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The Seeds of Terrorism

By

Mohammad Amir Rana

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Subhash Chopra

Unveiled: Jihad International

Amir Rana's exploration into the world of Jihad is a masterpiece of field research based on interviews, collection of information from news sources and his own long-term perspective. Lucidly written, *The Seeds of Terrorism* is the story of international Jihadi groups, born in Pakistan and Afghanistan with the blessings of the USA, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan during their successful campaign to topple the pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan. Unfortunately the monster they created has come to haunt all three of them. After the 11th September 2001 attacks on the US, the Jihadis have cast their net far wider to any country associating with them. Their bombings have come to Madrid and this July to London.

The Lahore based Pakistani journalist Rana's book is a veritable directory of Jihadi organisations brainwashing thousands of people in the name of Islam. At great risk to himself, he traces the rise of the Taliban government in Afghanistan with the active collaboration of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate of Pakistan after the exit of Soviet forces. The Americans and the Saudis too left the country after the victory over Soviet troops. But the Taliban, who filled the vacuum, found much stronger and more fundamentalist Islamic allies in old friends like the Arab Jihadis, later known as al-Qaida and led by Osama bin-Laden, who had fought against the Soviets. It is this explosive combination of Taliban and al-Qaida that the Western allies of Saudi Arabia and the USA are up against, with consequences for others too.

The Jihadi message is simple but deadly. As an example Rana reproduces a typical page from a lesser known group Jamiat-ul-Ansar's al-Hilal publication full of inciting slogans like the following:

The Bleeding World of Islam

Iraq – The land of prophets, where hungry, American-oppressed orphan children are crying for help

*Afghanistan – The land of martyrs
Where the war between the infidels and Islam goes on*

*Indian Kashmir– The heavenly land Where prestige is unprotected and women
disparaged*

Palestine – The holy land where dear ones of the mothers are being sacrificed

*Chechnya— Where lively marketplaces and towns Are turning into derelict places
Bharat— Where the lives of Muslims are under attack*

Is it not incumbent upon you to help these Muslims?

*Are they not your brothers in the
Islamic brotherhood and human concern?*

On the Pan-Islamic or Pan-Ummah nature of jihadi network, I recall a brief exchange with Pakistan's General Aslam Beg, who has held various top posts in the military establishment, in Islamabad about eight years ago.

When I suggested to him that Pakistani-inspired militancy in Kashmir would be defeated as surely as was Pakistani-propelled Khalistani militancy in Indian Punjab, he countered by saying that in this struggle the Kashmiris were not alone. They had fighters from the wider Islamic world with them. Sure enough the next few years, right up to today, the non-Kashmiri jihadis have been in the forefront of cross-border attacks. I certainly underestimated General Beg's veiled warning, but equally he too underestimated India's resolve to defeat terrorist designs in Kashmir. In Pakistan today the realisation is sinking in that borders cannot be changed with blood and peace must be found through non-jihadi means.

Pakistan has long financed and armed the Jihadis against India over Kashmir. In Indian eyes it still does so, though unofficially and much less openly. In his chapter on Kashmir Rana candidly admits that Pakistan's ISI has not helped Kashmiris over the years to simply let them become truly independent (of Pakistan). Equally he blames India for holding on to Kashmir. In a rather simplistic way he believes that an independent Kashmir would be the best solution, ignoring his own analysis that Pakistan and India are both opposed to such a solution for their own reasons. Diplomatically, perhaps, he avoids the mention of an independent Kashmir becoming the cockpit of international power play, or becoming the American power base encircling Chinese, Soviet and even Indian influence. Equally diplomatically, Rana is silent on America's own role in sowing the seeds of terrorism which has spawned Arab jihad. America's oil colonialism in West Asia, in Iraq and its neighbourhood, is surely a major factor behind the chaos there.

The chief value of Rana's book lies in the detailed history of Jihadi groups, their political faces, affiliation to religious factions, Sunni, Shia, tablighi, Deobandi, Brelvi Jamat, Jamiat, Lashkar, Jaish , Harkat and their variations under changing names. Even those who think they know a lot about Jihad will find the book highly rewarding. It is highly informative for the common reader and fills the gaps for the experts.

The book could have done with better editing and larger and clearer maps of Pakistan –Afghanistan border areas and Kashmir. Nevertheless it is essential reading for an understanding of Pakistan today and Jihad worldwide.