loss was just US\$ 3000! Similarly the cost of 9/11 which destroyed billions of dollar worth of real estate apart from the loss of over 5000 lives ranged between US\$ 200,000 and 500,000. The LTTE

believes that the assassination of a high personage like a Prime Minister or a President is cheaper and equivalent to the psychological shock of defeating a full division of the army. All terrorist groups are very patient in planning such attacks. It took 5 years for Osama to plan the 1998 Kenya Embassy bombing.



Brief History of Terrorist Movements

Terrorism was practiced even during pre-historic times to attain political objectives. It has been recorded that “Sicari”, an extreme Jewish faction, had targeted Romans and even other Jews in 73-70 B.C. In the 11th century there was the ‘Order of the Assassins’, followers of Hassan I Sabha in Qom, targeting Sunnis and later Christians in Jerusalem. In the 19th century there were the ‘Anarchists’, including Karl Heinzen and Johann Mist who migrated to The United States. Mist’s book *The Anarchist Cook Book* is still a standard text book in terrorist circles. The Russian Michael Bakunin who settled in Paris wrote the conduct rules for terrorists in *Principles of Revolution* and *Revolutionary Catechism*. Nikola Tesla, a Croatian, born in 1857, who worked with Westinghouse in US claimed to have invented the ‘Death Beam’ and ‘Earthquake Machine’. The Japanese ‘Aum’ cult scientists under Shoko Asahara had tried to access Tesla’s papers.

Some famous assassinations in the 19th and early 20th centuries: Tsar Alexander II in 1881 by Narodnyaya Volya (People’s Will), Lord Cavendish (British Chief Secretary in Ireland) in 1882, French President Carnot in 1894, Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Canovas in 1897 and King Umberto of Italy in 1900. Dr. S. N. Sharma, a noted scholar from Agra who attended my lecture on terrorism at the Kalina campus of the Bombay University in 2002, told me that the first terrorist act in Indian mythology was the assassination of Hiranya Kashyap by Narsingh. Some of the prominent ‘leftist’ terrorist groups in the 19th and 20th centuries were the Russian Social Revolutionary Party (1900),

its armed wing BO (Boevaya Organisatia) and the Armenian Groups (1890s) against the Turks. The 'Rightist' terrorist groups were the Russian 'Black Hundred', German 'Freikorps', Croatian 'Ustasha' (which was supported by Mussolini and which killed Yugoslavian King Alexander and French Prime Minister Barthov) and Rumanian 'Iron Guard'.

The major orientation of terrorism was nationalist-separatist in the 19th century, extreme right in the 1920s, left wing in the 1970s and the right wing/fundamentalist since the 1990s. Mention must be made of the Israeli Groups (1930-40) like the rightist 'Irgun' of Menachem Begin and the 'Stern Gang' (sometimes rightist and at times leftist) of Yitzhak Shamir. Both became Prime Ministers later. They blew up King

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David Hotel in Jerusalem (1946), killed scores of Arab families in Deir Yassin (1948), which started the Palestinian exodus and assassinated Count Bernadotte of Sweden heading the UN Truce Commission in the same year. The Algerian FLN fought for independence (1954-1962) while the French OAS countered it, both using terrorist methods. The German 'Baadeer-Meinhof' gang (1968 onwards) was led by a drug addict Baadeer and his girl friend Meinhof

who had brain damage. Italian 'Brigate Rosse' (1970-80s) organized more than 14,000 attacks and also killed many, prominent among them being Aldo Moro, Christian Democrat in 1978. Around the same time the Japanese Red Army collaborated with the mercenary Carlos in various terrorists acts. The Basque separatists mounted regular attacks in Europe and the rightist 'Weathermen' (whites) and the leftist 'Black

Panthers' (blacks) dominated the scene in the US.

Modern day terrorism reared its head in 1968 with the hijacking of an El Al plane from Rome by the PLO (PFLP of George Habbash). This phase was the direct result of the spectacular Israeli victory in the 6-day war, which saw the occupation of Palestinian territories like Gaza, Sinai and West Bank. The 1972 Munich Olympics hostage taking was yet another landmark. In 1976 the LTTE was formed. In 1978 Andrew MacDonald of the United States published the rightist pro-Aryan and anti-Jewish *Turner Diaries*. Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma bomber (1995) considered these diaries as his Bible. A big Hezbollah car bomb attack in Beirut in 1983

killing several US marines and French Paratroopers led to a decisive turn in the local dynamics resulting in the withdrawal of US troops. That was the beginning of the modern day suicide terrorism. A similar suicide attack in 1987 by the LTTE blowing up the Jaffna garrison saw a decisive halt in the Srilankan advance.

Meanwhile Sikh guards had assassinated Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1984, a culmination of the process of Pakistan-inspired Sikh terrorism, which had started in the early 1980s. Pakistani inspired Kashmiri terrorism exploded in 1989. Rajiv Gandhi was killed by the LTTE in 1991 in a suicidal attack. In 1993 the New York World Trade Center Towers were attacked killing 6, which turned out to be a dress rehearsal of the horrible tragedy to follow in 2001.

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The Babri Masjid demolition on December 6, 1992 led to the Bombay communal riots and later to the serial bomb blasts in March 1993, almost like the 1993 WTC bombing. In 1995 Timothy McVeigh bombed the Oklahoma building resulting in 168 deaths. American military

and embassy targets were attacked in Khobar (1996), Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam (1998) and Aden (2000-USS Cole), all suspected acts of Osama-bin-Laden. The 2001 September 11 attack on WTC Towers and the Pentagon, killing over 5,000 was the culmination of the death dance of the one time US-Saudi protégé Osama. Kashmiri terrorists attacked the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly on October 1 and the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001. The American-led war on Iraq since March 20, 2003 has served as a catalyst for further terrorist attacks on pro-American targets. Bombings in Bali killed 202 in 2002 and 20 in 2005. The Al Qaeda bombed Madrid Rail on March 11, 2004 killing 198 persons, exactly 911 days after 9/11. In what was described as the second deadliest terrorist attack in England since the Lockerbie Pan Am attack on December 21, 1988, the city of London saw a repetition of 9/11 on July 7, 2005 (labelled 7/7) killing over 50 through serial bus and underground rail bombing. This coincided with the UK hosted 31st summit of G4 nations. A second explosion on July 21 did not result in any injuries. A pre-Diwali serial blast in New Delhi on October 29, 2005 killed at least 65.



Islamic Fundamentalism and Terror

Samuel Huntington's 1993 theory on the "clash of civilizations" is being analyzed now more than ever to study the growing threat of terrorism emanating from Islamic groups. The question is why are Islamic nations or groups more prone to violence than others? Walter Laqueur, a known US authority on terrorism analyzed this issue in his book *The New Terrorism* (Oxford-1999) in this manner: "A 1998 'Freedom House' survey listed 51 States as 'Unfree', 45 of them were wholly or partly Muslim. Of the 20 armed conflicts then in the world, Islam was involved in 16. Of the 13 UN Peace-keeping missions, 9 were concerning Muslim countries and interests. He thus concludes that fundamentalist Islam generates violence. A similar analysis by Barbara Crossette in *The New York Times* (December 24, 2001) quoted the report of 'Freedom House' (2001-02) mentioning that only 23% of the 47 Muslim nations were 'free'.

Other writers however disagree. Islamic nations are subjected to the worst form of exploitation and injustice. Modern day terrorism, they claim, started with the Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories in 1967. The US led adventurism in the 1980s to checkmate the USSR acted as a catalyst, creating and consolidating the Islamic fundamentalist revival, which is now targeting American interests. Noted Pakistani writer Ayaz Amir says: "The affluent classes of the Muslim world including its rulers have been happy to become appendages or clients of the West. The disadvantaged or those at the bottom of the heap have discovered comfort and security in a crude form of Islamism".

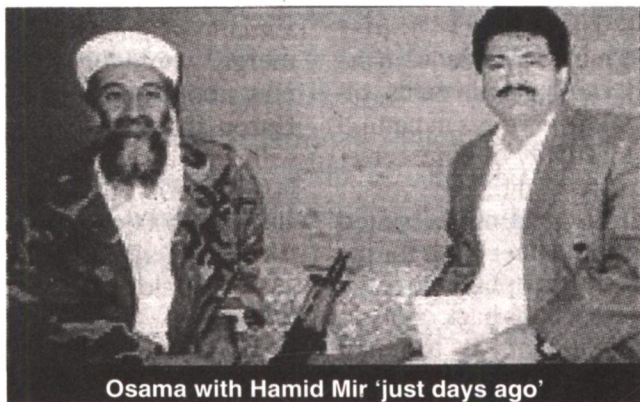
The question is why are Islamic nations or groups more prone to violence than others?

As Fareed Zakaria has analyzed, the US has not cared to apply any influence on her own allies like Saudi Arabia or Egypt to introduce democracy or rule of law in their civil societies. The continuing US apathy to genuine Palestinian aspirations is

not helping the US image among Islamic groups, who consider the US as an enemy of Islam. The Iraq War (2003-?) and the continuing American support to Israel have strengthened terrorist networks and boomeranged against American and Jewish targets.

OSAMA TIMES HIS WARNING

'We have (chemical and nuclear) weapons'



Osama with Hamid Mir 'just days ago'

On N-weapons: "Bush scared the European countries that Osama wanted to attack with weapons of mass destruction. If America used chemical or nuclear weapons against us then we may retort with chemical and nuclear weapons. We have the weapons as deterrent."

[Osama bin Laden in a special interview to Hamid Mir, the editor of Ausaf, for Dawn and Ausaf, at an undisclosed location near Kabul, after September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Washington]

Courtesy: *The Indian Express*, November 11, 2001.

Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda

Osama came under the influence of Dr. Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian-Jordanian of the 'Muslim Brotherhood' while he was a student at the Jeddah University. Azzam later inspired the Palestinian ' Hamas'. During 1982-85 Azzam founded the 'Maktab al Khidmat il Mujahideen al Arab' (MAK) popularly known as the 'Afghan Bureau'. Osama became the chief financier under the patronage of the head of the then Saudi Intelligence chief Prince Turki, nephew of King Fahd who funded and equipped the Mujahideen along with the CIA and ISI. (Turki was dismissed in September 2001 but continues to be close to the Saudi royal family). Meanwhile Osama also came under the influence of Dr. al Ayman Zawahiri, who was an accused in the 1981 Sadat killing. Differences cropped up later between Osama and Azzam over the Afghan strategy. While Osama supported Hekmatyar, Azzam wanted to help Masood. In 1989, men suspected to be Hekmatyar's supporters, killed Azzam in Pakistan.

After the 1989 Soviet withdrawal Osama returned to Saudi Arabia where he started creating problems for the regime. He was deported from the Kingdom in 1992 for prejudicial activities, including criticizing the presence of US troops on Saudi soil. Between 1992 and 1996 al Turabi gave him refuge in Sudan. In 1994 he met Ramzi Ahmed Yusuf, accused in the 1993 WTC bombing and conceived a plan to crash a plane on the Pentagon. He also plotted to kill President Clinton and the Pope during their visits to the Philippines, where Ramzi was hiding. However the plot failed and Ramzi escaped to Pakistan, where he was

arrested. Meanwhile he plotted to kill Hosni Mubarak in 1995 and also conceived a plan to blow up a dozen US planes simultaneously. US/ Saudi pressure on Sudan made him shift to Afghanistan in 1996. He organized the US Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998 killing 225 and injuring 4000. In 2000 he attacked USS Cole,

Unlike other terrorist groups like the LTTE, Hamas or Hezbollah, Osama's al Qaeda does not have a monolithic structure but is a conglomerate of several groups.

killing 17 sailors. In 2001 the Taliban appointed Osama as the head of the Taliban Militia with Uzbek terrorist Namangani as his deputy. Finally his outfit crashed 3 planes (AA11, UA 175 and AA77) on the WTC twin towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 marking a new phase in international terrorism. The fourth plane UA 93 crashed without reaching its target.

Unlike other terrorist groups like the LTTE, Hamas or Hezbollah, Osama's al Qaeda does not have a monolithic structure but is a conglomerate of several groups. Its cadre is drawn from Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), Al Gammaya al Islamia (Islamic Group of Egypt) GIA (Armed Islamic Group of Algeria), IPT (Islamic Party of Turkistan-Uzbekistan), Jaish-e-Mohammed (Kashmir-Pak), ASG (Abu Sayyaf-Philippines) etc. Each constituent has its own command and control. For example Dr. Ayman al Zawahiri who is No.2 of al Qaeda is also the head of EIJ of Egypt. Operational responsibility is delegated to the constituent units to prevent detection. The American-led war and occupation of Iraq has given a new lease of life to al-Qaeda. The Iraqi insurgency is led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian with a reward of \$ 25 million for his capture who had taken active part in the Afghan insurgency between 1989 and 1992.

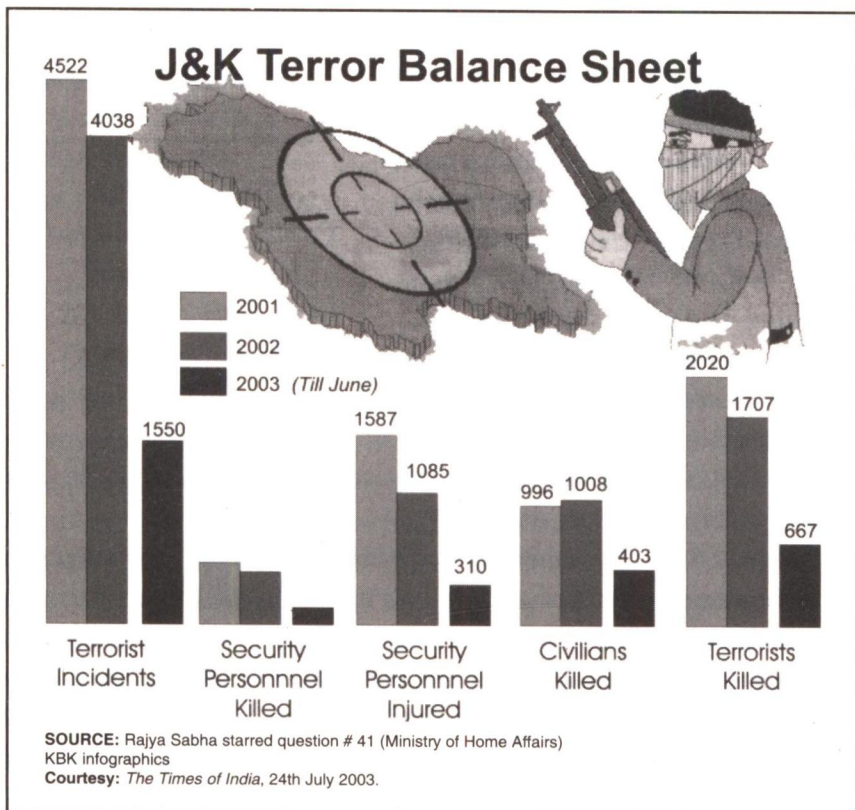
Pakistan as Haven

Even Americans say that Pakistan is a haven for terrorists as all the major terrorists run to Pakistan for refuge once things become hot elsewhere. Pakistan counters it saying that the US led Coalition had initiated the process using their territory in the Cold War game against the Soviet Union. Thus Pakistani national Ramzi Ahmed Yusuf, the brain behind the WTC Tower bombing in 1993 escaped to that country in 1995 from the Phillippines, where he was arrested. Mir Aimal Kanzi, another Pak national involved in the CIA killing in 1993 was arrested in Pakistan in 1997.

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Mohammad Sadiq Howaida, a Palestinian involved in the Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam bombings of 1998 was apprehended in Pakistan. His two Arab accomplices were also arrested in Pakistan the same year. Khalil-al-Deek, Jordanian who targeted US interests was caught in Pakistan in 1999. In 2003 Khalid Shaikh Mohammad, the mastermind behind 9/11 was apprehended in Pakistan. Till early 2003 Pakistan had handed over nearly 500 terrorists to the US without any legal proceedings for extradition. That Pakistan is able to successfully exploit these arrests to exhibit their "commitment" to eradicate terrorism is a success story of their diplomacy. It is therefore no surprise that the

2003 US State Department Report on Global Terrorism gave high marks to Pakistan as “one of the most important partners in the global coalition against terrorism”. In the wake of 7/7 Pakistan and UK crossed swords on the responsibility for the flow of Pakistani terrorists with the former accusing that the lax laws in UK had helped terrorism.



Israel and Terrorism

Many of our leaders and security experts are impressed with the way Israel tackles terrorist violence. They have made several visits to that country to study how they are tackling this problem. Many are impressed with the Israeli “hot pursuit strategy”, forgetting that Israel is surrounded by very weak powers. They want us to emulate the Israeli experience of being “tough” with terrorists. However a careful study would reveal that Israel is not having much success through the means they are adopting. Israeli law is very draconian – they can demolish buildings on mere suspicion. They also try to put down terrorism on their occupied territories by aerial strafing by fighter planes and helicopter gun ships, not to speak of tanks, which they send to the Palestinian territories regularly. All these are unimaginable steps in a democracy. Israel would not have been able to defy world opinion but for the solid backing of the US and the annual subsidy of \$5 billion thanks to the electoral clout of the Jewish lobby. Israel used to boast that their electronically sensitive double fencing would detect even a fly crossing the border. Yet they are helpless in preventing the infiltration of hundreds of suicide bombers from the Palestinian territories. Now they are building a 690 KM “apartheid” wall separating Palestinian territories in total disregard of world opinion. The International Court of Justice had ruled this as illegal in July 2004. The UN General Assembly had also passed a non-binding resolution on this. Israel is less than 5% of India’s land mass and also less than 5% of our population. Yet Israel saw 6162 armed attacks on their installations, 4016 on their Army Camps resulting in 63 Israeli deaths between September 2000 and July 2001. There

was a total lull in violence between October 1998 and November 2000 when Prime Minister Barak was having serious negotiations with Arafat. But Sharon provoked the Palestinians in September 2000 by marching triumphantly on the disputed Temple Mount. Since then terrorist violence has only increased.

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Harsh Israeli measures have not deterred Palestinian terrorism. Since September 2000 till August 31, 2004 at least 1000 Jews were killed, according to the Israeli Government, in terrorist attacks while 3166 Palestinian deaths occurred in Israeli reprisals, according to the Palestinian Red Cross. The cult of violence reached sinister proportions in March 2004 when Israel killed the quadriplegic Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in a missile attack followed by the killing of his

successor Abdel Aziz Rantisi in April. The wanton destruction of Palestinian homes upset even a senior member of the Sharon Government, Justice Minister Yosef Lapid, a Holocaust survivor who said that such acts reminded him of the Holocaust. This tit-for tat action by both sides has been going on since long with no end to violence in sight.

The Terrorist Mindset

The Terrorist “Mind” and Suicide Terrorism

Are terrorists bloodthirsty and sadistic villains as pictured in Hollywood/Bollywood movies? Case studies of well-known terrorists indicate that they are normal but determined individuals committed to do a certain job for various reasons. Raed Abdul Hamid Misk, a Palestinian suicide terrorist who triggered a serious bomb blast on August 19, 2003 was an ordinary family man. Wafa Idris, the first Palestinian female suicide bomber in January 2002 was a 28-year-old Paramedic. Similarly Dhiren Barot, a Kenyan Gujarati Hindu who became a key al-Qaeda operative in UK, who after converting was renamed as Abu Musa al-Hindi, was a normal student interested in fashion and music in Kingsbury, Middlesex. Why did they become terrorists? Ismail Abu Shanab, Hamas leader killed by Israel on August 21, 2003 had said: “Suicide bombing needs only a moment of courage”. According to him it was “cheap & cost effective”. Jessica Stern from Harvard who interviewed Shanab in 1999 says that suicide bombers are economically viable for terrorist organizations faced with a mighty army like that of Israel. Another researcher, Magnus Ranthrop of St. Andrews University, Scotland says: “You are propelled from being no one to some one glorified”. The LTTE holds a yearly parade to commemorate their suicide bombers as martyrs.

As Mercenaries

Carlos, the “Jackal” and Abu Nidal are the best examples of

terrorists as mercenaries. Ilich Ramirez Sanchez alias Carlos the Jackal flirted with communism, became the handyman of Palestinian terrorists in seizing 85 OPEC hostages in Vienna in 1975, bombed Israeli targets in UK and France in the early 80s and then moved over to various Gulf countries. He was finally arrested in Sudan in 1994 with the help

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of the local authorities and abducted by the French agencies to Paris where he is serving a life term for murders.

Abu Nidal, once the most wanted Palestinian terrorist of the 1970s and 80s was gunned down in his Baghdad apartment on August 16, 2002 by unknown assassins. Some said that he had committed suicide when Saddam Hussain's security

personnel came to arrest him. In any case Abu Nidal had been inactive for a long time. He had either entered Baghdad surreptitiously in 1999 or was given shelter by Saddam. Abu Nidal was responsible for killing a majority of Arafat's moderate Palestinian leadership between 1978 and 1983. In 1991 he killed Abu Iyad, Arafat's intelligence chief. Nidal was used by various powers against their enemies. Patrick Seale, a well known expert writes: "Iraq used him against Syria from 1974 to 1983; Syria used him against Jordan and the Muslim Brotherhood from 1981 to 1985; Libya then took him over, providing him with a decade long base for his foreign operations". There were strong grounds to suspect that he was working for Israel too.

Chechen Terrorism

Perestroika and the end of the Cold War helped in resurfacing the once buried nationalistic feelings in the Baltic, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The Chechens, a fiercely independent people, now numbering less than 1 million, had assembled their own National Assembly after the February 1917 Revolution and formed 'The Federation of The North Caucasus'. The Bolsheviks attacked them to bring them back into the Russian fold. Stalin, in keeping with his policy of redrawing the Central Asian state boundaries obliterated the Chechen nation in 1944 and transported half a million Chechens to Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan. The leader of the post-Soviet era Chechen Resistance was Djokhar Dudayev who had served the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. He was elected President in October 1991 and declared Chechenyan Independence next year. Yeltsin's Russia which did not want to lose this strategic oil rich area, started working against him first by encouraging pro-Moscow Chechen opponents, followed by the dispatch of 40,000 troops in 1994. What followed was a bloody 13-month "Chechen War 1" killing over 100,000. In 1996 a Russian missile killed Dudayev.

After the cease-fire in 1996 Russians troops withdrew and Alsan Maskhadov won the 1997 elections as President. Islamic extremism flourished during the First War when Shamil Basayev took the help of a Saudi Wahabi named Ibn-ul-Khattab and started directing the movement from 1995 onwards. Basayev, who took the name of "Shamil", the legendary 19th century Chechen warrior-priest-hero who fought the Czarist Army for 20 years was made Prime Minister in 1998 for a

six-month term. In 1999 Basayev and Khattab attacked Dagestan for spreading the Islamic Revolution which made Russia re-enter Chechen in 1999 to wage the Second Chechen War. In 2002 the Chechens under Basayev took their fight to Moscow by organizing a spectacular raid and hostage taking in the Melnikov Street theatre in which several were

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killed during rescue. In May 2004 pro-Russian President Kadyrov was killed in an explosion. Two Russian passenger airlines were blown up on August 24, 2004 just prior to the Presidential Elections on August 29, 2004 when pro-Moscow candidate Alkhanov was elected.

“The Islambouli Brigades” said to be part of al-Qaeda and named after Lt.Khaled Islambouli, who had killed Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, claimed responsibility

for the tragedy of August 24. This was followed by a bloody hostage drama from September 1, 2004 onwards in Beslan, North Ossetia near Chechenya in which at least 1,500 were taken as hostage by Chechen armed gangs. Nearly 150 including 10 Arab terrorists were killed in the rescue operations on September 3. Alan Maskhadov’s killing in March 2005 by Russian Special Forces was another serious incident in the continuing “see-saw” of Chechen violence and counter violence. The Chechen attack on the Russian city of Nalchik on October 13, 2005 killed at least 60. There seems to be no end to Chechen violence in Chechenya.

Terrorism in India

Pakistan now accepts that it started using terrorism against India in the 1980s as a low intensity non-active warfare to begin with by funding, training and aiding the Khalistani rebels. Along with this it also started similar operations in J&K, which burst into the open in 1989. The human toll of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in J&K has been devastating. Gautam Navalakha, quoting the J&K Police figures said in *Economic & Political Weekly* that till December 2002 the death toll was 94,000 with 36,000 in jails, 20,000 widowed and 40,000 orphaned. The official Home Ministry figures between 1990 and March 31, 2001 are different: 35,299 killed including 20,280 civilians, 12,391 militants and 2,628 security personnel. 33,017 weapons were seized. Property damaged till 1998 amounted to Rs.2,000 Crores while 2.78 lakh population was displaced. Government spent Rs.18,500 crores in relief and rehabilitation. The expenditure on security forces was Rs.46,500 crores. We are now raising 30 battalions of Rashtriya Rifles at an annual cost of Rs.545-575 crores. We have tried to complete 3,310 kms fencing of the Western border. Additionally we have 1,700 kms of Nepali border to guard. Border fencing does not however prevent infiltration, as experienced by other countries. The example of the USA-Mexico border, where the infiltration is for employment and not for crime is worth studying. In 1994 the US Government spent 2 billion US Dollars, to construct better fencing and also recruited 8,000 patrol agents. They now say they need 20,000 agents!

Naxalite Violence

The Indian nation is seriously threatened by continuing Naxalite

violence in several parts of the country especially Andhra, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. It is spreading to new areas like Karnataka, which did not see such activities earlier. The sensational attack on Jehanabad prison (Bihar) on November 13, 2005 to free around 500 Naxalite prisoners

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in which about 1,000 armed Naxalites had taken part is a clear indication of their prowess and the inefficiency of our State Police in dealing with them. According to observers, the States of Andhra, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh accounted for 64% of violent Naxalite incidents in 2002. There are some who believe that 53 districts in 15 States are under the grip of this movement, which is broadly split into two main groups: CPI-ML Peoples' War (PWG) and

Maoist Communist Centre (MCC). This movement follows three broad stages: Organization, guerilla and liberation. In the "Organization stage" no violence is used but all energies are devoted to build up the organization by resisting exploitation and earning the goodwill of the villagers. In the second stage the "exploiters" like landlords and police are targeted. The third is the utopian stage of "Liberation". It follows that there can be no "Naxalite" violence unless there is exploitation. It is admitted that good governance can be the only antidote to this problem. The UPA Government is therefore resisting pressures from some Naxal affected States to ban the Organization(s) since not much can be achieved by legally banning them. Of course the new Congress-led Andhra Pradesh Government reimposed the ban in August 2005 after a serious spurt in violence. The UPA Government in Delhi believes in a two-pronged policy of building up developmental work in the affected

areas to wean away the tribals/ villagers from the Naxalite movement and also deal with it strictly from the law and order point of view. The example of Srikakulam in Andhra which had seen serious Naxalite violence in the 1970s but which is now quiet because of developmental work is cited.

Of late it is seen that the Naxalite/Maoist groups including the Nepali Maoist rebels cooperate with each other in undertaking operations.

It is reliably assessed that they also intend to form a “liberated corridor” running through the tribal areas of Andhra, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand, and Bihar States to link up with Nepal. This is a serious development and is engaging the close attention of Delhi.

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I visited Sydney, Tokyo, London, USA, to investigate to which terrorist outfit he belonged, Sir. But found he is just a local petty pickpocket.

COURTESY: R. K. Laxman and *The Times of India*.

Problem of Small Arms

The problem of small arms, the chief weapon of terrorists, has not received the attention it deserves from the world community, which is spending thousands of manhours on esoteric concepts of security

Nuclear arms have not killed anybody since World War II while small arms have caused 4 million deaths since 1990.

like nuclear arms control. But nuclear arms have not killed anybody since World War II while small arms have caused 4 million deaths since 1990, more than the toll in all the recorded armed conflicts in the world. Over 500 million small arms are floating around the world after the break up of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and conclusion of the

Afghanistan and Cambodian Wars. 55 million AK-47s, mostly Chinese make are available in the market. It was once available in Cambodia for as low as eight US dollars! Major countries that are 'Supplying Countries' are not prepared for end user audit, as revealed during the last UN sponsored talks in July 2001. Two of the most contentious clauses, which would have called for stricter controls on private gun ownership and also prevented governments from selling arms to non-State actors, were dropped on the insistence of USA.

UN Role and Human Rights

It is not that international agreements are lacking for tackling terrorism. There are at least 19 global conventions or regional treaties against terrorism, the chief amongst them being the European Convention of 1977, CIS nations agreement of 2000 and the Shanghai Five agreement of April 2001. The UN passed twelve UN agreements starting with the 1963 Tokyo Convention on Aviation Security to the 1999 convention against financing of terrorist activities. However all these cannot be implemented unless ratified by the member countries. After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Security Council adopted Resolution No.1368 legitimizing unilateral military strikes against another country on grounds of terrorism. Resolution No.1373, passed on September 28, 2001 ordered member states to take all measures against international terrorism, contemplated in the twelve earlier UN Conventions. Thus all the Conventions became binding on member countries. Resolution No.1377 passed on November 12, 2001 dealt with assistance to States to fulfill the requirements of Resolution No.1373.

However UN Resolution No. 1373 (2001) also voiced “profound concern at the multiplication of policies, legislation and practices increasingly being adopted by many countries in the name of the fight against terrorism which affect negatively the enjoyment of virtually all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social”. UN Commission of Human Rights Resolution 2003/68 said: “States must ensure that any measure taken to combat terrorism complies with their obligations under international law, in particular human rights, refugee and humanitarian law”. The abuses committed by the US forces in Guantanamo base or in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq stand to violate these UN Resolutions.

Is a World Without Terror Possible?

Can we see a world without terrorism? The answer is “NO” as history has amply proved. Walter Laquer in his monumental book *The New Terrorism*, written well before 9/11 has said that the increasing ethnic conflict, migration, demographic pressure, unemployment, slums and perceived injustice contribute to the recurrence of terrorism all over the world. A study by the French authorities in the wake of the serious ethnic riots in France in November 2005 has revealed that urban ghettos where frustrated Muslim youth live without being integrated into the mainstream of the French Society contributed to the spread of violence.

Could the authorities put down terrorism by brutal suppression? There are some who believe that the strong-arm methods adopted by the Punjab Police in the 1980s were responsible for the end of terrorism in that State. They also quote the Israeli experience. I have already tried to disprove this point by quoting the rising trend of violence in Israel despite unusually harsh measures. A recent book *The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror and a Strategy for getting it Right* by Daniel Benjamin & Steve Simon is worth quoting: “*We are losing. Four years and two wars after the attacks of September 11, 2001, America is heading for a repeat of the events of that day, or perhaps something worse*”. To quote Michiko Kakutani who reviewed this book for *New York Times*: “On the other hand more and more Muslims, many of whom had no earlier ties to radical organizations, (are) enlisting in the struggle against the West”.

The only silver lining in the present dismal scenario is the July 2005 announcement by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) renouncing violence to achieve their aims, a break from their 35-year-old policy. Many reasons are said to be responsible for this change of heart including the stoppage of funds from US based Irish sympathizers. Elsewhere in the world we may have to accept the painful fact that terrorism is there to stay as long as dissensions and disputes exist. Even President Bush made a candid admission on August 31, 2004 while addressing the Republican Convention, New York that the war on terror “could not be won”. How do we tackle this?

This writer believes that all nations must accept terrorism as a threat against mankind in general. One cannot accept a situation in which terrorism against an adversary country is tolerated by a particular nation. All of us had felt that the end of the Cold War would also result in the lessening of tensions between nations and among sub-national groups. This did

not happen. New tensions have appeared and more and more fringe groups and non-State actors are resorting to terrorism. The best way to tackle terrorism is to treat it as crime and not as a political problem. This is because history has amply proved that terrorism has nothing to do with oppression. It is only a matter of perception. A terrorist group will find other reasons to agitate, as we have seen in the case of the LTTE, even if most of their demands are met. Hence the only way to tackle it is the UN way, treating it as crime. The tendency to give a value judgment on terrorism on narrow ideological, political or national interests is a dangerous pastime as we have seen in Afghanistan and for that matter in Sri Lanka.

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In certain but limited cases, terrorism can be fought through good governance, development and social justice. The Sriakulam experience quoted earlier is a good example. So is the case with Kerala which was subjected to serious Naxalite violence in the 1970s but which saw the end of that problem with the 'Gulf boom' absorbing thousands of unemployed youth who otherwise could have been weaned away by the extremist ideology. Similarly our North East problem could also be controlled through good governance and development. To some extent even Kashmiri terrorism could be controlled through meaningful participation of the local people in administration and development. But

The best way to tackle terrorism is to treat it as crime and not as a political problem.

this is not the case with cross border terrorism where the initiative comes from determined sources of malfeasance.

At the same time terrorism cannot be fought merely through conventional bureaucratic measures like raising more forces, constructing better fencing, creating more intelligence services or engaging in hot pursuit. Only a combination of the following measures can help tackling the menace:

1. Terrorism has to be viewed as a global menace and a crime against humanity, irrespective of ideology.
2. Normal foreign intelligence collection methods cannot tackle terrorism, as amply proved in the case of al-Qaeda.
3. A special universal professional anti-terrorism body like "Interpol" has to be set up, which will coordinate and exchange information, cutting across diplomatic channels which often act as stumbling blocks.
4. Like Interpol, this body should network directly with national police agencies.

5. National laws should be in conformity with its objectives.

6. The UN should take the initiative to set in motion the move to have a universal regime of effective terrorist (criminal) intelligence liaison between all countries based on the European model. It should not be left to the whims of nation states to decide what should be passed to others on terrorist related intelligence. Based on UN

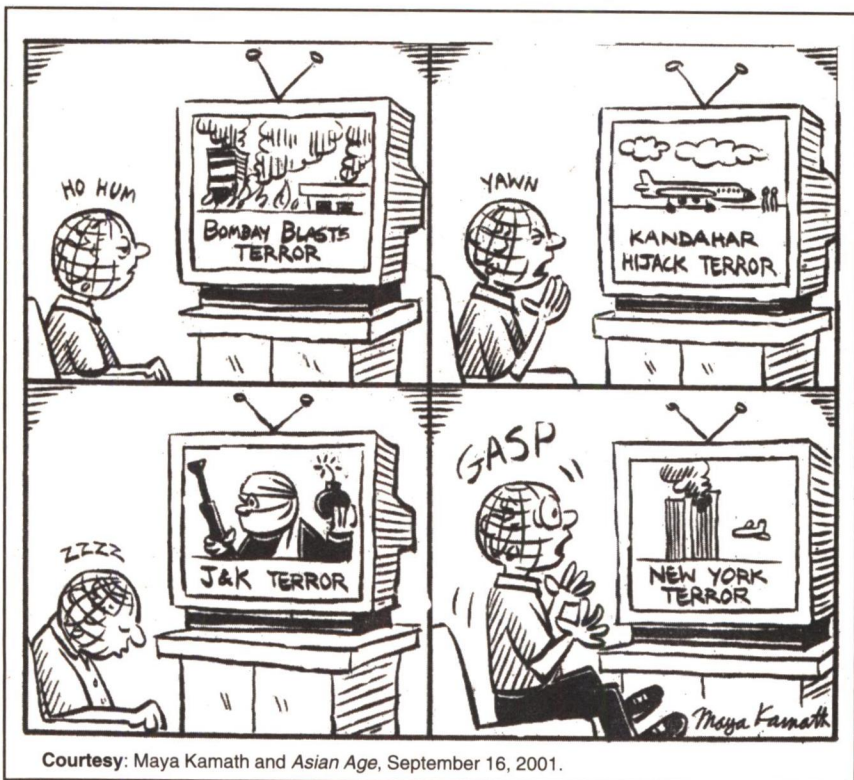
Resolutions, a system of sanctions should be set in place in case of failure to pass on intelligence or for harbouring terrorists.

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(This paper represents the situation as on November 25, 2005. It is necessary to record this in view of the fast moving developments and terrorism's ability to evolve new contours and tactics with each passing day).

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Courtesy: Maya Kamath and Asian Age, September 16, 2001.

V. Balachandran



A former member of the Indian Police Service (Maharashtra), Mr. V. Balachandran spent 17 years in the Police and 19 years in Indian foreign intelligence retiring in 1995 as Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat. In 1994 and 1995 he led the Indian Inter-Agency delegations for talks with their US counterparts on terrorism. Since 1996 he has been writing and speaking on several subjects like international relations, intelligence & security, terrorism and Intellectual property rights at various fora including universities in India and abroad. From 2003 onwards he is working as the Honorary Country Adviser for India to the Washington DC based National Advisory Council for South Asian Affairs(NACSA), a voluntary association of US nationals of South Asian origin. He is also the Convenor of the Mumbai Chapter of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) which has been championing the rights and welfare of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) scattered all over the world. In that capacity he organized the GOPIO Global Convention in Mumbai on January 5 and 6, 2005. He is also a member of the International Action Network Against Small Arms (IANSA), a London based NGO which seeks to control the unchecked spread of the menace of small arms in the world.

