

Terror Strikes Norway

Ram Puniyani

IN NORWAY ON 22ND JULY, Friday, around 3.20 PM in the afternoon the high-rise, where Prime Minister's office is located in central Oslo, was targeted resulting in blowing out windows and facades of close by buildings; just few hours later a gunman putting the dress of a police officer opened fire on youngsters at a summer camp of ruling Labor Party, in Uloya Island. The twin acts of terror killed 93 innocent lives.

Even before the horror of the act was registered, the verdict about 'who did it' was out, and the usual suspects in acts of terror were named, all around, by media and experts. The 'experts', ideologically motivated commentators and section of media revolved their discussion around Al Qaeda chief Ayman-al Jawahitri, saying that he is the culprit of the act. It was commented that the Al Qaeda, the dreaded Islamic terrorist outfit has done this. Incidentally Norway is also involved in the war in Afghanistan.

As it turned out the culprit was a Norwegian, Anders Behrig Breivik, a 32-year-old Christian farmer who has been part of right wing ideology, a neo-Nazi racist, opposed to multiculturalism, Islam; Muslims and immigration of Muslims, seething with anti-Muslim sentiments. His blogs are reflective of his ideology whereby in the name of tradition he opposes the development of European Union and Multiculturalism. Also he profiles Muslims as being supporters of Al Qaeda and so of terrorism. It seemed through this act he was opposing the liberal policies related to immigration of the Norwegian Prime Minister.

Despite this being true, the common perceptions have been manufactured to hate Muslims and Islam by projecting them as the terrorists. Whenever the word terrorist is said the image of a bearded Muslim flashes up. This is mainly due to the machinations of US-CIA through the media. Same way in India, the Muslims are projected as terrorists and the perception here is that all terrorists are Muslims. Some commentators go further to say that while Muslims are terrorists due to religion's preachings, those from other religions have political goals. All this is a total distortion of facts. Going to the depth of reality will unearth the role of US in creating the whole 'Jihadi terror' phenomenon, and it is US again which has played the worst role in doctoring the mass consciousness against Islam and Muslim.

The tragedy of this bomb attack reminds people of various phenomena in the society. To begin with the first and major suspicion for any attack on terror in India and at global level is put on the so-called Jihadi groups, thereby on the Muslims. By now some of the verses of Koran have been taken out of context and misinterpreted to create Islamophobia. One recalls that the right wing Al Qaeda-Taliban was originally promoted by United States in its goal to throw away Russian armies from Afghanistan, which was occupied by them on the request from the

local Communist Government. US planned to turn Russia's Afghan occupation into its Vietnam, as US had to bite the dust when it had attacked Vietnam.

Since US armies were totally demoralized due to the humiliating defeat in Vietnam, US- CIA planned to set up Madrassas in Pakistan in collusion with ISI. In these madrassas the radical version of Islam was taught to the young Muslim boys. The verses of Koran exhorting the Muslims to kill the infidels attacking them were taken out of context to indoctrinate the young Muslim boys. As a matter of fact these verses were meant for the war situation to protect the Muslims as a last resort. When seen in isolation it seems as if the advice to followers is to kill recklessly, when seen in the context, it is clear that these verses were said during the war and it was a defensive struggle for new converts to Islam.

A special syllabus was developed in Washington to be used in these Madrassas. These Madrassas produced the Al Qaeda breed. Osama, again a US creation was brought in as leader of Al Qaeda and was provided with 8000 million dollars and 7000 tons of armaments. The indoctrination of Al Qaeda-Taliban recruits was aimed to make them join anti-Russian forces to defeat Russian army.

It is after 9/11 2001 that US media popularized the term 'Islamic terrorism', it was a deliberate propaganda to demonize Islam and Muslims to prepare the ground to attack Afghanistan and then Iraq. In India the likes of Osama, Swami Dayanand Pandey; Assemanand and Company, were bred and brought up in the organizations with the goal of Hindu Rashtra and these terror suspects were determined to show their 'bravery' by following the dictum of 'Bomb for Bomb'. The association of Islam and Muslims with terrorism became firm in popular mind and Indian investigation agencies have been recklessly arresting Muslim youth, even when the blasts have taken place in front of Mosques and other places of Muslim congregation. Even after 13/7 2011 Mumbai attack, the similar theories have been put out by the agencies and one hopes that these authorities will start delinking their biases from professionalism.

As far as Europe-US are concerned people have seen in the past also that there have been terrorists and terror groups which have indulged in acts of terror. Irish Republican Army declared a few years ago that they will not indulge in acts of terror. Timothy McWay bombed Oklahoma in 1995 killing nearly 165 people. The current rise of intolerant, right wing ideology in Europe and partly all over the World has a lot to do with the global changes, post the rise of US as the sole superpower. US has been dictating the world, for the sake of its economic interests, particularly those related to control over oil resources. The attack in Norway shows very interestingly as to how the economic problems, which are plaguing the World, are being diverted to the issues related to xenophobic, intolerant view of society. The Norwegian terrorist is not an isolated person voicing these views. In Europe there are various trends which promote hatred for Islam and Muslims and oppose the immigration of Muslims.

Swedish daily *Expo* claims that Anders is a part of group called Nordisk, which is a Neo Nazi group and focuses on political terrorism. He has leaning towards Christian Fundamentalism. Since at the moment Breivik's fundamentalist ideas are focused against Islam-

Muslims, he finds himself close to the Hindutva fundamentalism, no wonder as RSS led Hindutva fundamentalism is currently targeting Muslims in particular. Breivik may be unaware that these Hindu fundamentalists are also on the spree to kill and intimidate the Christians in Adivasi areas. As such the Breivik's Manifesto seems to have derived a lot of inspiration from the RSS Combine. He appreciates the acts done by Hindutva groups of targeting Islam and Muslims. Breivik has quoted from the Hindutva ideologues criticism of Islam and Muslims. No wonder B P Singhal of VHP, a RSS affiliate said the Breivik's cause is correct but method is wrong.

Terror trends are so parallel all over the World, here a person inspired by Christian Fundamentalism is taking to terror, in Afghanistan-Pakistan Al Qaeda type of groups are fed on the diet of Islamic fundamentalism and the likes of Aseemanand and Pragya Singh Thakur base themselves on Hindu Fundamentalism. The culture of liberal values and ideology of struggle for dignity and rights of people are being substituted by the fundamentalist ideas all around. Fundamentalism generates Hate against 'other' religious communities leading to heinous crimes, witnessed in different parts of the World, particularly in South Asia and occasionally the one like this in Europe.

There is a deeper unity in the ideologies of all fundamentalisms. Globally there are two major factors promoting Fundamentalism in the name of this or that religion. One, when a privileged section of society feels threatened by the rise of assertion for equality by the deprived classes, women included. Two, when a superpower promotes it proactively to use the products of fundamentalist mind set for its economic-political goals. These trends come up in the wake of social changes where the weaker sections of society are trying to come up and assert their rights. In such situations the entrenched social groups resort to the politics in the language of religion. This in turn co-opts and uses the marginalizing section of people, those getting marginalized due to social processes, and unleashes an identity politics which ensure the status quo. At superficial level they target the people of other religions. At the deeper level this fundamentalist related political ideologies are opposed to the values of Democracy, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. They inherently believe in the birth based hierarchy of caste-class and gender. This is where Breivik will appreciate what Hindu Fundamentalists are doing in India. India must have been mentioned by him because it is here that ideological sophistry of Hindutva elements against Islam-Muslims is so aggressive and visible from last few decades.

The tragedy is, one fundamentalism feeds another. Promotion of Al Qaeda and accompanying radical version of Islam is used as a pretext by other fundamentalist tendencies to strengthen them. The Norway tragedy should wake up the World to the reality of this dastardly economic-political reason of terrorism. Religion should be for moral values, terrorism is a political phenomenon. Like in Norway the economic crisis is leading to the rise of intolerant views. □□□