

# Terror changes its spots

VIVEK CHADHA

THE terror strike targeting an Israeli diplomat in New Delhi in February 13 2012 has suddenly raised the concerns to higher levels both for the police and intelligence agencies - the primary instruments of defence against terrorism in any country. This is not the first strike against a soft target. July 13, 2011 witnessed bomb blasts in Mumbai's Dadar, Opera House and Zaveri Bazaar area, leaving 26 dead and 131 injured. On September 7, 2011, the Delhi High Court was shaken by a briefcase bomb, which killed 12 people and injured 76. However, the choice of Israel's diplomatic corps as the target of the strike raises both the pitch and the implications.

The previous terror strikes in India have followed a familiar pattern. Most were seen as attacks against the Indian State, even though some specifically targeted foreign nationals as witnessed during the 26/11 Mumbai attack and German bakery blast in Pune. The possible aim of these terror strikes included challenging the secular character of the State in pursuance of an ideology, give a local character to terrorism and create a religious divide through an expectant backlash, thereby enlarging the ensuing conflict. The selection of seemingly random targets also had certain common characteristics. The strikes targeted soft civilian groups. Invariably, the blasts took place in major cities. Even in these cities, it was timed to focus on crowded areas. The blasts were aimed at creating fear psychosis, partly due to the gory scenes at the sites of attack and even more from the 24 hour shrill and relentless beaming of real and at times imagined threats.

The shift in the nature and pattern of the 13/02 strike is significant for a number of reasons. First, the strike appears to have been planned simultaneously with another one in Tbilisi, Georgia, yet again against an Israeli diplomat. The coordinated action and commonality of target has raised the possibility of Iran or Hezbollah being the alleged perpetrator, a linkage alluded to by Israeli Prime Minister who indicated that the incidents

were "traceable to Iran". This virtually makes India a proxy battleground for terrorists willing to operate beyond their shores.

Second, while the terrorists chose a high profile target, they did not select a populated area, as done in the past like the chaos of a marketplace, judicial court or eatery. The choice is clearly indicative of a selective, demonstrative and punitive strike against a defined adversary.

Third, the choice of material, though still unclear, raises a couple of options. The use of Nitroglycerine as an ingredient was discovered by Alfred Nobel as early as 1847 and it was later perfected to make dynamite sticks. However, its instability remained a concern and subsequently led to improved explosive materials like TNT and RDX. Despite the availability of these latter, the liquid form of Nitroglycerine and the relative ease of smuggling it led to its use by terrorists like Ramzi Yousef, who smuggled it on-board a Philippine Airline flight on December 11, 1994. That is the first option. The other option is an RDX based IED, an explosive compound used in limpet mines like Maindeka, considered amongst the most effective and deadly in the world.

Fourth, going by the Israeli assertion, if the attacks in India have indeed been planned and executed by Iran, then the choice of country selected for the strike is disturbing. It indicates Iran's decision to retaliate against suspected Israeli targeting of its nuclear scientists, even at the cost of executing it in a country that has been sympathetic to its international isolation. This, as the early debate indicates, has already forced India to answer



ISRAELI DIPLOMAT INJURED IN CAR EXPLOSION  
ISRAELI EMBASSY CAR DAMAGED

awkward questions from US lawmakers and powerful Jewish interest groups, who see India supporting Iran despite obvious terror linkages.

Fifth, the strike is probably the first, where a bomb has not been planted on a static, nondescript target, but instead

on a temporarily halted vehicle, by a rider on a motorcycle, who reportedly followed the car, planted the device and drove off in a matter of seconds. The characteristics of the mine resemble those of a Limpet Mine, which, classically magnetic in nature, was used against hulls of ships below the water line (the name limpet is derived from marine mollusks which are invertebrates with a shallow cone and a large muscular foot). The name of the mine is attributed to Major Millis Rowland Jeffries and Stuart Macrae, who developed it in 1939 and subsequently used it during the Second World War. It has not only been used against ships by militaries, but also by terrorists, who have employed it as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against ships and motor vehicles, in ways similar to the strike in New Delhi. Interestingly, most initial devices employed chemical time delays for initiation to enable a quick getaway for the perpetrator, historically a very useful function, as was witnessed against the Japanese in the Singapore harbour, in September 1943. More recent ordnance devices, like Maindeka, have also used mechanical or electronic timers.

The use of a limpet IED in the Indian context raises serious concerns. One, besides being used against a moving vehicle, it is also the first instance of the use of

a magnetic IED. Two, the nature of the operation indicates a level of professionalism, which has not been identified with the Indian Mujahideen (IM) or Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in the past, raising concerns about their direct or indirect involvement if any. Three, the strike could have been engineered or at least coordinated by a foreign expert, with logistic support from groups like IM or LeT in India, which exposes the weakness in detecting the entry of suspects into the country and the planning, reconnaissance and execution of terrorist act. On the other hand, if the strike was outsourced, then it highlights concerns about the nature of tactical expertise far beyond the existing capability of local groups and, in the process, raises their threshold level to undertake similar strikes in future as well.

Sixth, unlike in Georgia, the attack in India could not be detected and averted. It also took place a few hundred metres away from the Prime Minister's residence. Despite the sensitivity of the area concerned, the close circuit television footage being used to analyse the incident is being sourced from a private residence. This raises concerns about defence against similar attacks in future and about the procedures and systems in place to guard against such attacks.

The success of the 13/2 terror strike may not be measured by its perpetrators from the number of casualties inflicted, but it will be seen in their ability to strike deep into the heart of the largest democracy in a manner, which was as yet untested. It may also become a successful test run for similar attacks in the future, which could well be more ingenious and sophisticated in their concept and execution. The strike also exposes India to the possibility of a more potent and professional group, which may have already raised the capability levels of indigenous terror cells and created a threat which is both real and potent.

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## China: How to translate hard power at home into soft power abroad

FRANK CHING

At a time when the rest of the world marvels at or perhaps dreads China's rise, Beijing perceives a serious weakness in its own armor: the lack of soft power. For all its economic woes, the West still possesses ample soft power as evidenced by its cultural domination. Behind China's worries also lurk fears about regime stability.

"The overall strength of Chinese culture and its international influence is not commensurate with China's international status," President Hu Jintao wrote in a January article. "The international culture of the West is strong while we are weak."

China is taking this cultural war seriously, on both domestic and international fronts. Beginning January 1, two-thirds of entertainment programs on China's 34 satellite channels, including game shows, dating shows and celebrity talk shows, were deemed "vulgar" and cut, making way for programs that "promote traditional virtues and socialist core values."

Externally, China has set up more than 300 Confucius Institutes and more than 350 classrooms in 96 nations, many linked with universities, to teach Chinese language and culture. In 2010, China produced a promotional film, featur-

rest of the world. It rejects the universal values of the West, such as democracy and human rights, but has nothing to replace them with other than appeal to traditional Confucian values.

The Communist party in October issued a lengthy document on deepening cultural structural reform and acknowledged the need to "move forward the construction of a socialist core value system." However, aside from slogans like "the spirit of rejuvenating the country" and "socialism with Chinese characteristics," it offered nothing concrete.

China's reputation for heavy-handed censorship is likely to hamper the growth of its overseas media organizations since few audiences tolerate propaganda.

Viewers of an official Chinese channel will want to know whether its journalists cover Chinese developments politically sensitive ones objectively or whether they must toe the party line. Will CCTV or Xinhua report on the arrests, trials and disappearances of human rights activists? Will they comment on the case of lawyer Gao Zhisheng, sent to prison in Xinjiang for allegedly violating the terms of his parole, apparently while detained by security personnel for the last 20 months?

Such cases of the use of brute power give China a bad image overseas, and without changing its behavior, there is little likelihood that Beijing can enhance its soft power.

The contradiction between China's desire to enhance its influence while refusing to allow its own people rights and freedoms taken for granted elsewhere affects China's position even in its own backyard. Since 1997, Hong Kong handed back to China by Britain after a century and a half of colonial rule has been a special administrative region, ostensibly enjoying a high degree of autonomy.

Beijing has worked hard to win the hearts and minds of Hong Kong's 7 million people. For example, in 2003, after Yang Liwei, the first

Chinese astronaut, returned from space, he was sent on a tour of the country. The first city he visited was Hong Kong. In 2007, marking the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty, Beijing gave a pair of pandas to Hong Kong though the city already had two. And in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, equestrian events were held in Hong Kong.

Despite such wooing, many people in Hong Kong still do not welcome the association with China. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong found that twice as many people favored the Hong Kong identity over being Chinese.

The Chinese government was not pleased. Hao Tiechuan, spokesman for the central government's Liaison Office in Hong Kong, called the survey "unscientific" and "illogical." Robert

Chung, director of the university's Public Opinion Program, which conducted the survey, became the target of vicious attacks in the pro-Beijing press.

Such surveys are not new. Chung has been conducting them regularly since 1997, reporting the ups and downs in terms of Hong Kong people's identification with China. This time, Chung said, the sense of Hong Kong identity had reached a 10-year high, while identification with China had dropped to a 12-year low.

To understand why Hong Kong seems so resistant to China's charms, Beijing could perhaps examine its own behavior. Last August, when Vice Premier Li Keqiang visited the University of Hong Kong, he was seated in the chancellor's chair although he was a guest. Three students who attempted to approach him were thrown to the ground by the police. The furor that followed overshadowed Li's attempts at promoting economic development.

Chung insisted that the polling was an academic exercise unrelated to politics and refused to be drawn into a debate with his critics, citing "Cultural Revolution-style curses and defamations."

But his critics were unrelenting, accusing him of trying to incite Hong Kong people to deny that they're Chinese, accepting "political dirty money" and being linked with a suspected British intelligence agent. Chung said he had never met the British official.

One commentator, Song Sio-chong, wrote in the China Daily that the results of the survey were unreliable, undesirable and dangerous. "Such a distorted survey should not enjoy the so-called academic freedom," he concluded. "If the public interest is paramount, then academic nonsense is not sacrosanct."

In the face of this onslaught against academic freedom, part and parcel of Hong Kong's core values, the Hong Kong government must tread a fine line. Raymond Tam, secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, denied interference by Beijing, saying that "anyone can give opinions on various matters," as if Beijing's spokesman in Hong Kong was just another individual whose freedom of speech needs to be protected.

Tam went on to say that academic freedom is protected by the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution, and "is an important social value treasured by Hong Kong." The government, he said, has been striving to maintain an environment "so that academics can conduct academic activities, such as research and survey, uninhibited."

To strengthen patriotic sentiment in Hong Kong, Beijing has urged the introduction of "national education" into the curriculum. Hao, the Chinese official, blandly accepted that this was tantamount to brainwashing, but said it was something that all countries do.

Of course, Beijing is Hong Kong's sovereign, in a position to throw its weight around when carrots like pandas and astronauts don't do the trick. But if China wants to enhance its influence internationally through soft power, it must be sure that the velvet glove hides the iron fist inside.

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The Confucius Institute, one of many funded by China, teaches calligraphy in California.

ing such celebrities as basketball star Yao Ming and Hong Kong businessman Li Ka-shing, to polish its image.

China is spending billions to extend its reach to all corners of the world, primarily through the state-controlled Xinhua news agency and its CNC World television news network since 2010 as well as China Central Television (CCTV), which started broadcasting from its Washington hub this week.

China's approach only highlights the contradiction. Soft power almost by definition results from civil society. American culture, for example, is reflected by such products as Hollywood movies, Coca-Cola and blue jeans, none of which are government creations. The Chinese government is trying to create soft power while repressing major segments of civil society.

Moreover, China is out of sync with much of the

## Hope of peace in Chittagong Hill Tracts- as I see

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Along with my senior friends and colleagues visited CHT to observe the post Peace Treaty scenario. My three days' visit was worthy as many stories of CHT are cooked and published at Dhaka which sometimes may mislead the policy makers and the scholars as well. Moreover, on October 17, 2011 the Ambassador of European Union His Excellency Mr William Hanna, an Irish citizen visited CHT and viewed the matter through 'Ireland crisis'. Therefore, this article may unveil the reality of CHT and provide justice to those who are really working for peace.

To me the natural beauty of the Hill Tracts is one of the attractions of our country that has tremendous tourism potential which needs due attention. Here, the present government and Bangladesh Army did a splendid job. In 1998 our present honourable Prime Minister received the UNESCO award. At that time I was a student of class ten and I was very happy as a Bangladeshi. After a decade when I visited CHT, I felt the award was really appropriate and people are ignorant about the good work being done by the administration and other agencies. Therefore, I would like to mention some issues for lasting peace in CHT.

### Land disputes

Tribal Leaders want to measure the land according to the traditional rules which is contrary to the existing laws and the constitution of the Bangladesh. I personally feel that 'land survey' has to be undertaken first and immediately. Some Members of the land commission remain always absent which is absolutely unacceptable. Now people understand the reasons for the 'delay battle'.

### Tribal/indigenous

To me 'indigenous issue' is more of political than that of the need and reality. It was not in the agenda before. Interestingly, when the Peace Accord was signed on December 02, 1997, people of CHT were termed as 'tribal' (upazati). After a decade, this issue has appeared afresh. The Chief of Bomang Circle has already notified that the term 'indigenous' is inappropriate for them as they came from Arakan only 283 years ago.

### Role of NGOs/INGOs

National/international NGOs must be scrutinized and made accountable to the state. All money transactions should be done through the banks. Let all beneficiaries to have bank accounts soon. Some employment opportunity may be created. Let real development start. Let real democracy be established.

### Voice of innocent tribals and Bangalees by birth

I hardly find any difference between the children of the settlers and tribals, who are born and brought up together in the green beautiful garden surrounded by hills. They, except the elite leaders, are happy with their own culture, tradition and customs. Let this region be for all.

### National Heritage and future of the Tourism

Let tourism sector be with professional, honest and dynamic people and organization. Our army may support them. If the working group is not honest, army must not be involved at all.

### State policy makers and development

The development could further be enhanced if all government machineries worked together in CHT. As I knew, army considers the service in CHT as bonus to their professional gain. Potential military generals spend much time in CHT, but it is not should not be their domain alone. Many civil servants are yet to experience CHT and there is gulf of difference between the 'military tempo' and other stakeholders. Possibly we need to put our hands on our heart and need to ask the question- 'being the servant to the republic, how much importance really we have put on this issue and have we handled the issue professionally so far? As I see and read from the articles of army officers, many senior officers of Bangladesh Army both in service and retired have vast experience on CHT. Many of them spent at least one third of service time in CHT during their long career and their experience can be put to good use.

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