

Combating the Menace of Terrorism: Issues & Challenges before our Nation

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“Terrorism has become the systematic weapon of a war that knows no borders or seldom has a face.”

-Jacques Chirac

Can we ever think of a society free of violence? Can the government ensure a peaceful society? What are the goals that the perpetrators of terror activities seek to achieve?

In a layman's language, terrorism is a sort of violence that is aimed to achieve some goal. These goals are generally those, which the government denies to the perpetrators of the terror activities. These monstrous activities have been ramped up in the recent weeks, in India. This calls for a strident response on the part of the government. Terrorism is more awful than the war. When there are the indications of war, we have the room for the tackle mechanisms. But the terror attacks leave no room for such mechanisms. Moreover the response of the Indian government has been not to the extent that it can be ensured that such activities are the past story.

Last few days have been a kind of sad and shameful for us all Indians. We boast of a country growing to become a super power but are not able to defend ourselves. All this is because of the attitude of the politicians who are interested in vote banks only, be it on lines of religion, caste or whatever. They have lost their conscience and would stoop down to any limit to win the war of votes but when it comes to the real war to defend the country they push forward our brave hearts to die. Yes I am referring to our armed forces, be it police, paramilitary, navy, air force or army.

“These four and half years are the worst in India's history of fighting terrorism. It is a spectacular four and a half years of mayhem (next to Iraq) when not one terrorist has been caught, not one major case solved (for vote banks)”.

-- Indian Express, Shekhar Gupta, Aug 2, 2008

4000+ were killed in terrorist attacks. India is next to Iraq both in terror deaths and terror incidents.

Source: The National Counterterrorism Centre in Washington & Dr. Subramanian Swamy

Every time when there is a bomb blast many innocent lives are lost and there is no accountability, no punishment of culprits, and no stringent law to protect its own citizens. What we get is the usual answer "We will deal with terrorism firmly"! A useless and impotent government worries about the political fallout if the real culprits get punished! Appeasement politics has gone up to its dirty peak.

Causes or roots of terrorism:

1) Lack of patriotism.

Coming to the roots of terrorism, let me touch patriotism. Just because I feel that terrorism has its main root in patriotism.

"Patriotism can be defined as loving or supportive feeling of oneself towards his mother land."

This is nothing but love towards country or mother nation. Suppose you do love your nation and so you are a patriot. What if this love develops a feeling of extreme hate towards other nations who are enemies historically or strategically to your mother nation? And you feel that the existence of your mother nation is threatened by the enemy nation whatsoever may be the actual fact. This case results in insecurity feeling in you towards your mother nation, you will lose your broad mindedness, and you want to harm whatever belonging to the enemy nation, its' citizen's, economy, infrastructure and whatever.

This is the case of cross border terrorism. Majority of the world countries are suffering from this kind of terrorism. Even prominent nations sign treaties among themselves for co-operation to curb this kind of terrorism.

Coming back to the definition of patriotism, suppose you are a patriot and you are enough broad minded to have a great understand upon the nation's political and economical state, if u believe that the status need to be improved by reforming the laws and bringing consistent change in the political policy. Choosing a path of violence for partial or complete achievement of better society is limited political terrorism. Civilians won't be targeted in this kind of terrorism.

Patriotism and its back bone:

You might be a present day patriot, but you are not a born patriot, because patriotism is not genetic. If you could realize, situations and social interactions made you a patriot, but not your self thinking and self motivation. You feel great and proud of your nation, just because 'some one' inspired you to that extend and made you feel so. The earliest record of that 'someone' would be your grandpa, grandma or your social teacher or someone else. Let us call them amateur historians.

They might have spoken very less about the future of the nation, but they stress upon the past of the nation, the way it came through various hurdles, the eminent personalities who helped the nation in due course, and many more things, which fascinate and inspire us to be a true patriot in our child hood days. Unfortunately, those amateur historians while focusing good they plot the bad very much more than how much actually it is. This results in hatred towards a community in the receiver, mostly a feeling of superiority or thirst for vengeance History is just like a knife, a knife is used by a doctor and also a murderer. It is the same way we have to use history to incur good rather than the bad. The misguided terrorists use this same history to inspire youth and make them join their path.

2) The problem needs a holistic approach.

It's not India or Pakistan's responsibility to obliterate the root of terrorism. It's an international issue at hand and all the nations need to unite irrespective of their status.

Anti-Terrorism Laws in India

- Ø TADA (Terrorist & Disruptive Activities Prevention Act) This was early on legislation from Congress that lapsed in 1995 due to campaign of activists on its misuse.
- Ø POTO (Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance): Revived by NDA in wake of 9/11 disaster in US in 2001 using models of similar laws in US/UK.
- Ø POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) was enacted by NDA in 2002 with joint sessions of parliament after terrorist attack on paliament. It expanded on POTO. This was opposed by Sonia Gandhi and her party and several congress ruled states were asked not to implement it.

How did other Countries dealt with Terrorism?

- Ø USA: After 9/11 there was not a single attack in United States since 2001. USA enacted Patriot's Act to cope with war on terror.
- Ø SPAIN: After 2004 Madrid train attack, not a single major attack occurred in Spain.
- Ø UK: In spite of continued threats, UK successfully thwarted diabolical plans of terrorists successfully by constant and diligent surveillance. It has POTA type laws.
- Ø Australia: Australia enacted Anti-Terrorism Act of 2005 that is elaborate with effective tools for security agencies to combat terrorism.
- Ø France: France has effective mechanisms of monitoring Mosques and terrorism activities

We strongly believe that the following action needs to be taken immediately:

1. A central federal agency to fight against the terrorists with intelligence wing and the commando wing. They should be authorized to take decisions in an emergency situation like this.
2. This federal agency should have the commando sections at all major cities in India.
3. Latest equipment to be provided to them both safety equipment and fighting equipment. It is high time that we do away with the 303 rifles which our policemen carry.
4. Continuous co-ordination between all the security agencies under a common control room system.
5. Fast track trial of terrorists, no lengthy legal process which normally takes years. No clemency to the terrorists convicted by the courts.
6. One very important point I want to mention - can we find a way to try the responsible politicians in our courts for the death of so many people, may be through a pil or whatever.