

Tackling Terrorism: Fight Disease Not Just the Symptoms

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Although terrorism is an age-old phenomenon- evolving from the religious origins of the Jewish zealots' Sicarii revolt against the Romans (66-70 A.D) to the increasingly secular ones after the French Revolution[1]- it happened to hog the headlines in the twentieth century in late 1960s with the sensational hostage-taking of Israeli athletes by the Palestinian Black September organisation in 1972 at Munich Olympic games that traumatised the world.[2] Many hijackings, kidnappings, seizure of embassies, hostage-takings etc. were to follow. However, the overall attention paid to it was short and meagre but the ensuing decades witnessed a phenomenal increase in the incidence of terrorism.

The Risk International estimated that in just three months (April-June), 1985, there were 859 major terrorist incidents. The United Nation World Social Situation Report 1989 estimated that from 125 in 1968 (with 241 victims), the terrorist incidents rose to 831 in 1987 (with 2905 victims). The U.S. State Department estimated that in 533 separate attacks in 1990, the terrorists targeted the citizens and property of 73 countries. In 1991, 567 and in 1993, 427 terrorist incidents were recorded.[3] According to the Patterns of Global Terrorism Report released on April 30, 2001, prepared by the U.S. State Dept., the worldwide deaths from terrorist incidents increased from 233 in 1999 to 405 in 2000. The number of wounded increased from 706 to 791 during the same period.[4] The September 11, 2001,[5] terrorist attack claimed over 3000 innocent lives.[6]

Age of Terror!

No wonder some writers have begun to speak of the "Age of Terrorism". They also suggest that since terrorism has gone global, the fight against it has to go global too. Many countries have gone in for harsh measures and laws. On June 13, 2002, it was reported that the Blair government in UK had called for sweeping powers of surveillance over the British citizenry. This came in for harsh criticism from various quarters and the idea was finally dropped. In an interview, President Bush conceded that there is concentration of more powers in his hands which he will use judiciously keeping history and constitution in mind. But he justified more powers saying: "I think the President needs to have the powers necessary to conduct a war".[7] Another notable fact is that in the year 2000, approximately 47 per cent of all terrorist attacks worldwide were committed against the U.S. citizens and property. Thus, the "U.S. policies, citizens and interests are the prime targets for international terrorism"[8] by some 29 terrorist groups targeted under the U.S. Anti-terrorist and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.[9]

Ironically, in this context, Col. Gaddafi of Libya stood corroborated,[10] many a baffled Americans now ask in wonderment: "why do they hate us?"[11] Today, Americans live in

perennial fear of the next major attack the Al Qaeda spokesman has warned of.[12] Bin Laden remains alive despite Bush's assertion in an interview to The Newsweek (December 03, 2001): "...We've got him on the run. And I've always said that this is a get-him-on-the-run mission. It could take 10 years. We will get him. And we will get his organisation." In fact, on the night of June 19, 2002, the White House was partially vacated when a small Cessna aircraft inadvertently strayed into the security perimeter near the White House. Of late, the U.S. administration has grown both panicky and tough. To the critics complaining of the harsh measures violative of the human rights, the U.S. Attorney General replied: "we have got a war time situation." "We need to make sure that we're doing everything possible to prevent the next attack." [13] The American administration's credibility stands very low as is evident from the recent remarks of a U.S. Colonel that the Bush administration is a "joke" and is taking the country nowhere.[14] This is happening despite the U.S. expenditure of over \$30 billion on 12 to 13 intelligence agencies.[15] The U.S. administration failed to give any advance warning to the American citizens for the September 11 attack although there are reports that the CIA and the FBI were warned well in advance of the impending attack and the information reached the President as well.[16] Earlier, the U.S. intelligence agencies had failed to detect in advance the Pokhran-II nuclear explosions by India on May 11-13, 1998.

Thus terrorism today stands out as a hydra-headed monster on a global prowl. The number of innocent victims it has claimed on its numerous visitations is already beyond the tolerable limits. We cannot possibly characterise our epoch as civilized if this hideous leviathan persists in its attacks with impunity. It is a matter of grave international concern that the phenomenon of terrorism is greatly facilitated by the ever-growing sophistication in technology, modes of transport and communication, miniaturisation of weapons and, in many cases, its state sponsorship etc.[17]

Partial Understanding

While a foolproof elimination of this age-old phenomenon in its multifarious new forms may not be possible, its incidence could certainly be greatly minimised with the help of an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The extant responses to combat terrorism are too narrow and sectarian (for example, the obsession with a single individual Osama Bin Laden and his organisation Al Qaeda, the so called "rogue states" etc), much hyped, sensationalised and tendentious, partisan and partial (like blaming it all on the non-Western world, ignoring the enormous loss of life due to terrorism of various kinds in the areas other than the Western world), shallow and superficial (hyping as if it all began only on September 11, calling it the day that changed the world, humanity; freedom and civilization came under attack etc.), diversionary and misleading (associating Islam and Muslims alone with terrorism, although the Irish, Basque separatists, Tamils of Sri Lanka and also the Oklahoma city bomber Timothy McVeigh culprit of the Oklahoma bombing and the narco-terrorists of Latin America are not Muslims at all), ad hoc and expedient (ignoring the need for an in-depth and long-term approach). Such interpretations gloss over many significant facts of history (not long ago, the Soviets, U.S., U.K., China and many other states were all involved in the game of state-aided terrorism in varying degrees and forms).[18] Besides, the highhanded responses (like attacking Afghanistan in October, 2001, without providing any evidence) in place of pinning down the culprits involved, is fraught with

danger. President Bush is reported to have signed a secret order authorizing the CIA to eliminate Saddam Hussain by fair means or foul.

The U.S. also does not recognise the jurisdiction of the international institutions. It has also rejected the jurisdiction of the World Court.[19] On June 6, 2002, the U.S. informed the U.N. that it is pulling out of the International Criminal Court treaty signed by President Clinton in December, 2000, but not ratified by the Senate. Many countries were critical of this U.S. decision.[20] In the first week of August, 2002, President Bush, invoking a provision of the new U.S. anti-terrorist law passed by the Congress and signed by President Bush in early August, 2002, warned foreign diplomats that joining the International Criminal Court without pledging protection of Americans serving in their countries from the jurisdiction of the ICC, could cost total loss of American military aid and assistance. By implication, those countries aspiring to join NATO couldn't do so without accepting this U.S. condition. Only the closest U.S. allies and those enjoying Presidential waiver are spared. This has caused widespread unease.

Instead of sensationalising terrorism, it may help to recognise that any act of violence is not terrorism and that anyone indulging in violence is not a terrorist. Terrorism is not just insensate violence (at least for the terrorist involved) nor is it a random act impulsively and senselessly attempted. It is an act well-planned and often executed with deadly accuracy. It is a secretive, conspiratorial act symptomatic of a deeper malaise or problem. Terrorism is not an aimless act. It sets for itself certain objectives (clear enough and sensible for the perpetrators of terrorist act at least). A terrorist terrorises for a purpose (however condemnable and contemptible for others). It is not a spontaneous and unconscious act but well calculated and calibrated one. Terrorism is also believed to be "a tactic of the powerless against the powerful." [21] A Palestinian, a Kurd, an Irish, a Basque activist, a Khalistani, a Kashmiri, an LTTE member, looks at it that way. A failed fighter earns the opprobrious label of a terrorist and a successful one (like the East Timor leader Xanana Gusmao, who had asked his guerrillas: "go back to jungle", "Fight and die there") wins the title of a liberator. A terrorist for the country "A" is a brave, venerable liberator for country "B". All the past national liberation struggles were so many terrorist activities for the imperial powers. Terrorism does not take place in vacuum but has underlying causes, reasons and contexts. Terrorism can be resorted to by an individual/group/organisation/cult/sects/ethnic/nationalgroup/poor, dispossessed, deprived, exploited and the ignored etc. Both secular and religious groups may take recourse to terrorism. Terrorism may be resorted to for personal/group gain or to draw individual/local/national/international attention.

A terrorist wants to be heard. Terrorism may be resorted to in the name of a cause however ill-defined and misunderstood by others. It could be a response of desperado/desperadoes faced with great odds, too powerful a perceived/real enemy or a high degree of persecution. A minority (national or other) faced with persistently high degree of repression, harassment and humiliation from a very powerful, impervious majority could take recourse to terrorism. Terrorism may represent a very high degree of alienation suffered by an individual/group/sect etc. who feel discarded, humiliated, ignored or marginalised. Terrorism may also represent a high level of frustration and anger and hence brutal revenge responses in the form of a terrorist act. Given a critical situation, any individual/group, when pushed to the wall, has the potential to take recourse to terrorism. Hence, blaming terrorism on a particular religion, ideology, mental make-

up/frame of mind is misleading. Terrorism is basically a mundane, this worldly, phenomenon espousing mundane, this-worldly, causes. Further, viewing a terrorist, self-righteously, only as a misguided fanatic/ fundamentalist/ mentally sick is not often a rewarding exercise.

Dealing with the Causes

Merely countering/condemning terrorism is only half (or even less) of the battle won. To eliminate terrorism, one has not only to bring the terrorist to the book but also endeavour to eliminate the causes that led to that terrorist act as well. Fighting only the symptoms (i.e. the acts of terrorism) and not the disease (i.e. the real causes that breed terrorism) is a vane, unproductive, wasteful exercise, also an ineffective, and inconclusive battle. Mere blame-game is no good either. The ISI may be blamed for everything but the real causes for terrorist acts may not be ascertained. Such an approach can be dangerous too, since it may make the fight against terrorists/terrorism persistent, permanent and never-ending. It may end up fostering permanent violence, a kind of perpetual war, a war without end or at least a permanent war-like situation. From this point of view, the so-called 'war against terror' or 'international war against terrorism' may end up robbing the world of peace and perpetuate/universalise war/ war-like situation. It may also condone an elaborate, elongated spell of state terrorism (through draconian laws and infringement of civil liberties etc.) bulldozing people into insensitivity and submission.

A terrorist is a fugitive, a man on the run. Even in the world of sovereign states and hard, well-protected boundaries, he is hard to pin down. Osama Bin Laden is a case in point. Hence, well-defined, face-to-face battles against terrorism are not possible. A terrorist could simply go underground a la Osama and others in Afghanistan. Hence, there cannot be cent percent success ever in completely eliminating terrorism.

What has rendered the situation more complex is the fact that there exists a whole variety of terrorisms: individual terrorism, group terrorism, cult/sect terrorism, ethno-national terrorism, minority-majority terrorism, class terrorism, terrorism of the poor/dispossessed, deprived and exploited, marginalised/alienated group terrorism, narco-terrorism, criminal gang terrorism, Ideological/ religious/fundamentalist/fanatical terrorism, terrorism of the mentally sick/deranged, state terrorism, politico-economic terrorism, techno-terrorism, info-terrorism, cyber-terrorism, bio-terrorism, eco-terrorism,[22] nuclear terrorism etc. Terrorism is sometimes broadly classified into, politically motivated terrorism and criminally motivated terrorism.[23] To tackle terrorism, one cannot lump all of them together. An ideal approach would be nuanced and sophisticated requiring each type of terrorism being responded to or tackled differently. Right now the focus is on political terrorism. Even here, all the energy is squandered in fighting just the symptoms. Under the present dispensation, the terrorism of the strong and also the state terrorism are more or less completely ignored.[24]

Problem of Definition

The difficulties to tackle terrorism are also compounded by the fact that the phenomenon of terrorism has still not lent itself to a precise, universally acceptable definition. The term's usage, and even more frequent abuse, has brought about a situation where, a la socialism, it may be compared to a hat which has lost its shape because too many people have tried to wear it. Any

political opposition is today sought to be condemned as terrorism. Besides, terms like anti-national, anti-state, unpatriotic, etc. are often used against the political opponents. The term terrorism is serving to obfuscate the phenomenon it is supposed to throw light on.

While the Indian HRD minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, not long ago, talked of intellectual terrorism of the Left parties, calling the famous left historian Romila Thaper a “terrorist” (as Akhilesh Mithal has recorded in the *Deccan Chronicle*, June 23, 2002, Sunday Edition, p.1), the Congress party accused him of perpetrating what they called text-book terrorism for affecting RSS-oriented reactionary changes in the school text-books. Any hard-core political opponent may be branded as a potential/real terrorist or at least having links with some terrorist group inside or outside the country. Linking of political opponents to underworld terrorist groups is also not uncommon. Arbitrary arrests without appropriate trial; torture, extradition, even death in the name of combating terrorism are frequently reported. A whole country or countries may be subjected to cruel, crippling sanctions, international isolation etc. This may cause enormous social suffering, even death of millions of people as in Iraq.[25]

Today, a situation has come to pass where any resistance to the powers that be, any struggle against injustice, oppression, exploitation, imperialism etc. could be called a terrorist act and the same is sought to be brutally suppressed in the name of terrorism. Terrorism has begun to serve as an alibi to resort to massive crackdowns, political interventions with a view to bulldoze opponents into silence and submission, through the passage of Draconian laws, to the circumvention of the legal procedures etc. On its part, the U.S. has undermined the U.N., walked out of Kyoto Protocol, the 1972 ABM treaty, (that too unilaterally, prompting Russia to walk out of the START II treaty),[26] the anti-racial Durban accords, sought exemption for its troops in Bosnia from war crimes trials, used veto on July 1, 2002, to undermine the formation of a 19-judge International Criminal Court, which came into existence on that date after 139 states signed a treaty in Rome in July, 1998, etc. The U.S. has also refused to reduce the huge subsidies to its agricultural sector. How are these acts to be construed? As American arrogance, unilateralism or isolationism? Or as Maureen Dowd wrote in the *New York Times* (DC, August 24, 2002), using terrorism as an alibi for imperialism?

Linking terrorism to a particular religion (although a PTI report on August 12, 2002, stated that 300 Muslims were killed in the September 11 attack) has brought about a situation where unfounded prejudices have begun to take roots. These prejudices are senselessly applied without compunction as is done in the 15-member EU-countries with regard to Muslims. This has been openly condemned by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) Director, Mr. Beate Winkler.[27] The recent crackdown on Muslim madrassas, the world over, (and especially in South Asia) represents the same prejudice. A recent survey in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (June 27, 2002, 58-60) found Indonesian madrassas to be tolerant and the Indonesian society at no risk of “becoming Talibanised”.

A good deal of misuse of the term terrorism could be avoided if the term could be accorded a cogent, comprehensive, universally acceptable definition. Attempts made in this direction have not borne fruit. The *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* sought to define the term terrorism in terms of an organised group or party which seeks to achieve its avowed aims chiefly through systematic use of violence.[28] But the question of the nature of aims is extremely important. It

cannot be talked of in a detached way. The first effort by the U.N. to define terrorism was made on October 24, 1970, when the General Assembly adopted the Declaration that stated: “every state has the duty to refrain from organizing, assisting or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorist acts in another state.....”. But the same Declaration also enjoined: “Every state has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peopleof their right to self-determination, freedom and independence.”[29]

The U.N. was always torn between proposing anti-terrorist measures and upholding the right to self-determination. In 1973, the U.N. established an ad hoc committee on International Terrorism which stated that each instance of insurgency was not an act of terrorism: “.....the inalienable right to self-determination and independence of all peoples under colonial and racist regimes and other forces of alien domination.....the struggle of national liberation movements” etc. are granted under the “U.N. Charter and relevant resolutions of the U.N.” In 1974, the U.N. General Assembly sought to forbid sending of armed bands, groups, irregulars and mercenaries of one state to another one. But in the same Article 3, the U.N. upheld the right to self-determination, freedom, independence etc. On December 9, 1985, the U.N. General Assembly again made an attempt at defining terrorism but concentrated more on crime oriented terrorism such as hijacking, hostage-taking etc.[30]

In an unprecedented move, the U.N. Security Council, in place of a definition, voted 15-0 dramatically on September 28, 2001, in favour of a U.S. introduced Resolution 1337 under Chapter 7 (mandatory for all the 190 members) that enjoins members of the U.N. to deal sternly with terrorists. The financing of terrorism was declared a criminal offence. The assets of the terrorists were to be frozen. As a mark of protest, the 57-member strong Organization of Islamic conference remained silent on the Resolution 1337 while supporting the Security Council’s other resolutions (nos. 1267, 1333 and 1368). The British Ambassador, commenting on who is and who is not a terrorist, made a strange remark: “For most of the time, if something looks like a terrorist and makes noise like a terrorist, it’s a terrorist.”[31]

The amazing, unprecedented alacrity with which the Resolution 1337 was adopted indicate the fact that the drafting, debating and passing of the Resolution was done on the same day to ensure that the matter was clinched before the U.N. General Assembly commenced its specially scheduled debate on defining the term terrorism on October 1, 2001. The Assembly, as expected, failed to agree on a definition of the term terrorism. The views expressed were too divergent to be accommodated in a concise definition. However, the U.S. and the E.U. went ahead in October 2001, with the decision to freeze the assets of 27 individuals and groups adjudged as terrorist. (The list was expanded by including 11 more non-European organisations on May 3, 2002).[32]

The Western countries have a working definition of terrorism that emphasises the targeting of innocent lives and property for political purposes. Raphael Pearl of the U.S. writes, “there is no universally accepted definition of international terrorism. One definition widely used in U.S. government circles and incorporated into law, defines international terrorism as terrorism involving the citizens or property of more than one country. Terrorism is broadly defined as politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents. A terrorist group is defined as a group which practices or which has significant subgroups which practise terrorism. The current definitions of terrorism all share one

common element: politically motivated behaviour.”[33] The Title 22 of the U.S. Code, Section 2656 f (d) states: “the term terrorism means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetuated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”[34] Stansfield Turner defines terrorism as, “the threat or use of violence for political purposes by individuals or groups when such actions are intended to shock, stun, or intimidate a target group wider than the immediate victim.”[35]

However, Raphael is aware of the woeful inadequacy of the definition he gives. What about individual, criminal, terrorism for financial gain? The cultural, religious group terrorism which is not political? The non-traditional violence like computer virus sabotage? Or attack on the USS Cole on October 12, 2000? Can the USS Cole pass muster as a non-combatant ship? What about terrorism for a cause? Where do national liberation struggles, genuine fight against racial, national and other forms of oppression stand? Where do we place state terrorism or terrorism practiced by Hitler, Mussolini’s Red Shirts, Stalin and Mao in the name of ideology? Although Turner’s definition captures the shock and intimidation dimensions of terrorism but the same is far from comprehensive.

Before September 11 attacks, many academics attempted to define terrorism but inadequacies persisted. Walter Laqueur maintains that, “no definition of terrorism can possibly cover all the varieties of terrorism that have appeared throughout history.”[36] One nation’s terrorism is another one’s liberation struggle. Any anti-establishment struggle can be termed as terrorist. However, Laqueur identifies certain features which are important. He writes: (1) terrorism is a new, unprecedented phenomenon. For this reason its antecedents (if any) are of little interest, (2) terrorism is one of the most important and dangerous problems facing mankind today, (3) terrorism is a response to injustice; if there were no political and social justices, there would be no terrorism. (a point which is ignored today at our own peril), (4) the only means of reducing the likelihood of terrorism is a reduction of the grievances, stresses and frustrations underlying it, (an extremely valuable point), (5) terrorists are fanatical believers driven to despair by intolerable conditions: they are poor and their inspiration is deeply ideological, (6) terrorism can occur anywhere.[37] It can also be safely added here that terrorism may be the response of the underdog against the oppressor, although the reverse could also be true as Noam Chomsky points out.[38] It could also be looked upon as a low-intensity conflict.[39]

For all these features, we still fall far short of an agreeable definition, although attempts for it are continuously made. On April 1, 2002, a three-day extraordinary conference of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) began in Kuala Lumpur. While condemning the linkage of Islam and Muslims to terrorism, the Conference failed to produce a consensual definition of the term terrorism. Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohd. of Malaysia called upon the U.N. to define terrorism because condemning terrorism without defining it would be something bizarre.[40] Many ministers at the Conference insisted on an acceptable definition of terrorism that differentiated between legitimate national liberation struggles and acts of terrorism. The OIC Declaration rejected “any attempt to link terrorism to the struggle of the Palestinians.....” The Declaration also rejected, “any unilateral action taken against any Islamic country under the pretext of combating international terrorism, as this will undermine global co-operation against terrorism.”

However, the Declaration, while condemning all forms of terrorism, including the state terrorism, maintained, “we reject any attempt to link Islam and Muslims to terrorism as terrorism has no association with religion, civilization or nationality.” “We reiterate”, the Declaration said, “that preventive action taken to combat terrorism should not result in ethnic or religious profiling of the targeting of a particular community.” The Declaration recommended the removal of the root causes breeding terrorism which included, “foreign occupation, injustice and exclusion.”[41] On April 9, 2002, Egypt’s officially appointed Grand Mufti, Ahmad al-Tayyeb, told the *Daily Telegraph* (London) that the suicide bombers are “martyrs of the highest order.”[42] Any future attempt at defining the term terrorism will have to take into account all these developments, as the OIC represents 57 countries.

On May 20, 2002, the security ministers of the 10-member ASEAN deliberated at a two-day conference on the regional counter terrorism measures. Here too, Malaysia insisted on working out an agreeable definition of term terrorism. But the Singaporean Home Minister, Mr. Wong Kan Seng, downplayed the attempt saying that the job of defining terrorism should better be left to the bodies like the U.N. He observed that, “Even Without a definition, I think we all know who are the ones who commit terrorist acts.” But the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi observed that it was a “great irony” that the world cannot define terrorism. “We all know it exists and we are all engaged in a fight against it.....But we will not commit to a definition of what it is.”[43] However, the joint communiqué of the ASEAN meet agreed to “counter, prevent and suppress all forms of terrorist acts” while insisting on eradicating the root causes breeding terrorism.[44] On May 6, 2002, at a meeting of Religious Affairs Ministers of the OIC, Saudi Arabia approved suicide bombing while Malaysia differed from it.[45]

While the difficulties in defining terrorism have multiplied, the U.S. has succeeded in mobilising all the important international organisations to agree on counter-terrorist measures. The ASEAN Heads of State had already agreed on counter-terrorist co-operation in November, 2001. On May 7, 2002, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Phillipines signed a tripartite pact (open to other 10-member ASEAN grouping) to co-operate against terrorism.[46] On August 1, 2002, the U.S. and ASEAN states signed a joint declaration for Co-operation to Combat International Terrorism. On the other hand, the 19-member NATO chalked out a plan to combat terrorism into which Russia is fully integrated. After all, Putin loathes what he calls “Islamic terrorism” and fears, along with the West, a threat from Russia’s south.[47]

At a meeting in St. Petersburg on June 7, 2002, the Shanghai group of six signed the Charter of Shanghai co-operation organisation. That made the group (Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) a full-fledged international body. The three principal tasks outlined were: regional security, economic and humanitarian co-operation and the fight against terrorism and separatism (which is declared to be the priority task). “The struggle against terrorism must be conducted on the basis of norms and principles of international law, it must not be identified with the struggle against any religion, countries or nationalities. It must be free from bias and “double standards.” A regional anti-terrorist structure is also to be set up.”[48] The 16-member Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures (CICA) adopted a 35-point Almaty Act on June 4, 2002, with a thrust on combating international terrorism.[49] President Bush, on his part, announced on June 6, 2002, that the U.S. which “is leading the

civilised world in a titanic struggle against terror” will establish a new agency called the Cabinet Agency for Homeland Security with a budget of some \$ 37 billion and a work force of 170,000 employees.[50] Will this accomplish what Bush vowed to accomplish on the occasion of the 6-month anniversary of the September 11 attack: “America will not forget the lives that were taken or the justice that is required. Every terrorist must be made to live like an international fugitive. He should have no place to sleep and no government to hide behind.”[51] It still appears unlikely.

If one examined all of these developments, a bizarre spectacle emerges. Virtually all countries and international organisations of the world are by now already roped in for what Bush called the titanic war against terrorism. The U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, told a press conference on June 22, 2002, that over 180 countries either offered or actually helped the U.S. in fighting terrorism; 69 countries directly helped in the Operation Freedom; over 90 countries arrested about 2400 suspected terrorists or their supporters. A super-power backed by the international coalition of countries is pitted primarily against just one individual, Osama Bin Laden and his organisation Al Qaeda. Yet, the U.S. remains in jitters, unnervingly fearful of fresh bouts of terrorism. Every other issue is pushed into the background. However, nothing is done to stop the roots of terror in the middle-east, i.e., the on-going bloody Israeli incursions into the Palestinian areas.

From this point of view, the response appears to be disproportionately on the high side. Terrorism is being fought on the wrong lines relying only on massive use of force and violence that might incite more terrorist attacks. This psychology of force and violence precipitated the attack on Iraq on flimsy pretext and all opposition to such harsh measures were brushed aside as unimportant. There has been a spiral of terrorist attacks on US forces ever since the US forces marched into Baghdad. The fact of the matter is the strategy of countering terrorism through force and counter-violence has led to more acts of terrorism and violence. We may very well end up in a hapless situation where terrorism and counter terrorism will perennially feed on each other. This kind of barren, counterproductive approach will never eliminate terrorism. Rather, it will perpetuate terrorism. The point bears repetition that only symptoms are sought to be fought and not the disease (i.e. the root causes/areas that serve as breeding grounds for terrorism).

Ad-hocism reigns supreme and no long-term universally agreeable perspective is sought to be evolved. Double-standards galore. In the name of fighting terrorism, other agendas like settling scores with political and other opponents or realizing covertly the foreign policy objectives, domination of oil and other resource-rich areas and global markets is sought. Using terrorism as an alibi, an environment is sought to be created in which any opposition to the Western agenda, projected as global agenda without working out a consensus on many of the important issues surrounding the phenomenon of terrorism, is construed as an apology of terrorism. The real problems of poverty, illiteracy, health, employment, education, environment, inequalities etc.[52] (which are being highlighted at the 10-day World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg which began on August 26, 2002) are grossly undermined. An ominous, war-like situation is sought to be perpetuated. In the non-Western world, a fear-psychosis arising out of fear of sanctions, withdrawal of foreign investments, international isolation, even foreign intervention and attack is sought to be built up.

Tackling Terror

It has to be hardly realised that such paranoia, over-reaction accompanied with colossal expenditure and use of force is not required to fight some stray acts of terrorism primarily from a small band of terrorists. The scenarios of civilisational/cultural/religious wars, the fears of bio-terrorism like the use of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear terrorism, missile attacks from the so-called rogue states are all highly exaggerated and misplaced. In the name of countering terrorism, Draconian laws are pushed through without adequate political and social debate, imperilling human rights, legal and democratic norms and procedures. The current approach is highly expensive, senseless, impractical, dangerous and counterproductive. The U.S. acting as a global cop will have to police too many areas, overextend itself and become unpopular. *The Los Angeles Times* reported that a secret Pentagon report to Congress had identified seven centres against whom the U.S. was planning to use nuclear weapons. They were: Russia, China, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria. The Russians were prompt in demanding an explanation from the US. If history is any guide, no country has been able to fight on too many fronts. This kind of overextending the points of counter-terror engagements could lead to the undoing of any power a la Paul Kennedy's thesis outlined in his well-known book: *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, sooner it is realised, better it is for everyone.

Similarly, linking terrorism to religions/cultures/civilisations is both fatuous and mischievous and needs to be avoided. For acts of terrorism, only the terrorist/terrorists involved need to be dealt with and not a whole area or a people. The loss of innocent lives need be treated on an equal basis. American lives are as precious as the lives of the people elsewhere. The blame-game should not be directed only against the non-Western areas. Racialism, imperialism, arrogance, injustices, oppression (national and other), inequalities, alienation, exploitation, frustration etc. breeds terrorism among the oppressed, weak, dispossessed, deprived and exploited. The fight against terrorism needs to be localised and not universalised. In conclusion, it may be emphasised that any mishand-ling of what Bush called 'the titanic war against terrorism' would generate a violent confrontationist ambience and could universalise and perpetuate violence or war/war-like situation, culminating in some great human disaster.

End Notes

1. Sicarii was the name of the weapons of the Zealots who committed mass suicide in 73 A.D. See Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea-The Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome A.D. 66-70*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 95, 145 and 214-215. L.I. Levine in A. Kasher, ed., *The Great Jewish Revolt: Factors and Circumstances Leading to Its Outbreak*, (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 367-376. Leonard Weinberg and Paul B. Davies, *Introduction to Political Terrorism*, (New York, 1989), pp. 19-20. Walter Laqueur writes that Sicarii were a highly organised religious sect consisting of men of lower orders active in the Zealot struggle in Palestine. See Walter Laqueur, *The Age Of Terrorism*, (London, 1987), p. 12. (Hereafter, AOT), Weinberg and Davies quote Franklin Lord (Political Murder, Harvard, 1985) that the Sicarii committed murders in broad daylight in the heart of Jerusalem. The Panic created was more alarming than the calamity itself. Everyone, as on battlefield, hourly expected death. Men kept watch at a distance on their enemies and would not trust even their

- friends when they approached. p. 20. For a history of terrorism in general, see the classic work of Walter Laqueur, AOT, Walter Laqueur, (Ed.), *The Terrorism Reader*, (New York, New American Library, 1978). David C. Rapoport, "Terror and Messiah: An Ancient Experience and Some Modern Parallels," in David Rapoport and Yonah Alexander, (Eds.), *The Morality of Terrorism*, (New York, Pergamon Press, 1982), pp. 13-42. Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, (New York, OUP, 1967). Albert Parry, *Terrorism From Robespierre to Arafat*, (New York, Vanguard Press, 1976), James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men*, (New York, Basic Books, 1980), Anthony Burton, *Urban Terrorism*, (New York, Free Press, 1975), Lawrence Freedman and Yonah Alexander, (Eds.), *Perspectives on Terrorism*, (Washington, Dell, 1983)
2. See Weinberg, *Ibid*, p. 39. See Laqueur, AOT, *Ibid*, p. 22, It is of interest to note that the International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences edited by David L. Sills in 1968 carries no entry on terrorism. Walter Laqueur edited *A Dictionary of Politics*, (London, 1973), but no entry on terrorism is to found there too. In December, 1987, the U.N. General Assembly passed a strong resolution on terrorism. The two countries that abstained were the U.S. and Israel.
 3. These U.S. Department estimates are quoted in Charles W. Kegley Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics-Trends and Transformation*, 5th Edn., (New York, 1995), p. 462.
 4. See Raphael F. Pearl, The CRS (Congress Research Service) *Issue Brief For Congress*, "Terrorism, The Future, And the U.S. Foreign Policy", (updated November 2, 2001), p. CRS-2
 5. No one has claimed responsibility for the September 11, 2001, attack so far. Even Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, while approving of the attack, denied responsibility for it. American writer Thierry Meyssan in his two books *Frightening Fraud and the latest 9/11*, and *The Big Lie*, argues that the ultra-right in the U.S. carried out not just the plane crash but a rocket attack on WTC and Pentagon buildings for which Arabs have been made scapegoats. Even after attack on Afghanistan in October 2001 Bin Laden and his close lieutenants remain at large. As late as June 13, 2002, Mullah Omar denied Al Qaeda involvement in the September 11 attack and earlier Bin Laden supported such an act he did not claim any responsibility.
 6. The exact number of casualties and deaths caused by the September 11 attacks as given by US media sources is over 3000. See a report in *The Hindu*, Hyderabad, May 17, 2002, p. 15. (*The Hindu*, referred to in these endnotes is the Hyderabad edition of the daily news magazine)
 7. See a report in *The Hindu*, June 13, 2002, p. 11. See also President Bush's interview to *The Newsweek*, December 3, 2001, p. 25.
 8. See the CRS Issue n. 8, p. CRS-2. In the year 2000, 206 anti-U.S. terrorist attacks took place: 172 in Latin America, 2 in the Middle East, 4 in Eurasia, 6 in Africa, 7 in Western Europe. These estimates were made by the U.S. Dept. of State in its report, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, "Total Anti-U.S. attacks, 2000" For some more details regarding the recent attacks on the Americans, see Mohd. Moazzam Ali, "U.S. Post-Cold War Search For Enemies: Muslim World Is A Wrong Choice", *Azad Academy Journal* (Lucknow), June, 2002, pp. 23-24.

9. These groups are designated by the U.S. Secretary of State as Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended by the Anti-Terrorist and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. Under it, it was unlawful to extend material support to these 29 terrorist groups. The Group members could be denied Visa. The U.S. financial institutions are required to block funds of the FTOs and their agents. In the list of Other Terrorist Groups, Jaishe Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (army of the righteous) are listed.
10. In July, 1993, Col. Qaddafi had warned: “whatever takes place in America - and you will see a lot more terrorism there...(it) is a function of perceived injustices in other parts of the world. Acts of terrorism in America will be the answer and they will be more and more violent and spectacular for television purposes around the world.” Qaddafi quoted in Kegley and Wittkopf, n.7, p. 464.
11. See for example “Why They Hate America ?”, *The Newsweek*, October 15, 2001. M.M. Ali, n.12, pp. 24-25. Lisa Beyer, “Roots of Rage”, *Time*, October 1, 2001, pp. 42-44.
12. Osama Bin Laden’s death is not yet confirmed. In fact, in early May, 2002, the Newsweek reported that he was seen in Pakistan. See also a UNI report in the Siasat, (an Urdu daily, Hyderabad), May 7, 2002, p.3. Recently, Al Qaeda has warned of September 11-type attack citing the recent atrocities on the Palestinians and injustices elsewhere against the Muslims. See Massimo Calabresi and Romesh Ratnesar, “Can We Stop the Next Attack ?”, *Time*, March 11, 2002. pp. 24-34.
13. See a report in *The Hindu*, June 14, 2002, p.14.
14. Lt. Col. Steve Butler of the U.S. Air Force is suspended pending trial (for the use of “contemptuous words” against political leaders forbidden by the U.S. law) for calling President Bush “a joke”. In a letter to The Herald of Monterey, he wrote: “He (President Bush) did nothing to warn the American people because he needed this war on terrorism. His Daddy had Saddam and he needed Osama. His Presidency was going nowhere. This guy is a joke.” Col. Steve is the Vice-Chancellor for student affairs at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey. He served as a navigator in the Gulf War. See *The Hindu*, June 7, 2002, p. 14. The U.S. Congress has started close door hearings to examine the persistent reports that the FBI and the CIA ignored the warnings of the September 11 attack. On June 3, 2002, *The Newsweek* reported that the CIA got to know about the two suspected men who were involved in the September 11 attack. President Bush has publicly confessed that a rift causing breakdown of communications between the FBI and the CIA : “In terms of whether or not the FBI and the CIA were communicating properly, I think it is clear that they weren’t.” See *The Hindu*, June 6, 2002, p. 14.
15. This figure is given by Philip Agee (author of the famous CIA Diary) in his article, “The USA and International Terrorism”, in Prabhat Patnaik, ed., *No To Terrorism No To War*, (New Delhi, 2001), p. 57.

16. For an account of how the U.S. intelligence was duped at the time of the Pokhran II nuclear explosions, see Raj Chengappa, *Weapons Of Peace - The Secret Story of India's Quest To Be A Nuclear Power*, (New Delhi, 2000), pp. 15-28. See a report in *The Hindu*, June 6, 2002, p. 14. See also "How U.S. Missed the Clues", *Time*, May 27, 2002, pp. 18-23, *The Newsweek*, May 27, 2002, pp. 24-31 and "How the FBI Blew the Case", *Time*, June 3, 2002, 22-28.
17. It is well-known that the state-sponsored terrorism has a long history. States provide weapons, training, passports, finances, transport, sanctuary or asylum to further a proxy war to achieve their foreign policy objectives at a cost much cheaper than a full-fledged war. See Kegley and Wittkopff, n.3, p.464. Many states, including the former Soviet Union, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Pakistan etc. have been accused of state terrorism. The U.S. was blamed for sponsoring terrorist activities in Vietnam, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and elsewhere. See *Ibid.* The U.S. air strikes against Libya in 1986 and against Sudan and Osama's camps in Pakistan were termed as "state terrorism." See "History of USA's State Terrorism" (containing a list of year wise terrorist activities of the U.S. around the world), in Patnaik, n. 3, pp. 49-56.
18. After all, Taliban and Osama were the CIA creations who turned against their own masters just as Bhindranwale had turned against Indira Gandhi. Chomsky writes that Bin Laden's men were brought together in the 1980s by the CIA. "The idea was to try to harass the Russians..." See Noam Chomsky, "The New War Against Terror" in Prabhat Patnaik, ed., *No To Terrorism No To War*, (New Delhi, 2001), p. 18. Some one lakh "best killer they could find" were brought together from diverse countries. See *Ibid.* Chomsky also writes that the Phillipines' conquest caused the death of 100,000 Phillipinoes. William J. Pomeroy in his book, *American Neo-Colonialism-Its Emergence In The Phillipines and Asia*, (New York, 1970), mentions a figure of 200,000 on p. 96 of his book.
19. See Chomsky, n.3, p.21. Chomsky goes on to argue that "the U.S. doesn't want to present evidence because it wants to be able to act without evidence. The U.S. probably could have [got UN] Security Council authorisation but it didn't want it. And it didn't want it because it follows a long-standing principle and that is that we have the right to act unilaterally. We don't care about evidence, we are the strongest guy around, the toughest thug on the block. We do what we want." pp. 21-22.
20. America's European allies were as upset by the U.S. decision on International Criminal Court (ICC) as they were when the U.S. refused to ratify the Kyoto treaty. Bill Graham, the Canadian foreign minister, perhaps echoed their sentiments well when he observed: "there is certain irony in the fact that the U.S., which tends to extra-territorially apply its laws rather widely, is not willing to participate in a truly international consensus." See a report in *The Hindu*, May 8, 2002, p.15.
21. See Kegley and Wittkopff, n. 7, p. 462.
22. It is of interest to know that while the 15-member E.U. ratified the Kyoto protocol under the U.N. aegis, to safeguard the planet earth against pollution and warming, the U.S. which was responsible for 36.1 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in 1990 (against the 55 percent

- emission from the EU countries, 8.5 percent from Japan and 17.4 percent from Russia) refused to join in. When President Clinton signed the Protocol, the U.S. Senate rejected it. In 2001, President Bush backed out of it saying that the Kyoto would cost the U.S. economy \$ 400 billion and 4.9 million jobs. See an AP report in *The Hindu*, June 2, 2002, p. 14.
23. See S.K. Ghosh, *Terrorism : World Under Siege*, (New Delhi, 1995),p. 16.
24. Noam Chomsky maintains that the Western policies in Afghanistan imposed massive starvation on millions of people. The U.S. bombing disrupted food supplies to some 7.5 million Afghans which meant that the West anticipated the slaughter of 3 to 4 million people. The U.S. rejected negotiations and demanded total capitulation of the Taliban forces. Chomsky calls this a “silent genocide” of the people in Afghanistan. See Chomsky, n. 3, pp. 11-12.
25. Over 1.5 lakh innocent people perished in the Gulf War. Over 50,000 children died. For madam Albright, it was just a “small price” to pay. After the sanctions were imposed on Iraq, over half a million children have perished. See the Preface by Patnaik, n. 3.
26. The START II called for reducing nuclear arsenal of Russia and the U.S. from 6000 warheads to between 3000 and 3500. The U.S. ratified it in 1996 and Russia in 2000. But Russia had linked the START II to the preservation of the ABM treaty of 1972. When the U.S. walked out of the ABM treaty, Russia declared that it “does not consider itself bound” by START II. See *The Hindu*, June 15, 2002, p. 14.
27. The EUMC (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia) Report 2002 states that physical and verbal abuse against Muslims in the EU countries is on the rise since September 11, 2001. Headscarves worn by Muslim women and the Turbans the Sikhs wear have come under attack. Numerous attacks against mosques have been reported. The EUMC Director, Beate Winkler observed on May 24, 2002, that, “An atmosphere has been created in which Muslims have to justify themselves that they are not terrorists.” See *The Hindu*, May 25, 2002, p. 15. The situation obtaining in the U.S. is no different.
28. As cited in Ghosh, n. 30, p. 4.
29. Ibid
30. For details regarding the U.N. attempts at defining terrorism, see Ibid, pp.4-6.
31. See *The Hindu*, September 30, 2001, p. 1 and September 29, p. 15. This was a strange comment. Apprehensions about the manner and speed with which the Security Council passed the resolution remained. See *Siasat*, Urdu daily, Hyderabad, October 2, 2001, p. 1 and 3.
32. See a report in *The Hindu*, May 4, 2002, p. 14.

33. See Raphael F. Pearl, The CRS (Congress Research Service) *Issue Brief For Congress*, "Terrorism, The Future, And the U.S. Foreign Policy", (updated November 2, 2001), p. CRS-3.
34. See the U.S. Department of State P1 of 3(A) *Introduction, Patterns of Global Terrorism-2000* released by the Office of the Co-ordinator for Counter-Terrorism, April, 2001, 9/27/01, p. 2.
35. See Stansfield Turner, *Terrorism and Democracy—Ten Steps to Fight Terrorism Without Endangering Democracy*, (University of Maryland, 2001), p. 2.
36. See Laqueur, AOT, n. 1, p. 11.
37. See Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism*, (Abacus, London, 1978), p. 15-16. For the elaboration of some of the features of terrorism Laqueur has outlined and find mention in the main text of this article, see Ibid, pp. 264-273. See also Ted Robert Gurr, *Some Political Characteristics of Political Terrorism in the 1960's* in Michael Stohl, n. 22, pp. 23-45.
38. Noam Chomsky writes, "it is very serious analytical error to say, as is commonly done, that terrorism is the weapon of the weak. Like other means of violence, it is primarily a weapon of the strong, overwhelmingly, in fact. It is held to be a weapon of the weak because the strong also control the doctrinal system and their terror doesn't count as terror." See Chomsky in Patnaik, n.3, p. 15.
39. See Weinberg, n. 1, pp. 152-53.
40. Argued Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad : "Muslims everywhere must condemn terrorism once it is clearly defined. Terrorizing people is not the way of Islam. Certainly, killing people is not Islamic....We must object strongly to the linking of Muslims with terror just because a few Muslims have resorted to acts of terror. We must point out that Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and others are equally guilty of terrorism. Terrorists must be identified by their acts and nothing else." He went on and said, the September 11 attacks were an "unmitigated disaster" for Muslims all over the world. "Our image which had not been good, has been made worse. It does not help that we are weak and disunited. Unless we are able to turn the present worldwide anger over the terrorist attack of September 11 into a real campaign against all terrorists irrespective of their religious faiths, we are going to find that Muslim bashing will be heightened." See *The Hindu*, April 2, 2002, p. 14.
41. The exact words of the Declaration were : "We emphasize the importance of addressing the root causes of international terrorism, convinced that the environment that breeds terrorism, including foreign occupation, injustice and exclusion, is allowed to thrive." See the report in *The Hindu*, April 4, 2002,p.14.
42. See a report in *The Hindu*, April 10, 2002, p. 14.
43. See *The Hindu*, May 21,2002, p. 14. However, at the end of the conference, Mr.Abdullah relented, "The issue is that we should not be spending all our time trying to argue who is a

terrorist and what is terrorism so much so that we have no time to talk about what we should be doing together (to tackle the issue)". See *The Hindu*, May 22, 2002, p. 14

44. See *The Hindu*, May 22, 2002, p. 16.

45. Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, maintained that the holy war couldn't be won with violence and suicide bombers, which achieved nothing except earning for the Palestinians the epithets of terrorists. Building strong economies was more important for fighting against injustice than suicide bombings. Muslims should not "allow Islam to be hijacked by those who have a flawed understanding of our faith and rally under the banner of militancy." The idea that Jihad means carrying out militant attacks needed to be dropped. Jihad must "not be pursued with guns and bombs" but should be translated into actions that would help to lift Muslims "from the throes of poverty." The Saudi Minister for Islam, Sheik Salleh Abdul Aziz, however, asserted: "The suicide bombings were permitted" and that "the victims are considered to have died martyr's death." See *The Hindu*, May 7, 2002, p. 14.

46. See *The Hindu*, May 8, 2002, p. 15.

47. See *The Hindu*, June 7, 2002, p. 14. Russia is now fully integrated into the anti-terrorist alliance through Bush-Putin pact on Disarmament on May 24, 2002. See *The Hindu*, May 25, 2002, p. 14. A NATO-RUSSIA Pact has also been signed in Rome on May 28, 2002. See *The Hindu*, May 29, 2002, p. 14. The West has already endorsed Russia as a market economy paving the way for Russia to join the WTO.

48. See *The Hindu*, June 8, 2002, p. 14. See also *Newsweek*, October 1, 2001, pp. 28B-28C. For Russia's integration with the West, see *Newsweek*, October, 22, 2001, p. 44 and *Newsweek*, November 26, 2001, pp. 49-50; Bush's interview in the *Newsweek*, December 3, 2001, pp. 25-26. For Putin's hatred of "Islamic terrorism", see *The Economist*, London, December 1, 2001, p. 45, *Time*, December 10, 2001, p. 51, *Newsweek*, November 19, 2001, pp. 29-31, "Putin's Big Gamble", *Newsweek*, October 22, 2001, p. 44, "What is Moscow's New Role?", *Businessweek*, February 11, 2002, pp. 30-31.

49. See *The Hindu*, June 5, 2002, p.1, *Siasat*, June 5, 2002, p.1, and June 8, 2002, p. 3. For an editorial on the Almaty Conference, *The Hindu*, June 8, 2002, p. 14.

50. See *The Hindu*, June 8, 2002, p. 14.

51. See *The Times of India* (Hyderabad), March 13, 2002, p. 10.

52. The Head of the Food and Agricultural Organisation, (FAO) Dr Jacques Diouf, says that about 8.5 million people go to bed hungry every night. In a recent interview, he observed, "We say, before you go and have a special meeting of the G-8 to discuss the digital divide, you need to look at the three elements you need to live, which is to breath, to drink and to eat." On June 10, 2002, the officials from 183 countries are scheduled to meet at the Head Quarters of the FAO in Rome to reassess the world food situation. Diouf maintains that the poor countries are falling short by \$ 180 billion needed to meet targets on cutting hunger that were fixed at the First World

Food Summit in 1996. Some 200 million children under the age of five live in perpetual hunger. Some 580 million people suffer from hunger. Because \$ 1 billion a day subsidy is given to the farmers in the rich countries, those countries have huge stocks of food. Yet some 800 million people don't have enough money to buy food they need. Of the world's 6 billion people, 1.2 billion people live on \$ 1 a day. See a *New York Times* report reproduced in *The Hindu*, June 10, 2002, p.14. The huge subsidy enables the American farmers to flood the world market with inexpensive corn, wheat, rice and soybeans which are sold at half of what it costs to produce them. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan writes that the first world Food Summit in Rome in 1996 had resolved to bring down the number of hungry and the malnourished from 816 million in 1990-92 to 408 million by 2015. But the actual achievement in hunger reduction was only six million per year by June 12-13 Second World Food Summit in 2002. Over 200 million people or 28 per cent of the entire population of Africa were found to be chronically hungry. And 24,000 children, women and men die every day due to hunger related causes. Seneca is quoted at the end : "A hungry person listens neither to reason nor cares for justice, nor is bent by any prayers." (May we add, can take to terrorism fast.). See Dr. MS.Swaminthan, "Fighting Hunger : Know-How to Do-How", *The Hindu*, (Sunday Magazine), Weekly Edition - 2, June 24, 2002, pp. 1 and 7.