


[HOME](#) [ABOUT US](#) [AREAS OF STUDY](#) [EVENTS](#) [PUBLICATIONS](#) [TEAM](#) [MEDIA](#) [CAREER](#) [CONTACT US](#)
Language 

## Government's Credibility Seriously at Stake – Aftermath of 13/7 Mumbai Attacks

20 Jul, 2011

[Ajit Doval, KC - Former Director, VIF](#)[View905](#)[Comments 0](#)

One of the infirmities of our national security discourse is our skewed approach to the issues involved. We get disproportionately focused on the manifestations, damage caused etc. than the response required to address them. National security essentially pertains to what the state does, or should do, to anticipate threats – both at the strategic and tactical levels. Correct threat analysis and anticipation is an essential prerequisite but by itself provides not only when followed by a determined and real time response. This happens when the state displays political will, mobilises its best human and material resources for systemic improvements and builds capacities to neutralise the threats. That is precisely what the government has miserably failed to do.

The recent terrorist carnage in Mumbai is tragic not only for the innocent lives lost and people injured but, more importantly, for the failure of the government and its capacities to meet a threat that has been bleeding the nation over and over again. When terrorist depredations happen ritualistic promises by the high command that they will leave 'no stone unturned to meet the threat' and complimenting the people for returning to normal life is a cruel joke over hapless people. In the aftermath of the attacks the government failed to come out with any innovative ideas, security policies, legal and administrative reforms or strategic initiatives that could deter the terrorists, deter their mentors – both within and outside the country, deny soft targets to the terrorists through proactive and preventive actions or mobilise central and state security agencies. Worst, whatever little was assured, it failed to take any determined steps to execute them.

On May 20, 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that he had a plan to "overhaul and modernise" internal security mechanisms. Claimed to be a 100-page plan, the document, purportedly aimed at creating networked national security architecture to address a gamut of shortcomings that plagued the internal security of the country. A key component of the plan was to setup a National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) that reportedly was to become operative within 100 days. Has the Minister's plan on the ground to modernise internal security mechanisms? The proposal to form a National Counter Terrorism Centre, whose need and urgency has never been tired of emphasizing, has not even been placed before the Cabinet Committee on Security. Was the government just bluffing the country that it never meant or is there some substance in the grapevine that differences in the cabinet sealed the fate of the internal security plan with the Prime Minister? He is usually only a helpless spectator.

This is the time for the country to ponder how much we have done in real terms to set our house in order to manage our internal security. The government's promises have lost their credibility. People want to see actions on the ground that deliver results that are visible. The counter terrorist laws in our country when compared to those where terrorism poses no or very little threat. POTA, though by itself a weak counter terrorist law as compared to other affected countries, was repealed – the first action on counter terrorism front that the UPA government took on assuming power in 2004! It not only weakened the state but demoralised the security agencies and sent a wrong signal to the terrorists and their mentors. Lack of a consistent and firm policy in dealing with Pakistan has put the country in a very poor light. The government repeatedly asserted that no talks will be held with Pakistan till it punishes perpetrators of 26/11. Today, while the government feels that Pakistan has failed to deliver in respect of culprits of 26/11, it has not only resumed a full scale dialogue but is even preparing a confabulation on Kashmir. The country has yet to get over its shame of Sharm-al-Sheikh.

There is another vital dimension of 13/7 attacks that deserves closer scrutiny. When a government fails to prevent, identify or neutralise the terrorists, it incurs systemic inadequacies. But when the perpetrators refuse to own responsibility, the causes are much more complex and, often, sinister. Terrorism is violence of some cause – political, religious or any other and the terrorists want the whole world to know about their existence, cause and the evil power. When terrorists seek publicity they are usually working as somebody's proxy and motives have more to do with the principals than the perpetrators.

Going by information coming from the government sources and open channels, there are strong indications that it was the handiwork of Indian Mujahideen underworld working in collusion with some external forces. If so, it is an early warning of a serious internal security threat that the country appears to be hearing the following reasons.

Firstly, after 26/11 SIMI, of which Indian Mujahideen is only a deceptive front to mislead the security agencies, has been extremely active on organisational matters for years. Government's soft policies have led to the reluctance of security agencies to initiate action against anti-national elements unless they were involved in cognisable offences. Repeal of POTA while on one hand emboldened SIMI on the other handicapped the law enforcing agencies from taking firm action against them. In a meeting following September 13, 2008 attacks in Delhi, a decision was taken by SIMI leadership that the organisation should take advantage of the favourable environment to reorganise and recruit cadres for Jihad. They also decided to refrain from sporadic acts of terror till they had strengthened their capabilities for spectacular actions. While they deepened relations with Pakistan through LeT and the underworld their role on terrorism was by and large played by Pakistani terrorists. The first cause of worry is thus the new strengths gained by SIMI/IM, their good ground knowledge and local contacts and a wide ground of laws, thin presence of an ill equipped police force on the ground and absence of political will to deal with the threat has compounded the problem manifold.

Secondly, SIMI/IM is only a motley group of youth recruited and motivated by Pakistan for the indigenisation of terror in India. It has negligible support of Muslims outfits have denounced their ideology and activities. But for a vague slogan of waging Jihad for Islam, it has no specific political demands or cause. In the 9/11 predicament of ISI when the latter compulsively realised that in the changed global environment it needed tactical change in its strategy of using terrorism for state policy. For higher deniability, they targeted SIMI to be their front organisation to carry out their diktats. Using Dawood Ibrahim, CAM Bashir, a SIMI leader was called to Dubai in 2001 and the process of converting a radical Islamic youth organisation into a Pakistan controlled terrorist outfit started. However, performance fell far short of Pakistan's high expectations and many were accused of making money without doing much. 26/11, however, forced Pakistan to rate ISI as a successful covert operation but for the exposure of Pak nationals that made the overall cost non-affordable. It made ISI to re-organise SIMI hoping to increasingly use it for direct actions rather than merely for support actions. 13/7 is a manifestation of this effort. For ensuring del

accessed, financed and controlled through locations in Middle-East and the underworld is being primed to enhance its striking capabilities. The second c SIMI/IM emerging as an empowered converging point of ISI, crime syndicates, radicalised local youth etc. to bleed India.

Thirdly, should Pakistan and the radical forces supported by it succeed in its nefarious design of indigenising terror; it potentially can generate communi component of violence ingrained. This has been a long cherished objective of Pakistan that has been eluding it for decades. Our response should be imagin calibrated to deny it to them.

The next problem emanates from the fact that our counter terrorist doctrines, structures and systems have over the years evolved around threats fr Apprehending political fallout the government has even been on denial mode on local participation. Accepting the realities as they are and not as we wish particularly of intelligence agencies, will have to be expanded to cover activities of domestic players. This increases the role and responsibility of district and units of the state governments which are generally in a state of neglect. The government's initiative of a National Intelligence Grid, though delayed, is a we to be pursued at a war footing.

In the emerging scenario the role of religious, social and civil society leaders of Muslim community assumes a critical importance. Both on their own ar government, they should deepen their contacts with members of their community and deny any space to foreign inspired subversive elements. It is impos firm actions against anti-national elements the innocents are fully protected and collateral damages avoided. The Muslim community leaders should be co-op the law enforcing agencies who, when taken into confidence, in the past have been more than willing to cooperate.

Lastly, the role of political parties is going to be crucial. Politicising terror in all situations is bad but can be catastrophic if we have to face its indigenous v resorting to vote bank politics would do immense harm to the country. The comment of Shri Digvijay Singh giving a communal slant to Mumbai carnage w cruel joke on the nation.

Mumbai 13/7 may be an early warning of a more serious long term internal security threat looming on the horizon. We have many things in our favour a capable of meeting the threat provided the political parties start looking at the problem from a national and not electoral perspective. Lack of credibility o serious matter. It becomes all the more so when it relates to security matters as lack of credibility may lead to the erosion of legitimacy; potentially thri stability. The country can ill afford that.

Published Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2011

## Post new comment

Your name: \*

Anonymous

E-mail: \*

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Comment: \*

Message\*

Input format

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

Save Preview

## Related Articles



### Commentary: Rise of Regional Parties and Coalition Politics

India has a multi-party system. It is estimated that over 2100 re



### Commentary: Fifty-Fourth Death Anniversary of Pandit Jawahar

It is over fifty years that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru passed away a



### Who is Pushing Surrender to Ch

Dr. Lobsang S. to present Dali t



### म्यांमार से आने वाले श

हाल ही में मिज़ोरम सरकार न



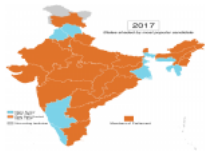
### Commentary: Pre-eminent Issues of Governance in Arunachal Pr

Arunachal Pradesh (AP) is the 29<sup>th</sup> state of India, wit



### Commentary: M with Refugee In Myanmar

The Mizoram ( recently raise migration



भारतीय राजनीति में गठब  
आधुनिक भारत में संसदीय औ



Why Economic Survey of India  
2018 is Path-breaking

The Economic Survey of India  
(ESI) has a short shelf-life in the



A Study on Skill:  
Employment Str  
Poor

**Introduction**  
the study is to

## About Us

The Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) is a New Delhi-based think tank set up with the collaborative efforts of India's leading security experts, diplomats, industrialists and philanthropists under the aegis of the Vivekananda Kendra. The VIF's objective is to become a centre of excellence to kick start innovative ideas and thoughts that can lead ...

[Read More](#)

## Contact Us

Name\*

Email Id\*

Phone Number\*

Message\*

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

Submit

## Tweet With Us



**VIF India**  
@vifindia

'The organs are the horses, the rein, the intellect is the charioteer, the rider, and the body is the chariot master of the household, the King of man, is sitting in this chariot.'  
[#SwamiVivekananda](#)



[Home](#) [About Us](#) [Area of Study](#) [Events](#) [Team](#) [Media](#) [Career](#) [Contact Us](#)

VISITORS: StatCounter - Free Web Tracker and Counter

© 2017 Vivekananda International Fou