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Terrorist targeting non-believers worldwide



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The world stands united in unreserved, condemnation of this latest atrocity. By singling out **Britons, Americans and Indians** and **Israilis**, they demonstrated that there are brand of Islamic fanaticism is anchored less in the absolutism of pure faith than in the geopolitics of hate. The loud message was that a small group of individuals could turn a mega lopolis of almost 15 million inhabitance into a battlefield for at least a day. This is the chilling echoes of the 1970's when Palestine terrorist and their left wing European accomplices selected Israeli hostages on hijack planes for executions.

The Terrorist targeted British, American and Indian citizens simply because they wanted to kill as many unbelievers as possible. They also single out for slaughter the occupants of the **Chabad House**, a pious Jewish outreach organization with no Israeli or political agenda: underscoring the point that at the core of the Islamist's hatred of the Jews.

The government and the security establishment refuse to acknowledge that what we are facing is a war on terror, is not driven, by any grievances which we all like to think, basically the fault of the West. We have only to look around the world. In **Thailand**, for eg: currently convulsed by Islamist terrorism in the south with bombings, beheadings and the murder of Buddhist, the terrorism in **Phillipines**, the attack in **Bali, Istanbul, Jakarta, Sharm-el Sheikh, Casablanca, Madrid, New York London and India**.

The fanatics use specific grievances: **Kashmir, Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya**, merely as recruiting sergeants for worldwide holy war against all unbelievers. India was chosen in order to further two aims.

To create greater tension between India and Pakistan. To destroy ever more vital strategic alliance between India and the West, in common defence against fundamentalist onslaught.

That is why British and American visitors were singled out. And that was why Mumbai itself was chosen: as the symbol of India's burgeoning, commerce and prosperity and its links with the West. Many hostages were taken but not for any demand. They were simply killed.

As soon as its victims have learnt to cope with its methods, it develops new ones. This time however the attack involves different types of operation blended together.

There were men who had placed explosives.

Gunmen operating in classic military style by seizing control of territory of symbolically significant location along with hostages.

Then there were militants prepared to kill and be killed in grenade attacks against security forces.

Although new to India the tactics has been tried in a number of other countries in the past decade, notably **Algeria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia**, at times with devastating effects. We afraid the tactic might be used in any city from Mumbai to New York passing through London and Paris.

This tragedy united the whole community: **Asians, Whites and Blacks** of the city of London, as never before and joined hands in denouncing terrorism. Prayer meeting were organized in Neasden temple, candles and lamps were lit in different localities, Church hall and City Hall in memory of the blast victims. All sections of the people regardless of caste and creed are craving for peace and are giving vent to their feelings in all possible ways they can. Pain must be shared.

This year alone the terrorists bombs have taken lives in **Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore, New – Delhi** and several different places on one searing day in **Assam**.

Guwahati has been targeted for its glamour, as a powerful gateway city of North East like all other cities in India. Guwahati was the place to hit maximum hurt, the emblamatic target. This was a carefully thought out multi pronged assault by killers. transported to their target, and operating cynically under a stage name intended to confuse. Its cosmopolitan flavour and mad passion for life: Panbazar, Fancy Bazar reminded me of London and New York: two other cities where not only the rich can enjoy and express themselves.

Assam was logistically convenient for terrorist from across a porous border. But we also must remember a significant factors, Assam is singularly surrounded with. Ahmedabad, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad is not curved with a nation in the border who is, willingly or tacitly, sending lakhs to the state and such mass infiltration is getting into the very cultural, and linguistic fabric of Assam effecting its demography altogether.

Time after time our minister in state and Prime Minister promises lessons would be learned. But how many times have we heard that mantra?

It would be wrong to second guess the security system, but it is difficult not to speculate that, once again the system is at fault: and that evil was not recognized earlier either through political correctness or a lack of common sense. We can not: indeed, we must never: let officialdom off so lightly. The terrorist are laughing and found it so easy to dupe the authority.

Indians have learned to endure the unspeakable horrors of terrorist violence ever since malign men in Pakistan concluded it was cheaper and more effective to bleed India to death than to attempt to defeat in other way. Attack after attack has been proven to have been financed, equipped and guided from across the border. Bombs and bullets alone cannot destroy it, because Indians will pick their way throw the rubble and carry on as they have done through out history. After each attack India's commercial capital and cities had bounce back. How annoying and frustrating that must be for the merchants of death. And how naïve of them to expect a people in love with freedom to submit to their violence.

Mumbai remains a magnet for migrants: the hope of millions of people. It is these hopes of freedom and prosperity that terrorists want to tear into.

It is our collective failure to grapple with the octopus like grip of growing terrorism. Their skilful executions of the superb plans are without any hindrance. This time **Guwahatians** have seen the biggest strike in Assam's history of terrorism. It is difficult to keep counting blast in Assam. The Ganeshguri flyover is a popular site for the terrorist to strike, it had witnessed at least 30 explosions in the last five years, claiming responsibility by various terrorist outfit for different reasons. The blast has become everyday occurrence in Assam, possibly has been witnesses the highest number of terrorist attacks in recent times. We have come to regard them as something usual and turn to the next news item without a blink. But this time even in our wildest dreams we could not think about such horrible incidents occuring in our city. This horror has robbed the Guwahatians of their joy and laughter.

One can only hope that the Assamese people will turn to their great resources, the spirit of the amazing city. But they have been provoked. Watching the horror of it all, sensing the anger of the people one can be sure only that for the city and the country I grew up, this is suddenly a very dangerous time.

Money can never compensate the loss of a precious life and in a way it is an insult to the victims of the blast. Although in some way it serves the purpose. In Assam we have been subjected to years of suffering by the extremist. Yet nothing effective has been done by the government to check militancy.

CCTV cameras that predict crime before they have been committed have been introduced in modern day cities. I remember when an official from government of Assam visited London few years back, he was exploring the possibility of installing CCTV in city of Guwahati. The official was amazed by seeing every streets of London are under surveillance. Officers on security guards can confront a suspect before crime is committed. The software divides the camera image into people vehicle and background. Video contact analysis is tipped to be one of the most significant development in the monitoring of people, goods and services in the develop world. Unfortunately **Ganeshguri and Bamunimaidan** is still the favourite spot for bomb blast!

We are now under huge pressure to emulate the US tactics. Some sort of Indian military response to the Mumbai horrors may be unavoidable. But can we hang on to our restraint as far as possible. The Central government has lost control of the tribal area and large part of North East. It knows that its long term task must be to reassert the rule of the law across the whole of the country and tightened the countries border fence.

After so many atrocities over the years, it is beggars belief that, these seaborne terrorist could simply saunter into hotels and stations and open fire. In UK and USA the security is formidable but in India, arrangements are utterly shambolic.

As in **New York after 9/11 and London after 7/7** India's response must rest firmly on the rule of law. After 7/7 local authorities, various councils in London worked closely with the government to ensure that there were no significant reprisal attacks. Our state government and Central government now do the same, without reprisals on defenceless innocents : for that surely would give terrorist the dark victory they so covet.

The government should let the public know the names of the people entrusted with the inquiry and most important the expected time limit of the report.

Must stop all cross border movements from **Bangladesh**, Seal the border. In the process of investigation and also in the process nabbing the culprits, going beyond politics, let police and more particularly the Army do their job and should be allowed to act without much hindrance and interference.

This is not a battle that will ever be resolved through diplomacy on negotiation, but only through force of arms. They must be haunted down, where ever they are. The response to the recent attacks has highlighted that India's police and security forces are virtually helpless to prevent such incursions in a country of porous borders and shifting populations where millions live and die without ever being even registered. But what can we do? After each attack police deployment is heightened, random checks on traffic stepped up, and metal detectors used in shopping malls, railway stations and other public places. But again it resulted in unhappy commuters and traffic jams.

There has to be coherence in the national response, only then can we devise tactics for an appropriate response. Until then we have to sit and wait for the next attack!

In Assam it is high time **AASU** should play a constructive role and help the state government to handle the situation, the way once upon a time they were able to bring entire Assam to their beck and call: "**Aah Ooi Olai Aah**". Rallies, meetings, bandhs, slogans etc are not the weapons to obliterate terrorism. Only firm and impartial action can do it.

Ajir Oxomiyai Nijak Nichinile Oxomote Bhogonia Hobo as Bhupenda predicted decades ago.

- Rini Kakati, London



editor

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