

TERRORISM – THE GLOBAL DIMENSION

ASHOK KARNIK



The Worldwide Spread of Terror

Terrorism, as a weapon, has been used for centuries by nationalists, separatists, ideological rebels, sectarian groups and dissidents all over the world. Terrorist tactics were always localized outbreaks, restricted to a geographical area. Hardly ever did these transcend a country or its periphery. What is being witnessed since the 1990s is a trans-continental spread of terror linked through a common thread – Islamic *Jihad*.

It is erroneous to link a religious denomination to a violent activity, as religion and violence are contradictory terms. The term “*Jihad*” is also open to various interpretations. The phrase “Islamic *Jihad*” is being used here only because it is being bandied about by the perpetrators of violence themselves to justify their wrongdoings. The cross-continental spread of the present violence has an ideological root; it is a misguided ideology but nevertheless it needs to be understood so that it can be countered effectively.

Islam embodies guidelines for the conduct of human life in all its facets. While most religions seek to meet the spiritual demands of its followers, Islam goes one better as it delineates a very strict social and political code of conduct. All other political philosophies from capitalism to communism are floundering but in contrast its adherents perceive Islam as the most effective answer to all problems. It is said that religion is not the opiate of the masses but the vitamin of the poor.

Ideological Pretensions

Islamic resurgence can be related to the success of the Islamists in Iran. With the dethronement of the Shah of Iran and the ejection of the US forces from Iran (1979) Islam was seen as the irresistible force capable of defeating Western hegemony in the Middle East. The confidence in the

The 7/11 Mumbai train blasts woke us up from a collective slumber. This will again be forgotten till the next blast. It needs to be realised that terrorism is a long-term threat and long-term remedies are needed. This is an attempt to provide some answers.

ascendancy of Islam was buttressed after the Russian withdrawal (1987) from Afghanistan. It was deemed to be Islam's victory over Communism. However, the US victory in the 1991 gulf war came as a setback to the ambition of ejecting the West from the Middle-east. It also created confusion as Islamic countries were seen fighting against each other. This militated against the belief that Islam transcended national boundaries.

Hassan Abdallah al-Turabi (born 1932), an Islamic ideologue based in Sudan, had earlier established an Islamic Charter Front in 1960 to form a broad-based Islamic coalition. He had to reconcile the antagonism between different Muslim countries. In order to establish Islam's universalism as against the territorial preoccupation of most Islamic countries, Turabi came up with the idea of “Islamic *Jihad*”. He advocated that the hated West had to be driven out by launching terrorist attacks all over the world by bringing together various *jehadi* organizations under the auspices of the International Muslim Brotherhood (IMB), sponsored by Iran.

Turabi held that an Islamic state was a pre-requisite to world Islamic order but the present Islamic nations were puppets of the West and needed to be emasculated by driving out the Western forces. In 1996-97, Turabi formulated doctrinal guidance for Islamist action: In an Islamic state subordinate to foreign influence (Saudi Arabia), agitation for removal of the foreign influence was necessary. In Muslim dominated states where Islam was persecuted (Egypt), violent action was justified, for Muslims under non-Muslim control (Israel, India) the fight against the infidels was necessary to liberate the Muslims.

The *jehadi* appeal has spread far and wide, with countries and regions ranging from the US, UK, Spain, Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Egypt, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines coming under terrorist attacks. This became possible because of the

emergence of Osama bin Laden as the pre-eminent Islamic revolutionary during and after the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan. The *mujahideen* apparatus created by the US and nurtured by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has come to haunt the world. The *mujahideen* and *fidayeen* culture so lauded then by the West has been let loose now for the propagation of Islam as understood by Osama and his *Al Qaeda*. The recruitment of volunteers and the facilities created for their training to fight the Russians are being utilized now to spread terror all over the world.

The worldwide spread of terror can be illustrated through the following incidents:

- 1) September 11, 2001 – New York World Trade Center attack – 2973 killed.
- 2) December 13, 2001 - New Delhi – 5 gunmen stormed the Indian Parliament, but did not succeed in entering parliament's precincts and were killed.
- 3) October 12, 2002 - Bali, Indonesia – A car bomb drove into a disco killing 202.
- 4) May 16, 2003 – Morocco – 5 explosions ripped through Casablanca killing 41 and injuring over 100
- 5) March 11, 2004 - Madrid, Spain – Ten bombs exploded on four trains killing 191 and injuring 1200
- 6) July 7, 2005 – London – Blasts in three underground trains and one bus, killing 52 and injuring 700
- 7) July 11, 2006 – Mumbai – 7 local trains attacked with bombs, killing 192 and injuring over 700

India Under Threat

India is unfortunately the target of both the Turabi doctrine and Pakistan's territorial claim and historical animosity. It would be wrong to assume that Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) is the only bone of contention between India and Pakistan. J&K is the immediate cause but India cannot escape the larger Islamic agenda. Pakistan has a short-term as well as a long-term goal in India. Pakistan has a lot of scores to settle with India. J&K remains an oozing wound. The creation of Bangladesh is remembered as the dismemberment of Pakistan by India. The goal of universalisation of Islam dovetails into Pakistan's grievances against India. Pakistan sponsored *jihad* against India is not Kashmir-centric but also aims at weakening the Indian state so that it can collapse under its own divisiveness. The *jehadi* network outside the Kashmir valley and attacks in far-flung areas of the country are proof of this design. Pakistan realizes that India cannot be defeated militarily. Its strategy is, therefore, to bleed India through a thousand cuts.

Space does not permit a narration of the violence let loose on India since 1980 but suffice it to say that India has lost more lives in terrorist attacks than in all the wars it has fought since Independence. According to an estimate, over 90,000 lives were lost in terrorist attacks from 1990 to 2000. The carnage has continued since then, despite peace talks between India and Pakistan. While Kashmir is the focus of attack, other parts of the country have also been targeted. From Delhi to Kolkata, Varanasi to Coimbatore, the length and breadth of the country has come under attack from the *Lashkar-e-Toiba*, *Jaish-e-Mohammed* and *Hizbul Mujahidden*.

These are in addition to the almost daily depredations in J&K. Those asking for proof of foreign involvement in these attacks are blind by choice and cannot be convinced by any proof that India chooses to provide. In hundreds of incidents the hand of these organisations was proved but in each new incident Pakistan and the US seek fresh evidence. Musharraf cannot and does not want to act against them because he may not survive if he acts against them. The US has to sustain Musharraf, as they have no alternative available. The realpolitik of the situation should not be lost on India. There is no point in India trying to provide any proof or expect other countries to do its job.

It is true that such attacks cannot be carried out without local support. It is regrettable that foreign *jehadis* find local support but that does not absolve outside powers that send the *jehadis* in the first place. Admittedly, there are several groups of misguided Muslims - and a few mercenary Hindus too - who help the terrorists from within. That is a problem India has to tackle separately but it should not detract from the culpability of the Pakistan-based terrorist organisations, which have started operating from Bangladesh too.

Modus Operandi

The Pakistan-based terrorist groups select local supporters from among those who are noted for fanaticism, aggrieved youth or sheer mercenaries from the underworld. Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) offers them ready fanatics. Even a handful from a large mass of pliable individuals is enough to form a module. The module may be put to use on a limited scale; like hiring houses, buying vehicles, arranging tickets, carrying parcels etc. Enthusiastic module members may be sent for training across the borders. There appears to be no dearth of modules in India. Over 200 modules were destroyed in the last 5 years but an equal number or more may still exist.

Remedies

In our anguish after each violent incident, there are public outpourings, asking for intelligence revamp, hot pursuit, stronger anti-terrorist laws *et al*. What is feasible is never finally decided as public memory fades and the time for action is seemingly over. The Government of India does no better after the initial show of determination.

It is in this context the following suggestions can be offered for consideration:

- 1) The intelligence network must be rebuilt but it should not be a knee-jerk reaction where the government talks only of additional manpower. The *quality* of manpower is more important. Production of intelligence would take time, as it is a long-term goal. No miracles can be expected here and now.
- 2) Talk of strong action like hot pursuit is futile. We are dealing with a strong military power and any precipitate action could lead to war. The example of Israel is often cited. Israel deals with non-nuclear states. Even then its

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MUMBAI, TERROR AND THE SOFT STATE

SHARAD BAILUR

The national ethos of India is based on a deep commitment to liberalism. This is reflected in the Constitution. Liberalism is the keystone of the democratic arch.

Among its key components are respect for the individual and individual freedom which find their highest expression in our list of Fundamental Rights. In our commitment to this freedom therefore we often take it to extremes without realising that it is a slippery slope that can only lead to uncontrollable anarchy. One of the consequences is that India is seen as a soft state with any number of loopholes in the law through which those convicted of terrorist activities can get away.

We need to be clear, first about what constitutes terrorism, and who a terrorist is. Our definition of a terrorist and terrorism must be specific to the context of this nation. It need not be congruent in all respects with its definition in other countries.

This is because in the Indian context the secular character of the state has been compromised by different political parties for their own ends, initially by muddle-headedness about the concept of secularism itself and later by the political opportunism that such confused thinking spawned.

I am no great admirer of Israel primarily because it is not a secular state. But it has understood the mind of its enemies well. And, in the context of its own version of democracy, it has not allowed itself to be reduced to a soft state by bleeding heart liberalism. In the context of what happened in Mumbai on 11th July 2006 it is time for the Government and the Intelligence agencies to take some hard lessons from Israel.

There is bound to be political opposition to the tightening up of the state apparatus but I strongly suspect that the BJP and the Congress will have almost identical views on this issue, even if other parties cry themselves hoarse. It would therefore be wise for the Congress to open parleys with the BJP and come to agreed common measures among which should be to:

1. Tighten border controls with Bangladesh, Pakistan and on the west coast. Places like Udupi and Mangalore have been identified as being those to be kept under special watch. It is surprising that Bhatkal in the North Kanara district of Karnataka is nowhere mentioned. Bhatkal is a hot-bed of smuggling arms and explosives that come across the sea from various Arab ports and from Pakistan.
2. Most often heightened anti-terrorist measures tend to become routine and in the context of the Indian mindset will most likely be flouted by the gatekeepers of the law themselves. So mere heightened awareness and care for some time is grossly inadequate. What is needed is that we enact an anti-terrorist law that is unambiguous, tough and does not allow for loopholes for those convicted. Also, it should be ironclad and unchangeable even by negligence. Its main architecture should rest on the following:

a) The state in its active operations should follow a “No

prisoners taken” policy as a matter of course. A “No Negotiations” policy with terrorists should also be made mandatory.

- b) The principle of putting terrorists in jail should be stopped. Terrorists tend to be used as bargaining chips as happened in the Indian Airlines hijacking to Kandahar. Today Syed Salahuddin encourages terrorist acts in India from the safe confines of Pakistan just because we allowed ourselves to be put into a position from which he was let off.
- c) Convicted terrorists, however “small” the terrorist act of which they are convicted, should face a mandatory death sentence after as much intelligence has been extracted from them as possible. This should be part of the law and there should be no extenuating circumstances and no appeal to higher courts including the Supreme Court. If this calls for an amendment of the Constitution, so be it. Executions should be carried out forthwith.
- d) Special anti-terrorist courts should be set up in which evidence can be fast-tracked and results received quicker. Even if the person concerned is exonerated let him be kept under watch for at least three years.

A special Anti-terrorist Finance Department for the task of gathering intelligence on the sources of finance of terrorist organisations should be set up. If leads in the financing point to ostensibly inoffensive organisations or politicians, they should be arrested under the anti-terrorist law as well and be investigated thoroughly till proved innocent.

The Government of India should approach the Israeli government for help to improve our internal intelligence mechanisms and a closer co-ordination with Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security agency should be evolved. We should take all the hard lessons that El Al the Israeli Airline follows with such religious devotion, and use them in all Indian airline flights. El Al has never suffered the ignominy of a hijack. Contrast this with the record of Indian Airlines and Air India.

Mumbai is specially vulnerable. A small motorised fishing boat from Bhatkal carrying arms and explosives can easily slip over to say Harnai beach or even Alibag with the consignment. From there another small boat can land on the unmanned east coast of Mumbai anywhere right up to the road that leads from Chembur over the Thane Creek to the mainland. The route via the Mankhurd line to Kurla is wide open. I have never seen even an unarmed policeman there.

Above all, the belief among Pakistan and its allies and among various terrorist groups that India is a soft state needs to be eradicated. A concerted effort is needed to inculcate a belief in them that terrorist activity against India is met with ruthless and condign consequences. It is only tough laws and a sustained campaign to educate the public that intrusive police searching is essential for their continued safety, that will yield results.

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REMEMBERING JULY 10, 1806: THE VELLORE MUTINY

R. SRINIVASAN

Popular local discontent against the rule of the East India Company (EIC) and later the Government of India expressed itself intermittently in different parts of the country. These exploded into regional civil and military unrest and in civil discontents. Tamilnadu has had a fair share of these, but they remain known only to the people of the region. Similar expressions of revolt were witnessed in other regions as well.

The best remembered of these and commemorated in folk and Tamil memory is that of Kattabomman, the dreaded Poligar (chieftain) who rose in revolt in 1799 defying the rule of the EIC. The battle against the Company came to a speedy end and near the town of Tinnavelly, the leaders Kattabomman and their associates were publicly hanged and attempts made to exterminate discontent. In spite of the hanging of the leaders, a rebellion broke out the very next year and this had a wide spread and is characterised as the Second Poligar war. Apart from the Tamil chieftans, it included the Malabar leadership (Kerala Varma) and Mysore ones as well. This second war was led by the brothers of the hanged Kattabomman, Oomaithurai and the united rebel forces had their way and in an unbelievably short period rebuilt the completely razed walls of the fort of Kattabomman, Palayamkottai. The rebel troops were briefly triumphant; but the superior forces of the Company put them down. In imitation of the Romans who destroyed Carthage, the entire fort and its environs were destroyed, ploughed and sowed with castor oil and salt to ensure that nothing would grow in the region. It was forbidden to recall the name of the family even in songs.

In spite of these, folk songs and ballads commemorated the heroic deeds of the leader and the family and for over a hundred years his place of birth continued to attract devout "secular pilgrims". The name of the poligar chiefs are still on the lips of the illiterates and the songs and ballads still repeated.

However, such acts of revolt were not the exclusive privilege of the male braves. Kittur and Dharwad led by Queen Chennave and her opposition to Col. Thackeray of the EIC recalls the later exploits of the Rani of Jhansi. She and her daughter-in-law defeated more than once the forces led by Col. Thackeray. This was in Bombay Karnataka.

Such acts of defiance and rebellion were historically important, but the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 whose bi-centenary is being celebrated in Tamilnadu needs to be more widely known. This was a revolt that led to the recall of the Governor of Madras, William Bentinck (who was to have another *avatar*



THE FORT OF VELLORE : Photo courtesy Curator, Government Museum, Vellore.

later as Governor General) and of the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army.

Vellore today known as one of the towns housing among the finest medical colleges and a centre of super speciality medical research was then a small town with a fort. The Mutiny of 1806 (July 10) lasted for just a day but reverberated down the forts of the East India Company to distant areas. It had all the potentialities of a great revolt but was nipped by speedy determined action. It had similarities with the later, more famous, 1857 Mutiny, in that both the major communities participated in it and religious scruples played an important part.

Why did the Vellore Mutiny break out at all? The Indian soldiers were ordered to forego the turbans that they had habitually worn and were prohibited from wearing their caste marks. Beards were prohibited and no earrings could be put on. These were seen as seditious attempts at Christianising the forces and both communities were against these orders. A further irritant was the new cap of the uniform which had parts of leather from the hides of cows. These were not to endear the soldiers to their masters.

It has also been suggested that ideas of revolt and civic restlessness were circulating in the South. A number of itinerant *fakirs* were constantly visiting towns and villages and spreading messages of revolt. They reminded the people that their rulers were ridiculously few in contrast to the teeming millions of the subjects. With such vast numbers, the rulers could be defeated. They influenced the native soliders and many local revolts are ascribed to their influence. Hindus, no less than Muslims, were among their followers.

Another factor that contributed to a sense of confidence

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POINT ↔ COUNTER-POINT

ASHOK KARNIK

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise man studies all sides before coming to a conclusion. This is an attempt to provide opposing viewpoints so that a considered opinion can be formed.

- 7/11 (Mumbai bomb blasts) amounted to failure of Intelligence, failure of the Administration and failure of the disaster management system. Pakistan should be taught a lesson, Intelligence overhauled and Administration made accountable so that such a disaster is never repeated.
- The monsoon has exposed the false promises made by the Municipal authorities. The roads are washed away, low-lying areas flooded and the people are scared of another 26/7.
- Muslim MPs meet the PM to complain about harassment of minorities during investigation of the 7/11 bombings. They claim that only those against whom concrete evidence is available should be picked up.
- A mole in the PMO – a great security breach. Jaswant Singh has produced a letter purportedly written by an American official about India's nuclear plans. It is based on information the American received from a "person close to the Prime Minister" (Rao). It indicates that India was planning to test a nuclear weapon shortly (1995). The author of the letter is not known, the person who provided the information is not known. However, the fact that the deliberations in the PMO were revealed to an American smells of a spy in the Indian establishment. What is the truth?
- Richard Boucher, US Asst. Secretary of State asks India to produce evidence of Pak involvement in the Mumbai blasts. Gen. Musharraf too asks for evidence.
- Our adversary has launched a proxy war against us. It is cost effective and is intended to bleed India so that the people lose faith in their Government. Even after all the improvements suggested, only some attacks can be prevented – not all. It is a battle of attrition. We hit back destroying their modules and the adversary keeps on with the attacks. Ultimately it is the determination of the people of India that will decide the issue. The nation has to stand united and not panic. More and more attacks are on the cards irrespective of what we do. We have to raise the cost of each attack.
- All desirable goals are not achievable. BMC is ailing for the last 50 years. It is unfair to hang Johnny Joseph for the sins of the past incumbents.

Exaggeration and wild predictions by news-channels do not help. There is no possibility of a deluge like the one on 26/7 in the near future. There will always be flooding as the drainage system can cope with only 25 mm rainfall. A system that required repairs 25 years back cannot be repaired overnight. We should not denigrate every institution in our anxiety. It spreads only cynicism and no constructive message comes across. In spite of shortcomings, the BMC does not deserve to be hanged on the basis of media hype.
- True, innocent persons will suffer during wide ranging investigations. However, how can the questioning be avoided? If 200 innocent persons lose their lives, a few innocent persons could suffer some inconvenience. It is unfortunate that members of a particular community come under suspicion; but look who have been so far found to be involved with the L-e-T. The MPs should take note of this bitter truth.
- Jaswant Singh's disclosure has raised more questions than provided answers. The questions are:
 - a) How did Jaswant Singh get the letter? If there were a spy, would Americans 'burn' their own asset in the PMO?
 - b) Is the letter genuine or was it planted on Jaswant Singh? In any case, the US diplomat has denied having written or received such a letter.
 - c) Apart from the issue being obsolete (once India carried out the nuclear test), was Jaswant Singh not concerned about a spy working in the PMO? Why did he keep quiet for ten years?
 - d) Was it a spy or was it a non-official opponent of the nuclear programme trying to seek American assistance to prevent the nuclear test? Even then, a person close to the PM, being in cahoots with the Americans was serious business. Should he not be exposed?
 - e) Or was it a diplomatic ploy on India's part to keep US informally informed about the pending nuclear test to gauge the reaction?
- This is nothing short of a joke. How many times evidence has been given and how many times have the US and Pakistan acted? If an organization threatens to attack you and you have discovered their plans, does it matter that a specific person has not been identified for involvement in a specific case? Is it a court case being conducted by the US and Pakistan? What did the US have as evidence after 9/11 when it launched a war on terror?

Readers are invited to send in their points of view on serious issues of the day to avkay@mtnl.net.in



CORNUCOPIA

FIROZE HIRJIKAKA

GET MILK



Courtesy: *The Times of India Online*

The manufacturers of Viagra in Europe and America are getting worried. The future of their wonder drug could be in serious jeopardy. Sure, they had faced – and successfully overcome – threats before; like when those copycat Indians concocted a far cheaper generic version (why does a population that can breed itself to a billion plus need help in that department anyway?). They had taken care of that problem by convincing their namby pamby, super health conscious citizens that the cheaper pill could have serious side effects.

AMORAL POWER

Is there something in the psyche of some of our countrymen, particularly the affluent ones, that blinds them to the inhumanity of their actions? The recent and horrific rape and murder of a ten year-old servant girl in Mumbai, allegedly committed by members of an upper middle class family residing in an upscale apartment is hardly an isolated incident. Not just in India, there have been periodical reports of Indian families, in cities as diverse as Dubai and London, torturing and humiliating their domestic help. The Gajaria family has deservedly come under media glare, but that is only because the unfortunate child died. There must be hundreds of families in Mumbai alone where maids are routinely subjected to inhuman treatment, but they never come to light because the victim is usually too illiterate or confused to lodge a complaint or is threatened with dire consequences if she opens her mouth. Moreover, past experience has shown that the police are extremely reluctant to register complaints of harassment by the underprivileged, unless their hand is forced by media attention or agitations by locals. Secondly, far from evoking sympathy from other home makers in the locality, the victim is more likely to be branded a trouble maker and her chances of future employment would diminish drastically.

The real tragedy is that the perpetrators of these atrocities almost never suffer pangs of a guilty conscience. They are hardly the stereotype villains portrayed in Hindi movies. In fact, their neighbours and work colleagues would

And now this 88 year old farmer from some village in India named Barmer had fathered a son (they didn't know Indians even *lived* that long), attributing his virility to regular intake of camel's milk. It wouldn't be long before some enterprising bozo packaged the stuff as a sex booster; probably with the grinning visage of super-dad and a testimonial on the carton. That could pose a real challenge. Sure, aphrodisiacs like Spanish fly and rhino horn have always been around, but that stuff is hard to get. On the other hand, there are one hell of a lot of camels. And how could they possibly trash a natural product like milk, especially after advertisements in their countries had been exhorting the population to "get milk" for decades? Any attempt would make them out to be the bad guys. Damn these Indians! It was bad enough that they were grabbing jobs from the West; now even sex drive may be outsourced.

Brainstorming is in progress. Adopting the "if you can't beat them, join them" philosophy, one guy suggested marketing an "all-new" Viagra with camel milk extract. It could work. They were desperate enough to try anything. Now all they needed was to find some camels. And sign an exclusive rights arrangement with that farmer – where the deuce is Barmer anyway?

probably describe them as friendly, helpful and even charming and perhaps they are, most of the time. It is just that some people, particularly Indians, seem to have a totally opposite set of values while dealing with their peers and those they consider inferior to them. In their mind, they don't just hire domestics, they own them and this is particularly true in the case of illiterate young girls brought from remote villages. Their employers believe that they have done the child a huge favour by putting a concrete roof over her head and food, of sorts, in her mouth. And they genuinely see nothing wrong in extracting their pound of flesh in return for this munificence. This payment is usually extracted in the guise of excessive domestic chores without respite and a form of house arrest. And sometimes, when they need to satisfy their carnal desires, what of it? The girl owes them, doesn't she?

The tragedy is further compounded by the fact that it is the victims of abuse, especially rape and not the perpetrators who are terrified of their ordeal being made public. It is the reason they are so readily cowed into submission. They are the ones expected to feel the shame, not the criminals who destroyed their dignity. In this country, the '*khandan ki izzat*' and what-will-people-say mentality overrides all reasoned judgment. And, of course, Hindi films and '*saas-bahu*' television sagas perpetuate this myth.

For more of this columnist's musings, visit <http://leonardo899.blogspot.com>

THE RESERVATION CONUNDRUM

We continue the discussion on Reservations initiated at a Seminar on the subject on June 10 and covered extensively in the July issue (No.470) of *Freedom First*. In addition to the proceedings, a number of articles by readers were received. We carry three of these here. – *Editor*.

WITHOUT RESERVATIONS

BAPU SATYANARAYANA

The irony is that three stalwarts of the Congress party were against it; Jawaharlal Nehru had deep distrust about reservation, while Indira Gandhi allowed Mandal I to gather dust; and Rajiv Gandhi was against it too. Yet this has become an article of faith with the party now.

Reservation has become an emotive issue, pitting one section of people against the other. It has the potential to snowball into dividing the nation on the basis of class, caste and religion. Even if the government succeeds in bulldozing its way, as it did in the case of the Mandal Commission Recommendations (Mandal I), it can leave deep scars in the psyche of the people; especially the younger generation who are today the driving force behind progress in many fields.

Even in the case of Mandal I, the recommendations were hedged in by certain conditions, as mentioned by S. S. Gill who was the Secretary of the Commission. However, these were conveniently ignored because the then Prime Minister, V. P. Singh only wanted to safeguard his position.

A Veneer to Cover Personal Ambitions

Now HRD Minister Arjun Singh has suddenly sprung a surprise on the nation, including his cabinet colleagues, by announcing 27% reservation (Mandal II) for the OBCs. All indications are that he has done so because his rivals in the party were trying to sideline him and he was in danger of losing his political clout. He was the architect of ‘de-safronization’ and the ill-starred 50% reservation for Muslims in Aligarh Muslim University. He was becoming the darling of the minorities and the OBCs and so naturally, other colleagues were getting restive. That is the genesis of the 27%. It has nothing to do with amelioration of the disadvantaged section of society. It can be seen that in both Mandal I & II it is used as a veneer to cover personal ambitions.

Damning the Knowledge Commission

The tragedy is that there is no informed discussion. When the National Knowledge Commission (KNC), set up at the initiative of the Prime Minister, voted against reservation by a 6-2 majority, none other than the HRD Minister himself spearheaded the vilification of the KNC! Moreover, till now, there has been no definitive survey made to assess to what extent the really deserving groups have

benefited. In defence of reservation, it is fashionable to cite the example of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where a whopping 69% reservation exists. Who has examined how it has played out in reality? General lowering of standards have been reported in many educational institutions while the meritorious are hounded and are fleeing to find greener pastures. It is generally turning out to be a wasteland of mediocrity. While so much din is made about OBCs, as per NSS data their share in total employment equals their share in population. Moreover, it is common knowledge that the creamy layers have appropriated all the benefits, leaving the really deserving where they were!

‘Camera Chronicles’

The basic malaise is that the government has not paid attention to revamping the entire educational system, right from primary schools, to empower everybody so that there is a level playing field. The present approach is devoid of merit because it ignores social equity and undermines the very spirit of the Constitution. It has something to do with genetic abnormality. Let me illustrate this with some historical facts based on eyewitness accounts. Vyarawalla, the first female photographer, along with P. N. Sharma were the only two witnesses who clandestinely captured the historic meeting on June 14, 1947 in which a few ‘wise men’ claiming to speak for the whole of India, laid the foundation for the vivisection of the country. The legacy of this decision has come to haunt the country even now. There is a credible account of this event, backed by photographic evidence, in Vyarawalla’s book ‘Camera chronicles’. It states that the meeting was stormy and only a handful of people were for partition. It further states that young socialists like Ram Manohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan lashed out at the others for allowing the division of the country. Also Maulana Azad, Abdul Gaffar Khan and Gandhi did not favour this division. Since then this policy of divide and rule has been etched in the psyche of the Congress party. In the author’s words; ‘The Congress party seemed to be in a hurry to gain power.’ She further states; “The Congress Party has treated

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India as their *jagir*, giving away part of the country as if it belonged to them.”

The irony is that three stalwarts of the Congress party were against it; Jawaharlal Nehru had deep distrust about reservation, while Indira Gandhi allowed Mandal I to gather

dust; and Rajiv Gandhi was against it too. Yet this has become an article of faith with the party now. Why? Because they want to hold on to power – as simple as that!

MR. BAPU SATYANARAYANA, social activist and freelance writer based in Mysore.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR

SARATCHANDRA PANDA

The three well known necessities of people are food, clothing and shelter. To achieve this, one must have purchasing power. And for that, one should have an income from labour, because the vast mass of SCs and STs are landless and labour is their only capital. To labour, they must have good health and that requires food and shelter from the vagaries of weather. Therefore, for a hungry person food is the first concern and education is a distant goal and availing of reservation is still further away. In my view, the worst affected segment of our society is migrant labour who leave their famished villages and work in urban areas or on road/river projects or industries to eke out a living. So the need of the hour is creation of employment suitable to the illiterate masses living in villages, so that they are not compelled to go to distant places where they are systematically harassed and exploited by labour contractors and employers.

Governments, both State and Centre, are spending crores of rupees on the welfare of the SCs and STs, but the target group receives only 10-15 paise for every rupee spent – to quote the former Prime Minister, the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The cost of bureaucracy has become too high to the detriment of the downtrodden.

If conditions are created in villages so that the young do not leave, but work in or around the villages, they will enjoy a stable life and this will encourage them to send their children to school; and this education will empower them. Without proper education and training, it is not possible to avail of the reserved jobs. The people who largely benefit are the children/grand children and other relations of the ministers, officers, etc. belonging to SCs and STs.

In my view, all possible assistance to the SCs, STs and OBCs, in the form of free boarding and lodging, waiver of tuition fees etc. may be provided, to make them eligible for admission to educational Institutions/ different jobs. But when they compete, it should be on the basis of *Equality*. This will tremendously increase the self confidence of these groups and also effectively prevent them from the jibe by the forward castes that he/she is a quota student/appointee.

The non-government sector will never agree to reservation of jobs since it takes the best available candidates, irrespective of caste or creed, in order to stand up to domestic/international competition.

MR. SARATCHANDRA PANDA, political activist and freelance writer based in Bhubaneswar.

DOING AWAY WITH RESERVATIONS – GRADUALLY

SANTOSH NEDUNGADI

In my opinion, the reservation policy has served its purpose and the communities affected by it have been reasonably uplifted. Untouchability has vanished, any reservations in entering Hindu places of worship have been done away with and the members of these communities have been sufficiently educated and gainfully employed.

While this was a major issue during the generation of our parents, it has come to matter little to our generation and, if you look at the next generation, they do not even know what we are talking about when we talk of reservations.

As usual, the political parties are using this for their very narrow interests. What saddens me is that I think all right thinking people are of the opinion that reservation should be done away with, but we, the people, are unable to influence

the Government to do this.

Wanting to extend this to the Private Sector is ridiculous and I am glad that for once the industry associations have stood together to fight this issue.

I am of the opinion that there is absolutely no need to increase reservations. In fact, I think there must be a road map to consistently bring it down. 10 years from now we should say only merit matters.

However, the big question mark is whether any political party will dare adopt this policy. If not, any discussion on our part would be frivolous.

MR. SANTOSH NEDUNGADI, Businessman, based in Bangalore.

GEORGE KENNAN

V. BALACHANDRAN



The *Times of India* of March 23, 2006 carried a 4 column report on page 27: “Kennan, Cold War architect, **dies**”. “George Kennan, the American diplomat and Pulitzer Prize winner, who was a leading architect of the US Cold War policy, **has** died aged 101”. The report further said: “He died in his

home in Princeton, New Jersey, on **Thursday** night.” (All bold italics mine). March 23, 2006 was a Thursday. How did the newspaper publish the news on the very day considering the time difference between India and United States?

George F. Kennan did not die in 2006 but one year earlier on Thursday, 17th March 2005. No reader pointed out this humungous mistake, indicating how much Indian journalism now-a-days has become a competitive “cut & paste” job inflicted on a smug readership.

Kennan was an intellectual colossus, author of 18 books and 65 thought provoking articles. 6 books and 30 articles were written about him while the prestigious Wilson International Center named its Russian studies school as “Kennan Institute for Advance Russian Studies” during his life time. He came to be known as the author of the “Containment Theory” and was described as the “architect” of the American Cold War Policy. This was only partly true. Much of what he had written and professed with admirable foresight was hijacked by the Cold War hardliners.

Twenty years after he joined the US Foreign Service he sent the famous “Long” telegram on February 22, 1946 to the Secretary of State as the Charge’ of the US Embassy in Moscow giving his projections on US policy towards Moscow. Even now this telegram is a model of how a political -security analysis should be written. The contents of the telegram were reproduced in an article in *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947) signed as “X”. This later became the bedrock of the American policy of “Containment” against the Soviet Union but misinterpreted by the “Cold Warriors”. Although convinced that the Stalin Regime posed a danger to the world he however assessed: “Gauged against the Western World, as a whole, Soviets are still by far the weaker force....But I would like to record my conviction that the problem is within our power to solve – and

that without recourse to any general military conflict”. Kennan felt that diplomacy should be very modest and restrained and the tendency to rely on military force rather than diplomacy should be avoided. He also believed that the Communist bloc would develop schisms within itself and USA could exploit this without military involvement.

His policy of “Passive Containment” met with strong opposition from Cold Warriors like Paul Nitze (author of the “Roll Back” policy of Truman) and the Dulles brothers – John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State and Allen Dulles, CIA Director who wanted to take military measures to contain the Soviet Union. J. F. Dulles told Kennan in 1953 that he had no job in the State Department. Even earlier his opposition to the Hydrogen bomb annoyed Secretary of State Dean Acheson who asked him to resign and preach his “Quaker Gospel” outside. Averell Harriman, US Ambassador to Soviet Union had said that Kennan was a “man who understood Russia but not the United States”. *Washington Post*’s obituary (March 18, 2005) said that Kennan’s confidence in his own intellect was such that he sometimes declined to explain himself to politicians.

In an article in *Foreign Affairs* (1987) he said: “In no way did the Soviet Union appear to me, at that moment, as a military threat to this country. Russia was at that time utterly exhausted by the exertions and sacrifices of the recent war. Something like 25 million of its people had been killed.... So when I used the word ‘containment’ with respect to that country in 1946, what I had in mind was not at all the averting of the sort of military threat people talk about today. What I think I saw – and what explained the use of that term – was what I might call an ideological-political unrest”.

In his speech at the Council on Foreign Relations in February 1994 to commemorate his 90th birthday Kennan said that the unnecessary military expenditure including the “useless & dangerous” nuclear arsenal built during the 40 years of the Cold War could have been avoided had the USA negotiated with Soviet Union immediately after the successful Marshall Plan and the Berlin Airlift. But the USA and her allies mistakenly insisted on unconditional surrender by the Soviets. In his interview to the *New York Review of Books* (1999) he said: “The whole tendency to see ourselves as the center of political enlightenment and as teachers to a great part of the rest of the world strikes me as unthought-through, vainglorious and undesirable”.

His policy advocacy on the Korean War was always quoted as an example of his foresight. When the invasion of South Korea was repulsed he recommended that UN forces should not go into North Korea. His advice was ignored and

(Cont’d. on page 11)

TERRORISM – THE GLOBAL DIMENSION (*Cont'd. from page 2*)

retaliatory strikes have not stopped terrorist strikes against Israel. Israel's retaliatory action gives it satisfaction of hitting back while we seem to be suffering in silence. A feeling of impotence causes anger.

- 3) Stronger laws need to be considered. Laws like TADA and POTA were indeed misused but the government has to consider check and balances like the Review Committees rather than throw out the baby with the bathwater. The laws do not necessarily prevent terrorist attacks but help the police to deal with investigation and prosecution.
- 4) The most effective step would be to encourage the Muslims to oppose the mindless violence let loose in the name of religion. They should be encouraged to come out and actively propagate that Islam does not permit violence against innocent people.
- 5) Scholars often go into deeper malaises like alienation,

poverty etc. No doubt these are valid grounds for the feelings of disaffection but these would take decades to remove. These should not be trotted out as excuses for indefensible actions like mass murder and anti-national activities.

Remedial actions should be initiated together. One need not be kept in abeyance waiting for the others to take effect. Absence of one course of action should not be an excuse not to implement the others.

The country is faced with a serious situation. Terrorist attacks will not stop. That is one truth we must be ready to face. Our resolve to meet the terrorist challenge is the surest way of telling our enemy that he cannot win.

MR. ASHOK V KARNIK, formerly Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. He writes and lectures on national security issues.

REMEMBERING JULY 10, 1806: THE VELLORE MUTINY (*Cont'd. from page 4*)

was the presence of the family of Tipoo and the entourage. It was a large presence of 1400 people including the sons and daughters of the late Sultan. They were lodged in the Fort and were looked up to by the soldiers as the legitimate rulers of the country, not the Company.

The revolt was carefully planned and the insurgents almost five hundred in number quietly made their way early in the morning to the European quarters. They were well-armed and had two heavy six pounder guns with them. At the arranged signal, the pounding of the guns shattered the peace of the early dawn and many slumbering Europeans were put to the sword. By early dawn, a hundred English soldiers and 15 officers had been killed.

The rebels hoisted the flag of Tipu Sultan and the sons of Tipu were in contact with the insurgents. The soldiers hoped to get the support of the royal family, but they dilly-dallied.

No sooner were the Europeans shocked into awakening by the gunshots than a resourceful officer sent a letter to the military stationed in Arcot 16 miles away. Reinforcements arrived rapidly. Had the mutineers organised their defence they could have held out. The gates were blasted and the rebels were put to the sword. About 800 rebels paid with their lives; it is believed that the actual figure was larger.

The Company Bahadur had put down with a determined tenacity the Poligar rebellions and the minor battles of Kittur and Dharwad. Though from the point of view of the Company these were unendurable, they had to take them in their stride. It was natural for a subject people to rise up against the masters and Scotland no less than Ireland had taught them that a little minor rebellion now and then was not unusual. But the revolt of the army was another intolerable thing for as though one's hand not only aimed a bullet to one's chest but almost pulled the trigger. It was put down ruthlessly as a prologue to a similar carnage to be meted out to the sepoys half a century later.

Many tend to see in these rebellious outbreaks a

nascent nationalism. However, they posit a later ideology to earlier historical experiences. These were violent expressions of protest against the ruling authority, eloquent testimony to a deep felt sense of injustice and grievance and a widely shared anger against the rulers. But were these expressions of nationalism at all? It certainly gave a sense of historical glow to the nationalist movement; it was claimed that the soldiers of Vellore and of the Mutiny were the progenitors of nationalism. However as an ideology, nationalism was still in the making and had to wait till the 19th century for it to come to fruition.

When Savarkar characterised 1857 to be the first nationalist movement he was fired by an ideal and wanted it to have a respectable ancestry to the activities of the idealist patriots. The claim that 1857 was the First War of Independence was propaganda, similar to the claims made that ancient India had once constitutional government, a cabinet system etc. Perhaps these myths had an important role to play then. But do we have to reiterate them now?

Any nation's history records momentous happenings that are imperishably etched in the country's consciousness and the recalling of these on memorable occasions is natural. Equally commendable are the celebrations of these occasions. A nation renews itself by such acts of remembrance – we reaffirm our loyalty and commitment to our country, its past and we cherish these events. In such acts of affirmation, it is also the duty of public intellectuals not to overlook dimensions of myth and exaggerations implied in these. It is good to remember the Magna Carta celebrated the liberties of Britons but its connotations then was not what it was to be later. The barons having a definite hand in its inscribing acted selfishly, for their interests were summed up in the historical document, their liberties were reiterated rather those of the citizens who were nowhere on the political scene. It was a myth but it has been regarded as a beneficial myth.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is retired professor of Political Science, Mumbai University and Associate Editor of *Freedom First*.

GEORGE KENNAN (*Cont'd. from page 9*)

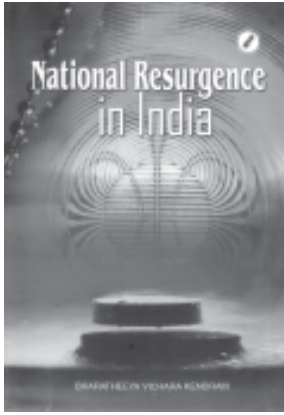
UN forces met fierce resistance from 300,000 Chinese "Volunteers" who pushed them back to the 38th parallel. Finally the truce came to be signed in 1953 only when Kennan used his contacts with the Soviet UN delegation.

A lesser known fact is that Kennan was the father of CIA's "Covert Operations" Directorate. While heading the State Department's Policy Planning Wing he drafted NSC 10/2 dated June 18, 1948 and installed his friend Frank Wisner (Father of former US Ambassador to India) as its head. This he came to rue in later years calling it "the greatest mistake I ever made". He wrote in the *New York Times* (May 18, 1997): "It is my

conviction based on some 70 years of experience, first as a government official and then in the past 45 years as a historian that the need by our government for secret intelligence about affairs elsewhere in the world has been vastly overrated". In this he was remarkably like the late Senator Moynihan who wanted to close down CIA for not predicting the Soviet collapse. (Moynihan's book "Secrecy – The American Experience" was reviewed by me in "*Economic & Political Weekly*" September 25, 1999).

MR. V. BALACHANDRAN, IPS (Retd.) is former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India.

BOOK REVIEW



NATIONAL RESURGENCE IN INDIA

Published by

Bharatheeya Vichara Kendram, Sanskriti Bhavan, G.P.),

Thiruvananthapuram 695 001.

First Edition : May 2005 No. of Pages : 296

Price: Hard Bound Rs.400, Paperback Rs.350

Reviewed by

Professor R. V. Chari, retired Professor of Commerce and Management.

During the latter half of 2003, the Bharatheeya Vichara Kendram, Thiruvananthapuram, of which Shri P. Parmeswaran is the Director, held an orientation course, where luminaries in various walks of life, actively participated through lectures and well-written articles dealing with various aspects of the progress, growth and development that had taken place in India from very early times to the present day. The course was sponsored by NAAC, Bangalore, and almost all the Universities in Kerala. In order to disseminate the valuable information gathered at the orientation course, the Kendram decided to publish the papers to reach a wider readership.

The publication comprises 33 contributions spread over 296 pages. However, paucity of space precludes an elaborate review of this publication. A few of them have been dealt with here but this is not meant to belittle the others that have been very well-thought and penned.

Dr. M. D. Srinivas traces India's rise in linguistics with Panini's grammar – known as *Ashtadhyayi*. He mentions that the style and language of the Vedas were completely different, by adducing several examples in his article. As aptly stated, "in *Ashtadhyayi*, Panini achieves a complete characterisation of the Sanskrit language as spoken at his time, and also specifies the way it deviated from the Sanskrit of the Vedas".

A commentary on *Ashtadhyayi* by Patanjali, Mahabhashya elucidates the Panian language. Dr. Srinivas is of the view that the Mahabhashya, the purpose of grammar is to give an exposition of valid utterances". Dr. Srinivas concludes by saying that, "Indians have developed efficient-locality-specific techniques not only in agriculture, irrigation, metallurgy and textiles, but also in diverse other areas like building and construction, sculpture, pottery, making of glass, and even in luxuries like making of ice".

Michel Danino covers the entire gamut of India's contribution in all spheres of life. He quotes Will Durant: "India was the motherland of our race and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages; she was the mother of our philosophy, mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India, is in many ways, the mother of us all".

Priced at Rs.400, this publication ought to be read by the younger generation to make them aware of the glory and greatness of India.

BETWEEN OURSELVES ...

Readers will, perhaps, be surprised to receive this 'self-covered' issue of *Freedom First*. Long-time subscribers, that is those who have been reading this journal over the last 21 years, will notice the format of the journal, is familiar. It last appeared in February 1985 and it carried an 'Announcement' from the then editor M. R. Masani that *Freedom First* was going Quarterly from April 1985. This is what he wrote: "For quite some time now my colleagues on the Editorial Board and I have been giving anxious thought to the need to make *Freedom First* more meaningful and better known amongst thinking citizens in this country."

"After examining the various options available to us, we feel that the only way to ensure the survival of the journal on a more meaningful and viable basis is to convert it into a quarterly with increased reading matter. We have accordingly decided to bring out four issues of *Freedom First* each year instead of the present twelve."

The reasons for the changeover were: the journal's survival; more meaningful in terms of reading matter and financially viable. We have survived; the reading matter has been plentiful and, at times, much appreciated by our readers; as for its viability, we have managed to pay our bills and keep our head above water – just about.

We felt that in the 21 years that have gone by, the world has changed and with it India – more countries are politically

free though, perhaps in terms of liberal democratic content, could have been freer. Nevertheless the nature of public discourse has changed. For instance, Profit was a dirty word. So was private enterprise. Both are now popular used even by PSUs!

We look forward to your suggestion on how to make *Freedom First* an effective instrument to keep pushing the economic reforms process faster. At the same time while the 'U' Turn in economic policies that Mr. Minoo Masani and Mr. Nani Palkhivala recommended time and again, is now a fact of life, India needs many more 'U' Turns in many other areas affecting the individual in society. These are the issues that ought to engage *Freedom First* in its monthly columns.

In such 'revolutionary' times we felt four times a year was no longer adequate. We had to engage in a regular dialogue to underline the Liberal position not only in economics but in all aspects of life and society. We would like to open our journal to the young and the not so old. So we decided to get back into the monthly habit albeit cautiously. We look forward to our readers co-operation in making this effort worthwhile.



S. V. Raju
Editor

MANY VOICES

I know what I am doing in West Bengal. What is the alternative? If we have to develop, we need capital... The old is changing. We are not fools, we are realists. We cannot stick to our dogmas.

Buddhdab Bhattacharjee, communist Chief Minister of West Bengal, *The Sunday Statesman*, May 14

I hate white. Ministers wear white, but abuse its significance. I would rather wear coloured clothes and serve the public.

Karnataka Chief Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy,
Deccan Herald, February 3

Tibetans always say wherever you feel most comfortable that is your home. Whoever shows you the greatest kindness and comfort, they are your family. So I am happy to die in India.

The Dalai Lama, quoted by Alice Thomson,
The Guardian Cited in *Tibetan Review* May 2006

The mole is now everywhere

Editorial in the *Indian Express*, August 15

Bombay is the haven for all kinds of migratory birds – humans included

Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, *Hindustan Times* July 14

Status symbols come in different shapes – from red lights atop cars to VVIP parking labels. Add the newest sign of prestige... exemption from security checks at the airport.

In the column 'Delhi Confidential'
The Indian Express, July 24

So nice of the government (of India) to admit there's a security threat. Now will it do something about it?

Editorial in *The Indian Express*, July 13

Bombay is a city that never quite gets the politicians or the infrastructure – or the credit – that it deserves.

Vir Sanghvi, editor *Hindustan Times*, July 14

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