

Freedom First

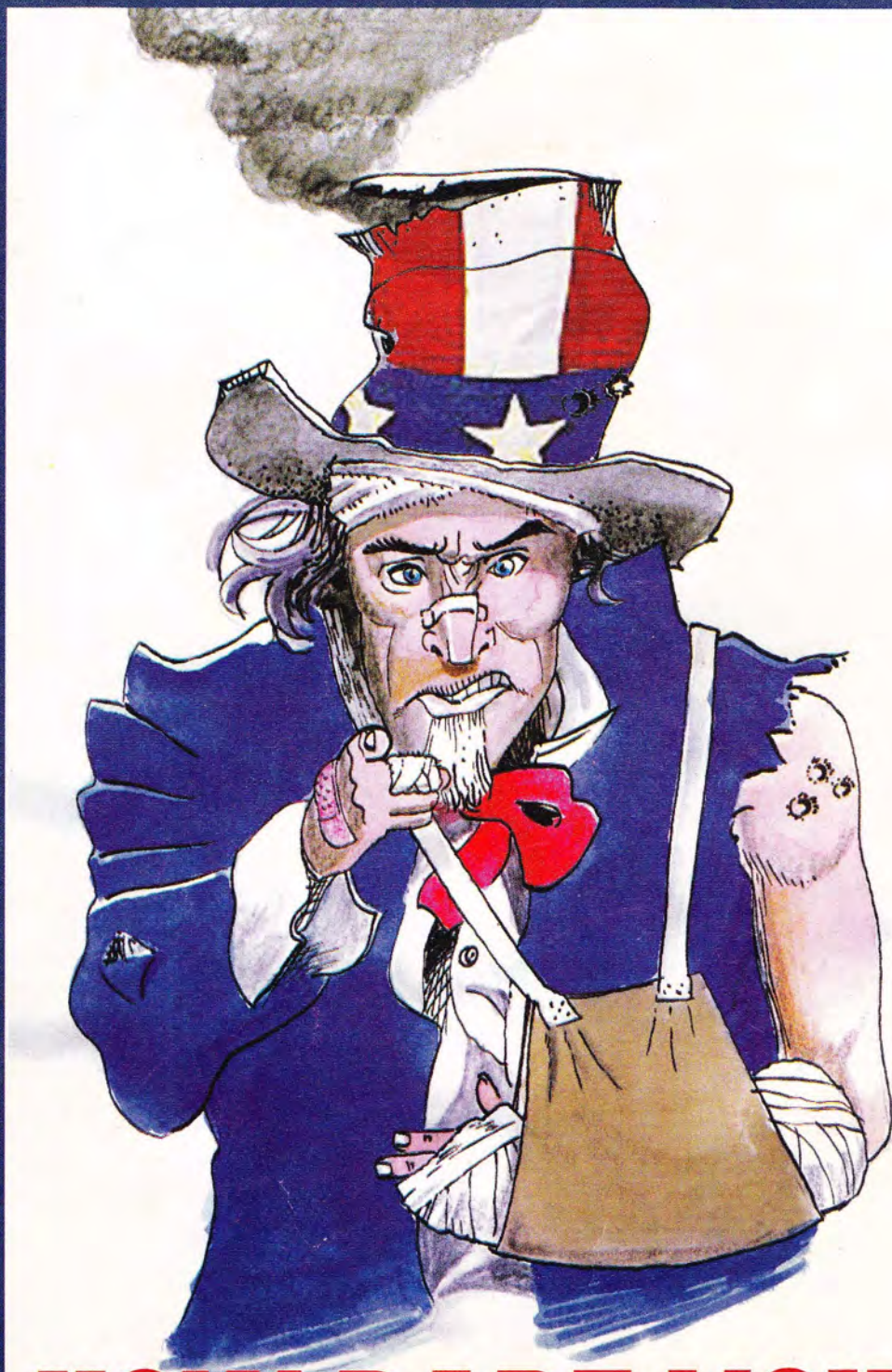
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RUPEES TWENTY-FIVE



AMERICA'S
WAR
ON TERROR

HOW DARE YOU!



Freedom First is a signatory to the following Statement circulated by the Conveners of the First World Forum on Democracy, Freedom House and the Stefan Batory Foundation.

We, non-governmental leaders and activists, writers and scholars, and participants in the first World Forum on Democracy, committed to the principles of democracy, open society, tolerance, and the rule of law express our profound sorrow at the massive loss of life suffered by the American people and by the more than eighty other countries whose citizens also perished in the terrorist acts of September 11th.

We join in a call for international solidarity among all people who support democratic values. We urge democratic governments to honour the pledge they made at the first meeting of the Community of Democracies in Warsaw, Poland in June 2000 "to strengthen cooperation to face the transnational challenges to democracy, such as state-sponsored, cross-border and other forms of terrorism".

We pledge to work within our own countries to urge our leaders to join in a broadly based international coalition led by the world's democracies whose aim must be to rid the globe of terrorism. We are convinced that now, as never before, the world's democracies – governments, the private sector, trade unions, and civil society – must be the bedrock of the effort to ensure security and peace in the world and to defeat terrorism.

We pledge our solidarity with all nations that have been ravaged by the scourge of terrorism. Above all, we pledge to oppose the racial, ethnic, religious and political extremism that form the ideological basis of terrorism.

At the same time, we reject all attempts at presenting Islam or Arabs as enemies of the democratic world. Our common enemies are fanatics, totalitarians, and nihilists, those who kill innocent people and despise the fundamental human rights.

In the end, a decisive and lasting victory against terrorism will only come when the tyrannies that harbour terrorists and promote political extremism and hatred are themselves replaced by governments rooted in the values of freedom and democracy. Governments that operate in the dark, that subject their citizens to repression, and that function outside the scrutiny of independent media and of civil society are unreliable allies and frequently are, themselves, havens for international terrorists and political extremists.

Twice in the last century, the democratic world defeated massive totalitarian power. It did so because it preserved the values of tolerance, openness and solidarity. This history gives us confidence that the struggle of the democratic world against terrorism will, in the end, triumph. And with it will come the triumph of democracy, economic freedom and human rights that have for too long been denied for far too many in the world.

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This is the website of the Indian Liberal Group

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BETWEEN OURSELVES ...

This issue ought to have been on Bollywood. We were almost ready with the cover feature when the events of September 11 in New York and Washington, stopped us, as it did everyone else, in our tracks. *Freedom First* mourns with the rest of the civilized world the needless loss of lives of innocent people killed by madmen in the name of religion.

WE DEDICATE THIS ISSUE TO ALL THOSE WHO WERE KILLED INCLUDING THOSE BRAVE FIRE-FIGHTERS AND LAW-ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WHO DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

This war against Terror must be carried to its logical conclusion and the scum who kill in the name of religion or whatever the cause, wiped out.

Our Next Cover Feature Jayaprakash Narayan The Keeper of India's Conscience

This is his birth centenary year and *Freedom First* considers it an honour to pay its homage to one of the finest men of the 20th Century.

Last date for contributions: Thursday, December 20. You can send in your contributions by email at freedom@vsnl.com, floppy disk (Word 95), Fax: 022 2843416 or by ordinary post.

Editor

October-December 2001
No. 451

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WITH MANY VOICES

*"The deep moans round with many voices. Come, my friends
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world" - Tennyson*

Nobody designs truly great cities. They just spring up.

Anjana Ahuja, in a book review,
The Statesman, October 15

There is no terrorist group in Pakistan ... they are operating in Kashmir.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, in an interview to CNN, cited in *India Today*, October 15

There is no politically correct way to say what I am about to, so I shall say it plainly: It is time for India's Muslims to distance themselves from the kind of Islam the Taliban preaches.

Tavleen Singh, *India Today*, October 15

Whatever they may be, the Taliban are not Chicago gangsters. They are fanatics, they are religious bigots, they kill easily and sacrifice themselves in the process.

C. R. Irani, *The Statesman*, October 16.

Why should the Marxists object to astrology? Marxism has failed. But isn't Marxism still taught in universities?

Union HRD Minister Murli Manohar Joshi,
India Today, September 17

Why do we pick such useless heroes? During the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein. During the present crisis, Osama bin Laden.

Ayaz Amir, a Pakistani journalist,
The Times of India, October 29

Are Americans so credit-card happy that a customer who pays in full is a source of consternation?

Charles Peters,
The Washington Monthly, July-August, 2001

Bureaucrats tend to resist or evade assessments of their performance. Sometimes of course they are simply afraid of the truth.

Charles Peters,
The Washington Monthly, July-August, 2001

The challenge that India has faced since Independence is to maintain its traditional regard for diversity while finding more room for equality and individual freedom. These are modern and not traditional values.

Andre Beteille, *Outlook*, August 20

Global Capitalism is a threat to human values.

Dr. Fredric Vandenberghe of the Univeristy of Humanist
Studies, Holland, in the *Altheist*, October 2001

... terrorism cannot be partitioned. Those who use knives, guns and explosives to kill civilians in Kashmir or Egypt, or Algeria, are no different from those who use aircraft to do so in the US.

Prem Shankar Jha, *Outlook*, October 10



OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

'Who' or 'Whom'

I am growing to like my readers. They are quick to point out my mistakes!

The title of the cover story of the last issue of *Freedom First* said

"We, the Voters...Do we really care who we elect?" I was told that it should have been "We, the Voters... Do we really care whom we elect?"

I decided to let Dr. Louella Lobo Prabhu, a litterateur of no mean repute, decide whether I had erred. She said I had. This is what she wrote:

"Reference your letter, regarding the cover of the last *Freedom First*, there was a mistake in the title "Who" should be replaced by "Whom". However popular usage, especially in the American style of writing, renders your mistake so small, as to be quite un-noticeable."

Dr. Louella Lobo Prabhu was only sugar-coating the decision. A mistake is a mistake and I apologise to the readers for inflicting this mistake on them!

P.O.T.O.

To infamous acronyms like PDA, MISA, COFEPOSA., TADA we can now add one more POTO – the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance. All of them have one thing in common – the contraction of freedom.

Freedom First has all along registered its strong opposition to such Acts and Ordinances because they are misused irrespective of which party or group of parties is in power. There are enough laws in our statute books that have adequate provisions to apprehend and punish wrong-doers, be they thieves or terrorists, provided the government in power has the will to implement these laws. Not surprisingly the very parties now in power opposed such ordinances and enactments when in the opposition. True to form the Congress now out of power and the architect of most of these acts is opposing POTO!

"the time has come," the walrus said,
"to talk of many things:
of shoes-and ships-
and sealing wax-
of cabbages -
and kings-"



An organisation called INSAAF International and the People's Union for Civil Liberties (Punjab) ie. PUCL (Punjab) have issued a joint statement condemning POTO. The vehemence of the language and the denunciation of all and sundry prevents us from welcoming the statement. The language reminds us of the terminology used by communist fellow travelling organisations not so long ago.

Be that as it may, *Freedom First* hopes POTO doesn't become POTA!

Prof. G. N. Sarma

We were sad to be informed of the passing away of Professor G. N. Sarma. Readers of *Freedom First* might have read the many books he reviewed in this journal.

Our Associate Editor Dr. R. Srinivasan has this to say: "Professor Sarma was for a number of years, professor of history and politics in the D.A.V.College, Sholapur before he joined the Marathwada University in the Department of Political Science from where he retired as Professor. He trained generations of students who remember him with warmth and recall his unforgettable lectures on Burke.

Essentially a recluse and a scholar, he was far from the bustle and din of academic politics, preferring the study and the company of a select few. His publications on Gundappa and Sri Aurobindo were highly regarded.

We shall miss him.

SVR



The Prevention Detention Act has become a habit-forming drug to our present Government. I am sure they can maintain India on an even keel without this wretched Act. But they have become like a man in crutches who does not dare to stand on his own legs at his command. So, like a cripple they hobble along on this arbitrary measure contrary to the spirit of the law. This is why I oppose this Bill and my Party opposes this Bill.

Minoo Masani.

In the Lok Sabha during a debate in 1963 on a Bill to extend the life of the Prevention Detention Act.

How Dare You !

America's War Against Terrorism

This is the time for us, as much as our 'leaders', to pause and review past attitudes, in two areas in particular – Pakistan and Kashmir.

We are entering very uncertain times. We Indians have always, particularly since Independence, been living in various degrees of uncertainty – what with our Five Year Plans; the annual visitations by our Union Budgets – the perennial nightmares of Indian business and industry; terrorism which has maimed or killed thousands of lives in Kashmir and showed its ugly face in Mumbai in December 1993, and of course the weather on which depends prices and profits. So uncertainty has always been us. So what's new?

What's new is that a new member joined our club on September 11 – no less than the world's most powerful nation (and the most democratic), the U.S. of A. What's not new is our response to the tragic events of September 11. The first thing our 'leaders' could think of was Pakistan. 'Good, serves them right', these 'leaders' seem to say. 'Now how about branding Pakistan a 'rogue' state or a 'terrorist' state, they suggested to the US. And we offered full enthusiastic support. When the U.S. of A paid no attention we were offended. And our leaders 'sulked' and developed a sense of grievance.

It is not surprising that the USA was indifferent to India. Because it is not in the USA's national interest to do so. Pakistan's cooperation is crucial to America in its 'war against terror' and in any case Pakistan has been a tested ally of the United States over the cold war years. So what if the Taliban is a Pakistani creation; so what if terrorists have their training camps in Pakistan. After all, the Stinger missiles are also of American make given by the self-same Americans to Taliban to fight another enemy in another war, another kind of terror.

American response has always been dictated by national self-interest. It is the bottomline that has mattered to them. Their declarations about human rights etc. have been so much hot air. Too bad about Tienanmen Square, but business must go on as usual. This time they have been targeted on their own turf and so they are so angry. 'How dare you' they said and declared a 'war on terror' as if terrorism began on September 11, 2001.

What am I driving at? Simply this. Let's not invest the Americans with a halo. They are as good or as bad as people grouped together in a nation or tribe are.

They react to protect their interests. Threats far away from home give them the pleasure of pontificating and acting like neutral policemen. September 11 has brought home the fact that the Atlantic Ocean no longer protects them. They have been flying high secure in the belief that they will have missiles that will stop enemy missiles in their tracks. But they were dumbfounded when a passenger plane was used as a missile by religious fundamentalists who were prepared to die.

Just as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war bade goodbye to global confrontation and marked the beginning of global cooperation, September 11 does indeed mark the end of one kind of era and the beginning of another. An era of confrontation. Is this a confrontation with Islam and the rest of the world which is not Islamic? My answer would be yes and no. Yes, it is a confrontation between the fundamentalist forces in Islam. It is not a confrontation between Islam *per se* (see the articles in this feature by Dr. Srinivasan and Prof. Iqbal Ansari) but between Islam as represented by Osama bin Laden, Mohammed Omar, the Taliban and a whole lot of terrorist outfits operating out of Pakistan, and the rest of the world.

This is the time for us, as much as our 'leaders', to pause and review past attitudes, in two areas in particular – Pakistan and Kashmir. The enmity between the two nations has cost both of us dearly, in terms of the denial of the basic needs of both our peoples. Because much needed resources are being diverted to the securing of weapons of destruction, and it would be stupid to deny that the bone of contention is Kashmir. With the eradication of terrorist breeding grounds across the border, it should be possible for India and Pakistan to discuss the Kashmir issue sensibly and in an atmosphere of relative peace.

The developments after September 11 therefore represent a threat and an opportunity for both India and Pakistan. They need to seize the opportunity with both hands for the peace and prosperity of the peoples in both our countries. Meanwhile let's at least behave as a mature democracy should.

S. V. Raju

"We Shall Not Sleep" – Terror in the U.S.A.

Minoo Adenwalla

If a united effort to unearth the agents of world terrorism is not made now, much worse promises to follow.

The horrific events and their aftermath of the last two weeks bring to mind a few lines of a famed World War I poem - "In Flanders Fields." By changing just a couple of words, the lines evoke, for me, the current mood of the United States. Slightly changed, they read:

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In shattered streets.

A Country Aroused

I came to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois as a young student fifty years ago. I have lived through the upheavals and events of that entire period, including the Kennedy assassination, the Vietnam War and "Desert Storm." Never, but never, have I seen the country so aroused, so united, so defiant, so determined NOT to break faith with those who died on 11 September and "lie in shattered streets." The citizens of 80 nations besides the U.S. died in the World Trade Centre and Pentagon. Over 250 came from India.

Fire fighters, policemen and

rescue workers continue to work night and day, beyond exhaustion in the debris of New York's shattered streets around the demolished World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in D.C. Millions have been donated to the relief effort. American flags fly everywhere and the shops are sold out. Prayer vigils in English, Hebrew and Arabic have been held all over the country. For the moment, the ideological differences between Democrats and Republicans have disappeared. Both, along with most of the country, have rallied behind President Bush, whose speech to Congress and the nation gave definition to what lies ahead. An editorial in *The New York Times* suggested that it "may be the most critical speech of his life." No president in history has the approval rating Bush has at the moment. The latest Gallup poll puts it at 90 percent*.

Most nations around the world, including Russia and China, have offered to join in the "war" upon terrorism. NATO activated Article V of its charter, that states that an act of war against one member, is an act against all. The United Nations has passed strong resolutions in support. What lies ahead is a long, hard, costly, patient struggle that will test the character and fiber of the American people and its allies.

Who are the Terrorists?

But who are the terrorists against whom, the U.S. has declared war, and has called upon the world, to unite? Many are puzzled. Do they include the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, the Kurds in Turkey, the Basques in Spain? They do not, for the present moment. President Bush defined the enemy as precisely as possible. It consists of every terrorist group "of global reach" who attacks the U.S. and its allies. It consists of "every government that supports them" unless that support is immediately withdrawn.

The immediate targets are the Taliban government of Afghanistan and its protégé Osama bin Laden and his loose terrorist organization al Qaeda, that has links to other such "organizations in many countries, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Movements of Uzbekistan." To those who demand evidence of Osama bin Laden's and al Qaeda's involvement in the attack upon the U.S., the Bush administration plans to issue two reports within a few days, a public report from the State Department and a secret one drawn up by U.S. intelligence agencies which will also include evidence from foreign sources. Evidence gathered against bin Laden for his earlier indictment in the bombing of the U.S.'s African embassies might also be cited. Only the most trusted nations, it is reported, will

* This article was written within days of the September 11 tragedy.

receive all the gathered information.

But the issuance of such reports, whether public or private, is of vital importance for the U.S.'s Muslim allies like Egypt and Pakistan. It will provide their leaders with evidence to justify their stands on behalf of the U.S. It is vital that such information be provided before the U.S. launches any major strike against Afghanistan, which might create a backlash, especially in countries like Pakistan where support, among the general population, for Afghanistan is strong. It is ironic that in the past, Pakistan's intelligence services are reported to have given the Afghan government extensive aid.

Al Qaida's Record

A group of the President's senior advisors, it is rumoured, led by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul D. Wolfowitz wanted to spread the net wider and name other states who supposedly sponsor terrorism, especially Iraq. But after also consulting with Secretary of State Powell and his national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice, President Bush decided that the initial assault would be on those perceived to be directly responsible for the September 11 attack on the U.S. The President claimed that all the evidence gathered following the attack "points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda."

This, of course, is not the first time Osama bin Laden and his group have been suspected of terrorist attacks. They have been linked in 1993 to the World Trade Centre bombing in New York, the bombing of a Philippine airliner in

1994, an assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt during his visit to Ethiopia in 1995, the attack that killed 19 U.S. soldiers at a military housing complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in 1996, the destruction of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, that killed 235 and injured around 5,500 people, in 1998, and, finally, the infamous attack upon the U.S.S. Cole in Aden harbour, that killed 17 U.S. sailors, in 2000.

Osama bin Laden's Call

Osama bin Laden has been indicted, in absentia, in the U.S. for the embassy bombings and the attack upon the U.S.S. Cole. He has never hidden his or al Qaeda's mission. It is to expel, by any means, from Muslim areas of the world, non-Muslims, especially Westerners and Muslim leaders who have strayed from his definition of Islam. He has called

October 11, One Month Later

It is exactly a month since Black Tuesday. Though the U.S. President reacted quickly in words, he did not indulge in bucking-bronco-cowboy follow-up action. First came, the round of democratic coalition, with other States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. In the early days, they committed themselves to honouring Clause 5 of the Treaty that an attack on one, would be regarded as an attack on all. Only Britain has entered the physical skirmish, so far. Mr. Blair appears to enjoy Margaret Thatcher's special relationship with Uncle Sam.

Predictably, because its logistical support is vital, Pakistan has got much more from the U.S. than India, which was among the first and earliest to pledge its support to the U.S. Global War on Terrorism. While supporting the U.S. global war on terrorism, Pakistan-backed terrorists opened a blood bath within the Kashmir Legislature grounds. Though India has drawn repeated notice to the omission, the terrorist groups, deprived of funding, repeatedly leave out, those which have plagued India.

Even when President Bush's speech-makers write up some eloquent rhetoric, the record shows that the U.S. has spawned the Frankenstein's monster which now mocks it. In the thick of the air-battles, which have blasted Afghanistan's air-defences, Mullah Mohammed Omar, defiantly said that more of the U.S. will feel the horror of more bombings, by *kamikaze jihadis*. The Muslim world, while joining America partially, has also reiterated that the war against terror should not include attack on other Muslim countries.

General Musharaff's quandary is pathetic. Along with the U.S., Pakistan armed and trained the terrorist Taliban, which he is now forced to disown. He has had to change his Cabinet, dropping the extremists and keeping the moderates. The streets are a war theatre of jihadis supporting the Taliban cause.

The picture on the streets is different. Whether General Musharaff will keep his chair - or his head, remains an open question.

Meanwhile, a truly awesome air build up has flattened Afghanis targets, but as on date (11-1-2001), Osama bin Laden and the Mullah, are alive.

Dr. Louella Lobo Prabhu

upon all true Muslims to kill Americans, who more than any other group symbolize godless and corrupt materialism. Without admitting participation, he has congratulated the perpetrators of the World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks.

U.S. Response

In his speech to Congress President put the Taliban on notice:

"Deliver to U.S. authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. Release all foreign nationals..... Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist, and every person in their support structure, to appropriate authorities. Give the U.S. full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating."

Since the Taliban have refused, they and al Qaeda will be the U.S.'s first targets. As Bush said, "The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate."

A massive build up of U.S. forces in the friendly areas surrounding Afghanistan is already in process. Aid will doubtless be given to what is known as the Northern Alliance, an indigenous Afghan force that holds around 10 percent of Northern Afghanistan and continues to fight against the Taliban. Their continued resistance will be invaluable. But how else is this war going to be conducted? Perhaps war is the wrong word, unless one understands that this will be a war unlike any other. For the U.S. there will be no front lines,

no massive encounters of troops and armour, no battles on the sea or in the sky. A good part of it may be conducted in secret away from public view and TV cameras. As President Bush put it,

A War with a Difference

"This war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion. It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat." Most probably, it will be a war of quick, surgical strikes by commando forces like the Rangers, by covert operations, by stealth attacks by B-1 bombers. A major part of it will be a war of economic attrition where the allied coalition will use intelligence and the exchange of information to go after and destroy al Qaeda's sources of economic and monetary support and, where possible, freeze its assets. President Bush asked for patience "in what will be a long struggle." Will the U.S. and its allies have that patience? This is one of the great unknowns. Political leadership has no greater task. For if this opportunity is lost, if through fatigue and temporary frustration the U.S. and its coalition give up, a great opportunity to combat an ever-growing world problem will have been lost. So far the response to incidents of terror have been sporadic and even ineffectual, like President's Clinton's response to the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Africa. A number of cruise missiles were launched against a pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan, which was supposed to a terrorist factory, and against a base

of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, which he had evacuated. Nothing more was done. There have been intelligence victories in preventing terrorist episodes, many of which the public hears nothing about. But no terrorist attack has been on the scale of devastation and loss of life than the one on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Well over 6500 are dead and over 6000 have been injured. This ought to be warning enough to civilized regimes in the world. Now is the time to unite, to cooperate, to exchange vital information and where possible to act together.

Now or Never

Even in the U.S. the various government agencies - like the C.I.A., the F.B.I., the I.N.S - that did have vital information did not coordinate their efforts successfully. This is why President Bush appointed Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania to a newly created cabinet level office called Homeland Security. His first task will be to coordinate the more than 40 agencies that have the duty of preventing with terrorist attacks. If a united effort to unearth the agents of world terrorism is not made now, much worse promises to follow. Even now there are fears of attacks using chemical and biological weapons. Besides Afghanistan the governments who sheltered or encouraged world terrorism in the past - Iraq, the Sudan, Libya and others - have been put on notice. The world can no longer afford to turn a blind eye to their doings

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Global Terrorism : Causes and Correctives

Amit Dholakia

Terrorism is as old as the institution of the state itself which was conceived in violence. More than any other period in history, violence and terror have become integral components of the philosophy, structure and practices of the modern state system.

The grisly attacks on the Manhattan Island and the Pentagon on Black Tuesday have united the world in grief and solidarity, barring odd celebrations in parts of Iraq and Palestine. The apocalyptic events exceeded the terror imagined in Hollywood movies like Independence Day, The Siege, Die Hard with a Vengeance, Black Sunday etc. They were too dreadful to believe and generated mixed emotions of anguish, anger, numbness, disbelief, shock, racial backlash, revenge, jingoism and fear of the future among Americans. Their leaders reacted like wounded tigers.

US No Longer Immune

September 11 dealt the biggest blow since the assault on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 to the power, prestige and status of the US as the mightiest state on earth. It has never been attacked on its own soil in the last sixty years, and never like this in its entire history. The collapse of the WTC towers and a part of the Pentagon awakened Americans to the reality that they too live in this violent and wretched world, and that what they thought happens to others elsewhere - in Kosovo, Kashmir or Palestine - could happen right in the heart of America, in spite of the countless nukes and F-22s. From

1995 to 2000, 77 American citizens died in terrorist attacks while 9713 Asians and 5762 Africans were killed during the same period in such violence. America's immunity to terror and war on its homeland has been lost, perhaps forever.

Mythologizing bin Laden

By hitting the most towering symbol of global capitalism and the most sheltered edifice of the strongest military power, the terrorists achieved more than mere loss of lives and buildings. They undermined an already weak and slowed-down American economy causing cumulative monetary loss running into billions of dollars. The media and the Bush administration have also mythologized Osama bin Laden and made him some kind of a cult figure among sections of Muslims all over the world by projecting the problem as an unequal war of the entire world against one man.

As President George W. Bush expects, we merely have to choose at this juncture if we stand for civilization or barbarism in this first war of the twenty first century. However, this professed struggle between good and evil has produced many unanswered and examined questions.

Defining Terrorism

Defining terrorism and terrorists is easier said than done. Such definitions alter from time to time. The US itself has adopted dissimilar criteria in different situations to determine whom to consider as terrorists. Osama bin Laden and the Taliban were lauded as Mujahedins and anti-communist freedom fighters when they were challenging the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the '80s. The same people are labeled as terrorists today when they have shifted their target to America. Hence, essentially violence committed in your favour or by your friends is not terrorism, whereas violence perpetrated by your enemies or against you is terrorism. Terrorism is also confused with correlated terms like fundamentalism and extremism. Terrorism should also be defined in such a way that genuine nonviolent protest movements are not stifled as terrorism.

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

International affairs expert Walter Laqueur interprets it as "the sub-state application of violence or threatened violence intended to sow panic in a society, to weaken or even overthrow the incumbents, and to bring about political change. It shades on occasion into guerrilla warfare (although unlike guerrillas, terrorists are unable or unwilling to take or hold territory) and even a substitute for war between states." Terrorism is highly political in nature. Indeed, it is a form of politics, a pursuit of politics through other, maybe abnormal, means. It exploits and uses in various ways the inbuilt fear in the human mind. It can take the form of a coup d'état, insurrection, reckless killings and destruction of property, genocidal massacres, guerilla warfare or hijackings.

Characterizing terrorism as use of force by non-state actors excludes state-sponsored as well as state terrorism which are sometimes more lethal and violent than sub-state terrorism. Could not the following actions also be considered as cases of terrorism – the annihilation of Red Indians in America and of the so-called aborigines in Australia by European settlers; the Gulag Archipelago narrated by Alexander Solzhenitsyn; the Israel-inspired massacre of 1800 Palestinians in Shatila and Sabra refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982; the American navy's downing of an Iranian civilian airliner killing more than 200 people on board in 1988; the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens, including about five lakh children, in the '90s due to American sanctions; death of hundreds of Chechens in Russian bombing, mining and artillery

attacks against Chechnya; large number of civilian killings in Serbia and Bosnia as a result of NATO strikes etc.?

Terrorism – A Brief History

Terrorism is as old as the institution of the state itself which was conceived in violence. More than any other period in history, violence and terror have become integral components of the philosophy, structure and practices of the modern state system. Ironically, though modernity has furthered democratic and nonviolent methods of political change and representation, it is also distinguished for being the most violent phase of human history.

Many groups have practised terrorism through the centuries. Militarily weak groups have employed terror to achieve political ends against more powerful adversaries. The anarchists, nationalists, leftists, communists, revolutionaries, Fascists, Nazis, communalists, religious fundamentalists - all have used terror to accomplish their ideological and political objectives in the past. We also find an echo of bin Laden's ideas in the writings of some medieval Christian theologians. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anarchist thinkers like Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin favoured violence, including killing of civilians. Between 1894 and 1901, their followers assassinated the Presidents of the US and France, a Prime Minister of Spain, an Empress of Austria and a King of Italy. The Irish Republican Army let loose a reign of terror in Britain between 1918 and 1921. The Nazi and Fascist savagery remains

etched in the most awful memories of the human race.

The Terrorism of the Left

Notwithstanding the fact that belief in peaceful change has been criticized by Karl Marx as a symptom of utopian and unscientific socialism, some modern Marxist writings have vainly attempted to exonerate Marxism of its violent content as manifested in the Marxist methods of revolution and advocacy of annihilation of class enemies. For communists, the use of terror and violence sharpens class-consciousness and organization. Lenin, of course, did speak of the futility of individual and reckless terror, but in principle he was not opposed to the destruction of the enemy class and the imperialist states. West Indian Marxist psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, stating that extensive violence is desirable and inevitable in any process of social or political change, glorified violence as useful and good for cleansing the minds of revolutionaries even if it does not produce any concrete political change.

Communists' Record

Little wonder then that the long spell of communist terror in Europe and Asia nearly equaled Nazism in brutality. The Russian and Chinese revolutions were completed through extermination of countless people. Subsequently Stalin and Mao massacred thousands, including rivals within the communist party, for consolidation of their power. Mao's political ideologue Lin Biao talked of the use of irregular violence and terrorism against the states of North America and Europe to defeat

them. The leftist terrorism, in particular of the Maoist variety, has been plaguing the Third World, including India and Nepal in South Asia. Ernesto 'Che' Guevara converted Maoist philosophy and tactics into anti-American and anti-capitalist guerrilla warfare in Latin America. Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Colombia were swept by guerrilla onslaughts under his inspiration.

Religion-based Terrorism

In contemporary times, apparently religion-based terrorism seems to have filled the ideological and strategic vacuum created by the retreat of leftist terrorism following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Most of the religion-based major terrorist organizations – al Qaeda, Lebanese Hezbollah, LTTE, Hamas, various terrorist groups active in Kashmir valley, Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Philippines, Basques Fatherland of Liberty if in Spain, IRA etc. – claim to advance the interests of Islam and Islamic people through their activities. They are unlike earlier terrorist outfits inasmuch as they are not fighting for a specific and negotiable goal like territory, independence or release of prisoners. They just want to destroy America, the West and the whole Judeo-Christian population and culture.

Transnational Terrorism

Today's terrorism is transnational and is less bound to, or sponsored by, any one state. It operates through loosely affiliated terrorist groups in several countries which also target several countries at the same time. Technology has proved to be of enormous

advantage to the terrorists. The publicity generated by modern media in the aftermath of terrorist attacks helps focus attention on their problems. Future terrorist strikes using biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction are in the realm of the possible. Production of a fissionable nuclear device out of the pilfered materials from unsafe

nuclear installations in the provinces of the former Soviet Union is believed to be on bin Laden's agenda.

Why Terrorism?

What are the fundamental causes of terrorism? The terrorists do not descend from sky. They arise

The Horror of It All

After converting planes into weapons of destruction, flying will never be the same again. Taking over a passenger jet and directing it to another destination is now relatively easy. Some knowledge of martial arts, a few months training as a pilot and a person can qualify as a hard-core heartless terrorist.

Security measures at airports and aircrafts are going to change substantially. The added costs are going to inflate travel costs. And despite all the steps, determined criminal minds will still find ways to overcome the safeguards. A slack surveillance system, a malfunctioning x-ray machine, forged travel documents, a government sympathetic to the murderous maniacs can cause the world to once again view the horror of human carnage.

We have seen planes heading into a sunset, flying over an ocean, landing at tarmacs in exotic locales. Now we have to add to that the horror of seeing jets flying headlong into buildings causing untold destruction and death.

Can one ever go back to New York and see, without an involuntary shudder, the empty space where the Twin Towers once stood? How can one not remember the horror of it all, when one gazes once again at the thrusting high rise, often superb, occasionally horrendous? It's a city most people seem to know before they get there, thanks to the hold it has on popular imagination, as the Big Apple.

When you see it in the flesh, its energizing buzz and movement, colour and noise are overwhelming. Right in there among the city's Irish, Italians, Chinese, Jews, Indians, Puerto Ricans and Blacks one gets a feel of the gritty New Yorker and his or her ability to survive the worst. The term "melting pot" takes on a new meaning here and the American dream takes its most alluring form. It wasn't a coincidence that its most potent symbols were smashed on that Black Tuesday. For the traveler, New York is the ultimate adventure because the city seems to renew itself each day. And now it must renew itself once again. In the words of Prophet Isaiah: "They will rebuild the ancient ruins ... they will renew the ruined cities ..."

Today the American dream has become a nightmare; the aviation industry is in turmoil and has lost billions in the space of a few days. For a long time to come, the spectre of terror will loom large each time one boards a plane, and the usual peeves of travel such as long queues, lost luggage, missed connections, immigration and customs formalities will pale into insignificance.

From an editorial in the *Voyage*, September 2001

and operate very much from the societies in which we live and derive sustenance from the human psyche. The conditions, ideas and cultures around us produce and legitimize violence and terror. Elements of terrorism – hatred of the other, violence, racism, fanaticism, bigotry, irrationality and xenophobia – are present in the collective psychology of all societies. We all bear a little dormant terrorist in our hearts. Most of us demand an eye for an eye some day against someone.

There are several reasons for terrorism - political, ideological, religious, social and psychological. The role of state terrorism in begetting private terrorism is considerable. Many times it is the crisis of the state's authority and legitimacy that breeds terror as a societal response. Generally terrorism is never induced by a single factor. Several interconnected reasons might cause terrorism in different cases. Some terrorists might be just hired criminals and mercenaries, though their number is never very large. Most terrorists take to terrorism out of conviction, of right or wrong kind. Terrorism often thrives on poverty, under-development, social injustice, discrimination and alienation. The asymmetrical international system and the cultural and economic effects of globalization prove a catalyst in the process that breeds terrorists. All terrorists are by nature anti-status quo aiming to bring about radical transformation of society and politics according to their ideological tenets. They manipulate the grievances of people and attribute them to one identifiable enemy whose elimination would bring about transformation in their

lives, or at least in their children's lives.

US Responsibility

The US cannot wash its hand off the liability of supporting and in some way breeding terrorism. It is much too deeply involved in world affairs to feel safe or to be able to avoid risks of violent backlash. Overbearing power brings in its wake enormous enmity. Its support to backward, fundamentalist or authoritarian regimes and sheikdoms in the Middle East to ensure free flow of oil; its unconditional backing to Israeli policies vis-à-vis Palestine and heavy positioning of American forces (between 20000 to 25000), military equipment and arms in the bases located close to holy Muslim shrines engender negative reactions among Arabs in particular and Muslims in general. Osama bin Laden is also a Frankenstein created by America itself.

The CIA also made use of all sorts of characters in its anti-communist missions during the Cold War, including drug dealers, death squads, mafia, people whom it calls terrorists today etc. In central and South America - in Honduras, Panama, El Salvador, Guatemala - its involvement in the toppling of elected governments and assassination of leaders could easily be dubbed as state terrorism. Ironically, September 11 marks the anniversary of the assassination of the democratically elected ruler Salvador Allende in Chile and the inauguration of the reign of terror under General Pinochet. The CIA is believed to be involved in both these events. The American attack on Panama to arrest General

Noriega also resulted in the killing of hundreds of civilians.

The prevalent notion of national security has to be reconceived in the light of recent events. What could ultimately provide security to nations in the contemporary world is a moot question. If even the world's most "secure" power can be attacked with such impunity and abandon, what kind of security could smaller nations hope for? The logic of deterrence that rests on the rationality of actors also collapses in the face of suicide terrorism.

Short Term Solutions

The havoc at New York and Washington D.C. would certainly precipitate a major policy review in the US. Calls for refashioning the priorities of foreign and security policies have already been made. Isolationist voices pleading for American withdrawal from global commitments and entanglements would become stronger. America might look inwards, slowing down its campaigns for human rights, democracy and nuclear non-proliferation abroad. US foreign policy and external interventions have exposed ordinary Americans to excessive risk. Their rulers mistakenly thought that they are covering this risk through conventional and nuclear weapons, and intelligence network. The US should now follow a risk-minimizing external policy.

Other knee-jerk reactions are also expected. Sporadic attacks on terrorist organizations and states supporting them, more stringent anti-terrorism laws, freezing of bank accounts of terrorist

organizations, stricter anti-immigration measures, tighter airport security and so on would follow. These would be supplemented by higher budgetary allocation for defence, intelligence and counter-terrorism activities and research into the techniques and possibilities of future terrorism. However, such measures cannot certainly root out terrorism, even as they go some way in controlling it. Retaliatory violence and strikes or posters of "bin Laden dead or alive" will not guarantee security for Americans. It is universally proven that terrorism cannot be overcome by recourse to military or administrative measures alone.

Most countries' methods of eradicating terrorism in fact produce more terrorists. Israel has been using brute force against Palestinian ultras for the past four decades without significant benefits. India too witnessed terrorism in Kashmir getting bloodier and bolder in Kashmir despite employing all its military might after 1989. Missile reprisals against bin Laden's network following US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 did not deter the strikes on September 11. Applying political, ideological and psychological measures in conjunction with military force could rein in the monster of terrorism more

effectively.

Long Term Solutions

Short-term military strategies to fight terrorism should not detract attention from the long-term policy transformations that advance democratization, disarmament, human rights, sustainable and eco-friendly development, greater justice in the international economic system and fair distribution of global resources. The US also needs to recognize terrorism as a global problem and adopt a multilateral approach to alleviate the conditions that create it. The UN could be the forum where multilateral agreements and covenants could be

STOP BLAMING THE VICTIM

Those seeking the mote in the American eye should rather pay attention to the beam in their own.

The average American is probably no more noble (or wicked) than the average New Zealander.

But their country is far richer, bigger, and more powerful than New Zealand, and there are 72 times as many of them. So when they act for good (or ill) a great many more people are helped (or hurt).

They have done some terrible things and supported some wicked men. But without their power and the sacrifice of their soldiers, sailors and airmen the outcome of both world wars would have been different. They also helped to free Russia and Europe from communism, in whose name far more people died than even Hitler ever dreamed of killing.

Yet Americans are reviled by the Western intelligentsia more than communism ever was. Notoriously during the cold war, it was fashionable among Europeans to hold American democracy in snobbish contempt and mouth apologies for communist dictatorship even as they sheltered from possible communist attack under the nuclear umbrella provided for them by the U.S. And earlier this year, there were reports of European leaders snubbing President Bush because he refused to sign a document (the Kyoto Protocol) none of their own governments had ratified.

This kind of disdain has been echoed in South Africa in response to the mass murders of 11th September.

President Mbeki issued a forthright condemnation, but some of his colleagues chose to be equivocal: 'Yes we condemn the attacks, but then again the U.S. should not have withdrawn from the World Conference Against Racism in Durban'.

Even more shameful were attempts by some commentators to put part of the blame for the attacks on the alleged evils of globalisation and the disparities across the world between the rich and the poor. Pressure on the U.S. (and other rich countries) for greater trade liberalization needs to intensify, but critics of America also need to consider that that country is rich because it is hard working, enterprising, and democratic, while many other countries are poor because their governments are brutal and corrupt and more concerned with finding scapegoats than solutions for their problems.

The U.S. has been called upon to do some soul-searching as to why it is so reviled. No doubt it will do that even as it buries its dead. But those who see the mass murders in the U.S. as some sort of 'come-uppance' for American would be well advised to do the same.

John Kane-Berman

Fast Facts, published by the South African Institute of Race Relations.

deliberated upon and implemented.

Terrorism cannot be controlled unless all nations endorse the value of a non-violent and peaceful world and stop militaristic, aggressive, unjust and exploitative policies within their territories and among themselves. Rather than talking about clash of civilizations, appropriate climate of tolerance and synthesis of the good among all

civilizations needs to be cultivated.

Last but not the least, America only needs to revive in their true spirit the pristine liberal values that it originally espoused - the rule of reason, tolerance, peaceful resolution of conflicts, freedom, and respect for plurality and diversity everywhere. An authoritarian and fanatical imposition of its way of life upon

all peoples and the desire to remake all societies on the American pattern are sure to back fire and cause more violent backlash. If this is a clash of civilizations, as many want us to believe, it should be fought in a civilized manner.

MR. AMIT DHOLAKIA is Senior Lecturer in Political Science, M. S. University, Baroda.

The WTC Tragedy and After - Learning the Right Lessons

Prasenjit Maiti

American policy-makers should realize that it is high time they begin dismantling the country's strategy of cultural isolation and indifference.

American political scientist Samuel Huntington had expressed apprehension way back in 1996 that the post-Cold War 21st Century would be marked by conflicts between Islam and the West, a throwback to the Crusades of the Middle Ages. This projection was also described in Western scholarship as the Jihad *versus* McWorld scenario, an eventuality that would test the resilience of the free world against the forces of fundamentalist insurgency. Still, it is rather disturbing that all such doomsday prophecies actually came true on 11 September 2001 with terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, New York and the Pentagon, Washington DC. Such mindless (?) acts of violence, however, provoke certain questions.

❖ Are the basic tenets of Islam incompatible with other world religions? We know that it is the religiously assigned duty of

Muslims to wage war against non-Muslims in order to transform the world into an acceptable and exclusivist *dar-ul-Islam* (World of Islam) from an unacceptable *dar-ul-harb* (World of Infidels). Islam as an organized world religion should come to terms with the realities of the new millennium, and should resocialize itself - so to say - to peacefully coexist with the emergent ethos of pluralist multi-cultural societies. The cultural worldview of Islam is more often than not informed by an authoritarian intolerance - this is not to suggest, however, that other world religions are entirely above board in this respect. Still,

it would appear that Islam's praxes have been more rigid and violent vis-à-vis Hinduism, for instance.

❖ Does violence beget violence? It obviously does but the United States at the present moment should also appreciate the exact nature of cross-border terrorism in flashpoints like Kashmir, India, and cooperate both with other NATO members as well as victims of



Courtesy: Heng Lianhe Zaobao in Newsweek.

insurgency in the Third World (like India) to combat militants who happen to obtain theological, military and financial support from Islam's thoroughly discredited thesis of the Jihad or Holy War. Americans should now realize the kind of trauma that Indian Hindus suffer daily in Jammu and Kashmir - this former valley of the gods has now been tragically reduced to a valley of fear and death by Muslim terrorists who have been trained and equipped by rogue states like Afghanistan, Pakistan and even Libya. President Clinton did not even condole for once the Mumbai Stock Exchange blast of 1993 that was masterminded by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence while Pakistan's army chief-turned-president had even had the insufferable audacity to describe Muslim insurgents in Kashmir as freedom fighters on his recent visit to India!

❖ Are human rights and democracy Eurocentric constructs? They are certainly not but the United States should stop acting as the moral guardian of a unipolar world, and should effectively build bridges underpinned by trust and a common agenda of human development to reach across to potential regional partners in the Third World like India, a country that has sustained its liberal democracy - unlike Pakistan - since Independence at 1947 despite poverty, malnutrition and hunger. But the US would now appear to be more inclined towards Pakistan to destroy Osama bin Laden and his Taliban cohorts in Afghanistan when Pakistan itself is one of the certified sponsors of terrorism in South Asia! This is most deplorable, and only serves to expose the short-

sightedness of American foreign policy. The Bush Administration, however, may be actually commended for successfully diverting the attention of the archetypal WASP American and the co-opted African-American from serious lapses in internal security to a cowboy-type vendetta against a faceless enemy - this role is tailor-made for the Texan US President who has even invoked a Christian God in this final war against Evil, implying in the process that America is again poised to play God in the first major military engagement of the new millennium.

American policy-makers should realize that it is high time they begin dismantling the country's strategy of cultural isolation and indifference. It is a disquieting fact that an average urban student of the Third World knows more about the US than an average American undergraduate knows about other peoples and other cultures. Dissemination of multi-cultural knowledge should be facilitated both within and without the American academia, industry and social service sectors. Familiarity can also breed understanding and help expand worldviews of an entire people. The logic of globalization more often than not has worked in an discriminating manner, provoking even Western scholars to come up with insightful expressions like McDonaldization, Coca-Colonization and The US is us!

Moreover, the US should discontinue backing wrong horses and should realize that Less Developed Countries in the Third World may be impoverished but are not, however, bereft of dignity. Likeminded liberal democratic

countries like India should be cultivated as reliable long-term allies on a level playing field by a series of confidence building measures. The US should also discontinue its interventionist policies that have generated such universal animosity and condemnation. Not for nothing has the expression Ugly American become well-known! Nobody has quite forgotten the acts committed by US Marines in Vietnam or the useless display of mind-boggling violence in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Third World has not yet come to terms with the missile attack on a children's hospital in Baghdad during the Gulf War, to cite an example. Have the Americans themselves forgotten the faces of helpless women and children at Kosovo only a couple of years back? Americans should realize that the lives of non-Americans are also valuable in the context of the entire human civilization, and should also engage in soul-searching to understand the roots of this anti-US attitude around the world.

The clash of civilizations has only just about begun - it is now the obligation of a more conscientious American people to learn from their mistakes of the near and distant past to salvage the future of their free and sanitized and once-impregnable World. They should talk less about Human Rights and should work more to safeguard Human Rights as the self-appointed policeman of the world. Those who do not learn from history, demonstrably and most regrettably, are often condemned to repeat it.

DR. PRASENJIT MAITI, Lecturer in Political Science, Burdwan University, West Bengal, India.

The USA's Double Standards

S. S. Bankeshwar

**The only thing that the United States has learnt from history
is that it is incapable of learning any lesson from history!**

All kinds of terrorism are equally condemnable, but Islamic terrorism is global and a threat to humanity, and human civilisation, while other terrorisms are localised ones like LTTE terrorism, Irish terrorism or ULFA terrorism, which are not a threat to the rest of the world. A clear distinction should be hence made between Global Islamic terrorism and localised terrorisms.

Is President Bush opposed to terrorism *per se*, or only opposed to terrorism against the United States? If President Bush is opposed to terrorism *per se*, is it not ridiculous that he should seek the help of Pakistan, the father of Islamic terrorism and the Taliban movement, and the sponsor of Islamic terrorism in Kashmir, to root out global terrorism in the world?

Pakistan – An Unreliable Ally

Is President Bush not aware that the Islamic terrorism against the United States on 11th September has resulted in the loss of about 6,000 lives, while Islamic terrorism against Kashmir has resulted in the loss of over 80,000 lives in the last two decades? According to President Bush, the former is horrific, while the latter is only unfortunate!

According to President Bush, Islamic terrorism against the United States calls for a global war by a

world-wide coalition, as it is a crime against humanity, while the Islamic terrorism against Kashmir calls for only restraint and patience. By implication, President Bush considers that the atrocities committed in Kashmir by Islamic terrorists in the last two decades are not crimes against humanity! Are not the Kashmiris human beings?

According to President Bush, America can bomb Iraq, Iran, Vietnam, Korea and Yugoslavia with impunity, but India should not cross the LOC (although Pakistani terrorists are crossing the LOC every day for the last three decades and indulging in terrorist activities in Kashmir) and destroy terrorist camps in Pakistani-occupied Kashmir. Travesty of justice indeed!

According to President Bush, the perpetrators of Islamic terrorism against the United States deserve severe and exemplary punishment, while Pakistan, the perpetrator of Islamic terrorism against Kashmir in the last two decades, deserves a massive financial bailout, lifting of sanctions imposed on it earlier, grant of IMF loans, and a 'Frontline state' status, for protecting and promoting the interests of the United States! Is this not most ridiculous?

When Friends Turn Hostile

The United States had earlier

supported Iraq with massive financial and military aid in its fight against Iran, and Iraq later on turned on the United States. The United States, had supported the Taliban in their fight against the then USSR, and the Taliban have now turned against the United States. The United States have now offered massive financial and military aid to Pakistan for help rendered by the latter to fight the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's network of terrorists in Afghanistan. It will not be long before Pakistan, possessing Islamic nuclear bombs, turns against the United States. The entire people of Pakistan, with a few exceptions, are now very anti-American. President Pervez Musharaff himself will be thrown out of power sooner or later by the hardline Islamic fundamentalists and Pakistani Taliban, who will then form the next government in Pakistan. This government will then declare '*jihad*' against the United States. India will then become a frontline state for the United States!

History will repeat itself. The only thing that the United States has learnt from history is that it is incapable of learning any lesson from history!

MR. S. S. BANKESHWAR is a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*.

Why the Afghans Suffer the Taliban? From an Afghani-American

Tamim Ansary

**Some say, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban?
The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, suffering.**

I speak as one who hates the Taliban and Osama bin Laden. There is no doubt in my mind that these people were responsible for the atrocity in New York. I agree that something must be done about those monsters. But the Taliban and bin Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who took over Afghanistan in 1997. Osama bin Laden is a political criminal with a plan. When you think Taliban, think Nazis. When you think bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan", think "the Jews in the concentration camps". It's not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this atrocity. They were the first victims of the perpetrators. They would exult if someone would come in there, take out the Taliban and clear out the rats nest of international thugs holed up in their country.

Some say, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, suffering. A few years ago, the United Nations estimated that there are 500,000 disabled orphans in Afghanistan - a country with no economy, no food. There are millions of widows. And the Taliban has been burying these widows alive in mass graves. The soil is littered with land mines, the farms were all destroyed by the Soviets. These are a few of the reasons why the Afghan people have not overthrown the Taliban.

We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the

Stone Age. Trouble is, that's been done. The Soviets took care of it already.

Make the Afghans suffer?

✓ They're already suffering.

Level their houses?

✓ Done.

Turn their schools into piles of rubble?

✓ Done.

Eradicate their hospitals?

✓ Done.

Destroy their infrastructure? Cut them off from medicine and health care?

✓ Too late. Someone already did all that.

New bombs would only stir the rubble of earlier bombs. Would they at least get the Taliban? Not likely. In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They'd slip away and hide. Maybe the bombs would get some of those disabled orphans; they don't move too fast, they don't even have wheelchairs. But flying over Kabul and dropping bombs wouldn't really be a strike against the criminals who did this horrific thing. Actually it would only be making common cause with the Taliban - by raping once again the people they've been raping all this time.

So what else is there? What can be done, then? Let me now speak with true fear and trembling. The only way to get bin Laden is to go in there with ground troops. When people speak of "having the belly to do what needs to be done", they're thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed. Having the belly to overcome any moral qualms about killing

innocent people. Let's pull our heads out of the sand. That's actually on the table is Americans dying. And not just because some Americans would die fighting their way through Afghanistan to bin Laden's hideout. It's much bigger than that folks. Because to get any troops to Afghanistan, we'd have to go through Pakistan. Would they let us? Not likely. The conquest of Pakistan would have to be first. Will other Muslim nations just stand by? You see where I'm going. We're flirting with a world war between Islam and the West.

And guess what: that's bin Laden's programme. That's exactly what he wants. That's why he did this. Read his speeches and statements. It's all right there. He really believes Islam would beat the west. It might seem ridiculous, but he figures if he can polarize the world into Islam and the West, that's a billion people with nothing left to lose, that's even better from bin Laden's point of view. He's probably wrong, in the end the West would win, whatever that would mean, but the war would last for years, and millions would die, not just theirs, but ours.

Who has the belly for that? bin Laden does. Anyone else?

From the Internet.

TAMIM ANSARY is an Afghani-American writer.

(Former UN Secreary General the late) Hammarskjold believed that had Christ been alive today he would have been UN Secretary General

Oliver Clausen cited in *Swarajya*,
August 29, 1964



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America's Anti-Terrorism 'Crusade' and the Media

14 Questions

Eustace D'Souza

Readers will recall the major gaffe made by CNN when in its zeal to support the American Establishment, telecast on CNN a clip of Palestinian children rejoicing over what was purported to be their joy at the terrorist attacks in the USA, on 11th September 2001. Later, it was proved conclusively to the embarrassment of CNN that these clips were 4 years old! Since that fateful day, the American media has projected events in a most biased manner to the extent of playing up the military regime of Pakistan and equally, playing down India's role.

A large chunk of Asia has been blanked out and this media coverage talks about the threat to Western Civilization led by the USA and faithfully followed by Britain and NATO. There has been hardly any coverage of the rest of Asia. Why so? Because it suits the US Government's policy to do so. The people of India, in an opinion poll, have indicated that it has been blown up beyond all proportions because American pride has been punctured as never before. This writer is privy to what a group of concerned Americans think of this obviously slanted reporting of the incident. They have posed 14 questions to President George W. Bush pertaining to America's Anti Terrorism Crusade, the term crusade being objected to strongly by the Islamic World because of its connotations to the earlier Christian Crusade against Islam. These 14 revealing questions are reproduced in the original leaving it to the reader of *Freedom First* to decide on their relevance to the on-going situation. The first 13 questions were raised by Severo Ornstein and Martin A. Lee on September 28, and the 14th by an American housewife.

"Mainstream journalists in the United States often function more like a fourth branch of Government than a feisty fourth estate. If anything the patterns of media bias that characterize sycophantic reporting in peacetime are amplified during war or a national

security crisis. Since the tragic events of September 11, the separation between press and state has dwindled nearly to vanishing point. If we had an independent and aggressive press corps our national conversation about the terrorist attacks that demolished the

World Trade Centre towers and damaged the Pentagon would be far more probing and informative. Listed below then are some of the questions reporters should be asking President Bush."

The 14 Questions

1. Barter Human Rights for support for fighting Terrorism?

Before the attacks in New York and Washington, your administration quietly tolerated Saudi Arabian and Pakistani military and financial aid for the Taliban regime, even though it harboured terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden. But now you say fighting terrorism will be the main focus of our administration. By making counter-terrorism the top priority in bilateral relations, aren't you signalling to abusive governments in Sudan, Indonesia, Turkey and elsewhere that they need not worry much about their human rights performance as long as they join America's anti-terrorist crusade? Will

you barter human rights violations, like corporations trade pollution credits? Will you condone, for example the brutalization of Chechnya in exchange for Russian participation in the war against terrorism? Or will you send a message loud and clear to America's allies that they must not use the fight against terrorism as a cover for waging repressive campaigns that smother democratic aspirations in their own countries?

2. Support Transparency International on investigating Money Laundering

Terrorists finance their operations by laundering their money through offshore banks and other hit money outlets. Yet your administration has undermined international efforts to crack down on tax

havens. Last May, you withdrew support for a comprehensive initiative launched by Transparency International in tax and banking practices. In the wake of the September 11 massacre, will you reassess this decision and support the OECD proposal, even if it means displeasing wealthy Americans and campaign contributors who avoid paying taxes by hiding money in offshore accounts?

3. War on Drugs – Changing Strategy?

Four months ago U.S. officials announced that Washington was giving \$43 million to the Taliban for its role in reducing the cultivation of opium poppies, despite the Taliban's heinous human rights record and its sheltering Islamic terrorists of many nationalities? Doesn't this make the U.S. Government guilty of supporting a country that harbours terrorists? Do you think your obsession with the war on drugs has distorted U.S. foreign policy in Southwest Asia and other regions?

4. Regarding Safeguarding Nuclear materials in the USA

According to U.S., Russian and German intelligence sources, Osama bin Laden's operatives have been trying to acquire enriched uranium and other weapons-grade radioactive materials for a nuclear bomb. There are reports that in 1993 bin Laden's well-financed organization tried to buy enriched uranium from poorly maintained Russian facilities that lacked sufficient controls. Why has your administration proposed cutting down funds for a programme to help safeguard nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union?

5. On Sharing Information

On September 23, you announced plans to make public a detailed analysis of the evidence gathered by U.S. intelligence and police agencies, which proves that Osama bin Laden and his cohorts are guilty of the terrorist attacks in New York and the Pentagon. But the next day your administration backpedalled. As we look through (the evidence), explained Secretary of State Colin Powell, "we can find areas that are unclassified and it will allow us to share this information with the public. But most of it is classified." Please explain this sudden flip-flop. How can we believe what you say about fighting terrorism if your administration can't make its case publicly with sufficient evidence? How

do you expect to win the support of governments and people who otherwise might suspect Washington's motives, particularly some Muslim and Arab nations?

6. Who is a Terrorist – Changing Definitions

Exactly who is a terrorist, and who is not? When the CIA was doling out an estimated \$2 billion to support the Afghan mujahadeen in the 1980s, Osama bin Laden and his colleagues were hailed as anti-communist freedom fighters. During the cold war, U.S. national security strategists many of whom are riding top-saddle once again in your administration, didn't view bin Laden's fanatical religious beliefs as diametrically opposed to western civilization. But now bin Laden and his ilk are unabashed terrorists. Definitions of what constitutes terror and terrorism seem to change with the times. Before he became vice president Dick Cheney and the U.S. State Department denounced Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress, as a terrorist. Today Mandela, South Africa's president emeritus, is considered a great and dignified statesman. And what about Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, who bears significant responsibility for the 1982 massacre of 1,800 innocents at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon? What role will Sharon play in your crusade against international terrorism?

7. The CIA's Role

There's been a lot of talk lately about unshackling the CIA and lifting the alleged ban on CIA assassinations. Many U.S. officials attribute the CIA's inability to thwart terrorist attacks in New York and Washington to rules that supposedly have prohibited the CIA from using gangsters, death squad leaders, and other unsavoury characters as sources and assets. Why don't you set the record straight Mr. President and acknowledge that there were always gaping loopholes in these rules, which allowed such activity to continue unabated? It's precisely this sort of dubious activity enlisting unsavoury characters to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives – that set the stage for the tragic events on September 11th. It's hardly a secret that the CIA trained and financed Islamic extremists to topple the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan. Some of the extremists supported by the CIA, most notably bin Laden, have since turned their psychotic wrath against the United States. Instead of rewarding the CIA with billions of additional dollars to fight terrorism, shouldn't

you hold accountable those shortsighted and perilously naive U.S intelligence officials who ran the covert operations in Afghanistan that got us into this mess?

8. Abetting State Terrorism in the Past

John Negroponte, the new U.S ambassador to the United Nations, says that he intends to build an international anti-terrorist coalition. During the mid-1980s, Negroponte was involved in covering up right-wing death squad activity and other human rights abuses in Honduras when he served as ambassador to that country. Doesn't Negroponte's role in aiding and abetting state terrorism in Central America undermine the moral authority of the United States as it embarks on its crusade against international terrorism?

9. Preventing Nuclear Disaster

The attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon brought home the frightening extent to which U.S citizens and installations are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. If the terrorists hit a nuclear power plant, it could result in an enormous public health disaster. In the interest of protecting national security, why have you not ordered the immediate phase out of 103 nuclear plants that are operating in the United States? Why doesn't your administration emphasize safe, renewable energy resources such as solar and wind power, which would not invite terrorism?

10. Airlines Bailout with Tax-payers' Money!

After years of lobbying against rigorous safety procedures, the heads of airline industries will receive multi billion-dollar taxpayer bailout for their ailing companies. Given your support for the airline rescue package, do you now agree that letting the free market run its course won't resolve all our economic and social problems? (That's what anti-globalization activists have been saying all along). And if airlines deserve a bail out, how about a multi billion-dollar rescue package for human needs like health and education? Why aren't we bailing out our under-funded public schools, our insolvent hospitals, our national railroads, and other elements of our dilapidated infrastructure?

11. About Kissinger and Pinochet

September 11 will be remembered as a day of infamy in the United States because of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. In Chile,

September 11th is also remembered as the day a U.S backed coup toppled the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in 1973, initiating a reign of terror by General Pinochet. Given your administration's avowed stance against terrorism, will you cooperate with the various international legal cases that are homing in on ex-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for colluding with Pinochet's murderous regime?

12. Do Two Wrongs Make One Right?

If the killing of innocent people in New York and Washington is indefensible, then why do U.S officials defend American air strikes that kill innocent civilians in Iraq, Sudan, Serbia, and Afghanistan? More than 50,000 Iraqi children under age 5 have died as a result of the 1990 Gulf War, subsequent economic sanctions, and on-going U.S bombing raids against Iraq. Will your

Publicity – Terrorism's Nourishment

It is not so much the physical effect of Osama bin Laden's attack on the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, that has spelt terrorism but the disruption of life and the fear and panic that followed it, and is still doing so. Within a week, capital goods shipment fell the lowest in two decades, 200,000 men were laid off, and the airlines and tourist trade fell by 50%.

The recent reported attacks of anthrax, real or hoax, made the Majority Leader, Tom Deschle close down Capitol Hill for four days, and the Mayor closed the whole of Baltimore town for a day. It must now be obvious that, the object of terrorism is not so much to kill, but to instill fear and cause panic disrupting normal life.

Thus terrorism thrives on publicity, and it is the media which gives it that publicity. If the U.S. government decides that for some time in future, the media will not be allowed to report all such incidences, but that the government will take all preventive and proactive action quiet and unostentatiously, and gives an impression of business as usual, it will automatically stifle and turn off the nourishment of publicity on which terrorism thrives. But then, this will go against the First Amendment of Freedom of Information. It is better to accept this temporary loss of freedom of the press than to live in a perpetual state of fear and panic.

Brig. N. B. Grant, AVSM (Retd.),
Pune

planned actions lead to a similar fate for the children of Afghanistan?

13. Won't Bombing Lead to Create New Terrorists?

What will you accomplish if you bomb Afghanistan? Would this not galvanize Islamic fundamentalist movements that are already powerful in Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, the oil rich Arab monarchies, and the Balkans? Wouldn't a U.S led onslaught against Afghanistan be the fastest way to create a new generation of terrorists? Adept at manipulating real grievances, terrorist networks breed on poverty, despair, and social injustice.

14. What About the IRA?

Finally, an American housewife would like to add, "Will you question the President as to the monetary support Irish Americans give to the IRA? Will these donors be investigated as part of your anti-terrorist

campaign? Do you think that you can wipe out or even reduce this scourge Mr. President, without seriously and systematically addressing the root cause of terrorism?

To these, this writer would like to add the following:

- Can Dubya define precisely what is the American interpretation of terrorism? Only those actions that hurt America?
- Why does the U.S persist in equating the world's largest democracy, warts and all, with a military dictatorship across our borders?
- Have any attempts been made to seek the involvement of China which has a stake in West and South Asia?

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Understanding Islam

R. Srinivasan

When Europe was sunk in its dogmatic slumber of the Middle Ages, it was the Islamic intellectuals who carefully preserved the learning and philosophy of the ancient Western World.

Islamic civilization, an extremely complex, vibrant culturally rich entity has been understood in static and pejorative terms and the media squarely have to be partly blamed for it. It is charged (and not wrongly) that Western depictions of Islam have been of *burkha* clad women, bearded *mullahs* or camels in deserts. An unchanging picture of the Muslim has been a legacy to all of us, coloured by memories of Arabian Nights, of Sultans, verses from the *Omar Khayyam* and eroticized pictures supposedly illustrating the verses of the famed astronomer and tent-maker!

It is not widely known that Islam is geographically and

demographically diverse with variations that are bewilderingly complex. A culture and civilization spread from the farthest corners of Indonesia to parts of China and from the three countries of South Asia (including sections of Sri Lanka) to the countries of Africa is generally characterized in simple stark terms of black and white, ignoring the shades in between. Also it is generally not realized that its spread has been gradual, continuous.

While it is believed that it was a religion that spread by the sword, it is not sufficiently known that peaceful trade and commercial influences have been more pervasive and far more influential as happened

in Africa, Indonesia, Kerala. Islam in Bangladesh has been due to mass scale voluntary conversion and those who converted to the religion were from the depressed castes mainly to escape the social inequities of organized Hinduism.

Islam in Africa has had a glorious record. The kingdoms of Songhay and Mali were prosperous to a degree unknown elsewhere. The city of Timbuktu (in today's Mali) was an unbelievably important center of Islamic learning and once was larger and more prosperous than London. People flocked to it for studies from different parts of the Islamic world. Its libraries were world renowned. In West Africa, the

Islamic religious leadership was entirely black in contrast to Eastern Africa where Arab leadership dominated the scene. It is worth one's while to remember that the 28 million Muslims in Africa (South of the Sahara) form one of the largest of constituents of the Islamic world; the concentration of almost everyone is only on West Asia and its Muslim population.

Even within the heartland of Islam, there never was one dominant culture. There were three major languages each summing up three different civilisational experiences – Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Each interpenetrated into the other and brought in elements lacking in the other two. In its long history, the Ottoman Empire not only was geographically very wide spread but had people of different nationalities living within and its famous *Millet* system ensured autonomy and qualified self government to the resident minorities.

What unites this varied population are the few cardinal principles of religion, its extremely simplified rituals and its egalitarian philosophy. Otherwise what divides the different sections of the community of believers is more salient. The notion that it is a semitic religion, that it is prone to violent outbursts, that it tends to inspire its utopian vision are statements that have to be largely modified. The differences between the Shia and the Sunni have persisted for centuries and not likely to be bridged over immediately.

Its philosophic heritage needs to be remembered and reiterated. When Europe was sunk in its dogmatic slumber of the Middle Ages, it was the Islamic intellectuals who carefully preserved the learning and philosophy of the ancient

Western World. Aristotle and Plato were forgotten in the West but were preserved in Arabic and their writings pondered over, redefined for contemporary needs and reconciled with the rarities of the religion. When Thomas Aquinas, the greatest philosopher of Roman Catholicism wrote his monumental *Summa* (still the basis for Catholic philosophy) he totally depended upon Latin versions of Aristotle made from the Arabic versions of the philosopher, for Aquinas could read no Greek. The names of Al Farabi, Al Ghazali and Ibn Sina belong as much to medieval Europe as to Islam.

It should be remembered that once the Islamic political world spread from Spain to the Levant including parts of Southern Italy. The Mediterranean was almost an Islamic lake. In the well established Islamic Spanish Kingdom, Jews found themselves tolerated and encouraged to practise their trades and professions and many of them occupied positions of responsibility and respect. In fact, when the Catholic hegemony was re-established, the Jews till then free, were now prosecuted and had to flee to more hospitable regions.

The educated Muslim cannot easily forget the high positions that Islam once had in "the civilized world", for more than a thousand years. Till about the end of the 18th century, the Islamic countries were not inferior to those of the West and the looming presence of the Ottoman Empire was a matter of some anxiety to the neighbouring smaller European nations. The rapid decline was to be from the 19th century which was common to China, India and the nations of the South East Asia.

From the First World War, the Imperial powers used the Muslim leadership for their own war designs

and advancement and they became pawns for Western political well-being and politics. With total cynical disregard the trust of whole peoples was betrayed and the career of T. E. Lawrence was devoted to the furthering of this camouflaged by an apparent love for the Arabs. The continuous initiation of the people as a whole, the propping up of illegitimate rulers, the safeguarding of their geopolitical interests have all been at the cost of the people in the region. For instance, during colonial mid-summer, Afghanistan was seen in the context of the safeguarding of British interests in the Indian subcontinent and three wars were fought there with India paying for its expenses.

It is an allegation widely made and accepted that Muslims cannot forget the Koran and their religion. It is true that both these are central to the Muslim people. It is said that they ought to grow out of both these. But have we grown out of our involvement in the Vedas? From Ram Mohun Roy to Sri Aurobindo many of us are still fascinated by the Vedas. In the West, the beginning of the 16th century saw an assault on the principles of Catholicism and later on Christianity. Yet for three hundred years the centrality of the Bible still continued and institutions including universities were to be dominated by the dominance of the Bible. We are caught in the grip of controversies around Vedic Mathematics and battling with the issue of introducing astrology in University courses. Can we then with any legitimacy talk to the Muslims of the perils of Islamic persistence with the Koran. And let us not forget that modernization in Islam is barely fifty years old.

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The Islamic Position

Iqbal A. Ansari

The Muslims worldwide, wherever they find themselves oppressed, should explore new techniques of militant but effective peaceful struggle of passive resistance which was evolved by, among others, Gandhi.

It is not enough for Muslims to assert that they condemn terrorism, as Islam is a religion of peace. It is common knowledge that it is not only historical - institutional Islam which has waged wars, but the doctrinal position that the Quran takes on the issue is not of absolute pacificism.

The issues related to war and terrorism therefore need to be addressed by Muslim scholars for their own clarity and for others to make a true assessment of the Muslim position. The Quran validates use of force for self-defence when people are subjected to extreme persecution to the extent that they cannot freely practise their religion and have been forced to flee their homes. Force is also legitimised for liberating a people who have been oppressed and tyrannised beyond endurance.

It is a travesty of the Quranic position to say that it exhorts Muslims to kill Kafirs *per se*. The exhortation is directed to the particular group of people who had driven Muslims out of their homes and who were bent on annihilating Islam. For other non-Muslims who did not persecute them the Quran directs believers to base their relations on principles of fairness and equity.

In both cases of lawful use of

force it is ordained by the Shariah that force will be taken recourse to when all other methods of redressal of wrong have been exhausted. The Shariah also requires that during the conduct of hostilities non-derogable human rights shall not be violated and that protection will be ensured to non-combatants and civilian life and activities, especially children, women, old and invalid and wounded people.

It follows from this that terrorism, which invariably makes indiscriminate use of force causing destruction of civilian life and property, including women, children and old people, is a crime against humanity under Islam as much as under humanitarian law.

Taking recourse to the logic as some Muslim jihadi groups including Osama bin Laden are reported to have done that since the government of country A is a tyrannical one therefore its citizens, who are taxpayers and who are potential combatants, can also be targeted even while engaged in civilian activities, is highly perverse, which brutalises the practitioners of such violence and dehumanises their political/religious creed.

It would appear that this is a position similar to that adopted by exponents and practitioners of Hindu Dharma from ancient times.

It has been rightly noted by many that the Quranic position on war is similar to that of the Gita. Though early Christianity did not entertain any idea of war, but at a subsequent stage the idea of a just war was developed within the organised Church, sanctifying crusades and martyrdom. In modern times this realistic position of legitimate use of force for a just war has been endorsed by the world community under the UN Charter (1945) and the humanitarian laws of war codified under the Four Geneva Conventions (1949).

There have been and are pacifists who would not allow use of force for any cause, even for self defence or for a just cause. They, however, do not generally remain consistent for any length of time. Gandhiji, for example, preached non-violence as an absolute religious doctrine during his struggle against the British. He nevertheless allowed Indian Armies to march into Jammu & Kashmir to fight and repel the raiders there in October 1947. It is wiser and morally more sound to allow use of legitimate force to defend just causes, otherwise might will always prevail over right, making Ravana to prosper and Rama to retreat.

Peace & justice, freedom and equality are all cherished moral and spiritual values. But in real world

conditions, one is perpetually involved in making a choice between conflicting values. Those who exalt 'peace' above all else disregarding the equally vital value of justice, are either naive or hypocrites or are insensitive to injustice because of their own or their class/national privileged position.

In the eyes of Islam peace is accorded a fairly high ranking in the hierarchy of values; but so is justice, which constitutes one of the refrains of the human song of the Quran. The Quran, and the life of the Prophet as exemplifier of its teachings, enjoin on every righteous person the duty to oppose injustice, and oppression to anyone anywhere. In real life, however, the option is not always binary between 'justice' and 'peace' or between 'equality' and 'freedom'. There are shades within each category requiring discrimination e.g. tolerable inequality reconciled to larger freedom and tolerable injustice reconciled to pervasive peace; and vice-versa i.e. tolerable disturbance reconciled to demands of minimum justice. Life is a spiritual quest requiring the pilgrim to continually harmonise the conflicting demands of these values within a broader framework provided by human rights norms in our times, which are comparable to Islamic norms of individual and collective rights under Shariah.

In our own times the choice of use of force also involves consideration of weapons of mass destruction including landmines, which are inherently incapable of distinguishing between civilians and combatants. It therefore requires Muslims to be in the

vanguard of outlawing all atomic, biological and chemical weapons and landmines. It also requires Muslims to speak out unambiguously through their authentic intellectual and religious forums against communal and terrorist violence.

Though all terrorists on occasions try to legitimise their cult by recourse to religion, a special responsibility devolves on Muslims for getting the collective opinion of the Ummah against terrorist

violence expressed not through the conclaves of opportunist rulers, but of intellectuals and religious scholars, for the simple reason that among a host of terrorist groups world over, like the IRA in Northern Ireland, the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the Naxalites, and sections of Hindus, Tribals and Christians in North East India, it is the Muslim Mujahideen whose claim to religious inspiration is most strident.

Muslim ulema and scholars

Root Out The Evil Of Terrorism But Do Not Use Unlawful Force

The following statement has been issued by Prof. Iqbal Ansari, on behalf of the Minorities Council:

The Minorities Council condemns, in absolute terms, the most savage incidents in the history of terrorism causing colossal loss of innocent lives in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, which has rightly outraged the conscience of mankind. We express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. We also express solidarity with the people and Government of the United States of America in their resolve to root out the evil of terrorism from the world.

We would, however, like to remind the Government, and the people of the USA that by using the language of tribal retaliation and jingoism and by threatening to use indiscriminate force against a whole people they would be involved in undermining the values of freedom, justice and rule of law, instead of promoting them.

We appeal to the people worldwide, especially of the U.S.A., not to give vent to their fury against innocent people because of their origin or community affiliation.

We appeal to all those who are committed to human rights and to ethical and spiritual values to take initiative for preventing and resolving all national & regional conflicts in a manner that does not allow the weak to suffer gross injustice and oppression for far too long driving them to seek desperate remedies.

All those who feel outraged by oppressive structures of power and systemic injustice and exploitation, must work for their overthrow by peaceful struggle. If at all force is to be used it must be done lawfully, abiding by the ethical and legal norms set by religious as well as by the humanitarian laws of war codified as Geneva Conventions.

We again appeal to the people and the Government, of the USA and to all governments actively supporting it not to take recourse to unlawful use of force.

should rather take a lead in getting authentic representatives of all religions endorse the humanitarian laws under Geneva Conventions, so that members of all communities may realise that if and when they feel that use of force cannot be ruled out, they must adhere to the code which prohibits communal violence and terrorism.

A call was given to the Parliament of World's Religions which met in December 1999 in Capetown to make such a declaration, but it remained unheeded because lovers of absolute peace could not think of adopting an ethical-legal code of war.

Apart from the ethical and legal requirements of observance of distinction between combatants and non-combatants, the technology, economics and sociology of modern warfare should make Muslims as well as followers of other religions join the struggle for the purification if not dismantling of the whole modern diabolical machinery of war.

This will not lead them to necessarily take a philosophical pacifist position of no use of force in absolute terms, which will allow Ravana to prosper and Rama to retreat. It will rather lead them to a position where life is treated as a perpetual struggle to choose

between peace and humanised use of force. On occasions it will make us choose for peace under an order which is not perfectly just, while continuing to peacefully struggle for a more just order.

This should lead the Muslims worldwide, wherever they find themselves oppressed, to explore new techniques of militant but effective peaceful struggle of passive resistance which was evolved by, among others, Gandhi. Will it succeed? The answer lies in the question: Has terrorism succeeded?

PROF. IQBAL A. ANSARI is Secretary-General of the Minorities Council and a member of the Indian Liberal Group.

Yes, This Is About Islam

Salman Rushdie

The restoration of religion to the sphere of the personal, its depoliticisation, is the nettle that all Muslim societies must grasp in order to become modern.

"This isn't about Islam." The world's leaders have been repeating this mantra for weeks, partly in the virtuous hope of deterring reprisal attacks on innocent Muslims living in the West, partly because if the United States is to maintain its coalition against terror, it can't afford to suggest that Islam and terrorism are in any way related.

The trouble with this necessary disclaimer is that it isn't true. If this isn't about Islam, why the worldwide Muslim demonstrations in support of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda? Why did those 10,000 men armed with swords and axes mass on the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier, answering some mullah's call to jihad? Why are the war's first British

casualties three Muslim men who died fighting on the Taliban side?

Why the routine anti-Semitism of the much-repeated Islamic slander that "the Jews" arranged the hits on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, with the oddly self-deprecating explanation offered by the Taliban leadership, among others, that Muslims could not have the technological know-how or organisational sophistication to pull off such a feat?

Why does Imran Khan, the Pakistani ex-sports star turned politician, demand to be shown the evidence of al-Qaeda's guilt while apparently turning a deaf ear to the self-incriminating statements of al-

Qaeda's own spokesmen (there will be a rain of aircraft from the skies, Muslims in the West are warned not to live or work in tall buildings)?

Why all the talk about American military infidels desecrating the sacred soil of Saudi Arabia if some sort of definition of what is sacred is not at the heart of the present discontents?

Of course this is "about Islam". The question is, what exactly does that mean? After all, most religious belief isn't very theological. Most Muslims are not profound Koranic analysts.

For a vast number of 'believing' Muslim men, Islam stands, in

a jumbled, half-examined way, not only for the fear of God – the fear more than the love, one suspects – but also for a cluster of customs, opinions and prejudices that include their dietary practices; the sequestration or near-sequestration of ‘their’ women; the sermons delivered by their mullahs of choice; a loathing of modern society in general, riddled as it is with music, godlessness and sex; and a more particularised loathing (and fear) of the prospect that their own immediate surroundings could be taken over – ‘Westoxicated’ – by the liberal Western-style way of life.

Highly motivated organisations of Muslim men (oh, for the voices of Muslim women to be heard!) have been engaged over the last 30 years or so in growing radical political movements out of this mulch of ‘belief’.

These Islamists – we must get used to this word, Islamists, meaning those who are engaged upon such political projects, and learn to distinguish it from the more general and politically neutral ‘Muslim’ – include the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the blood-soaked combatants of the Islamic Salvation Front and Armed Islamic Group in Algeria, the Shiite revolutionaries of Iran, and the Taliban.

Poverty is their great helper, and the fruit of their efforts is paranoia. This paranoid Islam, which blames outsiders, “infidels”, for all the ills of Muslim societies, and whose proposed remedy is the closing of those societies to the rival project of modernity, is presently the fastest growing version of Islam in the world.

This is not wholly to go along with Samuel Huntington’s thesis about the clash of civilizations, for the

simple reason that the Islamists’ project is turned not only against the West and “the Jews”, but also against their fellow Islamists.

Whatever the public rhetoric, there’s little love lost between the Taliban and Iranian regimes. Dissensions between Muslim nations run at least as deep, if not deeper, than those nations’ resentment of the West. Nevertheless, it would be absurd to deny that this self-exculpatory, paranoid Islam is an ideology with widespread appeal.

Twenty years ago, when I was writing a novel about power struggles in a fictionalised Pakistan, it was already *de rigueur* in the Muslim world to blame all its troubles on the West and, in particular, the United States.

Then as now, some of these criticisms were well-founded; no room here to rehearse the geopolitics of the cold war and America’s frequently damaging foreign policy ‘tilts’, to use the Kissinger term, toward (or away from) this or that temporarily useful (or disapproved-of) nation-state, or America’s role in the installation and deposition of sundry unsavory leaders and regimes.

But I wanted then to ask a question that is no less important now: Suppose we say that the ills of our societies are not primarily America’s fault, that we are to blame for our own failings? How would we understand them then? Might we not, by accepting our own responsibility for our problems, begin to learn to solve them for ourselves?

Many Muslims, as well as secularist analysts with roots in the Muslim world, are beginning to ask such questions now. In recent weeks

Muslim voices have everywhere been raised against the obscurantist hijacking of their religion. Yesterday’s hotheads (among them Yusuf Islam, aka Cat Stevens) are improbably repackaging themselves as today’s pussycats.

An Iraqi writer quotes an earlier Iraqi satirist: “The disease that is in us, is from us.” A British Muslim writes, “Islam has become its own enemy.”

A Lebanese friend, returning from Beirut, tells me that in the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, public criticism of Islamism has become much more outspoken. Many commentators have spoken of the need for a Reformation in the Muslim world.

I’m reminded of the way non-communist socialists used to distance themselves from the tyrannical socialism of the Soviets; nevertheless, the first stirrings of this counter-project are of great significance. If Islam is to be reconciled with modernity, these voices must be encouraged until they swell into a roar. Many of them speak of another Islam, their personal, private faith.

The restoration of religion to the sphere of the personal, its depoliticisation, is the nettle that all Muslim societies must grasp in order to become modern. The only aspect of modernity interesting to the terrorists is technology, which they see as a weapon that can be turned on its makers.

If terrorism is to be defeated, the world of Islam must take on board the secularist-humanist principles on which the modern is based, and without which Muslim countries’ freedom will remain a distant dream.

From the Internet.

Gandhi, America and the Taliban

Adi H. Doctor

In a world full of hatred, chaos, contradictions and obsession for power one is tempted to re-visit Gandhi to examine his relevance. What can we learn from Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence or *ahimsa*, which can be deemed applicable or meaningful to our turbulent times? The crucial Gandhian message relevant for our turbulent times is that peace will forever remain elusive to mankind, so long as it practices violence or *ahimsa*.

How true Gandhi was, is proved today when we see both the USA as well as the Taliban living in fear, having less liberty, their equality and fraternity shattered. Today every coloured and turbaned American is suspect in the eyes of his fellow white citizen. The Afghans are likewise a house divided, with brother made to fight brother. If only the West and Islam had learnt to live according to the essential nature of man, that is, non-violently, they (and the world) today would not be suffering the consequences of their violent life styles.

Violent means can never establish Truth or Justice

Violence mainly decides whose will shall prevail. It enables the strong to rule over the weak. It enabled USA to prevail over Iraq. It enables Israel to dominate the Palestinians. But there is nothing inherent in superior military or economic power that ensures justice is being done. While saying that justice does require power to enforce itself, to argue that those who wield superior power are *ipso facto* doing justice would not be acceptable. This is what Gandhi

implied when he said even if 99 out of 100 people do not agree with me, I can only do justice by being true to myself, to my conscience, to the God (or moral imperative) within me.

Justice and the search for truth, according to Gandhi, require, first and foremost, that we respect those who differ from us and are ever ready to dialogue with them. We must endeavor to change the adversary's mind and heart as much as be ready to change our own set opinions when confronted with reasonable dissent/disagreement. How can we ever hope to discover the truth if we opt to destroy those who dissent or differ from us.

Gandhi argued that in war even the good points the opponent is making are overlooked, whereas in non-violent resistance it is possible for each side to see and appreciate whatever justice there may be in the other side. Moreover Gandhi believed that non-violent techniques give rise to less scope for falsehood, deception and treachery and destruction which are common characteristics of violent conflicts and struggles

Non-Violence means looking at the evil within

Turning to apply Gandhi's doctrine to the America versus Taliban conflict, the question that can legitimately be raised is, has the USA cared to look at the evil within? If it does it may find that it has not always done justice to the non-white world. It has been unduly partial towards Israel's violence and forcible occupation of Arab territory. It has umpteen times adopted double standards. To give just one example: it adopted one standard for Iraq when it invaded Kuwait and another whenever Israel committed aggression. Then it has never hesitated to adopt the policy of carrot and stick to pursue its own (or western world's) national interests. USA's foreign policy tilt towards Pakistan for purely strategic reasons viz. promoting American national or security interests, write from the 1950s when it used Pakistan to fight its cold war adversary the USSR, till today when it seeks to make Pakistan the frontline state for fighting Taliban, is a good example of the exercise of what analysts call Reward Power the power to achieve one's goals through use of

the power to offer rewards, like giving military and economic aid, lifting sanctions, etc. Because of its policy of rule by military and reward power, because of its policy of identifying American global domination with justice, the USA has only produced a large number of marginal men.

It is impossible for the westerners who till yesterday lived comfortable and secure lives, fighting wars in remote lands with remotely controlled weapons, to easily understand the power of the marginal man. The marginal man is the man in Palestine, in Syria, in Iraq, who fights by resorting to terrorism because he has nothing to lose except his life since the powerful West has already denied him his rights and history, and, deprived him of his family, home and land. The power the marginal man exercises is a power that the West finds difficult to rationally apprehend. It is the power of a man who perceives himself as a holy warrior, who will not shirk from committing suicide in order to hit his enemy or perceived oppressor.

If only the USA would look within, it would find that the deplorable terrorist attack on the WTC's twin towers on that fateful Tuesday, the 11th of September 2001 was the marginal man's way of conveying a message to the powerful West. A message which simply says, "You are the enemy, the real terrorist who has stripped us of our land and rights and while doing this you openly flaunt your military power, wealth and privileges.

Non-Violence means understanding the adversary's mind

If the USA wants abiding

justice and peace, it must not only give precedence to dialogue over violence, it must not only look within (to examine if there is evil or injustice lurking within itself), but it must also try and understand the adversary's (in this case Taliban and marginal man's) mind.

Once Gandhi was asked how he would tackle a robber who had entered his house adopting non-violent means. Gandhi's reply was I have three options. I can violently bash him up. Secondly, if I am a coward, I can watch him steal and go away. But, thirdly, said Gandhi, if I am truly non-violent I would dialogue with him and try to find out why he has come to steal, and, maybe I would find that it is because he is starving. In that case, I would realize that it is not he who is the real thief. The real thief is myself who has held on to more than what I really need.

Now has the USA tried to understand the mind of the marginal man and the Taliban (Islamic fundamentalist). Justice can be done to the marginal man by removing his sense of unjust deprivation. However, justice can be done to the Islamic fundamentalist only by exposing how he is distorting the true message of Islam for evil and political purposes. Islam prescribes a holy war or jihad only against oppressors of the practitioners of the faith; it prescribes respect for other faiths. Islam also lays great stress on compassion and wisdom. Writing in *The Times of India* of 17th October 2001, Asghar Ali Engineer wonders why Islam has not yet produced a Mahatma Gandhi. It is time wiser men tackled Islamic fundamentalism by adopting a

three pronged strategy. Firstly, ask the powerful West to look within and find out to what extent Islamic militancy and fundamentalism is a response to Western unjust domination and its playing the role of a partial global policeman. Secondly, encourage the correct interpretation of the message of Islam, whose strong points are peace, compassion and justice as much as war against oppression. Thirdly, strengthen a truly global regime of Human Rights, which cut across nationalities, religions, and races.

Why good & wise men should deem *Ahimsa* as superior to *Himsa*

The ethical-religious reason simply says we should not practice violence against fellow humans because "they are as we are". What Gandhi meant by this was that the same God or spark of divinity (innate goodness, Kant's moral imperative) resides in all human beings, hence the possibility of reform cannot be denied even in the case of the meanest of creatures. On the practical plane, Gandhi's argument is equally simple and clear. What is got by force can only be retained by force. Those who believe in violence can rule only so long as they can retain their superior force. Once their power weakens the opponent, waiting to seek revenge again raises his head. Violence only makes the adversary or vested interest go underground or pretend submission and bide time for revenge. If men are wise and want to seek permanent freedom from this vicious cycle of violence, revenge and counter revenge, then they must work to change hearts (their own as well as of the adversary). In short arrive at

a new moral consensus.

Applying Gandhi's doctrine of ahimsa to the America-Taliban conflict, it can legitimately be argued that if the Taliban surrenders to superior force, remaining unconvinced that justice has been done, the submission at best will be temporary. The enemy will lie low, waiting for an opportunity to strike back when the perceived enemy's forces weaken or when he lowers his guard. The lesson to be learnt from Gandhi's philosophy is that permanent change can only be based on a non-violent change of hearts. Abiding peace will emerge only when both parties to the conflict arrive at a new moral consensus. What we need is moral armament, not weapons armament.

In Gandhi's scattered writings we also come across other implications of practicing non-violence, which contemporary men and nations need to note and practice. For Gandhi *ahimsa* meant avoiding anger, being calm and content, not being jealousy, not being greedy (wanting or holding on to more than what we need). Today the USA, Israel, Taliban, the whole world need to be reminded of these simple truths. As Lalita Panicker writing the middle in *The Times of India* of 25-10-01, p.12 observes Zeevi "had it coming". Zeevi, according to Panicker used "routinely to refer to Palestinians as lice and sub-humans. Regrettable though the killing is, it is precisely this attitude, the refusal to recognize the valid human rights of different people that has created a situation in which most Israelis live in a constant stage of siege". Translating Gandhi's message that

anger and hatred are another face of violence into practice, it means wise global leadership is expected to abjure anger, malice, hatred and endeavor to replace the ancient Semitic principle of eye for eye and tooth for tooth, by a mature, calm, composed and honest diplomacy, in which, first each side endeavors to look within to detect and eradicate the evil within itself; then each side seeks to understand the other and finally both sides endeavor to arrive at a new moral consensus which would remove the conflict permanently because it would have removed the root causes of the conflict.

The collateral damage done by violence

The adoption of violence (war) also does collateral damage to society. In the case of the UAS-Taliban conflict, we find that a significant casualty of the conflict has been freedom, especially of the media, print and electronic. In October 2001, the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice had a conference with media managers who reportedly agreed to her suggestion that any future taped statements from Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaida group be abridged and any potentially inflammatory language be removed. The White House spokesman, Ari Fleischer, made a similar veiled threat of censorship when he said that American media "need to watch what they say". The CNN responded by issuing an official statement declaring that in deciding what went on the air it would consider guidance from appropriate authorities. Here is a veiled censorship in the country that cherishes its history of freedom. It

is inappropriate for the government in a truly free country to subtly dictate to the media how to report the news. Freedom of expression in USA has indeed become the first casualty of war. Secondly, America's multi-culturalism and open society have equally come under threat. Turbaned Sikhs, Asians in general, Muslims in particular who till recently were considered fellow Americans contributing to USA's prosperity, overnight turned suspect in the eyes of many common and less informed Americans. The fundamental rights to security of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness which Americans constitutionally cherished as their most prized possession will never be the same again after the declared war on Laden's Al-Qaida. In the aftermath of the war, most Americans live in fear of lurking terrorism in the form of mail containing Anthrax, travel by air has been drastically reduced, tourism affected. These collateral damages are cited to show that war is a very costly way of settling disputes and achieving justice. Precedence to dialogue, understanding the justice in the demands of the adversary, understanding the reasons why an adversary burning with hatred for Americans has arisen etc., these are the key issues that need to be addressed. Merely winning a war with a primitive enemy is not the ideal solution to solving the complex problem of violence and terrorism globally. In short, in our turbulent times we need to go back to Gandhi and rethink the wisdom contained in his doctrine of *Ahimsa*.

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Silent About Many Things

Dilip D'Souza

Is the knowledge that murderers and their instigators live openly down the road from me any less, or more, terrifying than the knowledge that other such scum live in hideouts in Karachi or Afghanistan?

At precisely 10:30 on the morning of September 18, my family and I stood for a moment of silence. It had been announced some days before, and a full page ad. in that morning's newspaper told us to do so. In case we had missed it altogether, there was even a soft recording on the phone, in place of a dial tone, to remind us. On a Solidarity Day against Terrorism, this was a moment of prayer, a time to remember all those who have lost their lives to terrorists.

Moment done, I looked at the full page again. There's a picture of our prime minister, and a quote from him that says 'Every Indian has to be a part of this global war on terrorism ... We must, and we will, stamp out this evil from our land and from the world.' Below, there are four more pictures, of major terrorist incidents: the Bombay bomb blasts of March 1993, the Indian Airlines hijacking of December 1999, the Anantnag massacre of March 2001 and the WTC attacks of September 11.

Horrors all. 'Ugly face of Terrorism,' says the collective caption below the four photographs.

And yet, and yet... why do I feel a certain unease?

When I look at this ad, when I read all the columns about terrorism that have appeared in our papers since September 11, when I stand quiet and think of the victims of these outrages – I also say a few silent words for Raju. Because I knew his father, and through his terrible despair I understood: this 14-year-old boy, his only son, was also a victim of terror.

Raju died on January 11, 1993. In the heart of Bombay, during some of the worst rioting our country has ever known, he was butchered by some of his fellow Indians. He was one of somewhere around a thousand Indians who were murdered by other Indians in the two months of December 1992 and January 1993. I ask you: as he watched the men who surrounded him that night raise their long knives and slash at him, as he understood he had arrived at the

last few moments of his life, do you think Raju did not feel terror?

Go ahead, pick any of those thousand Indians who died like Raju died – as they saw death coming for them, did those men and women not feel terror?

Forget the deaths if you like. Did the man in the famous photograph from that time, a scrawny man in rags and a moustache, running for his life with

Solidarity Day against Terrorism – 18.9.2001



“Every Indian has to be a part of this global war on terrorism... We must, and we will, stamp out this evil from our land and from the world.”
— Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Prime Minister

Wherever we are
Let us stand in silence for two minutes at 10.30 A.M. today
A SILENT PRAYER : A SILENT RESOLVE



Ugly face of Terrorism

The Nation stands united behind the decision of the All-Party Meeting on September 15, 2001

blood streaming from his face, not feel terror? Did the man in that other famous photograph from that time, the sturdy jawan home from serving his country at the border, looking around at his smashed and looted house, not feel terror?

Did anyone who lived through those weeks not feel terror? What about those crazed few minutes near the Bandra railway station, when some men suddenly stabbed some other men and people ran screaming and a few alert photographers caught their headlong fright on film? What about the people who were panicked for a whole night by a rumour that an armed horde was about to come ashore on the Dadar beach? What about the one hundred or so residents of Pedder and Carmichael Roads who gathered one afternoon to meet then defence minister Sharad Pawar, pleaded with him to use the army to quell the riots?

What were all these people feeling?

And what was it that I felt as I realised that I would be nuts to try to make my way from my office to my suburban home? When

several surly yahoos advanced menacingly on me as I asked questions about a burned and looted shop in Girgaum for a report on the riots that I was working on? When I finally did take the train home and it crawled past an enormous crowd near Mahalaxmi railway station, the men carrying swords that glinted in the evening sun, glinting forever in my mind?

I know it and I feel not the slightest shame admitting it: I was in terror. As was all of Bombay.

And if terrorism means the spreading of terror, which is the only thing it seems to me it can mean, then all of us in Bombay experienced terrorism in those weeks. Yes indeed, Raju and the rest of the thousand dead died at the hands of terrorism.

Which is why I wondered as I stood for my moment of silence on September 18: In this full page ad that tells me about the 'Ugly face of Terrorism,' that urges Indians to fight terrorism, why is there no picture, nor even mention, of the riots in Bombay? I don't for a moment mean to overlook the horror of the four events that do appear in the ad. Each of them was

a crime against humanity itself, whose perpetrators must pay fully for it.

But were the riots not just such a crime as well?

After all, they happened, didn't they? They weren't a collective figment of our collective imaginations. So why is it that the riots are rarely mentioned in the columns, entirely absent from the full page ad?

Were they somehow less deadly than the four crimes in the ad? Well, the blasts killed about 250 Indians, the Indian Airlines hijack left one Indian dead, the Anantnag massacre 35, the WTC assault count is at thousands and rising. As I mentioned before, the riots killed about a thousand Indians. The way I see it, and I'd like to think that's the only way to see it, one death to terrorism is one death too many. But by the callous numbers alone it cannot be that the riots were a less deadly act of terror than the others.

Then is it that the four events involved a qualitatively greater degree of terror than the riots? Perhaps you think so. But put yourself in the place of Sharad



We have given unto ourselves a democratic Constitution of the highest quality, and it is improper to tarnish it with Hitlerian or Stalinistic decrees.

C. Rajagopalachari
Swarajya, August 22, 1964

Issued by The Rajaji Foundation

Pawar's afternoon guests, those terrified residents of Bombay's most polished neighbourhood. Put yourself in the place of those panic-stricken Bombayites looking fearfully out to sea at Dadar. Think of what it means to feel the terror of the evil that was loose in Bombay for not just a moment, or a few hours, or a week, but every hour for nearly two months. Put yourself, if you can stand it, in the slippers of Raju as he was reduced to pieces of bloody flesh one January night.

Is there any difference, and is there even any sense in asking about such difference, in the level of terror unleashed by all these events?

Or is it that those responsible for the four crimes are unimaginably evil, shadowy, slippery and powerful men who have escaped justice and live overseas? Well, I don't know how you measure evil. But I do know that those responsible for the Bombay riots live right here among us. For all I know, the young man who strolled past on the street below as I stood in silence at 10:30 could have been one of Raju's murderers. The men who filled him

with the hatred that drove him to murder, who urged on Bombay's rioting throngs, live powerful, protected and unpunished lives right here in Bombay.

You tell me: is the knowledge that murderers and their instigators live openly down the road from me any less, or more, terrifying than the knowledge that other such scum live in hideouts in Karachi or Afghanistan?

Something inside me longs for, craves for, answers to the innumerable questions I've asked in this column. Do you have any for me? For yourself?

And even as I write those words, it troubles me no end that I could ask the same questions, write the same several paragraphs, about the murder of 3,000 Indians in Delhi 17 years ago. Yes, why was that massacre of 3,000 turbaned Indians not mentioned in the PM's full page ad? Did they not feel terror?

And as I write these words, it troubles me some more that while a murder of just such a turbaned man in Mesa, AZ, has seen the swift

arrest of his murderer, in India we have not cared to punish the murderers from 1984. Then or since. Seventeen years since.

'Every Indian has to be a part of this global war on terrorism,' you remember our PM said, and 'we must, and we will, stamp out this evil from our land and from the world.' I could not agree more. But when in India we begin this global war by overlooking the evil in our own land, by explaining it away in our own minds, by pretending it doesn't even exist: yes, I do feel an unease that no moments of silence can erase. For I wonder: just what war are we Indians fighting? If we tolerate terrorism every day, how will we ever stamp it out?

The lesson from the horror of September 11 is hardly that Islamic terrorism threatens the world. It is that when religion is used to justify crime and spread hate – as it has been in Afghanistan and Kashmir, Ayodhya and Bombay – religion itself is perverted. Justice and humanity are destroyed.

Now there's something to fight a global war for.

MR. DILIP D'SOUZA is a freelance writer. This first appeared on Rediff.com.



It is the task of saints and not of political leaders to change individual persons. There are saints like that and they have saved the country from complete ruin. But the political leader's job is to change institutions and policies.

Jayaprakash Narayan
Towards Total Revolution, Volume 4,
Popular Prakashan, Mumbai

Veer Savarkar - Setting the Record Straight

Avinash Kolhe

Mr. Sitaram Yechuri, a senior member of the politburo of the Communist Party of India [Marxist], stated, in March in Hyderabad, that the late V.D.Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar, was a British ally. One can have ideological differences with Savarkar's philosophy; but to call him an ally of the British is indeed reading history from a totally wrong perspective. It may be recalled that such charges were levelled even against Netaji Subhash Bose during World War II by the same Left forces.

The difference between the case of Veer Savarkar and that of Bose is that in the case of Bose wild charges were thrown at him during the great war, whereas even now the likes of Yechuri want to rake up that past which would finally put him and his ideologically inclined comrades on the mat. It does not require much intelligence to understand the motive behind this attack on Savarkar now. The Indian Right as represented by the Bharatiya Janata Party, is on the ascent in many places. It is not only a dominant partner in the ruling National Democratic Alliance [NDA] in New Delhi, but also is in power in states like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. By portraying Savarkar an ideological guru of the Rightist forces in India as a British agent, he is trying to put these forces on the defensive.

To understand where Yechuri is erring, one needs to take

a quick look at the modern history of India.

The Second World War began in September 1939. The British Government declared war on behalf of India without consulting the Indian National Congress. Ideally the Congress should have been consulted as it was in power in seven provinces. Also, the British government was not willing to declare the fate of their Colonies after the war. The Congress was not willing to support the war effort without a commitment from the Colonial power to grant India's freedom after the War. All the Congress ministries therefore resigned. This was the Congress position then. As far as the Left forces were concerned, it was a war between two capitalist countries. It was Savarkar who understood the opportunity provided by the War and appealed to the Hindu masses to join the armed services en masse. Savarkar was aware of the fact that after India becomes independent, she would need trained defense forces to protect its boundaries and what better way of gaining this valuable training than joining the armed services.

Savarkar's appeal had the desired effect. This trained, experienced army came in handy when Pakistani intruders were marching towards Srinagar, trying to wrest Kashmir. The brave soldiers of the Indian army chased those intruders away into Pakistan and Kashmir was saved in the nick

of time. The credit for this must largely be given to the foresight of Savarkar.

Savarkar could issue an appeal like this simply because he was a serious student of military history. When World War II began, Savarkar was invited by the then Governor-General of India Linlithgow to discuss the war situation. Linlithgow commented that "Savarkar is the only politician who could ably discuss the war situation from the Indian view-point and its major issues in the context of international politics".

The Indian Army indeed fought a brave war against the invading army of Pakistan in 1965 when that country launched a surprise attack [Operation Gibraltar] in the Jammu sector. India not only stopped this invading army but also launched a counter-offensive in the Punjab and within no time, the Indian army was knocking at the doors of Lahore. This was a great shock to Pakistan. Ayub Khan used to boast that his army would have breakfast in Jammu, lunch at Amritsar and dinner in New Delhi. But the reality was different as the Pakistan army learnt to its chagrin. This again, was due to the foresight of Savarkar for which the country should be grateful to him rather than calling him a British ally. Is it any wonder that history has judged Savarkar as a great son of India.

MR. AVINASH KOLHE is a Lecturer in Political Science at the D. G. Ruparel College, Mumbai

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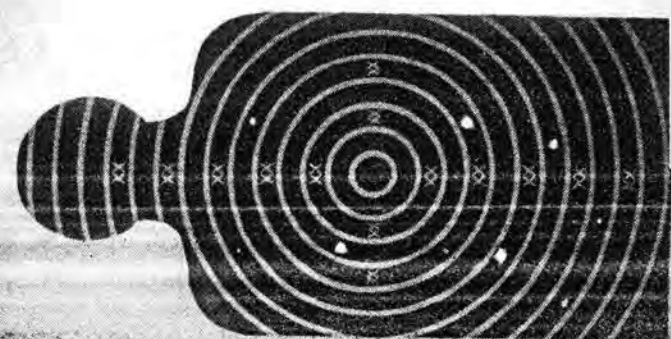
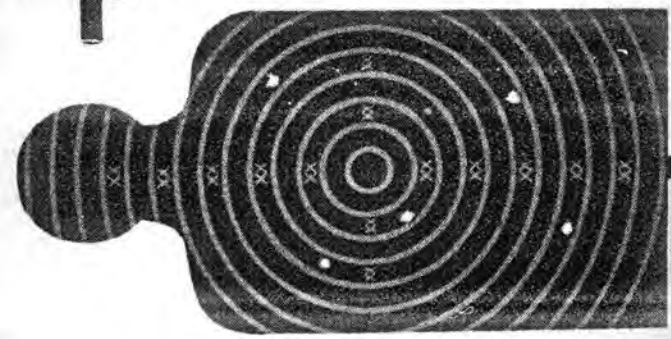
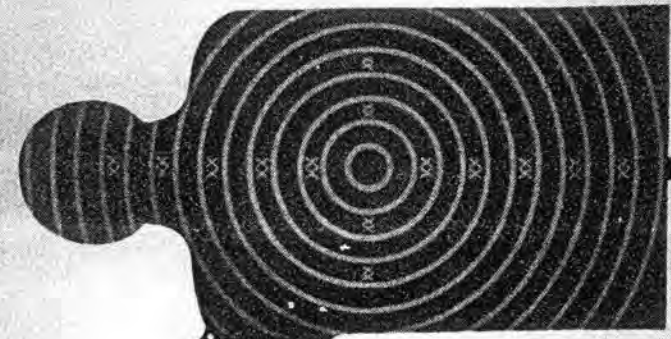
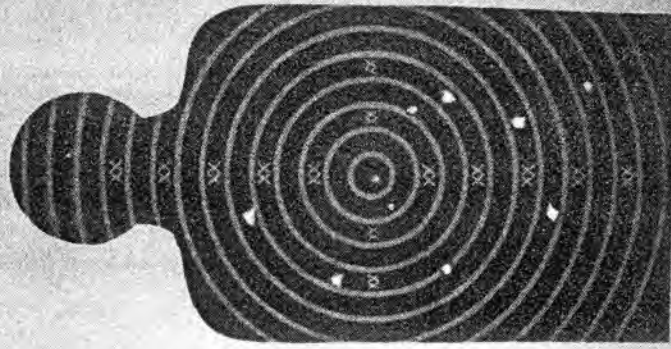
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Reflections Serious and Facetious

Louella Lobo Prabhu

Black Tuesday in the U.S.A. : Stray Thoughts in Varied Patterns

The seer Nostradamus,
A great sage of yore,
Said great iron birds
Would strike buildings tall -
And that they in fragments would fall.

It's exactly what happened that "Black Tuesday"
When out of the sky, and thin air,
Giant aircrafts rammed into great buildings,
And lo! in a trice, the buildings were no more, there.

The Symbol of the nations' wealth;
The symbol of a nations' power,
Were razed, as melting steel and flying ash.
On tortured ground, began to shower.
Beneath the rubble and the ash -
Were people trapped - but none can say.
How very many people died, upon that Black Tuesday.

It is true that great buildings fell:
The greater casualty,
The nations' very psyche and soul,
So sure of its invincibility.
The casualty also was,
The concept of a free society.
Based upon a free "social contract".
To see the strains of sharp plurality,
Become a great chorus of harmony.

Its nurture to retaliate,
And nurture the desire,
To answer body-blows, received.
With bombs and missile fire.

However, retaliation
Should not in sheer blood-heat be done;
It would then seem, the terrorist,
The last victory has won.

Note: If this war is perceived as one of the Christian West Vs. the Muslim Middle East, the former needs to show a becoming restraint, which does not wipe out the innocent with the guilty.

The Quickest Bill

The Lok Pal Bill, has been tabled on the floor of Parliament, over two decades after it was mooted. By contrast, a Bill further enhancing the pay and perks of Members has had a passage of lightning speed. Without going into the specifics, the salary of an MP would now exceed Rs.35,000/-. In the 4th Lok Sabha, of which my husband was a member, the pay was Rs.500/- and the sitting fee Rs.31/- raised to Rs.51/- per day. That Lok Sabha had some of the most illustrious speakers, who troubled to study the Book of Rules, to master the procedures, and sit through significant debates. In this Lok Sabha, a trend has hardened, which was also a feature of the 4th. Question Time and Zero Hour, see a pretty full attendance. The quorum bell has to be rung many times for Bills. This could be because the old timers are nearly all dead, and the new ones have been elected for qualities which have little to do with effective representation.

In the Rajya Sabha, all the Presidential nominees are film stars, who are often on film shootings. The

papers which carried the news item, did not mention their constituency work, though the perks include a "home" office, secretarial salaries, and 150,000 phone calls on the House. The reports did not mention whether these goodies come with our burdensome taxes inapplicable to MPs. It may be noted, that in a court of law, in accepting university examinerships and the like, a member with any personal stake has to state it, and is disqualified from holding that office. Here, interested parties have rushed through their Bill with unholy haste, while Bills of much greater importance, waiting for long to be introduced, have not been tabled, on the floor of the House.

In keeping with the trend of bucking public opinion, Ministers are appointing sons, daughters and close relatives, to the non-cadre posts of Officers on Special Duty. It is quite understandable that, the kith and kin of ministers and MPs are persons on whom they can rely. However, giving them official pay and perks is not correct. Already, even without the

designation of OSD, the kith and kin of ministers are regarded as conduits for official business. Even Vajpayee, who for years was supposed to be a bachelor; sprang on the nation, after becoming Prime Minister,

a bonny and bouncing adopted family. Judging from Tehelkagate, and the allegations of a Shiv Sena MP, Mr. Ranjan Bhattacharya does enjoy power. Power by proximity, without responsibility, is a dangerous thing.

India Loses a Potential Prime Minister

India has lost a potential Prime Minister, in the death of Madhavrao Scindia, when his plane crashed, on an election sortie. With him, went some of the brightest young journalists in Delhi. It seems a queer trick of fate, that both in the Congress and the BJP, the most promising aspirants were cut off in their prime: Rangarajan Kumaramangalam; Rajesh Pilot, now Madhavrao. These are in the middle generation, not too young and not too old. The first would be dismissed as lightweights, the second as people past their prime. Rangarajan, Rajesh and Madhavrao were comparatively young, middle-aged, capable of being taken seriously in terms of experience, and capable of vibing with the young generation. Madhavrao's career was not entirely a straight line trajectory. He started off with the BJP, passed on to the Congress, quit and rejoined it, after a spell in the wilderness when the *Hawala* scam was being probed. He was accepted and admired as a competent minister, with an over-zealous conscience; the minor mishap in the Civil Aviation,

over which he resigned, did not need that dramatic gesture. But his career graph, apparently so anchored in success all the way, had its ups and downs, which did not spare him because he was royal.

The only mean thing he seems to have done, was to stand against Vajpayee in 1984. There are a few people, so crucial to the nation's polity, that no one should stand against them. Vajpayee is one such. I still remember the exhausted look on his gaunt face when he appeared on TV.

It was heartening to see Vajpayee, Advani and Arun Jaitley, treating the loss, as if it had been that of a senior ruling party member. Jaitley was sent to escort the body in a special aircraft. Shakespeare's lines are apposite to him: "Good Night, Sweet Prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. Now cracks a noble heart ..."

Dr. Christian Bernard

I was sad to read about the death of Dr. Christian Bernard, at the age of 78. The younger generation may not even know, that he was the inventor of heart transplant, working not in a prestigious University of Western Europe, but in South Africa. A beautiful country, riddled with race problems, at the time he did the first heart transplant - if memory serves me correctly, on a black man. The patient lived for 18 days, and then died, as the body rejected the transplanted organ. But the beginning had been made. The heart, and as time went, other organs began to be transplanted, bringing new hope to those who would otherwise have most certainly died. The problem of the body rejecting a transplant has been largely overcome by refinements in the technique of surgery; the development of immuno-suppressive drugs, and better match of those donating an organ to the recipient. But Christian Bernard got there first.

I come up once more against the problem of bad things happening to good people: His surgical skills failed him, when he developed Rheumatoid Arthritis. He continued to lecture widely. But his personal life

must have been unhappy - the brief newspaper reports on his death, mentioned that he died alone, in a hotel room. Surely, he deserved better From Fate or God, that that ???

Dr. Christian Bernard

The human heart, an uncharted domain,
You transplanted. Opening a Chapter brave and new.
Many have since, followed the trail you blazed.
The credit for it, squarely rests with you,
Thanks to the pioneering work you did,
Many who were under sentence of death,
Were given new hope ... new life, thanks to you.

Like God to Adam, you gave man life's breath.
The work you started did not remain still.
Others progressed the work that you had done ...
New drugs, your techniques, milestones on the way
Of the first barrier you broke and won.

Whether or not they recall, gratefully.
The hearts you made beat, are a symphony.

West Asia : The Peace Process in Shambles

Nitin G. Raut

The political situation in West Asia is once again volatile and the violence on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip shows no signs of abating. In fact, the violence has intensified since December 2000 and the Arab-Israel peace process is today in shambles.

At the July 2000 Camp David Summit convened by the U.S., where President Clinton made a desperate attempt to sew up a final peace agreement, the Oslo Peace process which was gradually moving, was suddenly sought to be scuttled by Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat who showed extreme reluctance to arrive at a peace agreement through compromise. Indeed, President Clinton was at pains to point out that the obstinacy of Yasser Arafat was the reason for the failure of the Camp David Summit in July 2000. Instead of a gradual peace process, what Arafat was demanding in effect was a return to the pre-1967 Six Day War border, full control of East Jerusalem, insistence on the right of the Palestinians to return to Israel (i.e. those who fled Israel in 1948 and vowed to return only after Israel is wiped out) and without any assurance of containing the '*jihad*' against Israel.

What made Arafat risk his relations with the U.S. and jeopardise the Oslo Agreement? Beset by internal dissensions within his Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and challenge to his authority from the Islamic *Jihad* and *Hamas* extremists, he

deflected it by allowing a policy of drift which would propel him back to the centrestage of Palestinian politics - a position that is slipping from him given the challenges from Islamic extremists. In short, he wanted to dictate the peace process.

The real reason for the Palestinian '*intifada*' (uprising) was the very fear of a peace settlement. For, had the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations proceeded as per the Oslo Peace Agreement and subsequently the 1993 Camp David Agreement between the assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat, the Wye River Memorandum and the Hebron Agreement, the borders between Israel and the Palestinian State would have been legitimised and the Palestinian Authority would have been in a position to declare their State on 13th September 2000. Such an accord would have stolen the thunder from the '*jihad*' of the Islamic *Jihad* and *Hamas* extremists. Arafat instead chose to sup with the devil even if it meant delaying the formation of the Palestinian State.

The visit of Likud leader (the present Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem was merely an excuse for the Islamic extremists to spark the violence. Sharon's visit to the Mount Temple was normal as the site is open to the public. In fact, the events preceding Sharon's visit show that there was a premeditated plan to sabotage the West Asia peace process. Prior thereto, Arafat allowed the Islamic *Jihad* and *Hamas*

leaders to join the Palestinian Authority Cabinet meetings and gave them a place in the decision-making process. The two extremist Islamic outfits have rejected any peace accord with Israel. And indeed, Arafat had no explanation for the glaring anomaly of negotiating with Israel and flirting with the Islamic extremists. So carefully was the *intifada* planned that among the many targets of Palestinian Arab attack was Gilo - a southwestern suburb of Jerusalem - from the nearby Christian dominated locality of Beit Jhala with the expectation that a massive Israeli retaliation against Beit Jhala would affect Israel adversely in the Christian world. On 6th October 2000, even the Jewish worshippers were attacked at the Wailing Wall.

At the fag end of his presidency, Clinton made proposed that the Palestinians give up their demand for resettling more than three million Arab refugees and their descendants in Israel, in return for Israel giving up control over the disputed Jerusalem holy site. But at the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting in Cairo on 4th January, 2001, Arafat effectively torpedoed the peace process by holding that the return of refugees is a "sacred right". Arafat knowing that Clinton would be laying down office on 20th January 2001, and the new Republican President Bush will take about six months before he can address himself to foreign policy issues, adopted an ambivalent approach so as to make the issue of violence his trump card in future negotiations.

Ehud Barak had made a bold initiative of offering 90% of the West Bank for a Palestinian State and parts of Jerusalem for its capital, but Arafat's rejection raises serious doubts about the PLO's quest for peace in West Asia. In the light of Barak's magnanimity the outbreak of violence appears to be deliberate and orchestrated to keep the West Asia cauldron boiling. Significantly enough, a Palestinian Authority high official Hasan Asfour has said: "There can be peace talks without an international investigation. Our people did not die for nothing". It is a brazen attempt to sidetrack the peace process and make political capital out of violence and killings.

It is thus difficult to envisage a speedy end to the West Asian crisis. Arafat has to rise above internal Palestinian factionalism and adopt a statesman-like policy of peaceful co-existence on a give-

and-take policy. If Arafat fails he will be failing the Palestinian Arabs more than anyone else.

The September 11 WTC bombing by Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda terrorists and the subsequent U.S. war against their Afghan patrons, the Taliban regime, has by a strange quirk of events made the West Asia peace process an unwitting target. Sensitive that the war against the Taliban is not mistaken as a war against Islam, the U.S. is drumming for support of Arab-Muslim states. Aware that radical Islamic terrorism is as much a threat to them, most of them ranging from feudal monarchies like Saudi Arabia to semi-democracies like Egypt, with the exception of Libya and Iraq, have rallied around the U.S. But the popular mood being violently anti-U.S. and pro-Osama and Taliban, these regimes are equally scared of being toppled by radical Islamic

jehadi groups. And what better way to obfuscate the issue of global terrorism and war against the Taliban regime than by attributing the U.S. support to Israel as a factor that has derailed the West Asia peace process. By linking the West Asia peace process to the war against terrorism, the Arab Muslim states are killing two birds with a stone. It helps to placate hostile anti-U.S. mood at home and signals to the U.S. that there is a price tag for its support to the U.S. anti-terrorism war. It is a policy no different from Pakistan's Musharraf's support to the U.S. in his game of one-upmanship against India to derive mileage on Kashmir. The Arabs are likewise exploiting their support to the U.S. to derive advantage in West Asia.

MR. NITIN G. RAUT is an advocate, a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*.

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Iran and U.S. : Time to Make Up!

Mohammad Firouzian

Improvement of US relations with Iran is vital not only to ensure stability in the region but also to better the prospects of US commercial interests in and around Iran.

The international community has been watching with interest how the Iranians are pushing ahead with democratic changes. By electing a moderate President in 1997, a reformist Parliament in 1999 and by bringing back President Khatami to power in 2001 the people of Iran have clearly shown that they want reforms both internally and in their external relations. Iran's foreign policy, particularly after 1997 when Khatami assumed office, has favoured an open door policy to the region and the world. President Khatami encouraged cultural exchanges between Iran and the United States and asked the officials of the two nations to meet in order to narrow the differences between the two governments. Iran's moderate government has already succeeded in improving relations with Britain and Germany - two of America's closest partners in Europe; with Japan whose economy is closely linked to that of the United States; and with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, whose large oil potential have brought them close to the US. Iran has concluded security agreements with both these states and, at the same time, improved her relations with her other Arab neighbours in the Persian Gulf.

Finally, Khatami's administration has normalised relations with Algeria, the state that once tried to mediate between Iran and the US during the hostage crisis. Besides, Iran is now more

active than before in the region and the world in a discernible manner. Iran is one of the leading states in the Islamic Conference, N.A.M. and O.P.E.C. the three most important global organizations that shape politics in the developing world. The history and culture of the potentially rich and vast countries of Central Asia and Caucasia are rooted in Iranian civilization. The present day commonalities are too obvious to ignore. Thus, Iran can play a prominent role in bringing stability and peace and develop cooperation among nations in the region. For instance, in Tajikistan, it was Iran's good offices that helped resolve differences and stop the civil war in this country. Similarly, Iran's mediatory efforts between Azerbaijan and Armenia gained the trust of those two states and enhanced the belief that Iran's interest lies in bringing peace between her two neighbours.

Iran enjoys close ties with the three major states of Asia - Russia, India and China. All four states are strictly opposed to the political and economic domination of the world by a single state or a group of states, misusing high technology against humanity and the environment; they are also opposed to the evils of fundamentalism and terrorism. They unitedly opposed the recognition of the Taliban in Afghanistan and strongly condemned its violent nature and religious extremism. Iran, has good neighbourly relations with Pakistan

and historical ties with India, based on the belief that relations between these three states are like the arms of a triangle closely interconnected. This is why, Iran favours laying of a gas pipeline to promote peace in South Asia. The instability in Afghanistan, has cost Iran the loss of both men and money. Iran has to take firm steps to stop drug smuggling from Afghanistan via Iran to the rest of the world.

Today, increasing closer relations between Iran and Egypt's will prove to be a turning point for regional as well as global peace and security. Egypt is a key player in the Arab-Israeli conflict in which Syria and Jordan, the other main states have friendly relations with Iran. Thus close Iran-Egypt relations would promote peace in the region.

When we review the world political scenario since the second half of the 1970s, we realize that in the 1980s the US has become a strategic partner of Communist China. At the same time, after the collapse of the USSR, American global diplomacy shifted its focus to strategic cooperation with Russia's transitional democracy and India's traditional democracy in order to challenge Communist China.

However the US, despite having differences with China and even with Russia, continues to maintain good relations with both. In the same way, Iran's critical

dialogue with the European states which are now moving towards constructive relations and also her close ties with other major powers like Russia and China, compel the US to normalize her relations with Iran, at least in a manner that she currently has with China.

A critical dialogue between Iran and America on social and cultural issues and current problems in the Middle East and in the Persian gulf region could possibly pave the way for the US to help in Iran's progress. The prerequisite is that the Americans shed false suspicions about Iran's military programmes. Iran's security concerns for making the Persian Gulf a peace zone, without the military presence of outside powers could be highlighted in consonance with similar US objectives. In fact, with Iran firmly pursuing a policy of détente, the Persian Gulf no longer needs US military involvement. The US could achieve its goals by simply persuading the Sheikhs of the region to cooperate with Iran in security matters.

Taking into account the European competition in developing trade and investment in Iran, as well as the Japanese intention to invest in Iranian oil projects, the American oil companies sense that any further delay in making investments in Iran would be to their disadvantage. A diminishing US position in Iran in the long term would affect both bilateral and global interests. Geographically Iran connects the Eurasian Continent to the Persian Gulf, is located in the heart of the Silk-route, lies between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf and is a direct, convenient, safe and useful passage linking South Asia and the Far East with Europe. It also connects various Asian regions such as West Asia, Central Asia and

South Asia. Improvement of US relations with Iran is vital not only to ensure stability in the region but also to better the prospects of US commercial interests in and around Iran. By virtue of her very location, Iran is likely to enjoy her exclusive advantage as a transit point for goods and energy. It looks forward to get technical and financial help from the industrialized countries to promote her economic wellbeing, particularly in the field of oil and gas, to develop trade with geographically contiguous states of the region and invest in their industrial projects.

Postscript

The new trends in Iran's foreign policy have made it necessary to resolve differences and show more tolerance. This has raised hopes for fruitful collaboration. It is believed that with a new approach both Iran and America can become fruitful partners in the region. Many positive steps have been taken in this direction; however bold initiatives are needed. The United States has tried to remove the wall of distrust. The US acknowledgement of her mismanagement of her foreign policy towards Iran in the past, particularly her role to stop Iran's democratic reforms in 1953, indicate a positive trend. America's decision to allow the import of non-oil products like carpets, caviar and dry fruits from Iran was the other healthy move.

For its part Iran too should drop its position, that US, being far from the region, should not evince any interest in the region's politics. Realities dictate that the world is not unipolar, it is interconnected and interdependent, and every country could promote peace, progress and stability in its own way. Both Iran and US should no longer allow the

Arab-Israeli issue to interfere in the renewal of political contact between them.

At this juncture the immediate interests of both Iran and the United States are closely linked. The United States must take into account Iran's views about Afghanistan's future.

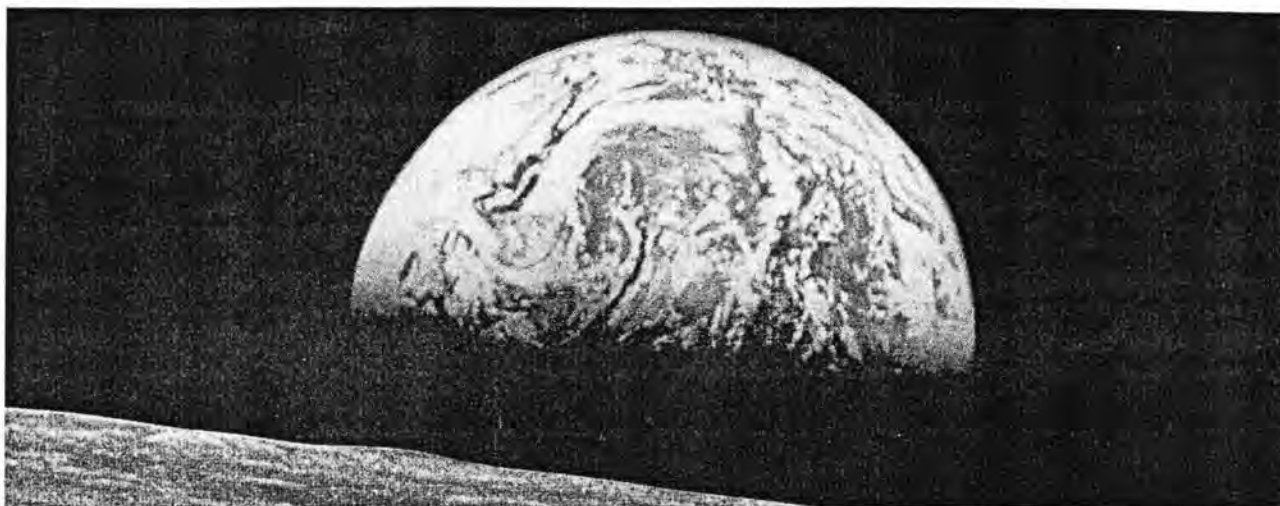
In fact, the US operation against the Taliban - the enemy of both Iran and US - is justified. However there is genuine anxiety among the Iranians whether the US would continue to play an active role in helping stop the fundamentalist expansion in Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia.

Iran worries that if the US favours the dominance of the conservatives in Afghanistan it might keep Iran in a troubled situation for a long time. Realities indicate that along with the promotion of Afghanistan's stability, the security concerns of her neighbours should be considered carefully.

If the war takes a long time and US land strikes in Afghanistan force the terrorists to take shelter in places outside Afghanistan, thus spreading the theatre of the war in the region to say, Chechnya or Kashmir, this would give an opportunity to some regional actors to misuse the fundamentalist danger for their own benefit. To avoid this, the United States has to take the side of Afghanistan's Northern Alliance and cooperate with Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and India.

The above was written much before the events of September 11 leading to the war in Afghanistan. This postscript therefore seeks to bring this article up-to-date. - MZ

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apocalypse now?

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BOOK REVIEWS



THE SEERVAI LEGACY ESSAYS-SPEECHES-TRIBUTES-LETTERS

By H. M. Seervai

Edited by
Feroza Seervai

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Reviewed by

Professor R. V. Chari, retired Professor of Commerce and
Management and a freelance writer.

On January 25, 1996, Mr. Homi M. Seervai, Advocate General of Maharashtra from 1957 to 1974, had just completed the third and last volume of "Constitutional Law of India". On January 26, he passed away quietly. Very ably edited by Mrs. Feroza Seervai, this book presents to the public for the first time, Homi Seervai's lectures, essays, letters and tributes to some of the eminent and distinguished lawyers. The writings clearly reflect the preciseness and erudition of Mr. Seervai. We are told that the name "Seervai" meaning like that of a lion, was confirmed on one of his ancestors, who, when called upon to kill a lioness that was terrorizing that area, first woke it up and then killed it with a single stroke of his sword! This review attempts to discuss a few of the topics from the book.

In 1981, in a detailed letter addressed to the Chief Justice of India about the administration of justice, he deplored and deprecated the delay in the disposal of the various cases pending in the Supreme Court. Mr Seervai attributed several reasons for the delay. Firstly, he felt that the Counsels sought adjournment from the Court for very flimsy reasons stating that they were en-

gaged in other courts or were ill, which was accepted and adjournments granted, contrary to the express provision in the amended 0.17 Rule I. Mr. Seervai classified adjournments into two types – open and concealed. In the concealed adjournment, Counsel for the Respondent may file a very skimpy brief, without details, leading to delay.

A second reason for the delay is due to the Judge himself. In the case of Needle Industries, when the second hearing was in progress, the presiding Judge kept the case in abeyance, so that he could lead a delegation to the ILO. The case dragged on for more than a year, causing heart-burns to all the parties, which had to be quelled so as not vitiate the atmosphere. He also narrates a typical case of an adjournment involving the Government of Rajasthan simply because the Counsel from the Supreme Court could not visit Rajasthan, as he was busy in New Delhi! Such delayed judgements had two consequences. Firstly, High Courts where similar cases have been filed would be tempted to postpone the judgement. Secondly, vital arguments may be overlooked or glossed over or completely missed leading to a review

petition by the aggrieved party.

The third reason mentioned by Mr. Seervai pertains to the delay in filling up vacancies caused due to retirement, resignation, death or transfer of the judge. It is a well-known fact that Government machinery has always been very slow in moving, resulting in untold harassment to the litigant. Hiten Dalal, the Mumbai share broker was accused of issuing four dud cheques for Rs.27 crores, Rs.14.50 crores, Rs. 17 crores and Rs.19.95 crores, in 1991. The Special Court Judge, Shri Variava, found Dalal guilty under Sec. 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act and convicted him, sentencing him to one year R.I. as well as fine on April 30, 1993. It took eight long years for the case to be taken at the apex court. In its editorial, the *Economic Times* says: "The net result of the entire episode is that, what was in any case a little more than token retribution for the worst securities scam in the nation's history, has been robbed of even its symbolic value."

The same views are echoed by Shri V. R. Krishna Iyer in his well written, two-part article in *The Hindu* of 6 and 7 August, 2001. After dealing with various aspects, he

says: "The supremacy of the judiciary makes the prompt appointment of the 'robed' brethren a matter of grave concern and urgent attention. Chaos in the cosmos, entropy in society and mayhem on human rights may well be the macro-lawlessness that may explode if courts are mute and judges unavailable. According to him, of the 600 sanctioned judges' posts, about 150 are vacant, since no appointments have been made leading to a lot of fretting, fuming and fulminations by the bar.

Mr. Seervai, then takes up the case of judges accepting invitations for lunch and dinner. He comes down in the strongest terms, condemning, according to him, this reprehensible, unethical, amoral practice, stating this should stop forthwith. The idea of throwing a party wherein judges and eminent dignitaries are roped in, is to create an impression with the litigants that the Counsel is not only well-to-do, but can also pull strings as and when required so as to get a favourable judgement. He feels that the attention of the judge should be drawn to impress upon him, the undesirableness as well as the incalculable harm that may be caused in the dispensation of justice and the public opprobrium that may follow once the judgement is delivered. He narrates his experience: "I have refused at any time to entertain a judge though I was called upon by the Chief Justice of Bombay, Mr. Justice Chainani to do so... Recently it was suggested to me that a Judge of the Supreme Court, who wanted to see me should be given a party. I refused to do so, but made a courtesy call on the Judge when he was in Bombay."

When in 1957, the Setalvad Law Commission was constituted, Mr. Homi Seervai had an opportu-

nity of voicing his views before the Commission. He made a fervent plea for enhancing the emoluments of the judges, so as to dissuade them from rendering legal consultancy services or practicing in the courts, which he feels is a highly retrograde step, seriously affecting the dignity, prestige and independence of such a high office. Also the frequent intervention in the arguments in trial courts and courts of appeals by the judges affects the litigants, the bar and the public. This does not find favour with Mr. Seervai. He quotes from the judgement in *Jones Vs. National Coal Board*: "a judge who intervened too much could drain a cause of all joy from the point of view of the advocate who, whether he had won or lost the case, came out of the court an exhausted person. .. The Judge's part in all this is to hearken to the evidence only... asking questions of witnesses when it is necessary... to make up his mind where the truth lies.. beyond this he... assumes the robe of an advocate."

Continuing his evidence before the Setalvad Commission he deplores the attitude of the authorities regarding the assignment of cases to judges. He feels that some times cases come up where the judge is not familiar with the rules and procedures placing a heavy burden on him. He cites as an example a case pertaining to revenue laws being handled by a Judge who possessed extensive knowledge of criminal laws. Under such circumstances it becomes a labourious task for him to go through the case.

Coming to a lighter topic, Mr. Seervai was quite proficient in English literature, especially poetry and had the knack of memorizing some of the finest poems just for the sheer pleasure that it afforded. He says: "From the time I was a student till today, poetry has been a source

of joy and pleasure, of solace and comfort and, at times of inspiration and strengthened resolve." He quotes John Stuart Mill: "What made Wordsworth's poem a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed not mere outward beauty but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a sense of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence."

Mr. Homi Seervai, then, refers to the writings of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who in his preface to the Oxford Book of English poetry says: "But writing in 1939, I am at a loss to do with a fashion of morose disparagement; of sneering at things long by catholic consent accounted beautiful; of scorning at 'man's uncontrollable mind' and hanging up (without benefit of laundry) our common humanity as a rag on the clothes-line. Be it allowed that these present times are dark. Yet, what are our poets of use - what are they for - if they cannot hearten the crew with auspices of daylight?"

As an active President of the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties in Mumbai, Mr. Seervai used to attend most of the meetings as well as devote some time in his chambers for the Executive Committee. The book includes his speech delivered on August 20, 1982. Praising Shri

Arun Shourie, on whom the Magsaysay Award was conferred, he says: "..... We have in our midst a distinguished man whom no award, no inducement, no office can seduce from the path of duty." In fact, the speech is about the Rule of Law, which runs into something like fifteen pages. A law was passed in England, whereby a person who makes a petition for *Habeas Corpus* must be produced before the Judge. The Judge had to consider the matter immediately and if the writ is improperly refused, a penalty of Pounds 500 was imposed on him. As against this, he cites the case of

Mrs. Mrinal Gore, who was detained in a block with two inmates – a female lunatic and a leper! When the Chief Justice enquired of Mr. Seervai, he recited a poem, composed by an intellectual who was thrown in the gaol, during the Emergency, as follows:

I know not whether the Laws be right,
Or whether Laws be wrong,
All that we know who lie in goal,
Is that the wall is strong;
And each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

Finally, covering some

twenty pages, the author pays rich tributes to eminent lawyers like Dr. K.M. Munshi, Justice M.C. Chagla, Justice S.R. Tendolkar, Sir Nusser-vanji Engineer, Motilal Setalvad, Justice P.B. Ganjendragadkar, and Sir Jamshedji Kanga.

Printed on excellent paper, with readable type, and very moderately priced at Rs.350, this book is a must for everybody, who wishes to know the many facets of the life and character of a jewel of a person called Homi Seervai.



SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CHANGE. Volume 5. *Religion and Kinship.*

Edited by

A. M. Shah, B. S. Baviskar and E. A. Ramaswamy

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Reviewed by

Mrs. Suman Oak, retired lecturer in English and a freelance writer.

This is the fifth and the last volume of the forty four essays written by Prof. Srinivas' friends and students. The central theme is *Religion and Kinship*. It explores a new area in Sociology and Social Anthropology, of which Prof. Srinivas laid the foundation when his book *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* was first published. His ideas spill over a boundless canvas opening new fields of sociology using innovative methods. This book is a testimony of how far have the seeds sown by Prof. Srinivas spread and have borne fruit regarding religion and kinship.

The first two essays are on Sikhism – *Sikhism and Islam: A*

Structural Analysis and *Sikhism and Caste*. The first essay is a discourse of history as well as a structural analysis of the ideology of Sikhism. Uberoy points out the distinctive features and gives a general outline of Sikhism. This religion elicits sharp social consciousness especially since Guru Arjun and Guru Gobind Singh, concern for the lowliest and the lost, and a protestant attitude towards all kinds of sham and shibboleth in religion, society and politics. It is thus distinct both from Hinduism and Islam, the two main religions prevalent in India at that time. It gave a simple and direct message: *there is only One God and He is to be reached through no intermediary priests but through one's own prayers and a*

simple routine of honest efforts. Its equally simple and direct mission was the rejection of all external forms and practices of religions; meaningless rites and rituals, base and degrading social abuses and practices, acceptance of dignity of manual labor and denying all distinction between rich and poor. Uberoy gives an account of how the message and mission were institutionalized and built into a powerful religious organization, through the leadership of the charismatic Gurus.

Guru Nanak recommended the life of a householder and a working man and not monastic asceticism, for salvation. He even disowned his own son who had



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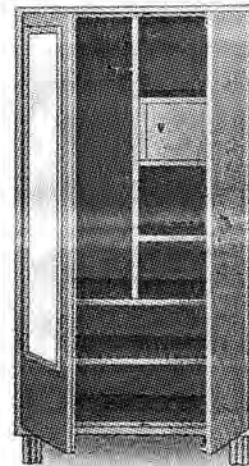
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renounced this world. This smacks of the *Charvak Darshan* of old. But in contrast with *Charvak*, Nanak founded a new religion with firm belief in One God. Sikhism followed the *Sant* tradition and *Bhakti* movement and successfully converted it into a modern movement of social protest and critical reform.

Uberoy also gives a historical account of how Gobind Singh, believed to have been brought up in a Hindu milieu and becoming a devotee of Goddess Durga, opposed Islam and how the deadliest feuds between Sikhs and Muslims – i.e., between illiberal Muslim opinion and imperial Mughal persecution on the one hand and the inherently warlike peasantry of the Jats on the other – as supposed by several historians, arose. He maintains that even the Hindu feudal hill rajas had opposed Sikhism and there is much more similarity between Sikhism and Islam at a deeper cultural level than meets the eye, despite the fact that the majority of Sikhs are converted Hindus and Sikhism has borrowed many philosophical and religious ideas like rebirth and *moksha* from the Hindus. Sikhism has effectively brought the three spheres of religion, society and politics together which the other two religions – Hinduism and Islam – could not do.

Like Buddhism and Jainism, Sikhism originated as a reaction to ritualism and caste practices of the Hindu religion. But all these indigenous religions as also Islam and Christianity, could not remain immune to the influence of Hinduism and observe certain caste restrictions and practices. Prof. Srinivas had defined the caste system as a *hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group having traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in*

the local hierarchy of castes. The caste groups are not localized any more due to industrialization and urbanization and also have lost much of the traditional association with any particular occupation. The hereditary and endogamous character of the castes remain intact even among the Sikhs. Relations between castes operate not only in terms of purity and pollution but also in terms of economic and political power and numerical strength. Although Sikhism rejects all notions of purity and pollution as well as the hierarchy of the caste system at the ideological level, at the grassroots level however, caste differentiation does exist. The economically and politically powerful Jat Sikhs enjoy high rank within the regional and village social structure. Similarly there is a caste like distinction between the Keshdharis and non-Keshdharis. Most Jats are Keshdharis, i.e., true Sikhs. In villages where Sikhs predominate castes such as Jat, Kamboh, Tarkhan and others based on occupations still prevail. Raja Jayaraman discusses all this and also how Sikhism assimilated the basic doctrines of both Hinduism and Islam, enlarged and deepened their meaning in his essay *Sikhism and Caste*.

In her critique of *Ramacharitamansa*, Veena Das shows how the dialogues between the characters are an externalization of the inner dialogue of the self, between its male pole of signification and its female pole of signification. She gives a number of interesting pieces of information like the change in the order of *yugas* since it became necessary that Rama be born earlier than his time and therefore the *Treta yuga* which ought to be the third *yuga* became the second; the double standards of the patriarchal society when Sati was renounced by Shiva for doubting

whether Rama was really a divine incarnation, etc. This doubting voice is often that of a female in Tulsidas' *Ramacharitamansa*, be it Sati, Uma or Manthara and only occasionally that of a male, Bharadwaja. The male voice is assertive trying to maintain law, believing in the absoluteness of *the Word*. The female voice is down to earth, not bound by the law, elicits desire and 'mocks at the carefully created world of order which death so gleefully disrupts.'

Emrys L. Peters explains the concept of *Baraka* around which all the day to day activities and rituals of the Bedouins of Cyrenaica are woven. *Baraka* to some extent akin to the *Daivi Sampatti* i.e., the divine virtues inherited by certain people at birth, as described in the *Bhagwad Geeta*. But the source of *Baraka* is not just these chosen men or families. According to one Bedouin saying, 85% of *Baraka* is in the wool on the back of the sheep, 10% in the grain and 5% in the honest traders. But these 5 parts are running loose in the world since there are no honest traders. How this concept of *Baraka* makes the life of these simple people tolerable and at times even enjoyable in the harsh surroundings (present day Libya) and how the families with *Baraka* are revered by the people despite their unsavory politics, makes interesting reading.

An individual while facing risks and dangers, is confronted with a set of do's and don'ts and the consequent penalties and rewards according to his changing social environment as we move from the primitive to the modern 'risk society'. The sociologists' task is to analyze this environment and the process that structures it. Mary Douglas in her brief essay traces the transformation of the ideas of danger and the notions of risk into ideas of pollution.

Most of the essays in this book are written by specialists for the attention of other specialists and the jargon makes it difficult for lay persons to understand them. K. D. Gangrade's essay however is a very down to earth account of his personal experience as to how decisions are taken and crises handled by the *Karta* – the authority in a joint family, usually a senior most male member. He describes how his elder daughter's marriage did take place on the *Mahurat*, despite a serious accident he met with just two days earlier. The way his family, his kin, workmates and professional colleagues helped him, illustrates the advantages of the joint families when one has to face adverse circumstances.

Leela Dube in her essay *Conflict and Compromise: Devolution and Disposal of Property in a Matrilineal Muslim Society*, gives an account of how in some societies two mutually contradictory sets of rules are simultaneously accepted.

The traditional property laws based on matrilineal kinship of the inhabitants of Lakshadweep islands are subsumed in the legal code of their new Faith, Islam that is decidedly patrilineal. She gives a historical and sociological account of the fascinating amalgam of two different cultures- the *Tarawad* Culture of mainland Kerala ruled by the Hindu Rajas and the Islamic culture of the later Muslim rulers. The essay also shows how it affected the legal system of inheritance of ancestral property in this queer cultural fusion.

In his essay, *Hyper gamy and Hypo gamy in Pre-Modern Kerala*, Paul Hockings and W.D.Merchant address the issue, important for the feminist concern, viz., the adverse sex ratio in Kerala. Despite being the most literate state in India, there is a heavy excess of males over females in the Brahmin community of Kerala. They reveal the fact that this disparity manifests only after the age of 17, when most of the Indian girls are married off and is

balanced by a corresponding excess of females over males in the Nayar community. They explain how the unusually complex pattern of inter-caste marriages of pre-modern Kerala in the matrilineal Nayar and the patrilineal Nambudiri Brahmin castes, gave rise to concubinage, polyandry and hyper gamy and is responsible for the unusual demographic phenomenon. They provide plenty of statistical data including a schematized model of normal marriage arrangements in pre-modern Kerala.

All these essays, with the exception of the one on *Baraka*, although covering different and apparently disconnected topics, throw light on pluralism and dialogue prevailing in Indian culture, and are important for understanding the traditions of Indian society.



TRIUMPH OVER DISCRIMINATION THE LIFE STORY OF FARHANG MEHR

By Lylah M. Alphonse

Sponsored

As a Legacy Project of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress,
Houston, by Hilda and Rumi Sethna,

Through the World Zoroastrian Organisation

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Reviewed by

Mr. Godrej N. Dotivala, Public Relations Officer, Bombay Parsi Punchayat

If there is one Iranian Zoroastrian in recent times whose life and times needs to be recorded for posterity, it is Dr. Farhang Mehr. Lylah M. Alphonse, grand-daughter of India's first Parsi woman Member of Parliament Mrs. Roda Mistry has done a signal service by providing us with an

authentic biography of this great man entitled *Triumph Over Discrimination*. Throughout his long and illustrious career, he had to fight with all his might against the limitations and restrictions imposed by the authorities on non-Muslims.

The Life Story of Farhang Mehr

depicts effectively how by dint of sheer ability, integrity, honesty, grit and determination, he steadfastly worked his way up the ladder of fame, inspite of innumerable odds.

Farhang had a brilliant scholastic record. At the end of his sixth year at school, he stood first

in the entire country. That brought about a momentous meeting with Reza Shah Pahlavi which eventually transformed Dr. Mehr's life. He was awe inspired when the Shahenshah presented him the coveted prize. The mighty monarch had a charismatic personality which radiated strength and power. He was tall, well-built and had deep penetrating eyes. All this had a lasting impression on the young man's mind. Reza Shah's mission in life was to modernise the ancient land. It is something which fascinated the youthful Mehr.

When youngsters go in for higher education, it often happens that they land up being square pegs in round holes, for a variety of reasons and Farhang Mehr was no exception. As he recalls, "My father used to tell me 'there is no use going into law, because you cannot enter judiciary. You can only be an ineffective advocate. In politics, they won't accept you in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; there is only one Zoroastrian representative in the Parliament, so it is better to become a medical doctor or an engineer'." But in his heart of hearts, Mehr had a flair for Law and Politics. So, to please his father and also to follow his own aptitude, Mehr studied and later graduated both in Engineering and in Law!

Dr. Mehr has had from his childhood days an abiding faith in the teachings of Spitama Zarathustra, the Prophet of Ancient Iran which has stood him in good stead through the vicissitudes of time. He is a prolific writer and has written extensively on Zoroastrian religion and culture and had contributed incisive articles to the definitive work *An Introduction to the Gathas of Zarathustra*. He fervently believed

that with their glorious culture and history, Zoroastrians cannot continue to remain second-class citizens in their fatherland.

He is a gold mine of information on religious subjects and though he is a man of principles and has the courage of his convictions, Farhang Mehr is the great conciliator who brings people of totally divergent views together to resolve even the knottiest of problems.

It is very pertinent to focus on Dr. Farhang Mehr's mature observations on a burning topic of discussion amongst Zoroastrians around the globe and it would be in the fitness of things to quote relevant extracts:

"In matters of conversion and the acceptance of children of mixed marriages, Iranians are more liberal and open-minded than Parsis ... After I migrated to the U.S, I noticed that the situation has only worsened. People become emotional over these issues and do not listen to reason. Dialogue has no significance to Zoroastrians in Diaspora. There are differences between conservatives, reformers and traditionalists and whatever. This is a matter that I think should seriously be addressed if we are interested in unity and solidarity of the community. It is absolutely essential for us as we enter the next millennium. We must have vision and be realistic in our decisions. The earnest interest shown by Zoroastrian youth in Iran and in North America in their religion is promising and shows that our religious and cultural heritage will survive the misunderstandings and various ideological conflicts and propaganda."

During the regime of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, Dr.

Mehr was virtually the right hand man of the Shah and reached heights never before attained by a Zoroastrian in Iran. He went on to become Iran's Governor in OPEC and Acting Minister of Finance. Finally came his crowning achievement – Deputy Prime Minister of Iran. His eight-year term as Chancellor of Pahlavi University in Shiraz was a glorious pageant in the annals of education in Iran. After the overthrow of the Shahenshah, he took voluntary exile in the United States where he has become the king-pin of the Zoroastrian Community.

Dr. Farhang Mehr's many splendoured innings chronicled by Ms. Alphonse makes fascinating reading from cover to cover! This biography is actually an autobiography as the subject of this treatise has provided extensive inputs to the author. To add spice to the story this 246-page volume is replete with colourful accounts of State intrigue in Iran.

The World Zoroastrian Organisation in its infinite wisdom has decided to make the life story of this indomitable man a Legacy Project of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress at Houston, so that it becomes a lasting contribution to Zoroastrians worldwide.

Guess this Organisation...

There are 500+ employees in it. 29 have been accused of spousal abuse. 7 have been arrested for fraud. 19 have been arrested for passing bad checks. 117 have bankrupted at least two businesses. 3 have been arrested for assault. 71 cannot get loans or credit due to bad credit histories. 14 have been arrested on drug related charges. 8 have been arrested for shoplifting. 21 are current defendants of various lawsuits. In 1998 alone, 84 were stopped for drunken driving. Have you guessed the organization?

(Turn to page 52 for answer)

From the Internet

Contributed by N. R. Balasubramaniam



BANGLADESH - MUJIB TO HASINA

By M. G. Chitkara

Published by

APH Publishing Corporation, 5, Ansari Road, New Delhi 110 002.

Year of Publication: 1997. Number of Pages: 286. Price: Rs.500.

Reviewed by

Brig A. Thyagarajan (retired), is a management consultant and a freelance writer.

Mujib had said in a TV interview in 1972 that the struggle for independence had started in 1948. The author has narrated that Bengal was not proposed to be a part of Pakistan in the original paper brought out by a group of Muslim intellectuals in UK. A number of Hindu and Muslim leaders of Bengal advocated a united Bengal. In 1954, seven years after the partition and independence, Mr. Fazl-ul-Haq, the then Chief Minister of East Pakistan spoke of a united India. After the formation of Pakistan, East Pakistan resented the domination by West Pakistan. This was evident in the sharing of political power, economic development and representation in the civil and defence services. The author has covered these events well.

In 1970 Mujib's party got an overwhelming majority in the elections. Bhutto and Gen. Yahya Khan connived to deny the rightful authority to Mujib. Widespread civil unrest erupted in East Pakistan which was dealt with by harsh martial law. The unrest turned into an armed revolt and, with the help of India, an independent Bangladesh emerged after the 1971 military conflict. The rise of Bangladesh falsified the two-nation theory. The book has spelt out the distinction between nation and state

and what are the essential ingredients of a nation. The founding fathers of Pakistan were blind to the fact that religion could never be the binding force in creating a state out of people of different cultural and ethnic origins. The imposition of Urdu as the only official language appeared to be cultural tyranny to the people of East Pakistan. It is an irony that the *Mohajirs* who were in the forefront of the movement for Pakistan are in a miserable state in Pakistan.

Mujib framed the new Constitution of Bangladesh on the principles of nationalism, socialism, and democracy. Discrimination on grounds of religion was to be eliminated. But Mujib himself was eliminated. A chronological narration of the changes in the political set-up would have helped the reader in a better understanding of the developments. Mr. Chitkara has covered the chronic disputes with India – for example, infiltration, treatment of minorities and enclaves and how India's soft handling and friendly attitude have been taken as a sign of weakness. The plight of Chakana Buddhists has forced a large number of them to come to India creating a threat to the demographic character of Manipur. The confusion created by the Nehru-Hoon Agreement on enclaves continues. The incident of

a Pakistan attack in 1958 on an Indian post was recently re-enacted. Mr. Vajpayee, then in the opposition in the Parliament had strongly criticized the Nehru-Noon Agreement. The Government of India has failed to clearly state her interests and pursue them.

Sheikh Hasina won the elections in 1996 and she is trying to restore secularism. A number of fundamentalist organizations have come together to oppose these moves and have come with demands like the prosecution of Taslima, the author of *Lajja*. The author's exposition of Hindu philosophy, Islamic polity, teachings of the Buddha and enunciation of human rights are out of context to the main subject of Bangladesh. The author has well covered the challenges to secularism posed by the increasing influence of extremist parties, the army's continued interest in politics and the near disappearance of Left-of- centre and Leftist parties.

The chapter on poverty is more about India and the church than about Bangladesh.

Guess this Organisation...

Answer : It's our Lok Sabha

(It wasn't a hard guess at all. Or was it?).

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