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NEMESIS ON NEW NORMALS OF LIFE: A REVIEW OF *UNDERSTANDING POST 9/11 CROSS BORDER TERRORISM IN SOUTH ASIA, U.S. And Other Nations Perceptions*

Amulya K. Tripathy, D.Santishree Pandit, and Rosni Kujur (Eds.) *UNDERSTANDING POST 9/11 CROSS BORDER TERRORISM I N SOUTH ASIA, U.S. And Other Nations Perceptions* ESS Publications, New Delhi, 2016. ISBN:978-81-7000-800-2. Pp-303 / Rs 1250/-

**Reviewed by:
Dr. Gagan B. Purohit**

Terrorism taking toll on human life continues to be a national nemesis all over the world. Humanity has fallen prey to such a menace, all measures to tackle the problem being awfully inadequate, though. The final truth involving terrorism, for gaining political mileage, is even more lachrymose. The society does not seem to be in good frame of mind at all in view of invitation it offers for its own peril. The logic is understandable if we want to inflict pain onto others as part of human tendency, but when we put our own life in peril for no sound reason, it is either madness or suicidal. The litmus test involved in such a scenario is simple soul searching which would stand the whole world in good steads. Power play has the ominous consequences out of which terrorism is born, and has widespread out reaching which proves out to be a potential threat to humanity as a whole. If we dig a hole for somebody else it is likely that we would fall into the hole, earlier or later, depending upon the situation. This is the reason why Osama Bin Laden, one time protege of U.S. administration, has handed down the aftermath of 9/11 tragedy that shook the whole world. The twin-tower attack on the world trade centre, leaving many innocent lives to desperation and death has become incumbent upon us to rethink our strategies and approaches to this ever increasing problem. Against such a backdrop, the coming out of a book on terrorism and the aftermath of 9/11 is more than welcome and the editors seem to have done yeoman's service to students, scholars and other stakeholders by bringing out the volume in a matter of fact manner.

The book *Understanding Post 9/11 Cross-Border Terrorism in South Asia, U.S. And Other nations Perceptions* (2016) seems to be balanced on a knife-edge where wide ranging issues have been covered on the subject under discussion. The post 9/11 era has thrown more

challenges to South Asian Countries than solutions, and the knee-jerk response from the U.S. and other superpowers concerned has not augured well for the crisis-ridden region either. This is to say, each concerned country has suffered from the cold hand of terrorism besides being in a perennial state of fighting economic inadequacies. The U.S. is definitely a key factor in controlling the cruel menace of terrorism but it has strong issues with other stakeholders which only add to aggravate the situation further. Consensus being the need of the hour, each Asian country including U.S. has to shed personal one-upmanship to fight terrorism united. The essays, by and large, focus on issues related to general terrorism, cross-border terrorism, the role of stakeholders and others of their ilk. We can ill afford to lose U.S. endorsement in countering terrorism of various types. There are, if you don't mind me saying so, innumerable problems with the plan of tackling the terrorism peril. There are fourteen erudite and scholarly essays on different aspects of the topic, each having specific design and motto of correcting the ills of the issue at hand.

Sivani and J.K. Baral put the problem of terrorism and its cross-border counterpart in the right perspective by discussing the issue at length in the exhaustive introduction. Returning to and revisiting the roots of terrorism in South Asia, they put Pakistan's role to sword, and they also urge the beleaguered country to stop aiding and abetting terrorism. Accusing Pakistan of being the "epicenter of cross-border terrorism" and running terror training centers in PoK for infiltration in Jamu and Kashmir, and Punjab since the 80s, they point out with accurate data and statistics that Pakistan has not spared a single South Asian country including China, its long time ally. Revenge is on the priority list of Pakistan for it considers India responsible for the division of East Pakistan into Bangladesh. While Pakistan resorts to open violation of international law to aid and abet terrorism in Indian soil, India maintains its stoic patience putting diplomatic pressure to sideline Pakistan, inviting economic sanctions from all quarters. Of course, it has also been a victim of its own misdeed, from which even innocent school children are not spared, if now famous, Mallala Yousufzai's plight at the hands of Taliban is any indication. China's double standards are well known when it comes to imposing economic sanctions on Pakistan. After Soviet troops are withdrawn from Afganistan soil in and around 1989, the terrorist activities are redirected towards Indian state of Jamu and Kashmir. It is proved beyond doubt that the civilian administration is at loggerheads with the ISI and Pakistan Army, as has been amply evidenced by Nawaz Sarif's recent shocking revelation about Pakistan's role in Mumbai attack. What is more

glaring is, to avoid internal rift in Pakistan, it unleashes terror in India, diverting the attention of agitated people from dissatisfaction and disappointment. This, in fact, is Pakistan's new normal in aiding and abetting terrorism in India. Ideology is simply being sacrificed for utilitarian needs to grab power and fulfill its geopolitical commitments.

The second chapter by Amiya Paricha is appealing because of its simple revelation of the fact that the economic and political apathy of the South Asian countries are carried out with tacit connivance of the U.S. The third chapter by Amulya K. Tripathy explores the conflicting conflagration involving South Asian countries being confronted with the big-brotherly and ambiguous attitude of the US. Of course, Post 9/11 period has brought about a remarkable change in America's firm confirmation that Pakistan is the culprit. In the very next chapter, Roshni Kujur argues that South Asian countries including Pakistan abide by the conformist ideology propagated by the US in the wake of the aftermath of 9/11. Parties concerned have forgotten that terrorism is a universal threat; only regional interests have come to the fore in their fight against terrorism. India's plight against terrorism only hangs in balance. In the fifth chapter Sudhir Singh takes up a rather contemporary issue as to how Modi government finds it all the more difficult to tackle terrorism. The Maoist insurgency and Afghanistan concern is playing in the mind of the writer with clear cut conclusion that it is in the interest of Afghanistan lies India's lasting peace.

It's a matter of conscience that how we take recourse to nuclear terrorism when we know pretty well that nuclear bombing in Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki towns has devastated innocent people from which they could not recover till today. It is exactly with the same assertion that Atreyee Sharma maintains that a strange claim is being made by stakeholders in possession of Nuclear power. The frightening prospect of nuclear terrorism has been the main contentious issue between India and Pakistan. The seventh chapter also deals with the issue of nuclear proliferation in commensurate with nuclear programme.

India-Srilanka stalemate involving the state of Tamil Nadu experiences the subtle positioning in the post-LTTE era. The eighth chapter by D. Santishree and Rimili Basu make common cause of the issue of 'neighborhood first' and its political compulsions. The larger geopolitical dimensions of Indian Ocean and the South China Sea have brought about a global importance of South Asian region. Power equations between China and India, and other super

powers of the world have become the cut and thrust of policy matters leading to a cold war like situation in the region. How Nepal becomes the safe abode of terrorists and smugglers in recent times has been explicated in the ninth chapter by A. Bajpei. The next two chapters are devoted to Indo- Bangladesh relationship and how it has been jeopardized by the rise in radical Islamic fundamental elements. Tej Pratap Singh argues in chapter twelve that the US has unleashed ‘War on terror’ and ‘operation enduring freedom’ in Afghanistan taking help from Pakistan and chapters thirteen and fourteen concentrate on Indo-US joint efforts to combat terrorism. The fact remains that the US is adopting double standards to keep both India and Pakistan on guessing. India cannot trust upon the words of a highly unreliable ally like the US. Differences are there among concerned countries to realize their foreign policies. But no one seems to be serious about fighting terrorism; each country is busy safeguarding its own interests.

The book seems to be an exciting prospect for students, scholars and interested public in dire need of some update on terrorism and its larger geopolitical context. The hard bound and attractive look is simply assets for the readers who are willing to accommodate the moderate price tag. The work serves a warning. Terrorism is a political, social and economic creation. Political opportunism underscores the ways of democratic world order by encouraging both covert and overt terrorism, shutting down doors of debate.