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## Terrorism's New Signature

ENTER HINDUTVA TERRORISTS

[Subhash Gatade](#)

[Whether it be the suicide bombers of LTTE or the jihadists of Al Qaeda or ET guerrillas working for a Basque region or the remnants of the Khalistani terrorists or for that matter terrorism unleashed by groups owing allegiance to the Hindutva brigade, the phenomenon of terrorism could be said to span every community or country in different measures.

India has also of late witnessed a spurt in terrorist attacks. Recently we were told India stands among the top five countries of the world which are susceptible to a terrorist attack.

While nobody can deny the role of jihadi terrorists belonging to the likes of Lashar-e-Toiba or Jaish-e-Mohammad in many such bloody and inhuman incidents, one feels perturbed over the mono-chromatic presentation of such a complex phenomenon where green tends to dominate the rest. The conspiracy of silence over the phenomenon of what is known in popular parlance as 'Hindutva terrorism' needs to be questioned and confronted.] ...The fanatics who spread violence in the name of religion are worse than terrorist and more dangerous than an alien enemy...

(Quoted in the Supreme Court judgement in the Best Bakery Case)

I

NANDED, a city in Maharashtra, which has a significant population of different religious communities—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs as well as Buddhists—should ideally have become a new metaphor for secularism as it is enlivened/practised in Indian subcontinent.

But sadly it is not so!

In fact, it represents today the newly emergent danger of majoritarian terrorism with due support from a section of the state machinery. A place which was once witness to the last days of the Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh Gurus, has today metamorphosed itself into an important epicentre of Hindutva terrorist activities.

It was evident in two explosions the city witnessed within a span of nine months (April 2006 and February 2007) at the house of activists of RSS/Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena accompanied by deaths of four people. Arrival of Nanded on the 'terror' map of India was followed by exposures about some earlier incidents as well— which similarly showed involvement of Hindu youths in terrorist actions.

Of course—the story does not begin and end at Nanded nor can it be said that it is a Maharashtra centric phenomenon. Ex-Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijay Singh has on record admitted the involvement of groups/individuals affiliated to the RSS in some similar acts in Madhya Pradesh. One can also look for similar leads in different extreme actions undertaken by the Hindu right.

The biggest problem in this connection seems to be the near absence of Muslims or Sikhs in the different intelligence wings of the government. As a cover story in the weekly newsmagazine Outlook titled 'Muslims and Sikhs Need Not Apply' (Saikat Datta, November 13, 2006) puts it, barring IB (Intelligence Bureau) which has a handful of Muslim officers none of the other wings of intelligence even have a single Muslim officer in its ranks.1

A logical culmination of this state of affairs could be said to be a rather mono-chromatic presentation of the menace of terrorism where green dominates all other colours. Consequently, despite the danger it presents before the secular fabric of the country, the phenomenon of 'Hindutva terrorism' has largely remained unexplained and unattended.

II

INDIVIDUALS associated with Hindutva outfits like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal are developing terror networks in north Maharashtra targeting the region's Muslim population. ...

The narco-analysis and brain-mapping reports, which are with Tehelka, reveal that the accused were being aided by state-level VHP and Bajrang Dal officials to execute bomb blasts at mosques in Parbhani, Jalna and Purna in central Maharashtra. ...

(Shaswat Gupta Ray, The Tehelka, December 30, 2006)

An exclusive report 'Nanded Blast : The Hindu Hand' by Shashwat Gupta Ray ([www.tehelka.com](http://www.tehelka.com) [<http://www.tehelka.com>]) which revealed the manner in which local Sangh Parivar members were raising their own terror networks did not cause any furore.

Of course the reaction was on expected lines. In fact one had witnessed similar 'conspiracy of silence' when the actual blast had occurred (April 6, 2006) in a house belonging to an old activist of the RSS called Laxman Rajkondwar. The explosion had snuffed lives out of two youngsters who happened to be members of the RSS/Bajrang Dal. While Himanshu Panse was found to be blown into pieces where his hands and legs literally lay scattered, Naresh, the son of the houseowner, had succumbed to injuries in the chest. Three youngsters who were later admitted to a hospital had suffered serious body injuries.

To be precise, it was the time when L.K.Advani's Bharat Suraksha Yatra was to enter the State of Maharashtra. A raid on one of the deceased's house had recovered dresses and caps normally worn by Muslims in the area and also some maps of mosques in nearby districts. One of the accused Rahul confessed to having made bombs earlier.

The idea was to attack mosques and Gurudwaras wearing those dresses and instigate a communal conflict. The expectation was that the community under attack would retaliate and a full scale riot would ensue. The only thing needed was explosives in one form or other which could cause maximum damage to the places hit. The making of bombs in a house owned by an old RSS activist who supposedly dealt in fir crackers also seemed rather perfect.

Part of the Nizam's state till its annexation, Nanded has had a history of communal tensions which have aggravated since the demolition of Babri mosque (1992). While Hindus comprised the majority (five lakhs), Muslims came second (two lakhs) and Sikhs came third (one lakh). The city had witnessed communal riots in the beginning of the year 2004 also when a group of miscreants riding a motorcycle had thrown bombs into a large congregation of Muslims in Parbhani, a city not very far from Nanded where they had assembled for their Friday prayers. While the embres at Parbhani had died down soon, it took time for the police to control the situation in other cities and towns in Marathwada then including Nanded. The miscreants who had thrown bombs in the congregation could never be found then. Incidentally the narco test of the accused in the Nanded blasts revealed that this group of Hindu terrorists had only executed the criminal attack in Parbhani.

The most disturbing thing about the Nanded blasts is the lack of sincerity on the part of the investigating agencies in pursuing the case, despite getting enough evidence that district and state leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and RSS were involved in conceiving and executing the plan.

As the investigation done by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and other democratic rights organisations ([www.pucl.org](http://www.pucl.org) [<http://www.pucl.org>]) make it clear, the district administration even saw to it that the news of the blasts does not get wide coverage outside. They also allegedly pressurised the local media not to follow the case further after the initial hullabaloo was over.

The local police itself made contradictory statements initially and did not deem it necessary to make arrests in the first stage. The leniency shown by the police towards these terrorist activities of a new kind was evident also from the fact that it did not invoke the more stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act and National Security Act which could have made their bail difficult.

And despite knowing the sensitive nature of the case, the CBI, a federal investigating agency also expressed its inability to conduct the investigations at its own level. In fact, when the honourable court was deliberating on a petition filed by some social organisations about the tardy investigations in the case, it filed a suo motto affidavit in the High Court about its inability to take up the case as it was 'overburdened' and has 'limited hands to deal with such cases'. (It is a different matter that later it was asked to investigate the case.)

The cumulative effect of all these half-hearted interventions albeit a 'secular dispensation' at the State and Centre clearly demonstrated the kid-glove treatment meted out to the terrorists of the Hindutva variety. Secular activists rightly raised a question that if the bomb explosion would have occurred in a predominantly minority area and the involvement of some 'fanatic' Islamic group could be detected, would the reaction have been similar?

III

JALGAON: (Maharashtra) Police is learnt to have seized explosive material from a residential complex in MIDC area. According to senior officials, during a police raid on Someshwar Somani's house police recovered 26 bags of ammonium nitrate, 500 detonators, 13 centrifuges etc which was meant for sale. (Jansatta, January 30, 2007)

The cavalier manner in which probe in the Nanded blasts were undertaken could be said to have prepared the ground for stepping up of similar activities in the area. A possible explosive incident in an area not very far from site of the first blast merely nine months after the first blast rather demonstrated this fact in a strong manner.

The said accident occurred on February 10, 2007, at about 12.15 a.m. which killed 28-year-old Pandurang Amealkanthwar on the spot as the biscuit boxes he was carrying exploded. His cousin, Dnaneshwar Manikwar, who sustained 72 per cent burns, died on February 16 at the JJ Hospital in Mumbai. The deceased Amealkanthwar happened to be ex-Shakha Pramukh (Branch Head) of the Shiv Sena and was associated with the Bajrang Dal at the time of his death and hailed from an area called Rangargalli in Nanded which is a hotbed of Rightwing Hindu outfits.

Preliminary findings of Concerned Citizens Inquiry conducted by Justice Kolse-Patil, Teesta Setalvad and others which went to the site with a forensic expert, interviewed people around the area, spoke to the owner of the house, the civil surgeon, fire brigade officials, and senior police officials, contradict the tentative conclusions of the administration. According to them, it was not a fire accident, as it was made out to be, rather a possible explosive accident. (The Hindu, Thursday, February 22, 2007)

Neighbours from the locality where the explosion occurred shared with the team some important information pertaining to the incident. According to them, there was a third person present at the spot who also got injured in the explosion (who does not find mention in the FIR) and a police officer who is part of the investigation actually supervised seizing and spiriting away of critical evidentiary material from the spot.

The fact finding team also noted that Dnaneshwar Manikwar, one of the accused who later died in the hospital, presented two versions about the cause of the accident. Initially he attributed the accident to the impact of a short circuit. Twenty hours later, he is learnt to have told the police that the two cousins had tried to set the godown on fire supposedly to claim insurance monies from the company.

It also felt that the State Police, especially the Superintendent of Police and Inspector General of Police, appeared to be in 'undue haste to close all possibilities of a liquid substance driven explosion, preferring to quote oral findings of forensic experts from Aurangabad who are reported to have told them that it was a petrol-ignited fire'. And despite the fact that the massive explosion had thrown the iron shutter of the godown to a distance of 40 feet, they insisted on calling it a petrol-ignited fire.

The fact finding team inferred that 'it was not a planned explosion but an impact explosion created due to the handling of large stocks of explosive/flammable materials stored here. This handling could have been for transportation to another place.'

But one of the most shocking observations which the team placed before the people is the 'nexus between some police officials and the rightwing Hindu outfits'. For the investigating team:

There is preliminary evidence to suggest some nexus between some police officials and the outfits that are using Nanded and the nearby belt to generate explosives and terror. Incidentally, Inspector Ramesh Bhurewar of the Nanded Police Station who is at the forefront of the present investigation was in charge of the investigation into the Parbhani blasts in which one person died and 40 were injured when similar low intensity explosives were placed in a mosque on April 25, 2003.

He arrested no one during long investigations. The FIR shockingly was only registered after a legislator, Fauzia Khan (NCP), raised a question in the State Assembly. Thereafter the inspector had closed the file (16/2003 dated November 21, 2003). He stated in his report that there were no accused in the matter. Following the Nanded blasts of April 2006 and brain mapping tests that the police conducted dated July 19, 2006, the accused admitted to having placed the bombs at Parbhani. The Nanded and state police are hence guilty of underplaying crimes wherein members of the minority community are the victims, causing a loss of face for the state police. ([www.sabrang.com](http://www.sabrang.com) [<http://www.sabrang.com>])

The fact finding team demanded that the Central Government should keep a close watch and monitor the increasing low intensity terror generating activities being conducted by political outfits that are misusing the Hindu religion. Independent investigations under a team of officers known for their utter professionalism and neutrality are a must, an impartial inquiry into the Nanded incidents, Malegaon, and the Parbhani and Purna blasts needs to be instituted, which is open to the public, to first and foremost investigate whether State intelligence and police agencies are professional and neutral in investigating instances of politically driven Hindu Rightwing terrorism.

Nanded I followed by Nanded II, the saga of 'terrorist acts' involving activists/sympathisers of the Hindu extremist organisations does not end here. Post-independent history is replete with examples showing their participation in aggravating the communal situation, targeting a particular community, aiding and abetting a riot.

IV

AKLERA (RAJASTHAN): It couldn't be less subtle. A bright saffron board welcomes you to the "Ideal Hindu Village", Mishroli. Nestled in picturesque green surroundings, the village has acquired this tag just this month. The past 10 days have seen armed Bajrang Dal activists on the rampage, driving out about 25 Muslim families from their homes, ransacking their houses and setting them on fire. ['Bajrang Dal activists made a village in Rajasthan Muslim free', The Indian Express (September 29, 2003)]

Amidst the ongoing controversy over the UPA Government's first anniversary celebration, not many took note of the Union Human Resources Development Ministry's significant decision to stop grants to 'Ekal Vidyalayas' (one-teacher schools) run by the so-called Friends of Tribal Society (FTS), in collaboration with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), in the tribal belts of the country. The decision follows a study, which revealed that the FTS that was provided assistance by the erstwhile NDA Government since 1999-2000 under the "Innovative and Experimental Education Component of the Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education," was "misusing these funds and using the grants for creating disharmony amongst religious groups and creating a political cadre". ('Another Blow to VHP', Mukundan C. Menon, [www.islaminterfaith.org](http://www.islaminterfaith.org))

It was only two years back that a website belonging to Terrorism Research Centre (TRC [www.terrorism.com](http://www.terrorism.com) [<http://www.terrorism.com>]), a East Virginia based centre dealing with 'Terrorism and security related studies', declared the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) a 'terrorist organisation' and lumped it together with a host of jihadi and secessionist outfits. The said list of 'known terrorist groups in India' on the website bracketed the RSS alongwith other 'known names' in the field, namely, Al Badr, Al Mujahedeen, Lashkar-e-Toiba to the likes of ULFA to the Hizbul Mujahedin.<sup>2</sup> The most baffling part of the whole episode as far as ordinary workers of the Parivar was concerned was that the TRC was closely connected to the American Government. The credibility of this Centre vis-a-vis the US Government can be gauged from the fact that many of its directors and researchers have closely worked with the US Administration.

Coming close on the heels of the visa denial episode wherein Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, was not allowed to travel to the USA by the US Government, this much larger indictment of the very raison d'etre of the Parivar, albeit by an institute close to the powers that be, did leave the Sangh bosses seething with anger. It is worth noting in this connection that it took more than eight months for the RSS to formally react to this assessment of the TRC. Although The Times of India (Times News Network) [Friday, May 27, 2005 08:18:15 am] carried a report about the same in its print as well as electronic edition, even a cursory glance at the website of TRC communicated then that the name of the RSS was added to the list way back in September 2004. Milli Gazette, a fortnightly published from India, had even reported about the same in its print edition in September 16-30, 2004 issue. Of course without going into the merits of the Terrorism Research Centre's nuanced observations vis-a-vis the RSS which demands a more detailed treatment of the matter, it would be good if we discern earlier records to see whether it is for the first time that the Hindutva brigade or any of its allied organisations or their activities have earned opprobrium under the 'terrorist' category.

It was only two years back that the US State Department added internet sites of certain organisations to the 'foreign terrorist organisations' list when "four Jewish Web sites deemed 'terrorist' (by Jerry Seper, The Washington Times)". Of course the unusual alliance between radical Jewish groups with Hindutva groups bringing together two extreme religious philosophies from different parts of the world is premised on the fact that they share a distant enemy, namely, the Muslims. The report stated: Four Internet Websites operated by two extremist Jewish groups have been included by the State Department on its list of "foreign terrorist organisations"—the first time the list has been extended to include Internet sites.

The listing, which went unnoticed when announced on October 3 in the Department's annual redesignation of the world's terrorist organisations, includes the four sites operated by the Kach and its offshoot, the Kahane Chai, both of which have been designated by the Department as terrorist organisations.

Interestingly one of these [www.kahane.org](http://www.kahane.org) [<http://www.kahane.org>] (<http://www.rediffmail.com/cqi-bin/r...> [<http://www.rediffmail.com/cqi-bin/red.cgi?red=www%2Ekahane%2Eorg>]) has had an important relationship with Hinduunity.org. (which 'Promotes and Supports Ideals of Bajrang Dal : VHP youth with Bharat') The Hinduunity.org site then still showed a prominent hyperlink to the [www.kahane.org](http://www.kahane.org) [<http://www.kahane.org>] site. Secular activists in the States had known for long that the website of Hinduunity.org was hosted by Kahane.org. on a common server and bear the same IP address. The particulars were: devserver.gwsystems.co.il (67.153.104.163) (Ref. Notice recently published in the Federal Register. (Federal Register: October 10, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 197) Page: 58738-58739))

Four-and-a-half years back secular activists in the USA had, after a painstaking work, brought out a report 'Funding Hate' which had exposed the linkages between the funds collected by IDRF (an umbrella organisation floated by Hindutva brigade) which collected money in the USA and the way the money thus collected goes into sponsoring sectarian violence in India. A news item published in 'Financial Times, London had boldly stated 'Cut the flow of funds to instigators of sectarian violence'

India's Hard Men, page 16, 24 Feb. 2003 (no author's name given)

. It needs to be noted that it was not alone in raising its voice against the modus operandi of the Hindutva formations in Western countries which supposedly had been aiding and

abetting sectarian violence at home. The report unambiguously stated: A year ago India was scarred by some of the worst sectarian violence since partition, when up to 2000 Muslims were killed in pogroms in the western State of Gujarat, ostensibly sparked by an arson attack by Muslims on a train that killed 59 Hindu activists. Human rights organisations in India, the US and Europe implicated two organisations in the well-orchestrated attacks, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council) and its youth off-shoot, the Bajrang Dal (devotees of the monkey-god Hanuman).

Now a Financial Times investigation has established that these groups receive extensive funding from Indians abroad, collected mainly as tax-free charity donations to front organisations in the US and UK. This fund-raising is increasingly coming under scrutiny. So it should—as should the links between these groups and India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Behind the VHP and Bajrang Dal stands a quasi-paramilitary body, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS or Association of National Volunteers), which is the mother organisation of the Hindu revivalist BJP. Described by Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime minister, as "an Indian version of fascism", the RSS is at the centre of a protean network of front organisations. This structure facilitates arm's-length money-raising. It also makes it easier for the RSS to deny it is inciting agitation against Muslims and Christians.

Of course IDRF (India Development and Relief Fund), the US based charity organisation, also presented a report in defence of itself against charges made in a report published last year that it was closely affiliated to the RSS and raised funds for sectarian causes in India. ('Not funding hate, says IDRF, The Hindu June 15, 2003) but that did not out much ice and it was largely ignored in the media.

V

...The Chief Minister said that the proof he has, is the candid admission by the RSS workers, who had been arrested earlier. Singh was speaking to mediapersons here at the airport. He said that the arrested RSS workers in their statement had said that they had planted bomb at a programme in Bhopal. He revealed that in 1993 when the bomb was being made in Seva Bharti office in Neemuch, it exploded.. ('CM ready to provide proof of Bomb making by RSS', September 11, 2003, Central Chronicle)

Can it be said that the involvement of the RSS and its affiliated organisations in acts which could be construed as terrorist in nature is a recent phenomenon or has it a long history behind it? Close watchers of the organisation since its inception have always watched with scepticism many of its activities which in today's understanding of things could be construed as 'terrorist acts', for example, making communally sensitive speeches which culminate in riotlike situation or taking out a religious procession from an area which is inhabited mainly by 'others' and provoke people to engage in violence. The manner in which its founding leaders supported 'ethnic cleansing' of Jews by Hitler and also proposed application of similar steps here could also be interpreted as supporting 'terrorism'.

Coming to concrete 'terrorist acts', a notable example of involvement of the RSS on the eve of partition itself pertains to the infamous 'Shikarpur bomb blasts' which saw deaths of two RSS activists.<sup>3</sup>

An article on 'RSS in Sindh : 1942-48' (Rita Kothari, July 8-15, 2006, Economic and Political Weekly) gives details of this bomb blast in the Shikarpur Colony of Karachi which witnessed deaths of two RSS activists Prabhu Badlani and Vasudev. According to her

...[I]n the Shikarpur colony of Karachi, the house of one Raibahadur Tolaram became the hideout for this cadre. The house was ostensibly taken over for tutoring students, and this turned out to be perfect camouflage for making bombs. The secret operation was going smoothly until on August 14, a powerful bomb accidentally exploded. It blew two swayamsewaks and the house to pieces. The two young men who died were Prabhu Badlani and Vasudev. The local police swooped down on the premises. All but one escaped. He was imprisoned and tortured for several months, until he was exchanged for another prisoner of war in 1949. There are contradictory opinions about the precise identity of this prisoner and his connections with the RSS. As she tells us, the aim of the whole operation which involved manufacturing of bombs with 'intense preparations on part of 21 young men' was to 'blow up a few government structures before leaving'.

The memoirs of Rajeshwar Dayal, who happened to be Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh at the time of partition, provides shocking details of another kind. It gives damning evidence of RSS chief Golwalkar's plans to stage a pogrom of Muslims. It is a different matter that despite a clearcut case against Golwalkar, the then Chief Minister of UP, Gobind Ballabh Pant, refused to order his arrest. Taking benefit of this wavering on part of the government, Golwalkar promptly absconded and could be arrested only after Gandhi's assassination.

According to him, When communal tension was still at fever pitch, the DIG of Police of the Western Range, B.L. Jaitely, arrived at my house in great secrecy. He was accompanied by two of his officers who brought with them two large steel trunks securely locked. When the trunks were opened, they revealed the incontrovertible evidence of a dastardly conspiracy to create a communal holocaust throughout the western districts of the province. The trunks were crammed with blueprints of great accuracy and professionalism of every town and village in that vast area, prominently marking out the Muslim localities and habitations.....

Timely raids conducted on the premises of the RSS had brought the conspiracy to light. The whole plot had been concerted under the direction and supervision of the Supremo of the organisation. Both Jaitely and I pressed for the immediate arrest of the prime accused, Shri Golwalkar, who was still in the area.

(Rajeshwar Dayal, A Life of Our Times Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1999 pp. 93-94)

Pyarelal, the Secretary of Mahatma Gandhi during those tumultuous times, tells us:

It was common knowledge that the RSS ...had been behind the bulk of the killings in the city (Delhi) as also in various other parts of India. (Mahatma Gandhi : The Last Phase, Navajivan Publishing House, Vol II, p. 439)

Different commissions of enquiry which looked into communal riots in post-independent India throw enough light on the role of RSS and other affiliated organisations in those troubled times. Whether the Justice P. Jagmohan Reddy Commission of Enquiry which looked into riots in Ahmedabad and other places of Gujarat (1969) or Justice Madon Commission which analysed the riots in Bhiwandi, Maharashtra in the early seventies or the Justice Vidhayathil Commission which probed the Tellichery riots (1971), most of these commissions of enquiry have provided details of the involvement of the RSS or (its mass political platform) Bharatiya Jana Sangh or other affiliated organisations in fomenting trouble. Justice Venugopal's report on the Kanyakumari riots of 1982 severely indict the RSS for its role in fomenting riots against the Christians. A joint report by Justice Sinha and Shamsul Hasan on the Bhagalpur riots also censure the RSS.

To illustrate how the RSS has received severe indictment at the hands of judges who looked into the disturbances, we could refer to Justice Venugopal as an example who sat on the Commission which inquired into the communal flare-up in Kanyakumari district in March 1982. According to Justice Venugopal, The RSS adopts a militant and aggressive attitude and sets itself as the champion of what it considers to be the rights of Hindus against minorities. It has taken upon itself the task to teach the minority their place and if they are not willing to learn their place, teach them a lesson. The RSS has given respectability to communalism and communal riots and demoralise administration.

According to Justice Venugopal, the RSS methodology for provoking communal violence is: rousing communal feelings in the majority community, deepening fear in the majority community, infiltrating into the administration, training young people of the majority community in the use of weapons, spreading rumours to widen communal cleavage. Commenting on the shakhas which are organised under the name of physical training, it tells us:

The aim behind these activities appear to be to inculcate an attitude of militancy and training for any kind of civil strife (Quoted on page 9, The RSS and The BJP, A.G. Noorani, Leftword, 2000, Delhi)

VI

IT is a sad commentary on our times that despite a 'secular coalition' holding the reins of power at the Centre and in many States one does not see any sincere attempt to move beyond the post-9/11 mythology vis-a-vis terrorism which stigmatises and demonises Islam and Muslims.

One finds oneself in a peculiar situation where it is difficult to decipher any qualitative difference between the 'secular' Congress and the 'communal' BJP over their response to any terrorist act. We have been witness to the dilly-dallying adopted by the Congress after the Nanded blasts or Malegaon bomb blast, but the same Congress-led government had no qualms in targetting Muslims as a community after the July 2006 bomb blasts in Bombay.<sup>5</sup>

A logical fallout of this situation has been the failure to address terrorism unleashed by Hindutva activists/formations. The Malegaon bomb blast (September 8, 2006) was one of those rare occasions when even the Prime Minister acknowledged the possibility that the Sangh Parivar organisations could have a role in the blast. Emphasising the need to investigate the functioning of the Hindu Rightwing formations, he clearly stated that he could not confirm or rule out the possibility of the involvement of Bajrang Dal in the bloody act at Malegaon. He made this calibrated statement en route to Havana, while going for the NAM summit.<sup>4</sup>

The post-Malegaon bomb blast investigation underlined the gravity of the situation further. The police recovered bomb shells and 195 kgm. RDX from some Shankar Shelke's shop on September 16. This man, whose godown had stocked this, was found dead the next day and an employee of his was absconding. Similarly the recovery of more than 300 kgms of ammonium nitrate, timers and fusers from the house of a Sarpanch of a village few kms from Aurangabad also went unnoticed.

Interestingly the nation could never know all these details pertaining to the extremist Hindutva groups.

One possible reason behind the ostrich-like position vis-a-vis Hindutva terrorism could be that in this era of electoral democracy nobody wants to displease the broad masses of Hindu people whom these activists/formations claim to represent. With a Rightward shift in the polity where one witnesses a new common sense about Hindutva getting wider legitimacy, one hardly notices any questioning over the deliberate cover up of Hindutva terrorism.

It is high time that more and more people get to know about these criminal/anti-human actions of the Hindutva terrorists. The mischievous and highly motivated understanding that a particular community, region or religious ideology is more prone or more susceptible towards what is known in popular parlance as 'terrorism' or 'terrorist activities' should be refuted at all costs. People need to be convinced there is no qualitative difference between terrorist acts committed by suicide bombers of the LTTE or the jihadists of the Al-Qaeda or Khalistani terrorists, or adopted by followers of the Hindutva formations.

This would be the first step towards their ultimate dissolution.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'From 1969 till today—RAW's current staff strength is about 10,000—it has avoided recruiting any Muslim officer. Neither has the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), a crucial arm of external intelligence. The Intelligence Bureau (IB) with 12,000 personnel has been a little more open. It has a handful of Muslim officers, the senior-most is a Joint Director.'

2. New Delhi: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is furious with an American think-tank for declaring it a terrorist organisation and lumping it with a host of jihadi organisations and secessionist outfits.

The Sangh leadership has written to the Terrorism Research Centre, protesting against the "terrorist" tag, but is yet to get a response.....

The 38 shortlisted to give the Sangh company include jihadi biggies like Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen which have been declared Foreign Terrorist Organisations by the US. The RSS's hardcore ideological foe, the Jamaat-I-Islami, too has found a place.

[US think-tank calls RSS terrorist, Sangh fumes', Mohua Chatterjee, Times News Network, Friday, May 27, 2005 (08:18:15 am)]

3. Anderson and Damle (The Brotherhood In Saffron, Vistaar Publication, New Delhi, 1987) mention 'manufacturing of bombs' at Shikarpur. The incident also finds mention in a biography of ex-Home minister L. K. Advani, former President of the BJP and former Deputy Prime Minister, by Atmaram Kulkarni. (The Advent of Advani, Aditya Prakashan, Bombay, 1995) A Sindhi writer from Gujarat Jayant Relwani refers to it in an article on the predominance of the RSS in Sindh. [Shamne Sindhu Neer (River Indus in My Dreams), Laxmi Pustak Bhandar, Ahmedabad.1996: 89-90]

4. "Bajrang Dal continues to be under the scanner. 'There is no reason to rule them out. We still haven't found anything to prove that Bajrang Dal is not involved,' a senior officer said. The Hindu fringe group is under investigation in Malegaon because of the role of its activists in various bomb blasts." ('PM doesn't rule out Bajrang role', Josy Joseph, Wednesday, September 13, 2006 00:50 IST, DNA, India)

5. The State administration also did not fail to show its anti-Muslim bias even in times of tragedy. While shading crocodile tears over their plight, it saw to it that victims in Malegaon blast, majority of whom were Muslims, receive less compensation (one-fifth) as compared to victims of Mumbai blast, majority of whom were Hindus. (Iqbal A. Ansari, The Milli Gazette online, September 14, 2006)

