NOTE

Rekindling Terrorism

Subhash Gatade writes:

The latest US congressional report on Terrorism has come out at a very inopportune time as far as President Bush and his team of neo-con advisers are concerned. The report presents a graphic portrayal of the way 'international terrorism was increasingly becoming a threat to US foreign, as well as domestic, security'. But it does not stop at that and rather moves beyond.It does not absolve the US administration completely of any role in creating or sustaining the whole situation. It not only underlines the 'obvious difference between the US administration's declared objective of promoting democracy in the Islamic world and its practices' but also holds it responsible for 'allowing terrorist groups to win sympathies of the people' by its 'support to totalitarian regimes in some Muslim countries'.

Obviously it would have been easier for the neo-cons to reject the findings of the study had it been prepared by someone from the Democratic Party or one of those regular peaceniks. But the problem is that it has been prepared by Congressional Research Service, which prepares policy papers for US lawmakers.

In a nutshell it tells the world that the (to quote an analyst) '...[t]he rise of anti-American terrorism owes nothing to American policies - in effect postulates an America that is always the aggrieved innocent in a treacherous world, a benign United States government peacefully going about its business but being "provoked' into taking extreme measures to defend its people, its freedom and democracy.' It was no surprise then that, in his simplistic world view which looks at it through the binary of 'good' and 'evil' Bush had commented after the exposure of the London plot: The London conspiracy is a 'stark reminder that this nation is at war with Islamic fascists who will use any means to destroy those of us who love freedom, to hurt our nation'.

Of course public posturing apart the rulers of the USA are not un-aware about the interconnections between their policies and terrorist activities, a Department of Defense study in 1997 had concluded: "Historical data show a strong correlation between US involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States."(US Department of Defense, October 1997, Final Report, vol.1. p.31)

Jimmy Carter had told the *New York Times* in a 1989 (March 26) interview : "We sent Marines into Lebanon and you only have to go to Lebanon, to Syria or to Jordan to witness first-hand the intense hatred among many people for the United States because we bombed and shelled and unmercifully killed totally innocent villagers - women and children and farmers and housewives - in those villages around Beirut. ... As a result of that ... we became kind of a Satan in the minds of those who are deeply resentful. That is what precipitated the taking of our hostages and that is what has precipitated some of the terrorist attacks."

In one of his celebrated pieces *'Our War On Terrorism'* Howard Zinn had rightly concluded that 'Unless we reexamine our policies-our quartering of soldiers in a hundred countries (the quartering of foreign soldiers, remember, was one of the grievances of the American revolutionaries), our support of the occupation of Palestinian lands, our

insistence on controlling the oil of the Middle East-we will always live in fear. If we were to announce that we will reconsider those policies, and began to change them, we might start to dry up the huge reservoir of hatred where terrorists are hatched.'

Is it possible to presume that Bush would ever get ready to listen to Zinn's unsolicited advice. ✍✍✍✍