

Where are those who have gone missing?

Social awareness needed to counter the threat

As per a report published in this paper on July 21, some 262 people have gone "missing" over the last 18 months. We do not know how many of these individuals have ended up as militants but police sources estimate as many as 100 may have. This timeline coincides with the emergence of the Islamic State (IS) as a major force in the Middle East. Given the above, it is important that agencies delve deeply into how so many of the so-called militants have been motivated to join up with extremist organisations. We need to know the means and methodology of recruitment followed by outfits like the IS which is now allegedly drawing not only young and impressionable people but also established professionals to their fold.

This paper has been highlighting the problem of rising militancy for some time now. But to our dismay, these warnings have gone unheeded. We wonder how much can be done about those who have already signed up to foreign extremist outfits and left the country. But we can do something so that future recruitment can be stemmed. This requires the involvement of the society at large, cutting across party lines, where raising social awareness should be the key component. It requires parental involvement in the day to day lives of their children – how they spend their time in schools, finding out who their friends and associates are, what they read and watch. And there is greater need for the government agencies to work hand-in-hand with the community and religious leaders to counter the distorted messages that are being disseminated in the name of religion.

Disruption of classes at Chittagong University

General students held hostage to intra-party feud

ACADEMIC activities at the Chittagong University campus has virtually been suspended following an attack allegedly by some BCL members during which the driver of a university shuttle train and a policeman were injured. The disgruntled members were, reportedly, protesting the inclusion of alleged criminals and irregular students in the newly formed full committee of CU unit of BCL. But whatever the reasons, why should general students, members of the law enforcement agencies and government workers suffer for an intra-party issue of the student wing of the ruling party?

What message does this send to the all the students and the people when the country is going through a critical time? Why hasn't the government moved yet to bring normalcy to the campus? Why has no action been taken against the perpetrators so far? Why does the ruling party not realise that it is causing more damage to their reputation than good? Is the AL going to take responsibility if the ongoing turbulence leads to a session jam in the university?

We wonder how much longer the disruptive activities of the BCL members would be allowed to continue at the seats of learning around the country. Given the clout of the Chhatra League, it may not be possible for the university administration to end the ongoing situation at the university without the intervention of the ruling party. We call on the AL to take steps to restore the sanctity of universities so that academic activities can be resumed immediately.

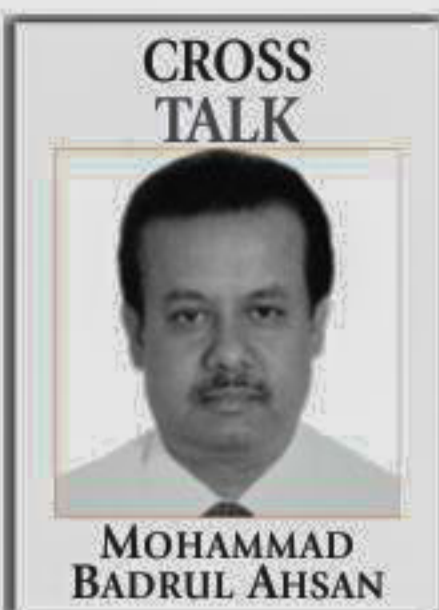
COMMENTS

"Little time for whom it's all about"
(July 18, 2016)

Sm Habibur Rahman Shabu

Not a single student of private universities cares for BCL's politics.

The Americans should have their own Chilcot



CROSS TALK

MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSAN

The Americans don't need to carry the burden of one man's guilt on their conscience. They, like the British people, have the right to know why their former leader had lied to take their country to a wasteful war.

EVER since the Chilcot Inquiry vilified former Prime Minister Tony Blair on July 6 for taking the United Kingdom to war in Iraq, the world is waiting for the other shoe to drop. If Blair deliberately exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam

Hussein, the report assessed he had done it at the behest of his American ally George W. Bush. That gives sufficient ground for the Americans to have their own Chilcot. Blair had bought the distribution rights on this of the Atlantic for the biggest lot of hogwash Bush sold to the entire world.

Bush and Blair remind one of America's most notorious criminal couple, Bonnie and Clyde. In the movie made on their life in 1967, Bonnie Parker tells Clyde Barrow after he rebuffs her romantic advances, "Your advertising is just dandy... folks would never guess you don't have a thing to sell." We don't know if the former British premier ever had the pride of an embarrassed Bonnie to tell his friend Bush before, during or after the Iraq invasion that he didn't have a thing to sell when he lied about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction.

The world knows that George Bush lied. It knows he fabricated that story to invade Iraq for more reasons than overthrowing its ruler. And, it doesn't seem to be an honest mistake or an error in judgment because Bush has never apologised, accepted responsibility or shown remorse for his decisions. Meanwhile,

the global chain reaction he set off has already killed thousands of men, women and children, and continues to convulse the world.

UK foreign secretary Philip Hammond said after the Chilcot report was released that the US blunder in Iraq led to the rise of IS. He criticised the US decision to dismantle the Iraqi army, when 400,000 unemployed soldiers, many of them Saddam loyalists, were let loose to graze on the fields of anger and vengeance.

In fact, it's not clear till today what has been accomplished by trashing a country to topple its dictator. It has been more than nine years since Saddam was hanged on an Eid day, but Iraq is bloodier, ever more violent and ever more confused. Pakistan is paranoid, Afghanistan is antsy, Syria is seething, Yemen is yelping, Turkey is terrorised, and European cities are reeling under terrorist attacks. Even a previously quiet country like Bangladesh has to look over its shoulder. IS has also turned its wrath on Indonesia, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

An American Chilcot inquiry should look into what goat George Bush had in this fight. Did he want to seek vengeance for the plot Saddam once had allegedly hatched to assassinate his father? Did he have a crusade mission to invade a vulnerable country and throw a monkey wrench into the Muslim world? Did he go after Iraq's oil? What did he actually want?

That Bush didn't go for the WMDs is clear already because he knew he couldn't find what wasn't there. He also didn't go there to fight terrorism because Saddam hasn't been linked to terror groups, which carried out the 9/11 attacks. He also didn't go to liberate Iraq, which is squirming under the oppressive burden of foreign invasion.

The United States needs a Chilcot-like investigation to answer these questions. It may take seven years or so, but better late than never. The Americans don't need to carry the burden of one man's guilt on their conscience. They, like the British people, have the right to know why their former leader had lied to take their country to a wasteful war.

It will be nice if the American inquiry summons Tony Blair as a witness. The investigators should have him sit together with George Bush at the same table and observe how they defend each other. Then both men should be provided with calculators to work out this simple math. Problem: Saddam was executed for the murder of 148 Iraqi Shi'ites. Solution: How many times should a devious duo be hanged for their misguided or mischievous policies that have killed nearly a million in Iraq, thousands in Syria and many more in other countries as collateral damage?

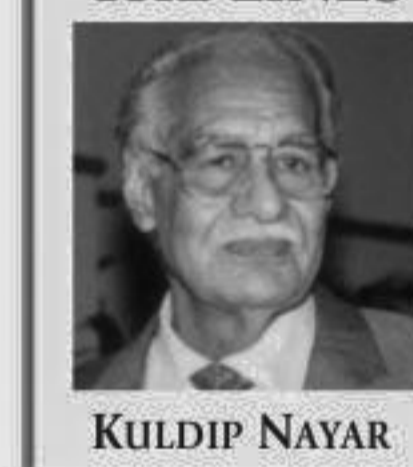
If the United States sincerely wishes to help other countries in their fight against terrorism, it must go back to the original sin and exonerate itself. It must explain to a disgusted world how an architect of anarchy could trigger turmoil worldwide and then enjoy the perks of a retired president without having so much as a rap on the knuckles!

Injecting air bubbles into the bloodstream can lead to brain damage or even death. An American inquiry needs to investigate how George Bush's "hot air" has created a similar medical condition across the world. Those left brain-damaged are ruthlessly killing, while others are helplessly dying in vain. Shame!

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Let's await the court's ruling

BETWEEN THE LINES



KULDEEP NAYYAR

then Home Minister Sardar Patel imposed a ban on the RSS which he withdrew when the organisation gave in writing that it was only a cultural outfit. However, the perception has remained till today.

The BJP, which is said to be a political wing of the RSS, has always denied the charge. But there is no clinching evidence either with the BJP elements or those opposed to it. Moreover, when Congress was in power at the Centre - they ruled for more than 50 years - it could have published the intelligence reports or some other documents to suggest that the assassination was the doing of the RSS. Nor could the BJP, when it was in power, release anything which would remove the charge once and for all.

What Rahul Gandhi has said was the perception prevailing throughout the country and abroad even today. At that time, the RSS elements were on the defensive and generally preferred to keep quiet. This only confirmed the perception that the Mahatma was killed by Nathuram Godse, a fanatic Hindu.

I was working with an Urdu newspaper, *Anjaam*, then. We were all sitting at the office when the PTI teleprinter machine's bell alerted a flash. We rushed to the machine and the cryptic message was: "Gandhi shot at!" I wasted no time and went straight to the Birla House on my scooter. My office was situated near Jamma Masjid and I rode through Darya Ganj area. The locality was calm and oblivious to the great tragedy.

There was a wooden gate at Birla House and there was no security to stop any visitor. I went to the raised platform where Gandhi's body, swathed in white khadi, was lying. Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy, came after I had reached the venue. He saluted the body; both Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Home Minister Patel, who followed him in the queue, were openly crying. The crowd had started swelling by then.

The assassin, Godse, who did not escape, was still there and surprisingly without any remorse. The carriage was carried through Raj Path - which is today called the Rajghat - with

Nehru and Patel sitting on either side. Ironically, Gandhi who had spread the new philosophy of non-violence to the world was taken for his last rites in a military vehicle, which the Mahatma would not have liked.

Rahul Gandhi was not even born then. But he had the privilege of being a scion of the family which gave its all to the national struggle. He has every right to find fault with the RSS and he is not a third party to the entire episode of courage and sacrifice. The entire conspiracy to kill the Mahatma has been placed before the public, though bit by bit. And there is no doubt that RSS elements were behind it.

In a letter addressed to jailor Arjun Das at Ambala, where he was detained, Godse confessed his involvement and argued that

diluting its stand. If it does so, the party would lose its face, more so Rahul Gandhi, who is being projected to lead the party in the next Lok Sabha elections. This is a tough case before the Supreme Court, because it is going to be damned if its verdict goes either in favour of the Congress or the RSS.

What saddens one is that the secular forces in the country are not marshalling their strength to face the biggest challenge to the idea of India, democratic and anti-communal. The struggle for independence was for the ethos of pluralism and egalitarianism. Gandhi was once portrayed as a "non-violent communist" and he did not take any offence to the comment, although communists had described him as "a running dog of imperialism".



Rahul Gandhi

SOURCE: TWITTER

Congress leaders at that time were weakening the country, making it an easy prey for Pakistan. This was a flimsy argument, which did not go down well with the public when the letter was ultimately released.

The dust of time has covered many a footstep and it is very difficult to find out today who else at the Nagpur headquarters of the RSS had blessed the heinous crime. This was probably the first crime committed in the name of ideology. Things have, however, changed now because the atmosphere has been politicised and there are very few voices left, whose credibility is beyond reproach. The RSS is still riding the high horse and refusing to join the conversation.

The fact that the matter has been given to the party spokesman to handle shows that the Congress is already making preparations for

My advice to the RSS and BJP is the same. Gandhi is an apostle of the marginalised and the backward. He represented the national struggle and India's emancipation from the British. This is the point on which all the political parties meet and they should have no hesitation in collectively recognising the fact that Gandhi rolled up the 150 years of foreign rule.

As for the allegations of Rahul Gandhi, the Supreme Court has taken note of them. In the wake of the court hearing, many skeletons may tumble out of the closet. Now that the Congress vice-president has refused to apologise - one can only hope that he will stick to his statement = the fat is on fire and the public may see an ideological warfare in the court itself. Rahul Gandhi is either made or marred.

The writer is an Indian columnist.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Being radicalised by disconnected societies

Many young men are becoming radicalised nowadays, not through social media or religion but through isolation, lack of self-confidence, discontentment with life, lack of finding a true purpose and lack of positive role models in our societies. At each stage of our civilisation, we experienced different forces of radicalism and ideologies that aimed to destroy peace in the world and take innocent lives, wearing masks of crusaders from the middle ages; through communism, the Nazi regime, and false religious leaders. Many would now blame the causes of unrest and violence on religion, but I believe the core lies inside a different monster.

Those who are becoming involved in these elements of destruction have nothing to do with preserving any

religious ideology but they believe in a politicised ideology of groups like IS, who are giving these misguided individuals a platform to boost either their psychopathic tendencies or a false notion of making their life meaningful through an illogical cause. The person who was involved in the recent tragic incident in Nice, France, had been such a person who was reported to be a loner, found no meaning in his job and was separated from his family. I guess he wanted to be someone special, and make the news.

How are we transforming the impressionable youth force into unconscionable killing machines? When we were kids, my parents were not at all worried when we were left to ourselves in the neighbourhood where all neighbours where part of an extended family, looking

out for each other. I would be taken home by a neighbour when I found myself lost in the nearby alley. Everyone cared, everyone shared. Parents paid attention to what we were doing instead of letting us sit with an electronic device in front of our face. Nowadays, teachers, parents, neighbours, all seem to want to somehow do their jobs, instead of understanding the young minds. Everyone wants to focus on individual gains, instead of focusing on "us".

This modernisation, 'living in apartments' culture, and dependence on technology is giving rise to a sense of isolation and detachment, as young people lack exposure to tradition, a sense of belongingness and inadequate sense of civic responsibilities that could make our lives more meaningful. We want to raise the

standards of education but why aren't we paying attention to the standard of care, morality and tolerance? Considering the fearful climate of our world, it's high time every institution pays attention to fill this widening gap by caring about the future generation, who are becoming disillusioned by groups that make them feel important through mindless acts.

We need to stop politicising the events and unite as a country and as citizens of the world, to help us all see the big picture and solve the problem from the root, instead of just cutting the branches.

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