WAR AGAINST TERRORISM: QUO VADIS?

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During a visit to the US from February 21 to March 3, 2002, this writer spoke extempore on various aspects of terrorism in South Asia at the University of California Los Angeles (February 23), the Potomac Institute of Policy Studies, Washington DC (February 25), the India Club, World Bank, Washington DC (February 26) and the James A.Baker III Institute For Public Policy, Rice University, Houston (February 28). This article incorporates the various points made by him in his presentations. The author will be writing separately on the ghastly punishment murders of Hindus travelling in a train in Godhra near Gujarat by suspected supporters of Dawood Ibrahim, the mafia leader with known ISI and terrorist links now living in Karachi whose extradition has been demanded by India, and the subsequent anti-Muslim retaliatory killings in Gujarat, which occurred during the fag end of his tour of the US and which figured during his hour-long interview over a radio station of Houston on March 1, 2002, during which he had drawn attention to the Dawood Ibrahim angle.

BIN LADEN AND CARLOS

There were two important landmarks in the evolution of international terrorism since the 1970s. The first was the formation by Carlos in late 1975 of a united front of like-minded terrorist groups (the International Front of Revolutionaries) to wage a joint struggle against common adversaries, namely, international capitalism and zionism.

In organising this united front, Carlos emulated the example of the united front tactics of International Communism. The component units of this Front were free to pursue their national objectives, but co-operated with and assisted each other in launching joint attacks on their identified common adversaries. Such joint attacks came to be known as punishment terrorism as distinguished from objective or demand
Objective terrorism seeks to achieve a specified objective and demand terrorism a tactical aim (e.g.) release of prisoners through aircraft hijacking. When the components of Carlos' front launched an act of objective or demand terrorism, they identified themselves and claimed responsibility or credit for it since they wanted their followers and the public to know that they were responsible for it. But, when they launched an act of punishment terrorism, they did not identify themselves or make any claim.

Osama bin Laden lived in Khartoum for some months in 1993-94 at the same time as Carlos, who had embraced Islam and married an Arab Muslim woman after divorcing his first wife Magdellana Kopp, a German. Carlos was captured and forcibly taken to Paris in August, 1994, by the French Counter-terrorism agency La Direction Pour La Surveillance Du Territoire (DST). He is now in jail in France. He has divorced his Arab wife and was due to marry his French lawyer.

It is not known whether bin Laden and Carlos met during their stay in Khartoum, but bin Laden was greatly influenced by Carlos' ideas of a united front of like-minded terrorist groups. The result: His formation in Kandahar in 1998 of the International Islamic Front For Jihad Against the US and Israel for undertaking acts of punishment terrorism against them. This was the second landmark.

The explosions in Kenya and Tanzaniya in 1998, the attack on the US naval ship "Cole" at Aden in October, 2000, and the terrorist strikes in the US on September 11, 2001, were acts of punishment terrorism carried out by this Front against the USA. The group involved did not identify itself nor was there any claim of responsibility or credit. Amongst other areas studied by the Front for similar acts of punishment terrorism against the US were India, Singapore and the Philippines through local surrogates/co-operation.

Carlos did not head a terrorist organisation of his own. He wore a single hat as the head of the International Front of Revolutionaries. He conducted himself like the CEO of this terrorist conglomerate.

bin Laden, on the other hand, wears two hats. He is the CEO of the Al Qaeda, a Saudi-centric organisation, which fights for the exit of the US and other Western troops from Saudi Arabia and for the overthrow of the Saudi monarchy. The 1996 attacks on the US troops in Saudi Arabia were carried out by the Al Qaeda in pursuance of its Saudi objectives.

At the same time, he is the head of the International Islamic Front for Jihad Against the US and Israel, which, on October 7, 2001, consisted of the Al Qaeda and its exclusively Arab 055 Brigade, the Taliban, three organisations of Egypt, two of Uzbekistan, one of Xinjiang, the Abu Sayyaf of southern Philippines and five of Pakistan. The five Pakistani organisations were the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM), the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET) and the Sunni extremist Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and its militant wing the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.
The components of this Front co-operated with and assisted each other in their operations against their perceived individual enemies (e.g. against India in Jammu & Kashmir and other parts of India; against the Philippines in the southern part of the country; against China in Xinjiang; against the ruling regimes of the Central Asian Republics; against the Government of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt; and against Russia in Chechnya and Dagestan).

At the same time, they undertook acts of punishment terrorism against the US, which were launched almost exclusively by the 055 Brigade of Al Qaeda. While making use of the logistics facilities of the other components, it did not take them into complete confidence regarding the details of its anti-US operations. Thus, there are strong reasons to believe that neither the Taliban nor any of the other components were in the picture regarding the plans for the September 11, 2001, terrorist strikes in the US. (Comments: During his interrogation in connection with the kidnapping and brutal murder of Daniel Pearl, the US journalist, Omar Sheikh, the British terrorist of Pakistani origin, is reported to have claimed that he was aware of the Al Qaeda's plans for the terrorist strikes in the US on September 11, 2001, and had informed Lt.Gen.Ehsanul-Haq, presently the Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), who was then a Corps Commander in Peshawar, and Gen.Mohammad Aziz Khan, presently Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, who was then a Corps Commander in Lahore, about it. This is yet to be verified.)

The Front has so far refrained from terrorist operations against Israel which it has left to the organisations of West Asia. Whereas there is a large convergence in their perception of the US and Israel as principal enemies of Islam, a similar convergence is lacking in respect of other nations. The Al Qaeda, the Taliban and the Pakisani components viewed India too as an enemy of Islam, but the other components did not share this view. None of them viewed Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand as enemies of Islam, but saw them as an ideal terrain for punishment terrorism directed against the US. They viewed Manila not as an enemy of Islam, but as an oppressor of its Muslim nationals and as a surrogate of the US. They viewed Malaysia as inadequately Islamic, but noted with approval its keeping a distance from the US.

**NATURE OF THE PAKISTAN-STATE SPONSORED TERRORISM**

Between 1989 and 1993, the terrorist incidents in J & K were largely due to the violent activities of indigenous Kashmiri groups, which had been trained, motivated and armed by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, either directly or through the intermediary of Islamic religious organisations of Pakistan. The involvement of Pakistanis, Afghans and other foreign mercenaries was minimal.

Since 1993, their involvement has steadily increased, with more and more Pakistani and other foreign nationals being killed in the encounters with the Indian Security Forces. Between 1989 and 1993, only 130 Pakistani, Afghan and other foreign mercenaries were killed in the State. Between 1994 and 2000, this went up to 2037.
Since 1994, the leadership of the terrorist movement has been largely taken over by the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), formerly known as the Harkat-ul-Ansar (HUA), the Harkat-ul-Jihad-Al-Islami (HUJI), formerly a component of the HUA, the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET), the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM), formerly a component of the HUM, and the Al Badr. The only Kashmiri terrorist organisation, which has maintained a continuous level of activity, is the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), which is the militant wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI) of J&K, which, in turn, has close links with the Pakistani organisation by the same name. Syed Salahuddin, the leader of the HM, operates from Pakistan.

All these Pakistani organisations share the following characteristics:

* They are pan-Islamic and project their terrorist activities against India in a pan-Islamic perspective unlike the indigenous Kashmiri organisations which project theirs purely from a Kashmiri perspective. They describe J & K as the gateway to India and look upon their activities in J & K as the first phase in their so-called jihad for the "liberation" of the Muslims in the whole of India. For this purpose, "they have been developing a terroristic capability and infrastructure outside J&K in other parts of India too and particularly in New Delhi.

* They are opposed to the Westminster-style of democracy. They describe it as anti-Islam since it does not recognise that sovereignty is vested in God and instead believes that it is vested in the people. They perceive the successful functioning of a Western-style democracy in India as a corrupting influence on the Pakistani people, particularly its elite. Hence, their attack on the J & K Legislative Assembly on October 1, 2001, and on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001.

* Before October 7, 2001, their logistics and training infrastructures were located partly in Pakistan and partly in Afghanistan. After October 7, 2001, they are totally located in Pakistan.

* Their cadres and office-bearers are predominantly Pakistanis, with most of the office-bearers being Pakistani Punjabis.

* They have had close association with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda. Arab instructors of bin Laden's 055 Brigade used to train the cadres of these organisations in their training camps in Afghan territory controlled by the Taliban. Most of the training camps destroyed and instructors killed during the US Cruise missile attacks of August, 2000, on bin Laden's infrastructure in Afghanistan belonged to these Pakistani organisations.
* After 1998, they became members of bin Laden's International Islamic Front for Jihad Against the US & Israel and started emulating the Al Qaeda's modus operandi of suicide terrorism. Before, 1999, there was no suicide terrorism in J & K. Since the middle of 1999, there have been 43 attacks of suicide terrorism of which 41 were carried out by the LET and the JEM. Only two were carried out by indigenous Kashmiris.

* As a result of the activities of these Pakistani terrorists, not only over 400,000 Hindu (Pandits) have been driven out of their home and hearth, but also about 40,000 Kashmiri Muslims belonging to the commercial classes have been forced to migrate to other parts of India in order to safeguard their business interests.

* Between 1989 and 2000, 10,338 innocent civilians were killed by terrorist violence in J & K, of whom 8,645 were innocent Muslims, that is about 80 per cent of the victims.

* Thus, what we have been witnessing in J & K since 1994 is Pakistani terrorism, essentially Pakistani Punjabi terrorism, in the guise of the so-called Kashmiri struggle and Pakistani Muslims killing innocent Indian Muslims in J & K and eliminating innocent Hindus and Sikhs in the name of jihad.

THE IMPACT OF THE AFGHAN SITUATION

Pakistani-sponsored terrorist violence directed against India in relation to J&K had started even before 1989. Examples of such terrorism were the hijacking of an Indian Airlines (IAC) plane to Lahore by two members of the India-based J & K Liberation Front (JKLF) in 1971 and the kidnapping and murder of Mhatre, an Indian diplomat posted in the Indian Assistant High Commission in Birmingham, UK, by the Pakistan-based JKLF faction in 1983. Since the Afghan wars of the 1980s, this terrorism has assumed an increasingly virulent form due to the following reasons:

* The training of a number of disgruntled Kashmiri Muslims in the training camps set up by the ISI and the Pakistani Islamic organisations for training the Afghan Mujahideen.

* Their interactions with the Afghan Mujahideen and with the Arab mercenaries serving with the Afghan Mujahideen.
* The “battle” experience gained by them in Afghanistan while fighting against the Soviet troops.

* The diversion of the Pakistani organisations fighting in Afghanistan by the ISI to J & K after the fall of the Najibullah Government in Kabul in April, 1992.

* The diversion by the ISI of the surplus arms and ammunition and explosives received by it from the USA for use against the Soviet troops to these organisations in J & K.

* The impact of their association with Al Qaeda on their motivation and capability.

* The availability of large amounts of heroin money from the heroin refineries run by the Pakistanis, initially in Pakistani territory and subsequently in Afghan territory.

* The availability of training and other logistic infrastructure and the services of the Arab instructors of Al Qaeda’s 055 Brigade after the Taliban captured control of most of Afghanistan in September, 1996.

The post-October 7, 2001, war against terrorism has destroyed these facilities, which were available to the terrorists operating in J & K from the Afghan territory. But, at the same time, it had redoubled the anger of the Pakistani terrorist organisations not only against the USA, but also against India due to the following reasons:

* These organisations had sent a large number of their trained cadres into Afghanistan to assist the Taliban and the Al Qaeda in their fight against the US-led coalition. They, and particularly the the HUM, the HUJI, the LET and the JEM, sustained large casualties due to the US air strikes. The Pakistani press has estimated their fatal casualties at 6,000 plus, but independent assessments estimate them at 8,000 plus.

* They accuse India of having trained and armed the Northern Alliance since 1996 to enable it to continue its fight against the Taliban. After the liberation of towns like Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul, many of the Pakistanis working with the Taliban and the Al Qaeda in those places were killed or humiliated.

The US-led coalition fought a two-in-one war in Afghanistan. The war to have the repressive and obscurantist Taliban regime replaced has succeeded, at least for the time being, but that against the Al Qaeda-led and inspired terrorist organisations has not
yet. Thirty-four out of the 42 members of the Al Qaeda’s brains trust, including bin Laden, and 23 out of the 27 leaders of the Taliban, including its Amir Mulla Mohammad Omar, are still at large. Many of them are reported to have taken shelter in the mosques and madrasas of Balochistan, the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan.

The surviving cadres of the Pakistani terrorist organisations, with their numbers estimated at anywhere between 10,000 and 20,000, have come back into Pakistan and have been re-grouping and re-locating themselves. The Pakistani military-intelligence establishment has not taken any sincere action to have them rounded up.

While the US-led war has damaged the Afghanistan-based terrorist infrastructure, there have been no significant recoveries of arms and ammunition and surplus heroin stocks, whose value before October 7, 2001, was variously estimated at anywhere between US $ one and 20 billion.

Thus, a large reservoir of trained and motivated terrorists of various hues are still available in Pakistan, with their arms and heroin holdings still largely intact.

The Afghan war of the 1980s produced a crop of Arab remnants, known as the Afghan returnees, who spread destruction and mayhem in many countries after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. September 11, 2001, was the culmination and consequence of their unchecked terrorist activities from the terrorist epi-centre of Afghanistan-Pakistan.

The post-October 7, 2001, war has produced a new crop of Afghan returnees consisting of the surviving dregs of the Al Qaeda, the Taliban and the Pakistani organisations now based in Pakistani territory. The attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001, on the Indian security personnel outside the American Centre in Kolkata(Calcutta) on January 22, 2002, and the kidnapping of Daniel Pearl, the US journalist, in Karachi on January 23, 2002, and his subsequent murder mark the beginning of a second wave of terrorism from this new crop of Afghan returnees. India and the USA should share a common interest in fighting jointly against them.

THE IMPACT OF MUSHARRAF’S DECISIONS

The ground actions of Musharraf and his military-intelligence establishment do not attest to his sincerity and do not corroborate his projection of himself as the frontline ally in the war against terrorism. Examples of such insincerity:
* Before his televised speech of January 12, 2002, he ordered the freezing of the bank accounts of the terrorist organisations named by the US and the UN. But, before doing so, Gen. Mohammad Aziz Khan, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, who belongs to the Sudhan tribe of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK), alerted the affected organisations about the impending action. He thereby enabled them to withdraw the amounts from their accounts or transfer them to other accounts, which had not come to the USA's adverse notice. Thus, according to the "News" of Islamabad (January 1, 2002) only US $ 70 were found in the frozen accounts of the HUM, US $ 14 in those of the JEM and US $ 252 in an account of the Al Qaeda operated by Ayman-al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian confidante of bin Laden.

* Of the Pakistani terrorist organisations active against India, he has banned the JEM and the LET, which had been active outside J&K in other parts of India, but not the HUM, the HUJI and the Al Badr, whose activities till January 15, 2002, were largely confined to J & K.

* Even the ban on these organisations applies only to their activities in Pakistani Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, the NWFP and in the capital region of Islamabad and not to their activities in POK, including the Northern Areas of J & K, and in the FATA.

* The Army and the Police raided only the subordinate offices of these organisations, but not the headquarters of the JEM at the Binori madrasa complex in Karachi and that of the LET at Muridke, near Lahore.

* There were no seizures of arms and ammunition. Only administrative and logistics personnel were arrested, but not the trained terrorists.

* Even this limited action has been suspended since the kidnapping of Pearl on January 23, 2002.

* Since then, about 600 of the about 2,000 arrested cadres of these organisations have been released on the ground that there was no evidence of their involvement in terrorism.
* Musharraf continues to reject Indian requests for the deportation or extradition of 20 terrorists, 14 of them Indian nationals, wanted by India for trial for offences such as aircraft hijacking, causing explosions in Mumbai (Bombay) in March, 1993 etc. He continues to dishonour even the red-cornered notices of the INTERPOL for their arrest and to violate the Montreal, the Hague and other international conventions relating to hijacking.

* The military-intelligence establishment gives no signs of taking any effective action against the new crop of Afghan returnees.

**RELATIONS WITH CHINA & NORTH KOREA**

Over 10 per cent of the pre-1947 territory of J&K is under China's illegal occupation. Part of it in the Aksai Chin area of Ladakh was illegally occupied by China before and during the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and incorporated into China in violation of the UN resolutions relating to J&K and part of it in the Northern Areas under Pakistani occupation was illegally transferred by the Ayub Khan Government to China in 1963 as a quid pro quo for Chinese military supplies and strategic support to Pakistan against India. This too was in violation of the UN resolutions, according to which Pakistan had no locus stand in J&K and had to withdraw its invaders of 1947-48. In another violation of the UN Resolutions, China helped Pakistan in constructing the strategic Karakoram Highway through Chinese-occupied and Pakistani-occupied Kashmiri territory in the Northern Areas. This road was initially used by the two countries for normal commercial purposes, but it is now being used by them for the clandestine supply to Pakistan by China of nuclear and missile equipment. Pakistan has been negotiating with China for its permission to use this road for similar clandestine nuclear and missile traffic with North Korea. In Pakistan's calculation, the use of this road would reduce the possibility of detection by the US intelligence agencies. Last year, North Korean military engineers visited the POK and the Northern Areas to examine the possibility of North Korean assistance for the improvement of road communications in the area, particularly construction of road tunnels. The continuing Chinese activities and the possibility of increased North Korean activities in this sensitive region should be a matter of concern to India as well as the USA though they are not involved in encouraging terrorism from Pakistani territory. Pakistan's actions would undermine the USA's proposed campaign against North Korea as a member of the so-called Axis of Evil.

**INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL CO-OPERATION**

The international and regional co-operation has had mixed results for India. On the positive side, one can cite the following:
* The growing acceptance by the international community that terrorism is an absolute evil, whatever be the cause, and has to be combated as such.

* The recognition that the situation which India is facing in J&K is due to terrorism pure and simple. The USA, which was reluctant to designate the JEM and the LET as foreign terrorist organisations before December 13, 2001, has had no hesitation in so designating them thereafter. Before December 13, 2001, the USA and other Western countries were euphemistically describing terrorist acts in J&K as "acts of violence". Now, they are calling them as acts of terrorism. There is a greater readiness to call a spade a spade.

* The freezing of bank accounts of terrorist organisations deprives them of the use of money legitimately collected through means such as charitable contributions.

* The severe damage to the terrorist infrastructure in Afghan territory directed against India.

On the negative side, the following may be mentioned:

* While the infrastructure has been damaged, the anti-India and anti-US motivation of the terrorists has not been weakened. The bulk of their trained cadres, leadership, weapons holdings and heroin reserves are still intact.

* The sanctuaries for international terrorists of various hues in Pakistani territory and their training and logistics infrastructure remain largely untouched.

* Pakistan continues to be the main source of supply of trained terrorists and weapons for many of the terrorist organisations of the world. Its illegal weapons manufacturing industries have remained unaffected.

* The ISI continues to be a rogue element beyond the purview of any control---national or international. It continues to be the progenitor of international terrorism of the religious kind.

CONCLUSION: THE PAKISTANI MINDSET

India is a multi-party, multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic and outward looking democracy. For all practical purposes,
Pakistan is an inward and backward-looking theocracy which does not allow non-Islamic religions, cultures and ethnic groups to flourish in its territory. For nearly half of its existence, it has been ruled directly by its military-intelligence establishment and for the remaining half, there was a charade of a democracy, with the military-intelligence establishment forcing the elected political leadership to do its bidding.

The political and military leadership in Pakistan continues to hug the concept that Muslims and non-Muslims and particularly Muslims and Hindus cannot co-exist in the same nation, a concept which is abhorrent to the Indian ethos. The result is there for all to see in statistics: Before 1947, Hindus constituted about 11 per cent of Pakistan's population. Today, they are dramatically down to a meager 1.5 per cent. Before 1947, Muslims formed about 10.4 per cent of India's population. Today, they form about 14 per cent.

India has the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Amongst the non-Islamic countries of the world, India has the largest Muslim population. There are more Muslims in India than in Pakistan, more Sunnis than in Pakistan and more Shias than in Pakistan. Indian Muslims have risen to be Presidents of the Nation, Ministers holding sensitive charges, Chief Ministers of States, heads of the military services and para-military forces, and senior civil servants, including the Cabinet Secretary, who is the co-ordinator of all Government departments including the sensitive intelligence services.

No Pakistani Hindu has ever risen to high or sensitive positions. The only high position ever occupied by them was as Ministers in the Cabinet, but without power.

There are more madasas in India than in Pakistan, but no Hindu organisation in Pakistan can run a religious school for its children. Most of the pernicious ideas which afflict the terrorist groups of today such as extra-territorial loyalty of religious elements, the recognition of only the frontiers of the Ummah and not of nation-states, particularly if they are non-Islamic, the right and duty of religious fanatics to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to protect their religion were born in the madasas and minds of extremists in Pakistan.

One does not ever find such concepts in circulation anywhere else in the Islamic world except Pakistan and the adjoining areas of Afghanistan. bin Laden was infected by these concepts during his long association with Pakistan's military-intelligence establishment and religious organisations.
Every year, a large number of Muslim students from the Islamic countries of the world come to India for education in secular or religious institutions. They go back to their countries and distinguish themselves as constructive and responsible citizens. Hamid Karzai, whom the USA toasted recently, was a product of the Indian education system and influenced by the Indian ethos.

An equally large number of students from the Islamic countries go to Pakistan for their education. Many, if not most, of them return to their countries as destructive citizens and terrorists. All the Taliban leaders were products of the Pakistani education system.

Why? That is the question to which the international community has to address itself during the second phase of the war against terrorism. Musharraf is right when he says the international community has to address the cause of terrorism, but the cause is not J&K as claimed by him. It is the Pakistani mindset, which uses the J&K issue as a pretext for giving vent to its fanaticism and irrationality.

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