



Shades of Gujral doctrine

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Manmohan Singh's Government is high on rhetoric but low on resolute action in order to deal with terrorism

I was in Delhi when France played the final of the FIFA World Cup against Italy. The next few days were not easy for Persons of French Origin. Until then I had thought football generated little interest in India, but suddenly I discovered there were millions of 'specialists' giving their opinion. Of course, the most talked about incident was Zidane's head-butt. Condemnation was unanimous. I had to duck questions like, "How could he do that?" "Such bad manners?"

A few days later, a series of bomb blasts in Mumbai killed nearly 200 people. Though Government was quick to condemn this atrocious act 'planned' from across the border, nothing was done except the usual VVIPs visits and the police's daily press conferences. Zidane's head butt then came back to my mind: Is it healthy to always be beaten and insulted and to say nothing? Retrospectively, I can't condemn Zidane.

In the far more serious case of the bomb blasts, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh could only assert that his Government "cannot allow the (terrorists) to succeed and get away with their crimes". Would a 'legitimate' head butt make the perpetrators of terror better understand that they can't "get away with crime"?

The next day was the announcement of the dramatic arrest in Nigeria (and later disappearance) of Syed Abdul Karim, alias Tunda. He is one

of the founders of the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba and one of the 20 terrorists whose extradition was demanded from Gen Musharraf after the 2001 attack on Parliament. The list includes Dawood Ibrahim, LeT chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed and JeM's Maulana Masood Azhar.

After Mumbai bombings, the MEA spokesman suddenly remembered that the list of 20 had been given to the Pakistani dictator. The spokesman could only say that India was disappointed at the General's continued denial of the presence of terror groups in his country and Pakistan's failure to take action against *jihadi* outfits. But what has India done to press its point?

Delhi said that it remained committed to the dialogue process, though the Foreign Secretaries' talks were postponed. The problem seems to me that the Indian officials remain mild only because they are afraid to get a red card from the Americans, who refuse to pressure their favourite dictator to book the infamous 20.

I recently began sorting out some old historical documents collected over the years. Soon after Gen Musharraf's speech, I came across a letter I had forgotten. It was written in January 1959 by Bernard Dufournier, the French Ambassador to Pakistan, to his boss and Foreign Minister, Maurice Couve de Murville.

Dufournier analyses the situation two months after Gen Ayub Khan's and his self-promotion as Field Marshall. The striking analysis of the diplomats says: "The establishment of a dictatorship in Pakistan coincides with new tensions between Delhi and Karachi." The renewed tensions were obviously centred on the 'K' issue. The ambassador writes: "Pakistan's claims (on Kashmir) seem without hope, as India will not backtrack on Kashmir accession and one more resolution in the UN will not change this basic fact."

Then, a more interesting question: "However, would the politicians in Karachi play (in such way) with the fate of Pakistan if, behind the screen, were not hidden deeper designs?" The letter mentions "tactics serving to cover a more tortuous strategy, whose motives cannot be openly exposed". What is the strategy; the answer is: "The final objective (is) to throw back into question partition itself and change the balance put in place by the (British) power in 1947."

Dufournier continues: "If one accepts this hypothesis, the policy of Karachi Government is an open book. The Pakistanis have never accepted the repartition of territories between the India and Pakistan." Meanwhile, using a rostrum near Red Fort, Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, blamed the Shiv Sena and RSS for the Mumbai blasts. He even said that he was willing to visit Pakistan and 'talk' to LeT commanders if he was given proof of their involvement: "If they are responsible then we will talk to them, tell them that they do more harm to the cause of Islam."

The Imam added, "If you want to end terrorism, then you would also have to end state terrorism." What does it mean? During the UP election campaign he had said: "When Muslims get targeted under these so-called secular parties, it is time we taught them a lesson. It is time Shias, Sunnis, Ansaris, Saifis, Barelvis, Qureshis and all else stand up as one - as Muslims - and snatch back our collective rights and dignity." Does not secular India forbid appealing for votes on religious grounds?

In 1959, the French diplomat, speaking of the possibility of Pakistan's holy war, had concluded: "The minarets of the Delhi mosques will loom on the horizons as a mirage, this dream is for many Pakistanis, at least for the political leaders, the reality of tomorrow... it is from this angle that the military dictatorship envisages its future relations with

India."

Much water has flowed down the Indus since 1947, but one thing has not changed: The US still supports Pakistan. Could a 'diplomatic' head butt make it wake up to the reality? Unfortunately, Delhi is too obsessed with the 'deal'!