

THE CHALLENGE OF FUNDAMENTALISM

The global order is facing the challenge of fundamentalism which is destabilizing the regions, dislocating the populace and forcing the change of regimes. In the last more than two decades or so this challenge has acquired menacing proportions which is posing a big challenge to the peace of the world. The high sounding rhetoric of the so called big powers of the world notwithstanding, the challenge remains with all its disastrous ramifications.

The phenomenon of fundamentalism has always been prevailing in different societies in one form or the other. However, it never acquired such overarching dimensions to destabilize the prevailing political or social orders entailing bloodshed and disorder until it was used as a strategic weapon by the big powers to deal with their adversaries.

It was for the first time that this tenet was used in the Eighties by the US experts to train the so called *Afghan Mujahideen* in Afghanistan to drive out Soviet forces from that country. It is a well known fact of the recent past. However, when the US Security advisor who introduced this strategy was asked that what would these trained *Mujahideen* do after the Soviets had vacated the Afghanistan, his curt reply was that they would go and retire in their homes. That did not happen. The *Mujahideen* who were drawn mainly from many Asian countries, particularly West Asia, continued with their so called mission of establishing the " *genuine rule of God* " on earth. In this process this stratagem became a handy device for different political forces across the world to achieve their strategic objectives. The numerous instances are available to support this contention. It was interesting to note, as revealed in the international media, that after the overthrow of Muammar al Ghaddafi in Libya, some oil companies were negotiating with the so called victors to sell them oil on cheaper rates.

It may be recognised that the hapless so called third world countries

that are at the receiving end of this tactics have to bear the brunt of this phenomenon. The operational mechanism of this strategy is so subtle and intricate that a state has to expend great deal of resources and energies to cope with the challenges thrown up by this phenomenon in their societies. In view of the security challenge such a phenomenon throws up , the response of the state some times is harsh which invokes opprobrium on account of violation of human rights violations. Thus, these states are caught in a vicious circle with no apparent way out.

The states at the receiving end of this quagmire should ponder over the entire situation in a collective endeavor to deal with the menace and castigate its operators by adopting a holistic approach. It is an irony that some third world countries have been using this tool against their immediate neighbours to achieve their strategic objectives. There is an urgency to censure these states and coerce them to abandon the nefarious practice.

Riyaz Punjabi