

## Right to Live Without TERROR

***The issue of terrorism has to be dealt with ideologically and not by use of weapons because terrorism begins from the mind, not from the gun >>>***

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The human right to live without terror is, without doubt, an urgent need of our times. From the First World War till now, a great number of charters and declarations of this nature have been issued by different international forums, including the United Nations. But, as we know, these charters and declarations have yielded no result.

Looking at this matter deeply, we find that the problem is not basically about the lack of a suitable charter. Rather, it is essentially about the lack of results from the charters that we already have.

**We need an ideology to counter terrorist ideology:** The reason for this is that issuing a charter as a declaration of an agreement is only half the solution to the problem that a charter purports to address. The remaining part of the solution involves extensive ideological campaigning in the charter's support. Since this task has never been effectively performed, the various charters have not yielded the desired results.

Let's take an example to illustrate this point. After the Second World War, the United States of America faced two major threats, one after another: one pertaining to communism, and the other to terrorism. As we know, America successfully solved the problem of communism, while it utterly failed to solve the problem of terrorism, even after spending trillions of dollars ostensibly for this purpose.

This difference in the results in the two cases was due to the

difference of strategy adopted for dealing with these two issues. America launched a strong ideological campaign to counter the threat it faced from communism. This ideological campaign proved so successful that even the communist leaders themselves lost confidence in the communist philosophy. They began to prefer a liberal economy to a socialist economy, until in 1991 the communist empire collapsed at the hands of its own people.

On the other hand, in order to counter the menace of terrorism, America has depended solely on guns and bombs. It has failed to produce an ideology to counter the terrorist ideology in the same way it had done to counter the communist ideology.

That is why, in spite of great loss in terms of lives and resources, it has not been possible to extirpate the menace of terrorism. In such a situation, only a charter that utilizes experiences of countering the communist ideology can successfully serve this purpose.

An appropriate charter in this regard can only be one that is based on realism. A draft based simply on sentiments is bound to fail. We have to convince the world that we need to cherish the concept of reconciliation between civilizations, as opposed to the concept of a clash of civilizations. To adopt a practical strategy, one has to be realistic and should not let emotions overrule one's judgment.

Terrorism begins from the mind, not from the gun. Terrorists have an ideal in their minds, and they resort to violence to achieve this ideal. They remain unaware of the fact

that idealism is not achievable in this world. The only possible option for them is to accept the less than ideal situation. But because they refuse to accept this, they continue to engage in futile violence. They are also unaware of the fact that in the present world no positive result can be achieved through violence.

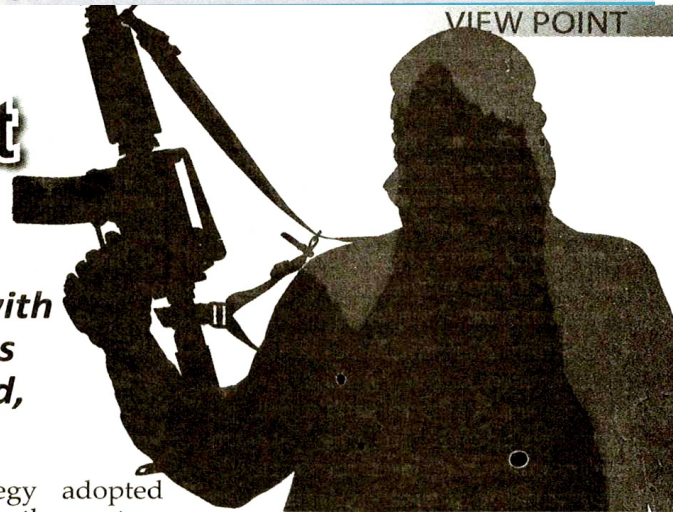
The truth is that terrorism is the result of intellectual unawareness. This is what makes terrorists resort to violence. They are fired by the mistaken belief that in this way they can realize their false hopes. Terrorism can be brought to an end solely through intellectual awareness, based on religion and spirituality. The ideology of peace based on secularism has already been tried and it has failed.

We must cherish the concept of reconciliation between civilizations, as opposed to the concept of a clash of civilizations. It is from religion that we should draw our ideology of peace. Jesus Christ says in this regard: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25).

This is not simply a Christian formula of peace. Rather, it is a common formula, recognized by almost all the religions, in one form or another.

The Prophet of Islam has expressed the same principle in these words: "Render what is due to the rulers and ask for your dues from God" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*).

Similar is the case with other religions. Hinduism preaches *nishkam karma* or selfless service.





Jewish scriptures say: "Blame thyself." According to Jainism and Buddhism, *ahimsa* or non-violence is the greatest virtue. The essence of all these teachings is the non-confrontational or non-political approach.

Non-political activism is only another name for non-violent activism. Political activism generates hate and violence, while non-political activism brings about peace and brotherhood. Terrorism begins from the mind, not from the gun. It must be countered with an ideology, not with guns.

Religious ideology is based on the relationship between man and God. On the other hand, the ideology behind present terrorist movements is based on what can be called a 'man-versus-man' concept. It is this 'man-versus-man' activism that results in violence and terror. Contrary to this, activism based on the relationship between Man and God produces love and peace in society. This is not a passive attitude. Rather, it is activism in the complete sense of the word. It leads us to avoid political conflict and to avail of the opportunities present in fields other than politics. It is a way of buying time. To put it briefly, it may be called 'positive status-quoism', that is, accepting the political status quo, and, at the same time, availing of opportunities in non-political fields.

It is from religion that we should draw our Ideology of Peace: This religious formula provides the method by which we can achieve our goal through peaceful means. If we are to succeed in ensuring the "Human Right to live without Terror", there are a few other matters that must be addressed. Here are some issues that must be considered in any draft charter for the "Human Right to Live without Terror":

1. 'Super-powers' will have to abandon the notion that they can play the role of global policemen. This notion is a complete anachronism. Such imperial thinking may have had some validity in the ancient age of kingship. But now it has lost all relevance. It can produce only negative results. Today, the formula

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of political adjustment or political co-existence alone is practicable. The concept of 'political master' ruling over 'political subjects' has no relevance in the modern age.

2. Wherever there is terrorism, it is, directly or indirectly, related to the question of ownership of, and control over, territory. Experience shows that in this matter it is the policy of give-and-take alone which is practicable. The concept of unilateral occupation is no longer workable. All nations must adopt the policy of give-and-take as soon as possible. This is the only practical solution to the problem of terrorism.

3. Time is now running out for the terrorist groups. They must learn a lesson from their experience and realize that in the post-industrial age, they are left with no option at all but peaceful activism. Violent activism is not going to yield any positive results whatsoever.

The terrorist groups, therefore, should finally come to the conclusion that however rightful their struggle might be, it can only aggravate the problem. It cannot solve it. Therefore, they must switch over from violence to peace without any delay. They must at all times choose the peaceful method over violent methods.

4. Governments as well as non-government actors must accept that if a dispute cannot be solved through mutual dialogue, the other option available to them is not confrontation but, rather, referral of the dispute to some forum for arbitration. Fortunately, this forum already exists in the form of the International Court of Justice. In the present circumstances, no other option is available either to governments or non-government actors. Whenever a controversy cannot be brought to an end by mutual negotiations, it should be referred to the International Court of Justice, and its verdict should be

accepted unconditionally by both the parties.

5. Modern 'developed' nations spend trillions of dollars to produce weapons of mass destruction. Almost none of them could, however, make use of the deadly weapons at their disposal. America dropped the atomic bomb only once. Later, despite involving itself in several wars, it could not make any use of the nuclear bomb. The truth is that nuclear weapons can be used only once. Once such destructive weapons have been used, such deterrent factors emerge against their use that it becomes impossible to employ them again. These weapons have now become a liability: they are no longer an asset for nations that once used to be proud of possessing them. These nations are now left with no option but to abandon them forever. Given this state of affairs, what nations must do is to unilaterally abandon their weapons of mass destruction programmes. The truth is that in this matter there exists practically no other option.

6. Along with adopting the above strategy, launching an effective and persistent ideological campaign in its support is also indispensable, making use of all modern means of communication.

7. Today, there are a number of national and international forums striving for peace. However, we would not be wrong in saying that their efforts have been marred to a great extent because of their having been politicised. That is why they have produced little or no results. For instance, all big peace prizes are given on a political basis. It is essential that efforts towards the promotion of peace should be separated from political interests, otherwise no such end can be accomplished. ☐