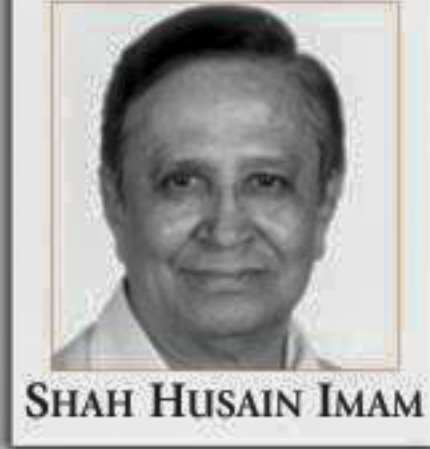


Walk the talk ...

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

WE have an uncanny genius to state the obvious and the commonplace. The latest example of this trait is typified by a facile labeling of the latest incidence of hackings to death. We are phrasing them as being 'targeted', 'premeditated', executed by 'expert' killers and aimed to embarrass the government and create instability in the country. When it is clear to even a layman that the murders had been premeditated, charted along the movement pattern of the targeted and carried out in broad daylight for maximum shock effect, why stress the obvious over and over again if not to divert attention away from the slow motion handling of the cases?

What the citizens are interested in is not any stock, bland description of the incidents or speculative theorisations but whether any headway has been made in resolving the cases or any culprit apprehended.

Now is the time for action – on two levels: One, zeroing in on the real culprits and their masterminds and putting them through speedy trials leading to exemplary convictions. Wishful thinking it may be, given the track record of unsolved murder cases when, at the time of occurrence, they would have appeared imminently solvable. But enough is enough, we have to fix our back on the deteriorating trend or else we are looking to a transition, from individuals being terror targets to public places coming under attack. Something of an echo from 2005 when countrywide bomb blasts were orchestrated by the since-outlawed JMB.

The investigators should neither be unduly distracted by political noises nor play to any

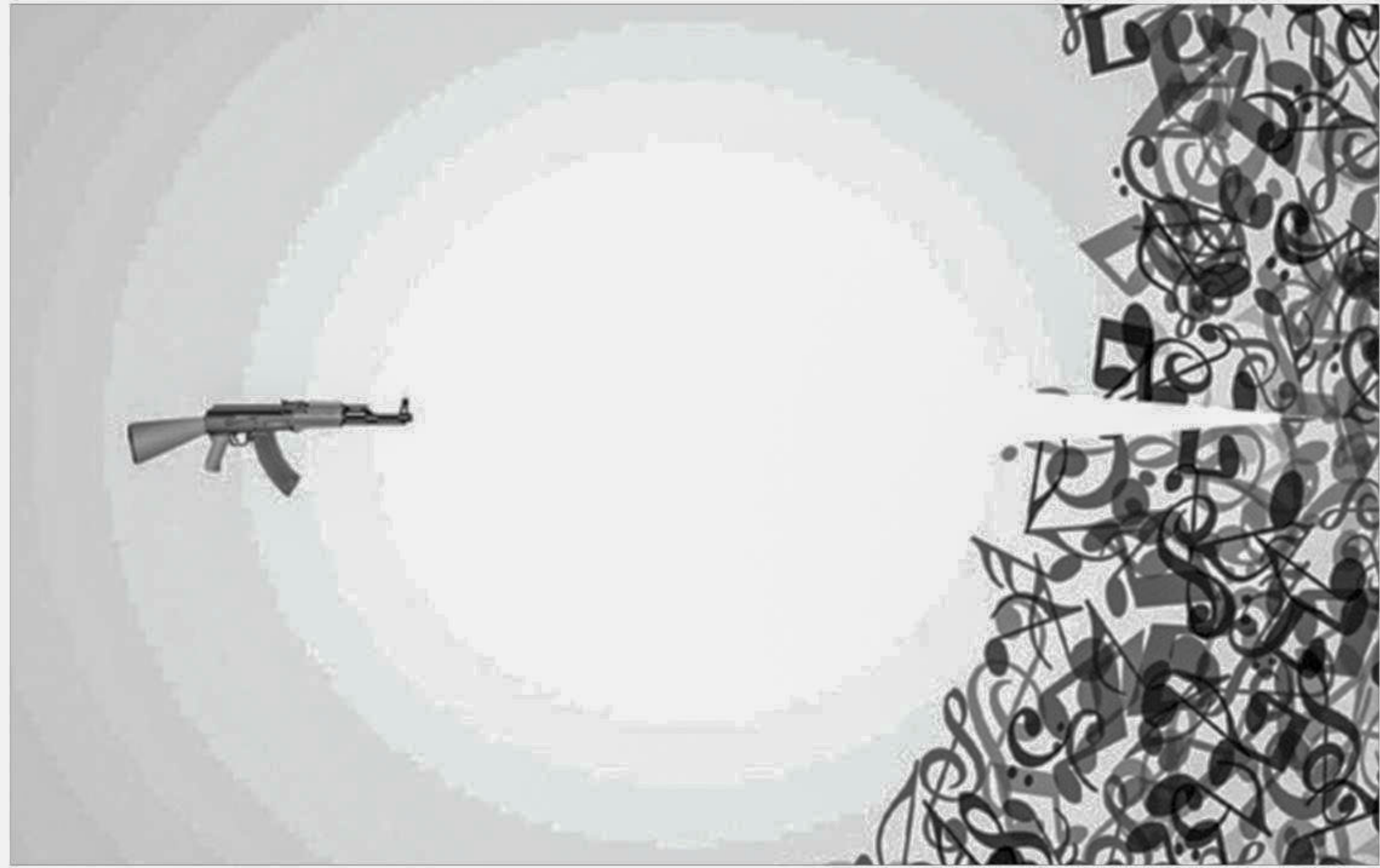


ILLUSTRATION: NATHANFELMORE.COM

copybook style setting the sail to the wind that is blowing. Casting the net far and wide in a manhunt will betray a lack of focus apart from causing unnecessary suffering to the innocents.

The second critical element in the fight against individualised terror attacks has been pointed out by former Inspector General of Police and *The Daily Star* columnist Nurul Huda in terms of intelligence surveillance

deficits. Although he does not take the view of a wholesale deterioration in law and order, he is quite sharply of the opinion that had there been advance information secured through timely human intelligence, the latest killings could have been averted. Few would disagree with him. Deficiencies in intelligence networking are nearly in a primitive state when other nations are retooling their capacities by putting money

where their mouth is. Our law enforcers have busted terror networks, executed extremists, outlawed many an outfit, and unearthed caches of weapons and still they keep reincarnating and hacking people to death on religious and cultural grounds. That said, we need to address the root cause of the killing phenomenon, based on hatred of ideas or beliefs, otherwise we will

be beating about the bush as the predators prowls nearby. The paramount question is: Why must ideas be put to sword and not debated with superior arguments to win over each other and in the process gain intellectual ground with the people? While those who exercise the rights to freedom of expression are not killing their dissenters to death, the latter is exactly doing the opposite, finishing them off zealously. Now the fanatical killers have somehow come to believe that they have a tacit approval of their vile designs from some quarters. This provides them with an oxygen of support and consequent free rein to be melting into the dense population after their dastardly crimes. The equivocation about one-sided fanaticism is clearly dangerous and unmerited when one set of indoctrinated or money-fed people are killing those of the other set which is nonviolent.

Let's read into what the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Robert D. Watkins has said lately, 'Intolerance-related violence is increasing in Bangladesh and targeting a growing range of people whose views may not conform with those of the majority.' That tolerance of other's views or ways of thinking is diminishing and the number of individuals coming under attack is increasing is a phenomenon not confined to Bangladesh alone but surely it is an anathema to age-old socio-religious harmony in Bangladesh. More to the point, it is not the majority which is reacting to contrary views of others, rather it is the signature of the fanatical fringe on a self-professed killing mission.

'Twisted minds – of evil men who used the mask of religion as an excuse for some of the most horrifying crimes in history,' reminded Joseph Conrad in 1911.

The writer is Associate Editor, *The Daily Star*.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

The Fourth Jihadist Wave



CARL BILD

MUSCULAR language has become increasingly prevalent in the debate about how to counter the threat of jihadist terrorism. Television talk-show hosts speculate about when control of Raqqa in Syria or Mosul in Iraq

might be wrested from the Islamic State (ISIS), implying that these cities' liberation will mark, at the very least, the beginning of the end of the problem. And in December, Ted Cruz, a Republican contender in the US presidential race, went so far as to raise the spectre of nuclear strikes: "I don't know if sand can glow in the dark, but we're going to find out," he said.

Such simplistic sound bites understate the severity of the challenge. As the International Crisis Group highlights in a recent report, the jihadist threat we are facing is the fourth in a series of increasingly perilous waves. If we are to avoid creating an even more powerful fifth wave, it is imperative that we learn from the mistakes we made in seeking to counter the previous three.

The first jihadist wave occurred when volunteer fighters from the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan returned home and started attacking regimes they considered un-Islamic. This led to the second, far more deadly jihadist wave, as Al Qaeda launched spectacular attacks against the "far enemy," seeking to draw Western powers into violent confrontation and outright war. The attacks on the United States, on September 11, 2001, marked the crest of this wave.

The global counterterrorist offensive that followed largely succeeded in eliminating Al Qaeda's ability to launch large-scale attacks. But the 2003 invasion of Iraq created the conditions for the third wave, triggering a vicious sectarian war between Sunni and Shia that allowed Al Qaeda to exploit the chaos of an increasingly fragmented state.

Eventually, the so-called Sunni Awakening broke the back of Al Qaeda's efforts in Iraq, and the 2011 Arab Spring redirected the region's political development. But the failure to build an inclusive government in Iraq, together with the violent repression of protesters in Syria, offered battle-hardened jihadist leaders an opening to initiate the fourth wave.

This wave is by far the most dangerous. Tens of thousands of recruits have joined the effort to build a caliphate in the Fertile Crescent. Meanwhile, ISIS has expanded into numerous other crisis zones and recruited or inspired terrorists within Western societies, as demonstrated by the attacks in Paris, Brussels, and San Bernardino.

Countering this threat will require a vigorous ideological battle against the forces of intolerance and hatred, building on Islam's history of openness and tolerance. But ideological struggle, on its own, will not be enough.

We must also recognise the true origins of the jihadist threat: the conflicts and state failures ranging from West Africa across the wider Middle East to South Asia. It was not jihadism that created today's crises. On the contrary, bad governance and state failure provided jihadism with the opportunity to flourish.



PHOTO: AFP

Much of the region entered the twenty-first century in a deplorable state; and in most places, things have only gotten worse. Trying to meet the jihadist challenge with repression, as Egypt is doing today, risks exacerbating the problem.

Addressing these root causes will be a daunting, decades-long task. Much of the region entered the twenty-first century in a deplorable state; and in most places, things have only gotten worse. Trying to meet the jihadist challenge with repression, as Egypt is doing today, risks exacerbating the problem. And incarcerating Islamists often means providing them with an ideal environment for recruitment, indoctrination, and training. Instead, openings must be created for democratic Islamic political forces to operate.

Despite the scale of the challenge, the West lacks a clear policy on what to press for and how to obtain it. Clearly, military force must be used. But retaking Raqqa or Mosul is only the easiest of the tasks facing us. How many times have Western forces retaken

Afghanistan's Helmand province or Anbar province in Iraq, and with what result? Far more difficult – and far more important – will be ensuring that legitimate structures of inclusive governance are set up in the places from which ISIS is driven out. These must address feelings of persecution among Sunni Arabs as well as the victimisation of large segments of the population that has fostered rage across the region.

Without such a strategy in place, retaking Raqqa and Mosul will merely be a prelude to an even more violent fifth wave of jihadism, which its committed and experienced practitioners will seek to portray as the final epic battle with "crusaders" in the West. It is no coincidence that ISIS has named its slick propaganda magazine

Dabiq, for the name of the place where this Islamic version of Armageddon is prophesied to take place.

We must not hand our enemies what they want on a silver platter. We must instead wage an ideological battle against them, treat them as the terrorists that they are, and address the conditions that allow them to flourish. The jihadists are seeking escalation in order to drive us into total confrontation. If we have learned anything since 2001, it is that we must not fall into their trap.

The writer was Sweden's foreign minister from 2006 to October 2014 and Prime Minister from 1991 to 1994, when he negotiated Sweden's EU accession.

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(Exclusive to *The Daily Star*)

QUOTABLEQuote



ALBERT CAMUS

Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Marry again
 - 6 Succeed
 - 11 "Hello" singer
 - 12 Put on a pedestal
 - 13 "The Big Lebowski" star
 - 15 Tiny worker
 - 16 Finger count
 - 17 Was inactive
 - 18 Ring combatant
 - 20 Nymph chaser
 - 23 Seedy bars
 - 27 Wide-eyed
 - 28 Smoke source
 - 29 Costume
 - 31 Golf shoe feature
 - 32 Syrup source
 - 34 Gardner of movies
 - 37 Social page word
 - 38 Caffeine source
 - 41 "The Newsroom" star
 - 44 Skylit lobbies
 - 45 Muscle woe
 - 46 Alex Haley book
 - 47 Circular
- DOWN**
- 1 Indian prince
 - 2 Perfect place
 - 3 Tapestry thread
 - 4 Middle Earth resident
 - 5 One in the red
 - 6 Made headway
 - 7 Bizarre
 - 8 Thick mists
 - 9 Open space
 - 10 Take a breather
 - 14 Writer Stout
 - 18 Old exclamation
 - 19 Biathlon need
 - 20 Decline
 - 21 Maturity
 - 22 Stroller user
 - 24 Be a contender
 - 25 Historic time
 - 26 Determined
 - 30 Bamboo eaters
 - 31 Hold tightly
 - 33 Pod item
 - 34 Not quite closed
 - 35 White House power
 - 36 Bushy hairdo
 - 38 Blue hue
 - 39 Sailors' saint
 - 40 Nile serpents
 - 42 In shape
 - 43 Writer Levin

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4-19

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

H E R B O B O E

M O V I E F A R M S

A R E N A T R A C E

R A N G U P N E E

I C E S R A N G E R

N E D R A N T E D

R A N C H

T R A N C E M A L

G R A N D E S O D A

I O N R A N D O M

G U S T S L A U R A

S P O O K A R L E S

E M M Y S E E D

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

SARGE AND OTTO SURE LOOK ALIKE

THEY SAY PEOPLE AND PETS WHO SPEND TIME TOGETHER BEGIN TO LOOK ALIKE

HEY, WHERE DID PLATO GO?

GREG MORT WALKER

4-15

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

CHECK THIS OUT. AWW! OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS TOGETHER!

WE BOTH LOOK SO... YOUNG? THIN?

I WAS GOING TO SAY 'ENERGETIC'!

YEAH, WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU, ABOUT A YEAR LATER.