

COMMENT

Unanswered Questions

TWO YEARS LATER THE 26/11 Mumbai attack continues to create more riddles instead of resolving them. There are many loose ends that the Centre and Maharashtra State Government have so far failed to bind. The latest twist is the disclosure by Mr Digvijay Singh, the Congress General Secretary. That Mr Singh has a telephonic conversation with Maharashtra's ATS Chief Hemant Karkare before he was gunned down by terrorists has just compounded the mystery that shrouds Karkare's death.

The lone survivor from terrorist groups Ajmal Kasab is facing the trial in the Courts. While tributes were paid to those who died in the episode and those who laid down their lives while trying to save the nation, some of the old questions raised by this episode remain unanswered, showing the gaping holes in the investigation and suggesting that the real truth of the tragedy is not out yet.

Sections of powers that be from Pakistan, especially the army did have a central role as is obvious from some of the clues. It also may be a game between different sections of Pakistan society struggling for supremacy and so clashing with each other within Pakistan. Pakistani army is trying to maintain its grips on the levers of power, despite the fact that civilian government is ruling formally. Prior to this incident, Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari, had extended the hand of friendship for India. The Pakistani army does feel if the relations between Pakistan and India improve, if a friendship is established between two nations, army's place in the power equations will go down. Has this observation something to do with what happened?

In this sequence the role of FBI-ISI double agent James Coleman Headly is very curious. The role of Headly is unmistakably there in the whole scheme of things. Headly's links with ISI, FBI are there for all to see. So is it a mere game emerging from the soil of Pakistan or are there much bigger players with more sinister plans behind this attack on Mumbai? One may hope somewhat against hope that one day the truth will come out and the false perceptions will give way to the identification of the real culprits.

After Digvijay Singh's revelation of some uncomfortable truths the Karkare episode has taken a new turn.

Karkare was investigating the case of Malegaon blast and came across the motorcycle of Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur and others, those associated with organizations and inspired by RSS ideology, some of them being the office bearers of this organization. With Pragya Singh Thakur coming under the scanner her associates from Abhinav Bharat, Bajrang Dal etc. also came to light. One of them, Swami Assemanand, of VHP, was caught hold of recently, as he had been absconding for long. During the period when Karkare was investigating these links of Hindutva terror network some from this camp labeled him as anti-national (*Deshdrohi*) and one of their leaders went on to say that they spit on Karkare's face! So when Karkare was murdered there was lot of suspicion about his murder along with two other top police officials.

The versions of Karkare's death, the gaps in the police version of incident were too glaring, so the demand came up for an independent probe. Ram Pradhan Committee was constituted to probe the tragedy. One does not know what the report has to say about the incident as Maharashtra Government is refusing to table the report.

Meanwhile a case has been filed and Court has asked the Government of Maharashtra to clarify various aspects related to Karkare's murder. One point about this is the intelligence report received few days before 26/11 warning that Karakre's life is in danger. So the logical question is what was the response of Government to this information?

Sometimes what is presented is obvious and the deeper truth remains under the hue of the hysterical response.

Strangely enough, the Congress Party feels uneasy with the Digvijay Singh statement, though piecing together facts from the Digvijay-Karkare telephonic conversation proves beyond doubt that even the party in power has something to hide in respect of 26/11. □□□