

## **Religious Terrorism in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the post world war-II period the international terrorism in general and terrorism in the name of the God in particular have indeed shaken the foundations of present day civil society. Religious fundamentalism, fanaticism and religious terrorism are the severe threats to the international peace, security, stability, prosperity, spirit of peaceful co-existence, cooperation and inter-faith dialogues movemen. Generally the protagonist of religious fundamentalism seek the help and patronage of political regimes to get much need support to carry out their policies and at the same time political leaders require the support of religious clerics to justify their policies and to legitimate their existence and political power. Both political leaders and religious fundamentalists hail each other so long each finds other suitable to his interest

The religious fundamentalism is not solely associated with Islamic world. Religious fanatics can be easily found in every religious community. Today the world Islam, the doctrine of Jihad and Islamic fundamentalism are taken together to analyses the global terrorism. To some people, academicians and followers of Islam, this academic approach to understand the religious terrorism is not correct. Today Islamic ideology is held responsible for global terrorism and even common Muslim are presented as potential threat to international peace and security. Some Islamic leaders consciously and unconsciously interpret their religious in such a way that it creates a wrong image of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism etc. However, this does not essentially mean that these religious traditions thought their followers to wage a war against humankind.

There is close linkage between power politics and religious terrorism. It is not possible to analyses the religious fundamentalism and religious terrorism in isolation. It is not merely confine to religious bigotry and backward-looking and unscrupulous actions of certain religious fundamentalist. Today religious fundamentalism does not merely confine to any radical religious ideology. It has become a political instrument to achieve desired ends. It is being used to weaken the enemy and opponent government as well as to justifies one's own action in the name religion. In some countries, government encourages religious fanatics and uses them as vital instrument of their foreign policy to promote their political agenda and to weaken their

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opponent countries. Spending foreign aid on development of country, puppet regimes use this financial aid to facilitate the needs of their religious fundamentalist organizations and terrorist group.

During the heydays of cold war, it has seen that the western countries support military dictators, reactionary government in the backward Islamic and developing countries to exploit the natural and human resources in these countries. They favor and assist the puppet regimes to indirectly control over their socio-economic and political policies. They curb their freedom of making independent foreign policy decisions.

### **CONCEPT OF TERRORISM**

Terrorism constitutes a direct repudiation of liberal and humane values and principles, and that terroristic ideology is inevitably and constantly deployed in a struggle to defame and discredit liberal democracy. It is an important, sometimes over-riding, terrorist aim to undermine the political will, confidence and morale of liberal governments and citizens so that they are made more vulnerable to political and social collapse.<sup>1</sup> The word terrorism is an artifact of the French Revolution. The regime de la terreur, which took place from 1793 to 1794, was a systematic attempt to unearth traitors and send them to the guillotine. As first the violence, or terror, had a positive connotation since it was used to punish subversive and other dissidents' whom the new regime regarded as enemies of the people. But in time the revolutionary leader Maximilien Robespierre was executed along with the 40,000 others who were guillotined during the regime de la terreur.. Soon thereafter, the Englishman Edmund Burke, a vocal critic of the revolution, described the proponents of the revolution as terrorists<sup>2</sup>

In ordinary usage, however the related word "Terror" is ambiguous, often suggesting any kind of extreme apprehension, no matter what the cause. Moreover, it may mean, on the one hand, the psychic state-extreme fear-and, on the other hand, the thing that terrifies- the violent event that produces the psychic state.<sup>3</sup> Terrorism in unlawful action, going beyond what are regarded as the bounds of legitimate protest, going further than confrontation, on to exceeding the limits of conventional social behavior. It is rated as a criminal offense, wholly disproportionate to any expression of grievance or any attempt to work for change. No civilized community can tolerate kill license to kill and spreading of uncertainty and fear.<sup>4</sup> Occurs when the violence enters in the matter. The terrorism is the result of failure in conflict resolution, which can occur anywhere in the world. It is the crucial social problem of the society as well.<sup>5</sup>

it denotes synthesis of ear and theatre, a dramatization of the most proscribed kind of violence, which is perpetrated on innocent victims, played before an audience in the hope of creating a mood of fear for political purposes.<sup>6</sup>

### **International Terrorism in New World Order**

In the post cold war era, insurgency has moved in one of two directions; either towards organized crime or towards religion. As established 20<sup>th</sup> century ideologies like communism and fascism have lost their prestige, and with western materialism leaving so many unsatisfied, religion's attractiveness, always strong, is being further enhanced. The search for meaning, for justice, and problems of modernization will all help bring religious violence to the fore, according to this view.<sup>7</sup> presently, the international terrorist organization get inspiration, motivation and sanction to create state of terror or to frighten their rivals from religious fundamentalists and narrow-minded interpretation of religious texts. The sacred texts are quoted without relishing and understanding of inner truth. Regrettably, the most pious word 'religion' has become prefix of the most heinous crime against humanity i.e. terrorism-religious terrorism. religious-political centre's target to strengthen their influence everywhere especially in central Asia, as using any including terrorist means, ideological and political vacuum, resulting from the collapse of the soviet power in this region, started to be filled by doctrinal studies of religious-extremist organizations, which tried to obtain permanent power in the regional socio-political arena. Central Asia was directly challenged and threatened by religious extremism and international terrorism as well as during business, trafficking and environmental degradation<sup>8</sup> religious expression of anti-Americanism and anti globalization is that bring new aspects to conflicts that were otherwise not a part of them. For one thing, religion personalizes the conflict. It provides personal towards-religious merit, redemption, the promise of heavenly luxuries-to those who struggle in conflicts that otherwise have only social benefits. It also provides vehicles of social mobilization that embrace vast number of supporter who otherwise would not be mobilized around social political issues. In many cases, it provides an organization network of local churches, mosques, temples, and religious associations into which patterns of leadership and support may be tapped. It gives the legitimacy of moral justification for political encounter. Even more important, it provides justification for violence that challenges the state's monopoly on morally sanctioned killing.<sup>9</sup> In the age of global terrorism, people look towards religion with suspicion. Religious places are considered as nurseries and training school for inspiration and ideology of international terrorist

organizations. However, it is true terrorism is not linked to any particular religion; rather it goes beyond the boundaries of religion. It is true that during the decade of globalization, western interests came under increasing attack by the Islamic group. There are reasons for it-one, large perception about west in terms of violence of the west and violence of the modern; two, continued western hold or presence over the Middle East; and three. Western indifference to the problems of statehood, principally the Palestine. Since the emergence of Islam fourteen hundred years ago, Muslim religious critics of the status quo have periodically emerged, opposed to what they perceive as unjust, unacceptable forms of rule. Contemporary Islamists can be seen as the most recent example of this trend. This is because they characterize themselves as the 'just' involved in a Jihad('only war')against the 'unjust', primarily but not exclusively their own domestic political rules.<sup>11</sup> In the present scenario, the notion of Jihad has become synonymous with the concept of terrorism. Even though the term "terrorists" is used to designate and condemn diverse groups fighting for countless causes; terrorism is frequently associated with Muslim fighters. The slaughter of Israelis in Tel Aviv, the abduction of tourists in the Indian-occupied Kashmir, and the armed resistance in Chechnya, to name a few ongoing scenes of violence, present Islam as a religion that inspires its followers to use force instead of finding peaceful solutions to existing conflicts. This violence-drenched image of Islam is reinforced when Muslim groups fighting in the name of Allah turn their guns at each other, or against their own rulers, governments and justice is not predicated on creating a paradise on earth, whether that paradise is an image against the future or a recaptured past. The Islamic law of war has often come to be ignored, sadly, in the name of a totalitarian mindset, which seeks to crush everything in its path for the sake of achieving its ultimate ends. According to such a view, compassion, nobility, beauty, and fairness are all to be sacrificed and then somehow recaptured later when the fighting ends.<sup>12</sup>

The doctrine of Jihad has become the driving force of the religious fundamentalist and terrorist organizations active in Islamic countries. Jihad, waged by Islamic roots itself in a religious tradition, which wherever it has predominated, has centered nations that have failed to modernize themselves. Whatever power and glory the Muslim empire may have once enjoyed, with the advent of modernity in another cultural milieu, the Islamic world has lost its pre-eminence and become subject to an external modernization imposed through colonialism and imperialism. As a result, the contemporary world of Islam is mostly a post-colonial realm, mired in all difficulties endemic to the post-colonial condition.<sup>13</sup> The Afghan mujahideen, the Taliban and the Northern alliance, have waged a Jihad in Afghanistan against foreign powers

and among themselves; Muslim in Kashmir, Chechnya, Dagestan, the Sothern Philippines, Bosnia, and Islamic Jihad Palestine have characterized war with Israel as a Jihad; Algeria's armed Islamic group has engaged in a Jihad of error against the government there, Osama bin Laden had waged a global Jihad against Muslim governments and the west .<sup>14</sup>

Many terrorist groups have used the name of Islam to promote their cause and this gave many non-Muslims a chance to attack Islam and label the Muslim as terrorist. The west, for example, on the other hand deliberately ignores. Labeling terrorist as Christian or Jewish terrorist when they are. The idea that Islam is at the centre of a fault-line dividing "the west and the rest" leads us way from an understanding of attitudes in the Muslim world towards a board array of issue-relation with the U.S, peace with Israel, democracy and domestic governance, and even Islamic are similar in their positive orientation toward domestic ideals. Where Islam societies do differ significantly from the west, in supporting religious authorities, they are far from exceptional around the world. Any black and white 'Islam versus the west interpretation of a 'culture clash' as conveyed by the popular media is for too simple.<sup>15</sup>

What is being today labeled as the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism has little to do with any real renaissance of Islamic values or civilization. The renewed trend towards revivalism is not autonomous collective phenomenon involving the entire ummah, the community of believers. The niceties being exchanged at diplomatic levels between the western powers, particularly the United State, and the ruling elite of some Islamic countries, doers not amount to recognition of the political strength or culture integrity of Islamic countries, individually or collectively. As in the past, the imperial interest of the western powers is the best served by maintaining hold on the material and human resources of the Islamic world and using some of the Islamic states for geopolitical interest in the fast changing international co-relation of forces of the cold war period.

Islamic fundamentalism or Islamic resurgence is not merely a religious or political option in terms of belief perspective. It is a package-deal phenomenon marked by a sequence of factors whose cumulative impact can be devastating. The Taliban, to return to this example of extreme Islamist fundamentalism, took an absolutist, inerrant and exclusivist line with respect to religious identity and behavior, which was extended to include all who were within their purview-namely, the inhabitations of Afghanistan. Actions taken to effect their aims were deemed sanctioned by the highest authority-Allah-and their extreme measures were in consequence deemed. The Islamic fundamentalism, whatever it means, has been repeated

enough times in relation to violent incidents that naturally, any thinking human being has to be uncomfortable with the fact that America is home to vibrant Muslim community. The problem stems from negative image about Islam. In the court of public opinion, Islamic fundamentalism is guilty until proven innocent. Even though the Middle East was home to fewer terrorist incidents than Latin America and Europe is still regarded as the region where terrorism is rooted.

### **CONCLUSION**

Presently, religion has become scapegoat in the era of global terrorism. Virtually all religious traditions face the same dilemma of unrestrained growth of religious fanaticism. Religious fanatics belonging to various religions have considerably damaged the image of their religion. Nobody has any problem with religious sentiments of fundamentalists so long it does not restrict the religious freedom of other members of society. It is true that religious extremism and religious violence is not a customary feature of any specific religion. However, it is also a fact that unfortunately due to wide spread network of religious fanatics in Islamic countries; today global terrorism is being associated with the Islam. Islamic world is facing serious allegation of being partisan of international terrorist groups. In the post cold war era, political version of Islam and Islamic fundamentalism is censured because of its inclination towards terrorism. Religious fundamentalists in general and Islamic fundamentalists in particular react sharply against the process of westernization and modernization. In the Islamic world, a religious fundamentalist raises serious objection over western hegemony, western model of democracy and secularism. In the beginning, radical Islamic groups exposed the exploitative character of European colonial power in Islamic countries. They unmasked the hidden agenda of western power to exploit natural resources in the Middle East. Religious fundamentalists criticize severely the deliberate efforts made by western powers to penetrate in social and political systems of Islamic countries.

Politicization of international organizations. The United Nations came into existence to play the natural role in resolution of conflicts among various nations. With the passage of time, we have witnessed that the United Nations is playing a second fiddle role and working under pressure of the USA and her allies' particular on the issue of international terrorism. The members of the international community expect from the United Nations to be steadfast, natural and vigorous in the fight against international terrorism. It is extremely unfortunate that people raise an accusing finger on the role of the United Nations. Unless the United Nations plays an impartial role in war against

terrorism, international community will continue to suffer at the hands of enemies of humanity. United Nation must refrain herself from playing in hands of powerful nations and must be neutral in formulation and execution of the terrorism strategies. .

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