The Paily Star EDITORIAL _____EDITORIAL ____



FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

Boosting FDI inflow

Infrastructure, financial reforms imperative

Norder to shore up economy, economists and financial experts at a discussion held recently have advised the government to set the task of inviting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) on a priority basis. Actually, the issue has received a new significance in the changed context of big economies considering Bangladesh as an investment destination. At the same time, the country faces competition from the neighbourhood in terms of attracting FDIs. So, the emphasis has been laid on infrastructure development, cutting back on bureaucratic red-tape and financial sector reform.

But except uttering words of mere assurance, successive governments could not improve the investment climate by developing communications and power infrastructures with a matching supportive policy regime. Especially, bureaucratic tardiness, pervasive corruption and above all political unrest have worked to dampen the would-be investors' spirit effectively.

The government can ill-afford to let such a trend continue. It must get its act together and create conditions for foreign investors to choose Bangladesh as a lucrative investment destination.

As recommended by experts, as a precondition for attracting FDI, local investment must be boosted. At the same time, special economic zones have to be set up within the shortest possible time. For the purpose, it would be necessary to empower Board of Investment (BoI) so that prospective investors can bank on its service bereft of time-wasting bureaucratic tangle. Financial reform, especially, in the banking sector, have also to be carried out in tandem with the measures to facilitate investment, both local and foreign.

Bangladeshis pay more

Set guidelines for charges

HY must Bangladeshi expatriate workers pay through the nose to secure foreign jobs? That is what the latest study by Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) has unveiled. According to the report the average Bangladeshi migrant worker seeking employment in Qatar is paying US\$2,685 to the recruiting agency whilst a Sri Lankan worker pays half that much. This is like highway robbery. The scenario is more or less the same across the board for most international labour destinations for our workers. The fact is that our recruitment industry is largely unregulated and the authorities have little say in the manner in which workers are charged for foreign employment opportunities.

Looking at quality of services rendered by Bangladeshi workers, the study finds that skill levels of our workers are lower than those in major competing countries. Once abroad, Bangladeshi workers are also left at the mercy of employers whilst labour officers of other countries like Sri Lanka provide its workers with a wide range of facilities like protection from exploitation and other assistance.

While we profess our love for our expatriate workers and the precious foreign exchange they remit as a national effort, we do little to honour their sacrifice abroad. That our poor economic migrants are being fleeced is not an acceptable situation. The authorities need to set guidelines for fees and these have to be enforced so that greater numbers of people can avail employment opportunities in international labour destinations. A failure to do so will only be to

9/11's dangerous legacy

SHAHRIAR FEROZE

EVER before the repercussions of a terror had attack inflicted such misery in the history of mankind. No, I am not talking about the victims of World Trade Centre, but about the ones who became prey to America's 'war on terror'. The 9/11 is perhaps the deadliest among all legacies that was intended for creating more global conflicts across the world.

Ask yourself, if you had ever known, heard or come across a disaster that would create and justify a rhetorical war under the 'war on terrorism' banner which is literally dispersed while whose criteria for inclusion is also unclear. It's all the battles under this 'war for terror' flag that has snatched away the lives of peoples at least ten times more than the collective number of who died on that ill-omened day of September. Not surprisingly yet this war is being used for justify unilateral preventive war, human rights abuses and other violations of international law. But the question is for how long will it continue? The question automatically arises since, enough abuse have been already recorded. By no means am I trying to say that terror acts should not be prevented but simply proposing to define this war more clearly than what it's now. Ironically, the war's euphemistic term under the Obama era has changed to 'Overseas Contingency Operation'- a term that is even more obscured.

This war wouldn't have existed if 9/11 hadn't occurred, but think deeply how much of global terrorism this war has actually prevented since its commencement? Little in fact and the truth is: if it was intended to fight terrorism than it had only fought against those terrorists who had conducted terror attacks on US subjects and interests. More to it is that this US-style Jihad on terror wouldn't have initiated even if a million had died on a terror attack in another country.

Against the backdrop of current reality, there are enough reasons for saying that the abuse of this war has actually become a prime reason for fundamentalists and fanatics for carrying out even more intensified acts of horror. With Over 6,000 US soldiers killed in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq followed by a damaging over-reaction is America really winning the war it was meant for? Domestically it may have winning but on a global perspective it allowed the Taliban to regroup in Afghanistan that has strengthened Al-Qaida's positions even further. And evidently the US military's unbeatable trademark has also vanished by the success with which rag-tag groups of guerrillas have defied and aggravated it in some parts of Afghanistan and middle-east.

The bottom line is we aside the all Americans condemn and mourn for what had happened on 11 September, but the legacy of a vicious continual warfare born out of it must come to an end; its struggle against terrorism must be re-defined.

The writer is Current Affairs Analyst, The Daily Star. E-mail: shahriarferoze@gmail.com

Enlarging terrorist footprints in South Asia

So what should one make of the recent

Zawahiri announcement? There is logic in the

initial comments of the Al-Qaeda watchers

who felt that the move was to reinvigorate the

core group and in particular replenish the void

left by the departure of many of its rank and

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING



Brig Gen SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN ndc, psc (Retd)

AWAHIRI has got the alarm bells ringing in the region with his latest announcement expressing his intention to set up base in India of his terrorist organisation. And if reports regarding the IS' attempt seeking inroads into South Asia are true, then the South Asian countries, particularly Bangladesh, are looking at a very real threat to the region that has felt only the tremor and not the blast of full grown terrorism,

the kind of which some parts of the world has witnessed, particularly after 9/11, and are still enduring.

It is after substantial gap that Al-Qaeda has made any comment on its future plans, to enlarge its focus and direct it towards the subcontinent. His comments are interesting and raise several questions. One should be as much interested to learn about the purpose of the public articulation of the terror group's future projects as much as the com-

pulsions behind the expressed plan --- of turning its gaze towards the other countries of South Asia. Why would a terrorist organisation expose its operational strategy when doing so would only allow the targeted countries to take countermeasures and thus defeat its objective? And this is

where we should start our inquiry into the whys and wherefores of Zawahiri's announcement.

Al-Qaeda is a composite of many subgroups of affiliates that have, in some cases, broken off from the main body for several reasons. One being that it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain adequate and effective control and command of the affiliates that are spread over more than 30 locations in several regions of the world. Another being the falling out of some of its affiliates with the Al-Qaeda core group due to regional and local compulsions and clash of interests, as is the case with the Islamic State (IS) which has detached itself from Al-Qaeda and is now operating independently in Syria and Iraq.

So what should one make of the recent Zawahiri announcement? There is logic in the initial comments of the Al-Qaeda watchers who felt that the move was to reinvigorate the core group and in particular replenish the void left by the departure of many of its rank and file who had chosen to join the splinter groups. But it is also because the terrorist group wanted to reassert its presence to the international community. Admittedly, although it still presents

significant threat to US interest, Al-Qaeda's activities had been dwindling over the last several years, more so after the IS broke away from Al-Qaeda in Iraq in 2013. According to an expert writing in The Guardian in August 2013, "Al Qaeda leadership is a shattered remnant, reduced to begging funds and munitions from local allies and with its most capable members heading to Syria. But western analysts say the group retains the ability to regenerate quickly and dangerously and its ideology remains a potent threat around the world, as the closure of US embassies across the Middle East this week shows." Its recent announcement, given the reaction in Delhi and Dhaka, bears out this statement.

It is pertinent to ask if the establishments in these two countries have gone into an overdrive with their reactions after the Zawahiri broadcast. For good reason the reactions in Delhi and Dhaka have been different. Predictably India went into a state of alert at national level, and that which perhaps helped nab four IS contacts in India while they were crossing over into Bangladesh. However, by generating the type of reaction in these two countries, particularly the media reaction in Bangladesh, the Al-Qaeda has

achieved its first objective
- a very wide publicity and
attention. The question is
how will the terrorist
group implement its plan
in the rest of South Asia,
its presence being already
there in Afghanistan and
Pakistan?

file who had chosen to join the splinter groups. One should point out that the problem evolving from the announcement

for India and Bangladesh are very different. In India their target is the minority which the Al-Qaeda feels is in distress. It is to the majority in Bangladesh that the terrorist organisation has addressed its message. Our approach to the issue would therefore be differently nuanced.

It would be erroneous to think that Zawahiri's pronouncements portend a cataclysm for us in the near future. But there is a proviso – to thwart Al-Qaeda advances inside ur territory there must be an absence of such condition as could be exploited by Al-Qaeda.

What the intelligence agencies in our country should be looking for now is to assess the likely ways Al-Qaeda might operationalise its newly announced plan. I am inclined to think that it would not consider undertaking any action that would disturb the generally peaceful situation in Bangladesh. But whatever way Al-Qaeda may chose as a means of ingress into this country their success would depend on the degree of local support and sympathy. It is the level of support and the sympathy for this group is what the agencies must unearth.

The writer is Editor, OP-Ed and Defence & Strategic Affairs, The Daily Star

The missing component in defeating terrorism

Ali Kazak

HE new phenomenon evolving in the West of elements who are joining extremist groups, and their raison d'etre, must be taken and dealt with seriously.

In his recent speech to the Australian Institute of International Affairs titled "Evolution of terrorism – and what it means for Australia", Mr David Irvine, the Director-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), said ASIO's Act of 1979 definition of terrorism is "...acts or threats of violence or unlawful harm that are intended or likely to achieve a political objective, whether in Australia or elsewhere, including acts or threats carried on for the purpose of influencing the policy or acts of a government, whether in Australia or elsewhere..."

Notwithstanding the lack of international consensus on the definition of terrorism, I find ASIO's definition interesting primarily for its frank admission of the political connection and motivation behind acts of terrorism. But what is lacking in this admission is any mention of the policies which the terrorists want to influence or change.

While the Western governments, especially the USA, Britain, Canada and Australia, are shy to address the policies propelling acts of terrorism, devoting all their efforts to covering-up on those policies and shifting attention to artificial and absurd motives which have nothing to do with what fuels the perpetrators of terrorism, we find the terrorists themselves are not as shy to indicate the policies which drive them to commit their violence.

In a keynote address to the National Council on US-Arab Relations 21st Annual Arab-US Policy Makers' Conference in Washington, 25.10.2012, the highly respected US Ambassador Chas W. Freeman Jr., said:

'For anyone with an open mind, these causes [of virulent anti-Americanism and its spread] are not hard to understand. The fanatics who carried out the atrocities of 9/11 went out of their way to describe their motivations and outlined their objectives to anyone who would listen. America turned off its hearing aid. It's still off. The grievances that catalysed 9/11 remain not simply unaddressed but ignored or denied by Americans.

'Al Qaeda saw 9/11 as a counterattack against American policies that had directly or indirectly killed and maimed large numbers of Muslims. Some of those enraged by our policies were prepared to die to achieve revenge. ... It is not our values that they hate. It's what we have done and continue to do. ... We can't fight anti-American extremists effectively or otherwise fend off the menace they present if we refuse to consider why they attacked us and why they still want to do so.

'The chief planner of 9/11, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, testified under oath that a primary purpose of al Qaeda's criminal assault on the United States was to focus "the American people... on the atrocities that America is committing by supporting Israel against the Palestinian people..." In so-called "fatwas" in 1996 and 1998, Osama Binladin justified al Qaeda's declaration of war against the United States by reference to the same issue, while levying other charges against America.'

CBS News reported on 16.5.2008 an audio message from Al Qaeda's leader Osama bin Laden, telling listeners that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has always been the primary cause for friction between the West and the Muslim world – a struggle which he said was getting more difficult

due to European policies biased in Israel's favour.

Mr Michael Backman, a business writer said in an

article in The Age newspaper on 17.1.2009:

"Israel's utter inability to transform the Palestinians from enemies into friends has imposed big costs on us all. We have paid for Israel's failure with bombs on London public transport, bombs in bars in Bali, and even the loss of the World Trade Centre towers in New York.

"It is not true that these outrages have occurred because certain Islamic fundamentalists don't like Western lifestyles and so plant bombs in response. Rather, it is Israel — or more correctly the treatment of the

Palestinians — that is at the nub of these events."

"The Australian political parties should be forced to state their policy. Do they support the creation of a Palestinian State on the 1967 boundaries? If not what do they support and why? If they do support a State on the 1967 boundaries what do they propose to do about it – particularly when Israel, as it will inevitably do – annexes more, or attempts transfer of the Palestinians to Jordan. When will Australia propose sanctions against Israel? Sanctions were good enough against South Africa (eventually), they are mooted for Zimbabwe and Burma, and of course military action is advocated for Iraq. When will Israel become accountable?"

Instead of the West correcting their injustice and crimes they created in Palestine, they continue their biased support of Israel despite its non-stop aggression, expansion, occupation, racial discrimination and violation of international law and resolutions.

Worse still, in its blind extremist biased support the Australian government even claimed recently that the Jewish colonies in the occupied territories are not against international law, and refuse to refer to East Jerusalem as occupied! It further opposes and lobbies against the Palestinians' attempts to go to UN institutions to achieve their rights through peaceful means, votes against resolutions condemning Israel's gross violations and Palestinian membership of the international community, and opposes Palestinian attempts to seek international Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS).

Current Prime Minster Tony Abbott went as far as to say that "We're all Israelis now" after the Bali bombings in 2002 in direct admission of what the terrorists said at the time on ABC radio that they carried their act "because of Australia's support to Israel".

The West's extreme, unjust and hypocritical policies are not only responsible for encouraging Israel's violations, refusal to recognise Palestinian rights and withdraw from the occupied territories but they are also fuelling anti-Western fury across the Muslim world and playing a major part in pushing angry and frustrated generations to believe that only through violence and terrorism will they achieve change.

Western governments must shoulder some responsibility in endangering their own security and national interests.

While security and legislative actions and seeking community and religious leaders' cooperation to confront terrorism are important, without Western governments putting an end to their hypocritical and blind support of Israel's aggressions, all their actions will not stop the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism which, like its raison d'etre, Israel, is going from bad to worse.

What is stopping Western governments from adopting a policy based on justice, international law and United Nations resolutions?

The writer is a former Palestinian ambassador to Australia, New Zealand, East Timor and the Pacific region.

© Counterpunch.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Traffic rule violation by the powerful

Thanks for the excellent front page report and photos published in your esteemed newspaper on September 2, 2014. I wish the influential people



violating the traffic rules read this. I wonder how an army vehicle takes the wrong side of the road just to avoid traffic jam. Can any civilian dare to drive in the wrong side in the cantonment area? The same can be said about our political leaders who give a damn about the traffic rules and get away with police protection. Even the buses carrying university students (mostly DU and JnU) very often use wrong sides to avoid jam. These things happen before the eyes of the traffic police, but they can't do anything as the violators are so powerful.

These shameless influentials should be ashamed of themselves.

Shafiqul Karim Dhaka

Raising awareness against drowning

Bangladesh is a land of rivers and ponds and so deaths by drowning are very common in rural areas. The victims are mostly children and this happens as they are left unattended. This can be prevented if people become aware and keep toddlers away from water. The local schoolteachers can be given the duty to make village people aware of this. Raising awareness can gradually reduce the number of deaths by drowning.

Shafkat Rahman BIAM Laboratory School Dhaka

No streetlight near National Heart Institute

As I was passing through the area at night, I was surprised to see there was no light at the entry gate of the National Heart Institute, Shyamoli, Dhaka. Imagine a panic-gripped person with chest pain reaching the gate of National Heart Institute in the middle of the night. He may have a real heart attack if he encounters snatchers at the hospital gate, as the area remains totally dark at night. This is very likely to happen in Dhaka at midnight. Can't our government arrange streetlight for these areas including the gate of one of the most important hospitals of the country?

Khandaker Zia Hasan Special Correspondent Weekly Jogajog Canada

Comments on news report, "Dhaka quits UN race for Tokyo," published on September 7, 2014

Adnan Samdani

As someone who was privileged to be there in New York in 1998 when we won our UNSC seat for the second time, I was so looking forward to Bangladesh's third time opportunity of getting UNSC seat. Now, I know for sure I won't get this opportunity during my lifetime. To make it more painful, Bangladesh's decision to withdraw came without a word of discussion, neither was the public consulted. We never knew a decision like this was taken with even minimal of consultation with the ministry of foreign affairs. No summary ever was prepared or placed before the cabinet.

For last ten years Bangladesh accumulated a good number of reciprocal support arrangement securing support from countries like Australia and a good many others. Second, it is Bangladesh's rightful turn in the Asian group. We are competing, after 15 years, only for the second time, while Japan is competing for the 11th. Bangladesh is sure to get support of China, as opposed to Japan, and thereby, through Chinese help, would have secured the support of most, if not all, of African countries.

Moazzem Hossain

A very good diplomatic move by Bangladesh.

Adnan Samdani

Really...how? What did we get? Just tell me a dollar worth that we got during this visit. Japanese PM just reiterated what they were saying for last one year. Has Japanese PM offered us to build a bridge over Padma or Meghna or a new port or even a culvert? Has he offered to take source workforce that Japan would need in thousands to build infrastructure as they prepare for Tokyo Olympic 2020? Could anyone cite a precedent where a sovereign state voluntarily gave up their contest in UNSC ever?

Dev Saha

Under the circumstances Bangladesh did the right thing. We quit the race and chose aid, investment and technologies from the third largest economy. This is a win-win deal for both countries.