

Fundamentalist Extremism: A Study of Terrorism in India

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ABSTRACT: *India and the issue of fundamentalist extremism are quite important for diplomatic policies to address the Terrorism. India is no exception to this trend of terrorist violence rather she has faced it for the last two decades exceeding almost all limits. This study will cover an outlook of extremist activities occurred in India and the policies taken by the Indian government. Some changes in the nature of diplomatic values are also specified in this study. Basically last two decades are more significant in term of Indian foreign policy to deal the fundamentalist extremism.*

KEYWORDS: *Fundamentalist, Terrorism, Operation, Provocation, Border, Militants*

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Fundamentalist extremism though a global phenomenon yet it is more pronounced in India. It is global in the sense that no other event during the last few decades had been in the news as the terrorist attacks all over the world particularly the attack on the Twin Towers of World Trade Centre of US and the Pentagon on 11th September, 2001. This was so devastating and barbarous that Michael Cox rightly pointed out that “so famous or infamous has 11th September become that it does not even have to be referred to in full, but can be signaled by the simple shorthand of two numbers – 9/11. The world has witnessed such terrorist violence on numerous occasions in the past too. In September 1972, the Palestinian terrorists linked to PLO took eleven Israeli sportsmen hostage at the German Olympic village at Munich. The drama ended in a gun battle at the airport leaving all the hostages, one German police officer and five terrorist dead. Again, in September 1973, militant guerillas stormed the Athens airport and opened fire on the crowd. Three persons were killed, fifteen injured and thirty-five taken hostages. They were held at gun point for hours before the guerillas surrendered. In 1973 itself, the Arab terrorists attacked the Rome airport killing thirty before hijacking a Lufthansa Jet. They demanded release of militants caught during Munich and Athens attacks. In 1997, terrorists of Egyptian group Al-Gamma’s al-Islamiyya attacked foreigners with automatic rifles near the tourist town Luxor killing fifty-eight. This was Egypt’s worst terror strike in decades. In 2002, Chechen rebels took eight hundred and fifty hostages at a theatre demanding release of militant prisoners. After a sixty-hour siege, Russian forces stormed in and killed thirty-nine terrorists. Some one hundred and thirty people also died during the operation. Again in 2004, the Chechen Islamic militants took more than eleven hundred people including seven hundred seventy-seven children hostage in a school in a Russian town Beslan. The stand-off ended on the third day after the Russian forces stormed in the building. Around three hundred forty hostages, half of them children, died. On July 28, 2008 two terrorist bombs killed sixteen civilians and wounded nearly one hundred fifty others in a crowded pedestrian area of Istanbul, Turkey. The killing of innocent people in London Metro rail, the attempt to blow up United Kingdom’s Heathrow airport in 2008 and the deaths of hundreds of civilians and security personnel in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel and Turkey speak volumes of terrorist violence all over the world. In 2018 alone, Taliban struck terrorist attacks throughout the year in Afghanistan, the major areas affected were Kabul (27 Jan, 22 April, 20 Nov, 24 Dec), Farah (12 and 15 May), Oshan (11 May), Ghazni (10 August), Day Mirdad District (9 Sept), Sari Pul (10 Sept), Muhmand Dara District and Mayward District (11 Sept), Dila District (12 Sept) claiming lives ranging from fifty to as high as more than four hundred sixty. A suicide bomber killed at least hundred and fifty people including a candidate in election rally at Darengarh in Pakistan on 13th July 2018. At Gwaska, Nigeria (5 May’18) and Albu Kamal, Syria (8 June’18) more than fifty people were killed in terrorist attack. Despite a decline in terrorist deaths, in 2019 also Afghanistan remained the country most impacted by Taliban terrorism losing more than five thousand lives. Eight coordinated militant attacks took place in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday (24th April’19) targeting churches, hotels and housing complexes culminating into more than two hundred sixty deaths. Other countries affected during the year were Mali, Cameroon, Somalia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Syria, India, Burkina Faso etc.

India is no exception to this trend of terrorist violence. Rather she has faced it for the last two decades exceeding almost all limits. Since 1990, the major cities of India stand testimony to terrorist violence which claimed thousands of innocent lives. India has lost nearly five hundred civilians to terror attacks in 2008 only. Country's financial capital Mumbai was hit by 10 Pakistan-based Laskar-e-Taiba (L-e-T) terrorists in 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks lasting four days across the city. At least 174 people died and more than 300 were wounded. According to the South Asia Intelligence Review, the number of civilians killed in India in 2001 was one thousand sixty-seven and it was nine hundred fifty seven in 2007. The University of Uppsala Conflict Data Set and the "Minorities at Risk Project" at Maryland University suggest that more than one thousand deaths a year in internal conflict situations constitute high-intensity violence. By that measure India has the highest number of killed in terror attacks. One should not forget the continuing insurgencies and terrorist violence in Kashmir and the North-East which claimed one hundred fifty-seven lives in 2008. Four heavily-armed terrorists in 2016 attacked Indian Army's 12 Brigade headquarters in Uri town of Jammu and Kashmir. It was reported as "the deadliest attack on security forces in Kashmir in two decades", where 18 soldiers were killed. But in another terror attack, deadlier than that of Uri, at least 44 CPRF personnel were killed and another 20 injured when a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist drove an explosive-laden SUV into a convoy of vehicles in Pulwama district of Jammu & Kashmir. Be it the rich or the poor, terrorism has affected all in India. It is, thus, quite evident that India had been in the midst of terrorist violence since the mid-eighties. However, before going in for an in-depth study of terrorism in India, it will not be out of place to examine as to what terrorism is and for what it stands.

There is no universally accepted definition of terrorism and so opinions vary regarding the meaning and content of terrorism. A few regard terrorism as organized violence against the state, of course, with some political objectives. This, however, does not convey fully the idea behind terrorism. There may be violence against any individual or a particular group in the society or even against the state. Many define terrorism as the product of fanatical violence perpetrated generally to realize some political objectives. A few however, regard it as an instrument for accomplishing different objectives including political goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation. According to Harold Lasswell, "terrorists are participants in the political process who strive for political results by arousing acute anxieties". This is, however, a very simplistic formulation about terrorism. The element of violence which is the hall mark of terrorism is missing in the analysis of Lasswell. In every terrorist event some misguided youth often fed on religious sentiments resort to violence and killing of innocents. They cannot be called participants in the political process for achieving certain political objectives. Can the killing of Israeli athletes by Palestinian terrorists in 1972 during German Olympic Games be termed as participants in political process? Yonah Alexander is, however, near to the point when he defines terrorism as "the use of violence against random civilian targets in order to intimidate or to create general pervasive fear for the purpose of achieving political goals". This definition of Yonah points out to two basic elements of terrorism; firstly, the violence causing intimidation and secondly, the motive to attain political objectives. But here a very pertinent question arises as to who commits the act of terrorism? Is it the state or some political organization? Andrew H Kydd and Barbara F Walters give the answer that it is the non-state actors who resort to terrorist violence against civilians to achieve certain political objectives. When India referred to Pakistani hand behind terrorist attack on Mumbai in November 2008, Asif Ali Zardari, the then President of Pakistan, while defending his country said that it was the act of non-state actors. It has, however, been conclusively proved that Laskar-e-Taiba a militant outfit supported by Pakistan's military and its intelligence wing ISI, were behind the Mumbai mayhem.

It is important to find answer to the question as to what are the strategies and goals of terrorist outfits. In a thought provoking study on strategies and goals of terrorists, Andrew H Kydd and Barbara F Walters point out that terrorist outfits mostly engage in "costly signaling" which means violent signals of resolve meant to show about their ability to enact "acts of terror" to achieve their goals. For instance if Al-Qaeda had informed the US in advance that it planned to kill three thousand Americans on September 11, 2001 unless it withdrew its forces from west Asia, people would not have believed it. Therefore, weak actors like terrorists establish their "terrible" credibility by means of a public display of violence. In July 2016, ISIS claimed responsibility for a car bombing at a popular shopping center in Baghdad that killed nearly 300 people, making it the single deadliest bombing in Iraq's capital city since 2003. Since at least 2015, ISIS has integrated local children into its forces and used them as executioners and suicide attackers. The group also directs, enables, and inspires individuals to conduct attacks on behalf of the group around the world, including in the United States and Europe. In November 2015, ISIS carried out a series of coordinated attacks in Paris, France, including at a rock concert at the Bataclan concert hall, killing about 130 people and injuring more than 350 others. In 2018, the Taliban's main targets were military and police personnel, which accounted for 53 per cent of attacks and 59 per cent of all deaths. The group's focus on state forces has been a feature of their insurgency campaign as a means to undermine state stability. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is known for kidnapping and

beheading a number of hostages, including several international journalists, and posting videos of these crimes on social media. Boko Haram is noted for favouring highly-lethal bombings as well as for suicide bombings.

Kydd and Walters cite five strategic logics of terrorist outfits. They are - firstly, attrition; secondly, intimidation; thirdly, provocation; fourthly, spoiling; and lastly, out bidding. Terrorists utilizing attrition advertise to their adversary their ability to impose considerable costs on the target population over a period of time. Intimidation is mainly aimed to coerce the target population to support the terrorists' cause. Provocation is intended to induce the adversary to respond to terrorist acts with indiscriminate counter force resulting in enormous hardship for the people. Consequently, the population ends up supporting the terrorist outfits. Spoiling includes attempts by terrorist modules to undermine any move against terror by moderates amongst the target population. Out bidding aims at convincing the target population that one terrorist outfit is more credible than others. The terrorists desire to achieve five principal goals through the above mentioned strategic logics. They are regime change, policy change, alteration in territory, social control of the population and lastly status quo maintenance of an existing regime or territorial arrangement. Amongst these goals, 9/11 attacks were primarily waged by Al-Qaeda to engineer US policy change in west Asia, especially with regard to US troops stationed in Saudi Arabia.

The numerous terrorist events and bombings in Kashmir are intended to effect a territorial change at best to incorporate it with Pakistan. This is the declared policy of Hafiz M Saeed, the chief of Laskar-e-Toiba and Maulana Masood Azhar, who heads Jaish-e-Mohammad. Another terrorist outfit SIMI and the Indian Mujahidin which operate in India under the patronage of their Pakistani counterpart intend to have a social control as they want to strengthened their own status among their present recruits as well as among the target population. The Indian Mujahidin sent an email stating that it was a terrorist group in order to indicate its violent nature to the target population. It also openly requested L-e-T not to claim responsibility for the attacks in Jaipur, Ahmadabad and Delhi so that its own distinctive terrible credibility would be established beyond doubt.

Social control over the target population is also secured by discrediting the state's capability to ensure safety and security to its citizens from terror attacks. Aggressive verbal attacks (spoiler tactics) by terror outfits against moderate Muslims who condemn the acts of terror have been witnessed recently. Prior to the abrogation of Article 370 on 5th August 2019, militants and terrorist outfits enjoyed this kind of control in Jammu and Kashmir.

The terror bombings in India particularly the 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai (2008) adds one more goal which the alleged Pakistani terrorists want to achieve and that is to cripple India's economic nerve centre, creating fear among the tourists and world investors and ultimately to undermine India's global image. The suicide squad had chosen high profile five-star hotels to capture international attention since they are frequented by western delegations and tourists. Apart from sending a message to Government of India, it was a signal to international community about the strength and audacity of the terror groups in the region and was also intended to target opinion makers and movers and shakers who visit these hotels frequently. It was a daring act and certainly had collusion of a terror group like the Al-Qaeda along with some Pakistan based terror groups aimed at creating panic in the country. Shashi Tharoor, a former UNO official of Indian origin, while dwelling upon the unspeakable horrors of terrorist violence in India expressed that the perpetrators of these barbaric and heinous crimes from Pakistan have in their mind that "it was cheaper and more effective to bleed India to death than to attempt to defeat it in conventional war".

The profile of fundamentalist extremists has considerably changed from poorly educated, poverty ridden, disgruntled elements to highly skilled, well adjusted, contended looking individuals. For instance, the perpetrators of the terrorist bombings at the airport in Glasgow, United Kingdom, in 2007 had engineering and medical degrees, and were employed. The perpetrator of the terrorist attacks in Norway in July 2011 came from a middle-class background and the majority group in the population. These are a new breed, a new kind of terrorist hunting down their victims in the heart of the city and fighting pitched battles against commandos in crowded places. This has not happened in India before, not even at the height of militancy in Punjab. No other part of India has had to face this war like 26/11 barring other than Jammu and Kashmir, where people have lived for decades with violence in their towns and cities.

Now the terrorists are no longer shadowy and faceless. His mask is off and he looks like a clean-shaven lad with a nice haircut, dressed in cargo pant, a designer shirt and branded sneakers, with a bag on his shoulder and a gun dangling loosely from his hand. He walks with the casual self-assurance of a teenager heading for the gaming zone. But the new terrorist game is different. He uses real bullets and his victims are real people. He is not satisfied with merely killing the ordinary people waiting on crowded railway stations but has taken his war to the affluence zone, gunning down powerful people, looking for foreigners from the rich developed world. Moreover, apart from profile transformation, increased use of sophisticated weapons, better

utilization of information technology, meticulous planning and greater boldness of extremist elements have added new dimensions to terrorism.

A question arises in mind as to why a person or group of individuals takes the path of terrorism. Are they forced to join any such outfits or they choose to be a part of such organization on their own? Sometimes, it may be a charismatic recruiter who influences his recruited. Or it may be due to violence experienced or antipathy encountered from an individual, group(s) or agent of state that somebody is tempted to pursue this path. Psychological and cognitive factors, such as one's self image, a sense of identity and belongingness, expectations, beliefs and attitudes also shape and modifies one's choice and reactions to his or her environments and events. According to United Nations, "prolonged unresolved conflicts, dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of rule of law, violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and lack of good governance" may lay conducive ground for terrorism.

Terrorism in India: India had different hue and colour of terrorism. In other words, terrorist violence in India has been from different fundamentalist extremists who may belong to Christian, Sikh, Muslim or even Hindu community. It is said that Christian had resorted to terrorism in Nagaland for its independence. But, gradually insurgency in Nagaland died down. The Hindu fundamentalists are accused of Babri mosque demolition and atrocities on Christians in Orissa (Kandhmal) and Karnataka. Some Hindu militants were alleged to be responsible for bomb blasts in Malegaon in Maharashtra in 2008. Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur was accused to be involved in the blasts in Malegaon. She was subjected to Norco tests thrice for ascertaining the truth about her involvement in the Malegaon explosion. But, nothing came out so far. The critics were, however, quick to point out that is it fair to conduct Norco tests on a lady repeatedly just because investigators cannot find evidence against her? It has also been alleged that Srikant Purohit, an army officer, supplied RDX to a few Hindu militants to cause blasts in Malegaon. However, it is yet to be proved conclusively that some Hindus were responsible for Malegaon blasts. L. K. Advani, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, has rightly advocated a judicial probe into the ATS (Anti Terrorist Squad) interrogation of Sadhvi Pragya Singh and the allegation that Srikant Purohit supplied RDX to Hindu militants. It is regrettable that political parties are trying to draw mileage from sensitive issues like the Malegaon blasts. The correct step would be to properly investigate the case and let the law take its own course. In 2016, the National Investigating Agency (NIA) dropped Sadhvi Pragya's name from its charge sheet, giving her a clean chit. In 2017, the Bombay High Court granted her bail. In the same year, Colonel Purohit, prime accused in the case, also got bail from the Supreme Court and rejoined the army. It has been argued that the Hindu fundamentalists resorted to violence to stop conversion of Hindus to Christianity and to safeguard Hindu heritage and culture.

Bhinderwala spearheaded Sikh fundamentalist extremism in early eighties in Punjab, a border state of India on whose western frontier lies Pakistan. The terrorist problem in Punjab was a challenge not only to secular fabric of India but it also endangered the security and integrity of the nation. It was a challenge to secular ethos of India in the sense that some misguided Sikh youth under the influence and patronage of Sikh leaders like Bhinderwala and Jagjit Singh Chauhan wanted the creation of separate and independent Sikh state in the name of Khalistan. The terrorist violence in Punjab, traced back to 1978, had the potentiality of a secessionist movement and if it had succeeded it would have certainly posed a danger to the security and integrity of India.

Terrorism in Punjab started with the sectarian feud between some fundamentalist Sikhs and Nirankaris. There were killings in the clashes of April, 1978 and later on climaxed with the assassination of Baba Gurbachan Singh, the spiritual head of Nirankaris, on 20 April, 1980. Thereafter slogans like "Khalistan Zindabad" and "Khalsa Raj Karenga" were raised and communal tension was deliberately fomented. Soon thereafter, Lala Jagat Narain was murdered in September 1981 because of his criticism of the murder of Nirankaris. Jarnail Singh Bhinderwala was arrested on 20th September, 1981 in connection with the murder of Lala Jagat Narain. There was large scale violence in which policemen were attacked with deadly weapons near Mehta Chowk. The police resorted to firing. A judicial inquiry was set up to look into the matter. It, however, justified the police action later on. The same day four persons were killed in Jalandhar and several injured by a gang of motorcycle riders. This started the cult of random killing and terrorist violence. Bhinderwala assumed the leadership of the Sikh extremists and became more fanatic day after day. He gained respect among religious Sikhs by his opposition to Nirankaris. He was able to recruit a large number of unemployed Sikh youth who became fanatic Hindu haters due to their constant brain washing. They started believing that they would soon attain their goal of Khalistan by terrorizing the people and government with the active support and encouragement of foreign elements particularly Pakistan.

From October 1983 onwards, the fundamentalist extremists led by Bhinderwala started turning the Golden Temple complex, the holiest shrine of Sikhs, at Amritsar into a fort where large number of arms and ammunitions were stored. The terrorists did all this by lodging themselves within the holy precincts of the Golden temple and other Gurudwaras of Punjab.

The Government of India by May 1984 woke up to the reality that any delay in curbing terrorism in Punjab would be fatal. It was only then Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, ordered the army to launch military operation 'Operation Blue Star' on 5th June, 1984. The operation achieved its objective of flushing out the terrorists from the holy shrine and killed Bhinderwala and Amrik Singh, the President of Sikh students' wing. But unfortunately, a part of Golden temple was damaged in the army operation. A total number of forty-two religious places had been identified where terrorists were based. The army moved into these premises in stages to flush them out. It encountered a fair amount of resistance in the Gurudwaras at Moga and Muktsar. The terrorists had also fired at the army in Faridkot, Patiala, Ropar and at Mehta Chowk. The last of these army operations was, however, completed by June 6, 1984.

The Government of India crushed terrorism in Punjab and gradually peace and amity between Sikh and Hindus was resorted but at a very high price. Smt. Indira Gandhi was assassinated on 31st October, 1984 by the two of her Sikh body guards at her residence. A section of the Sikhs who held extremist views regarded the operation Blue Star in the Golden Temple as an affront and insult to the Sikh religion. So, this was a revenge killing because she had ordered the army to enter the Golden temple to flush out the terrorists. Sikhs also regarded the inviolability of the Golden temple complex as a symbol of their indomitable and defiant spirit and their unyielding determination to survive against all odds. They, therefore, treat any threat to the inviolability of the Golden temple as a mortal danger not only to their separate identity but to their very existence. The Khalistan movement is long dead but its ghost haunts Indian democracy as attempts from across the borders were made to give a new direction to farmers' agitation towards the end of 2020. NIA issued notices to dozens of Sikh and Punjabi activists and registered Firsthand Information Report (FIR). The FIR reads: "The central government has received information that Sikhs for Justice an 'Unlawful Association under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and other Khalistani terrorist outfits, including but not limited to Babbar Khalsa International, Khalistan Tiger Force and Khalistan Zindabad Force along with their frontal organisations have entered into a conspiracy to create an atmosphere of fear and lawlessness and to cause disaffection in people and to incite them towards rising in rebellion against the Government of India."

The terrorist and extremist violence has also plagued India on account of the activities of the Naxalites. The roots of the naxal movement go back to 1967 when the communists following Maotseung launched a full-blown violent revolt by the peasants and the deprived section against the land owners in the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal. The socio-economic disparity in the society attracted the unemployed youth and the landless people to join the Naxalite movement with a view to change the social and political order through violence and extremist activities. In seventies, the government of West Bengal under the leadership of Siddharath Sanker Ray dealt with the problem of naxalism with iron hand. This resulted in the killing or fleeing of naxals to the neighboring states. This movement had spread to fifteen states and one hundred and seventy of the six hundred districts of India. It is mostly concentrated in inaccessible forest areas where tribal dwell. Till 2003, the movement was led in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra by the Peoples' War Group. In Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, it is led by Maoist. The success of Maoist in Nepal, where they seized power within eight years, inspired the naxals to adopt classical arm insurrection as a strategy to usurp power under the banner of CPI (M). Thus, the Naxalites belong to the banned CPI (Maoist) faction and their armed wing is known as People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA). Their supreme commander is Mappala Laxamana Rao alias Ganpathi of Andhra Pradesh who has been running the red ultra network. He along with fourteen top Naxalite leaders – all members of the CPI (Moist) politburo – takes all the decisions on the entire naxal operations across the country. Seven of the fourteen naxal politburo members were from Andhra Pradesh. They are using a ten thousand square kilometer unsurveyed jungle in the heart of India called 'Abujmadh' in Dantewada district of Madhya Pradesh bordering Maharashtra as their headquarter, exploiting the absence of basic facilities like hospitals, schools and roads to indoctrinate the tribal who have been denied their legitimate rights to safety, forest land and produce. They mostly target the security personnel but also indulge in extortion activities for purchasing arms and ammunition. They often kill the civilians and those villagers whom they suspect to be police informers.

Nitish Kumar, the Chief Minister of Bihar, while addressing the meeting of the Chief Ministers of seven Naxalite affected states in New Delhi on 7th January, 2009 said that the solution to Naxalite problem lies in the democratic behaviour of the government in particular and society in general. He further reiterated

“Naxalism is no longer a state centric phenomenon, but like terrorism it is an interstate problem with international ramifications. Like terrorism, the Central government has to pitch in and help the states in countering and combating this problem. It should be treated as a national problem and the centre should assist the states in tackling these problems – both in strengthening law enforcing agencies as well as on the development fronts”. N. Vittal, former Central Vigilance Commissioner, elaborates these views further and suggests a four point strategy to tackle naxal problem in India. Firstly, since the Maoist are following the classical communist strategy of arms insurrection, this challenge must be met literally, by military in line with the effective strategy used to put down similar insurrections of the communists in Malaysia and Greece in the past after the Second World War. Secondly, we must replicate the Salva Judum tactics of providing police supports to tribal’s self defense team. Salva Judum in Chattisgarh grew up as a spontaneous tribal vigilante movement when tribal in thousands started collecting around police station near their homes, seeking safety from marauding naxals. The state government through special police officers provided protection to the tribal camps. In future, in mobilizing manpower for this effort, extensive utilization of disciplined manpower in the form of ex-servicemen is required. This issue can be seen as a law and order problem involving police and hence within the exclusive jurisdiction of the state, Article 355 of the constitution must be invoked by the Government of India to create a parallel force. Thirdly, by granting title to their land which tribal are traditionally cultivating by amending the Indian Forest Act will go a long way in curbing the social causes of naxal movement. And finally, by providing basic infrastructural facilities of governance like roads, hospitals, and schools etc the affected population can be brought back into mainstream. In fact, proactive and continuous actions are the only pragmatic solution to naxalism.

The Naxalites is though a home grown terrorist outfit that indulges in anti national, illegal and extremist activities, yet it is not aligned to any caste, creed or religion. It has killed so many security personnel, policemen and innocent civilians and hence it has become a danger to the peace and security of India. There is urgent need to tackle this menace with an iron hand and at the same time take necessary steps for the socio-economic development of the Naxalite infected areas. Above measures along with development of the infected area by building roads, means of communication, hospitals or primary health centers, schools etc and friendly attitude of police and local administration has started bearing fruits. Many naxals have opted to enter into mainstream on one hand and many leaders have been killed on the other hand, weakening the movement.

But the most outrageous, cynical and worst kind of terrorism that India has faced so far is that of Islamic terrorism. With the exception of Malegaon which points to the possibility of “saffron terror”, every single terrorist attack on India bore the imprint of the Islamic Jihadists. The Islamic terrorists, a loose coalition of jihadists bound together by ideological religious affiliation, strive to create a non-socialist, non-secular Islamic state where people would be governed by the holy Koran and the Sunnat (precedents from Prophet Muhammad’s life). This was the view of Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian Islamic scholar, whose work deeply inspired the global jihadist movement. According to him “there is only one place on earth which can be called the home of Islam and it is the place where the Islamic state is established and Shariah is the authority and where all Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultations”. The terrorist is the God’s volunteer who gives his life and takes others’ for a future built on blood soaked past. Under this kind of hallucinatory vision what can be expected from Islamic jihadists in India? They would naturally unleash a reign of terror and indulge in wanton killing of innocent and unarmed civilians here and there.

Terrorist violence and extremist activities in India has a long history. Initially it was confined to the state of Jammu and Kashmir where terrorist attacks and extremist violence became the order of the day since the partition of India in 1947. During the British rule Kashmir was a native state whose ruler was a Hindu named Raja Hari Singh. The British at the time of granting independence to the two newly created independent states – India and Pakistan- gave an option to the native states including Kashmir to merge with either India or Pakistan or remain independent. Kashmir under Raja Hari Singh whose Prime Minister was Sheikh Abdullah chose to merge with India. This was not liked by Pakistan as Kashmir was a Muslim majority state. Pakistan sent kabayli raiders in 1947 itself to capture Kashmir by force but the Indian army drove them away. Unfortunately, a small portion of western Kashmir including Muzaffarabad could not be cleared off the raiders and since then this part is known as Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Pakistan could not reconcile the idea of Muslim majority Kashmir remaining with secular India. The Islamist fundamentalists with the aid of Pakistan started terrorist violence and extremist activities in the valley of Kashmir since fifties. The Kashmiri militants and the infiltrators from Pakistan operating in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), intend to effect territorial change either for its independence or merger with Pakistan. They obtain arms, ammunitions and training from Pakistani army and financial support from dozens of Islamic Charities and radical Islamic organizations. Pakistan based A I Rasheed Trust run by Maulana Masood Azhar and Markaz-ul-Dawa Ishad, the parent outfit of Lasker-e-Taiba,

may be mentioned in this connection. It is because of their activities the J&K region of India has been in the midst of terrorist violence and extremism during fifties and sixties. However, after the Bangladesh war and the signing of the Simla accord in 1972 between India and Pakistan, peace did reign between the two neighbouring countries – no war, no cross-border terrorism – for seventeen years until 1989 when Pakistan security forces began to send Mujahedeen as well as other jihadist elements to fight on the Kashmir front since the Pakistani militants were suddenly unemployed after the end of Afghan war against the Soviet army. Soon after, the ISI also created the Laskar-e-Taiba, comprised mostly of non-Kashmiris, as a special outfit to inflict trouble across the Line of Control (LoC). Since then, Kashmir has been in the grip of militancy and extremist violence.

Terrorism and extremist activities spread from Jammu and Kashmir to other major cities of India. It had assumed a dangerous proportion since nineties. There was a series of bomb blasts in Mumbai in 1993 in the wake of Babri Masjid demolition. The hijacking of Indian Airlines plane IC 814 in December 1999 by the Pakistani backed hijackers was the most daring terrorist act. The IC 814 was on its scheduled flight from Kathmandu to New Delhi when it was hijacked and diverted to Kandhar. The passengers and the plane were allowed to go in exchange for the release of three dreaded terrorists including Maulana Masood Azhar, who were languishing in Indian jails for terrorist activities in India. This shows that India lacked political will to wage a war vigorously against terrorism. This is also evident from the fact that in November 1989 when Rubbiya Sayeed, daughter of the then India's Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed (during V.P. Singh's Premiership) was kidnapped in Srinagar, the terrorists asked for the release of five Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) militants. The Government of India succumbed and the militants were set free. These two incidents amply demonstrate the timidity of political class of India. Every time you make major concessions, you are preparing the ground for several more terrorist attacks in future.

The saga of terrorism in India does not end here. The Islamist terrorists made an outrageous and daring attack on 13th December 2001, on the heart of Indian democracy – the Parliament. Although all the fidayeen jihadists involved were killed and the collaborators were caught, a good numbers of security personnel also lost their lives in defending the symbol of our democracy. Since then, India has had over two thousand deaths in terrorist violence. It is not only the audacity and ruthlessness of the attack on India's financial capital Mumbai but it has been preceded by so many terrorist attacks in India's major cities. There was storming of the Akshardham temple in Ahmadabad in 2002 and the July 2005 attack on Ramlala idol at Ayodhya. The killing of hundreds of innocent commuters in the local trains of Mumbai in 2006 is still afresh in our memory.

2008 was a year when India was held hostage by terror. There have been numerous outrageous terrorist attacks in different cities of India in that year only. The year 2008 began (January 1) with a Laskar attack on the CRPF camp in Uttar Pradesh. The Ahmadabad terrorist bombings of 26th July killed nearly forty-five and wounded one hundred sixty civilians, while the Bangalore bombs the previous day killed one person and injured six. These incidents were preceded by May 13 Jaipur terrorist bombings which killed eighty civilians and injured more than two hundred. There were severe bomb blasts in Hyderabad on two occasions. Malegaon also witnessed bomb blast in that year. Militants also planted bombs in crowded areas of Delhi in September killing hundreds of innocent civilians. By the time 2008 drew to a close, there were multiple terrorist attacks in Mumbai on the 26th November, 2008 which left more than two hundred dead and several hundred wounded. Nearly sixty hours of prolonged pitched battle between the terrorists and the security forces speak of the enormity, preparedness and severity of the Islamic extremist strike in India. This spine-chilling attack in Mumbai in November is different from the militant's attack on Indian Parliament in 2001 in the sense that it was a planned military type invasion even if it involved only ten attackers. The sophisticated arms that they used and modus operandi which they adopted point out to a well funded, well trained group that bears the signature of fundamentalist Islamic organizations like Laskar-e-Taiba and its several variants. Unlike in previous cases of terror attacks where bombs were placed stealthily in crowded places, this was a fidayeen operation like the one on Indian Parliament in 2001. The targeting of well-known landmarks and high-profile places in Mumbai such as the Chattrapati Shivaji terminus (railway station), the Taj and Oberoi Hotels and Nariman House shows fore knowledge of the city obtained by prior reconnaissance or through local collaborators.

Just as 9/11 entered the dictionary of terror so would 26/11, the day which will go down as Mumbai's darkest hour when terrorists laid siege to the city's roads, airports, railway station, hospitals and two of its best-known luxury hotels, leaving a trail of death and destruction and taking hostages. The scenes were devastating: explosions, raging fires, dead bodies, heavily armed terrorists with rucksacks containing grenades and explosives and firing indiscriminately at people on the streets. The most heart rendering sight was Mumbai's

most iconic and beautiful building, the 106 years old heritage wing of the Taj Mahal Hotel which was reduced to a blackened ruin.

The terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008 seems to be a challenge not only to India but also to the USA. It is a challenge to India in the sense that Pakistan's avowed policy of bleeding India through thousand cuts has manifested itself in numerous terrorist attacks and killing of several innocent civilians in different cities of India on numerous occasions. India has on several occasions given evidence and proof of the complicity of elements in Pakistan particularly Laskar-e-Taiba supported and nurtured by army and ISI combine behind most of the terrorist violence in India. USA and Britain both have acknowledged the hand of Pakistan's infamous ISI behind terrorist attack on India's Embassy in Kabul. Bruce Riedel, former CIA head, has accused the Musharraf regime for hoodwinking USA in the war against Al-Qaeda and Taliban and views Pakistan as part of the terror problem. But despite such accusations Pakistan has far from given up its reliance on jihadists to carry out terrorist attacks in India. It is now an accepted fact that the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 26/11 were carried out by specially trained jihadist elements from Pakistan. The confessional statements of Ajmal Amir Kasab, the captured terrorist of Mumbai carnage, and the disclosure of the names and identity of the other nine terrorists who were killed in Mumbai, the internationally available intercepts of telephone conversations among the terrorists during their operations and their handlers in Pakistan and just repeating demands for proof from India shows that Pakistan is shielding the perpetrators of these attacks. In view of these mounting evidences, India insisted that the perpetrators must face Indian justice and Islamabad must hand over forty fugitives wanted in various terrorist activities including Mumbai carnage. New Delhi also gave a dossier to Pakistan linking their nationals to the Mumbai attack but initially Islamabad rubbished this as simply information and not evidence. But perhaps on US bidding and due to increasing pressure of world community Pakistan is said to have instituted a probe with regard to the 26/11 attacks and had detained seventy one members of banned militant groups, put one hundred twenty four under surveillance and shut down five training camps of Jamaat ud- Dawa, widely believed to be a front of Laskar-e-Taiba.

Terrorism emanating from Pakistan is also a challenge to USA. Pakistan professes to be an ally of US in the war against terrorism but the truth is otherwise. Bruce Riedel, former CIA head, considers Pakistan as part of the terror problem. He was also critical of the fact that Islamabad has fleeced Washington of billions of dollars ostensibly to be used in the fight against terrorism, while allowing actually Al-Qaida to recoup and grow in the tribal areas of western Pakistan. In fact, US-Pakistan alliance to control and eliminate Taliban was unnatural one doomed to failure from the very beginning. The ejection of Taliban from Afghanistan was the result of Northern Alliance troops sweeping down to Kabul and Kandhar with the US air support. Pakistan contribution to that war was to extricate the Al-Qaida leadership and provide it a safe haven in Pakistan. In the last seven years after drawing ten billion dollars in aid from US, Pakistan has permitted the Afghan Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, to function publicly from Quetta and has ensured the resurgence of the Taliban not only in Afghanistan but in Pakistan as well. It is on account of this, recently hundreds of American military transport vehicles carrying essential supplies to US forces in Kabul were destroyed on its way in the Swat valley which is in Pakistan but is under the domination of Taliban and Al-Qaida. A suicide car bomb killed a US service member, four Afghan civilians and nineteen others in an attack outside a US military base and in front of the German embassy in Kabul on 17th January 2009. The attempts to place Kashmir at the centre of terror problem by those arguing that this would "free" Pakistan to pursue the war at the Afghan border must pause to reconsider their views especially after these incidents. The brutal murder of Daniel Pearl in Pakistan by Islamic jihadists sometimes ago and the deliberate targeting of American and British citizens and Jews in The Mumbai 26/11 attacks are further reminder to Washington that the evolution of Laskar-e-Taiba or Jaish Mohammad into an Al-Qaeda like organization in Pakistan can hardly solve the problem of terrorism faced by India, USA or the world. In the given circumstances, it would be very appropriate for the world community not to allow Islamic jihadists in Pakistan any further breathing space. It is thus obvious that terrorism is a global phenomenon. But as it has affected USA and the world so has it hit India all the harder. It is, therefore, necessary that India should take hard decisions to combat terrorism and make full proof arrangement so that this scourge of terrorism is eliminated as USA has prevented recurrence of terrorist attack on its soil after 9/11. It is time to wake up and act fast or else India could be doomed. The need of the hour is not only to strengthen India's security apparatus but also improve intelligence machinery. Stringent laws should be framed so that no terrorist could escape the due punishment for his terrorist act.

The Home Minister of India Mr. P. Chidambaram has taken initiative in this direction and enacted two important laws that will go a long way in preventing terrorism in India. The first law is regarding prevention of unlawful activities, widely known as Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and second is intended to establish National Investigating Agency (NIA). The new law UAPA like the repealed POTA (Prevention of

Terrorist Activities) ensures that the terror suspect can be held without framing charges for a period up to 180 days instead of 90 and police custody can be stretched up to 30 days. But at the same time UAPA has widened the scope regarding the definition of terrorism which includes offences related to radioactive or nuclear substances and even attempts to overawe state or public functionaries. The UAPA is more stringent in the sense that this law directs the court to presume the accused guilty in these cases unless proved otherwise. But while in POTA, confessions before a police officer was admissible as evidence, it would not be so under UAPA. Legal experts, however, are of the opinion that without this provision the law will not have much teeth, only a snarl. There is tough bail condition for those accused of terrorism. There would be no bail without the prosecution being heard properly and in case of foreigners there would be no bail at all. Further, Government of India would have the power to freeze, seize or attach funds and other financial assets of individuals or entities listed as terrorists and those who are suspected to be involved in terrorism.

It is high time to think afresh on clemency provision. It is most shocking that Afzal Guru who was sentenced to death by Supreme Court of India for being a part of conspiracy to attack the Indian Parliament is still alive due to clemency provision in the law. His mercy petition is in suspended animation due to vote bank politics. Hence, to avoid such situation in the future, clemency provision for convicts of terrorist acts should not be an option.

The UPA government had been dithering on a national agency to investigate terror cases for a long time under pressure from states which did not want their powers to be diluted. The Mumbai carnage, however, made all such opposition redundant. The government enacted the law for the creation of National Investigation Agency (NIA) in December 2008. The NIA is to investigate and prosecute offences related to sovereignty, security and integrity of the country including bomb blasts, hijacking of aircrafts and ships and attacks on nuclear installations. Under NIA there is also provision for special courts for speedy trial and appointment of special prosecutors. Proceedings for these trails are to be in camera, if necessary.

Concluding Remarks: Militancy cannot be fought without cutting edge technology like dedicated satellites, CCTV, complete connectivity between intelligence and responders, metal detectors, network of informers, command and control rooms, well equipped bomb squads, early detection system etc. There is need to build new NSG hubs in the metro cities and buy sophisticated arms for commandos. Equally important is to find the means and ways to equip and upgrade the local police besides increasing their numbers. They constitute the bulk of the manpower in the police force. They live and work within the community. They can be developed as human intelligence units at the lowest level. In addition to this they need to be trained well to respond adequately and promptly in a crisis situation. However, defensive measures, in any event, can be meaningful only if they are accompanied by a proactive component that entails going after the terrorists before they strike. That means, among other things, hounding, disrupting and smashing their cells, networks and safe havens; destroying their local network: cutting off their funding; and imposing deterrent costs (through overt or covert means) on those that promote, finance or tolerate terrorist activity.

India needs American cooperation to put pressure on Pakistan to desist from sending terrorists to India. The change in stand of China when for the first time it has supported Security Council action against Jamaat-ud-Dawa, a Pakistani militant outfit, is a matter of encouragement to India. Even Gordon Brown, the British Prime Minister, has recently observed that the majority of terrorists' plots in UK had a definite Pakistani connection. Hence, India should ask the European Union and the United States to exercise their influence in the IMF and the Aid Pakistan Consortium to condition financial assistance on more responsible conduct by the near bankrupt Pakistani state.

The United Nations mechanisms can be further exploited. The 13 international conventions against terror should be wielded against Pakistan. Out of two mechanisms created by the Security Council - one, the Sanctions Committee established under resolution 1267, has already been pressed into service to ban Jamaat ud-Dawa. The other resolution 1373, adopted immediately after 9/11, imposes, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, binding requirements on all member states to take a whole range of actions against suspected terror organizations. These include freezing financial transfers and interdicting arms supplies, reporting on the movements of suspected terrorists and upgrading national legislation to bring it into conformity with international requirements. In the event of continued inaction by Islamabad, the possibility of moving the Security Council to hold Pakistan in breach of resolution 1373, and threatening sanctions against the Pakistani state if compliance does not follow, is well worth pursuing. The threat of sanctions would be even more potent if they specifically target the Pakistani military, by imposing travel bans and restrictions on the sale of weapons

and other military assistance. Also, the UN could exclude Pakistani army from future UN peace-keeping operations.

It is argued that to teach a lesson to Pakistan, India should strike at the terrorist camps and destroy the terrorist machinery of enemy. This may, however, lead to full scale war between the two nations. The saner elements in India point out that war is only a means to achieve an end but the end can never be mutual destruction. Some of the scholars argue that since, India and Pakistan are both nuclear countries, this is hardly an option. However, India does not need a leader to manage peace; it needs a leader who can lead us in war. We have been through with a Chamberlain; it is time for a Churchill.

The Indian Army did conduct surgical strikes on terror launch pads across the Line of Control on 29 September 2016. In view of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir in September 2018, then Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said “he believed there was a need for another surgical strike on terror launch pads across the Line of Control” In another strike against terrorism, the Indian Air Force bombed the Jaish-e-Mohammad’s biggest terror-training camp in Pakistan’s Balakot on 25 February 2019. The attack comes few days after 40 CRPF jawans were killed by a JeM suicide bomber in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir. This was non-military pre-emptive strike which shook the confidence of terrorist outfits as well as Pakistani agencies supporting them.

The above strikes were result of deep commitment of NDA government under the dynamic leadership of Indian Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi to fight terrorism. In his address to the 75th United Nations General Assembly debate, in reference to the last 75 years of the United Nations, he observed “One could say that we have successfully avoided a third world war, but we cannot deny that there have been several wars and many civil wars. Several terrorist attacks shook the world and there has been bloodshed.” Further, our Prime Minister Modi has made his message very clear in the very same session, quoting “India will not hesitate in raising its voice against the enemies of humanity, human race and human values (including) terrorism, smuggling of illegal weapons, drugs and money laundering.”

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