# DIALOGUE

## QUARTERLY

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# DIALOGUE

## QUARTERLY

**ASTHA BHARATI**
**DELHI**

*The views expressed by the contributors do not necessarily represent the view-point of the journal.*

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# Editorial Perspective

**Populism or Political Thuggee?**

The death toll of the Indore-Patna Express train derailment at Kanpur reached 150 on November 22, 2016. As happens after every railway accident, ex gratia payments are announced, politicians and bureaucrats rush to the accident site, and also visit hospitals. Further, the inquiries are conducted with the announcement that the guilty shall not be spared. Even the numerous earlier reports on the railway safety are dusted off, studied afresh, and forgotten, till fresh accidents take place. We often hear about the derailment of trains, which takes place due to the old tracks needing repair, or as the existing tracks are incapable of handling speedy trains. A perusal of the derailment figures—fifty-five during 2011, forty-eight during 2012, fifty-two during 2013, sixty during 2014, thirty-seven during 2015 (up to October , and sixty-two during 2016 (up to October) — does not present a happy picture, especially when we know that track revamp will take at least 40 years as of now.

Apart from track revamp, especially keeping in view the running of high speed trains, and laying new railway lines, manning thousands of unmanned railway gates, where frequent accidents and loss of life is a day to day occurring phenomenon, construction of thousands of flyovers. Here, it needs mention that casualties from railway surface crossing accidents, taking heaviest toll, account for 60% of all deaths and 30% of injuries arising from all consequential accidents on Indian Railways. It is an expedient measure keeping in view much higher number and the contemplated higher speed of the trains. Keeping these facts in view the Kakodkar Committee has recommended complete elimination of level crossings at a proposed cost of Rs. 50,000 crores.

It is alleged that most of the Indian railway coaches today are ICF designed ones, which are termed by several railway expert committees as "safety risk", and these committees advised their replacement by LHB (Linke Hoffman Busch) coaches. The ICF designed coaches, which are not meant for a speed above 80-90 kmph, piled up during

Kanpur railway accident, causing heavy toll. Although, Rail Coach Factories at Kapurthala, and Rae Bareli are manufacturing LHB coaches, and Integrated Coach factory at Chennai has also started manufacturing the same, there does not seem to be the end of the problem; at the present rate, anyway, the shift to safer LHB coaches may take 30 years at the present rate of replacement. It needs mention that out of around 44,000 coaches used today in our passenger and express trains, only 4,000 are LHB designed ones, and the remaining 40,000 are of old ICF design. Of course, many do not believe that ICF-built coaches are so much unsafe. Anyway, the replacement of the railway coaches is not the only problem, there are many others also, which need immediate tackling.

But looking after the "hardware" aspect, including mechanical modernization, etc., is not enough. Meeting the "software" needs are equally essential. Needless to say that most of these are safety-related needs and measures, needing our urgent attention. These are also essential for our developmental needs. Of course, equally essential is the change in the organizational structure of the railways, which is centralized and too top-heavy at present.

As mentioned above, Indian Railways needs to meet both its hardware and software demands, which will reduce its operational and systemic strain, reduce accidents and resultant loss of life, to the maximum. But all these need funds, and Indian Railways' finances remain perilous. A recent committee has come out with 106 recommendations, the projected implementation cost of the which shall be 103,110 crore, spread over five years. Not such expenditures shall have to be incurred to save the Indian Railways from the brink of collapse. As Prime Minister, Narendra Modi himself participated in the three day 'idea generation camp' and is personally interested in bringing desired change, there is every hope that the bad days for the Indian Railways shall be over.

For decades, the railways suffered due to the populist policies of not increasing the railway fares. The fact that this kind of populism ultimately caused the resource crunch and neglect of safety-oriented measures leading to the death of thousands, and was in reality, a political thuggee by a section of our stupid politicians was never discussed sincerely in our country.

— **B.B. Kumar**

# Naga Peace Talks: Steeped in Semantics

Patricia Mukhim*

The recent incident in Ukhrul district of Manipur where Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh's chopper was ostensibly sought to be grounded is akin to a suspense thriller. Perhaps the National Investigating Agency and the Manipur Police hot-shots have the real version. But as of now there are as many colourful adaptation of the story as there are differences between the hills and the valley. Here is one state where problems and responses to them must invariably be seen through the prism of the ethnic divide that defines Manipur. That there is no love lost between the people in the hills and the valley is a fact and it would be an exercise in self delusion to think otherwise. Writers like us who comment on issues across the region, are quickly despatched WhatsAap messages to convince us of the 'truth' or versions of it before we launch off. Each sender is at pains to impress upon his audience that we have to see things from his/her point of view since they are sole custodians of the truth. Hence, there were messages from Meitei friends who vented their spleen on the continued rent-seeking by the NSCN(IM) despite the 'peace' talks, thereby making everything terribly expensive for them in Manipur. Their rant of course does not clear our doubts about what actually happened on October 25. The Naga groups swear on everything they hold sacred that the whole drama was well orchestrated to make Ibobi Singh some sort of a hero and for the Congress to gain sympathy votes in the upcoming assembly elections. They also ask quite belligerently why Ibobi Singh wants to inaugurate a half-completed hospital project. But more than that the Tangkhul

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Nagas of Ukhrul have not got over the fact that it was Ibobi Singh as CM who stopped the NSCN(IM) supremo, Thuingaleng Muivah from visiting his people and his home in Somdal village.

Manipur is a state that is marked by serious discrepancies in terms of representation in the State Assembly. For instance, Chandel District with a population of 1,44,038 has only two constituencies, hence almost 72,000 people are to vote in each constituency. Ukhrul with a population of 1,83,115 has only 3 constituencies; Tamenglong with a population of 1,40,143 has three constituencies, Contrast this to Imphal West with a population of 5,14,683 and 13 constituencies and Imphal East 4,52,661 with 11 constituencies. The number of Scheduled Tribe MLAs in the house of 60 is only 19. Hence the Manipur Assembly is largely represented by Meiteis. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the dissension that has fragmented the politics of Manipur.

In a state that is already like a tinder box, it is easy to play the blame game. The Meiteis are now crying foul about their Chief Minister being the target of attack in NSCN (IM) territory and no one is taking things seriously. At the best of times the same people would rave and rant and curse the Chief Minister for not being able to deliver on development and of course on not taking a stand that is as confrontational as that adopted by the various hill tribes. This politics of dystopia plays out especially on social media. The Ibobo Singh episode has only given more grist to the glut of word missiles that adorn the Facebook pages of people of Imphal who are more tech-savvy and Naga scholars now very articulate, but also more stroppy than ever before. And of course the media gets a good story with which to fill up its pages. In all of this stand-offish situation it is the ordinary peasant on both sides of the divide who is suffering the most.

Coming back to the incident of October 25 last, while fingers are pointed to the NSCN (IM), as if this is the only group and its cadres the only ones with the bellicosity to fire a gun at Ibobi Singh, no attempts have been made to get to the bottom of the incident. The Nagas now say: "This is a clever set-up to abort the Naga peace talks." The Meiteis say: "How dare they fire at the State Chief Minister?" So this will be the dominant narrative until the people of Churachandpur decide to once again raise up the issue of the nine dead bodies and that is likely to happen because elections are all about stinking stuff that are sought to be raked up at appropriate times to discredit the enemy.

The Congress would not like the BJP government to succeed in its peace talks with the NSCN(IM). Hence the frenzy at which Ibobi is trying to reach out to the hills. He needs to stake a claim to having pushed some development project to Naga inhabited areas of Manipur – a sore point that has been at the heart of many a conflict in that state.

Naga peace talks must be the most frequently occurring word on Google. But that there are many troubled areas before arriving at a settlement of the Naga conundrum is no one's case. Truth cannot be told in politics and diplomacy. Conversation must be couched in semantics lest something falls out of place and the parties in conversation start sulking or shooting each other's heads off. It's a difficult path to tread; one that even angels would prefer to leave well alone knowing that heads they win, tails you lose. By 'they' here I mean the stalwarts of the Naga struggle and not just Mr. Th Muivah. There are many who have died for the cause and that is why failure is not an option. But that is precisely the problem. How would one define failure here? In any attempt to resolve a conflict all the cards must be on the table. Clear lines need to drawn by both parties about what they can concede and what they cannot. In the case of the Government of India, perhaps the first clear line to be drawn is the territorial integrity of Manipur. The second is that 'Naga sovereignty' as envisaged by those who took up the guns in the 1950s and 60's is no longer de jure because as far as Nagaland is concerned it has a constitutionally elected Government.

Nagaland state is an already well-settled issue. People have accepted the Constitution of India albeit with enough riders to craft out their own future under Article 371 (A). Naga people have voted times without number. The younger generation of Nagas are at ease in Delhi as they are in Shillong, Guwahati, Kohima or Mokokchung. It is perhaps the Nagas of Manipur who continue to yearn for a homeland – a utopia of sorts where all their problems would disappear. There is an inherent contradiction here. The Naga people living within the geographical boundaries of Nagaland state have learnt to live by the Constitution of India. What they are looking for in the future is better development, a strong anti-corruption legislation and better and more effective utilisation of resources and moral probity in their elected representatives. Looks like a tall order but no harm trying. The Nagas of Manipur perhaps ought to learn pragmatism.

Any solution to the NSCN (IM)'s demands must happen within that limitation.

# Defections Galore as Manipur Prepares for Election

Pradip Phanjoubam*

With elections to the Manipur Legislative Assembly barely five months away, the ruling Congress is in a siege. Three of its senior legislators have abandoned their parent ship forsaking their Assembly seats as well in the dying months of its current terms. One of the three, and the senior most among them, Yumkham Erabot, has already joined the rival BJP and if everything goes as anticipated, the remaining two, Nongthombam Biren and Francis Ngajokpa, will also be following suit. Given Manipur's brand of politics, it is anybody's guess if more senior Congress legislators will desert camp and flock to what at this moment is seen as the greener pasture of the BJP camp.

The immediate reasons cited by the three are, however, similar only to the extent that they all claim they were compelled to do what they have done by their voters. This however, in all likelihood, is not the only reason, and each would probably have their individual compulsions. In the case of Erabot, his rivalry with the Chief Minister, Okram Ibobi, is well known, and he had once even projected himself as competitor to the state's top job. He was ultimately dropped from the Ibobi cabinet and he must have realized that he would have no future in the Congress, so long as Ibobi remains in charge.

Biren in an interview after his defection said that he wants to be in a position to serve the people better and there was no scope for this in a Congress government. He was a Minister in the last Congress government but not in the current one, and a rebellion he was part of caused Ibobi to reshuffle his cabinet mid-term, however Ibobi chose not to include him in his new ministry. Francis was a Minister till this

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last reshuffle when he was dropped. One of the parameters for dropping ministers in this reshuffle was the performance of the Congress in grassroots elections in the respective constituencies of the ministers, and it may be recalled, Francis's Maram constituency returned no Congress in the last ADC election. At least in his case, there may be considerable truth in the claim that his voters do not want the Congress anymore.

There is nothing legally or morally wrong with politicians switching parties, unseemly as they appear. This provision for political divorce, when it is determined by ideological visions, in fact is an effective democratic deterrent on unwarranted authoritarian tendencies of leaders. Every individual remains free in the ultimate analysis and the cabinet thus is forced only to be an enlightened partnership in which all minsters are equal and the Chief Minister is only the first among equals.

However, as the world just witnessed in Arunachal Pradesh, in Manipur too such defections are seldom on ideological grounds but avarice. In the styles and manner of a banana republic, politicians defect only so that they are in positions of personal gains. The current floor crossings would have looked all well and part of progressive and acceptable ideology based politics had it happened three years ago, when the Congress was still in power at the Centre, and the Assembly still had enough life to live.

Even if these defections came late in the day, it would still have had a semblance of an ideological struggle, had the defectors not rushed to the camp which is projected by many to come to power in the next Assembly. Let the bluff be called. As in any banana republic, it is still power and the plunders that come with it which lures politics in Manipur.

Having accepted this, let us try a little crystal gazing into what lies ahead. Given the fact that an opinion poll done last month by India Today and Axis, gave the BJP a favourable verdict to form the next government in the state, the Congress may not find it easy to keep its flock from further straying.

In fact, India Today and Axis may have committed an electoral offence by their report for attempting to influence public mood, wittingly or otherwise, ahead of an election. It must however be kept in mind that it has been proven time and again that not just pre-poll opinion surveys but even exit polls, where sample voters are asked who they voted for

immediately, as they exit from the polling stations, have proven more often than not farcically wrong. The way NDTV ended up looking from the wrong end of the telescope in their exit poll in the last Bihar election is evidence enough.

In Manipur today, the BJP is upbeat and understandably too for in small dependent states, the general feeling is, it is safer to be on the same side as the party in power at the Centre, and it is the BJP which is in this position now. The Congress camp must be worried, but their leaders are still confident that the departure of some MLAs would not make a dent on the party's electoral fortune. Manipur's 2017 election promises to be an interesting political battlefield drama to watch indeed.

# Countering Jihadi Terrorism – The Ideological Challenge

## Rajiv Kumar*

Recent reports of some Indian Muslim youths joining ISIS to fight in Syria and Iraq as well as reports of the use of internet by ISIS activists of trying to win over adherents from Indian Muslim youths has raised the question as to how ISIS and similar organisations are able to influence Muslim youths everywhere with their brand of jihadi ideology? While we in India have been fighting the battle against terrorism for some time now and have been successful in containing them through politico-military efforts as in Punjab and to a very considerable extent in North East, our efforts to contain jihadi brand of terrorism has not been so successful. The reasons for them are not far to seek. The jihadi brand of terrorism presents us with a separate set of challenges as it is influenced by various extraneous factors and, therefore, the political solution to the same are not possible within the country. It is for this reason that the jihadi brand of terrorism poses us much greater challenges than that posed by any other. An important reason for the spread of jihadi terrorism in the world has been that in most of the countries this has been treated solely as a law and order and security issue and has been treated as such. Even in India we have followed the same route to containing terrorism. But the basic reason for spread of jihadi terrorism is ideological and unless this aspect is tackled headon, the battle against jihadi terrorism cannot be won.

What is it that drives Muslim youths towards the jihadi ideology? Why is it that the Muslim youths from as diverse countries as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Russia or France are attracted towards an ideology

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which enjoins upon them to a continuous war against the non-believers and despite the risks associated with such activities, more and more Muslim youths are gravitating towards this ideology. Most of the western governments are worried about the growing influence of ISIS and are trying to contain the activities of ISIS in Syria and Iraq militarily, hoping that victory against ISIS in Syria and Iraq would "solve" the ISIS problem and stop the growth of jihadi terrorism in their countries at least, if not globally. The argument advanced by the supporters of the military approach against ISIS is that once the base from where these jihadi terrorists are operating are not available the intensity of jihadi terrorism will abate. While it is true that destroying the base for jihadi terrorism, which is currently in Syria and Iraq, may slow down the jihadi movement, it can not be fully defeated unless it is tackled at an ideological level.

This assessment is based upon the study of jihadi terrorist groups since they started to make their presence felt. When the jihadi terrorism began in the 90s, it was al-Qaeda which was leading them. After 9/11 and the war against terrorism, it was argued by Western nations that if al-Qaeda was neutralised, the jihadi terrorism could be contained. It was on this premise that US forces attacked Afghanistan. Despite many setbacks that US and the Afghan government has suffered there, there is no denying the fact that al-Qaeda has been very significantly damaged by the action of Western forces not only in Afghanistan but also elsewhere. But does that mean that the spread of jihadi terrorism has been contained? Can we even say that jihadi terrorism today is less potent globally than say in 2006. The answer is a definite No. Instead of al-Qaeda, the jihadis are now led by a more extremist group ISIS and the group has adherents all over the world with groups such as Al Shabab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria pledging allegiance to them. Even if ISIS is defeated in Syria and Iraq and neutralised completely, it does not mean end of jihadi terrorism and some new group or other may crop up somewhere else to give the lead. So what drives the Muslim youths to join diverse groups such as al-Qaeda, ISIS or even smaller groups such as Boko Haram or even Lashkar e Jhangvi in Pakistan who all believe Jihad is the only proper course for them to follow. Four key elements of the jihadi narrative have been identified by some western researchers. These are :

    1. The Islam is under attack from the Western crusaders and their allies.

2. Jihadis are defending against this attack.
3. The actions they take in defence of Islam are proportionately just and religiously sanctified, and therefore ,
4. It is the duty of all good Muslims to support these actions.

Indeed the whole thrust of the arguments advanced by the Islamic jihadists are that the actions taken by them are in response to the oppression against Muslims and therefore are justified.

Another important reason for the attraction of the Muslim youths towards the extremist ideology is that the teachings of many important Islamic scholars have historically been open to interpretations which support jihadi viewpoints. While many of the Islamic scholars had written these words in a different era and in a different context, when these are taken in isolation and out of context provides justification for the acts of jihadis. To illustrate, a prominent eleventh/twelfth century Islamic scholar Imam Abu Hamid Al Ghazali had enjoined Muslims to go to Jihad at least once a year. In India, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhandi, the sixteenth/seventeenth century Islamic scholar wrote: "Kufr and Islam are opposed to each other. The progress of one is possible only at the expense of the other and co-existence between the two contradictory faiths is unthinkable." He has further mentioned that "The honour of Islam lies in insulting Kufr and Kaffirs. One who respects Kaffirs, dishonours the Muslims." The famous Saudi Islamic scholar and the founder of Wahabi school of thought Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahab has stated: "Even if the Muslims abstain from shirk and are believer in oneness of God, their faith cannot be perfect unless they have enmity and hatred in their action and speech against non-Muslims." There are many such examples of writings of the Islamic scholars which can be quoted and which are liberally quoted by the present day jihadi ideologues. The message which comes out of these teachings is that of Islamic supremacism. It holds that Islam must dominate the world and it is the duty of all Muslims to assist in this process. While these teachings are not new, what has made these views widespread is the growth of internet and social media. When the disenchanted Muslim youths, who find themselves alienated from the society, whether in Muslim majority countries such as Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries where the alienation stem from the economic inequality or in Western countries where the alienation is on account of identity, they find these views very appealing. Incidentally, this is the reason why most of the

ISIS and al-Qaeda recruits, apart from the affected countries are from countries such as Saudi Arabia or Western countries.

If the basic reason for the spread of jihadi terrorism is ideological, it stands to reason that to tackle this we need to have an ideological response. Only recently this realization seemed to have been made. For considerable length of time the response to jihadi terrorism was similar to that practiced against other variants i.e. the politico-military approach. The security forces of most of the countries have taken strong measures against such militants whether in Afghanistan, Indonesia or USA. Even countries such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have taken the issue of terrorism within their country seriously. In many Western countries there have been socio-political responses by trying to ensure that the alienation of Muslim youths is not channelized towards jihadi terrorism. However, there has been very few attempts to tackle it on ideological plane.

India has so far not been as badly affected by this as some other countries have been. One reason for this has been India's syncretic culture. In India there is also no identity crisis which can push the alienated Muslim youths towards jihadi terrorism. It is only on account of these factors that despite the fact that India has the second largest Muslim population in the world, only a miniscule number of Muslim youths (the estimates range between 30 to 60) have gone to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS. It is also heartening to note that despite long drawn problems in Jammu and Kashmir where efforts have been made by Pakistani based groups to give it a jihadi colour, there has been no report of any Muslim youth from other parts of India taking up arms in J&K. This shows that there are no strong push factors which is present in India. Having said that it is clear that even though the push factors are weak in India, the pull factors of jihadi ideology as explained earlier are as relevant to Indian Muslims as they are to Muslims elsewhere. This issue is extremely important since there are already indications of jihadi ideology taking root among some sections of Muslim society in India. So far this is generally considered not to have reached a dangerous level though some scholars do believe that ideologically this has already reached a threatening level. Whatever may be the extent of actual penetration of jihadi ideology among Indian Muslim youths, there is no denying that this presents India a major threat not only ideologically but also for India's national security. While both the Government of India as well as the society at large are

fully aware of the threat terrorism poses to India and steps have been taken to counter these on a security plane, there have been only a limited effort to look into its ideological genesis and counter it at that level. The Government has so far kept itself aloof on what it considers a purely religious debate. Most of the moderate Muslim leaders have only mentioned that Islam is a religion of peace and does not condone violence against innocents. Some efforts have also been made by Muslim clerics to tackle this issue. About 70000 Barelvi Muslim clerics issued a fatwa against ISIS during the festival of Urs-e-Razvi of Dargah Ala Hazrat. Also in Eid in 2015, some Indian Muslim clerics declared that any Indian Muslim taking part in terrorist activities should not have the Namaz-e-janaja read during funeral services. However, the response of both the Muslim leadership – religious as well as lay – and also the Government and civil society in this respect has been not to the extent required, given the nature of threat.

Other countries have tried different approaches to meet this challenge. UK was one of the first countries to try to tackle the jihadi issue at the ideological level. They introduced a programme known as "Prevent" According to the authors of this strategy the "Prevent" will

    A. Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism,
    B. Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and
    C. Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

The basic approach is to involve the affected local communities in trying to contain the radicalisation ideologically and further to involve the local community to try to influence the radicalised individuals to bring them back into the fold. France on the other hand took an approach wherein they tried to homogenise the society into a "French" way. The ban on burqas and recent controversy regarding use of burqinis in French beaches are a part of the overall approach. The approach is more legal than ideological. Singapore has also produced a comprehensive counter terrorism doctrine which also emphasises on meeting the threat at the ideological level. The Indonesian approach where the state has collaborated with moderate Islamic elements to try to undercut the influence of jihadi ideologues have also yielded positive results and the influence of groups such as Jemah-e-Islamiya has been contained to some extent.

Despite these steps the jiahadis have been more than successful in their effort to radicalise more and more Muslim youths and take them

in the jihadi fold. So why is this happening? First reason is the limitations of the Community Approach to tackle the disenchanted Muslim youth. As mentioned earlier, the governments and societies are trying to win over the disenchanted Muslim youth through the use of community leaders by showing them that the system is not as unjust as portrayed by the jihadi leadership and they are being treated fairly by their political and social leaders. This could have worked in earlier times but thanks to the proliferation of technology coupled with the dextrous use of the same by jihadis it is not very effective nowadays. A stray incident in one part of the world is now utilized by the jihadis, backed by one picture or video which may be genuine or doctored, to illustrate that Islam is under attack. The Community leaders' words may be important on local issues but they lose their relevance in deciding what is happening in distant parts of the world. Thus, if burqinis are banned by some French municipalities, it is taken as assault on Islam; if Israelis attack a Palestinian outpost, it is again considered as a threat to Islam. Whether there is an incident in Thailand, USA or India, every small incident is magnified to support their narrative. Many Muslim majority countries also unwittingly reinforce this narrative by portraying events which have got nothing to do with action against Islam but which are purely local in origin to be assault upon Muslims. Thus, when Rohingiya Muslims suffer in Myanmar or there is some disturbance in Kashmir valley, it is portrayed by many Muslim countries as Islam vs the rest. This is being done by the regimes in these countries to gain support of the religious elements there where this support could be vital to the existence of the regime. For example, Saudi Arabian monarchy depends on support from its religious establishment and, therefore, in most cases follows the Islamic orthodox views. Pakistani establishments, particularly the Army, has traditionally used the religious militants both against the Pakistani political parties as well as against India and Afghanistan. When these jihadi groups are used by the government and the establishments, it becomes difficult for such regimes to counter them at the ideological level. The policy of supporting some jihadi groups to serve their ends and to oppose others makes it impossible to have an effective counter jihadi narrative.

Added to this is the extreme violent culture being promoted by the jihadi groups in some Muslim majority countries. Even if the governments in these countries are committed to take action against

these elements they are not strong enough to do so. A classic example is Bangladesh. There the government is keen to stem the tide of jihadi extremism but is unable to control their activities. Vast majority of Bangladeshi intellectuals are against jihadi extremism but they are mostly silent. Few who dare to speak out have in recent past been brutally murdered. This makes the propagation of counter narrative more difficult as anybody promoting such views are accused of being anti–Islam and are open to threat of violence and more. Even in India it is difficult for a moderate Muslim to talk openly against the religious fundamentalism without being accused of being anti-Islam. Similar is the case in many Muslim majority countries, be it Indonesia, Malaysia or Jordan – all moderate Muslim countries – where most of the moderate Muslims are too intimidated to come out openly against the jihadi viewpoint.

As mentioned previously the teachings of many prominent Islamic scholars are open to interpretations which are supportive of jihad. The jihadi groups make full use of these views and these are being very aggressively propagated by them, thus making the counter narratives being proposed by moderate Muslims unacceptable to many Muslim youths. The Ulemas in many countries, even those supported by the state are aggressively promoting this view. Thus Saudi Arabia which is in a unique position among all, being the custodian of Holy mosques has a clergy which openly supports radical Islam. Given all these factors it is hardly surprising that the counter narratives of moderate Islamic scholars does not have as many takers as that of the jihadis. So what are the options – to the world at large which is facing this problem and to India in particular where because of our demography this issue is of critical importance?

It is obvious that since the issues to be tackled are ideological in nature rather than being merely a law and order issue, the response has to be ideological. Of course this does not and should not preclude taking strong and punitive action against the hard core jihadis who in any case are unable to be reformed. The main effort, however, has to be directed at meeting this threat at the ideological level. The actions required to be taken will obviously depend upon the peculiar circumstances in each country. The ideological effort to counter jihadi extremism thus cannot be a "one size fits all" solution. In the western countries the most important issue is that of alienation of the Muslim

youths which attracts them to the jihadi ideology. In such societies it is important to tackle the issue of integration. This however requires a very delicate balancing act as the actions taken by some countries such as France and Belgium have the potential to further alienate the Muslim community rather than making them more integrated to the societies.

In the Muslim majority countries it is the responsibility of both the Governments as well as the religious and social leaders to promote moderate Islam which can and should co-exist with other faiths.The Islamist Supremacist approach being propagated by many religious leaders needs to be tempered. It is also important that the Muslim countries should make efforts not to portray each perceived challenges they face as Muslim vs non-Muslim issue. Even if we believe that the cause of Palestinians is genuine, by making it a Muslim vs non-Muslim issue, actually the importance of the issue is being side tracked. Similar is the case of perceived grievances in Kashmir valley, in Myanmar or in Thailand. An organisation such as OIC has to play a more proactive role in improving the economic situation of the Muslim countries, most of whom are poor, rather than espousing a Muslim vs non-Muslim political narrative. This narrative plays directly in the hands of the jihadi elements and hurts these Islamic nations themselves the most. It is also important that more efforts are made by Muslim intellectuals and social leaders in these countries to propagate those aspects of teachings of Islamic scholars who preach tolerance and co-existence rather than violence and jihad. Indeed the religious texts written centuries earlier are liable to various interpretations and unless a very concerted effort is made by the governments of Muslim majority countries and by the Muslim social and religious leaders, the narrative which suits the jihadis and which is being aggressively propagated by such elements will gain more adherents.

In the countries such as India, where Muslims are in minority but form a significant population, the responsibility has to be more on the Muslim social and religious leaders. The role of the Government has to be only to support the moderate social and religious leaders without directly getting involved in theological issues. This support, however, should be robust and such leaders should be provided security and other support so that they need not be afraid to openly counter the jihadi narrative. It is also important that due consideration is given by

the governments in such countries to tackle the contentious local issues involving Muslims expeditiously since it is such issues if not handled properly which give opportunities to the jihadis to exploit the Muslim youths.

While today every nation in the world has become alive to the dangers posed by the Islamic jihadi terrorists, unfortunately in most cases the response has been a military or security-centric one. While these responses are necessary it is important to realise that the problem will not go away unless we meet them headon on an ideological plane. As the study above indicates while the primary responsibility to meet this challenge lies with the Muslim political, social and religious leaders all across the world, equally important is the role of non-Muslim leadership to ensure that jihadi leadership does not get the fodder to enable them to win more adherents within the disaffected Muslim youths.

# Reflections on 'Islamic' Terrorism with special reference to West Asia and North Africa (WANA)

Anwar Alam*

### Introduction: Meaning of Terrorism

Scholarly debates on the scope and definition of 'terrorism' remained inconclusive, partly due to the lack of consensus on the form of violence, which would be considered as legitimate, ethical, moral and legal.[1] This has led to differences among nations in their attitudes towards the consideration of act and scope of terrorism and anti-terrorist legislation. Thus for Turkey, the thrust of anti-terror law is not for the protection of people from act of terrorism, but for the security of state from all ideas and actions that has implications for harming the state. It is for this reason that the International Criminal Court has not included the terrorist acts as punishable offences.[2]

However, notwithstanding its problematic definition, terrorism as a 'form of politics,' particularly oppositional politics to establishment, is an old phenomenon, which has acquired a new form and new meaning in the late twentieth century. Three aspects of this new form and meaning are: a culture of suicide bombing, indiscriminate killing of *unsuspected* innocent people and invisibility of terrorists meaning 'enemy within but invisible.' It is from this point of view that the peculiar evil of terrorism is 'not only the killing of innocent people but also the intrusion of fear into everyday life, the violation of private

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purposes, the insecurity of public spaces, the endless coerciveness of precaution.' It is this form of violence that differentiates terrorism from all other forms of violence including the revolution politics that aims to overthrow the state by use of force, that I would like to situate the discourse of 'Islamic' terrorism with reference to West Asia and North Africa, which currently occupies the largest share of all terrorist activities in the world. Terrorist groups like Al- Qaida, ISIS, the Egyptian Jammah-al Islamiya, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Shabab in Kenya, various Talibani groups in Af-Pak area and many others  fit within this discourse of terrorism and which often carries the combination of Islamic, local, sectarian, tribal, national, regional and international grievances.

## What is 'Islamic' About Terrorism?

However before one further proceeds, a clarification with regard to the usage of term 'Islamic terrorism' is required. President Obama and many others prefer a colour-blind word term  'terrorist' in oder to (a) avoid its presumed connectivity with Islam, (b) to deprive the terrorists of any Islamic legitimacy, (c) to prevent alienation and misconception among Muslims that might occur due to such usage, (d) to solicit their support in the fight against terrorism and finally (e) to develop  global anti-terrorist cooperation on the basis that terrorism and terrorist has nothing to do with religion, nationality, race, colour, caste, creed, culture etc. Notwithstanding the merit of the argument, particularly from the counter-terrorist strategy point of view, however it treats the phenomenon of terrorism or terrorists very narrowly – in ''technical – physical sense' to be eliminated through the application of force and ignores its ideological dimension.

However the application of hard and soft power in the aftermath of 9/11 including 'War on Terror,' sharing terror related intelligence, squeezing the financial sources of terror outfits, devising a political strategy of 'good Muslims' vs 'bad Muslims.'[4] along with package of democratization of Muslim societies with a focus on 'strengthening of civil society' has not met with success in eliminating the threat of Islamic terrorism. Rather it expanded vertically (western countries) and horizontally (non-western countries) under various forms. Neither the outspoken Islamic denouncement of Islamic terrorism from several national and international Islamic agencies and prominent individuals has resulted in completely robbing off phenomenon of Islamic terrorism

of its Islamic legitimacy and thus rendered the Islamic terrorism beyond the boundary of Islamicness/Muslimness.

Terrorism in essence is a modern ideological phenomenon which thrives on the ideological construction of 'absolute other'– both internal as well as external. Secular revolutionary politics in the past and in present too with legacy of violence continue to rely heavily on the role of ideology as motivational source. It is in this sense that a particular tradition or narrative of Islam — text, institutions and history – whether contextually constructed or its literal understanding — factors in the ideological mobilisation of Muslim political actors leading to degeneration into terrorist activities depending upon the context. Thus a denial of connectivity of particular Islamic tradition with terrorism is of not much help but identifying, isolating and delegitimising such narrative is far more important, no matter how difficult this process is given the lack of authoritative universal Islamic institutional structure, something like a Church,' in the Muslim societies. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to state that even though colonization, imperialism, modernization and under-development have affected most parts of the world; yet, the violent reaction from a section of Muslim community to this process has no parallel in other faiths, communities or groups. In its intensity, frequency and scale Islamic terrorism has surpassed all other forms of terrorism.

## Reasons for Production of Islamic Terrorism

What has caused and sustained the minuscule trend of Islamic terrorism including ISIS, al-Qaida and other terrorist groups in the WANA region and elsewhere, despite the concerted international effort to delegitimize the same? A part of the explanation to this trend lies in the covert and overt support of state actors to such non-state actors in order to protect, advance and defend one's own narrowly defined 'national interest.' Thus the 'internationalization of Islamic terrorism' in Afghanistan, was partly due to the support extended by USA, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to al-Qaida and Taliban in Afghanistan. If the United States facilitated the 'grouping of international mujaheedin' in Afghanistan primarily to check the erstwhile Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf, the Saudis's support to Sunni-Pastun Taliban was meant to check influence of Iran through Shii-Hazara Afghani militants in Afghanistan; whereas Pakistan saw in Afghanistan crisis a golden

opportunity to mobilize resources –money and arms (primarily through US-Saudi nexus), to advance its nuclear programme, to settle the border with Afghanistan and finally to use Taliban militants as foot soldiers to fight in Kashmir and conduct other terrorist operations within India so as to generate pressure on India to concede Kashmir to Pakistan. Al-Nushra and ISIS/ISIL/DASH too came to an age on account of initial support extended by Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey along with US's 'politics of indifference' in the region. The Saudis and Qataris primarily supported IS as 'Sunni mobilization' against Iran led growing Shii influence in the region. Turkey saw IS as 'resistance forces' to the Bathist regime in Syria as well as a 'safe guard' to prevent the development of Kurdish republic at its southern border.

But beyond the political use of Islamic extremists/terrorist groups by the state and regimes, the historical roots of this menace lies in the colonial context of Islam, development of Wahhabism as political creed and modern tradition of institutionalised violence-reinforced in greater degree and mostly used against the peripheral Muslim segment of Arab societies by the post-colonial 'secular' Arab regimes. The modern colonial context unleashed the process of redefining Islam as ideology at least since the eighteenth century. All modern reformist Islamic movements since then have contributed to the process of ideologisation of Islam at the cost of its moral and ethical dimensions; making it into an instrumental object to achieve political and social ends.

More specifically, the development of Wahhabism resulted in the significant transformation in the meaning of doctrine of Tawhid – the core of Islam – with serious implications for the growth of Islamic radicalism and militancy.  This vision of Tawhid or what is called *Wahdut al-Shuhud* (All from Allah), the origin of which goes back to bitter Islamic theological contestations in the eleventh century and continues till date, refers to a very sharp, literal, binary, rigid, ideological, vertical and exclusive, as compared to its more fuzzy nuances under *Wahdut al-Wujud (Allah is Allah)*  understanding of *Tawhid in pre-modern times,* in which the notion of Allah emerged as 'marker' of differentiated Muslim identity vis-a-vis other faiths with following specific  connotations:

    (A) a vertical relationship between Allah via Quran, *Sunnah and hadith* and mankind without any mediatory role of Islamic agencies—learned Ulema, Sufis, institutions and interpretative textual traditions;

(B) Allah has to be imagined as a complete separate uncreated entity from all created things;

(C) Allah as the sole source of authority over everything and the sole object of worship, glory, praise and expectation for mankind and

(D) any association with Allah or expectation in any form other than Allah is considered *Shirk* (unbelief).

All subsequent Islamic reformist movements – both political and non-political – have operated within the above discursive meaning of *Tawhid* as laid down in Wahhabi-Salfi narratives. Today this meaning of *Tawhid* has become the standard bearer of Muslim understanding of Islam owing to multiple factors – the most important of which is the development of petrol dollar and improved means of communication and transportation that allow the Wahhabi-Saudi State to 'universalize' its 'local' version of *Tawhid* as narrated above at rapid pace across many parts of the Muslim world, particularly in the urban areas.

Such understanding of *Tawhid* has multiple implications in radicalising a section of Muslim youths, the most important of which is lack of legitimacy of any secular rule or law which contradicts or appears to contradict the fundamental tenets of Islam. One consequence of this process is a gradual acceptance of an idea among large number of Muslims that by restoring back to Allah's rule (strictest form of monotheism), which is considered to have been corrupted through long process of *shirk* and *bida (innovations including ideas, practices and institution that was non-existent during the period of Prophet Muhammad)* committed by Muslim governments and people alike with or without the association of other (mainly the West), the pristine glory of Islam can be retrieved and good fortune of the Muslims be assured. This 'material' hope, howsoever illusory would it may be, sustains the preference of 'Sharia law' over any form of 'man-made law' among large section of Muslims, notwithstanding their ignorance of Sharia law, as former is forever 'sacralised.' That is why the idea of 'Islamic state,' no matter how faceless and abstract it is, continues to retain an appeal among large segment of Muslim societies, more so in the context of failure of authoritarian, secular Arab republican regimes to address the issue of 'justice' and 'material deprivation' of Muslim masses.

The search for 'Islamic state' of 'Sharia rule' becomes more sharp with the gradual decline of legitimacy of Islamic institutions, which used to confer Islamic legitimacy on political leadership as well as

perform mediatory role between ruler and the ruled; and erosion of much of internal sufistic, catholic, syncretic, pluralistic, accommodative, and humanistic traditions of Islam in the name of denouncing them as *shirk* and *bida* by modern Islamic reformist movements as well as by the modern nation state in the name of obstacle to progress and development. One implication of this process is the development of an understanding of Islam among a literate, bilingual, urban Muslim youth, which pays a very low premium on human life, promotes a binary world view of Muslim vs other (which includes even practicing common Muslims), imagines 'homogenised ummatic unity of all Muslims,' focuses more on identity discourses and decisively rejects the idea of pluralism, democracy, nationalism, secularism and politics of accommodation and negotiation.

This leaves a large number of Muslims with a question: how to effectively implement the Commandments of Allah as enshrined in Quran, *Hadith and Sunnah*? With this question in mind a tectonic shift – under the condition of colonial modernity – took place in the notion of *Sharia, Dawa, Ummah,* Hijrat, and *Jihad,* which are more literal, ideological, exclusive, technical, legalistic, hierarchical and violence prone, the discursive meaning of which is shared by a good numbers of moderates and the radical elements alike. Collectively all these notions in the hands of radical/militant youths served as instruments to implement 'imagined God's laws' with a high degree of violence.[5] This in part explains the cult of 'suicide bombing' and the indiscriminate killings of people, the majority of which are Muslims, by Islamic extremists,

## Specificity About WANA Region its Implication for Terrorism

The above historical process along with complex psycho-analytical factors of victimhood and marginalisation as well as of supremacism have played its role in the emergence of Islamic terrorist organizations such as al-Jihad, Tanzim, al-Qaida, Taliban, ISIL and many others across the Muslim world. However apart from this general process of development of terrorism, there are four additional specific factors that have specifically influenced the course of Islamic terrorist groups in the WANA region. First, the strategic value of the region that warranted the deeper involvement of the West in the region and its close

association with 'authoritarian secular or monarchial rulers; second, Islam in the region continues to be a barometer of legitimacy of the government and hence politics couched in Arabic language, the language of Islam, whether conducted by the establishment or opposition alike continues to operate with discursive space of Islam. In other words, Islam is the most dominant discourse in the region, not merely a privatise or public 'religion' in the terms of post-Reformation understanding of religion. Third, the Islamic opposition to the regime, including the violent ones, remained the most dominant form of opposition in the region and hence subjected to regime's brutal suppression. Fourth, if not the least, the state regimes in the region suffer from acute legitimacy deficiency, historically weak state institutions and institutionalised sectarian outlook with a result that the regime has traditionally employed the 'excess of force' in order to govern and survive or what a German thinker Carl Schmitt has called '*state of exception.*' This has produced a 'violence induced public culture' in which 'embedded violence' has acquired the form of normalcy. All these specificities of the region have shaped the violence prone, anti-west polemics of Islamic terrorist organisations in the region. Thus, the crimes and violence perpetuated by ISIL and other terrorist organisation might look horrendous for non-Arabs; it is not so for the internal Arabs living there as they are accustomed to live with such reality. Regimes in the Arab world have brutal record in suppressing all forms of dissent.

## Locating ISIL Within WANA Political Trajectory

ISIL is as much a product of inter-state Middle Eastern politics as it stems from the failure of Arab Spring to institute a democratic transformation of the region. Though the Islamists were not a factor in making of Arab Spring, which, to a significant extent, jolted the authoritarian foundation of Arab state system, the post-Arab spring witnessed political ascendancy of the Islamists in many parts of the Arab region with Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and al-Nahada even forming the government for a few years before the restoration of secular authoritarian order in the form of Al-Sisi military government in Egypt. The political paralysis and anarchy in the region that was set in motion  following the failure of Arab Spring  provided the favourable context to the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)  under the leadership of Al-

Baghdadi to unilaterally declare the establishment of ISIL in 2013 by announcing the merger of the Syrian Jabhat al Nusra and Islamic state of Iraq (ISI) (notwithstanding the protest and opposition of Al-Nusra to such declaration; though its dominant faction went with the formation of ISIL). The declaration of formation of ISIL, later renamed as Islamic State (IS) after gaining control over Mosul, the most important province after Baghdad in Iraq, was meant to present a credible Islamic political alternative before the Muslim Arab masses, who were increasingly alienated by the secular regimes; and not merely aimed at the opposition to the Syrian regime.

It may be noted that the ISI, which was formed in 2004 had virtually collapsed in 2007, was regrouped under the leadership of al Baghdadi in 2010 who managed to bring all Islamic militants/terrorists associated formerly with Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) (following the assassination of its leader, Zaraqwai, in 2006), the segments of Sunni Iraqi tribal leaders belonging to loose federation, the Sahwa (Awakening Council) and the section of Sunni Iraqi segments who were increasingly alienated with rapid Shittization of Iraqi administration under the rule of Prime Minister Maliki (2006-2014).[6] The ISI rapidly managed to regain its lost ground and expanded its influence under the favourable condition of political vacuum created by withdrawal of US army in 2011, political balkanisation of Iraq into Shii South, Sunni Central and Kurdhish North, rapid erosion of the authority of Assad regime in Syria and the overall regional context of Shii-Sunni rivalry, particularly shaped on account of bitter Iranian- Saudi leadership competition in the region and thus managed to establish ISIL/IS with electrifying speed over a good parts of Syria and Iraq.

## What is Unique About IS?

Much has been said about mindless, barbaric, violence, (reminiscent of medieval savagery) generated by the IS and its territorial nature, which was considered something unique in the annals of history of terrorism. A large number of studies focussed on the strength and invincibility of IS, which it draws from control of territory, provision of service, system of taxation, its control over petroleum products, extortions, smuggling, salaried civil servants, its own gold currency, sophisticated media communication, pool of reserved Muslim army from across the world to fight in the defence of Islamic state. In short, unlike al-Qaida,

it functioned like a normal state. However it is not the territoriality, which is the unique dimension of IS as has been profoundly stressed in the scholarly writings; the terrorist with claim over territory had been previously existed in the form of Taliban state in Afghanistan. However the Taliban state represented a case of 'peripheral terrorism,' which was of not much concern to the West till 9/11 happened; whereas IS posed a specific threat to the security of international order, the West, particularly European neighbourhood and stability of the region in two fundamental senses:

First, its connectivity with Arab heartland and restoration of Caliphate in the hand of *(pure)* Arab hands, unlike in the past when the caliphate was passed to non-Arab Turkish hands, which is considered to be an important factor, at least for the radical Muslims, for the fall of Islam. Moreover, even though the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood is the largest mass based Arab Islamic organisation; however in the eyes of Arabs (that includes Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine and UAE), the Maghrib (which includes Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) is not Arabs but Arabic speaking people. Second, it has successfully questioned the modern notion of territorial nationalism, upon which rests the modern international order, and unsettled the state-boundary structure created by Sykes-Pickot Agreement in the aftermath of the first world war and reserved the right to represent the global Muslim community in the name of Caliphate of Islamic State.

The combination of these two factors along with its rapid success over parts of Iraq and Syria partly explains why IS enjoys greater legitimacy over all other radical Islamic organisations and attracted a section of mindless youth from across the globe travelling to Syria and Iraq in support of IS with an understanding and hope that the newly born 'Islamic state' under the leadership of 'real Sunni Arabs' is a successor to 'Islamic state' created by Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century AD and hence will once again redeem the glory of Islam. It is for this reason that Europe is more alarmed with the development of IS, as WANA is not only the neighbourhood of Europe, but a large diaspora of Arab Muslims live in Europe as well as the fact that it is threat of 'Arab Islam' that has, to a large extent, shaped the Occidental discourse of Orientalism, which has an implication for shaping the discourse of 'securitisation of Islam' and 'Islamophobia' in Europe in recent years.

The barbaric violence generated by the IS or its predecessor ISIL in the context of civil war both in Iraq and Syria is a part of 'foundational violence' connected with birth, consolidation and expansion of any ideological state. Both as a part of ideological conviction and as a part strategy the self-declared IS Caliphate used the exclusive, masculine and violence prone West Asian state tradition, as well as Islamic narratives for instilling fear, disciplining and coercing people to support the Caliphate. However the horrendous crime record and discrimination of Alvi dominated Bathist Assad regime in Syria and the Malki regime in Iraq against Sunni Arabs also helped a section of Sunni Arabs to prefer IS rule than the existing regimes. The combination of coercive element of state tradition, mostly sectarian in nature, and of Islamic traditions led IS to perpetuate 'rein of terror' over its population ranging from indiscriminate killing and massacre on the one hand to the implementation of Islamic practices, assumed to be prevalent in early period of Islam, in its distorted forms such as the distribution of booty looted during the IS operation against the enemy, the culture of concubines, Islamic bodily reform including compulsory veiling and beard, application of Jazziya tax to non-Muslims, invitation and conversion to Islam on large-scale as happened to Iraqi Yazidis communities, implementation of Islamic penal system including public flogging, amputation and public hanging, large-scale destruction of sculpture and statue including of Palmira ancient sites.

Along with a very high degree of ideological conformism (neo-Islamic Salafism), the IS indulged in all forms of violent activities— ranging from indiscriminate killing and massacre, extortion, kidnapping and beheading (mostly western tourists; journalists) in lieu of ransom and bargaining with the West— in the name of defence of Allah's rule and fight against enemy, which took intra-Islamic (Sunni vis Shii, ISIS vs other Islamic resistance groups and terrorist outfits including al-Qaida, al-Nusra etc), inter Islamic (non-Islamic minorities and the West) and intra- Arabs (predominantly Shiis, non-cooperative Sunni Muslims, Alvis, Christian minorities, Kurdish, non-ISIS, etc). Further the uprooted international component of ISIS leadership as well as its foot solider, who is prone to understand Islamic texts in its literal sense unlike its localised recruits from Iraq and Syria, played its own role in barbaric display of violence in everyday political life of ISIL/IS.

## Strategic Difference Between IS and al Qaida and its Implications for Cycle of Violence

The spiral of violence one is witnessing in Syria and Iraq is partly on account of IS's differences with al-Qaida in terms of main enemies, strategies, tactics, and other fundamental concerns. Al-Qaida believes in principle of 'global Jihadism' and tactics of 'spectacular performance' with a view to exert pressure on the West to withdraw their physical presence and support to puppet authoritarian regimes of WANA countries, which would weaken the regimes to be eventually replaced by the Al-Qaida inspired Islamic rule in the region. In this, al-Qaida is inspired from the Hezbollah's tactic of attacking the US Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983, which eventually led to withdrawal of the US Marine Base in Lebanon and the emergence of Hizbollah as dominant power in the Lebanese state system. All terrorist attacks by al-Qaida such as the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the attack on U.S.S. *Cole* in the port of Aden in 2000, World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11, and plots like the 2005 attempt to down over 10 transatlantic flights was intended to achieve this objective. Further al- Qaida tactically avoids indiscriminate killing of Shii or other sectarian and religious minorities or targeting western journalists, social or aid workers or tourists; for the former 'defame' Islam and the latter acts as messenger to carry its message to its target audience.

However, IS with its sectarian roots in Iraq and Syria is more regionally focussed with specific aim of first creating an Islamic State with seizable control of territory, which would then act as base for dismantling other regimes and annexing their territory under its Caliphate. It is this political trajectory that partly explains IS all out war against all enemies – perceived or real – Shii, religious and ethnic minorities, Sunni Islamic groups – social, political or terrorists, western journalists, social workers or military commander etc. — all that comes in the way for formation and consolidation of Islamic State. This difference between the two partly also shapes the differential strategic response of US to terrorism: its reluctance to send troops in Syria and Iraq to fight IS as it does not consider it as threat to 'homeland security of US' (though it may pose threat to its interest in the region), unlike al-Qaida, which for the US remained the primary terrorist group, which poses a threat to homeland security.

## IS, Syrian Refugee and Security Threat to Europe

If the development of ISIL/IS in parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014 re-centred the agenda of terrorism within the region and globally and shifted away the priority focus of US led international community from the removal of the Assad regime in Syria  for elimination of IS. This in course of time would further weaken the security scenario in the region with cycle of violence and mass migration of Syrian refugees, the largest of which is in Turkey. The likely defeat of ISIS, which looks imminent  now, is unlikely to help in strengthening the security condition and structure in the region and around the globe; rather it may further worsen it. The combined effect of repression of Assad regime and violent politics of Islamic oppositions including ISIL produced one of the largest human refugees.

Apart from its humanistic plight which drew world wide attention, the refugee march towards, given its predominantly Arab Muslim character, Europe pose a 'security threat' to the European neighbourhood and even contributed in the rise of anti-Islam/anti-Muslim right wing political forces across the European continent. It may be noted that the Ergodan government in Turkey, home of the largest number of Syrian refugees, used the Syrian refugee as 'strategic tool' to silence European union over its growing human rights abuses and democratic deficiencies in matter of governance. Concern with its own security at home the European Union concluded treaty with Turkey with a assistance package of 4.5 billion Euro to the latter to prevent the Syrian Refugee from coming to European countries and provide them better facilities in the host society itself. It is no secret that with the conclusion of this treaty the movement of Syrian refugees towards Europe significantly declined. In view of success of this policy the European Union is actively contemplating similar treaty with Mali, Libya, Somaliya, Niger and other African countries to help with monetary assistance and other support to stop the movement of illegal migrants to Europe.

## Anti-IS Operation and Shifting IS Strategy

Though the combined international collaboration involving such grouping as Iranian-Hizobollah-Russian-Assad regime, the American-PYD Kurdish, the recent Turkish-FSA (Free Syrian Army) against IS have enabled the Assad regime, the PYD Kurdish forces and Free Syrian Army  respectively  to gain  control over a good part of territory

once controlled by ISIS, there is not much evidence to point out the physical liquidation of ISIS leadership and manpower, apart from physical destruction of Syrian cities with Aleppo being worst off. Nonetheless, what is evident is the eventual  collapse of ISIS within a few months, if not years.

As IS came to realise its gradual demise, it brought significant changes in its terrorist strategy and tactics. First, it moves out of its regional perspective and started terrorist strike on global scale with a focus on the West and Europe in order to deter them from their further involvement in Syria and Iraq. Thus, apart from strategy of 'lonely wolf' and 'inspiring individual jihad' (such as October 2016 Orlando carnage in US), the IS organised a series of terrorist attacks between 2015 and 2016 targeting Russian passenger plane in Sinai (November 2015), Charlie Hebdo (January 2015), Paris (November 2015) and Nice (July 2016)  massacre in France, Brussels Airport in Belgium (April 2016), Tunis in Tunisia (Feb. 2016) and in Turkey (Ankara, Istanbul Ataturk Airport, Istanbul city, Gaziantep, Diyarbaker etc.). However IS's increasing terrorist foray in the West and elsewhere is partly also the result of its competition and rivalry with al- Qaida for the global supremacy of its leadership. In fact, as part of its competition with the Islamic State, al-Qaeda has stepped up affiliation, establishing relationships with groups in the Caucasus, Tunisia, and India such as al-Qaida in the Indian subcontinent (AQIS) and al-Qaida in Arabian Pennisula (AQAP) etc. The Islamic State is playing this game too and securing the allegiance from Islamic radical groups all across as Afghanistan, Algeria, Libya, Pakistan, Sinai, Yemen, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria  and other Muslim countries.

Second, given the shrinking authority of IS, increasing loss in its appeal and without the prospects of recruitment of potential *mujaheedin* in view of tough surveillance and restrictions imposed by the respective governments, as well as due to better intelligence coordination among nations, it seems that IS is no more seeking *mujhaeedin* recruitment from abroad, which at one point rose to as high as 2000 in one month. It is now advising the potential *mujaheedin* to remain at their respective homes to conduct the terrorist activities.

As the prospect of defeat of IS is very high in the near future; two scenarios are emerging from strategic point of view. (A), a large number of local Arab fighters would dissolve themselves within their respective societies, to emerge in the different form of Islamic resistance in the

near future, to pose a security threat to their respective countries. And (B), with the defeat of IS a large number of foreign fighters would gradually return to their home countries. It is estimated that out of 42000 foreign fighters that had travelled to Syria and Iraq in defence of IS from across 120 countries including 260 Americans, 7600 Westerners (mostly home grown European Muslims) with majority coming from Tunisia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, around 10,000-30,000 foreign fighters remained in the war zone of Syria and Iraq. Within the context of falling oil prices, sluggish economic growth, precarious security situations in view of sectarian conflicts and growing unemployment across the region of West Asian and North African countries, the 'retreating terrorists' may utilise these favourable contexts for the future terrorist mayhem in their countries. One can recall here the retreating *mujaheedin* from Afghanistan in Algeria, Egypt and Kashmir in 1990s and their role in shaping the Islamic militancy and terror activities throughout the 1990s in these countries and in other nations.

From this point of view Turkey is far more vulnerable than other countries, partly on account of Turkey's role in facilitating the foreign fighter recruits to the IS; providing medical facilities to wounded IS fighters etc., which allowed the IS to develop sleeper cells within Turkey. Not surprisingly, Turkey tasted a series of IS led suicide bombing within its territory since 2015. Moreover the state crackdown on hundreds and thousands of state employees belonging to military, intelligence, police, judiciary, teachers in the aftermath of post-military coup etc. has further  weakened the administrative capacity of Turkey to effectively fight the terror from across the border or within its territories.

To conclude, there is no doubt that the US led international community have, to a large extent, succeeded in significantly weakening the threat of terrorist organisations by relentlessly targeting its leadership, killing, disrupting its finances, destroying its training camps, infiltrating its communications networks, and ultimately crippling its ability to function. The defeat of IS would certainly evaporate its appeal among a section of Muslim communities. But the larger question is:  whether such defeat would end the saga of terrorism or could be more counterproductive? The removal of Taliban and al-Qaida from state power in Afghanistan has not made the world safer; rather free of any state structure they have created terrorist mayhem all over the

world. If the Iranian revolution can be contained within its national boundary through multiple means including rigours of economic sanctions, there is a possibility to contain the terrorism within the state structure and national boundary through internationally sanctioned means. Moreover, the success of counter-terrorist strategy depends much upon its consideration of terrorism as mere tactic or ideology or combination of both. Unless and until the international community deals with ideological component of terrorism, it would keep emerging in different forms.

## Notes

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# Islamic State and the Threat to India

## Prakash Singh*

The greatest threat to world peace today is from the Islamic State and its attempt to build a unitary state or a Caliphate which eliminates all borders in the Middle East and extends them as far as India and Central Asia. According to Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani journalist, "Not since Arab Muslim armies spread out to conquer the world in the aftermath of the death of the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century have we witnessed such a powerful force that has combined brilliant military and political strategy along with abject cruelty and oppression of those who are under its thrall."

### IS Strength and Weaponry

It was on June 29, 2014, the first day of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, that the ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham) spokesman announced the restoration of the Caliphate under the leadership of Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarra'iyy (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi). It was declared that the group would henceforth be known as the Islamic State (IS) and Baghdadi its "Caliph Ibrahim." Baghdadi is an Iraqi national from the Al-Bu Badri tribe who claims to be a descendant of Prophet Muhammed. He had received a Doctorate in Islamic Studies before he founded Jamaat Jaish in 2003 to fight the US forces. Lister's view is that Baghdadi's clerical background puts him on a qualitatively higher religious level than Osama bin Laden or Ayman al-Zawahiri. The announcement was made after the ISIS had seized Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, on June 10. Soon after, by July 4, when Baghdadi made his first public appearance, the Islamic State controlled territories stretching from al-Bab in Syria's Aleppo Governorate to Slueiman Bek in Iraq's Salah ad Din Province, over 400 miles away.

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The Islamic State managed to mobilise fighters and acquire a formidable array of weapons. To start with, they recruited fighters from the 1,000 or more regular army officers of the Iraqi army which was disbanded by the Americans. It is estimated that, by the end of 2014, IS had about 31,000 fighters and the numbers continued to grow. The American-led coalition undertook 6000 sorties and killed no less than 15,000 IS fighters, and yet the Caliphate continued to attract jihadis from across the world, and the total number of fighters went up to 70,000 including 20,000 foreigners from 90 countries. One US lawmaker called it "the largest convergence of Islamist terrorists in the history of the world." The IS arsenal includes tanks, armoured personnel carriers, field guns, howitzers, rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns and an assortment of other weapons. Much of this was captured by them from the Iraqi army. Financially also, the IS has been well off. It has been described by Ahmed Rashid as "the richest terrorist force in history" due to its capture of oil wells, use of kidnappings for ransom, bank robberies, and taxes from businesses and shops under its control. It is estimated that it raked in over $1 million per day. According to RAND Corporation, the group minimized costs by looting military equipment, appropriating land and infrastructure and paying relatively low salaries.

## Plan to Dominate World

Baghdadi wants to spread the "volcano of jihad" everywhere. The Islamic State, in fact, plans to take over large parts of the world including almost the entire Indian subcontinent within the next five years. The plan is detailed in a book entitled *Empire of Fear: Inside the Islamic State* by Andrew Hosken. It has a map which throws light on the IS plans to establish its authority over the Middle East, North Africa and most of the Indian subcontinent and parts of Europe by 2020. Another document purportedly written by the Islamic State terrorists and obtained by the US through a Pakistani source outlines a strategy to draw the US into an all-out war by attacking India. It states:

> "This Caliphate will survive and prosper until it takes over the entire world and beheads every last person that rebels against Allah. This is the bitter truth, swallow it. Even if the US tries to attack (us) with all its allies, which it will, the Ummah (Muslim community) will be united, resulting in the final battle."

The IS strategy is to trigger the final conflict by unleashing attacks on India. The US would come to India's aid. The Islamic State would

then declare a global jihad, calling upon a billion Muslims to heed the call. Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow with the Brookings Institution, says that "attacking India is the Holy Grail of South Asian jihadis."

There is evidence to show that the Islamic State is gradually capturing the support base of Al Qaeda. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's Chief, is said to be cut off from his top commanders and is just managing to keep the outfit afloat. According to Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, regarded as the most influential jihadi scholar alive: "Zawahiri operates solely based on the allegiance. There is no organizational structure. There is only communication channel and loyalty." Another radical preacher, Abu Qatada, a Jordanian, said that Zawahiri is "isolated" and that the IS has been winning the propaganda war against Al Qaeda. It is becoming apparent that the Islamic State is pushing Al Qaeda to the margins of global jihad.

## Gravity of Threat

How serious is the threat?  Opinions would differ, but it would be an invitation to disaster if the country did not prepare for the contingency of an onslaught by the Islamic State. India becomes vulnerable to an onslaught by the IS by virtue of the fact that the militant outfit has already made inroads in the neighbouring countries. The Islamic State is no longer a distant phenomenon for India.

## In the Neighbourhood

The Pakistan Taliban has declared its allegiance to IS. The TTP spokesman Shahidullah said that all Muslim fighters in the Middle East should unite for the greater good. "We consider the fighters in Iraq and Syria as our brothers and are proud of their victories. We are their part and parcel in times of joy and sadness."

In Bangladesh, according to Animesh Roul, "the Islamic State's self-proclaimed Caliphate and the promise of its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, to return to all Muslims their 'dignity, might, rights and leadership' seem to have infused a renewed Islamist fervor within a section of Bangladeshi youths and among existing radical elements." There have been several arrests of individuals engaged in recruiting Bangladeshis for the Islamic State. Dhaka had its night of horror on July 1, 2016, when five militants opened fire on the Holey Artisan Bakery, killing 29 people including 18 foreigners.

In Maldives, entire families have left Maldives to participate in the so-called Caliphate's millenarian dystopia. Across the ocean, in Nigeria, Boko Haram has declared its allegiance to the ISIS.

**In India**

The Islamic State has, in fact, already penetrated India. Ansar-ul-Tawheed (AuT), an ultra-religious off-shoot of the Indian Mujahideen, has declared its allegiance to the Islamic State and its self-styled Caliph. In a video, AuT's ideologue and chief, Abdul Rehman Nadvi, alleged that the United States, India, Saudi Arabia, Australia, France, Canada and a few other countries were forming an axis of evil. Expressing his determination to create an Islamic State in India, Nadvi said: "The Ummah could not afford to lose this battle as it will mean subjugation forever." AuT is actually the fourth group in South-East Asia to have declared its loyalty to the Islamic State, the other three being the Abu Sayyaf group of Philippines, Jamaah Islamiyyah of Indonesia and Al-Tawheed Batallion of Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

The Islamic State has followers/supporters across India. In **Maharashtra**, many youngsters have gone missing and are suspected to be in either Syria or Iraq. They include two students who were studying engineering while one was a mechanical engineer. In **Karnataka**, the Bangalore police arrested Mehdi Masroor Biswas, a management executive in an MNC, who was working as an IS propaganda activist. In **Kerala**, 21 people are reported to be missing and are suspected to have joined the IS. They include a doctor's family and a computer engineer, his wife and friends. In early October 2016 a six-member IS module was busted which included a graphic designer, an ex-engineering student with possible links with muslim outfit Popular Front of India (PFI) and with Gulf connections. In **Telangana**, the police intercepted 17 youngsters from different parts of the country while they were trying to cross over to Bangladesh. They were counselled and let off with a warning. In **UP**, two persons from Azamgarh, Abu Rashid Ahmed and Mohammad Sajid, featured in an IS video, threatening terror strikes in India. In **West Bengal**, suspected terrorist Mohammad Musiruddin was arrested for having gone to Kashmir to undergo training in terror. The state has a 2,200 km. porous border with Bangladesh and that makes it vulnerable to any transgressions by the Jmaat-ul-Mujahideen, Bangladesh. In Jammu and Kashmir, IS flags are hoisted by militants in the valley now and then. The Islamic State however wants Kashmir as part of the Caliphate and not as part of Pakistan.

## Radicalisation of Indian Muslims

There is enough evidence to suggest that the Indian Muslims are gradually getting radicalised. This was demonstrated in the response of Indian Muslims to the January 7, 2015 terror attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. Tufail Ahmad, a former journalist with the BBC, carried out a review of the facebook comments made by the Muslim youths in India on the Paris shooting and found that "the geography of this radicalization in India is indeed wide, fertile and raw." The overwhelming responses from across India were in favour of the attackers. Comments celebrating the killing were made on the facebook page by Muslim youths living in Kolkata, Patna, Chhapra, Lucknow, Dehradun, Aligarh, New Delhi, Srinagar, Jalandhar, Bhilwara, Indore, Jabalpur, Pune, Bangalore and other places. Those commenting included engineers, doctors, graduates, school students, both male and female. Tufail Ahmad's disturbing conclusion was that

> "…there is no difference between their viewpoint and those of the jihadists of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) when it comes to blasphemy and Sharia. It is unlikely that all or even a majority of them will become terrorists, but it certainly suggests that there is a fertile field of jihadist ideas being cultivated by Islamic scholars in India, notions of which young Muslims are fed regularly. This is a result of decades of Islamic teachings offered by *madrasas*. At any point in time and across countries, these ideas can be easily used to destabilise a society.

Hasan Suroor also expressed similar views:

> "The nature of Indian Muslim radicalization stands dramatically transformed. There is now a global dimension to it with foreign jihadi groups looking upon India as a fertile new ground for recruitment as al-Qaida's decision to set up a separate Indian branch clearly shows…
>
> Muslim radicalization is real and growing. But to put it in perspective given the size of India's Muslim population and compared to other countries it is still on a relatively small scale. But for how long?"

According to official estimates, the total number of people who have come to adverse notice for involvement in IS activities within the country is less than 100. This is, however, contested by independent analysts. Madhav Nalapat's estimate is that this number is now in four figures. Nalapat has also said that the Islamic State is systematically working on recruiting youths within the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council),

where more than six million Indian citizens work. Apart from creating an IS Fifth Column in India, the group may, over time, create the same chaos within some GCC states as is now being witnessed in Syria and Iraq, thereby affecting the $40 billion in remittances that this country gets annually from its nationals in the GCC. "That ISIS is already at war with India is a detail which seems to have escaped the attention of policy makers in India," according to Nalpat.

## IS Violence in Different Countries

Some incidents showed the phenomenal capacity of the Islamic State to perpetrate acts of violence beyond its borders. On June 26, 2015, in near simultaneous strikes, the Islamic State insurgents carried out attacks in France, Tunisia and Kuwait, leaving a bloody toll on three continents – Europe, Africa and Asia. In France, the attackers stormed a US owned chemical plant near Lyon, where they decapitated one person and tried to blow up the factory. In Tunisia, gunmen opened fire at a beach resort, killing at least 37 people. In Kuwait, there was a suicide bombing in one of the largest Shia mosques, killing at least 25 and injuring 200 worshippers.

The Islamic State has however suffered setbacks in the recent past. The Western and Russian bombers have pummelled the jihadis from the air while the local fighters have been pushing them back on the ground. The Kurdish *Peshmerga* has proved to be a formidable opponent. According to Brett McGurk, Obama's Special Envoy in the fight against Islamic State, the IS has lost 47 per cent of its territory in Iraq and 20 per cent in Syria. The US has also been targeting the IS leadership. In March, it killed Haji Imam, IS's Second-in-Command, and Abu Omar al-Shishani, its Minister of War, among other jihadi leaders. "We are systematically eliminating ISIL's cabinet, boasted Ashton Carter, America's Secretary of Defence. Financially also the IS has been hit. Its oil revenues have shrunk to half of what they were. As a result, the IS has slashed fighters' salaries in Raqqa, the group's defence headquarters in Syria by up to 50 per cent. Nevertheless, the IS is still able to generate about $ 150 million a year. Even if an optimistic view is taken and the Caliphate fails, experts warn that hundreds, if not thousands, of battle-hardened soldiers would return home to continue the struggle in their respective countries. We have to, therefore, take a long-term view of the IS threat.

The CIA Director, John O Brennan is critical of the slow progress in the fight against Islamic State in countries other than Syria and Iraq.

In Jordan, IS maintains a strong support base in the southern city of Maan and areas within Zarqa, Irbid and Salt.  Saudi Arabia has over 1000 nationals fighting in Syria and has a sizable support base at home. Turkey has been playing a dubious game and letting foreign fighters cross its borders to Syria.  It is also known that IS maintains recruitment and facilitation networks in Ankara and Istanbul. "As the pressure mounts on Islamic State," according to the CIA Director, "it will intensify its global terror campaign to maintain its dominance of the global terrorism agenda."

## Change in IS Strategy

There has been a subtle change in the IS strategy lately. It is now exhorting its followers to carry out attacks in the countries of their origin. Adnani, who oversees IS's external operations, has called upon the followers to attack its enemies wherever and howsoever possible. The operations have now been de-centralised. As a result, the IS is now becoming, as stated by Eric Schmitt, "a larger, more sophisticated version of its stateless chief rival, al-Qaida."

There have been several deadly attacks in different countries by the franchise units of the Islamic State. In **Belgium**, there were two blasts at Brussels airport on March 22, 2016 in which more than eleven people were killed.  A third explosion took place at Maelbeek metro station close to the European Union headquarters in which 15 people were killed. In **Turkey**, militants guided by the IS conducted a coordinated suicide attack on the Istanbul's Ataturk airport on June 28, 2016, killing 45 people and injuring 230. In**Bangladesh**, on July 1, 2016, militants attacked a Bakery situated in an affluent area of Dhaka with many embassies and killed 29 people including 18 foreigners and two police officers. Significantly, at least three of the identified militants were from privileged background. And, in**Iraq**, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for a bombing in Baghdad that killed more than 200 people on July 3, 2016. The powerful explosion came near the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, when the streets were filled with young people and families out after sunset.

## Government of India's Response

The Government of India is unfortunately living in a state of denial. Speaking at a Conference on Counter-Terrorism in Jaipur on March 19, 2015, the Home Minister of India said that the influence of the Islamic

State on the youth was negligible as only a handful of them had joined the ISIS and out of them some had returned after being persuaded by their families. It was stated in the Lok Sabha on August 2, 2016 that the Islamic state had "influenced or attracted very few youths from India." Besides, in another statement made on August 11, 2016, it was stated that 54 IS supporters or sympathisers of the IS had been arrested before they could carry out any terrorist attack within the country. It may all be true, but as stated in the *US Country Report on Terrorism* for 2014, "given India's large Muslim population, potential socio-religious marginalisation and active ISIL online propaganda efforts, there remains a risk of increased ISIL recruitment of Indian nationals." What should worry our policy makers is that if and when the Islamic State targets India directly, it would have full support of transnational terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba, Hizbul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Muhammad as also the indigenous outfits like the Indian Mujahideen and SIMI.

## Countering the Threat

Any strategy to counter the Islamic State, as rightly said by Charles R. Lister in his book *The Islamic State*, "must address the socio-political conditions in Iraq and Syria that the organization has engendered and exploited to fuel its growth." At the international level, it would have to be a four-pronged strategy: first, the Arab states should be leading the coalition and not Washington; secondly, the Arab states should display political unity in their fight against the IS; thirdly, the rift between the Arabs and Iran should be patched up; and, fourthly, the Arab states must develop a common narrative and agree on a moderate interpretation of Islam. The battle would have to be fought ideologically as well as militarily.

On February 22, 2015, the Grand Imam of Egypt's Al Azhar mosque declared that extremism was caused by "bad interpretations of the Koran and the Sunnah (the doings of Prophet Mohammad)" and that what was taught in Islamic Schools and Universities needed to change. The doctrines of *Jihad* and *Takfir* are central to the debate. The extremists interpret jihad as mandating an offensive holy war. In a recent issue of *Dabiq,* the magazine of Islamic State, it was stated that the evidence from the *hadith* and renowned scholars that Islam is a religion of the sword is "so profuse that only a heretic would argue otherwise." *Takfir* is the process whereby Muslims declare other Muslims to be apostates

or unbelievers for which the penalty is death. Al Qaeda applied the doctrine with some limits so as to avoid alienating other groups of Muslims. The IS however invokes *takfir* in a very sweeping manner, especially against the Shias. The mainstream critics, though not very vocal, do not agree with these views. Jihad, according to them, does not mean holy war but striving to achieve peace and anything good in obedience to Allah. Last year, 120 Muslims scholars wrote to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the IS, saying that he had misconstrued Islam by ignoring the context of the Koran.

According to a critic, "the problem with Islam is that it is stuck in a time-warp." The need is "to rescue Islam, and rescue the text and the religious philosophy from the orthodoxy and propagate ideas and interpretations that are in sync with modernity and scientific inquiry."

## Encouraging Moderate Muslims

We have eminent Muslim leaders holding moderate views. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, late Asghar Ali Engineer, Daud Sharifa, Shaista Amber, Zeenat Shaukat Ali, Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, Uzma Naheed and quite a few others have been working for reforms, though their impact has been limited. It is a great pity that the majority of moderate Muslims prefer to keep quiet in the face of onslaughts by brutal, murderous, terrorist outfits. These moderate sections should be encouraged to articulate their views. Government will, of course, have to ensure their safety. The media, in our country, has unfortunately been giving space to communal cobras than to saner voices of moderate Muslims.

## Education System

A large population of Muslims in India get education either from *madrasas* or from Urdu medium schools. *Madrasa* is an Arabic word which means an educational institution. They were never limited to provide only religious education, but the concept has changed and *madrasas* have become the centre of religious education only. Although Muslim parents are attracted to the safe environment of these schools, they are aware that a purely religious education will not help their children earn a decent living. The Ministry of HRD has been running two schemes, namely

     i. Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM) and

ii. Scheme for Infrastructure Development in Private Aided/ Unaided Minority Institutes (IDMI) since 2008-09 for the educational upliftment of the Muslims

Under SPQEM, financial assistance is provided to the *madrasas* which introduce modern subjects i.e. science, mathematics, social studies, Hindi and English in their curriculum. However, the scheme is implemented through the State Governments. Under IDMI, financial assistance is provided to augment infrastructure in private aided/unaided minority schools/institutions in order to enhance the quality of education to minority children. However, under the scheme, only those *madrasas* which are imparting formal education and thereby following the prescribed syllabus of the State Education Board are covered. The IDMI scheme is also implemented through the State Government. Government has been giving priority to minority concentration districts in central schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Teachers' Education Scheme, Adult Literacy, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme (JNV), setting up of Girls Hostels and Polytechnics, etc. in order to promote participation of minorities at all levels of education.

The *madrasa* system of education has been alienating Muslims from the mainstream. It needs to be revamped with the introduction of subjects like science and mathematics so that the boys and girls studying in these institutions are exposed to modern concepts and are able to get gainful employment. Tufail Ahmad's suggestion is that all the *madrasas* and mosques should be registered and their finances audited, though he adds that this would not be possible unless the same was done for temples and churches also.

## Divisive Politics

Politics which seeks to sharpen differences between the communities with a view to attracting their votes will have to be abjured. Political parties across the board should come to an understanding on the subject in the larger interests of democracy in the country that they shall not play divisive politics and that their efforts would be directed at ensuring harmony among the various religious groups.

## De-Radicalization Programmes

Government of India is worried over Islamic State's "poisonous ideology" infecting the youth in India. The Ministry of Home Affairs is

examining the best practices followed around the world to wean off sections attracted to jihadi ideology. This includes US' counter-radicalization program focused on community outreach, UK's Prevent and Channel programmes as well as Austria's latest de-radicalization counselling initiative.

A senior officer of the Government of India is reported to have stated that while US and UK's deradicalization programmes appear to have met with limited success, the Austrian helpline centre, which is not linked to the police but is manned by non-profit groups, got an encouraging response within a couple of months of its launch. The deradicalization centre also conducts educational lectures and puts out material to help identify potential threats.

## Legal Framework

The law of the land will need to be strengthened to deal with elements seeking to spread poison among communities, dividing them on religious lines, and seeking to destabilize democracy and establish some kind of a theocratic state in the country.

UK has already passed a *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, 2015*. The Act seeks to enhance existing terrorism prevention and investigation measures to monitor and control the actions of individuals who pose a threat. The British Counter-Terrorism Strategy has been summarized in four words: prepare, prevent, protect and pursue.

Government of India would also need to strengthen its law enforcement apparatus and upgrade the existing counter-terrorism architecture.

# Changing Profile of Terror in India

Sushant Sareen

After the terror attacks of 9/11, Indian leaders would never tire of boasting about how despite the second largest Muslim population in the world, not a single Indian was involved with international jihadist terror groups like Al Qaeda. Indian democracy and the strength of Indian society was held as an example for rest of the world to emulate in the fight against Islamic extremism. But while the inclusiveness and liberty offered by the Indian democratic system, coupled with the syncretic societal ethos was a great asset that India possessed, and it did act as a bulwark against the Islamist terror groups, the fact was that these defences were never going to be enough to keep the forces of fanaticism at bay, certainly not for any length of time. The reason was simple: the character of terrorism and the profile of terrorists was changing as fast as, if not faster than, the pace at which society itself was changing.

What many in India did not quite understand was that the jihadists operate with a millenarian mindset, best captured in the pithy comment of the Taliban in Afghanistan who would tell the Americans that while they had the watches, the Taliban had the time. While most countries and polities operate with the timeframe of an election cycle, the Islamists tend to take a far longer term view – often spanning decades – of their achieving their objectives. The Islamists work under the radar and in a very insidious manner to infect the minds of their target audience with their ideology. They slowly but steadily chip away the glue that binds different societies and inject their poisonous ideas and propaganda into the minds of ordinary folk. And one day, in a most unobtrusive way, the Islamists achieve success when people readily lap up and start believing them. The Islamist narrative essentially revolves around

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how all over the world, the Muslim community is victimised by a grand international conspiracy, how Muslims are on the receiving end of the machinations of non-Muslims, and why all this is because Muslims have deviated from the right path. This is followed by building a new narrative that Muslims can regain their past greatness, and address, if not avenge, the injustices, some real but mostly manufactured, of the past and present.

A lot of this has been happening in India as well. It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that flags of the IS have been waved in Kashmir, young Muslims have posed for pictures wearing IS t-shirts in Tamil Nadu, cells of IS supporters have been busted from different parts of India, young techies have been caught spreading IS propaganda. In a recent video featuring some former Indian Mujahideen terrorists who have now joined the IS, an undisguised effort was made to incite and instigate Indian Muslim youth by raking up emotional issues like Babri Masjid, Gujarat, Muzaffarnagar and Kashmir. But more than this, it is the vehemence with which the video rails against not only the Indian Muslim clerics and politicians but also the social relationships and economic interdependence between Muslims and non-Muslims in India that suggests that the jihadists are aiming at Indian syncretism in order to advance their ideology and gain support in India. All of this indicates that even though infinitesimally small in relation to the Muslim population of India, there are growing number of people who have been seduced by the IS propaganda.

Unfortunately, India has been living in denial and has ignored the fact that even though there was no direct involvement of Indian Muslims in international jihadist terror groups, the ideological bent of many of the local groups – eg. Al Ummah or Abdul Naseer Madani's Peoples Democratic Party – was quite similar to that of the international jihadists. The terror attacks by these groups were seen as local acts and not tied with what was happening in rest of the world. By the mid 2000's, there were isolated cases of Indians being involved in terror attacks abroad. The involvement of an Indian in the Glasgow airport bombing should have served as a wake-up call for India. Unfortunately, the then Indian Prime Minister remained awake at night not so much because of what such an attack portended for the future but more because he was distraught at the thought of what the mother of the terrorist (who, it later transpired was utterly unrepentant over her son's action and was in fact responsible for infusing the jihadist mindset in him) would be going through after her terrorist son got burnt in the attack. The next

big incident was the arrest of half a dozen young men in Bangalore who were planning to go to Afghanistan to join the Taliban fight against the foreign troops in that country. All this had started happening before the advent of the abominable Islamic State (IS) terror group. Post-IS this phenomenon became a lot more common.

Although the Al Qaeda had managed to establish a global footprint post 9/11, jihad became globalised in the real sense after the emergence of the IS in 2014. With people from over 80 countries making a beeline for joining the ranks of the IS, it was only a matter of time before the phenomenon would manifest itself in India. After all, India is no isolated island that is immune from the virus of radical Islamism. And notwithstanding the strengths of Indian society, the fact remains that even in the bygone era when it took months for news to travel, Indian Muslims did get affected and influenced by what happened in the middle-east. It was, therefore, nothing but a dangerous delusions for anyone to imagine that in this day and age of instant communication, the Indian Muslims will remain untouched and unaffected by the malign influences sweeping through Muslim societies from Morocco to Mindanao.

By all accounts then, the IS has today replaced other international, regional and local jihadist groups as the go-to group for many young Indian Muslims.For its part, even the IS is now actively reaching out to Muslim youth in the subcontinent, and finding some traction.But here a caveat is in order: the seduction of jihadism isn't so much related to an organisation as it is to the idea itself. The organisation is attractive to the extent it is successful. There was a time when Al Qaeda enjoyed the sneaking admiration of many people but its decimation (at least that is what seemed to be the case at one point of time) robbed it of support. The same could happen with the IS if the major setbacks it has faced over the last few months turns into a rout. In other words, even though today the IS is the go-to group, its defeat will also lead to its rejection. The only problem is that this will not lead to the defeat of the idea of jihadism, because it will only be a matter of time before another more virulent, violent and vehement group will replace the IS. In fact, already the Al Qaeda is making a big comeback and has been spreading its influence in a big way.

In India, part of the problem has been that terrorism has been analysed from a somewhat antiquated metric that no longer operates in the same way as it did in the past. For instance, terrorist groups generally had some kind of an organisational structure which included an identifiable

hierarchy and a well-defined cause. No longer. Old world style organisational setups are now passé. The terror groups' organisational structures are much more diffused and are managed remotely from locations that themselves aren't spatially static. In other words, don't look for a centralised command centre of international jihadist groups in places like India because it won't be there. Also, don't expect them to hold a launching party or presser to declare their arrival. They invariably start their activities by staying unobtrusive and well below the radar screen. Starting small, they steadily build their networks and before anyone realises it, there is a monster to be confronted. This means that instead of being complacent and congratulating itself that only an infinitesimally small number of people in India have fallen for the IS propaganda, India should be extremely worried and working overtime to nip this problem in the bud.

It is also important to understand that terror groups today increasingly function like multi-national corporations and operate on the principle 'think global, act local'. In other words, a common ideological strand ties the franchises together, but in their own areas the franchises are pretty much autonomous to act. These franchises are more in the nature of cells and busting one module doesn't necessarily affect the functioning of the other modules. This means that different modules will have different efficiency and effectiveness levels. What is more, because these are small cells, they are more difficult to detect. On the other hand, because they are small, their ability to pull off a major, devastating or even debilitating attack is that much more difficult, though not impossible.

There has also been a sort of dumbing down of the phenomenon of radicalism. People bandy buzzwords words like 'internet' and 'social media', as though they are enough to explain why people are getting attracted to groups like the IS. The fact, however, is that the internet and social media are mere tools. In and of themselves, these tools are no different from something like a knife which can be used both for cutting vegetables as well as for slitting someone's throat. What is important is what exactly is making people use the social media and internet not as instruments for expressing their views, their dissent, or increasing their knowledge, but for linking up to and getting influenced by radical ideologies. In other words, what is it about radicalism that is captivating minds of so many young Muslims? Without finding an answer to this basic question, there is no way that the threat of terrorism can be countered effectively.

The real failure of states and societies around the globe, including India, is their inability to understand that the radicalism that is sweeping the Muslim societies has transcended the traditional grouses of jobs, economic deprivation, social discrimination etc. Terrorism today is more driven by religion and ideology than by existential issues of politics, or for that matter economics. To put it differently, terrorism is less about this life and more about the after-life, and it is less about an organisation like the IS and more about a mindset. At the risk of repetition, even if the IS were to be eliminated tomorrow, it would be replaced by some other group selling the same poison under a different label. The reason is that a decades-long sustained propaganda that peddles the narrative of victimisation and real and imagined grievance among Muslim communities has slowly but steadily started capturing the mind-space and has practically reached the tipping point where it is finding more and more people subscribing to it. What is worse, even where the radicals are emphatically denounced by the spiritual and temporal leaders of Muslims communities, the conspiracy theories that form the basic building block, or if you will germ, for the radicals' narrative – for instance, Islam is under siege, or Muslim lands are under occupation of non-Muslims, or how IS is a creation of the West – are readily lapped up, and even offered as a sort of excuse to explain away what is clearly a problem with Muslim societies. Once this germ plants itself in the mind-space, it isn't difficult to mutate it to convince someone to fight, die and kill for a higher cause. Incidentally, this phenomenon isn't exclusive only to Islam. Other religions too have experienced it.

The other big change that is being witnessed is the sort of people who are getting attracted to the terror groups, and the areas from where some of the terror cells have been busted. The new phenomenon being witnessed is that of middle and upper-middle youth, well-educated and with reasonably bright career prospects, have been inclined to join international jihadist groups, and in particular the IS. Even some of the earlier terror modules like one of the breakaway factions of the Indian Mujahideen have linked up with the Khorasan chapter of IS in Afghanistan. While these elements are trying to recruit youngsters from India by stoking their real and imagined grievances, they themselves were more motivated by the international jihadist narrative than by any specific or general grievance in India. Surprisingly enough, most of the new recruits are also motivated more by the internationalist aspects of Jihad than by the domestic factors. This could change in the future if inter-communal harmony is disturbed in India, but as of now it isn't so

much about what is happening in India but more about what is happening to Muslims in the world and also about a quest for living under a pristine Islamist dispensation that is attracting, nay seducing, young people. That many of them have been found to be misfits in Indian society, dysfunctional and even depraved as also misanthropic is also a factor for their inclination to the IS.

The other major change that is being witnessed in India is that the recruitment is no longer limited to bigger towns and cities, or for that matter in a particular geographical area. Many of the cells that have been busted have been located in small towns spread across the country. What is more, the cells are found in clusters that centre around one area. For instance, Hyderabad, Darbhanga, Bhatkal, Azamgarh etc. have become centres of some of these cells. It generally starts with one or two people who get roped in by the online propaganda and then they bring in their circle of friends and associates to form a cell. A small group then links up with other such groups or individuals who then start pulling the strings. It isn't all done through remote control or online. Invariably there is a local contact involved who then passes the instructions to the cell.

In Kashmir, however, another trend is visible. This is terrorism of and under the cover of mass disturbances. While it is being projected as an outpouring or reaction to the killing of the Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Burhan Wani, in reality this is the manifestation of a strategy that had been devised way back around 2004 by the Pakistanis. Around that time, the Pakistanis rejigged their strategy in Kashmir to create the framework for a civil insurrection through mass protests and demonstrations. This was done through insidious indoctrination, infiltration and instigation. Where India made a mistake was in thinking that the jihad in Kashmir was over when in reality it was merely a strategic pause by Pakistan and a change in the tactics. In Kashmir also there is a generational shift in patterns of terrorism and unless the Indian state understands this shift, it will make the blunder of preparing to fight for a late 20th Century terrorism even though it faces a new 21st Century terrorism.

The bottom line is that terrorism is forever changing but the response to terrorism is invariably dated. Unless the response is as quick and rapid as the change in the nature and profile of terrorism, the Indian state will always be playing catch-up, and will therefore always be found wanting.

# Changing Profile of Terrorism in India and Abroad

## Vappala Balachandran*

**Brief History of Terrorism:**

The word "terror" comes from the Latin word "terrere" meaning to frighten. Terrorist acts spread fear among the public with unexpected violence. Terrorists use this to achieve certain specific objectives. These could be political, religious, freedom struggle or ethnic differences. Recorded history reveals that the earliest objective was to resist foreign occupation when the defenders did not have enough armed strength to wage open warfare. It was a David versus Goliath concept. During 73-70 B.C. "Sicari," an extreme Jewish group, targeted Roman occupiers and even Jewish collaborators. They were perhaps the first to practice suicides as a form of protests. The Sicari committed mass suicide with their families during 37-31 B.C. on the hill top of Masada in Southern Israel when a superior Roman army laid siege to arrest them. It is a tourist spot now.

In course of time use of clandestine violence was extended to other areas of conflicts: The first recorded incident of international terrorism was in 68 B.C. when Cilician (modern-day Cukorova, Turkey) terrorist-pirates burnt Ostia, a flourishing Roman port, destroying naval and commercial fleet of the then global superpower. Their aim was commercial and not political. That was the Roman "Pearl Harbour." Historians had recorded that the amber glow

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of fire could be seen at night even from Rome. People were afraid that this would deprive them of food and make voyages unsafe.

The natural result of every such terrorist attack is accumulation of more coercive power by the executive. After the Ostia attack, the Roman Senate was forced to confer extraordinary powers on Pompey who was made the supreme ruler. Some said that this incident heralded the death of Roman democracy. Hitler also achieved the same position after the 1933 Reichstag Fire. In modern times 9/11 attack forced the US Congress passing the Patriot Act in 2001 conferring unprecedented powers on their Executive and investigation agencies.

## Religious Extremism and Terrorism:

Sicari also attacked other Jewish sects due to religious differences. They used to carry small daggers (sicae) concealed in their robes and suddenly stab others to death.  In the eleventh century the "Order of the Assassins" ("Hashshashins") followers of Hassan I Sabha in Qom spread terror among Seljuk Turks and Sunni Muslims and later on Christians in Jerusalem. Traditionally Sunnis including Turks had mistreated Shias. Also Turks had captured large tracts of Persia. The Shias could not defeat them in open warfare. So they hid themselves on mountain tops and started attacking their targets by stealth. They were eliminated by the Mongols in 1256.

Some writers have described the eighteenth century thugs in India as "Hindu terrorists" since they worshipped goddess Kali. This is wrong. William Sleeman's writings clearly reveal that they were merely criminal gangs. Sleeman, who eliminated the menace by 1848, says that the thugs had Hindu and Muslim members. Several historians have said that religion as such did not breed terrorism. Very often it was only a façade to collect followers of a particular group. This is true even of modern Muslim groups.

## Definition of "Terrorism":

The dictionary meaning of "terrorism" is coercive intimidation for political ends or a movement that seeks to rule by instilling fear through terror. There are over 100 definitions of terrorism. However no internationally accepted definition exists. Terrorism was given different interpretations from time to time by historians, philosophers, rulers and also by the perpetrators. Acts of violence were described as "terrorism," "insurgency" or "freedom struggle" depending on which side of the

fence one was placed. However mere violence as seen in communal riots or mass murders is not generally described as terrorism. Edmund Burke had used this word to describe the Jacobin atrocities during 1793-1794 after French Revolution. After the Jacobin Terror "White Terror" followed until Napoleon put a stop to this in 1799. However not many agree to this description now since stealth combined with violence by non-State actors is generally accepted as "terrorism."[1]

Four elements have to be present in terrorism: Ultimate goal (Political or religious), Immediate purpose (fear or causing further disorder), targets (Soft or hard targets) and method (combat like an army or stealth). Irrespective of any definition, the term "terrorism" denotes attempts to overthrow an established system or government through force directed against government or soft targets like civilians to undermine their morale.

## Influence of "Anarchism" on Terrorist Groups:

Historians have said that late nineteenth century-early twentieth century terrorist movements were guided by "Anarchists". These terrorists exhibited two features: Firstly, organizational structure and tactics were constantly modified to meet different objectives. Secondly, they justified terrorism as "rational" response to injustice. These two features were copied even by Osama bin Laden, ISIS and our Maoists. The earliest such organization was "Narodnyaya Volya" meaning "Peoples' Will" (1879-1884) which emerged out of the writings of "Nihilist" Sergey Nachayev (1847-1882) who published "Revolutionary Catechism" advocating "destruction of this filthy order." As a result Narodnyaya Volya assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881.

Other "anarchists" also recommended destruction. Karl Heinzen, nineteenth century German radical thinker had said in 1848: "If you have to blow up half a continent and cause a bloodbath to destroy the party of barbarism, you should have no scruples of conscience." Pierre Joseph Prudhon (1809-1865) who styled himself as "The First anarchist" wrote a book in 1840 titled "What is Property." He said that property is theft. Other anarchists like Prince Peter Alexeyvich Kropotkin (1842-1921) who styled himself as "anarchist Communist" and Mikhail Alexandrowich Bakunin (1814-1876) who described himself as the "father of modern anarchism" were conspicuous. Bakunin said: "The passion for destruction is a creative passion." Lenin chose to defend terrorism in 1908, although he had earlier criticized "terrorism per se." This was in the context of stirring up revolution in other countries: "We cannot

reject terror, as it is the one form of military action which may be perfectly suitable or even essential at a definite juncture in battle." This became a trend setter for exporting "revolution" or for State sponsored terrorism.

Terrorism took the colour of being nationalist-separatist in the nineteenth century, extreme right in the 1920s, left wing in the 1970s and right-wing/fundamentalist since the 1990s. Frantz Fannon, the Martinique psychiatrist turned writer wrote in "The wretched of the Earth" (1963): "Terrorism unifies the masses and is a cleansing force, freeing the oppressed from an inferiority complex and from despair and inaction." This was written in the context of Algerian War of Independence. Jean Paul Satre wrote a long preface to this book. The LTTE used to quote this often.

Several others followed this during "Freedom Struggle." Lawrence ("of Arabia") organized the 1916-1918 Arab insurgency against Ottoman Turks. Mao's guerilla warfare ushered in Communist revolution in China followed by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara during the Cuban Revolution of 1959. While Mao, Castro and Che Guevara advocated rural rebellion, a Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella (1930-1971), wrote the Latin American handbook on terrorism (The Minimanual of Urban Guerrilla Warfare), claiming that one man's terrorist is another man's liberator. He advocated urban guerilla warfare with "cities as the spring of rebellion." This was the bible for Baader Meinhof, which terrorized Europe in the 1960s-70s.

While Gandhiji used non-violence in Indian Independence struggle, nations like Kenya and Algeria used violence to achieve independence. Jewish groups like "Irgun" of Prime Minister Menachem Begin and "Stern Gang" of Prime Minister Yizhak Shamir blew up King David Hotel (1946), killed scores of Arab families in Deir Yassin (1948) and assassinated Count Bernadotte of Sweden heading UN Truce Commission (1948). Displaced Palestinian refugees struck back with a new form of terrorism by hijacking El Al airline in 1968. That was as startling as the 9/11 when commercial airliners were used to destroy buildings. In 1974 Yasser Arafat defended hijackings in his speech in the UN saying that it was Freedom Struggle. The 1972 hostage taking during Munich Olympics was yet another landmark. The LTTE was formed in 1976 to free Tamil areas from Sinhala control.

The modern form of suicide terrorism manifested in 1983 for the first time in Beirut when a Hizbollah car bomb killed scores of US marines and French troops. As a result of this the US and French troops withdrew from that country. A similar suicide attack in Jaffna by LTTE in 1987

reversed the advance of Sri Lankan troops. All these groups followed the philosophy of Karl Heinzen, Carlos Marighella and FrantzFannon.

## Differences Between Terrorists, Guerillas and Freedom Fighters Blurred.

Pakistan was accused of supporting terrorists who attacked our Uri military camp on 18 September 2016. To rebut these accusations some Pakistani papers published the 1971 photographs of "Mukti Bahini" trainees alleging that India was the first South Asian country to indulge in cross border terrorism. A perpetual dilemma is— when does a terrorist become a freedom fighter? In the 1930/40s the Jewish underground groups were termed as terrorists but in 1944-45 they became "freedom fighters." India and Bangla Desh consider Mukti Bahini as "freedom Fighters." Celebrated American writer William Safire continued to call Yassar Arafat as "Chief of Terrorism" as long as he was alive.

"Guerillas" were Spanish and Portuguese resistance fighters against French occupation in Peninsular Wars (1808-14). Their violence was justified as response to injustice. This itself originated from the Italian "Condottieri" (mercenary soldiers or militias) who were used by different Italian Princes prior to the Reformation to wage local wars. "Terrorists" were the "Urban Guerillas" who in the 1960s evoked sympathy owing to their leftist leanings. Insurgents are expected to have public support in their areas of operations. In the 60s/80s the difference between guerillas and terrorists blurred as terrorists also claimed to be "freedom fighters" to gain sympathy.

## Osama bin Laden and his Legacy:

No terrorist leader in history had dominated the world's attention as Osama bin Laden. "New York Times" said on May 2, 2011 after his killing by US commandos: "He railed against globalization, even as his agents in Europe and North America took advantage of a globalized world to carry out their attacks, insinuating themselves into the very Western culture he despised." Ironically "the complex at Tora Bora where Qaeda members hid was created with the help of the C.I.A. as a base for the Afghans fighting the Soviets." His idea of a "Caliphate" extending from Afghanistan across the globe has been copied by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is the current leader among Jehadis.

The present "Jihadi terrorism" spread all over the world has been analyzed in the backdrop of Samuel Huntington's 1993 theory on the "clash of civilizations." However is it really a clash of civilizations or an attempt by certain Muslim extremists to alter their objectives and tactics to meet different objectives by giving it a religious façade? This will be clear if we analyze Osama bin Laden who fought on the side of USA and Saudi Arabia against Soviet Union and then trained his guns against USA.

Osama while a student of the Jeddah University came under the influence of Dr. Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian-Jordanian of the "Muslim Brotherhood." Azzam later inspired the Palestinian "Hamas." During 1982-85 Azzam founded the "Maktab al Khidmat il Mujahideen al Arab" (MAK) popularly known as "Afghan Bureau." Osama became the chief financier under the patronage of Prince Turki, nephew of King Fahd and then the Saudi Intelligence Chief who funded and equipped the Mujahideen along with the CIA and ISI. He later came under the influence of Dr. Ayman Zawahiri, who was an accused in the Sadat killing. Differences cropped up later between Osama and Azzam over the Afghan strategy. While Osama supported Hikmatiyar, Azzam wanted to help Masood. In 1989 Azzam was mysteriously killed in Pakistan.

After the 1989 Soviet withdrawal Osama returned to Saudi Arabia but started creating problems for the regime. He was deported from the Kingdom in 1992 for criticizing presence of US troops on Saudi soil. Between 1992 and 1996 Al Turabi gave him refuge in Sudan. In 1994 he met Ramzi Ahmed Yusuf, accused in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and conceived a plan to crash a plane on the Pentagon. He also plotted to kill President Clinton and the Pope during their visits to the Philippines, where Ramzi was hiding. However the plot failed and Ramzi escaped to Pakistan, where he was arrested. Meanwhile he plotted to kill Hosni Mubarak in 1995 and also conceived a plan to blow up a dozen US planes simultaneously. US/Saudi pressure on Sudan made him shift to Afghanistan in 1996. He organized the US Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, killing 225 and injuring 4000. In 2000 he attacked USS Cole, killing 17 sailors. In 2001 the Taliban appointed Osama as the head of the Taliban Militia with Uzbek terrorist Namangani as his deputy. Finally his outfit crashed 3 planes (AA11, UA 175 and AA77) on the WTC twin towers and the Pentagon on Sept 11, 2001 marking a new phase in international terrorism. The fourth plane UA 93 could not reach its target and crashed in between. 9/11 attack killed 2,996 and injured more than 6,000.

## Osama bin Laden and ISIS:

Osama bin Laden was a great synergist in centrally conceiving destructive plans and also in dispersing the ideas of destruction to influence common Muslim masses. He conceived the idea of "Near Enemy-Far Enemy" concept. "Near Enemy" was the local apostate state and "Far Enemy" was America and the West. He twisted the Communist dogma "From each according to his ability to each according to his needs" to suit an ordinary Jehadi by coining the concept of "Do it yourself terrorism" which is now the biggest menace. He spread the poison far and wide.

Noted US journalist James Kitfield described this in "*al-Qaeda's pandemic*" (*"National Review" September 1, 2006): "*Global insurgency reacts to Osama bin Laden's radical ideology almost like distant and seemingly disconnected light particles respond in unison to an unseen wave." He reversed the "Top Down" recruitment of Jehadis replacing it with "Bottoms Up" self recruitment by Jehadis, using modern methods of communication. The earliest such recruits were Nigerian Christmas bomber Abdulmutallab (2009) who planted a liquid bomb in  North West flight from Amsterdam to Detriot and Faizal Shahzad (2010), a Pakistani who tried to plant a bomb at the New York Times Square. Similarly the Tsarnaev brothers had self radicalized to be the Boston Marathon bombers on April 15, 2013.

## The Emergence of ISIS:

There are three theories on the origin of IS. The first connects it to the Jordanian-Iraqi terrorist Abu Musab al Zarqawi who was leading Tawhid wal Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad) from 2002 to 2006. Zarqawi had originally taken part in the US-Saudi-Pakistan supported Afghan Mujahideen wars (1979-1989) but developed serious differences with Osama bin Laden. He returned to Jordan in 1989 and founded Jund-al-Sham (soldiers of the Levant-Syria-Palestine). He was in a Jordanian prison from 1989 to 1999. In 2000 he fled to Pakistan when his "Millennium" plot to bomb Radisson hotel, Amman was discovered. From Pakistan he crossed over to Afghanistan, met bin Laden in Kandahar and set up his own training camp at Herat for Jordanian militants. This was known as Tawhid wal Jihad.

Zarqawi shifted to Iraq during the 2003 second Iraq War to resist US occupation. In fact Bush administration had wrongly quoted his presence in Iraq to justify the second Iraq War although Saddam

Hussain never encouraged him. His organization was also called as al-Qaeda of Iraq (AQI) and he was known as the "Emir of al-Qaeda of Iraq." In this capacity he organized several attacks on Shias and American soldiers. In June 2006 he was killed during a US aerial bombing. Some US writers feel that AQI leaders "repackaged" the group as a coalition known as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) under the leadership of Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al Badri al Samarra' (aka Abu Bakr al Baghdadi). By early 2013, the group was conducting dozens of deadly attacks a month inside Iraq.[2]

The other theory is that Baghdadi was a descendant of Prophet Muhammad's Quraysh tribe – one of the key qualifications in Islamic history for becoming the Caliph. This version was advanced in July 2013 by a Bahraini ideologue Turki al-Binali, writing under the pen name Abu Humam Bakr bin Abd al-Aziz al-Athari.[3] Turki al-Binali's version said that prior to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Baghdadi had received his PhD from the Islamic University of Baghdad, with a focus on Islamic culture, history, sharia, and jurisprudence and that he had preached at the Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal Mosque in Samarra. Following the US invasion of Iraq, Baghdadi raised Jamaat Jaysh Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jamaah (JJASJ) – the Army of the Sunni People Group – which operated in Samarra, Diyala, and Baghdad. US-led coalition forces detained him from February to December 2004 at Camp Bucca, but released him since he was not viewed as a high-level threat.

Meanwhile AQI changed its name to Majlis Shura al-Mujahidin (MSM-Mujahideen Shura Council) in early 2006. JJASJ pledged its allegiance to MSM. AQI again changed its name as Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). When ISI's leader Abu Umar al-Baghdadi died in April 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi succeeded him.

The third theory is based on an investigative report by Der Spiegel in April 2015.[4] It said that the original planner for IS was Col. Samir Abd Muhammad al-Khlifawi, of the Saddam's Air Force Intelligence who was known in IS circles as "Haji Bakr." He was not an Islamist. After Saddam's overthrow he was arrested and kept in Camp Bucca along with other future IS leaders like al- Baghdadi. His blue print for the future Islamic State running into 31 pages was discovered after his death. He was killed by other Syrian rebel forces in January 2014 in the Syrian town of Tal Riffat, north of Allepo.

In 2010, Bakr and a small group of former Iraqi intelligence officers made Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the emir and later "caliph," the official leader of the Islamic State. Bakr was not an Islamist and wanted to set

up an authoritarian secular regime like Saddam's Iraq administered through repression and supported by intelligence. However they reasoned that Baghdadi, an educated cleric, would give the group a religious façade to attract Islamists. From then on underground activities of this group started. The Syrian civil war gave them an opportunity to extend their activities beyond Iraq. They started setting up innocent looking "Dawas" in Northern Syria as nucleus of the future Islamic State. By the end of 2012 they started setting up military camps. By 2013 nearly 2,650 foreign fighters were recruited. The first spectacular conquest was Raqqa in 2013. They used naked terror over the residents and subjugated the place. Kidnapping and murder were used to terrify the public.

Thus, it is generally accepted that the hard core of ISIS consists of the old Saddam Army. Patrick Skinner, a former CIA officer who had served in Iraq  told the AP that Saddam-era military and intelligence officers were a "necessary ingredient" in IS' battlefield triumphs last year, accounting for its expansion from a  "terrorist organization to a proto-state….Their military successes last year were not terrorist, they were military successes." These observers say that US run Bucca prison had became an incubator for IS. Saddam-era veterans also serve as "governors" for seven of the 12 "provinces" set up by IS in the territory it holds in Iraq.[5]

US was indirectly responsible for these developments. The Baathist Saddam Army was disbanded by Paul Bremer, US Coalition Provisional authority in May 2003, leaving 2,50,000 soldiers without jobs. Bremer also dismissed all Baath Party cadres from government jobs. These steps created a serious vacuum in the administration when civil war between Shias and Sunnis exploded after the fall of Saddam. Iraqi soldiers joined Sunni militia groups to protect Sunnis. Paul Bremer disputes this version and claims that the order came from the White House. [6]

A report in "Washington Post" by Liz Sly, their Beirut Bureau Chief says that under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the recruitment of former Baathist military officers became a deliberate strategy.  "Baghdadi embarked on an aggressive campaign to woo the former officers, drawing on the vast pool of men who had either remained unemployed or had joined other, less extremist insurgent groups." After U.S. troops left in 2011, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki started dismissing even those officers who had been rehabilitated by U.S. military. These officers brought in military expertise to the IS army and also the know-how of the smuggling networks maintained by Saddam Hussain to defeat the Western sanctions (1993-

2003) for clandestine export of oil, which is the main revenue for IS. Almost all of the leaders of the Islamic State like their Emirs and shadowy military and security committees are former Iraqi officers.[7]

A "New York Times" report (May 2015)[8] said that IS receives US$ 1 million per day by extortion and taxation. They tax Iraqi government employees up to 50 percent of their salaries, thus getting at least $300 million last year. Companies are taxed 20 per cent of their contracts and revenue. They received $ 875 million when Mosul fell (June 2014). In the same year they stole $ 500 million from banks, $ 100 million from oil, and $20 million from kidnapping. Oil income is falling. Salaries take $ 3 to 10 million a month. The Islamic State also invests in police-state institutions, such as committees, media, courts, and market regulation, but provides relatively few services. The group minimizes costs by looting military equipment, appropriating land and infrastructure, and paying relatively low salaries. The group also limits its vulnerability by shifting operations, transitioning between expanding its territory and fueling terrorist activity. A huge American arms dump meant for Iraq army at Mosul including Black Hawk helicopters and "Humvees" were captured in June 2014. [9]

On 16 November 2015 Russian President Vladimir Putin said that he shared Russian intelligence data on Islamic State financing with his G20 colleagues. He said that IS was financed by 40 countries, including some G20 member states.

Der Spiegel says that "ISIS is primarily financed through a wide array of criminal activities, large and small, centered in the parts of Syria and Iraq that are under the group's control. ISIS steals livestock; sells foreign fighter passports; taxes minorities and farmers and truckers; runs a sophisticated extortion racket; kidnaps civilians for ransom payments; loots antiquities; and much more." In addition they also misuse Islamic charities. All volunteers joining IS are supposed to finance themselves.[10] A signed article in Huffington Post on June 6, 2015 by "Country Risk Solutions" alleged that Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have been funding IS to promote their collective anti-Shia agenda.[11]

### Number of Foreign Fighters with the IS:

The December 2015 report by the Soufan Group has said IS has about 27,000-31,000 foreign fighters from 86 countries. They were only 12,000 from 81 countries in June 2014. From June 2014 the flow of foreign

fighters from Western Europe has more than doubled. Recruits from Russia and Central Asia have shown a near 300 per cent increase. Areawise recruitment was 8,240 from the Middle East, 8,000 from the Maghreb, 5,000 from Western Europe, 4,700 from former Soviet Republics, 900 from South East Asia, 875 from the Balkans and 280 from North America. Largest contributing countries were Tunisia (6,000), Saudi Arabia (2,500), Russia (2,400), Turkey (2,100) and Jordan (2,000). The report gives the figures for India which is 23 official but 40-50 unofficial with 1 returnee. For Pakistan it is 70 official but 330 unofficial.

Besides online propaganda, they found several "hotbeds" for recruitment like Lisleby district of Fredrikstad in Norway; Bizerte and Ben Gardane in Tunisia; Derna in Libya; the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia; and the Molenbeek district of Brussels. This indicated peer pressure on susceptible youth in close-knit groups generating a momentum of recruitment that spreads through personal contacts. More than a third of Tunisian fighters are from just 3 areas of Tunisia (Ben Gardane, Bizerte, Tunis). Secondly they had found that recruits had come from even interior Algeria or Uzbekistan where no internet or social media is available. While the power of the Islamic State's social media outreach is undeniable, it appears that it helped to prepare the ground for persuasion, rather than to force a decision which they do through ground activists.[12]

## Strength of ISIS- Its Social Media:

In December 2015 the London based Quilliam Foundation did a study of 1,146 pieces of propaganda products released by the ISIS between July 17 and Aug. 15, 2015. A similar study was done in the same year by the Jakarta based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) to find out why these social media releases were so attractive to Indonesians. A lot of efforts were made to make the releases "Hollywood Style" with power of visuals, contrasting colours (Black uniform, orange jump suits), multiple cameras, tight focus, and intimate sounds. Earlier, the al-Qaeda visuals were drab with monotonous speeches by Osama bin Laden or Ayman Zawahiri.

ISIS had then 50,000 twitter accounts which were re-tweeted by their 35 affiliates. IPAC said that their films depicted "daily life in the Islamic State and the camaraderie of Indonesian fighters, smiling broadly with their new weapons or enjoying a dip in a hotel swimming pool after battle," "dreams of Sunni brotherhood and revived Muslim glory" and "An Army and alternative State".

Quilliam Foundation found that the video on "Games on the day of Eid" in the city of Tabqa was expertly choreographed, as there were a lot of people playing games. The propagandists were trying to convey a sense that it was only in the Islamic State's caliphate that Eid was so pristine and enjoyable and holy, as Islam was being implemented so thoroughly in this place. They found 696 similar pieces.

## Weaknesses of IS:

Reports in August 2016 indicate that the land area held by ISIS has shrunk by 25 per cent due to hardened Russian/US coalition air attacks. Still their lethal power by using home grown Jehadis especially in Europe has not diminished.

There are many weaknesses in the IS which need to be exploited. First there are serious differences between different nationalities. Fusing Arabs with Chechen and European fighters has not been successful. Religion has not been the perfect glue. There have been several instances of infighting which the even Western media has not been publicizing. Secondly the IS administrative structure has not been able to hold and administer territory except through terror.

The number of defectors is not known but many are escaping the brutal hold of the IS army. Their main theme is that the IS brutality terrifies everyone. International Center for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR) has brought out several reports on the grievances of defectors which the media has not exploited. On October 10, 2015 they published a report after examining the narratives of 58 defectors: (1) infighting among Sunnis (2) brutality towards other Sunnis (3) corruption (4) "harsh and disappointing life"[13] On December 4, 2015 they published a report that the number and quality of their media releases of IS, which were earlier very appealing, are declining. [14]

## India Specific Threats:

In the beginning India underestimated the ISIS threats. Even on May 24, 2016 our Home Minister told the media that ISIS posed no threat to India (Economic Times). However India had been targeted by IS propaganda twice in 2015. "USA Today" (28 July 2015) published an Urdu document obtained by the American Media Institute (AMI) circulating in Pakistani tribal areas calling for uniting Afghan and Pakistani Taliban into one army and launching attacks on India. Another manifesto released in December 2015 reiterated the earlier decision in

the background of the "movement of Hindus" "who kill Muslims who eat beef." (Indian Express)

In 2014 I had told "The Week" (September 21, 2014): "Although the Islamic State does not have the capability to invade and capture other nations, a most worrisome factor is the back flush of those indoctrinated youth. We have the example of hundreds of Mujahideen from Afghanistan who returned home to Algeria after 1989 and fought their bloody civil war causing lakhs of deaths (1991-2002). That is the main danger to India".

Since then Indian anti-terrorist police forces and National Investigating Agency (NIA) have been quite active in locating the recruitment for ISIS. They have made a number of arrests. Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad had prevented 15 Mumbai youths from joining ISIS through counseling.[15]

## What Should India Do?

The Soufan Report said that returning Jehadis were 20-30 per cent, presenting a significant challenge to security and law enforcement agencies. This is by far the biggest danger to India as it was for France & Belgium. Soufan report findings on South East Asia apply to India too. IS constantly exhorts them to come to Syria with their families to perform Hijrah. Some of them travelled on student visas. 141 of them who had no radical history had only wanted to be good Muslims believing that IS caliphate offered them a life of piety that would increase their chances of rewards in the afterlife. Some radicalized youths who could not travel to Syria were prepared to carry out attacks at home to punish their governments.

One of our biggest problems is lack of dependable data on the presence of overseas workers in the Middle East, where the recruitment is done by ISIS. For example the 2012-13 annual report of the former Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) listed only 18,000 Indians in Iraq. As against this, "Iraq Business News" (May 17, 2010) said that "at least" 50,000 Indian workers were working in Iraq including some who had entered through Kuwait or UAE, when India had imposed a ban (2004-2010) on recruitment. Such workers do not register at our missions. It is a pity that the NDA government has downgraded the MOIA by placing it under a junior minister in the Ministry of External Affairs. The UPA government had recognized its importance and upgraded its supervision to a cabinet minister.

When the ISIS overran Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq in June 2014, they took 40 Indian construction workers captive. In November 2014 one Harjit Masih, who managed to escape from their clutches told the Indian authorities that 39 of them were killed. This was denied by Gen.V.K. Singh, Minister of State MEA on July 22, 2015. He said that they were safe according to several intermediaries who were approached by our government. However their families in India have received no communication from them. Unfortunately our government is not able to give any clear idea where they are held and how they are considered alive. This contrasts with the initial self congratulatory reports in our media that India was confident of getting their release through our National Security Adviser's secret diplomacy. At the same time 49 Turkish consulate employees who were taken hostage on June 11, 2014 by the Islamic State were released on September 20 through the efforts of their intelligence organization.

I would recommend the following steps:

Restore the importance of the MOIA to what it was during the UPA rule by placing it under a cabinet minister against its present unimportant position of being an adjunct of the Ministry of External Affairs.

MOIA should closely follow the movements of our overseas workers, collect correct statistics by liaising with reputed NGOs like "International Organization for Migration" (IOM).

Appoint a second or first secretary level officer in every Middle East mission to collect reliable data on the identity and presence of Indian labour. These officials should report directly to MOIA.

Our state and central intelligence services should strive to collect reliable statistics on our population going abroad, not just depending on the Protector of Immigrant statistics. For this ground intelligence is needed.

We recognized the importance of Indian Diaspora only towards the end of the 1990s but confined our attention only on the educated and wealthy. Till 2004 we thought that migratory labour was more of a nuisance. No systematic thought was given on the poorer segment despite their greater contribution to our GNP.

There is a mistaken impression among our intelligence agencies that monitoring of social media is enough to check radicalization. The Soufan Report of December 2015 has clearly said that recruitment to IS is mainly due to "Peer Pressure" and not merely online. While the power of the Islamic State's social media outreach is undeniable, it

appears that it helped to prepare the ground for persuasion, rather than to force a decision which they do through ground activists. This would indicate the need for more ground intelligence in addition to social media monitoring.

It is generally estimated that the Singapore "De-Radicalization" programme is the best to prevent "re-engagement" of misguided youths from rejoining radical movements. They do it through "Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG)" helped by the police. In India no thought as yet has been given by the government on any initiative to involve Social Welfare Organizations in the "De-Radicalization" programmes which should be called "Counter-Narratives." Entrusting this responsibility only on the police is not a good strategy considering the trust deficit of minorities in police.

Singapore programme lays emphasis on looking after the families of arrested militants through their After Care Services Group (ACG). This is worth adopting in India. ACG gives support to the detainees' families through community service bodies to prevent emergence of second generation extremists. This is very important considering the frank statement made by Shri Anurag Sharma, Director General of Police (Telangana State) on December 20, 2015 at the DGPs Conference in Bhuj. He said that random arrests of Muslim Youths had in the past made them more radicalized. [16] "He highlighted how areas inhabited by minorities "were generally bereft of civic amenities and dearth of economic opportunities."

## Notes

[1] Annie Besant used the word "terrorism" to describe the activities of those including Congress opposed to "Home Rule" by using violence preventing elections under British rule. (See page 210 of "The Future of Indian Politics" Theosophical Publishing House, London, Adyar, Benares, Bombay-1922)

[2] (https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43612.pdf
(Congressional Research Service: The Islamic State crisis & US Policy)

[3] (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449)

[4] http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-files-show-structure-of-islamist-terror-group-a-1029274.html

[5] https://www.rt.com/news/311988-saddam-veterans-isis-command/
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2007/09/who_disbanded_the_iraqi_army.html

6   However President Bush denies to have issued any such order. Fred Kaplan, US journalist suspects that the orders were issued by Vice-President Dick Cheney on the advice of the wealthy Shia banker Ahmed Chalabi, who was also a long time CIA asset. He went on exile in 1992 and set up Iraqi National Congress and wanted to overthrow Saddam Hussain. In this he had received support from the "neo-Cons" like Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle etc. It was his secret information on Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) code named "Curve-Ball" that was responsible for the Iraq invasion in March 2003.

7   https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-hidden-hand-behind-the-islamic-state-militants-saddam-husseins/2015/04/04/aa97676c-cc32-11e4-8730-4f473416e759_story.html

8   http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/19/world/middleeast/isis-finances.html?_r=0

9   http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2014-06-11/al-qaeda-jihadis-loot-over-400-million-mosul-central-bank-seize-saddams-hometown?page=2

10  http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-files-show-structure-of-islamist-terror-group-a-1029274.html

11  http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-wagner/why-there-is-no-stopping-_b_7518012.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in

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13  http://icsr.info/2015/10/icsr-report-victims-perpetrators-assets-narratives-islamic-state-defectors/

14  http://icsr.info/2015/12/icsr-insight-decline-islamic-state-media-output/

15  Mumbai Mirror 22 September 2016

16  http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/random-arrests-of-muslim-youths-leading-to-radicalisation-telangana-police-chief-2/

# What After the Islamic State?

Omair Anas*

## Abstract

As the decline of the Islamic State began; many ISIS held cities being liberated, the political process towards a lasting peace has not yet started. An ISIS free Iraq and Syria without a credible political process in which all the communities can fairly participate, will remain vulnerable to another round of instability, violent protests and eventually terror recruitment. Sectarian divide; Sunnis remain on the margin and Shias have dominated most of the military, intellegnce and other state institutions, remains unbridged. A post-ISIS scenario is not much optimistic as it does not promise any inclusive politics in Iraq and Syria and hence forces of instability will continue to define the region.

The Islamic State is functioning within the fault lines created by the failures of the Iraqi and Syrian states, though certainly it has not emerged from this gap only. However, this simplified version of the crisis put Saudi Arabia and Qatar and other Sunni neighbours in black shade for their apparent complicity with the Islamic State and put Iran and the Syrian regimes in the rather white shade because their principle opponents are those, who are against the Assad and Iraqi regimes. It is not necessary that the beneficiary is always the creator of the group.

Islamic State is projecting itself as a credible alternative to the modern political institution called 'state' by introducing a host of institutions by using historical Islamic nomenclatures towards receiving popular Islamic approval. They are carefully using Islamic terminologies including the name of "Islamic State," which was never used by any

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Muslim dynastic Caliphates in the past. The literature promoted by the Islamic State suggests that it has achieved spectacular success in reaching its goals even faster than the mainstream Islamist groups, which have been active for many decades. Among their most important objectives are the establishment of *Deen* (religion) and propagation of oneness of God; establishment of Islamic Caliphate with sovereignty of God, one that is suspended by all Arab rulers; support to weak Muslims around the world; and to free occupied lands of Muslims, to free Muslim prisoners, treating non-Muslims as per the guidelines of God, which is to ask them to enter Islam, pay Jizya or face war; to maintain security and justice among people and implement brotherhood among Muslims.[1] After they have already established themselves on ground and have controlled vast territories and resources, many questions are in discussion about their future, durability and sustainability as an Islamic State. Many security scenarios are being projected with the Islamic State as a reality. Questions such as whether the Islamic State could have a global appeal among the Muslims of more than 100 countries, whether India or countries like India face a real threat from the potential of Islamic State expanding into the Indian Muslims' minds and souls and hence constituting a very serious national security threat both in territorial and ideological sense, and what is the real size and nature of threat emanating from the Islamic State and its expansion and hence, what are the possible corrective as well as preventive measures against this threat?

Despite its being an existential threat to the Gulf monarchies, a challenge to the territorial integrity of Turkey, Jordon and Syria and permanent threat to the neighbouring regions of Central Asia, South Asia, Caucasus and Europe, there is no common ground among all stakeholders to fight against the Islamic State. Their inability or reluctance may not necessarily be linked to their complicity with the terror group; rather, it may be linked more to a geo-strategic evaluation of the threat in which the Islamic State may or may not qualify as the 'only' or as 'the most serious' threat. Most important dividing factor among all these regional and international players is the collapse of the system in Iraq and Syria where the vaccum is effectively filled by non-state militia supported by their respective allies in the region.

For the Sauids and other Gulf authorities, the emergence and dominance of Shiite militant groups,[2] supported and armed by Iran such as the Popular Mobilization Units in Iraq (Al-Hashd al-Shabi) is the main source of destabilization.[3] Turkey's main concern is that Kurdish

separatist groups linked to US listed terror group PKK, is manipulatant the situation to carve out another independent state in its southern border.[4] A systematic exclusion of Sunni population from Iraqi military, intelligence and politics by the Nouri Al Maliki led Iraqi government has left Sunni tribes at the mercy of Shiite militant groups. In Iran, there is growing anti-Arab sentiments both at official and popular levels. Recently, the Tehran MP, Ali Reza Zakani boasted that Iran had three Arab capitals in the bag with Sana soon to follow.[5] The role of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is also seen in line with Iran's effort to revive the earlier abandoned policy of exporting revolution, this time with armed struggle.[6] The Iraqi Kurdish authorities are equally worried and dismissive of the role of Iran backed Shiite militias.

The KRG President, Massoud Barzani, in his talk at the Council for Foreign Affairs, underscores the failure of Iraqi state, particularly, the failure of Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri Al Maliki for Islamic State's success. KRG's perspective on how to take Mosul from Islamic State is different from that of Bagdad's.[7] Turkey, which has a long border with both Iraq and Syria, has two major concerns; first, the emergence of Islamic State is directly linked with the repressive Syrian regime and the exclusion of Sunni population in Iraq; secondly, the Syrian Kurdish groups should never be allowed to create a new state. On both fronts, Turkey has received no major assurance from its Western allies, rather, the US has started arming the Syrian Kurdish group YPG against Turkish wishes.[8]

Iraq and Syria have become a real battleground of private militias, mercenaries fighting on behalf of their groups, state and non-state religious, tribal, ideological, ethnic and sectarian entities. There are nearly 48 militant groups fighting against the Islamic State, mostly Shia and Iran-backed or state supported, but accountable to individual leaders, rather than to the national military leadership. The largest and perhaps the strongest private militia is the umbrella group, Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) known as *Hashd Shabi,* fighting in concert with the Iraqi state. Though it includes a few Sunnis, but its leadership and most of its fighters and constituent groups are Shia militias. Major constituents of the group are the *Badr*, *Hezbollah* (of Iraq), *Asaib Ahl Al Haq*, *Saraya Salam* (former Jaish Al Mahdi of Moqtada Al Sadr) and *Lewa Khorasan*, *Sheibani Network*, *Quds Force*, *al Sayed Al Shaheed*, *Lewa abul Fazl Al Abbas*, *Katiba dar'a al Shiya*, *Al Tayyar al Risali*, *Sariyya Ashour, Katiba Amlek Al Ashtar*, *Harkah Iraqiya*, *Harka Abdal*, *Jaish Al Mokhtar* etc.[9] There is growing international concern over the

command of these private militias, as most of them are taking orders only from their religious leaders, not from the military or the leadership of Hashd Shabi. Its popularity and legitimacy is based on a fatwa issued by Iraq's supreme religious authority Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani, which the Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al Abadi had used to legitimise the group.[10] The Fatwa asks all "Iraqi citizens, who are able to take up arms, should volunteer in the ranks of the security forces to defend the country." There is misinterpretation of this Fatwa that he had called Shiites to take up arms against the Sunnis.[11] However, the decision to allow such a militia parallel to Iraq's national army was not well received by all political parties within Iraq as well as by the international human right groups and neighbouring countries.[12] Even before formal announcement of *Hashd Shabi*, there started international mobilization among Shia Muslim youths to protect the holy shrines. In India, the Shia Islamic scholar, Kalbe Jawwad was detained while trying to fly to Iraq from Indira Gandhi International Airport.[13] Human Rights Watch has reported many serious human rights violations by these private militias, which include the killing of many Sunni tribesmen, who were not involved with the Islamic State.[14]

Similarly in Syria, there are many groups active against the Islamic State, who are protecting the Assad regime. Prominent ones are *Liwa Suqur al-Quneitra, Liwa al-Quds, Jaysh al-Tahrir al-Falastini, Nusur al-Zawba'a, Katibat al-Jabal, Hezbolla,* and many of them are organized in similar popular resistance forums, such as Iraq's PMF. According to the Carnegie Endowment Report, the largest pro-Assad militia is the National Defense Forces (NDF), some units of the groups are armed with tanks and rocket launchers. The second largest militia is The Baath Battalions, followed by the Jerusalem Brigade, The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), and their recruits are gradually declining.[15]

The increasing role of Iran backed militants has complicated the situation further. The largest and perhaps the strongest private militia is the umbrella group, Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) known as *Hashd Shabi,* fighting in concert with the Iraqi state. A major concern is that the Iraqi state has no control over these groups, their funding, arms and recruitment. There is information that several thousand Afghanis and Pakistani Shias have been recruited to fight along with the ranks of PMF. A Fatwa issued by Iraq's supreme religious authority Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani has been used to justify a global recruitment of

Shias to fight to defend Shia shrines.[16] There is misinterpretation of this Fatwa that he had called Shiites to take up arms against the Sunnis.[17] In India, a recruitment drive was launched by the Shia Islamic scholar, Kalbe Jawwad who was even stopped at Delhi airport from flying to Iraq.[18]

## After Falluja Operation

After a long time, some good news is coming from Iraq indicating that the Iraqi forces have successfully liberated Fallujah, a stronghold of Islamic State. Only a few days before, the US had cast some doubts that the Iraqi army may not be in full control of Fallujah. To send a strong message, Prime Minister Haidar al Abadi made a televised message from Fallujah to congratulate the Iraqi people. The message was clear that neither Islamic State is invincible nor the Iraqi state has lost its collapse. Now the seize of Mohil the second largest city of Iraq is under IS control.

That said, the challenge is not yet over. There are three major sources to fear that the celebration may be short-lived. Since the American invasion of Iraq, Fallujah has been a restive region as the province is strong hold of Sunni forces, many militants among them, opposed to the American invasion and subsequent Shia led Iraqi government. The deadliest attack on Fallujah was in April 2004 which had made global headlines as they involved serious human right violations by the American forces.

The victory has exposed the over reliance of Iraqi state on Shia dominated umbrella militant group al Hashd al Shabi (People's Mobilization Forces; PMF). The Iraqi Sunnis have been accusing the group of indulging in serious crimes against Sunnis. International rights groups, mainly the Human Rights Watch has been demanding the Iraqi government to make the PMF accountable to the state or the Iraqi military. A few weeks before the Human Rights Watch had again said that "the Iraqi government needs to control and hold accountable its own forces if it hopes to claim the moral upper hand in its fight against ISIS." The very making of the PMF is based on a sectarian solidarity which has strong anti-Sunni feelings that holds the entire Sunni population responsible for the crimes Saddam Hussain had committed against Iraq's Shia population. Human Right Watch had documented serious human right violations, mostly unaccountable, that many pre-existing Shia militias had executed in the areas of their deployment,

including Fallujah. These groups have also close coordination with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp and its leader General Qasim Suleman. The Iraqi state's deepening reliance on such a militant group had divided the Iraqi political groups; secular Shias and Sunni and Kurd leaders have been critical of these groups. Kurdish leader Mahmud Barzani, the President of Kurdistan Regional Government, had asked PMF to stay away from entering the Kurdish region.

Second most important factor that can help the victory sustain is an expedient rehabilitation of Iraqi Sunnis who have faced brutalities from Islamic State or have fled their homes to live in inhuman conditions within the country. The mass exodus of Sunnis dramatically rose when Shia militant groups had advanced to liberate the city. Soon after Islamic State's takeover of the city, the UN had reported that more than nearly 72,910 families were registered as displaced in 2014 mostly from Anbar. Weeks before this operation began, as many as 50,000 Iraqis were besieged in Falluja and thousands are in camps set up by the Iraqi army. Their expeditious rehabilitation will be the key challenge for Abadi government to defeat Islamic State militarily as well as politically.

Third factor to stabilize Iraqi advances against Islamic State will be implementing long held political reforms. Just last month, supporters of Iraq's most influential Shia leader Moqtada Al Sadr had stormed Prime Minister Office and protesters chanted anti-Iran slogans criticizing Iran's interference in Iraq's internal affairs. Anti-Iran protests are common among Sunnis but a Shia protest against Iran had immediately become news. In 2007, Sunni's anti Al Qaida group al-Sahwah al-Sunniyah and Abna' al Iraq were the main force behind the complete defeat of al-Qaida and Abu Musab al Zarqawi.

However, Sunnis were gradually marginalized, and excluded from major security forces and other public offices that led to a boycott policy resulting into a legal exclusion of Iraqi Sunnis. The gradual exclusion accompanied with the decline of Iraqi secular politicians against the Iran backed Shia religious political leadership particularly Nouri al Maliki.

Nouri al Maliki set aside all reforms and followed a strict exclusivist policy; Iraqi Sunnis accused him of employing a sectarian agenda. Nouri al Maliki, though he enjoyed full support from Iran, had gradually lost legitimacy amid deepening sectarian crisis. Iraq's secular Shia leaders as well as some religious leaders such as Moqtada al Sadr, played an important role to force Maliki out of power. The dramatic rise of Islamic State was seen as an outcome of Nouri al Maliki's failing policies against

Iraqi Sunnis who did not find any change in their life in both situations.

The Iraqi Sunnis' active support could be secured only when the new Prime Minister Haidar Al Abadi announced certain reforms. Other than fair representation in the Iraqi government, Iraqi Sunnis have been demanding for the release of thousands of Sunnis jailed on terror charges but the right groups call these cases mostly politically motivated. Abadi has promised to decentralize Iraq's security forces which will be accountable to their provincial governments instead of the central government. Sunnis predicament in a common struggle against ISIS is driven from the sense of alienation and insecurity for which the central government holds much responsibility. For example, rather than disbanding all non-state militant groups, such as Shia's Al Hashd al Shabi (PMF) and Kurds' Peshmarga, and forming an inclusive Iraqi military, Iraqi state is seen as complicit with Shia and Kurd militant groups when it allows them to have arms and refuses Sunni groups the same. Sunnis became underrepresented in Iraqi military after a debathification law disbanded entire Iraqi army and banned them from joining any public jobs.

An expedient rehabilitation programme, implementation of the overdue political reforms and disbanding all militant groups, regardless of their sect and ethnicity, to form an inclusive and representative Iraqi military are the main steps towards forcing the ISIS and similar extremist groups away from Iraq.

For Indian government, it is extremely sensitive issue as it has a responsibility to stop the sectarian politics coming to India where 20 per cent population of Indian Muslims belong to Shia community. A scenario that some suspected Shia and Sunni fighters fighting for Al Hashd Al Shabi or Islamic State and will return to India, will have deeper implications for India's hitherto peaceful sectarian environment.

India's war against terrorism and al-Qaida will weaken and take a sectarian turn if its nationals join either side of the conflict in Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State, with its clear vision and ideology, is against the very state system on which the existing West Asia and Muslim world is based. A threat to the entire state system is a threat to the global peace and order. It may not establish a Pan-Islamic Caliphate in near future but its ideological reach will itself create divisions within Islamic societies around the world. India's immediate security concern is the gradual expansion, of the Islamic State, both territorial and ideological, in Afghanistan and Pakistan and its alliance with the already active militant networks. Also the mass recruitment of Shia fighters

from Pakistan and Afghanistan should be closely watched as their return from Iraq and Syria may deepen a sectarian divide in the region and can also create a ground for import of Shia Islamic revolution from Iran and Iraq.

## Notes

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# Kashmir Valley in Turmoil – Awaiting New Leadership

J.N. Roy*

The over four month long current upsurge in the 10 districts of the Kashmir Valley (not other parts of the state), has led to over 90 deaths, over 10,000 injuries, including several hundred eye injuries in use of pellet guns by the security forces. Over hundred are said to have been permanently blinded. It has been accompanied by prolonged curfews lasting over 90 days and shut downs on the calls of the separatist – leaders. Schools are closed for the last four-months and now (Nov 10, 2016) 33 have been burnt down by "unknown" people. Several thousand (over 7000), including children (13-15 years) have been arrested. Its intensity, as of all storms, has dwindled but no early end seems in sight as the separatist leaders, now for a change on one platform, are interested in prolonging it. Pakistan, expectedly is jubilant over the development to embarrass India as a grave human rights issue.

The current upsurge, unlike the 2008 and 2010 ones, is spontaneous, generated by unattached youth and leaderless. The protestors are only relating to various protest progammes being dished out by the separatist leaders SAS Gillani, Mirwaz, and Yasin Malik, whom they do not seem to acknowledge as leaders. Rather they are suspicious of all old leaders and processes. It is for a change home grown movement and nothing to do with Pakistan, and Hurriyat leaders are taking advantage of it to defame India. Death of popular Hizbul Mujahidin "Commander" Burhan Wani on July 8, 2016 in an encounter with the security forces (SF) triggered the "intifada" like (as in 2010) movement with youth even children, pelting stones at the SF/Police, and schools/offices and shops remain closed. School burning is the latest mode of protest which the separatist leaders condemn and as usual blame the govt. for it. 33 school

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buildings had been set fire to (Nov 10, 2014) ostensibly to thwart the govt. effort to hold examinations in November. This did not succeed and students in large number appeared for the examinations.

There is a déjà vu about the situation vis-à-vis the 2008 (over lease of land to Amarnath Shrine Board); 2010 over alleged security forces excesses, and even the 1989-90 period beginning of the armed militancy. A valued friend and colleague whose views I respect, was unhappy when I said that it will continue to recur from time to time as the basic issue alienating the Valley Muslims remains unaddressed and the popular perception in the country (not the govt.) is opposed to any engagement with them because in essence it is perceived as separatist with Pakistan connection and the increasing Islamisation of the movement. He felt that the Valley muslims were totally 'alienated' (they were always), and SF actions against peaceful protestors and civilian deaths are unacceptable. I do agree with him, particularly the civilian casualties are something we cannot live with as a civilized country and must change the terms of engagement to minimize it, if not totally avoid it an future. But, I still stick with my proposition of periodic recurrence of such protests and violence over any pretext or incident with pro-Pakistan separatist leaders as instigators. Armed militancy ebbing this kind of periodic upsurges suit Pakistan to keep Kashmir in front pages.

It is but natural for the experts, journey-men journalists, liberals and intellectuals to wade into the situation and generally condemn the Govt. of India for "oppressing and suppressing" the Kashmiris, and worse "the breach of trust and promises" over the years. A refrain regularly reinforced by the Valley media and Kashmiri moderates, separatists and politicians. Betrayals by Nehru (on self-determination) and Govt. of India for alleged dilution of Art 370, 1952 Agreement and autonomy of state form the main plank of their arguments. This is further reinforced by suggestions like, opening talks with the stake-holders, winning the hearts and minds of the Kashmiri youth, (they mean valley muslim youth as youths of Jammu and Ladakh region are not alienated); involve separatist leaders in discussions and talks for restoring normalcy in the state (they mean the Valley). Some Indo-Pak experts evoke the litany of the visceral Indo-Pak animosity or enmity to predict stalemate as Pakistan will not allow, using pro-Pak separatist leaders and militants, any normalcy in J&K till Kashmir agenda is resolved to Pakistan's satisfaction. They are perhaps right.

No past event whether 1989-90, 2008, 2010 and current 2016 are same in details, reasons, protagonists or the trigger, even if the

substantive reason remains constant A.G. Noorami (Asian Age Oct 30, 2016) feels "the situation in Kashmir today is far worse than what it was even at the peak of the militancy from 1989 to 1994." Many, including some J&K experts agree, and worry. The issue of alienation total, substantial or partial, has been the main cause of country's initiatives in the Valley, at least since the 1996 onwards. Vajpayee govt's. initiatives for Round Tables with the separatist leaders. (Gillani opposing all the while); and efforts of the UPA govt. between 2007-11, in forms of Round Tables, Working Groups and a Group of Interlocutors were steps meant to engage and resolve the issue of Valley's alienation to restore normalcy. But these efforts failed and seem to have run their course and are no more relevant including the present separatist leaders of the Hurriyat, hardcore SAS Gillani and Azadi proponent Yasin Malik et al. They are past their prime and efforts of the Parliamentary Delegation and Yashwant Sinha led Advocacy Group to talk to them in September/October, 2016 only makes them relevant and should be avoided. There is no issue which has not been discussed and recommendations made, but there is no meeting ground and there cannot be any with them. Talks imply give and take, adjustments and above all goodwill and trust. These do not exist as the demands like azadi, autonomy, going back to 1952 Agreement etc. are not acceptable to the people and govt. of India. Many experts, including AG Noorni, R.C. Guha etc. blame the govt. for breach of trust and not adhering to Art 370 and promises made to J&K and its people. Extensions of the jurisdiction of the Centre in the state has taken place legally under the J&K Order 1954 with consent of the state Govt. Art 370, stands and is not deleted and J&K's special status remains. Centralising or closer integration with the country is not a dirty word besides the compact was with all the citizens of the state and not with Valley muslims alone. People of Jammu and Ladakh have no problems over the issues. Any hope that any engagement with the separatist leaders willyield results is a non-starter. Their positions, with Pakistan backing them remains unchanged. The constraints of Govt. of India, in a deteriorating strategic environment in the neighbouring region are mounting leaving little room for accommodation and manouere. There is no point in carrying on the charade of talks etc. with the protagonists whose positions are well known and fixed.

There is no similarity between the 1989-90 upsurge and the current one, 2008/2010, except in one important respect. The 1989-90 one was a result of euphoria, hope, optimism and enthusiasm. The current one is

the result of pent-up frustration, hopelessness and bewilderment of the new generation of youth. Their demands which they feel is based in righteousness of the cause; whether of Azadi or autonomy or faith, and in protest against suppression of their voices in 2008 and 2010 agitations. Unfortunately, the 1989-90 movement chose the passage of arms to press their demands, while the current one has adopted relatively peaceful 'intifada' type protests of stone-pelting, shutdowns etc. About seven attacks on SF and camps and snatching of 25 rifles could be described as aberrations. However, an important similarly between the two is that both were and are home-grown and leaderless. The 1989-90 movement was led by four half- educated JKLF youth with 'Azadi' as their slogan and without any formal organisation at the grass-roots. It thrived on popular mood and support. In substance it was home grown and Pakistan had no control till they supplanted them by end 1990 with pro-pak Hizbul Mujahedin, a pro-JEI set-up. Although SAS Gillani and JEI had some influence on JKLF, they did not lead them.

The current one is also homegrown by unattached youth and without any formal organisation and is riding the popular sentiment of deepening alienation, informed by growing, islamisation of the movement and perceived insensitivity of Govt. of India over finding a solution to Kashmir issue which they feel the central govt. is not interested in. With firm belief in the righteousness of their cause, they find the Indo-Pak engagement in cold-storage and Indian hardline on Pakistan; total lack of initiative to talk to Valley separatist groups. Return of BJP govt. in Delhi (2014) is fuelling apprehensions of a majoritarian agenda driven by the RSS. Formation of PDP-BJP alliance govt. in the state was like a red-rag to the bull, and a challenge to the religio-ethnicity based agenda of the Valley Muslims, to dominate not only the Valley, but the whole state. They fear the very ethnic muslim aspirations of the Valley muslims will suffer at the hands of outsiders (Congress & BJP) and they would be suppressed.

The death of Burhan Wani was nothing more them a trigger to release these pent-up, ethnic frustrations and fears, as were Shrine Board land lease in 2008 and alleged security force excesses in 2010. Burhan Wani was a social-media created warrior, whose call to Kashmiri youth to fight for his rights, with considerable Islamic input, was timely with which the frustrated youth could relate to. He caught their imagination with his debonair looks, youth and appeal. Burhan was not a normal militant trained in Pakistan or fighting in the field like Ashfaq Wani (JKLF) who died in 1990 and others. He brought the youth once

again in the fore-front. But his influence is overstated. Hizbul Mujahedin, of which he, was commander has now meagre presence (about 93 militants) in the Valley. His death has not led to large number of valley youth joining HM as was a apprehended. Only about 40 are reported to have joined. The prolonged agitation of frustrated Valley youth will symbolise his presence for sometime but it's the real issues which will overtake the future developments, with new youth leaders emerging. Resort to violent means will be a grievous mistake and waste of all the sacrifices. The current agitation offers a window of opportunity if it succeeds in dumping the traditional pro-Pak separatist leaders-hardliners and moderates – and is led by the leaders who are pragmatic with whom the govt. can engage with purpose.

To do that the govt. and people of India must understand the well-springs of frustration and alienation of the Valley muslims. Lot of history rides it including the conflicting regional templates. Presently, particularly relevant is the 100 years of Dogra rule (1846-1947), in which Kashmiri speaking Valley muslims were on the margins, and Hindus, particularly the Pandits, cornered land, jobs, business concessions, engendering anger and deep resentment among the Valley muslims who were the erstwhile rulers. During the Sikh (1819-46) and Dogra rule, Valley muslims suffered considerable oppression and suppression. The efforts of the Valley muslims from mid 1920's to protest to improve their status was suppressed harshly.

It is in this background that the movement of Valley muslims for betterment of their status and against the Dogra rule and outsiders has to be seen. From the petitions (1925) to Lord Reading, setting up of the Reading Room (1930) to protest against discrimination against muslims, brutal suppression (1931) of protesting muslims and formation of Muslim Conference (1932) demanding jobs for Muslims and reopening of mosques shutdown by the regime, and later its conversion into National Conference (1939) by Sheikh Abdullah to broadbase the agitation against the Dogra Rule, to the communist influenced Naya Kashmir Charter (1944) of the National Conference and the "Quit Kashmir" notice (1946) to Dogra Ruler forms one common thread of the rise and consolidation of the Kashmir valley muslims and articulating their aspirations.

It started essentially as a protest movement of Kashmir speaking Sunni muslims of the Valley against the deprivation in jobs, businesses and subjugation. Cocooned in a lush Valley of 120×60 Kms, their ethnic religious and national identity was clear but suppressed for over a century. From the very begning (1930) Sheikh Abdullah dominated and

guided it, outmanouvring his opponents. He turned it into a mass movement from its uppercrust and elitist beginnings, converting Muslim Conference (1932) into National Conference (1939). Its search for identity and national goals went through turns and twists and conflicts but in the course acquired certain attributes which abide till today and influence and bedevil the state as a whole. These trends and characteristics have been aptly described in following excerpt from "In Search of Future – the story of Kashmir" (page 37): by David Devdas.

Quote "Although it had been born out of the anti-Pandit resentment ………The party had evolved since 1932 into an instrument for the advancement of Kashmiri interests. And packaged though it was as representative of all the people of the state, Abdulla's party had become the tool of ethnic Kashmiri who lived in the high terraces in the middle of the valley…. Abdullah was trying to forge a unity that Kashmir 's web of hierarchies had hitherto prevented. But the construction of every identity excludes others. If the muslim identity excluded minorities within Kashmir, the Kashmiri identity excluded people of other parts of the state "unquote"

Infact the current situation in J&K particularly the Valley including the 1989-90 one, is the legacy of life-long struggle of Sheikh Abdullah as his core agenda to ensure dominance of the Kashmiri speaking ethnic Valley muslims in the affairs of state with maximum autonomy, to govern, and if possible, an independent or near independent state. He felt that never again should an outside force rule or dominate the Valley and the state. That is why he opposed the presence of outside political groups viz. congress, BJP (then BJS) etc in the Valley and the state.

It must be said to the credit of Sheikh Abdullah that he never wavered from the core agenda of his political vision. Depending on circumstances and constraints he made temporary truces and compromises, but continued to test the limits to which he could push his agenda.

Meanwhile taking advantage of dispute with Pakistan and interest of USA in the matter; he continued to explore the possibility of a semi-independent status for Kashmir even while the Prime Minister of an Indian state. His discussions in this regard with the U.S. envoy Loy Henderson and the visiting Senator Adlai Stevenson are now matter of record (unclassified US Congressional papers) and can be easily accessed. Ambassador Henderson's report (1950) on his discussions with Sheikh would confirm that he was in touch with the Azad Kashmir leaders also to push the agenda for independence. All these

developments leading to his ouster in 1953, helped in strengthening and firming up an anti-integrationist sentiment among the muslims of Valley which in due course acquired, anti-India hue. Thus the popular feeling in the Valley that Nehru's promise of "self-determination" has not been fulfilled forms the core of the separatism and anti-Indianism in the Valley and is rooted in Sheikh's vision of ethnic muslim superiority in the Valley.

It is this mindset which is at the root of the current trouble and has to be factored in all dealings with Valley politicians of any variety. Many experts blame Nehru for not being honest in avoiding the referendum in Kashmir but vis-à-vis Sheikh he was more sinned against than sinning. Sheikh had changed and Nehru failed to comprehend that in time, despite evidence to the contrary.

The above narration of Sheikh Abdullah will arouse ranconr and protest but an objective study of his political journey and beliefs, and pragmatic compromises, strong religious under-pinnings of his personality and politics is yet to be made. What we have are the popular perceptions and make believes. This is neither to belittle nor critique him to paint him negatively, but to suggest the need to properly evaluate him. He will perhaps emerge as a taller leader and person with unwavering faith in his beliefs and destiny of ethnic Kashmiris than we presently think; even if it does not suit India.

Overall the current environment in the state is of a deeply divided regional template. Majority Valley muslims are alienated over the denial of their right of self-determination, alleged injustice, suppression of the right to freedom of speech etc. A general sense of victimhood and violation of autonomy enshrined in Art 370 and 1952 Delhi Agreement etc. exist. The very nature of the alienation in the Valley straddles two worlds. The separatist one is over the denial of self-determination and the other one is over erosion of autonomy which by implication accepts the Indian constitution. Many in the Valley subscribe to both the different templates, which many experts fail to distinguish, when they speak of widespread alienation.

Presence of the security forces and their anti-militant operations has not only caused suffering but widespread discontent and alienation in the valley. This narrative has received considerable support from the Valley media, political leaders and mainland left liberals and other intellectuals – painting govt. of India as the main Villan. This narrative also accuses the govt., alongwith the separatist leaders of insincerity in talks with the various leaders in the Valley and erosion of promised

and guaranteed autonomy to the state. Such attacks including recommendations of various groups etc. winning minds of the Kashmiris (Valley) and their youth, withdrawal of army etc. the latest addition, and rightly so, is the allegation of highly partial and provocative coverage of the current upsurge by a section of visual media, painting the youth and valley muslims as anti-national and furthering Pak agenda in the state. No mainline commentators and intellectuals criticised such national media for its excesses in the name of freedom of press. Infact, it further alienated the agitating youth.

The above observations are by and large constants in Kashmir story over decades of violent movement (1989-90), various protests and agitations, efforts at talking to Valley leaders, both separatist and mainline, in addressing their concerns. The other constant in these narratives is the alleged villainy and insensitivity of the central govt. and victimisation of the Valley muslims for demanding their just rights. Liberals and Intellectuals subscribe to it, including the need to talk to Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir problem. Any objective analysis will find it difficult to subscribe to this one sided narrative, which at times is due to being ill-informed, ignorant and at times motivated. The middle class intellectuals in India as in other countries, tend to adopt a high moral ground, being elitist and look down upon the motives and actions of the mundane practitioners of governance, state craft, strategic and security needs of a country including the popular moods or perceptions of the people at large. This class is confident of itself and does not admit of any doubts. They consider the imperatives of the nitty-gritty of the governance and security beneath their self-proclaimed moral and intellectual compass. Vis-à-vis Kashmir for example, they think nothing of the verities, realties, truths against false assertions if it does not fit in their notions of the truth. They do not mention the expulsion of over three lakh people (65000 families) from the Valley in early nineties manifesting Islamilsation of the movement. They have no patience to consider the efforts of the Govt. over the years to engage the Valley's separatist leaders and Pakistan, but to no avail. While advising and admonishing the govt. they fail to admit that all these suggestion and efforts of the govt. only help the separatists to harden their postures. No govt. worth its salt can accept the terms of SAS Gillani for dialogue nor that of autonomy by the main line parties as they only talk of the 1952 Agreement, ignoring the 1975, Indira – Sheikh Abdullah Agreement, though it is the latest one and Sheikh Abdullah was the main player in both the Agreements. The interlocutors etc. never tire of advising the

govt., but have nothing to say about the obstinacy of the Valley separatists and their impossible conditions. The Govt. all along had been reasonable and bent backwards to placate them to see reason. But, these have been interpreted as admission of guilt by the govt. It is this mindset, which in the context of the death of Burhan Wani, felt that he should have been arrested rather than killed, to avoid the current agitation. It was indirectly articulated by the chief Minster and then directly by Vice-Chancellor of Jammu University Prof. R.D. Sharma (Indian Express 10.11.2016). It is this kind of double talk which is unfair to the security forces, as if they had a choice and deliberately murdered him. The final fate of Burhan Wani comes with the territory he chose to tread. No govt. in the world can give an either or kind of directive to its security forces in dealing with an armed militant commander. It must be clear that the forces are there on the ground because of armed militancy, and will be there till it lasts. And they are not happy to be there, but are doing their duty. The Valley mindset in this regard is not honest, when they rail over the overwhelming presence of the forces in the Valley.

The nature and content of the current movement, while worrisome over the depth of alienation, also offers an opportunity to, begin a new kind of dialogue and solution process and break from the old procedures and mindsets. There is a need for the govts. of the state and centre to reach out to these youth before old separatist leaders succeed in coopting them. Emergence of a new leadership in the Valley to explore some new options is needed. It may seem daunting in view of the fact that there are enough spoilers and vested interests on both sides. It may take time but is not impossible. But it requires shedding of a number of shibboleths, prejudices and mindsets on part of Govt. India and the agitating Kashmir Valley youths. In immediate terms the govt. of India and the state govt. must respond open heartedly to humane concerns and handling of the outburst, which like all, such outbursts is abating. A sense of sympathy, transparency and sincerity must define govt. response.

Some immediate steps to be taken could be:
 (i) Immediate release of hundreds of children, and youth arrested for stone pelting across the board,
 (ii) Specialised treatment of those with serious eye injuries by pellets
 (iii) A clear stand on use of pellet guns,
 (iv) Reach out to those who have suffered in recent riots and quick assistance to them,

(v) Review all the cases of recent detention orders, particularly of Human Rights & social workers.

(vi) Compensate those whose houses have been destroyed in SF actions where militants take shelter, unless known collaborator,

(vii) No undue importance to the separatist leaders both hardline and moderates – as they are spoilers and deal with only new emerging youth leaders or unattached community leaders if they come forward,

(viii) Clear and open instructions to the SF and the police to use minimum force and eschew confrontation and retribution, and

(ix) Above all, ensure and respect the right to freedom of speech and peaceful protest of the citizens, even if it involves some risk.

In the long term, the narrative on both sides will have to change if a pragmatic engagement and solution is to be found. It will have to take into account the India govt. of India's dilemma imperatives of strategic consideration over the moral compulsions of governance. Rajmohan Gandhi (Indian Express 30.8.2016) has aptly summed up the new terms of engagement on both sides. He felt that if India was serious about its standing in the world as major global power then it will have to exhibit courage to find an agreement with genuine representatives of the people of Kashmir. Similarly, he felt, that if the Kashmiris are serious about wanting a decent future for their future generations, they will have to think of fresh methods, free of radical Islam and free of violence for protesting excesses and demanding azadi. Above all they need to fashion a united leadership. Rajmohan Gandhi had also contended that to eschew violence is no betrayal of Kashmiri dreams which infuriates the Indian people; a peaceful protest will shame and embarrass them (Indians) and is likely to succeed. For the story of violent movements in face of might of the state is rather depressing and counter- productive.

As to the nature of settlement, Gandhi feels "the most that currently be hoped for is an agreement between New Delhi and Kashmiri political coalition to bring genuine and substantial self-governance to Kashmir."

Politics is an art of the possible. Pragmatic solution in an emotionally charged environment where Kashmir Valley muslims strongly feel justice has been denied to them; and people in India are enraged at the Pakistan element and Islamisation of the movement; are not easy to reconcile. In recent decades, particularly after 2008 Mumbai massacre, the Indian public opinion has become increasingly anti-Pakistan and against those supporting its claim over Kashmir. No govt. in Delhi can now ignore

this popular sentiment, as it cuts across party lines. Besides, almost two and half decades of violent movement in Kashmir Valley has spawned its own set of grievances, counter-narratives and blood trails. The path to a solution will have to overcome all these. The Central Govt., and people will have to understand that they cannot govern a part of the state against its wishes and mandate, and the Valley muslims must realize that they only represent a region with majority population and not the whole state as the people of Jammu and Ladakh regions are not alienated from India. Imbued with a legacy of ethnic superiority, the Valley muslims will find it difficult to forge a united front with other groups and regions, which is a must for a meaningful solution and engagement. The most difficult journey for people of Kashmir will be a realization that:

a) The final solution will have to be found with India as the nuclear status of both India and Pakistan has frozen the status quo and Kashmiris need to be pragmatic about it. Therefore, Pakistan and Islam cannot be part of the narrative;

b) Azadi and full autonomy, 1952 Agreement etc are not on the table only some form of self-rule around Article 370 will have to be attempted;

c) That only peaceful movement will move and convince the people and govt. of India,

d) On their part the Govt. of India and people must shed their ego and treat Kashmiris fairly as equals and their own. And above all not as a favour.

e) Govt. must ensure the freedom of speech of the citizens and their right to peaceful protests, and

f) the state govt. and the Centre should embrace the new youth leadership, if and when it emerges with sincerity and transparency.

In brief, all round sincerity and time is needed for the basic formulations of the narrative on both sides to change the terms of engagement and change for the sake of India's prestige as a democracy and the future of Kashmiris. The current cul-de-sac must be breached with lot of spoilers around and history riding it. Let us live in hope as neither Kashmiris in their eternal turmoil and victimhood nor India celebrating its 100 years of freedom in 2047 with a section of its population in alienation, will look pretty or proud. The present turmoil in the Valley offers that window of opportunity to both sides to make history in humility, introspection, and goodwill. But the initiative must

come from the state govt. and the Central govt. to break the ice. But finally its for the people of Valley to decide what kind of future they envisage for their future generations. And if they are willing to shed their egos, forge unity among themselves and then with other stake holders in the state for a normal future. Presently they are so overwhelmed and consumed by their grievances that they fail to see that the state has become part of a power game between three countries, viz. China, Pakistan and India, and stakes are fairly high in strategic terms. India need reassure the Valley Muslims that the country will embrace then as their equal and own them. On their part, they need shed false hopes of outside help (Pakistan) and look ahead. In brief it may sound harsh  but it is the call of the Valley muslims about their future. The govt. cannot act beyond a point in a deteriorating strategic environment around the state. Both sides have to transit from confrontation to convergence.

If the terms of new engagement with new leaders and thinking does not happen, I am afraid such periodic upsurges on new issues and pretexts will keep recurring with Valley suffering and bleeding and India facing periodical embarrassments. This could well be the new pattern of Pakistani strategy in Kashmir Valley.

# Afghanistan, Global Jihad and Intra-Islamic Fault-lines

B.B. Kumar*

The last column of the Soviet 40th Army led by its Commander, General Boris Gromov crossed the Friendship Bridge over the Oxus River on 15 February 1989. The 3,331 days' war ended, and so was the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Milt Bearden, as Christina Lamb writes, sent a two word cable from the CIA station in Islamabad to his headquarters at Langley: "'WE WON,' it said, in giant letters made from Xs. That night, for the first time in three years, he turned the light off in his office before leaving. His office faced that of his Soviet counterpart, and he had liked them to think he was working all night to defeat them."[1] While America was happy, Pakistan was not. Najibullah was still the President in Kabul; the Communist rule has not yet ended. The new set of Americans replacing the old CIA ones after Geneva Accords lacked the warmth. A Pakistani Army colonel remarked: "Those CIA people who'd been working with us for ten years were excellent. They'd give us things without asking. If they knew I was going inside they would give me photographs, maps, gadgetry, communications gear, etc. After the Geneva Accords new people came who treated us as if we were the corrupt police of a Third World country."[2]

The US, as mentioned above, was happy, as it ignored the danger emanating from the monster, which has taken birth from the womb of the Afghan War. There was global spread of thousands of 'warriors' trained in the use of most sophisticated arms. Equipped with most resilient ideology of global jihad and war with the 'distant enemy,' the new Al Qaeda attacked the US few times. After 9/11, the US retaliation led to decimation of Al Qaeda and the Taliban government of

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Afghanistan; then the war spread to Iraq. The first war cost the Americans only $5 billion and no American was killed. The second war is still continuing, though more than "$3 trillion had been spent in Iraq and Afghanistan in response to a terrorist attack that cost only between $400,000 and $500,000 to mount," and in spite of "the might of NATO, forty-eight countries with satellites in the skies, 140,000 troops dropping missiles." The NATO casualties, up to more than a year earlier, have been 3,484; on the other hand, 15,000 Afghan troops and 22,000 civilians have died apart from the casualties in Iraq and Syria. The irony is that the entire effort was "to defeat a group of ragtag religious students and farmers led by a one-eyed mullah his own colleagues described as 'dumb in the mouth.'"[3]

Two events proved to be of tremendous morale boosters for the Islamists like Osama bin Laden. The first was that the clerical regime of Iran held US diplomats as hostages for 444 days in Tehran, and thus defied and humiliated number one Super power of the world. The second was the defeat of the world's largest army, the Soviet army, in decade long protracted jihadist guerrilla campaign; thus the second Super power of the world was not only defeated and humiliated, but was also later disintegrated. This psychological factor led to the upsurge in jihadist activities throughout the world. Numerous jihadi *tanjims* were formed, the existing ones were activated; jihadist terrorism raised its face not only in non-Muslims countries, such as Kashmir in India, Chechnya in Russia, but even in the Islamic countries to fight the "the near enemy," that is the "false and corrupt Muslim rulers." Osama bin Laden targeted the "distant enemy," the US, although, "many of his aides objected to the idea as too dangerous."[4] Muhammad Salah Al-Din Al-Zaidan, a former Egyptian army colonel, was one of them, who "opposed 9/11 strike, arguing that it would end in the destruction of al-Qaeda's infrastructure and the Taliban's Islamic State."[5] Bin Laden was adamant. His efforts culminated in 9/11, leading to US war on terrorism, and ultimately his death also.

Thus, the humiliation of the US by Iran, and defeat of the USSR by the Mujahideens generated so much confidence among the Islamists that they even thought of defeating the US. On the other hand, the West, due to hangover of the colonial arrogance, combined with lack of understanding of the jihadist ideology and its resilience, never thought that even they may be targeted. This wide perceptional gap in understanding, inevitably, led to the 9/11. The West was not only over-confident and ignorant, it was also utterly insensitive towards the

'others' suffering due to jihadist violence. When thousands were being massacred in Tajikistan, a small Central Asian country, the offices of the jihadist outfit, Hizb-ut-Taharir, were openly running in the West.[6] Al Qaeda's predecessor, Maktab-al- Khadimat (MAK) had thirty offices in US and Europe.[7]

This psychological morale boost of jihadists led to global upsurge in terrorist activities; new jihadi outfits were formed everywhere, including India. (Bruce Riedel, p. 40) At one point, there were 180 terrorist groups in Kashmir to fight against India. There were "riots and violence throughout Kashmir. Incidence of violence jumped from 390 in 1988 to 2,100 in 1989 and almost 4,000 in 1990. Hafez Sayeed's Lashkar-e-Tayyiba began setting up its infrastructure inside Kashmir, while its camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan trained hundreds of militants."[8] The strange reason given for the upsurge in violent jihadist activities in Kashmir by a senior CIA functionary, Bruce Riedel, was "Years of heavy handed oppression by India."[9] Was it really so? In reality, Kashmiris were treated most favourably in terms of developmental input by Central Government; they enjoyed the fruits of democracy, whereas the same was mostly denied to the Pakistanis, including its eastern wing (now Bangladesh). Whereas the population of the Hindu minorities dwindled from 16.5 per cent to 1 per cent in Pakistan, and 29 per cent to 8 per cent in Bangladesh due to their excessive oppression, the minority Muslim population increased in India from 9.7 per cent to about 14 per cent due to most favourable treatment. Unfortunately, US and Europe continued to ignore this humanitarian aspect, and persons like Bruce Riedel continued to indulge themselves in myth-making or facile simplistic explanations.

There was dispersal of the jihadist warriors in the large part of the globe after the ouster of the Soviets from Afghanistan. Robert Gates, the Deputy Director of CIA and the man responsible for all intelligence analysis, wrote about their global spread in 1996, five years before 9/11, which was the first attack on USA after 1840:

"Most fought with the Islamic fundamentalist Muj[10] groups, particularly that headed by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. We examined ways to increase their participation, perhaps in the form of some sort of "international brigade," but nothing came of it. Years later, these fundamentalist fighters trained by the Mujahedin in Afghanistan would begin to show up around the world, from the Middle East to New York City, still fighting their Holy War—only now, including the United States among the enemies. Our mission was to push the Soviets out of

Afghanistan. We expected post-Soviet Afghanistan to be ugly, but never considered that it would become a haven for terrorists operating worldwide."[11]

## Genesis of Afghan Crisis

It is not that the ideological antagonism between the communists and the radical Islamists in Afghanistan was a post-Soviet invasion phenomenon. Really, it started during Muhammad Zahir Shah's monarchic regime, and even during the regime of Muhammad Daud's. Similarly, American collusion with the Middle East and Afghan affairs was not a new development. Islamist radicalism, on the other hand, always dominated in the region. The success of Ayatollah Khomeini's Iranian revolution of 1979, immediately before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was, as we know, the success of Islamist radicalism itself.

The existence of illegal communist parties in Afghanistan, including the NDPA, as well as the radical Islamic party, 'The Organization of Young Muslims,' during mid-1960s, and the conflict between them, ultimately led to the crisis situation in Afghanistan. Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, Mullah B. Rabbani and A. Sayyaf were associated with the latter one. The ideological antagonism between the two, as some scholars believed, and an event of April 1970, led even to the downfall of Muhammad Zahir Shah. According to Bladimir Bosov, a leading Russian expert on Afghanistan, and advisor to the NDPA Central Committee, "Leftists printed a newspaper for Lenin's 100th year anniversary and they published a poem dedicated to him. They called Lenin the 'instigator of revolution' and they used an Arabic term, which is applied only to the eulogy of Prophet Muhammad. This was a call to Islamists. They tried to force the King to forbid such leftist organizations and their publications. Mullahs gathered around mosques and went to the squares to protest against the growth of the leftist danger. The royal family failed to devise an appropriate way of dispersing the crowd. Mullahs were put on buses and taken out of Kabul. For believers, this was an inexcusable act. In leaflets and sermons in mosques they began saying that the king had retreated from the protection of Islam. A *fatwa* of damnation was not carried out and *khutbas* and toasts continued to be included in the Friday prayers. This indicated that the clergy hoped to reach mutual understanding with the king. But, radical Islamists took new action. They shaved a dog's forehead so it would look similar to the king and wrote the word 'Zahir Shah' in blood on its forehead so that nobody would mistake the comparison. They then left the

unfortunate animal into the streets."[12] The situation gradually worsened and the king was ousted. Situation did not improve, however, when Muhammad Daud came to power. Radical Islamists accused him of being loyal to the communists. They tried to stage his ouster with the help of the army during 1975. The revolt was, anyway, suppressed and the radical Islamists had to migrate to Pakistan. But, Daud's regime was overthrown by the Marxist officers of the Afghan army in April 1978 and the Communist regime led by N. Taraki came to power. The rural countryside of Afghanistan rose in rebellion; Pakistan's dictator, Zia-ul-Haq asked the ISI director, General Akhtar, himself a Pashtun, to arm and help the rebels, who were already in contact with ISI and Pakistan's religious parties, especially the Jamaat-i-Islami. The communist Afghan government appealed Moscow for arms, advisors, and finally for troops. Moscow was reluctant at first, but, ultimately sent 85,000 Soviet troops on the eve of December 25, 1979.[13]

## Expanding Network to Oppose the Soviets

After the entry of Soviet army in Afghanistan, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq immediately turned to Saudi Arabia for help. The response of the Saudis, who were already worried about a Marxist threat in Afghanistan even before the officer coup, and whose intelligence chief, Prince Turki bin Fayal had even warned Afghanistan's President, Muhammad Daud Khan, of a communist officer threat during latter's visit to Riyadh, was positive and immediate. King Fahd put Turki's General Intelligence Directorate (GID) in immediate touch with Pakistan's ISI, and provided funds in support of the Mujahedin. Apart from that, Saudi authorities also encouraged their citizens to lend private financial support to the Afghans fighting against the Soviets and to join in their jihad. America's CIA joined the ISI-GID alliance after that.[14]

Thus, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to a massive flow of money, weapons and Mujahedin volunteers from throughout the world to Afghanistan through Pakistan. An Arab expedition, apart from others joining in, took shape in Pakistan. According to an estimate, "more than 15 thousand people passed into Afghanistan through this Arab base (three thousand Yemeni, two thousand Egyptians about three thousand Algerians, 400 Iraqis and Tunisians, 200 Libyans, Jordanians and Syrians as well and others). Saudis represented the largest group, numbering over five thousand people. There were four thousand young Muslims who came from the city of Medina alone."[15] This was apart

from the men and resources coming from other Muslim countries of the world to join the war efforts including Pakistan.

## America Joins the War Effort

The US also joined the war efforts of the Mujahedin in a big way. Here it needs mention that it was not the first time that America joined hands with the Islamic States or groups for any common purpose; such things happened earlier also during the cold war period when the US and the Arabic States came together to fight communism. Ayatollah Khomeini, after the success of Iranian revolution in 1979, allowed well-known Egyptian publicist and public figure, Muhammad Hasaneyn Haikal to work in Shah's archives. He found some documents, according to which, in the beginning of 1970's there was an informal group patronized by the United States administration (particularly Henry Kissinger). It included Alexander de Maranch, head of the French Documentation and Counterespionage Service (SDECE) since 1979, Anwar Sadat, Shah of Iran, Muhammad Raza Pahalavi, King of Morocco, Hasan II and Kamal Adham, head of Saudi Arabia's General Investigation Unit. Haikal named it the Safari Club. The tasks of the group were to work against communism, work to prevent the penetration of Soviet influence into countries of the third world, prevent the spread of leftist ideas, and to work against the appearance of regimes of socialist orientation. The members began using Islam for solving their problems. Working through King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, a meeting between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and heads of the radical organization, Muslim Brotherhood, was organized in 1979; the resulting reorientation led to exclusion of Soviet military experts from Egypt in 1972. With the permission of the Egyptian authorities, and under both Saudi and Egyptian organizational and ideological control, Saudi Arabia organized thousands of Islamic groups to "struggle" against atheist Marxism.[16]

Communist takeover of Afghanistan, coupled with fall of Shah of Iran, prompted America to renew its love affair with Pakistan. President Carter ordered CIA to provide low-level assistance to the rebellion against the communist regime. This was six months before the invasion. After Soviet invasion, President Carter's national security advisor, Zgibniew Brzeziniski came to Pakistan; he offered more assistance to Mujahedin and Pakistan, which was, however, rejected by Zia as 'peanuts.' Zia, however, came around; bilateral ISI-GID relations became trilateral one between CIA, ISI and GID. As per the arrangement, Washington and Riyadh provided matching grants of money and

purchased arms; Islamabad handled the task of distribution of the same and the training. CIA funding gradually increased to $250 million annually and peaked in 1987 and 1988 to $400 million annually. Apart from William Casey, CIA director, a colourful personality, Charlie Wilson, who sat on key House committees, was enthusiastic supporter of Afghan war. He always recommended the payment of more than what CIA asked for.[17] Christina Lamb writes about him: "One of the most passionate about the cause was a colourful Texan Congrssman with a penchant for beauty queens with names like Snowflake. Charlie Wilson was on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, and under his campaigning the US went from supplying Lee Enfield rifles to AK47s and surface-to-air missiles.[18] Charlie Wilson visited a Peshawar hospital and asked a wounded Afghan, and asked him as to "how he could help, and the man had asked for something with which to shoot down Soviet helicopters. It was largely his lobbying that led to the mujaheddin being given the Stinger missiles in 1986 which really turned the war around." The Stingers made a lot of difference; Russians lost a few hundred helicopters, "which was very decisive in their decision to withdraw."[19]

## Parties with Distinct Agenda

The jihad in Afghanistan succeeded due to input from various parties. As bin Laden noted, "Volunteers from all over the Arab and Muslim countries … were trained by the Pakistanis; the weapons were supplied by the Americans, the money by the Saudis."[20] The war brought five parties together, each with own distinct agenda. They were:

    i.   The Americans, whose agenda was to defeat the Fortieth Red Army of USSR for which CIA director William Casey and Charlie Wilson were wholeheartedly supporting Pakistan's President, Muhammad Zia-ul Haq.

    ii.   The ultimate agenda of the Pakistan's dictator, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, was to prepare for the jihad in Kashmir and India. This also gave him opportunity to continue his nuclear programme unhindered.

    iii.   Defeat of the Communists and ouster of the Soviet army from Afghanistan was the agenda of Saudi Arabia.

    iv.   The agenda of the Mujahids, especially of Umar, the Afghan clergy, was fighting for the establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan.

v. Lastly, there were persons like Abdullah Yusuf Mustafa Azzam, Osama bin-Laden and Ayman al-Zawahary who were working for the fulfillment of their agenda of global jihad.

## Zia's Jihad Agenda

As Bruce Riedel writes: Zia, from the earliest days of Afghan war, "had already begun planning for the next stage of jihad, to be waged in India and Kashmir. He first approached Jamaat-i-Islam Party, with which he and the army had long-standing ties. Jamaat's founder and Islamist writer, Mawlana Sayyid Abu A'ala Mawdudi, had advocated force to establish a Muslim state in India …"[21] Everything continued according to Zia's plan. Bruce Riedel writes about the steps taken by the ISI in managing the overflow of resources: "The ISI thus took great pains to oversee the flow of outside help, and arms to the various mujahedin factions. This also meant it could favour some factions, notably the Pashtun and Islamic groups, at the expense of non-Pashtun and more modern elements. The man who ran the operation for much of the 1980s was Mohammad Yousaf, the chief of the ISI's Afghan bureau. His two accounts, *Silent Soldier: The Man behind the Afghan Jehad* and (with Mark Adkin) *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, are the best pieces on the war from the Pakistani perspective. *The Bear Trap* describes the "pipeline" for US aid as follows: "As soon as the arms arrived in Pakistan, the CIA's responsibility ended. From then on it was our pipeline, our organization that moved, allocated and distributed every bullet that the CIA procured."[22]

Zia took every step to promote and strengthen the Islamization of Pakistan. In view of Shuja Nawaz, the foremost expert on the Pakistani army, "Islamization was the legacy (Zia) left Pakistan."[23]

Zia strengthened ISI. He hand-picked Akhtar Abdur Rahman, a Pashtun, better-known as General Akhtar, as director, ISI during 1979. Akhtar was a "cold, reserved personality, almost inscrutable, always secretive," who "hated publicity and press, avoided being photographed, and was difficult to fathom even among his most senior lieutenants—but he was a gifted intelligence officer. He developed close working ties with many of the Afghan Mujahedin leaders, especially fellow Pashtuns, and organized them into political parties to give more legitimacy to their struggle. Akhtar also built strong ISI links to the CIA and Saudis."[24] There was tremendous expansion in the strength of the ISI, whose staff jumped within a decade from 2,000 in 1978 to 40,000 in

1988. This was with the twin objective of keeping Zia in power, and for waging jihad. (Ibid) Keeping the next stage of jihad, i.e., jihad in Kashmir, in mind, Zia and ISI wanted Kashmiri militants to join his training camps; the JKLF militants, after initial hesitation, joined ISI training camps in 1987.[25]

There was tremendous expansion of Islamic schools in Pakistan, and even government school curriculum was radicalized. The number of officially registered madrassas jumped from 900 in 1971 to 8,000 in 1988, and there were another 25,000 unregistered ones. The worst thing which Zia did, apart from changing the mindset of the army men, was the poisoning of the minds of the Pakistani young ones by bringing drastic change in school curriculum of the social sciences and Urdu. As a Pakistan based study opines: "The military government of General Zia-ul-Haq, after the coup in 1977, had its own problem of legitimacy, which it tried to guise in an overarching quest for Islamization of the society. Education was among the first of its victims. Religious political parties became enthusiastic partners in this quest. In the educational sphere, this amounted to a distorted narration of history, factual inaccuracies, inclusion of hate material, a disproportionate inclusion of Islamic studies in other disciplines, glorification of war and military, gender bias, etc. Subsequent governments either failed to check these harmful deviations, or willingly perpetuated them.[26]

The Pakistani army was radicalized during Zia's time to much extent, which coupled with jihadi agenda of the extremely powerful ISI made the life of the persons, sitting even on the top, extremely unsafe.

Thus, the situation in Pakistan became so bad that none was safe in that country. Benazir suspected that ISI and the Pakistan army were plotting against her, which ultimately proved to be true. She was removed from prime ministership twice, and was ultimately assassinated on October 18, 2007, probably by al-Qaeda and its Pakistani Taliban allies, when she came to power as Prime Minister of Pakistan for the third time. According to UN inquiry, Musharraf government did not give adequate protection to her. On the other hand, ISI obstructed the process of proper inquiry of her assassination.[27] ISI's role remains suspect in Pakistan, as even attempts were made to assassinate Musharraf. General Asif Nawaz, the chief of army staff, determined to get the Pakistani "army out of politics," in the very first order of the day, Nawaz stated that "the army must allow the democratic process to work and return to the business of being a professional military." Further, "his goal was to try to persuade Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto to reconcile for the

good of the nation." Unfortunately for Pakistan, he died suddenly. According to his wife, "he had been poisoned and that the plotters may have included Prime Minister Sharif."[28] Thus, even a well-meaning topmost army officer had no scope to act for the better in Pakistan.

Ideological alignment of the Pakistani army officer cadre, and the rank and file with the terrorist groups, such as LeT and Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammad, numerous instances of involvement of the regular officers and men from the army "in terrorist activities either directly or indirectly as facilitators and trainers for groups like the LeT and the JeM, the influence of extremist ideology of Tablighi Jamaat and Hizb-ut-Tahrir, the formation of a radical group of retired army men and officers, like Tanzeem—ul Ikhwan, and motivation for coup attempt, were not innocent phenomena; these were the result of Zia's jihad. An audio cassette titled *Crush India*, containing "provocative songs, speeches and apocryphal stories about martyrs hoping to imbibe in soldiers the spirit of jihad," was circulated among the Pakistani troops. It said, "Since independence, our army has been fighting with the enemy which is five times larger and equipped with latest weapons. But our army is equipped with a special weapon the enemy doesn't have, the spirit of jihad … Every Pakistani soldier is a soldier of Islam. He will be rewarded by Allah." A booklet on jihad, circulated as a part of the junior officers' campaign, proclaimed, "One who kills a *kafir* will not go to Hell ever and there will be no shortcoming in his prosperity as regards to wealth and good food. The soldiers of Islam should know that winning or losing is in the hands of the Almighty and defeat can only be provided by God … if soldiers die during a jihad, their pain would be equivalent to that of a mosquito bite."[29] For Hamid Gul, involved in Afghan Jihad, it was a 'soft Islamic revolution; as he argued, "Pakistani Army soldiers have always been religious, but now a growing number of officers have turned Islamist."[30]

## Ideologues

The ideological input in Afghan war was provided by Abdullah Yusuf Mustafa Azzam, an accomplished intellectual. His book, *The Defense of Muslim Territories,* the foreword of which was written by Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz, Saudi Arabia's leading Wahhabi scholar and religious figure, gave new direction to the Afghan Jihad, and future course of global jihad.

Azzam, born in 1941 near the city of Jenin in the British mandate of Palestine, whose family migrated as refugee, to the Jordan's East Bank

after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and settled in a refugee camp outside the city of Zarqa, joined Palestinian *fida'in* resistance movement. Here, it needs mention that the first massive Palestinian refugee migration also took place due to Arab-Israeli war of 1947-48, in which his family must have suffered. Palestinians refer to the same as *Naqba* (catastrophe). Azzam, however, preferred to go for higher education, and, had impressive credentials as an Islamic scholar.

Azzam had degree in Islamic law from Damascus University in 1966 and then master's degree from Al Azhar; he then taught at Jordan University before joining Al Azhar in 1971 for doctorate. After obtaining his doctorate in 1973, he joined teaching profession in Amman University. While serving in Amman, he became a well-known Islamic leader and speaker. When General Intelligence Directorate (GID, intelligence service of Jordon) pressured him to tone down his statements, he left Amman and joined at King Abdul Ibn Saud University in Jidda; and within a year left that university also to join Islamic University of Islamabad in Pakistan. In Islamabad, Azzam came in contact and under the influence of Zia's jihad in Afghanistan. He played distinct role not only in providing ideology—though that was in no way different from those provided by Islamic ideologues, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad Ibn Abd al Wahhab and Sayyid Qutb; only the emphasis differed—but also in the establishment of jihadi outfits and bringing in the mujahids and jihadi leaders to Pakistan for joining jihad in Afghanistan by his call of 'join the caravan.' Other two important writers whose writings the jihadis consult the most are Abu Khalid al-Suri and Abu Bakr Naji.

## The Ideology

Earlier, while in Al Azhar and Jedda, Azzam was under the influence of Muslim Brotherhood and Wahhabism. Later on, of course, he thought Muslim Brotherhood to be too timid and broke his links with it. His views gradually hardened, and he was all for Salafi jihadism. About jihad, Azzam wrote: "Whenever jihad is mentioned in the (Quran), it means the obligation to fight. It does not mean to fight with the pen or to write books or articles in the press, or to fight by holding lectures."[31] His slogan was, "Jihad and the rifle alone, no negotiations, no conferences and no dialogue."[32] In this connection, it may be said that Azzam's statement is in line with what the Qur'an says in its numerous *Suras.*[33] Of course, the Qur'an also says that there is no compulsion in religion (*La ikrah fi'l din*).[34] The fact cannot be denied that the voice

of the Medinan *Suras* of Qur'an is certainly the voice of sword, violence and terror, and that is what was practiced during the Empire building phase of Islam.[35]

As Azzam said, it was obligatory on the part of every Islamic state 'to send out a group of mujahedeen to their neighbouring infidel state. They should present Islam to the leader and his nation. If they refuse to accept Islam, *jizyah* (a tax) will be imposed upon them and they will become subjects of the Islamic state. If they refuse this second option, the third course of action is jihad, to bring the infidel state under Islamic domination.' According to Azzam, as argued in his book, *Defence of the Muslim Lands*, 'it was a great sin not to wrest control of Afghanistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Kashmir, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea, etc. which had 'previously fallen into the possession of the infidels.''[36]

In February 1989, nine days before the Soviet army left Afghanistan, Azzam outlined his vision of the Islamic state in a sermon delivered in Islamabad. He said: "We will fight, defeat our enemies and establish an Islamic state on some sliver of land, such as Afghanistan. Afghanistan will expand, jihad will spread, Islam will fight in other places, Islam will fight the Jew in Palestine and establish Islamic state in Palestine and other places. Later these states will unite to form one Islamic state."[37] Jihad for Azzam was global cause to be unitedly fought as a pan-Islamic struggle by the entire ummah providing solid base (*qaeda sulba*).[38] His emphasis on the cult of martyrdom, and for the participation of global *ummah* in Afghan war has tremendous impact throughout the Muslim world.

During the jihadist struggle going on in Iraq and Syria, the jihadists take advantage of the writings and strategies suggested by Abu Khalid al-Suri and Abu Bakr Naji. "Chastened by two decades of failure, Suri published a massive tome on line. The Call of the Global Islamic Resistance, explaining where the jihadist movement had gone wrong and how to put it right again. The 1600-page book came out around the same time Naji published his *Management of Savagery*.[39] Naji did not restrict himself to Muslim strategists in his writings and suggested his jihadist readers to learn from the writings and examples of non-Muslim insurgents, military strategists and political theorists. Rather than the Prophet, he quoted American historian, Paul Kennedy, as one of the very first people, who wrote about the dangers of military overreach: "If America extends the use of its military power and strategically extends more than necessary, this will lead to its downfall."[40] Naji based on this quote as the main principle of his entire strategy for provoking

the US to overextend itself militarily. Universal laws of insurgency are usually compatible with Shari'a laws, Naji argues.[41] Naji advocated utmost ruthlessness towards the enemy,[42] and advises even to kill their women and children,[43] though the Prophet advised to the contrary.[44]

## Cult of Martyrdom

Azzam advocated the cult of martyrdom. According to him, the jihadists, if dead, while fighting to repel the outsiders, or "the far enemy" would be glorified as martyrs and assured a special place in heaven.[45] This is what the Qur'an says.[46] The apostle, during the battle of Badr, told that martyrs shall go straight to Paradise. During the battle of Uhud, Umayr, son of al-Humam, who was eating some dates which he had in his hand, heard the Prophet saying that Martyrs shall go to Paradise. After hearing him, he said: "Fine, Fine, is there nothing between me and my entering Paradise save to be killed by these men?" He flung the dates from his hand, seized the sword, and fought the enemy till he was slain."[47] It needs mention that the Muslim young ones have special charm for the paradise, and especially the *hurries*. Arif Jamal, a Pakistani journalist, studied the last letters of six hundred jihadists active in Kashmir, and he found hardly a letter in which there was no mention of 72 *huries*. Arif Jamal's research paper was published in *Asia Times*.[48] According to another study, a majority of Hizb ut Taharir followers in Tajikistan were of 15-20 year age group, among whom the charm of the *hurries* is the greatest. Of course, many of them might have believed that Islamic rule may bring an end to their poverty linked problems.[49]

The jihadist outfits not only run training camps for the terrorists, arrange for fidayin attacks, but organize social welfare and produce huge jihadi literature. MDI (Markaz–ud-Dawa-wal Qrshad) or JUD (Jamait-ud-Dawa), as for example, publishes many journals. A perusal of its literature reveals as to what extent they may go to motivate the jihadists. "A sample reading from an issue (February 2007) of its children's magazine, *Nanhe Mujahid* ('Child Warrior') reveals, as Wilson John writes: "that the group has given an entirely new dimension to literature for children: 'Jihad is unique tourism. In other types of tourism, one spends money. But in jihad, one earns a lot of money, female slaves and concubines in paradise. When a Muslim conquers the land of infidels, he becomes (the) owner of their property. He becomes owner of their Women …'"[50]

Today, we read a lot about the *fida'ins* (*fida'is*) in the newspapers. It is interesting to know that the *fida'is* were employed even a thousand

years earlier to kill the enemies. Carl Brockelmann writes about them in Seljuq empire during Malikshah's reign: "The murder of an enemy of the true faith designated by their master was presented to them as a work well pleasing to God, the execution of which would assure them of the joys of Paradise. Such murderers were called *Fida'is*, "the Self-Sacrificers," or *Hashishis* (whence Assassins); those intoxicated by *hashish*, the narcotic element in hemp. The use of stimulants was widespread in mystic circles elsewhere as well; in the sixteenth century coffee was used for such purposes in South Arabia. Accordingly, what the Venetian world traveller Marco Polo reported when some two hundred years later (1271 or 1272) passed through the territory of Alamut, may be mere legend: namely, that the *fida'is*, while intoxicated by *hashish*, were placed in a section of the Alamut garden fitted out as Paradise, with young women as *hurries*, in order to make the assassins amenable to the orders of the leader by giving them a foretaste of the pleasure awaiting them in the hereafter."[51]

The use of the young ones, and sometimes children, for suicide bombing, by the jihadists is also a well-known fact, and the studies made in the field confirm the fact. Christina Lamb writes about one such study: "… the UN mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) commissioned a study by American academic Christine Fair on who was carrying out the suicide bombings. Her report found that they 'appear to be young (sometimes children), poor, uneducated, easily influenced by recruiters and draw heavily from madrassas in Pakistan.' Some were school children, 'lured with promises of adventure or material gain such as motorbikes and cell phones,' others had been abducted outright. Some were Afghan refugees settled in Pakistan."[52]

Christina Lamb further writes: "I'd heard the story of children being recruited from madrassas from many bereaved families in Pakistan, though they were always too fearful to give their names. As in the story Karzai told me from the Afghan in Karachi, it seemed there were jihadi talent-spotters who went to madrassas and took selected students off for 'extra tution.' This meant training at camps run by militant groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad and Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin, which Musharraf had told the US Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin he would not close. Often families didn't know their children had any involvement in such activities until they got a call saying, 'Congratulations, your son carried out a successful martyr mission.' People also talked of middlemen being paid to scout villages for recruits."[53]

There is large-scale recruitment of the child soldiers by the ISIS; "the boys, as young as 13, has been tasked to carry weapons, guard strategic locations or arrest civilians;" "children are taught how to behead another human being, and are given blond dolls on which to practice." The children of ethnic minorities, especially the Kurds and Yazidis, are captured and forced to join ISIS.[54]

The martyrdom, advocated by jihadist outfits is based on the perceived victory both ways. In such a case, even a loser in war is a winner. Wafa Sultan has cited the case of the Lebanese Shiite Muslim cleric and Hezbollah (the party of Allah) leader, Hassan Nasrallah. In a ruinous war with the Jews, his 1,000 people were dead, 5,000 wounded, and one million displaced, as against loss of 100 people by the Israel. But on the evening of the ceasefire, Nasarulla declared his victory.[55]

## Jihadists Joining the Caravan

Thousands of the Jihadists came to join the caravan on the call of Azzam; the prominent among those who came were Osama bin Laden, Abu Musaib al-Zarqawi, Riduan Isamuddin (also known as Hambali; he helped create Jamaah Islamiyah and carried out a wave of terror attacks in South East Asia, including October 12, 2002 bombing in Bali), Abu Mus'ad al-Suri (a Syrian writer of 1600 page *Global Islamic Resistance Call*) and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad (a Pakistani, serving as aide to Azzam for brief period).

Abd al-Aziz, born in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) in 1973, was heavily influenced by Azzam's works; he came to Pakistan just after his death and became the disciple of bin Laden, as was the case with Suri. After some time, he returned to Saudi Arabia; he wrote a jihad manual, *A Practical Course for Guerrilla War*.

## Jihadi Outfits

Azzam created Service Bureau (Maktab al Khidmat) in Peshawar to assist jihadist arriving from all points of the *ummah* to join the Afghan war, and to provide them with housing and food. Osama bin Laden, a previous student of Azzam at Jidda and in whose house he lived there, was the co-founder of the organization. In the beginning, they set up hostels for jihadists in Peshawar, and then the training camps for them, who joined Afghan war subsequently. Bin Laden, a scion of the Saudi Arabia's wealthiest construction magnet, provided financial support. Of course, Azzam also collected huge fund during his tours, including

in the USA for the purpose. Osama bin Laden, however, distanced himself from Azzam on the advice of his Arab supporters, and also his Egyptian advisor, Ayman al-Zawahiri.[56]

Inspirational role of Azzam, in the creation of Harakat al-Muqawamat al-Islamiyah (Hamas; Islamic Resistance Movement) in 1987, is dully recognized. He was also instrumental in setting Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI; Centre for Proselytization and Preaching) with the help of Hafez Saeed and Zafar Iqbal, with the mission 'to apply the lessons of Afghan war—which was winding down in 1987 as the Soviet forces prepared to leave—to Kashmir and India.' MDI's 'first priority was to train Kashmiris to fight alongside the mujahedin in order to gain combat experience. Camps were set up in Afghanistan's Konar Province for the purpose. The ISI helped get the new group set up, and trained MDI operatives in its camps as well. A military wing of MDI named Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), or the Army of the Pure, would become the most violent and effective terrorist group fighting India."[57] LeT has grown tremendously since its formation. It has numerous training camps; according to an estimate, 200,000 jihadists were trained in LeT camps up to some years back.[58] In 2001, when MDI, was banned due to attack on Indian Parliament, the name of the outfit was changed to Jamaat ud-Dawa (JuD).

The LeT did not keep its activities confined to Pakistan only. As Wilson John writes: "the fact that the LeT has had a presence in almost twenty-two countries," and it "proves its capacity to work undercover in alien surroundings, a characteristics normally related to intelligence agencies."[59] This underscores the close ISI links with LeT.

## Post-Soviet Scenario

With the withdrawal of the Soviet forces and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cold war ended. There was no role for the USA and Saudi Arabia after that. The US withdrew from the Afghan scenario. The new phase of jihad of Omar (Taliban) and Osama bin-Laden began just after that. But, the US had to come back to Afghanistan again after 9/11 attack. Zia, Akhtar, US Ambassador in Pakistan, Arnold Raphel and several senior Pakistani generals died in a mysterious plane crash on August 17, 1988, when the war with the Soviets was coming to an end. But, although the Soviets left Afghanistan, the Communists were still controlling the country, and they continued to rule Afghanistan until 1992. After the end of the Communist rule also, the intra-Mujahidin war continued. Ultimately, Taliban (Students' Movement) came to power

under the leadership of Omar (Umer), which collapsed after American war on terror. Northern Alliance helped the US in the war.

In 1992, the Communist regime collapsed; Abdul Rashid Dostam defected to the Mujahedin; jihadists occupied Kabul. The intra-Mujahedin war, however, continued after that, and Pakistan continued to extend its support to a section of the Mujahedin, especially Gulbuddin Hekmatayar's Pashtun group. As usual, it opposed groups, such as Tajik group of Ahmad Shah Masoud. The fall of Kabul also led to the emergence of Taliban. Bruce Riedel writes: "The years of anarchy following the fall of Kabul to the mujahedin fomented what came to be known as the Taliban or students' movement—the most extreme Islamist movement ever to govern a country."[60] "It is one of the many paradoxes of Pakistan's history," Bruce Riedel writes: "that the most liberal and enlightened of its leaders, Benazir Bhutto, would be the one to help midwife the Taliban, an action that ultimately led to her assassination."[61]

## Al Qaeda and the Global Jihad

Al Qaeda, apart from facilitating the Islamists' war efforts, was managing anti-Soviet Afghan training and operational infrastructure also in a big way. Its predecessor, Maktab-al- Khadimat (MAK) had thirty offices in US and Europe and worldwide network, which Al-Qaeda inherited. Al Qaeda's role, however, changed in February 1989, just before the Soviet withdrawal. As the international community neglected Afghanistan after Soviet withdrawal, the country, and Pakistan which was the frontline state in the anti-Soviet struggle, "became the international center for ideological and physical warfare trainings of Islamist guerrilla and terrorist groups. Afghanistan replaced the Syrian controlled Bekka valley as the principal center of international terrorism. As the West looked the other way. Afghanistan evolved into a 'Terrorist Disneyland.' Several Islamist groups, principally Al Qaeda, and Al Qaeda along with Islamic Movement of the Taliban, the ruling party of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan trained 70,000-130,000 mujahideen until the US-led coalition's intervention in October 2001."[62]

Al Qaeda also helped Islamist groups in different conflict zones of the world, such as Tajikistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Mundanao and Xinjiang, by providing trained recruits and funds. The Arab Mujahedin and their leader Bin Laden remained in Afghanistan and Pakistan even after the war, because they were not welcome in their own countries.[63] Bulk of them living in Pakistan, however, moved to Sudan, where Al Qaeda had established its headquarters in December

1991, especially after the first World Trade Centre attack in February 1993, when the US threatened Pakistan to either get rid of the Mujahedin or be declared 'a terrorist state. Pressure on Sudan by US and UK in May 1996 forced Al Qaeda to relocate to Afghanistan. The organization had added advantage there, as Western intelligence agencies failed to monitor it in that country. There the Al Qaeda strengthened its old links and developed new ones. Gunaratna writes: "After having established new, and consolidated old relationships with Balkan, Caucasian, Middle Eastern and East African groups when based in Sudan, Al Qaeda was able to develop closer and deeper ties with Asian groups after its relocation to Afghanistan. As an organization with global membership, Al Qaeda had diverse capabilities as well as access to unprecedented resources. It armed, trained, financed, and ideologised 36 odd Islamic groups from Asia, Africa, Middle East, and Caucasus. In addition to its own training camps in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda dispatched its own trainers to establish or serve in the training camps of other groups in Asia, Africa, Middle East and the Caucasus."[64]

Gunaratna further writes: "Al Qaeda's distinct ideology of an universal jihad provided the framework for cooperation with disparate groups waging local and regional conflicts. In contrast to its associated groups, Al Qaeda's overarching ideology advocated a struggle that was not bound by territorial boundaries. Although these local and regional groups waged parochial struggles, there interaction with Al Qaeda made them committed to fighting both their territorial and international enemies. As a part of the ideological training, Al Qaeda was able to successfully instill in some cadres thoughts that both the near and the distant enemies must be targeted. In most cases, the near enemies were the "false Muslim rulers" and the "corrupt Muslim regimes," and the distant enemy was the US. Defining the US as the "head of the poisonous snake," protecting and shielding the false rulers and corrupt regimes of the Middle East, Bin Laden justified the attacks against the US and its interests."[65]

Osama bin Laden not only helped Omer in Afghan War by providing trained Arab Mujahedin, but also by providing financial resources. He had advised Mullah Omar to destroy the sixth century statues of Lord Buddha at Bamiyan as a sign of Islamic piety, with a view to further radicalizing the Taliban," and visited them to oversee their collapse. After that, he wrote to Omar congratulating him for "success in destroying the dead, deaf and mute false gods." He, then, urged him to

now turn to "destroying the living false gods," meaning the United States.[66]

With the US-led intervention in Afghanistan in October, 2001 due to attack and destruction of the Twin Trade Towers, Al Qaeda had suffered the destruction of its state-of-the-art training and operational infrastructure in Afghanistan; loss of 60-70% of its core and operational leadership; 4,100 operatives in 102 countries had been captured. In spite of these losses, its intention to attack, and nurture robust Islamist milieu remained intact.[67] Al Qaeda, after the attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the bombings of the USS Cole in 2000, was under the impression that it may continue to hurt America without being known; emboldened it to hurt the US most on 9/11, and was almost destroyed after the US retaliation. But there was silent revival of Al Qaeda. In 2001, Al Qaeda existed at a few homes in Kabul, at the Tarnak Farms base in Kandahar and a smaller facility at Herat. Today, Apart from Al Qaeda Central, its affiliates are AQAP (Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula), Al Shabaab in Somalia, AQIM (Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb) in Africa, Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria, and Al Qaeda (now ISIS) in Iraq. This is apart from its numerous allies, such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Haqqani network, Afghan Taliban, JEM, HUJI, Boko Haram, Ansar al-Din, Ansar al-Sharia, Libya, Ansar al-Sharia, Tunisia, East Turkistan Islamic Movement, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and numerous others.

In spite of America's war against terror, there is revival of Taliban; ISIS has emerged as one of the most lethal jihadist organizations. This is certainly not without valid reasons. Some of the reasons for the same are: (i) The American allies are working on cross purposes; whereas "the ideology of al Qaeda and IAIS draws a great deal from Wahhabism, it is promoted by the states like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, who are opposed to al Qaeda and ISIS.[68] (ii) Pakistan is the American ally, but ISI has links with Al Qaeda[69] and Haqqani network.[70] (iii) The US keeps civilian detainees and others with trained jihadists together in the same camps; thus, their camps become an academy of Islam;[71] (iv) Pakistan provides operational support for Taliban;[72] the presence of Urdu speaking Taliban, and Gurkhas calling an area Pakistani Alley, clearly indicated that there was regular supply of Pakistani Taliban fighters from Pakistan to Afghanistan.[73] (v) Jihadist outfits are taking fullest benefit of propaganda through social media, especially twitter; non-Arab Muslims have special attraction for apocalyptical end-time prophesies and are flocking to the

war fronts of Iraq and Syria. They hope to get the dream of Islamic Empire fulfilled by their martyrdom.

The situation is gloomy in the Islamic State (ISIS) held areas, especially for the poor people, women and minorities; millions have been subjugated, minority community women have been the worst victims; they have been captured, enslaved and sold. Captives have been most cruelly beheaded. Some 7000 Yazidi Muslim women were taken captive in August 2014.[74] They have become sex slaves.[75] Islamic State believes in the use of terror for control and subjugation. Bin laden also believed in the same, and initially supported ISIS in this case. He, however, changed the policy at least in the case of intra-Islamic conflicts. Al Qaeda has learnt the lesson from its past experience; the 'General Guidelines for Jihad,' issued by al-Jawahiri in September 2013, orders an end to terrorist acts in markets and mosques, violence against non-Sunni sect and hasty imposition of shari'a law.[76] AQAP learnt the lesson, and changed itself accordingly.[77]

## Intra-Islamic Faultlines and Fluid Loyalties.

Islam shows its united face at its religio-cultural frontiers; it unitedly confronts the 'other.' But, it also has multiple intra-Islamic faultlines based on sect, ethnic and other differences. Intra-societal conflict is in-built in Islam. In the power conflict, just after the death of the Prophet, and before he was even interned in the grave, three parties confronted each other for the caliphate. Believers confronted even the Prophet for the share of the plundered booty (*male ghanimah*).

Difference in strategic orientation and fluid loyalties generate conflict between the parent organization and its affiliates. As soon as an affiliate organization gathers strength, it declares its free existence, revolts, and even confronts the parent organization, as we find in case of the conflict/war between Al Qaeda and the Islamic State,[78] and the conflict between Islamic State and Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra, Syria). The affiliated organizations often ignore the guidelines or dictates of parent organization. The tanjims often split into splinter groups, which behave anarchically.[79]

## Jihad Along Intra-Islamic Fault-lines

Islam shows its united face at its religio-cultural frontiers; it unitedly confronts the 'other.' It, however, has multiple intra-Islamic fault-lines

based on sect, ethnicity and other differences, and Intra-societal conflict is in-built in Islam. Therefore, it also confronts the 'Muslim other,' as is happening in Iraq and Syria today. Here, it needs mention that such conflicts are not new for the Muslims. In the power conflict, even just after the death of the Prophet, and before he was even interned in the grave, three parties confronted each other for the Caliphate.[80] Believers confronted even the Prophet for the share of the plundered booty (*male ghanimah*).[81] Intra-Islamic fault-line appeared within three decades of the death of the Prophet, leading to the great schism, which ultimately resulted into the creation of two warring sects of Islam—the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. The present war going on in Iraq and Syria is the manifestation of the same. Unfortunately, America and European countries continued to ignore the acts of their Arab allies working on the cross purposes. Patrick Cockburn brings out that fact to our notice; he writes:

"In 2009, eight years after 9/11, a cable from the US secretary of state Hillary Clinton, revealed by Wikileaks, complained that donors in Saudi Arabia constituted the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide. But despite this private admission, the US and Western Europeans continued to remain indifferent to Saudi preachers whose message, spread to millions by satellite TV, You Tube, and Twitter, called for the killing of the Shia as heretics. These calls came as Al Qaeda bombs were slaughtering people in Shia neighbourhoods in Iraq. A sub-headline in another State Department cable in the same year reads: "Saudi Arabia: Anti-Shi'ism As Foreign Policy?" Now five years later Saudi supported groups have a record of extreme sectarianism against non-Sunni Muslims. Pakistan or rather Pakistani military intelligence the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) was the other parent of Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and jihadi movements in general."[82]

## US Ignored the Inimical Acts of its Allies

It is a surprising act that the US and the West ignored the inimical acts of its allies. It happened just after 9/11 and also in Afghanistan, and that was also a reason that the war on terror did not succeed. Patrick Cockburn writes: "The 'war on terror' has failed because it did not target the jihadi movement as a whole and, above all, was not aimed at Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the two countries that fostered jihadism as a creed and movement. The US did not do so because these countries were important American allies whom it did not want to offend. Saudi

Arabia is an important market for American arms, and the Saudis have cultivated, and on occasion, purchased influential members of the American political establishment. Pakistan is a nuclear power with a population of 180 million and a military with close links to the Pentagon."[83] "When the Taliban was disintegrating under the weight of US bombing in 2001," Patrick Cockburn writes: "its forces in northern Afghanistan were trapped by anti-Taliban forces. Before they surrendered, hundreds of ISI members, military trainers, and advisors were hastily evacuated by air. Despite the clearest evidence of ISI sponsorship of Taliban and Jihadis in general, Washington refused to confront Pakistan, and thereby opened the way for the resurgence of the Taliban after 2003, which neither the US nor NATO has been able to reverse.[84] The strange thing is that such faulty decisions were taken after 9/11 also." Cockburn further writes:

"The keydecisions that enabled al-Qaeda to survive and later to expand were made in the hours immediately after 9/11. Almost every significant element in the project to crash planes into the Twin Towers and other iconic American buildings led back to Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden was a member of the Saudi elite, and his father had been a close associate of the Saudi monarch. Citing a CIA report from 2002, the official 9/11 report says that Al Qaeda relied for its financing on a variety of donors and fundraisers, primarily in the Gulf countries and particularly in Saudi Arabia." The report's investigators repeatedly found their access limited or denied when seeking information in Saudi Arabia. Yet President George W. Bush apparently never even considered holding the Saudis responsible for what happened. An exit of senior Saudis, including Bin Laden's relatives, from the US was facilitated by the US government in the days after 9/11. Most significant, twenty-eight pages of the 9/11 Commission Report about the relationship between the attackers and Saudi Arabia were deleted and never published, despite a promise by President Obama to do so, on the grounds of national security.[85]

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# Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: The Background and Development

Bimal Pramanik* and Mintu Barua**

Immediately after Bangladesh became independent, a process was set in motion to include the country in the Islamic block. Although mainstream Awami League (AL) leadership tried to establish the freedom struggle on a nationalistic pedestal, culturally there was little transition from the Islamic psyche to the Bengali psyche in post-independent Bangladesh. After the death of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, the process of Islamisation completely over shadowed Bangladesh. Although religion is an important subject matter for the common people of Bangladesh, there was a great chance of shaping Bangladeshi polity on the basis of the ideals of democracy and secularism, following the success of the liberation war in 1971, which upheld these ideals. A few people persisted in pursuing these ideals, but the dreadful massacre of liberation war leadership, including Sheikh Mujibar Rahman in 1975, drastically changed the fate of the ideal of secularism. Later, even the Awami League, which adhered to the ideals of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, failed to embrace the principles of secular political practice.

## Emergence of Islamic Extremist Groups in Bangladesh

To a large extent, at the fag end of Pakistani rule and the early period of Bangladesh, AL did not use religion as the primary source of its political influence. The use of religion in Bangladeshi politics started after the

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killing of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman in 1975. Religious influence flooded the society, like tidal waves. Even Sheikh Hasina, leader of a liberal democratic party like AL, performed Hajj a number of times and wore *hejab*. She had to sign a five point agreement on religiosity with a fundamentalist party, Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), for the purpose of holding the Muslim vote bank.[1] Moreover, she retained such provisions as "Bisssmillah-er-Rahaman-er-Rahim" in the preamble to the Constitution of Bangladesh, and "Islam as State Religion," (15th Amendment in 2011), in spite of receiving the judgement for abolition of the 5th and 8th amendments, which contained these provisions, from the highest court of the country. From all such events, we can easily gauge the overall situation of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Mujib and other national leaders were killed due to an army coup. General Ziaur Rahman captured power in connivance with the Islamic and Pakistani lobby. At the time of General Zia, Islamic fundamentalist and terrorist outfits rapidly engulfed Bangladesh polity and society. The concept of international Islamic solidarity began to gain ground in the society, and the role of political leadership was important in this regard. In the early 1980s, a lot of Madrassa students were recruited as volunteers to fight in Afghanistan and Jammu & Kashmir as a part of international *jihad*, which is an open secret today. No political parties and social organizations protested against these activities. Actually, most of the people thought that it was an attempt at building Islamic solidarity and unity. Gradually, a large number of students from Bangladeshi Quami Madrassas joined the international radical Islamic terrorist network, and thus Bangladesh got importance in the Islamic countries. Subsequently, a rapid growth was observed in the sector of Islamic NGOs. During 1982-1990, Maolana Abdul Mannan, former AL Badr,[2] i.e. collaborator of Pakistan in 1971 liberation war, acted as the Minister of Religious Affairs in

General H.M. Ershad's Cabinet, and also remained the leader of Jamiatul Mudarresin (an umbrella organization of Bangladesh Qaumi Madrassas). Abdul Mannan played a vital role in organising *jihadi* cadres (radical Islamic terrorists) from Qaumi Madrassas for Afghanistan and Jammu & Kashmir wars, while he enjoyed the patronage of General Ershad.

### Expansion of Terrorist Networks in Bangladesh with the Connivance of Government

After the defeat of the Soviet Union in Kabul, a large number of radical Islamic terrorists started to return to Bangladesh from Afghanistan, Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistan. At this juncture, a number of new terrorist outfits emerged in Bangladesh, e.g. Harkatul Jihad, Harkatul Mujahidin, Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh, etc. These organizations gained importance all over the country and abroad. Since the mid-1980s, Bangladesh state and society were getting recognised as a safe haven for all kinds of terrorists. A good number of the most wanted Indian terrorists settled in Bangladesh with the help of their friends or former classmates at Deoband Madrassa of Uttar Pradesh in India. Their Bangladeshi friends played a very important role in providing jobs to them in Madrassas, and, food and shelter among local sympathizers. A good number of former Bangladeshi students of Deoband fought in Afghanistan, Jammu-Kashmir and other places in India along with Indian terrorists. From the 1980s, for two or three decades, Bangladeshi governments and administration sponsored several terrorist outfits, including radical Islamic outfits, to carry out sabotage on the Indian soil. This is now an open secret. Nevertheless, Bangladeshi governments and administration always denied these facts. During Hasina's tenure, from 2009 onwards, the hidden truth about the activities of radical Islamic outfits, and a group of Indian terrorist organisations from north-east India came to light. On the other hand, Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) established foreign branches in Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia in West Bengal and different districts in Assam, which have now been disclosed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) after it started investigations into the Khagragarh blast (Burdwan) of 2014.[3] It is mentionable that during the tenure of the caretaker government (2006-2008) of Bangladesh, six top leaders of JMB were hanged after a closed door summary trial in 2007. After this incident, a good number of JMB leaders and cadres took shelter in West Bengal and Assam. After the Khagragarh blast, all these facts have gradually come out in the open due to the investigations conducted by the NIA.

### Internal and International Pressure that Unmasked Bangladesh

Leaders of radical Islamic terrorist groups in Bangladesh thought that Bangladesh had a conducive atmosphere for Islamic revolution, and

therefore, they launched an offensive with the connivance of BNP-BJI alliance government. The alliance government played a very minimal role to suppress it. Incidentally, when more than 500 bombs exploded at a time all over Bangladesh on 17 August 2005, international agencies sharply reacted.

Bangladesh apparently worked as a terrorist state in the eyes of international leadership. Therefore, Non Resident Bangladeshis (NRB), especially those who are living in USA or in Europe, came under international pressure. Representatives of the United Nations (UN) urged Bangladesh authorities to take immediate measures to curb terrorists. Thus, BNP-BJI alliance government came under tremendous internal and international pressures. The alliance government banned the JMB outfit at the fag end of its tenure. Meanwhile, a military-backed caretaker government took over charge.

During the second tenure of Sheikh Hasina (2009-2014), BNP-BJI had launched a massive anti-government agitation. Most of the radical Islamic outfits helped them to continue this movement for a long time. At this juncture, the Bangladesh government decided to watch and monitor the following Islamic militant organisations aiming at controlling the ongoing movement led by the opposition front, particularly BNP-BJI. The names of such organizations are given below:

**Militant Islamic Outfits in Bangladesh [4]**
**Outlawed Groups**
**(Dates of banning given in the brackets)**

1.  Shadat al Higma/Shahjadat-e-al Hagima (SAH) [09 Feb 2003]
2.  Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) [23 Feb 2005]
3.  Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMJB) [23 Feb 2005]
4.  Harkatul Jihadi Islami (HUJJI)-Bangladesh [17 Oct 2005]
5.  Hizb-ut-Tahir al-Islami Bangladesh [22 Oct 2009]

**Blacklisted Groups**

6.  Alla'r Dal
7.  Al Markajul al Islami
8.  Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT)
9.  Hizb-ut-Tawhid/Hizbut Touhid
10. Islami Samaj
11. Islamic Democratic Party
12. Shahadat-e-Nobuwat

13. Tawhid Trust/Touhid Trust
14. Tamir-ud-Deen
15. Ulema Anjuman al Baiyinaat

## Groups Under Watch

1. Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh
2. Al-Harat al-Islamia
3. Al-Jihad Bangladesh
4. Al-Khidmat Foundation
5. Al-Sayeed Mujahid Bahini
6. Amanatul Forkan Al Khayriya
7. Ahsab Bahini
8. Bangladesh Anjumane Taklamije Islamia
9. Hayatul Igasa
10. Hizbul Mahdi
11. Ibtedatul Al Muslemin
12. Iktadul Tulah Al Muslemin
13. Islami Jihad Group
14. Jamayatul Falaiya
15. Jamiatul Ehhia-ut-Turaj
16. Jummatul-al-Sadat
17. Khidmat E Islami Foundation
18. Tanjeem Bangladesh
19. Tawhidi Janata
20. Muslim Millat Sariyah Council
21. Warat Islamic Front
22. World Islamic Front for Jihad

## Other Groups

1. Ansar al Islam (AAI) Bangladesh

In spite of concern about the activities of such a large number of radical Islamic organizations in Bangladesh, the government banned only a few of them. In other words, there is a soft feeling towards these Islamic terrorists all over Bangladesh, which helps them to grow inside the country.

Now the crucial question that we need to ask is – why is the government unable to control the radical Islamic activities and atrocities on Hindus, which are occurring all over Bangladesh? Interestingly, it is

not a recent phenomenon; rather, it has been happening since its very inception in 1971.

## Society is Unabatedly Moving Towards Islamisation

Although the Bangladesh government has adopted a counter-terrorism strategy, such as killing of terrorists in Artisan Bakery, Kalyanpur counter-terrorism incident, etc. the counter-terrorism strategy of the government attracts minimal attention from the international community due to frequent occurrence of torture over the minorities and Islamist violence in the country. Bangladesh lies at the strategic crossroads of South and Southeast Asia. Potential terrorist movements and activities in or through Bangladesh pose a potentially serious threat to India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar as well as Bangladesh itself. Consequently, the Bangladesh government has banned a number of Islamic extremist groups in recent years. The Bangladesh government has also intensified the crackdown on Islamic terrorist groups involved in killing, but all this is not enough. Bangladesh has effectively been transformed into an Islamic State. As a result, Islamist parties and forces have been able to assume a growing role in the country's politics. A large number of Islamic forces are openly active within the mainstream political parties, including AL, BNP, JP, etc. It is a correct contention that, the introduction of the 15th Amendment Bill of the Constitution on June 30, 2011, which retained Islam as the "State Religion," helped the radical Islamists to increase their influence in the politics of the country. It also legalised religion-based political activities. Thus, BJI got the legal political status in the country. Actually as early as 1976, Jamaat got recognition through Political Parties Regulation (PPR) in independent Bangladesh under the banner of Islamic Democratic League (IDL) with Nezam-e-Islam. Jamaat re-emerged formally through an open political convention on 22-27 May 1979. In 2010, when the Supreme Court declared it as void, the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution, Jamaat automatically lost its right as a political party. But in 2011, the Bangladesh Parliament amended the Constitution without imposing any bar on religion-based political parties. Then a good number of MPs in the parliament raised questions regarding a ban on Jamaat, but Sheikh Hasina herself was against imposing any ban on Jamaat. As a result, Jamaat and other religion-based political parties retained their rights to perform their usual activities in the country. According to the party constitution, it has been working since

its inception to build Bangladesh as an Islamic country. In 1988, General Ershad included Islam as state religion in the Constitution. Thus, one of the major demands of Jamaat was automatically achieved without any hindrance even when they were not in power. A fresh demand of ban against Jamaat was raised by the student community in February 2013 at Shahbag Square for their collaboration with the Pakistani army and the brutal killing of Bengali people in 1971, during the liberation war. True, AL has been trying to quell Jamaat by hanging a few top leaders on the plea of trial of "war criminals," but the roots of the radical Islamic groups remained in the country as before. In recent times, we are witnessing a number of radical Islamic terrorist activities in the capital city of Dhaka and districts, e.g. Artisan Bakery killing (1 July 2016), Solakia-Kishoreganj killing (7 July 2016), killing of 6 bloggers, murder of 6/7 Hindu priests as also of, a few foreigners, etc.

## Religious Minorities are the Main Victim

It is unfortunate that planned attacks were carried out on minority communities in Brahmanbaria and other districts from 30 October 2016 onwards with the connivance of the ruling party and administration during the season of religious festivals of the Hindu community. Shockingly, only in Brahmanbaria, more than 15 temples were destroyed, and more than a hundred Hindu houses were looted, burnt, and ransacked.[5]

Here it is indeed important to recall that the carnage, which was orchestrated in Ramu on 29-30 September 2012 during the tenure of AL government, will always be remembered as a dark episode in the history of Bangladesh. The villages of Ramu, Ukhiya and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar district and Potiya of Chittagong district suffered from massacre and devastation like never before when dozens of Buddhist temples including the 250 year old Maitri (Friendship) Temple and at least 50 homes of Buddhists were set ablaze in the most atrocious manner. The perpetrators then went on a looting rampage.[6]

The local police and administration were astonishingly silent during the wild burning and looting. Even the local MP and other area representatives were conspicuously absent during the violence. No one was there to stand up for the victims. In this event, Muslim radicals destroyed Hindu temples, too.

From January 2007 to October 2016, 1,714 temples were destroyed and burnt, and 302 members of the minority community were killed,

and 392 were raped. Severe attacks on minority settlements were conducted in Chirirbandar of Dinajpur (4 August 2012), Hathazari of Chittagong (9 and 10 February 2012), Kaliganj of Satkhira (31 March and 1 April 2013). Minority properties, temples, and houses were looted, ransacked, and burnt.[7] According to a Human Rights Organisation 'Ain-O-Salish Kendra,' during the previous five years, atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh could be easily gauged from the facts of the total number of attacks on houses, shops and temples was 2803. All these establishments were looted, ransacked, destroyed and burnt.[8]

## Concluding Observations

A significant observation is, always the younger generation of the Bangladeshi Muslim society was so influenced by the radical Islamic ideology that they attacked minority religious groups in different places in Bangladesh. Brahmanbaria and other incidents of violence on religious minorities are the latest examples.

The ground realities of the Bangladesh society changed so much during the last four decades that there are so many Islamic organizations in present-day Bangladesh, and the Government of Bangladesh is soft towards them. Even a number of members of the present ruling front have close connections with these Islamic organizations through many religio-cultural activities.

All the above facts and incidents in Bangladesh are nothing but a clear manifestation of the society where a deep rooted radical Islamic perception engulfed the entire polity since independence in 1971. We apprehend that no remedial measure can now be applied by any political party or government.

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# The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria: Its Evolution and Consequences

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## Point of Origin

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which has evolved and become a dreaded terror phenomenon, spread its influence in different parts of the world. As it is understood, the primary motive behind the inception of this Sunni militant outfit was to establish a Caliphate, or an Islamic State, to be governed by rigid Islamic laws. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in late July 2014 declared himself as the new Caliph of this group. Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai, the real name of the self-appointed Caliph studied in the Islamic University of Baghdad, and obtained a degree in Islamic Studies.[1] Since his taking over of the terror outfit, he is referred to as Caliph Ibrahim by his followers. It is understood from this name, which otherwise means "succession" in Arabic that the ultimate ambition of the leader is to establish the Islamic State globally. This outfit was earlier a part of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), the group that was formed in 2004 when the United States (US)-led coalition forces tried to establish control in Iraq after Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime was toppled. With such lineage, the fighters in outfit were mainly composed of soldiers who earlier served in the said regime. But their leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who was killed in a US airstrike in October 2006 was replaced by Abu Ayyub al-Masri. The new leader then changed the outfit's name to Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), and appointed Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as the leader. Similar to al-Zarqawi's fate, this leadership lasted only for a few years, and from

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April 2010, the onus of running ISI fell on Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who finally gave the name Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or ISIS. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared ISIL in early 2013 after the absorption of Al-Qaeda backed militant group in Syria, known as Jabhat al-Nusra or Al-Nusra Front,[2] which is now renamed as Jabhat Ftah al-Sham (Conquest of Syria front). Consequently, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's announcement of this merger had led to the rift between Al-Nusra and ISIS resulting into their going separate ways since February 2014. The commonly discussed belief that ISIS's extreme brutalities towards the local civilian populations ran contrary to Al-Qaeda's mission to unite all the Muslim across the region and this difference led to the eventual divorce between them.

What had initially started as an Al-Qaeda franchise, ISIS has become one of the most powerful, organised and feared terrorist organisations the international community has ever seen. Moreover, the unfolding in Middle East during early 2015, where ISIS militants captured two strategically and historically important places (such as Ramadi in Iraq and Palmyra in Syria), indicated its vigour to consolidate control and expand its territories. By capturing these cities, with well-planned tactics, the outfit demonstrated its capability to operate on multiple fronts and carry out effective offensive operations. These triumphs had become one of the most important recruiting factors due to which thousands of foreign fighters from Europe, Middle East and Asia-Pacific countries flocked towards Syria and Iraq. However, with the recent loss of territories, the dream of establishing a global Caliphate began to crumble. The succeeding sections highlight the problems which are being faced by the outfit since early 2015.

**Territorial Shrinkage**

For an outfit like ISIS, loss of territory is definitely a setback. The coalition military campaign led by the US since September 2014 checked on the further experience of the outfit, particularly in Iraq. During 2015 and early 2016, ISIS started to lose its grip in some of the areas it controlled in both these countries. Before taking over Ramadi in May 2015, Iraqi forces, in coordination with tribal forces and locals, recaptured the strategic city of Tikrit in April. Then on, the efforts to free Mosul most important cilt under ISIS ……. bearer. In November 2015, Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Yazidis were able to take full control of Sinjar in Iraq, and parts of a road which served as a link with Syria.[3] This

restricted the movements of fighters, curbed smuggling of weapons, and caused financial strain. Quickly, a US-led coalition campaign liberated Ramadi in late December 2015. Since then, the outfit could not make significant progress in their attempts to occupy more territories though it continues to carry out attacks.

Similarly, territories inside Syria began to shrink although its so-called headquarters at Raqqa is still under its control. From early 2015, Syrian Kurds, who are fighting against the ISIS militias, made concerted efforts to take back the border town of Tal Abyad in Syria, which is close to the Turkish border. This was a strategic asset as ISIS fighters used it to cross into Turkey, and it also served as a supply conduit for Raqqa. The Kurdish Popular Protection Units (YPG), backed by the US air strikes, assisted in the liberation campaign. Alongside, the financial system was severely affected in both the countries, and casued rifts amongst the fighters. Amidst these developments, Turkey remained extremely concerned about the rising capabilities of the Syrian Kurds along its borders as they have been demanding a separate entity for themselves. The divergence of interests is the reason as to why external players, including Turkey, the US, and Russia, do not see eye-to-eye on combating ISIS or any other outfits unitedly.

In 2015, ISIS's territory (in Syria and Iraq) shrunk from 90,000 sq km to 78,000 sq km, or a net loss of 14 per cent. A data released in early October 2016 mentioned that there was a decline from 78,000 sq km to 65,000 sq km in the first nine months of this year.[4] The commencement of the Russian air strikes from 30 September 2015 contributed to the cornering of ISIS in Syria. The Russian intervention enabled Assad's forces and its allies to push out the outfit from Palmyra during late March 2016. After Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the drawdown of troops from Syria on 14 March 2016, the Russian military campaigns shifted its targets towards Palmyra and the nearby areas resulting into the breakthrough. This reignited the debate over Russia's potential return to Middle East as a major player.

As ISIS upholds the centrality of establishing an Islamic State, the continuous shrinking of territories became a serious drawback. Even its parent-organisation al-Qaeda could not hold defined territories (despite its enormous network) of such magnitude since its inception in the late 1980s. The idea of having a Caliphate with administrative units, currency, social services, judicial, educational and banking systems has attracted like-minded terror outfits, supporters and sympathisers from different

corners of the world. When the territorial control starts crumbling, the ambition of raising such an entity diminishes.

Despite the gradual retreats from Iraq and Syria, ISIS still managed to keep certain areas intact. The leadership continues to make strategic decisions and give orders vis-à-vis operations for the region and beyond. Moreover, the physical and logistical capabilities to conduct attacks have not been fully contained or destroyed. Another worrisome factor is the potential chemical or biological attacks. After an alleged use of such lethal weapons against the Kurdish forces in August 2015,[5] the European Parliament and US intelligence warned of the possibility of such attacks, particularly in Europe. A serious debate on this issue was kick-started after the 13th November, 2015 Paris attack.[6] The profiles of the foreign recruits, mostly with educational and professional experiences on technical subjects such as physics, chemistry and computer science was another reason to be concerned in this regard.

As the outfit started to lose grounds in Iraq and Syria, it has begun to export its terror activities abroad. There have been several attacks either directly linked to ISIS or inspired by it. Some of the major incidents took place between late 2014 and March 2016 in France, Yemen, Tunisia, Turkey, Belgium, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Australia, Libya, Indonesia and Egypt.[7] The carnage, particularly in Paris[8] and Brussels, are clear manifestations of ISIS's rising ability to strike overseas targets with meticulous planning. They also signified the level of proficiency. Further attacks cannot be ruled out as there are already vast Islamist networks with access to weapons systems, financial assistance and returnees with battlefield experiences. This is also applicable to the South and Southeast Asian context from where fighters have moved towards West Asia, and disaffected groups and local terror outfits are looking for the right moment to strike.

Merely liberating territories alone will not break the backbone of ISIS but fighting its extremely pernicious ideology would be helpful in the long run. But the reality is that there are still no effective counter-narratives or de-radicalisation programmes that could prevent impressionable youths from blowing themselves up in the name of *holy war*. The outfit has gone transnational in its campaigns effectively using the social media. Tackling these eminent problems is going to be a major challenge in the future.

### Parallel Problems: Financial Shortcomings and Internal Discords

From being considered as the world's wealthiest terror organisation in 2014, ISIS faced financial constraints. In mid-2015, its overall monthly revenue in the territories under its control in Syria and Iraq was estimated at US$80 million but plummeted to US$56 million in March 2016. This has come about with the destruction of several oil fields by air campaigns conducted by the US-led coalition and that of the coordinated efforts between Russia and its allies. A direct impact is being felt by the fighters and the outfit struggled to maintain its military infrastructure. Moreover, oil trade has become more difficult due to the recapture of strategic cities (in Syria and Iraq) which were once used as routes for illegal trade, movements of fighters and smuggling (particularly along Turkish borders). Earlier, a significant amount of oil was reportedly marketed within Iraq and in ISIS-controlled and rebel-held territories in northern Syria.[9] Beyond the borders, Turkey has been identified as an alleged buyer of such oil. The air strikes have resulted into the destruction of almost 30 per cent of the outfit's oil infrastructure.[10]

The resulting financial problems led to the slashing of the salary of the fighters in Syria and Iraq by almost 50 per cent. While it is unclear as to how much amount every fighter was paid during the outfit's heyday, the reduced monthly salary for Syrian fighters is estimated at US$200 and, US$400 per month for the foreigner fighters.[11] The perception that the outsiders are paid higher on the grounds that they have left behind them their comfortable lives in their respective countries triggered serious "ire and resentments of local ISIS members."[12] Such an anomaly has given rise to internal discords amongst the fighters. The foreign recruits have been blamed by the locals for the fall of territories due to their incompetence, and there are complaints pertaining to their disregard for the local culture, traditions and tribal structures.[13] The former rationale somehow fits well into the assumption that the fighters, mainly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and African are inferior and "expendable" as compared to the Arabs and the Western counterparts.[14] Further, there is also a belief that the estrangement is caused due to the dominant nature of the foreign recruits over the local fighters. An amalgamation of these factors is leading to a serious internal strain within the group.

Subsequently, there is a rising rift between the fighters—locals and the foreigners—resulting into a decline in the influx of foreign

recruits. From an average influx of about 1,500-2,000 fighters (monthly) till recently, the current speculated number is between 200 and 500.[15] This is a major setback for the outfit which has boasted about its ability to recruit thousands of fighters from across the globe.

These challenges within Iraq and Syria are apparently leading to the expansion of activities elsewhere, and the outfit is adopting new strategies or tactics. The increasing ISIS-connected activities in North Africa, Europe, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Southeast Asia are the manifestations. Some of the foreign recruits started moving towards other places where the outfit has established links or drawn supports. The attackers in Paris and Brussels were once in Syria where they received training. There is likely to be recurrences of similar assaults, particularly in other parts of Europe. This is also primarily due to the reason that there are already Islamist networks in quite a few European countries which are capable of providing logistical supports for carrying out attacks. Orders for further attacks need not come from the leadership in Syria but can be executed by the returnees or local outfits and supporters which have been heavily influenced by ISIS. In the wake of this, ISIS-connected developments in India are a worrisome factor. The loss of territory and influence in Iraq and Syria is likely to lead to growth if local level outfits owning allegiances to the ISIS link operating the independently as low war far or groups.

## India Not Immune to ISIS's Terror Propaganda

Any political and security disorder in the Middle East is watched by New Delhi with utmost concerns. Likewise, the manner in which ISIS rose to prominence in this oil-rich region by capturing vast swathes of territories was overtime taken seriously by India as well.[16] During the initial days, India was concerned more about the safety of its citizens residing in the Middle East and it did not take that seriously that the ISIS influence would penetrate into the country.[17] But this perception was short lived as it witnessed several ISIS-connected activities during the last couple of years. The initial complacency of the Indian establishments was because of the reason that less number of Indian Muslims joined the outfit in Syria or Iraq and there has been no attack conducted by it. Many were under the impression that the Muslims in the country are well integrated into the mainstream society, and are not affected by the extremist ideology. Owing to this, ISIS was not

considered to be an immediate threat while there are others who remain wary, particularly considering the outfit's export of terror and ideology in a systematic manner. The departure of four Muslim youths from Kalyan in Maharashtra to Iraq in July 2014 received some attention but it did not trigger an immediate concern. However, the situations hanged after one of the youths returned to India after serving briefly in the so-called "Caliphate" and revealed previously unknown facts, including the role of social media in radicalisation and recruitment, presence of insiders within the country who make necessary arrangement for travel, and most importantly, the nexus that exists between Indians in the country and abroad, particularly in the Persian Gulf countries. These are some of ISIS's characteristics which are noticeable in other countries too.

Over a period of time, ISIS-connected activities in India escalated. Security agencies, mainly the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and state polices, have arrested over 50 ISIS supporters/sympathisers between late 2015 and mid-2016.[18] This should dispel the myth that Indian Muslims are immune to the lure of ISIS propaganda. Despite a strict surveillance being put into place in India, instances of radicalisation and recruitment have been discovered, and this concerned the government, the security agencies and the civil society. is taking place at this crucial stage when ISIS's end is repeatedly predicted by looking at the While, on one hand, it is losing ground in Syria, Iraq and Libya, ISIS's ideology has successfully penetrated into various countries, and fighting this is going to be a difficult task.

Since the beginning of 2016, several ISIS-linked persons—sympathisers, recruiters and supporters—have been arrested, including the alleged head of India's ISIS wing, Muddabir Mushtaq Shaikh from Maharashtra (in January). He was reportedly a close associate of his Syria-based handler Shafi Armar. Muddabir was also the "emir" of Janood-ul-Khalid-al-Hind, the ISIS inspired radical outfit.'[19] It is through these people that the mechanisms of recruitment, presence of similar people in different Indian states, conduct of training-related meetings in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Telangana, were exposed. The follow-up investigations also revealed their plans to carry out attacks in strategic locations in India. This has indicated the expansion of the outfit's influence in the country. More alarming aspect is the alleged bomb-making lesson a few of them received through online contents, and by using readily explosives such as hydrogen peroxide,

ammonium nitrate and potassium chlorate. It cannot be denied any more that ISIS operatives, or sympathisers and supports, in India were planning for some violent activities within the country.

While the threats from ISIS need not be exaggerated or underplayed, the authorities in India and its citizens should at least be aware of the fact that the country is under the radar of people who are highly indoctrinated by this outfit. This is where the threats from the radicalised youths hold substance. Regardless of how many radicalised people were attracted to the 22-minutue video clip released in May 2016 by ISIS,[20] with a specific focus on India and South Asia, it happened at the stage when radicalised Muslim youths are either allegedly travelling to Syria or are planning operations by remaining in the country. The outfit has tried to invoke anti-state sentiments by referring to the "violence against Muslims in many places, including Mumbai, Gujarat, Assam and Moradabad."[21] The reports of 21 youths from Kerala, who went missing, and a few allegedly joining ISIS, and the arrests in Hyderabad by the NIA are an indication of the developments which had taken place in India. These impressionable youths had access to weapons systems, possessed lethal explosive-related chemicals, and received financial assistance from their handlers, both in India and abroad. What was more worrisome was the discovery of triacetone triperoxide (TATP), a chemical which the ISIS suicide bombers used in Paris and Brussels, from one of the youths' basement in Hyderabad.[22] These developments have shown the evolution of ISIS-related activities in the country. It is no longer a mere case of Indians travelling to Syria/ Iraq but endeavours of a few zealous and radicalised lots to stage attacks inside the country.

There are constant efforts from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which is also coordinating with state polices, not just to nab terror-linked people but also to prevent departure of such elements to the conflict-ridden Middle Eastern countries (Syria/Iraq). The authorities are also roping in families and peer groups while fighting the problem of radicalisation. It is because of this, the Indian Home Minister emphasised the strength of "India's traditions and values." A constant monitoring on suspicious youths and their activities is in place. Moreover, as this phenomenon is predominantly seen in the Muslim society, several religious leaders, Non-government organisations (NGOs), and civilian organisations from the community itself are coming out in the public and condemned the atrocities committed by outfits like ISIS

in the name of religion. Several clerics have issued fatwas against ISIS and its extremist ideologies, and they also called for outreach programmes in educational institutions. Furthermore, the role of modern-day social media tools such as Whatsapp in countering the false interpretation of Islam has been discussed by the Muslim leaders, and this is a welcoming move in the country. Notwithstanding these positive arrangements, the challenges ahead are still enormous as it is not only a fight against individuals or a terror group but against an ideology. The phenomenon of radicalisation of youths in different Indian states should be monitored closely, and be dealt accordingly.

## ISIS Sowed the Seed of Terror

The ISIS has brought to the fore the most sectarian, brutal and extreme form of terrorism in the recent times. It has been able to sow seeds of terror globally through different manifestations. While the ongoing coalition military operations in Syria and Iraq is putting tremendous pressures on ISIS militias, there are other parallel activities taking place in distant foreign lands. Firstly, the return-journeys of well-trained foreign fighters to their native countries are causing considerable concerns. Secondly, the rise of lone-actor/wolf attacks, both in the US and Europe cannot be ignored anymore. This is also a particular phenomenon which is raising lots of security concerns, and South and Southeast Asian countries need to be careful about this trend.

In the past, terrorism was comprised of coordinated attacks by existing organisations which had developed the wherewithal to inflict damages. But this is changing with the induction of lone wolves whose actions are difficult to detect and deter. A vast majority of attacks in the Western world in the recent months have either been carried by ISIS operatives or by the lone wolves who drew inspiration from the outfit. Activities by these individuals have gone in favour of this outfit which continuously attempts to spread its tentacles everywhere possible.

With the significant decline in the influx of fighters into Iraq and Syria, a pertinent question has arisen whether "terrorism threat is actually easing or just morphing into a more dangerous new phase?"[23] This is when the relevance of the returnees comes into the picture as a new phase may be in the offing. There is this possibility of the returnees teaming up with those radicalised who did not get an opportunity to travel abroad. In other words, the return journeys are likely to exacerbate the problem of violent extremism domestically.

The concerns emanating out of such reversal will be serious not only in countries from where highest numbers of foreign fighters joined ISIS[24] but also in Europe and as far as Australia. The problem is not solely anymore about people departing towards Syria/Iraq but the threats emerging from those who are fleeing the outfit's strongholds. Simultaneously, it has to be acknowledged that not all the returning foreign fighters will want to continue fighting or "form the next generation of global jihadists."[25] A study conducted by the Sydney-based Lowy Institute categories "the future foreign fighter cohort in Syria and Iraq into four categories," including "…those who chose to remain in Syria and Iraq; those who leave in order to continue violent jihad in another theatre, either at home or elsewhere; those who seek to return to their country of origin; and those who go to a third country of refuge."[26]

Being concerned with the surge in attacks, security officials from the European Union (EU) countries and the US have expressed their concerns over the likely fallout of ISIS's military defeats. The risk is acute in France which faced a few brazen attacks within a period of one year. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls mentioned that there are "nearly 700 jihadists who are either French or live in France are in Iraq and Syria at the moment," and "their return represents an additional threat to our national security… it's going to be a long fight."[27] Moreover, news of ISIS-connected lone wolves activities and similarly terrifying incidents have been widely reported from Belgium, Germany and the US in the last few months. While some of them turned out to be ISIS-directed/inspired, there have been cases when the outfit's connections with the perpetrators were tenuous. The lone wolves attacks are gradually instilling fear amongst the civilians. This is more so because of the nature of their target audience and the locations such as theatres, pubs, malls, train stations, airports, etcetera.

## Likely Consequences and Necessary Measures

Although the end of ISIS, as a physical entity in Iraq and Syria is apparently around the corner, the international community cannot afford to remain complacent by merely looking at the defeats in Iraq and Syria. While the military measures are destroying the capabilities of this outfit and territories being recaptured, not enough approaches have been made to counter the terror ideology propagated by ISIS. This outfit, moreover, has set a precedent for motivated radicalized

people and like-minded terror outfits and with similar ambitions of establishing their own version of Islamic State. As fallout of the military campaigns in the Middle East, ISIS is likely to turn to insurgency in its core areas while its fleeing fighters will likely conduct sporadic attacks in their native countries. The latter scenario is a matter of grave concern given the rising phenomenon of homegrown extremism and radicalization in different countries at this juncture. In the wake of the threats coming from radicalized individuals, returnees and terrorist operatives, there is a need for greater security vigilance and enhanced coordination between agencies of different countries.

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**Book-Review**

# How to Comprehend Islam**

Shankar Sharan[*]

Understanding Islam has been one of the most neglected tasks of Indians, especially Hindus. It appears quite inexplicable that a highly learned and ancient civilisation ignored the very phenomenon that wounded it so deeply and for so long! To be sure, they did rebuff Islamic aggressors for centuries, but by all accounts took them as just another marauders. Islamic attacks on India started right in the wake of Prophet Muhammad. Starting from the first raid on Sindh in the early eighth century, the aftereffects in India continue till date. Yet almost no effort was made by the Indians to know and understand the aggressors in essence. What propelled the Islamic aggressors into doing what they did repeatedly here and elsewhere? This question never seriously engaged the Hindus, or at least not adequately.

Historically, it is really a recent affair that the Indian thinkers, particularly Indian scholars, started studying Islam in earnest and making an independent evaluation of it. Swami Dayananda Saraswati made the first systematic analysis of the *Quran* in his *Satyartha Prakash* (1875). After Dayananda, though some Hindu thinkers off and on commented on Islam, another systematic analysis appeared not until about a century passed. Rahul Sankrityayan and Dr Bhagwan Das did in between publish their takes on Islam. These largely remained at the customary politically correct level, that is, more a willful endorsement of Islam than a genuine study. In scholarly terms, after Dayanand Saraswati the contributions of Ram Swarup and Sita Ram Goel are the only works that deserve a place amongst the foremost scholars on Islam. According to Koenraad

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Elst, himself a distinguished academic, some of their insights are so original and scientific that even the best minds of Europe today have not surpassed it.

It shows, among other things, that the neglect by the non-Muslims in studying Islam in its entirety along with its historical record was a great lapse. Why it had been so during all these centuries is a curious and interesting question. Here it is pertinent to note that the illiteracy about Islam among Hindus is now giving way to a slow but increasing awareness of the need to understand Islam as it really is.

The latest book by Dr BB Kumar, *Understanding Islam* (2016), is an evidence of this growing trend. Dr Kumar is a versatile scholar and experienced observer of the multi-cultural society that our country is. Before undertaking to study Islam, he has already authored more than a hundred books including on caste, tribe and society, many of which have received acclaim. Armed with such an extensive experience of life and times and scholarship, his new book on Islam is a timely intervention, capable of catalysing further debate on the most visible, yet little considered, subject.

For those interested in learning Islam from the beginning, this is a good volume. *Understanding Islam* is an example of a simple honest scholarship. Spread in more than 400 pages with a suitable bibliography, authentic references for all crucial information contained in it and an index, this is a commendable introduction to understand the theory and practice of Islam. Based on some of the best sources available in the world today, this book explains the basic tenets and specific features of Islam in its proper historical setting in its early years.

The book is divided in 10 chapters with first setting the historical background of the Arabia where Prophet Muhammad was born. The initial chapters, especially the 'Background', including information on Prophet's family and ancestors, and pre-Islamic Pagan society of Arabia (pp. 3-45) and 'Pre-Prophetic phase' (pp. 79-108), do it adequately. Knowing the life and times of Arabia just before Muhammad is necessary to evaluate the Islamic doctrines, especially its claim of divinity and of being the 'only truth'. This claim and the attitude of Muslims towards it are important, and should always be kept in mind while dealing with Islam or with issues Islamic. Many a mistake have been made by even great men, particularly the non-Muslims, precisely because they took Islam as any other religion. It is not so, and that is why this kind of book, as Dr. Kumar has produced, are necessary all the more for non-Muslim readers.

The fourth chapter traces the process of Muhammad turning into a self-proclaimed messenger of Allah. Allah was the name of the supreme God among the Arabs before Muhammad, and there were other deities too worshipped by the Arabs. Muhammad proclaimed that except Allah, all others are false.

The process of preaching Islam started secretly during the early days; initially, Islam was a secret society operating in a very limited circle. Afterwards, the Prophet started preaching openly, but he did not oppose the prevalent religious beliefs. Therefore, people did not resist him. But when he started talking against the Arab deities, it led to conflict between the followers of Muhammad and the Pagan Arabs (p.119).

As the author describes in the Medinan phase, the society in Medina before the Prophet's migration there, two interesting points emerge. This period saw the new sect grow into bloom, and the economic status of the migrants changed from utter poverty to riches; the main source of income being the 'loot from raids on non-Muslim tribes' (p. 165). The Prophet's share in the booty was one-fifth. As the *Hadis* of *Sahih Muslim* informs, 'He would meet the annual expenditure of his family from the income thereof, and would spend what remained for purchasing horses and weapons as preparation for Jihad.' (p. 166) It becomes a moot point whether it was the material benefit, of unearned riches coming easily, that helped Islam grow; and whether the same is still a paramount motive for guarding the faith from criticism. Any consideration of spiritual factor seems non-existent, since then till now, as to the acceptance or in defence of the creed.

The sub-chapter, 'Prophet and the Poets' (pp. 169-181), is also illuminating in itself and in understanding the point just raised above. Muhammad did not like the poets criticising him. He had them all killed, including even the hundred-year-old poet Abu Afak. Poetess Asma, sleeping with her infant baby, was treacherously killed. Was it for fear of questioning per se? Islam does not tolerate questioning of any kind. This trait is still intact among the *ulema*, the guardians of Islam, all over the world.

The sixth chapter illustrates the Islamic society, polity and economy. In this a sub-chapter is on 'women in Islam' (pp. 202-20) and another on 'Dhimmis and dhimmitude' (229-32). These two chapters cover the most criticised aspects of Islam in modern times. No satisfactory justification about them can be found in the Islamic scholarship anywhere, at least to the satisfaction of non-Islamic discussants.

The chapter 'Islam and the people of the Book' includes the famous episode of the massacre of Banu Qurayza by the Prophet (pp. 297-303). It has been argued by Muslim authors as a masterly example of the Prophet, the politician and strategist. It brings out the importance of terror (also discussed separately) as an instrument of Islamic war.

The 'Pillars of Islam' is also a remarkable chapter in the book. It clears some common doubts. Are the pillars five or more? The author finds that the ideas of Paradise, Hell, the Doomsday or the Day of Judgment, *jihad* (war against non-believers), *jizya* (tax on non-believers) and *ghanimah* (war booty) are also among the pillars of Islamic faith (p.307). This has the authority of Muhammad himself that the "fight against people" will go on "till they testify that there is no God but Allah, that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah…" It leaves no doubt that the source of all violence stems from this exclusive belief and none else. From the beginning till today the point of bloody contention remains essentially the same.

The author has also taken up the theology of Islam in some detail. We find the interesting fact that while the various names of the Allah are acceptable in Islam, the famed 'ninety-nine names of Allah', the variety of forms is prohibited (pp. 347-48). It seems contradictory. If the God can have various names, how can His various forms be denied? Because the names, the words do have different attributes. That is why they vary. But Islamic theology is adamant on it. Because it might otherwise lose the exclusivity claim on faith per se. Therefore, only those names of Allah are accepted which are mentioned in the *Quran*. Others names are also prohibited.

Finally, the book discusses the strength and the weaknesses of Islam from its inception (pp. 381-86). Apparently its strength and weaknesses intertwine. As the author says, "Both solidarity and conflict is inbuilt in Islam." The means are just two: 'terror and treasure'. Thus, from the beginning, the material factors, i.e. fear and greed, remained undoubtedly more important than spiritual ones. Although it brought benefits to the new converts, it also had permanent problems. The author underlines, "Whereas the new identity worked excellently against its opponents, in matters of intra-Islamic solidarity it proved to be most fragile."

That is why the Islamic proclamation that all Muslims are true brothers and sisters, and killing each other leads them to Hell had little effect on Muslims from the very beginning. Killing other Muslims, even the nearest kith and kin, for power and material gain started right after

the death of Muhammad. Three out of four Caliphs and 11 out of the 12 Imams did not have natural death. They were killed either by assassination or by poisoning. Caliph Muawiya's son, Yajid, got even the descendents of Prophet Muhammad massacred (p. 383). So much for the Muslim brotherhood which can be seen as frail today from Afghanistan to Syria and Nigeria.

The book compels a reader to think afresh about Islam, Muslims and problems about them. Especially a Hindu might find it almost startling, although everything in this book is well-known to the Western scholarship for a long, long time.

In fact, many a mistake have been made by even great men, particularly by Hindus, precisely because they took Islam as another religion. It is not so, and that is why such books as Dr Kumar has produced, are more valuable for non-Muslim readers. The chapters — 'Revelation, Call and Preaching in Mecca' (pp. 111-30) and 'Medinan Phase' (pp. 133-89) — describe the events leading to establishing Islam as a religion. This process is full of interesting events and should be studied in as much detail as possible. The claim — 'Muhammad is the final spokesman of the only true God, who, through him, passed on to mankind a series of messages collected in the Quran' — is the truly defining feature of Islam. The prophet-hood of Muhammad sets it apart from every other religion. Those who really want to understand Islam should concentrate on this issue.

Because it sheds light on the entire process by which the claim of divine 'revelation' can be scientifically tested. Here it should be underlined that this inquiry is not any denigration of Islam as some commentators and writers are prone to say. Because 'faith' and 'truth' are two entirely different things. If a doctrine claims to be the truth, then it has to be tested on the scientific touchstone. Otherwise it is ipso facto anything but truth.

It is a common knowledge that the words, deeds and the behaviour of Prophet Muhammad in every respect, including family, hygiene, etc, not to speak of state and warfare, are considered the Law for Muslims to follow even today. Why so, on what ground? Because he claimed to be the last Prophet, annulling other Prophets before in human history and categorically denying any other to come forever. This claim is the only basis for his words and deeds being the Law for all Muslims.

Only in this background we should note the importance of the fact that the doubts on the revelations and the prophet-hood of Muhammad had started with Muhammad himself! In the chapter 'The Revelations'

(pp. 111-18), through the most authentic biographer of the prophet Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, Dr Kumar has noted the express doubt Muhammad felt when he first heard the voice claiming to be that of Gabriel (an angel mentioned in the *Bible*). At first Muhammad thought with horror, after the fashion of the local beliefs, that he was possessed by spirits. It was not considered good for a man. Accordingly, Muhammad despaired: "Woe is me poet or possessed." (p. 112). He felt ashamed that the fellowmen would ridicule him. It clearly shows self doubt about the revelation. Later, he even considered suicide in despondency (p. 115). Various scholars have noted that there were occasions when "the mind of Muhammad hung in suspense, and he doubted the reality of heavenly mission." (pp. 115)

And Muhammad was not alone in doubting. Some of his family members and local people also doubted it all. This episode is worthy of consideration because today any such doubts are considered heresy or blasphemy. In fact, the claim — 'Muhammad is the final spokesman of the only true God, who, through him, passed on to mankind a series of messages collected in the Quran' — is the truly defining feature of Islam. This sets it apart from every other religion: the prophet-hood of Muhammad, the blind faith in him and obedience is an abiding tenet of Islam.

The book closes with 'Islamic appropriation of Ka'ba and its worship' (pp. 387-91). At this point it appears inconclusive because for understanding Islam today, the next stage after its inception, its propagation to Arabia, parts of Europe, Africa and Asia is as important. It is more so because at present many continents are feeling the heat generated by Islamist forces, both violent and otherwise. A modern reader would like to know whatever happened later during the expansion of Islam. How did it succeed in establishing itself far and wide? And, whether a clue of today's troubles in Muslim societies can be found in its history of expansion? We hope that Dr. Kumar would complete the story in a successive volume.

The author also brings out the root cause of the current Muslim-Jew conflict in the region in the context of expansion of Islam in lifetime of the Prophet and perceived oppression of the Jews in the region in the chapter "Medinan Phase."

Written in a simple manner, this book doubles up as an interesting literary reading and reference volume as well. Many a famous narratives and tidbits from the life of the Prophet are narrated in due context. It makes the reading humane, easy and informative. At the same time, it

also illuminates the personality of Muhammad as he really was. For instance, writing about 'Prophet's tastes and habits' (p. 86), it is mentioned that he "abhorred anything that produced an evil odour; garlic and onion were described by him as evil vegetables."

In discussing Islam many non-Muslims tend to focus on the negative features of Islam, such as the low status of women and non-believers, etc. However, in its essence Islam is not a system of ethics but a belief system, a truth claim. We should take this point a little further to see the importance of the subject. The root cause of the current churn within Islam and its radicalisation can be traced to its early years. Hence, any writing on Islam in the current *jihadi* time is a risky proposition. But in *Understanding Islam* Dr. Kumar has set an example of a scholarly endeavour, which is authoritative without being judgmental and equally useful to a scholar of Islam and a layman interested in the subject. It's a timely and valuable addition to belated efforts in India to understand Islam.

# Comments of Eminent Indian Thinker and Litterateur, Padmashri and Sahitya Akademy Awardee, Professor Ramesh Chandra Shah on *Understanding Islam*

Dear Prof. Kumar,

　　I find it incredible that I've finished reading your 'Understanding Islam' within a couple of days. I was hardly in a position to exert myself continuously. But miraculously, I hardly felt the exertion. Once, I picked up the book, I was so absorbed in it that I couldn't lay it aside. I did have a nodding (?) acquaintance with some material on this subject; but your book is so readable—so inclusively a thoroughly well-documented, so consistently engaging, that one can't rest until one is through with it. Right from the opening chapter called – 'The Birthplace of Islam', upto the concluding chapters – 'Strength and Weaknesses of Islam', you have managed to hold the reader captive & entranced as it were. Great labour has been invested in it, yet the writing is so straightforward & smooth, so well-planned, so earnestly engaging, that one marvels how you managed to include all the facts, all the historical details in it. Really, sir, you have rendered a great service to the interested and inquisitive readers by managing to incorporate so many things within its covers. The Indian readers particularly in need of such a comprehensive account of the origin, evolution, triumph and progressive-regressive history of Islam & its warrior adherents. It's so well-organised and so fully informative.

　　Moreover it's a must-read book, because we in India –so hospitable to other faiths, and so innately respectful towards all ideas and practices of the Sacred are nevertheless, most lacking in real curiosity and real historical sense. This is our chief lacuna. One wonders whether even our great men and leaders had studied the Qur'an; and the history of all the stages of its evolution. It was high time our intelligentsia acquired

real, factual knowledge about Islam, and its theology as well as other topics related to it which had such impact on our own people, and on our history. Your book achieves this feat in a thoroughgoing manner. It's a scholarly as well as eminently readable account for laymen like us. You have done full justice to its title. You do guide your reader to a complete understanding of Islam. I found it so fascinating – the account of the 'Pre-Islamic Pagan Culture', 'The Prophet's Ancestors', 'Source material for the Study of Islam', 'pre as well as post prophetic phase', 'Revelation, call and preaching in Mecca and Medina', Its relationship with the people of the Book, its main pillars, its theology etc. The epilogue gives a considered view of the plus and minus points of this imperial enterprise. Even the annexures are vitally significant. Since I personally didn't find Qur'an as poetic as Bible, I was delightfully surprised to be told on p. 41 that "instant poetry was in the very nature of the Arabs," and that Ibn Ishaq's biography of the Prophet is full of poetry. 'The importance of Hadis in understanding Qur'an' has been very succinctly underlined by you. I didn't know that Sir Sayyad Ahmad also wrote a biography of the Prophet in reply to Muir's biography & exposed the one-sided rationality of Muir & co. It's only through your book that I learnt about Lesley Hazleton's 'The First Muslim'.

It was Huxley, who first coined the phrase—'Theological Imperialism'. But it's through the comprehensive account given in your book that I came to understand the actual meaning and process of this historical phenomenon of the Sky-God religions like Islam & its forerunners. Your book is richer than its predecessors' by hindsight and, also, by your status as a more remote and detached observer than the orientalists and the Indian adherents & apologists like Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan.

Apart from & after Ram Swarup's 'Hindu View of Christianity (& Islam)' and the recent work of Mehrotra called 'difference', yours is the only full-fledged scholarly account of the career of Islam as a religion. As a Hindu intellectual, you are an insider of the only worldview which combines & reconciles the apparently opposite standpoints of Monism (*Advaita* & monotheism) on the one hand, and a full-fledged *Bahudevavad* (paganism) on the other hand. Without explicitly exposing the self righteous hollowness of the theological Imperial Standpoint, you have implicitly justified the way of *Bahudevavad*, which the theological imperialism of Christianity & Islam sought to discredit and destroy. Paganism was a word coined to proclaim their self-righteous

superior stance and consequent disparagement of the oldest understanding and direct immanent experience of the Sacred.

Today, all over the world, there seems to be emerging a new urgency to reinstate & reassert the latent virtues of the so-called pagan world-view & practice of the sacred in human history. In this context, you have instinctively underlined the basic error of the Sky-God religions on p. 390, where you rightly point out that "for Muir, a Semitic blind faith is sacred belief, but a similar pagan phenomenon is superstition and gross idolatry." Further on, you hint at the actual heart of darkness – the real & most costly weakness of the Semitic understanding (view) of the Sacred, when you say that "Muir should have extended the area of inquiry of Sabeanism, idolatry and stone-worship in extended continuum frame and found that the Arabs, like Indians, are worshipping the deities inside the sun, moon, stars, idols and the stones, rather than the material items. Unfortunately, the Semitic bias – terror of their God, basic incapacity of the Christian mind, makes them thoroughly incapable of understanding the same. You clinch the argument further on when you affirm that "what an authority insider like Ibn Ishaq writes is "about the spread of stone worship, and not of its origin". You are saying this because of your firm grasp of the origin – for you are born and bred in that tradition. That's why this concluding note of your book sounds so compellingly authentic. Your inborn sense of the sacred combines the pagan feeling as well as the philosophically evolved monism and monotheism in Hinduism without perceiving any incompatibility between the two.

I have an intuitive feeling that these historical religions have served and exhausted their destined useful purpose and the modern man stands at the threshold of recapturing a new (though most ancient) religion which satisfies all the dimensions of his being – emotional, intellectual, physical – instinctive. I have been following the trends of such an inevitable change. Ramswarup's comparatist perspectives of Islam & Christianity vis-à-vis Hinduism, his re-discovery and reinstatement of the pagan wisdom, as well as many other Western critiques seem to point to that inevitable future turn in human understanding of the Sacred. Thus, one tends to agree with V.S. Naipaul – that "Islam is on the defensive now." The desperate re-assertion and reinstatement of Jihady politics do seem to point that way. There is an in-built contradiction in the very genesis of historical religions. Things determined and shaped by history must needs yield to the nemesis inherent in historically determined events. Metaphysical as well as natural religions are bound

to reassert their truth in & through the universal human consciousness and culture itself. It's the nemesis inherent in Time itself. We are at the threshold of post-modern, post-Marxist, post-ideological times. Of course, it has its own challenges and hazards. But these are signs of desperation & disillusionment with historically determined ideologies everywhere. Communism (or Marxism) – atheistic equivalent of Islam and Christian ways of walking upon the earth — has already met its nemesis. It remains to be seen how long Maoist Chinese variant of it is going to prolong and bail out its survival.

Well, it's idle to speculate thus. Suffice it to say that your scholarly labour has appeared at the right time. The whole world needs to understand & re-evaluate imperialist theologies with their 'in-built contradictions and conflicts (as you have so ably demonstrated or hinted at in the penultimate chapter of your book).

We Indians in particular have been criticized for our lack of historic sense. Scholars like Ramswarup (whom you find so relevant & quotable in many chapters) and Sitaram Goel and some others have sought to remedy this lacuna and their efforts are not going to be wasted. Your own scholarly findings in chapters entitled 'Islam and Christianity', 'Islam and the people of the Book', 'Islamic Economy', 'Women in Islam', etc implicitly point to that inadequacy & historically conditioned limitations. You have given due importance to the orientalists as well as to the latest scholarly work of Lesley Hazleton. You have taken due notice of K.S. Lal. I wonder whether the earlier historians like J.N. Sircar and R.C. Majumdar are so irrelevant as not to merit even a passing reference in your otherwise so well-documented treatise.

Enough is enough. Let me halt here. Let me thank and complement you on the completion of this most readable book on 'Understanding Islam'. You have justified the title: it's an understanding, not just a description or exposition of the vitally important subject. Thank you again and my heartiest congratulations.

Yours sincerely,

Ramesh Chandra Shah
1st October 2016

**Book Review**

# Window to Bhutan: A Study of Emerging New Social Patterns with Urban Educated Middle Class Working Women (1972-2013)**

Shalini Gupta*

The period from 1790 to 1920 which was of industrial capitalism in European economies brought about a major transformation of work, workplace and home. It also completely changed the meaning of domesticity. Till now the women's development was centered as housewife located in the home, or the private sphere. However thereon, they entered the realm of professionalism. Similar change occurred in the Kingdom of Bhutan with the policy of globalization and modernization. The economic, political and social development in Bhutan produced a new class of society in which the values and beliefs of middle class were evident. Education which was till then monastic became secular and large number of girls who were erstwhile deprived of education got access to it, with the concerted efforts of the government. The book *Window to Bhutan: A Study of Emerging New Social Patterns with Urban Educated Middle Class Working Women in Main Focus (1972-2013)* written by Madhu Rajput presents and analyses integration of Bhutanese women into the mainstream life outside home, its impact and the challenges emerging due to it.

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The book runs into seven chapters: Introduction, Women's Education: Defining New Perspective, Concern for Health, Economic Status, Women Voices, A Comparative Study of Bhutanese Educated Women with Indian Women, and Concluding Observations. The book also includes as appendices author's interviews with several women working in government as well as private sectors, which gives an insider's view and is quite informative, insightful and interesting.

Beginning with the demographic statistics which reveal a healthy sex ratio, the book delves into the traditional roles of the Bhutanese women. Though not employed in offices, they held a high position in the family and exercised power of decision-making. The reason behind their non-involvement in the official work was attributed more to the lack of infrastructure rather than any gender bias.

With material progress and advanced infrastructure, education was made available to women. Chapter two describes the thoughtful policies and efforts of the Royal Government to ensure women's access to education. The author traces the initial reluctance of parents and the government's emphasis on education, resulting in almost hundred percent enrolment at primary level, and increasing number of women in higher studies, technical and vocational courses.

A mountainous kingdom, Bhutan had to face enormous challenge in providing health services to its citizens. However, with Indian assistance, a basic infrastructure has been developed and the government implements various policies to ensure mother-child care. Chapter three highlights the health concerns for women, and the medical facilities available to them.

The most important change in Bhutanese women's life after Bhutan accepted modernization in early 90s has been their enhanced economic position. Educated middle class women began to participate in official occupations, holding administrative positions, and entering almost all private sectors. This has ushered a new era in their lives. The earlier joint family system with the matriarch as the power centre gave way to city life, nuclear families and pressure of dual responsibilities of office and home. Chapter four address these new found opportunities, as well as the challenges. Since working in offices happens to be an entirely new phenomena for the Bhutanese women, they are still grappling with the side effects, albeit enjoying the wide horizons opened to them. The research on the subject and the resultant book is extremely useful as it is the first of its kind to voice the concerns of a changing economic and social scenario in Bhutan from women's point of view.

The findings of a field survey done by the author over two years in 2010 and 2011, amongst educated working Bhutanese women present useful statistics gathered firsthand through a questionnaire. In addition, her interviews with several working women highlight their aspirations, struggles and concerns in their own words. The chapter has been aptly titled as "Women Voices."

Another interesting feature of the book is a comparative study between Bhutanese women and Indian women. The author draws insightful parallels in the fields of social position, education, employment, working conditions, and preferable jobs.

Both primary and the secondary sources have been used extensively in the research. The book is useful for the social scholars, researchers as well as the policy makers, as it portrays a society in transition. Madhu Rajput is a well known scholar on Bhutan and has authored three other books on Bhutan's society and polity.

# Gandhi, His Thoughts and the Gandhian Institutions

Ramjee Singh*

When Gandhi was alive, some of his sincere and dedicated disciples with an intention to idiolise his thoughts, invited Gandhi to a get-together at Malik Nanda. Gandhi respecting, their sentiments attended the meet. But when he was invited to expound his views, Gandhi to their great disappointment was frank enough to say: "There is no such thing like "Gandhism" and I do not want a sect after me." Indeed, it might have been a bolt from the blue, but Gandhi stuck to this idea till his death. He was always true to his ideas and therefore, he stuck to it like a rock by saying: "I shall speak from my grave." He had no utopia or any ideo-topia except his absolute allegiance to truth. Like a scientist, he was humble but firm; no preconceived notions but thoroughly experimental. His whole life was devoted to most adventurous experiments, without any compromise. With the his best and closest associates, when he saw that his life-long mission was falling like a house of cards on the eve of freedom, Gandhi did opt for his most controversial experiment of Brahmcharya. Perhaps, it might have occurred to him that though he was true to non-violence, in word, deed and thought and he never betrayed the vow of truth, there might be some failings in the observance of celibacy. He was a helpless witness to the worst kind of violence at the time of partition. As a result, he preferred the most dangerous peace adventure in Calcutta. Noakhali, Bihar and Delhi. It was an experiment and adventure for a living martyrdom.

So, we can humbly say that Gandhi was truly great but his death was glorious and most inspiring. Indeed, it was no normal death but a

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crucifixion or drinking the hemlock. Gandhi was his own example. His crusade against violence was not only limited to the problem of the sub-continent as it was not only political or related to war and armaments. It was a global, as well as an integral phenomenon. Hence, it is not only a war of indepence but an alround challenge to civilization of mankind. It is not only a question between violence, or non-violence but between existence and non-existence of mankind. War has lost its dynamics but we should understand that modern civilization, itself has also lost its dynamics. Most recent report from the U.N. shows a grim picture of inequality where only 1 per cent of the total population of mankind live like human beings, while the rest are half-dead and half alive. Should we choose to live in an unequal world of civilization? Should we boast to call ourselves a civilized world?

In short, Gandhi had a global as well as a radical outlook towards religion, politics, economics, ecology and social organisations. He was like a world citizen, a follower of Universal Religions.

Politics in the world has become the worst phenomenon of human history. Politics should be a branch of ethics, but it is has become a chess board of duplicity, exploitation and violence. In the place of feudalism, national cause is a most welcome phenomenon, but nationalism today has become like tribalism. More than 70,000 small and big wars have taken place. Can we not think of one world or a world without war. The so-called globalisation is like neo-imperialism based on individual ownership and exploitation of the poor world.

During the conference of Asian Relations in India just before the independence, Gandhi was asked a question about "One world." His reply was prompt and spontaneous – "I do not want to live in this world if it is not one world." Besides Gandhi, Wendell Willkie wrote his famous book entitled "One World." So Bertrand Russell, H.G. Wells, Toynbee and many others have supported the idea of one world." "It is not Utopia but a reality."  On the portals of Indian Parliament is displayed the maxim – "The world is our family."

The worst tragedy is with regard to the role of religion which is supposed to be the inner nature of man and an elevating phenomenon. It is a tragedy that in the name of religion more than 7500 small and big wars took place, including inter-sect, and between Christians and Muslims. Gandhi had a universal as well as an ethical approach towards religion. He advocated equal respect for all religions. No doubt we should stick to our own religion but we should not hate other religions.

Rather, we should have the same amount of reverence as to ours. Religion, in essence, is goodness, fraternity service and everything good and noble. Gandhi, adopted the concept of equal respect for all religions. This is what Raja Rammohun Roy, Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and R.N. Tagore also prescribed.

Even on education, Gandhi was radical, practical and most integral. He wanted all round development of human personality namely hand (body), head (mind) and heart. His method of co-relation was scientific and based on Montessori concept of "learning by doing," and Mao's concept of Half-half, Gurukul method of learning by profession etc.

Gandhi believed that Science without spirituality is blind but spirituality without science is lame. Hence there should be reconciliation between science and spirituality. In short, Gandhi had a holistic vision based on syntheses of religion and ethics, science and spirituality, politics and ethics etc. His is not one sided talent. He had a universal mind, without which we cannot solve the complex problems of the world. It is why that when more than 50 Nobel Scientists and other geniuses gathered to find out solutions for the world, there was a consensus on "Gandhian solution" and they discarded the role of modern politics or science without spirituality.

Only few years ago, all the 223 member – Council of the U.N. had unanimously agreed that Gandhi's non-violence is the most practical solution for world peace and happiness. Gandhi is acceptable because he is non-partisan and universal. Gandhi is one and indivisible. He is universe. As such, he is universal and global. No doubt he was an Indian patriot but had no ill will against Pakistan and its long time ruler – U.K. Similarly, he was a Hindu, a Sanatani Hindu but he called himself also a Muslim, a Sikh, a Christian. Infact, he had no objection to be universal like Tagore, Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

Apart from being global and universal, Gandhi believed that there is only one way towards peace i.e. non-violence. Either we accept non-violence or adopt non-existence; either we should have atom or ahimsa. Gandhi is practical and down to the earth. Either we have peace or we perish wholesale. Similarly, we should have both science and spirituality. This is the integral approach. The opposite to science is nescience, which is unacceptable. For Gandhi's concept of politics, or economics of permanence, decentralisation, limitation of wants, nature-cure, abolition of untouchability, Caste System, and disregard for women etc. are important issues worth emphasis. Human life is not a water-tight

compartment into social, political, economic etc. It is a mixture or admixtures of everything. Politics is based on ethics and ethics is based on metaphysics. Hence, when Dr. Lohia draws a water-tight compartment between pro-establishment and anti-establishment, it is only relative categorisation. From one standpoint, Gandhi can be designated as pro-establishment but at the same time he is labelled as 'statusquoist' in some what non-serious remarks. Gandhi himself is an anti-establishment and revolutionary person. No doubt, he is an atheist but it is a theism of very broad meaning. This is why, he was a hero among Charles, Bradlaugh, Gora, Lavnam and many other atheists. He is no doubt a theist but he adores atheists because to him atheism is the theism of the atheist.

Even in matter of religion, he is never an orthodox or dogmatic. His concept of God is both incarnate as well as non-incarnate. To him, God means love, compassion, justice and all other noble virtues. Similarly, to him religion, does not mean dogmatism, orthodoxy, and worn-out belief in ghosts, and other evil spirits. Religion, to him, means noble human virtues. Hence, he is in an open opposition to social evils like widow-burning, untouchability, casteism, ban on widow remarriage, prostitution, Dasi system, dowry etc. To Gandhi religion is ethics and spirituality. Infact, he was a religious and social reformer. Hence, Gandhi was not only a philosophical revolutionary but also religions rebel and a social reformer. Spiritualisation of politics and economics and revolutionisation of education was his main objective. Gandhi was both a rebel as well as pro-establishment as the situation demanded. Even amongst the government minister and administrators, there are social and communal rebels and these are status-quoists among the socialists and communists. To call or brand Acharya Vinoba, Acharya Kriplani, J.P., T.C. Kumarappa, and many others as pro-establishment is not correct.

Gandhi was a born-rebel. Like Marx's Communist Manifesto, he had vision of Total Revolution. Marx resolved to abolish family, the private property, and the state. However, Gandhi went much further. He had his own vision and dialectics. Even in the field of health and medicine, his small booklet "Key to Health" is a revolutionary document in the field of health and hygiene, dietics and nature-cure. Similarly, when politics has become the refuge of the scoundrels, Gandhi set an example of spiritualisation and moralisation of politics. When economics

has become the dismal science of darkness or a science of wealth, Gandhi has advocated the limitation of wants and voluntary trusteeship. When economics is becoming the principle of centralization, mechanization, automation etc., Gandhi has emphasized the principle of small is beautiful or Gram Swaraj. When there has been stress upon mega cities and palacial buildings, Gandhi has emphasized the welfare of the last man or the marginalized sections of society, viz. the test of good economic planning rests upon the welfare of last man. It is a caricature of mis-planning in India, where 15 per cent people are well-off, the rest 85 per cent live in abject poverty, bad education and grim health etc. While 20 per cent people live under sky, 84 per cent people in India have no proper latrines and more than 64 per cent people go without clean drinking water. Gandhi's test of welfare rests with the last man.

Ecological changes were the upper most concern in Gandhi's mind. According to him, nature has enough to meet our needs but not our greed. "Today, we are selling of our mineral resources at throw away prices to big companies and foreign capitalists. Hence, we have been facing the worst, ecological disaster. The entire natural resources of world are the common wealth of the humanity. We should spend it as economically as possible so that it should last longer for the whole of humanity." To Gandhi, it is one world. Narrow nationalism is, therefore, tribalism. If we look seriously, there is either one world or a deluge or no world.

Hind Swaraj, therefore, is no utopia but a manifesto for the future of humanity. Gandhi's Hind Swaraj is, therefore not only a manifesto for India but for the entire world and also for the immediate and also distant future. The entire wealth of nature is a trust property and, therefore, it should be treated as a sacred and common trust. Hence, there is no scope for exploitation, or profiteering.

**The Last Testament**

To Gandhi, "political freedom" of media was important for which he used his entire strength, willpower and wisdom. But he was more practical in quest for freedom. Needless to say, India had been suffering the longest period of foreign domination on account of needless social and communal divisions and sub-divisions. India did not lack valour and bravery but lacked woefully social, cultural and political integration.

Gandhi took stock of the entire situation and came to the conclusion that unless there is social, communal and religious integration in India, there is bound to be despair and defeat one after the other. Needless to say Indian nationalism has come to stay as a syncretic concordance. Indian culture is not like the Vindhya standing like the immovable mountain, of one kind but is like the ever, flowing river the Ganga, starting from Go-mukh or Gangotri and descending down to Haridwar, Prayag, Kashi to Ganga Sagar. Culture is a kind of multiple chemistry based on the mutual give and take enriching the cult of synthetic Indian culture. Limited we stand divided we fall.

For, Gandhi, in his last testament, a copy of which was delivered to the secretary of the Indian National Congress on Jan. 28, 1948 had given a prophetic warning against the emergence of violence in our civil life. Ofcourse, he after appreciating the historic role of the congress in India's political freedom struggle he pleads strongly to dissolve the congress which was a common front for achieving freedom of India. But Gandhi did not hesitate to warn the nation and the congress that after India became free, there is bound to be a clash between the civil power and the military power. If civil power fails, military dictatorship is inevitable. But Gandhi did not mean by violence only overt violence but more so structural violence. Inequality and disparity are as dangerous a violence as overt violence. The state is a symbol of force and violence. Military, para-military, police, jail and courts are all symbols of power. Even political parties do represent power as they hold power or oppose the power. In short, our entire so-called democratic fabric of western style democracy rests on party system, whose sole target in either to grab power or oppose.

Hence, Gandhi conceived a different system of people's service bereft of party politics, and power politics. Political parties are rooted directly or indirectly in power politics. They cannot be true to the people at large. Public servant must be selfless and without fetters of caste, community, and their self-interest.

Thus, Gandhi by floating Lok-Sevek-Sangh, who are loyal only to truth and non-violence and must be aloof from party politics and power politics. Gandhi had a plan to set-up such a voluntary organization to serve the people, without any self-interest or party consideration. But after two days, he was the victim of a communal fanatic. After a month of his martyrdom, in April 1948, a convention of various representatives assembled at Sevagram, where Gandhi lived and worked during his last

days. Dr. Rajendra Prasad presided over the convention. Acharya Vinoba Bhave was the Pole Star. Besides, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, and other important leaders of the government. Sri Dhebar Bhai, Congress President, Shri Ganga Saram Singh, President of Socialist Party, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Sushila Nayar, J.C. Kumarappa, E.W. Arya, Vaykara, and other important leaders were present. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, moved a resolution to set up two open orgnaisations:

(1) Sarva-Seva-Sangh (2) Sarvodaya Saamaj. It was unanimously adopted. The purpose of Sarva-Seva-Sangh (SSS) was mainly to co-ordinate the activities of Gandhi's constructive programmes, such as:

1. All India spinner's association,
2. All India Gramodyog Sangh
3. All India Harijan Sevak Sangh
4. All India Go-Sevak Sangh
5. All India – Kasturba Trust

These were also merged with Serva-Sewa-Sangh and to keep it open for other such purely Gandhian constructive organisations to be affiliated.

In short, Sarva-Seva-Sangh because the central federal body of the Gandhians who were wedded to Gandhi's constructive programmes run all over India through the organizations which had nothing to do with power politics or party politics. However, under the leadership of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Bhoodan Movement was started in 1954 on a small-scale in Andhra Pradesh in violence affected Telengana and Nalgonda, which become most powerful, non-violent and non-party movement. About 45 lac acres of land was collected throughout India and more than half of it fit for agriculture. These were distributed among the landless. Bhoodan was ofcourse the grand product of Gandhian Sarvodaya movement in the Post-Gandhi era but lacked orgnaisational skill and dynamism. Gramdan was perhaps the most potentially powerful phenomenon but it died a premature death in theory and practice, Gramdan could be a better alternative to Kol-Khoj in soviet system, commune in the Chinese revolution and Kibbutz in Israel. However, Vinobaji called for a national consensus on this. The Bhoodan – Gramdan movement showed structural and ideological weaknesses.

J.P., had relinquished party affiliations and had become a Bhoodan-Sarvodaya leader after Vinobaji retired from active work and retired to his Ashram in meditation and spiritual exercises.

In 1974, a new phase in Sarvodaya-world, sourced in Gandhian thought as well as in Indian politics, erupled like a volcano under the leadership of Jayapraksh Narayan, with new dynamism and youthful vigour. J.P. although away from party politics or power politics in his personal life, was as unhappy with the all round deterioration in the social and political life of the country which was heading towards personal dictatorship of Indira Gandhi in the post Bangla-war (1971). J.P., did not consider politics as an untouchable. J.P. stood for Peoples Revolution on the Gandhian lines. J.P., however did not confine to sarvodaya - dynamics. He moved to people dynamics. Total Revolution had almost the same goal as of Sarvodaya: However, because of the compulsions of politics, and the necessity of unity of opposition, J.P. was half way between Sarvodaya and full-fledged parliamentary democracy. But nobody can challenge J.P.'s sincerity and non-selfishness. But for J.P., India would have lapsed into a long-term personal dictatorship with corruption, and many anti-people measures. Those who differed with J.P.'s strategy also loved his honesty and love for the last man and the youth.

Today, Sarvodaya Samaj is more a formal all-India body, powerless and without dynamism, with occasional highlighting of the problems of communalism, globalisation, wrong educational policies etc. But organisationally, it is not only poor but also divided among many old guards who are hesitant to leave the mansion of sarvodaya. But there is hope that it will show a new path. Sarvodaya might have fatigued but there is no dearth of vision and commitment.

Sarva-Seva-Sangh and its workers, are supposed to have faith in truth and non-violence. It has coverage almost all over India, with state units. There are more than 2000-3000 active members. Programmes are also discussed quarterly but regularity and seriousness are missing. Dynamism is visible in some all-India programmes concerning biological disaster, and wrong economic and political policies.

Besides Sarva Seva Sangh and the All India Sarvodaya Samaj, there are a dozen of Gandhian ashrams and organisations. Most prominent is the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, to commiserate Gandhi's martyrdom. It was set-up by collecting about Rs. 10 crores from people. It has 70 - 80 centres in the country. Similarly other important Gandhian Institutions include, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, All India Prohibition Council with state level bodies; All India Nai Talisn body at Sevagram; Adim Jati Seva Mandal, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Al Nature Cure

Centres; besides the Gandhi Gram University. Thanks to the UGC, there are about 18 Gandhian Research Study Centres associated with universities besides the Gandhi Gram University. UGC has also established 70/80 libraries and symposia centres. Altogether there are a large number of Gandhian Centres including Gandhi Bhawan's spread all over India. But tragedy is that their activities and programmes, seminars etc. are all in decline including the interest and participation levels. Gandhian thought has still a lot to contribute but the old zeal and importance of Gandhians and the institutions is lacking vigour and sustainability, including their educational and social construction programmes. Regular courses on Gandhian thoughts are only held at Gandhi Gram University. The main strength of these institutions is their association with Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave and J.P. Some of them have considerable assets. But somehow interest in activities and participation in the programmes reflects decline in their importance and impact regarding their objectives. This includes two most important bodies viz. All India Sarva Seva Sangh and All India Sarvodaya Samaj.

# On the Health Workforce Crisis in Rural India

Dilip Saikia*

## 1. Introduction

As India strives to achieve universal health coverage by 2020, the health sector of the country has been suffering from, among other problems, severe shortages of health workforce. The World Health Report 2006 (WHO, 2006) placed India among the 57 countries which have been facing severe health workforce crisis. As per the report, India has about 0.60 doctors, 0.80 nurses, 0.47 midwives, 0.06 dentists, 0.56 pharmacists and 0.76 other health workers, respectively, per 1000 population in 2004-05. A recent study (Rao et al., 2012) finds that India had approximately 20 health workers per 10000 population in 2001 and when adjusted for qualification the density falls to a little over 8 per 10000 population. Further, the combined density of doctors, nurses and midwives (11.9) is less than half of the World Health Organisation's benchmark of 22.8 health workers per 10000 population and when adjusted for qualification the density falls to around one-fourth of the benchmark.

Together with the problem of numerical shortage of health workforce, there are also concerns relating to maldistribution of the workforce between rural and urban areas and across the states. Studies show that while health workers are mostly concentrated in urban areas, there is gross shortage of health workers in rural areas. Motkuri (2011) finds that only 38 per cent of the total health workforces in India are employed in the rural areas and the density of health workforce per 10000 population in rural area is only 16.2, compared to 65.9 in the urban

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areas. Rao et al. (2012) find that there are only 1.2 allopathic doctors and 0.7 nurses per 10000 population in rural areas compared to 11.3 allopathic doctors and 4.3 nurses respectively in urban areas and the density of health workers in rural areas (10.8 per 10000 population) is roughly one-fourth of that in urban areas (42 per 10000 population).

Given the facts that more than two-thirds of India's population live in the rural areas; rural areas account for higher proportions of child and elderly population, who often require more healthcare; rural areas have higher infant, child and maternal mortality rates; and about one-fourth of the rural population are poor, thereby depend more on public medical facilities; the shortage of health workforce in the rural areas of the country is a serious concern and it has big repercussions in achieving the goal of universal health coverage by 2020.

It has been a decade now since the Government of India had launched its flagship programme the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in April 2005 to strengthen the rural health sector of the country.[1] Albeit some improvement made in the healthcare infrastructure and deployment of health workforce in the post-NRHM period, the shortage of health workforce in the rural areas remains unchanged. There are issues related to numerical shortage, distributional imbalances, improper deployment and inefficient skill mix of the health workforce in rural areas.

In this context, this paper seeks to examine the adequacy of health workforce in the public health sector in rural India. By focusing on the public health workforce (PHW) we exclude the private practitioners from our analysis. Further, although WHO (2000) defines health workforce as "all the individuals engaged in the promotion, protection or improvement of population health," in this study the term health workforce is restricted to doctors, nurses/midwives and paramedical and supporting staffs only.

## 2. Availability of Public Health Workforce

The rural healthcare system in India, in the NRHM framework, has been developed as a three-tier system with Sub-Centre, Primary Health Centre (PHC) and Community Health Centre (CHC) being the three pillars.[2] The establishment of these health facilities and the staffing pattern therein is based on certain population norms laid down by the Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS). As per the norm, each Sub-Centre is to be manned by two auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) and one male health

worker. The PHC is to be manned by three doctors, one AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) practitioner, five staff nurses and 15 paramedical and supporting staffs. The CHC is to be staffed by six general doctors, six specialists, two AYUSH practitioners, 19 nurses and 45 paramedical and supporting staffs. Thus, India's rural PHW is comprised of a variety of healthcare providers, such as general and specialist doctors, AYUSH practitioners, dentists, nurses, ANMs, radiographers, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, community health workers (such as, health assistants and health educators), etc. Besides, there are some other categories of health workers such as Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and informal medical practitioners, also known as registered medical practitioners, who don't have a license but practice allopathic treatment in rural areas with little or no formal medical training.
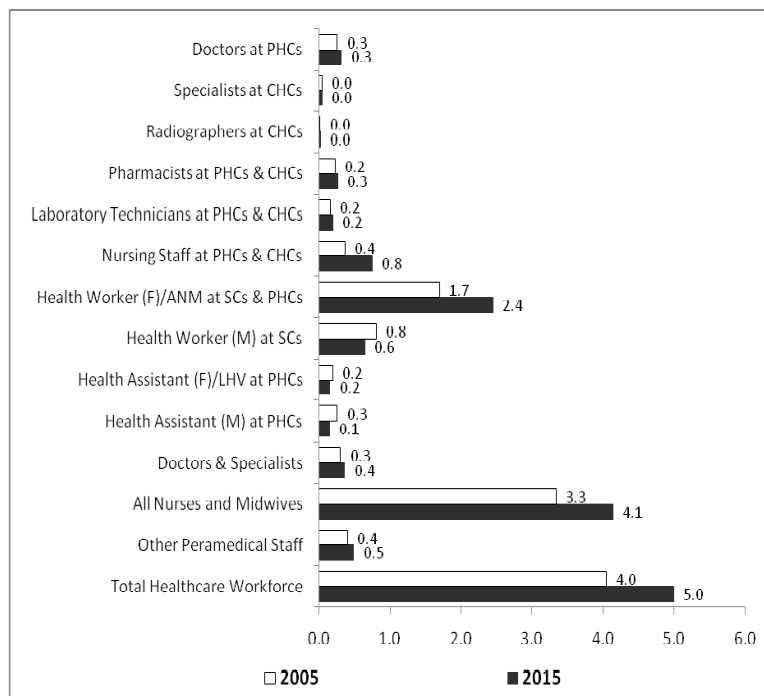
Figure 1: Size of Public Health Workforce in Rural India
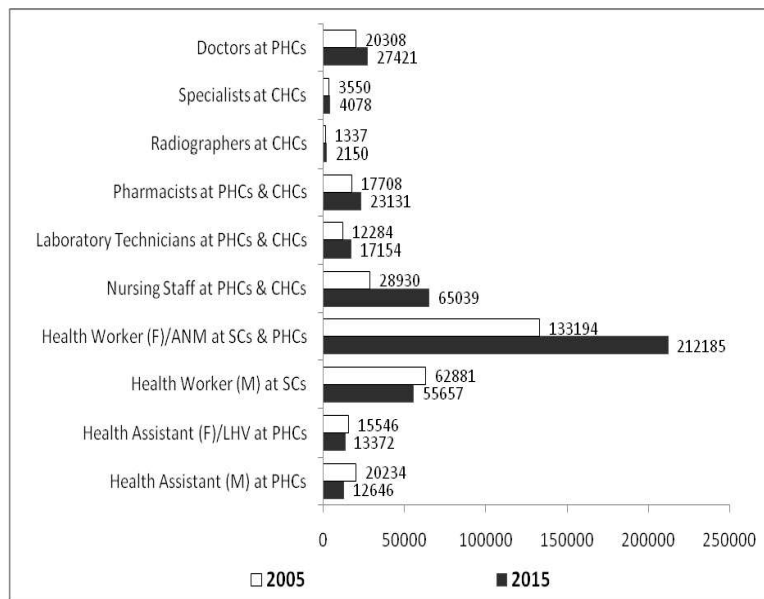


Source: Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India 2005 and 2015.

As per the Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India 2015 published by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi (GOI, 2015a) the total PHW (excluding ASHAs and health educators) in rural areas was 432833 as on March 2015.[3] The number has increased from 315972 in March 2005 (GOI, 2005). The size of different cadres of PHW for 2005 and 2015 is reported in Figure 1. It reveals that between 2005 – the year of implementation of the NRHM – and 2015 there has been considerable increase in the absolute numbers of all the cadres of PHW, except male health workers, female health assistants and male health assistants.

Figure 2: Density of Public Health Workforce (per 10000 population) in Rural India



Source: Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India 2005 and 2015.

The female health workers, also called ANMs, constitute a majority of the PHW (49 per cent) followed by nurses (15 per cent) and male health workers (12.9 per cent) in 2015. The share of doctors in total PHW is 6.3 per cent, specialists 0.9 per cent, radiographers 0.5 per cent, pharmacists 5.3 per cent, laboratory technicians 4 per cent, and female and male health assistants 3 per cent each.

One way to look at the numerical adequacy of PHW is to examine the density of the workforce. Figure 2 presents the density of different cadres of PHW. Between 2005 and 2015, the density has increased for all the cadres of PHW, except male health workers, female health assistants and male health assistants. The density of total PHW is 5 per 10000 population in 2015 compared to 4 per 10000 population in 2005. The densities of doctors (0.32 per 10000 population) and specialists (0.05 per 10000 population) are terribly low, showing the abysmal situation of PHW in rural areas. The combined density of doctors, nurses and midwives is about 4.5 per 10000 population in 2015 compared to 3.6 per 10000 population in 2005. Considering the World Health Organisation's benchmark of 22.8 health workers per 10000 population (WHO, 2006), India's rural areas have a deficit of 18.3 PHW (doctors, nurses and midwives) per 10000 population in 2015, leaving 80 per cent of India's rural population without access to public healthcare.

Another indicator of the numerical adequacy of PHW is population-to-workforce ratio. In 2015, a doctor has to serve 31591 people, a specialist has to serve 212422 people and a nurse has to serve 13319 people in rural India. The population coverage by different cadres of PHW is reported in Figure 3. Between 2005 and 2015, considerable improvement has been achieved in the population-to-workforce ratio in case of all the cadres of PHW, except male health workers, female health assistants and male health assistants. Although the NRHM has not set population coverage norms for all the cadres of PHW, but it recommends that there should be a female health worker (at Sub-Centre and PHC) and a male health worker (at Sub-Centre) per 5000 population in plain areas and per 3000 population in hilly/tribal/desert areas (GOI, 2015a). While the norm is fulfilled in case of female health worker in 2015, it is yet to be fulfilled in case of male health worker.

Appropriate skill mix of the health workforce is very important for efficient functioning of the healthcare system. Although there is no national norm for a nurse-doctor ratio, the World Development Report 1993 (World Bank, 1993) recommends that the nurse-doctor ratio should exceed 2:1 as a minimum and a ratio of 4:1 or higher is regarded as best

for cost effective and quality healthcare. There was approximately one nurse per doctor in rural India in 2005, which increased to two nurses per doctor in 2015 (including midwives, the nurse-doctor ratio is 11:1 for both the years). Further, the NRHM recommended for a standard ratio of female health assistants at PHCs to female health workers at Sub-Centres and PHCs and male health assistants at PHCs to male health workers at Sub-Centres each to be 1:6 as a minimum (GOI, 2015a). The ratio of female health assistants at PHCs to female health workers at Sub-Centres was 1:9 in 2005 and 1:16 in 2015, whereas the ratio of male health assistants at PHCs to male health workers at Sub-Centres was 1:3 in 2005 and 1:4 in 2015.

**Figure 3: Population Covered by a Public Health Workforce in Rural India**
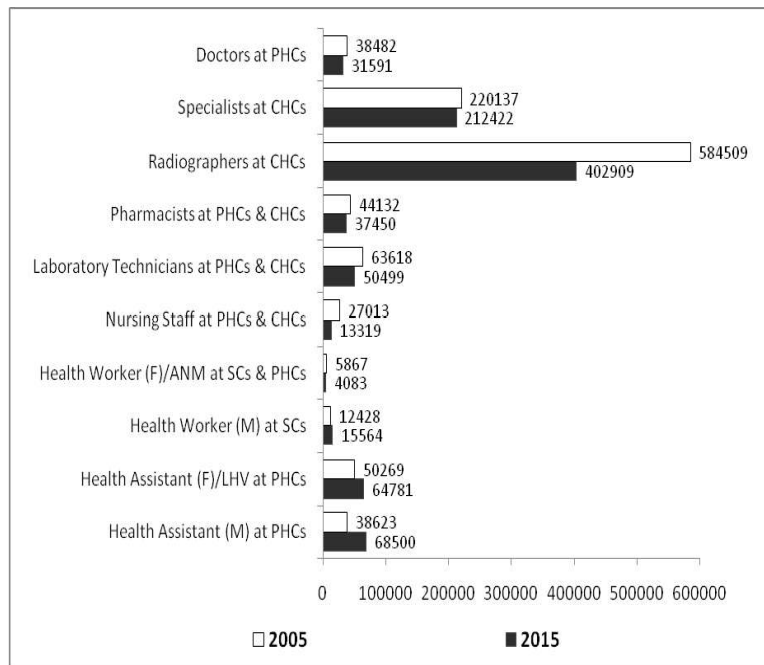


Source: Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India 2005 and 2015.

### 3. Shortfall in Public Health Workforce

The above figures reveals the numerical inadequacy of PHW in rural India. In 2015 out of the 25308 PHCs functioning in rural India, about 14189 (56.1 per cent) have been functioning with only 1 doctor and out of the 5396 CHCs functioning 4645 (86.1 per cent) don't have all the four specialist doctors, even though the NRHM recommends that each CHC must have four specialists – a physician, an obstetrician and gynaecologist, a surgeon and a paediatrician. Further, about 2041 PHCs (8.1 per cent) have been functioning without a doctor, 18872 PHCs (74.6 per cent) don't have a lady doctor, 5553 PHCs (21.9 per cent) don't have a pharmacist, 9649 PHCs (38.1 per cent) don't have a laboratory technician, 8138 Sub-Centres (5.3 per cent) are without a female health worker, 71433 Sub-Centres (46.5 per cent) are without a male health worker and 5053 Sub-Centres (3.3 per cent) are without both female and male health workers (Figure 4). The important caveat is that in the last ten years the situation has been worsening in terms of all the above indicators, except increase in the percentage of PHCs with lady doctors.

**Figure 4: Shortfall of Public Health Workforce in Sub-Centres and PHCs**
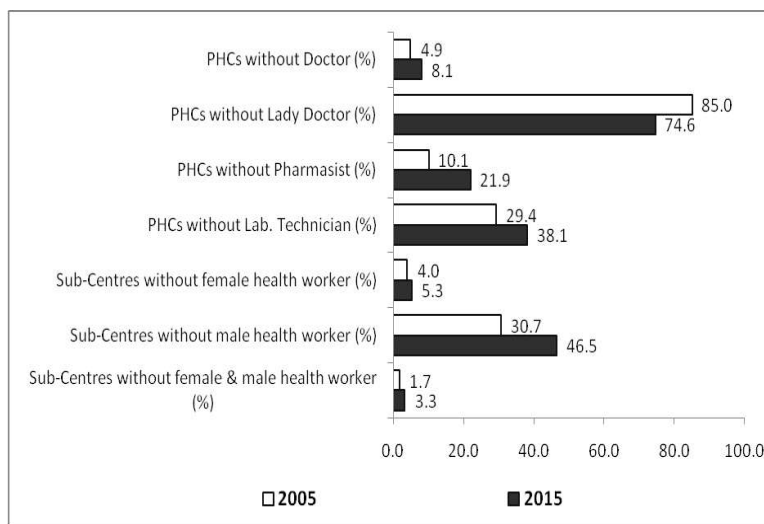


Source: Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India 2005 and 2015.

The shortfall of PHW is calculated as the difference between the required workforce, which is calculated using the prescribed population norms, and the workforce in-position. The data reported in Table 1 shows that there are acute shortages of all the cadres of PHW in the rural health centres. In 2015, there is a shortfall of 12 per cent of doctors in PHCs, 83 per cent of surgeons, 76 per cent of obstetricians and gynecologists, 83 per cent of physicians and 82 per cent of paediatricians in CHCs. Overall, 81 per cent of the specialists in CHCs are in short. There are 63 per cent fewer radiographers, 27 per cent fewer pharmacists, 44.6 per cent fewer laboratory technicians and 20.5 per cent fewer nurse midwives. At the PHC and Sub-Centre level there is shortfall of 5 per cent of female health workers, 63.8 per cent of male health workers, 49.2 per cent of female health assistants and 61.3 per cent of male health assistants. The most disturbing facet is that between 2005 and 2015 the shortfall has increased in case of all the cadres of PHW, except for nurses and female health workers; the significant increase is for all the four cadres of specialist doctors.

**Table 1: Shortfall and Vacancy of Public Health Workforce in Rural India**

| Health Workforce | Percentage Shortfall | | Percentage Vacancy | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2005 | 2015 | 2005 | 2015 |
| Doctors at PHCs | 3.81 | 11.86 | 10.91 | 27.02 |
| Total Specialists at CHCs | 41.40 | 81.20 | 37.12 | 68.04 |
| Surgeons | 34.79 | 83.40 | 40.99 | 74.61 |
| Physicians | 45.22 | 83.01 | 41.13 | 68.15 |
| Obstetricians and gynecologists | 33.33 | 76.26 | 24.64 | 65.38 |
| Paediatricians | 49.88 | 82.13 | 42.89 | 62.80 |
| Radiographers at CHCs | 31.56 | 63.12 | 22.30 | 48.76 |
| Pharmacists at PHCs and CHCs | 7.10 | 27.10 | 11.03 | 19.30 |
| Laboratory Technicians at PHCs and CHCs | 24.09 | 44.59 | 14.96 | 27.13 |
| Nurse Midwives at PHCs and CHCs | 27.86 | 20.53 | 13.05 | 15.87 |
| Health Workers (Female)/ ANM at SCs & PHCs | 6.75 | 5.21 | 5.44 | 10.47 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health Workers (Male) at Sub-Centres | 47.15 | 63.80 | 27.14 | 40.74 |
| Health Assistants (Female)/ LHV at PHCs | 13.84 | 49.19 | 12.64 | 41.91 |
| Health Assistants (Male) at PHCs | 22.23 | 61.30 | 25.24 | 46.88 |

Source: Bulletin on Rural Health Statistics in India 2005 and 2015. Notes: Shortfall is expressed as percentage of required posts and vacancy is expressed as percentage of sanctioned posts.

Compounding the looming shortage of health workforce there is large-scale absenteeism and low level of participation in providing healthcare services among the existing workforce in the public health sector (Bhandari and Dutta 2007; Choudhury et al., 2006). Choudhury et al. (2006) find that the absence rate among the primary healthcare providers in India was 39.3 per cent and absence rate was highest among the high-ranked healthcare providers such as doctors (43 per cent) compared to the lower-ranked ones, and among the men compared to the women. Additionally, there are also reports that in many instances the health centres never open in due time and in other occasions they remain closed, which is more often at the Sub-Centre level, leading to inconvenience of timing for the patients (Bhandari and Dutta, 2007; Choudhury et al., 2006).

## 4. Some Explanations

Given the current situation of PHW in rural India, one might question that is the shortage due to supply side factors, i.e. due to low production capacity of healthcare professionals. However, this is not utterly true. There has been rapid increase in the number of educational institutions and training capacity of healthcare professionals in India in the last two decades (GOI, 2015b; Hazarika, 2013),[4] owing to which the stock of healthcare professionals in the country has considerably increased in recent years. In 2014 there were about 938861 registered allopathic doctors, 736538 AYUSH doctors, 154436 dental surgeons, 2621981 nurses and midwives, and 664176 pharmacists in India (GOI, 2015b). The shortage of PHW in the rural areas, despite the increase in the stock of healthcare professionals, suggests that the shortage can't be attributed to the supply side factors alone, rather a combination of supply side factors, demand side factors and political factors are responsible for it.

It is worth noting that there have been gross shortages in the number of Sub-Centres, PHCs and CHCs in rural areas as compared to the required numbers on the basis of existing norms,[5] and thereby the health workforce that were to be deployed in those centres added to the total shortfall of PHW. Besides, a significant percentage of the required number of posts in the Sub-Centres, PHCs and CHCs remained non-sanctioned due to the reluctance of the government to creation and sanction of new posts.[6] Further, even out of the sanctioned posts a significant percentage of posts are lying vacant at all levels (see Table 1), because of various reasons such as undue delay in the recruitment process, poor retention policy, unwillingness of the healthcare professionals to work in rural areas, etc.

The rural healthcare practice is an extremely unattractive career for healthcare professionals, especially for the high-ranked professionals such as allopathic doctors, because of various reasons. First, rural practice offers poor career prospects and low salary in comparison to urban practice. The competition from urban facilities and practices attract them away for better salaries, career opportunities and other benefits associated with the urban environment. Second, the working conditions in the rural health centres are very poor. The minimum essential facilities such as water and supply, staff quarters, etc. are either not available or in deplorable conditions. For instance, in 2015 about 28.4 per cent Sub-Centres don't have regular water supply, 25.6 per cent Sub-Centres don't have electric supply, 54.7 per cent of Sub-Centres are without quarter for ANMs, and 51.6 per cent of CHCs are without quarter for doctors (GOI, 2015a). Because of the poor infrastructure nobody wants to take-up job in rural areas, and even those who are employed, they barely visit their health centres. Third, rural areas offer very less opportunities for outside earnings in private practice as well as very few job opportunities for spouses and education opportunities for children. Fourth, the medical education system in India is urban centric, and hence, being trained in an urban area one may not be willing to work in rural areas. Because of limited access to medical education in rural areas, rural students have fewer opportunities to pursue careers in health fields and when they moved to the urban area to pursue medical education there is very little chance that they might be willing to go back to rural areas.

Another contributing factor is migration of healthcare professionals to other countries for better career opportunities, working condition, salary and other benefits. The migration of healthcare professionals

from India has been growing significantly in the last two decades and India is emerging as one of the major countries of origin of migration of skilled healthcare professionals to the developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland and the Gulf countries. According to one report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2014), the total number of MBBS graduates of Indian medical colleges practicing in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia stood at 59095 in 2006, which was about 10.1 per cent of the MBBS doctors registered with the Medical Council of India. Sinha (2007) reports that 20 per cent of graduates of Indian nursing schools go abroad every year. Percot (2006) estimated that about 60000 Indian nurses are in the Gulf countries. The large-scale emigration of healthcare professionals aggravates the shortage of health workforce in the country.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The paper examines the adequacy of health workforce in the public health sector in rural India. We find that even after a decade of implementation of the NRHM, India's rural health sector has been suffering from acute shortage of health workforce. The shortage of health workforce certainly has huge repercussions on the healthcare services being provided to the people. The shortage of workforce implies that there are too few healthcare providers at the health centres when patients demand for healthcare, which creates overburdening of the staffs that are present at that time and also long waiting time for the patients. The limited workforce also implies that not every patient can be attended by the available health workers. Besides, lack of particular types of workforce poses problem in delivery of certain healthcare services. For example, lack of lady doctors in PHCs and CHCs severely affects access to healthcare services for women patients as they might not feel comfortable to discuss their certain health issues with male doctors. Similarly, lack of male health workers in Sub-Centres resulted in poor participation of men in family welfare programmes. All these issues take their toll on the quality of public healthcare services, due to which patients are reluctant to use public healthcare facilities. Data from the National Family Health Survey – III (2005–06) reveals that 65.6 per cent of households in India (70.2 per cent in urban and 63.2 per cent in rural areas) don't generally use government medical facilities, and of these households about 57.7 per cent reported that the

poor quality of healthcare is the reason for not using government facilities, another 24.8 per cent cited the reason as too long waiting time, 13.1 per cent cited the reason as inconvenient timing of public facilities, and 9.2 per cent cited the reason as frequent absence of the health personnel (IIPS, 2007).

Solution to the problem of PHW shortages in rural areas requires combined actions at various levels, particularly on the part of the state policies, training institutions and healthcare facilities.

- There is urgent need to develop a national health workforce policy for planning and management of health workforce production in the country. To do so, new training institutions need to be created by the public sector, especially in states where they are few and the existing institutions need to be strengthened. Emphasis also needs to be given in ensuring a more appropriate mix of training opportunities and assuring educational quality through regulatory enforcement such as licensing, certification and registration, etc.
- Appropriate strategies must be put in place for recruitment and retention of health workforce in the public sector, especially in the underserved rural and remote areas. The required number of posts need to be created and vacant posts are to be filled up by simplifying the recruitment procedures.
- Efforts are to be made to make the rural service attractive for the health professional. To do so, attractive job packages including both monetary and non-monetary incentives need to be introduced to encourage the health workers to serve in rural and remote areas. Since 2007, monthly financial incentives in addition to salaries have been widely introduced across all the states for doctors, nurses and midwives working in rural and remote areas.
- Another policy measure is compulsory rural service to deploy and retain health personnel in the rural and remote areas.
- There is considerable scope for actions that the educational institutions can use to address rural health workforce. The educational institutions may come up with strategies such as admission criteria that are likely to produce providers interested in rural practice, for example preferentially admitting more students who are willing to work in rural areas. Another measure is to develop rural-centric curricula and training tracks to

encourage the medical graduates to work in rural areas. New cadres of rural medical practitioners, such as the three years Bachelor of Rural Health Care, which was already introduced in Assam and Chhattisgarh, can be created to address the specialist shortages in the rural areas.

- There is also need to remove the barriers to practice. Allowing alternative providers such as AYUSH practitioners and nurses, after proper training, to provide primary healthcare services in rural areas can lessen the effects of specialist shortages.
- Use of information technology such as tele-health services, internet-based health services, etc. can help, to some extent, to fill the gaps in health services in rural and remote areas caused by shortages of health workforce.
- Enhancing the performance of the existing PHW also merits attention. The rural healthcare facilities may employ strategies such as proper supervision, fair and reliable compensation, critical support systems and on-job training facilities to enhance the performance of the health workforce.
- Urbanisation of rural sector at a faster pace will to an extent make the rural postings not as unattractive as at present.

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## Notes

[1] The NRHM is an initiative undertaken by the Government of India to provide accessible, affordable and accountable healthcare services to the rural population, with special focus on 18 states (e.g. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarkhand), which had poor health indicators and inadequate public health infrastructure facilities. The mission mainly focuses on improving access to equitable and affordable primary healthcare services such as women's health, child health, water, sanitation and hygiene, immunisation and nutrition, etc. to the rural people, especially women and children. In 2013 the NRHM was amalgamated with the National Health Mission (NHM), with NRHM and National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) being its two sub-missions.

[2] The Sub-Centre is the most peripheral and first contact point between the primary health care system and the community; PHC is the first contact point between village community and the medical officer and acts as a referral unit for six Sub-Centres; and CHC is the referral centre for

four PHCs, which also provides facilities for obstetric care and specialist consultations. As per the existing norm, there will be a Sub-Centre for every 5,000 population, a PHC for every 30,000 population and a CHC for every 120,000 population in plain areas, whereas these population norms in hilly/tribal/difficult areas are 3,000, 20,000 and 80,000 respectively.

[3] There were about 895986 ASHAs as on March 2014 and 2934 health educators as on March 2015.

[4] As on April 2014, there were about 362 medical colleges with 45629 admission capacity, 523 undergraduate AYUSH institutes with 29101 admission capacity, 2865 General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) training institutes with 115844 admission capacity, 1853 Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery (ANM) training institutes with 52479 admission capacity and 723 recognised institutes offering diploma in Pharmacy with 43300 admission capacity (GOI, 2015a).

[5] In 2015 there are shortfall of 6556 (22.35 per cent) Sub-Centres, 6556 (22.35 per cent) PHCs and 2316 (31.63 per cent) CHCs in rural India (GOI, 2015a).

[6] The percentage of required posts remained non-sanctioned was about 37 per cent for specialists, 31 per cent for radiographers, 12 per cent for pharmacists, 30 per cent for laboratory technicians, 40 per cent for male health workers, 20 per cent for of female health assistants and 41 per cent for male health assistants in 2015 (GOI, 2015a).