

An Analytical Survey of the Aftermath of Mumbai Terror Attack

By

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November 26, 2008 saw a horrific night that overwhelmed the Mumbaikars' impulse of fear Vis-a – Vis the entire Indian nation that kept them on tenterhooks for next sixty hours without respite. The memory of that catastrophic night will remain deeply ingrained in the tragic history of Mumbai as it was an act of terrorism by perpetrators in guise of non-state actors who let loose a reign of terror and bathed south Mumbai with human blood. It witnessed a series of heinous activities in the city that drastically paralysed normal life thereby bringing the spirit of the commercial and entertainment hub of India to a standstill. India is not unfamiliar with the dismal consequences of terrorist attacks but it is not well-equipped with the adequate means to encounter it. The recurrences of such horrifying activities that torment every minute of a man's life often raise doubts about the efficacy of the administrative set-up of our country. The manifold instances of such acts reveal the intensity of the subdued grievances and brutality of those non-state actors but fail to address to the valid causes that have driven them to pursue such a barbaric course of action. Active cooperation from each and every country is very much needed to combat terrorism. The menace might not be wiped out overnight but the magnitude can be reduced.

The striking part is that the country which has often been victimised by such an evil exercise has ignited such ventures in some other countries. The Mumbai attack has soured the relationship between India and Pakistan and Indians cannot flinch from identifying Pakistan as the source of attacks and reiterate that Pakistan should accept the responsibility to act against the convicts who have executed such reprehensible acts. Tension between India and Pakistan has escalated in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks and there is considerable international pressure on Islamabad to deter terrorism. It

is to be understood that antagonistic relationship between the countries would not solve the problem of terrorism confronted by them and both of them must adopt certain measures to bring their relationship out of the dynamics of conflict into the ambit of cooperative and peaceful relationship. Peaceful, cooperative relationship is highly desirable and the political parties, governments of both the countries should strive for the establishment of peaceful, harmonious relation. A democratic country needs a support to thrive on and the best support invariably comes from other democratic countries. India and Pakistan need to move forward towards resolvable issues through dialogues, high level interactions, bilateral cooperation and regional cooperation. Here the emphasis on the issues of cultural diplomacy, connectivity, people to people contact, establishment of hotlines for gathering exchange repercussions prevails.

India has received cooperative support from all other countries to face the challenges arising out of terrorism. India suffered from enormous loss due to the blast. The after effects of a terrorist attack exhibit that the terrorist is an international personality who is more actively organised and properly galvanised than all those who speak the language of peace. It is the lack of adequate orientation and single-mindedness that thwart the antagonists of terrorism to realise their goals. If India fails to confront the menace rigorously it will undoubtedly be a hub where the terrorists will implement their atrocious business with alarming frequency.

After the Mumbai blast, the Indian Government has undertaken certain active initiatives to curb the dominant threat. It has revised terror law with POTA clauses and has moved swiftly to introduce a Bill to set up the National Investigation Agency (NIA) backed by tough anti-terror laws. Awareness among each and every citizen along with rigid security checking at all levels and acute stress on strengthening the intelligence machinery will restrain its frequency to a large extent. Stringent checking of luggage and belongings of passengers and installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at sensitive points should be pursued all throughout the country. Effective police forces in our country are definitely one of the authentic ways of dealing with terrorism. This is because

it is spectacular action that gives the terrorist the greatest mileage in terms of media publicity and the widespread fear it generates.

Contemporary terrorism is perpetrated by non-state actors with sound organisational footing .The scale and intensity of today's terrorism to inflict massive damage to both lives and property to a magnitude that were never seen before. Terrorism serves as a well-grounded mode through which fanatic fundamentalists ceaselessly assault our secular and economic foundations. All our planning - building international opinion and beefing up our internal security mechanism - will have to proceed on this basis. The need of the hour is a proactive community effort to disarm terrorists before they strike. Will this happen at all? Will the Mumbai show the way to others in the country and the rest of the world? What the common man really wants is an end to all blasts. Pakistan is a responsible country and shall continue to play its rightful role in eradicating the menace of global terrorism. Interconnectivity of terrorist groups and how to spot the webs of money laundering and other frauds they weave need to be scrutinized properly. The security forces' extreme preparedness and effective retaliation can quell terrorists but terrorism can be checked only when it is made less attractive for the youth, who are haunted by unemployment. Media coverage is no doubt imaginative and comprehensive. India now creates a huge reservoir of talent and knowledge that lacks direction and remains largely unutilized in constructive activities. Educational institutions and opinion leaders in the society who are apolitical can possibly help. The fight against terrorism has strong public support; that it requires courage, determination and commitment on the part of those holding public office; and that it is a political and public priority requiring constant and extensive vigilance, co-ordination between a range of partners, effective legislation against violence and a determined and proactive judicial and political approach to racial and religious intolerance and extremism; Consequently, considers that the protection of human rights and civic liberties should be seen as an integral part of the struggle against terrorism, not as an obstacle to it; that the fundamental values of human rights and dignity must not be sacrificed in the combat against terrorism; and that anti-terrorism measures

should be reasonable, proportionate and non-discriminatory. Nothing effective can be done to tackle terrorism unless people rise as one man to help law enforcement.¹

Certain guidelines can be used as yardstick to deter terrorism. The Government should formulate strong and clear policies to enhance social cohesion by promoting tolerance through educational and cultural programmes. It can erase social exclusion by fostering respect towards the peaceful coexistence of different cultures, minorities and communities. The Government should respond in a fair manner to the social, economic and political problems of the population and should ensure fair equal access to educational and employment opportunities. It should always enlighten the public about all threats and risks, planned contingency measures and subsequent crisis management, using modern technology and it should be proactive in ensuring the coordination of emergency services. It must encourage the strengthening of international cooperation in confronting terrorism. It should remain alert and adopt necessary actions to protect the people in places where massive gatherings take place and should try utmost to secure the pride of our country.

Any country shattered by the attack of terrorism must impart severe punishment to the fugitives so that the terrorist activities get halted and the bereaved families of the victims might get some sort of solace. One important thing needs to be borne in mind of every citizen that terrorism is a curse, a paranoiac element that requires to be erased out of every country. The only way to wipe out or at least to diminish terrorism is to grapple its roots, to trace out the causes of their grievances and frustrations rather than candidly attempting to curb it by firm policies. Any country needs to chalk out a concrete plan of action: to adopt the measures hindering the spread of terrorism; to prevent and combat terrorism; to solidify the state capacity to fight terrorism; to strengthen the role of the local authorities in confronting terrorism; and to ensure the respect of human rights while countering terrorism.

¹ R.K. Raghavan, 'Tackling Terrorism', accessed electronically at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2315/stories/20060811001909400.htm>, 19.12.08.

Terrorism by non-state actors creates a difficulty which is beyond the control of a single country. It is often the misuse of modern technology for ulterior purposes that pose obstacle to a nation. India, if it wants to insulate its territorial periphery, it ought to come with the laws that would not compromise with either terrorism or insurgency and inculcate a sense of submissive attitude amongst its citizen to the laws even if they have to sacrifice their liberties to some extent.
