

Groping in the Dark

NOVEMBER 26 TERROR ATTACK on Mumbai shook the whole nation like never before. The society and state have been putting in their best to see that measures are taken whereby the terror acts don't repeat. So traumatized has been the nation that every conceivable measure is being given a serious thought for the safety and security of society.

It seems that the knee jerk reaction after the tragedy is more focused on the symptoms of the phenomenon. Tighten security, have better bullet jackets and have stringent laws. There is not much attempt to go beyond the obvious to unravel the truth of sectarian and terrorist violence. Surely sectarian violence is due to some political groups baking their bread in the divisive politics, the ground for which is prepared by the hate ideology, spread of misconceptions and distorted view of the minorities and the oppressed, their history, their present.

Communal violence and emotive issues give more strength to communal parties, who in turn give bigger space to their affiliates who work at cultural and religious levels to increase the communal divides and weaken national integration, further paving the way to still worse violence in times to come. Not only that, their intensity has been worsening every next time they are staged. Gujarat was worse than Mumbai and Orissa has been more horrific than Dangs. The trajectory of communal violence has clearly shown that all the efforts by the state to curb it have been misdirected; the social initiatives have been serious but probably not hitting the target in the effective way. One means the communal congruence of right wing ideology during last three decades.

With the result that the real causes of terror are not taken up for treatment of the disease of terrorism. From 1993 onwards terror attacks have been occurring, stringent laws or otherwise. The deeper injustice has been giving *raison d'etre* to the repetition of these attacks. Here also the attacks have been worsening, the Mumbai one being worst so far.

Seriously speaking the real causes of terrorism have not taken up for fighting against. Popular perception stopping at al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba being the real cause obviates the need to see beyond al Qaeda etc. It prevents people from seeing the role of US in bringing them up and using these groups for America's political-economic gains. So all anger coupled with protest against Pakistan gets major importance. One misses the point that terrorism of al Qaeda variety has roots in US policies of control over oil resources. It is due to those policies that these groups were propped up to fight Russian armies occupying Afghanistan. One has to see beyond the obvious to realize that this type of terrorism has its genesis from the deeper political designs. The indoctrination of the radical groups which began due to this policy of US cannot be fought against merely by strengthening some more laws and by new set of weapons.

Pakistani society is as much a victim of this dastardly phenomenon as India is. Terrorists always are looking for the holes in security through which they operate and their biggest advantage is that they are indoctrinated to the extent that they are willing to stake their all, including their lives to do what they have been doing. On similar wave length operates the terror attacks by the so-called Sadhvis.

First and foremost, all places where injustice prevails, where democracy is stilled in a shortsighted way, those places become a rich fertile ground for breeding of terrorism. The one planted by US, al Qaeda type, needs to be fought at global level. US is to be made accountable for much of this cancer which has spread in the area. While firmly dealing with the present terror set ups, democracy also needs to be made strong in Pakistan itself. One sees the subtle difference in the utterances of democratic elements in Pakistan and the Army-ISI-Mullah combine. The global peace movement has to ensure that the United Nations comes to the fore and stops the hegemony, the imperial behaviour of US in particular. No measure short of restoring UN, making US follow the wishes of global community, a more democratized United Nations will suffice. This rejuvenated UN has to take up the global issue of terrorism, and put a brake on one sided, arbitrary US policies. US war on terror, and those who go by that, need to be put on the margins and entire charge of global interventions taken up by UN. □□□

