

**A Shrinking World**  
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First of all I would like to submit my sincere and deep concern and sympathy to all Americans for the immense tragedy that has resulted from the barbaric terrorist attack on the United States. This reprehensible act is a crime not just against the United States, but also against all humanity and the whole world.

The September 11<sup>th</sup> incident was a great shock to me personally and increased the stress and fear I felt while I spent ten months in a very small town in Iowa away from my family in India. Although I visited the United States in 1999, this visit has changed some of my views about this country. My most important observation after September 11<sup>th</sup> was the sudden impact on the social, economical, political and spiritual institutions, as terrorism became a challenging act. Many Americans know that India is a country which greatly values a closed family system and hence is culturally united. My first observation as an Indian was that I could feel a similar emotional response among the people of the U.S. after September 11<sup>th</sup>. It was also a surprise to me to realize that many people have become more religious, feeling the power of God.

It has been an enriching, wonderful and challenging experience to be a Visiting Scholar and to exchange and share with the American society views about India, its culture and traditions. My stay in the U.S. and my interaction with students, faculty and others at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, as well as visits to many other parts of the country have shown me that Americans have recovered from their short-sightedness and many of them have come out of their "bubble" to see what is going on around them and also in other parts of the world.

Terrorism is a crime against humanity. Terrorists do not make distinctions in caste or faith. The whole purpose of terrorism is to hit out at innocents. This is an experience that India still has. I want all of you to make a note that India has traveled these gloomy dark by-lanes and roads of terrorism for the past two decades. I wish to emphasize here that India has been suffering from this cold war especially at her borders.

India, a democratic country, has experienced terrorism of various kinds in Kashmir, in the Punjab, and in the Northeast, with little success in arresting it for over fifty years. Countless innocent lives have been lost to the terrorist bombs and acts. Therefore, it stands as an example of a country; always looking for peace, which has dealt for a long time with anti-terrorist actions. It is also the largest country to offer to be part of the emerging international coalition.

The impression of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack from

the news coverage and reports has no doubt left all Indians in a state of shock of the grim reality. There has been understandable anger in the country for this evil act of violence killing 2,827 innocent victims including 250 Indians who had made the United States their home country. Every Indian feels that they are one with those who lost loved ones in the WTC attack. There are at least 53,000 families who felt the pain of this September 11<sup>th</sup> act; for terrorists have killed that many people in India over the last two decades. To support and join hands with the people of the U.S., the Embassy of India and the Indian American community held an interfaith prayer meeting, and a candlelight vigil was held at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial in New Delhi.

India consistently has highlighted the need for a unified international response to transnational and transborder terrorism. The links between terrorists groups operating in India and other countries are quite clear today to every part of the world and the role neighboring countries have played in allowing this scourge to spread has also been amply documented and understood. The people of India have expressed their grief and sorrow, and India declared a Day of Solidarity on September 18<sup>th</sup> as a memorial to the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy. A well-attended function was held to mark the day of solidarity.

To go back to the history of terrorism, India has been witnessing terrorist violence since 1980, initially in Punjab, since 1989 in Jammu and Kashmir, and in other parts of India. India has suffered 45,182 terrorist incidents in Jammu-Kashmir alone. Though for many incidents security forces were targeted, the majority involved attacks on civilians. Nearly 30,000 people, mostly women and children, have been killed in terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir involving both shootings and bombings. There have been terrorist activities responsible for 2,466 kidnappings and 791 cases of extortion since 1989, and this has resulted in extensive destruction of property in Jammu and Kashmir. There were attacks targeted on 780 educational institutions in a bid to destroy modern education, because the terrorists, with their fundamentalist ideologies, do not approve. On March 12, 1993, serial blasts in Mumbai resulted in the deaths of around 260 persons and injury to 700 others. The loss of property was estimated to be worth 270 million dollars.

On behalf of all the citizens of my country, I express my sincere thanks to United States as it is now working on a global-wide operation against terrorism. But I am sad to mention, that though progress has been made in the global campaign against terrorism, there were still terrorist attacks in Srinagar on October 1, 2001, where 27 were killed and 60 injured in the Indian Parliament house in New Delhi on December 13, 2001.

What I wish to emphasize is that the September 11<sup>th</sup> incident has been considered the most important global issue. Every national and international TV station broadcast news about this deadliest terrorist attack, and the public mood in India was reported to be buoyant. My sensitive question concerns the opinions of Americans who knew about the terrorist attacks in India, especially at the Indian border, and

how they discuss these issues.

The September 11<sup>th</sup> incident has also created a global awareness of terrorism among Indians, from school children who initiated processions with Indian and American flags shouting slogans against terrorism, to the Veteran freedom fighters who lit candles in memory of the American victims. India is always ready to provide support for the U.S. to fight against the menace of terrorism. President Bush's statement on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> day after the terrorist attack in the United States was noted and well appreciated by millions of Indians because he condemned the terrorist attacks against India.

The images of horror perpetrated in New York and Washington D.C have raised a collective consciousness not only among Indians but among the whole world that now realizes that terrorism is the greatest threat to our times. I believe the Indian community has responded in many ways and expressed its collective challenge to uproot terrorism and bring peace, security and progress to mankind.

Most Indians appreciate the U.S. Government's step-by-step diplomatic approach toward terrorism before resorting to real force. This crusade is against terrorism, not against Islam. These are wise decisions and made India's cooperation with the U.S. more plausible. At the same time there are also doubts and fears among Indians that shutting down the Afghanistan base by the U.S. military will only cause it to migrate, possibly in part to India, i.e., Kashmir. If operations are intensified, something like September 11<sup>th</sup> might happen against Indian targets, and ultimately there will be terrific pressure on New Delhi to retaliate massively. This could lead to a confrontation with neighboring countries the likes of which we have not seen, in which nuclear weapons might be used.

The United Nations University Leadership Academy (UNULA) recently reported that citizens of both the U.S. and India now rank terrorism as the most pressing national and global concern. One in three Americans and 17% of Indians see terrorism as the top national problem, while 26 % of Americans and 44% of Indians see terrorism as a global problem. Among Americans, the top five national problems are terrorism, war, personal safety, poverty and the economy. In India the top five national problems are terrorism, unemployment, poverty, over-population and the economy.

In addition, another major impact of September 11<sup>th</sup> is the crash in the high-tech marketing sector, and many Indians have returned home jobless, affecting the economy and lifestyles of many middle class families in India. The survey also reflects that while the impact of September 11<sup>th</sup> was global, the December 13<sup>th</sup> storming of India's parliament was not. This clearly shows that the coverage of international news is less important on American TV, and that this is why Americans have remained silent for years and have not been exposed to other parts of the world.

Our Prime Minister has awakened and has motivated each Indian to be part of this global war on terrorism. We must and will stamp out this evil from our land and the world. Leaving these political situations in the hands of leaders and

policy makers, I would like to highlight the impact of globalization more generally. The world is shrinking slowly as globalization progresses daily. India is the leading country in the IT sector, and there has been tremendous growth in both human resources and the quality of computer-based education. The immigration of Indians to United States has risen more than two-fold in 2001. The number of Indians living in the U.S. is around 1.7 million, the third-largest Asian community after Chinese and Filipinos.

India's most prized resource in today's economy is its readily available technical workforce. India has the second largest number of English-speaking scientific professionals in the world, second only to the U.S. It is estimated that India has over 4 million technical workers, and over 1,832 educational institutions and polytechnics, which train more than 67,785 computer professionals every year. As India is racing to become the fastest-growing internet market, even faster than China, internet culture is slowly changing Indian traditions and culture due to Western impact, and many fear the loss of her cultural identity.

I leave a question for thought rather than summarizing or concluding. Is the world shrinking day by day because of Globalization or Americanization?

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