



Globalization, Terrorism and Vicious Cycles of Violence by Vandana Shiva

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Terror has become the code word of our times. We live in terror and fear: terror created either by the corporate hijack of our economies, resources and lives; or terror created by frustrated angry young men called terrorists who use the tools and logic of a terror system to try to pull it down while they actually reinforce it; or terror created by police states which morph all peace loving, democratic citizens into “terrorists” because these states themselves have morphed into corporate states that see their primary duty as the defence and protection of corrupt and greedy corporations and their illegitimate rights, rather than the protection of their citizens and the legitimate rights of people.

Just a few years ago, the pundits of corporate globalization were telling us that globalization would herald an era of prosperity and peace. Instead, we have been thrown into unprecedented poverty and violence. The economic terrorism of corporate globalization, the political terrorism of fascist, corporate police states, and the cultural terrorism of fundamentalism and extremism feed on each other, creating vicious cycles of violence along with injustice and non-sustainability and fear.

This paper is an attempt to understand how these vicious cycles are emerging and how we can create virtuous cycles of peace, hope, sustainability and justice.

The “war against terror” declared in response to 9/11 was supposed to stop terrorist attacks. Instead, terrorism has increased worldwide. Bali and Moscow, Mombasa – every day there is news of new 9/11s. And smaller 9/11s have become routine.

Attacks on US Targets in 2002

Nov. 24, Aqaba	Pizza Hut set alight in Jordanian Red Sea resort
Nov. 22, Dubai	Gunman targets US military helicopter at Dubai's al-Fujairah airport
Nov. 21, Sidon	US missionary Bonnie Penner killed in Southern Lebanon
Nov. 21, Kuwait	Two US soldiers shot while travelling near Camp Doha military base
Nov. 20, Riyadh	McDonald's restaurant set ablaze near US airbase in Saudi Arabia's Kharj province
Nov. 13, Tripoli	Bomb attacks on three American-style restaurants
Nov. 12, Tripoli	Bomb attacks on Pizza Hut restaurant in Northern Lebanon
Oct. 28, Amman	Gunmen kill US diplomat, Laurence Foley of the US Agency for International Development
Oct. 8, Failaka	One US marine killed and another injured by gunmen on Kuwaitian island
Sept. 23, Beirut	Small bomb in parking lot of McDonald's restaurant
May 9, Tripoli	Explosion at Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in Lebanon. ¹

India, which lost two Prime Ministers to terrorism, has seen terrorism increase since 9/11.

More than a million soldiers were posted on the border of Pakistan after a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001. Thirteen persons, including five terrorists, were killed in the attack.

Earlier, on October 1, 2001, soon after 9/11, twenty-two persons were killed and sixty injured when a Jaish-e-Mohammed suicide bomber blew himself up outside the regional parliament of Jammu and Kashmir State.

On May 14, 2002, thirty people, mostly women and children were killed by terrorists at Kaluchak in Jammu. The police killed the attackers.

On February 27, 2002, fifty-seven Hindu activists returning from the controversial Ayodhya temple on the Sabarmati Express died when the train compartment they were travelling in was torched at Godhra station in Gujarat.

Over the next few months more than two thousand Muslims were brutally killed in Gujarat as a backlash. The killings continue.

On September 24, 2002, two terrorists stormed into Akshardham, the Swaminarain temple in Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat. Twenty-nine people, including four children and their security personnel, were killed. All temples in India were subsequently put under strict security.

On November 3, 2002, the eve of India's festival of lights which celebrates the victory of Ram over Ravana in the epic Ramayana, two terrorists were killed in an encounter in the largest new shopping plaza, Ansal Plaza in India's capital.

On November 22, 2002, two suicide bombers killed six security personnel and injured nine at a Central Reserve Police Force Formation in Srinagar.

On November 24, 2002, militants attacked the Raghunath temple in Jammu killing nine persons and injuring forty-two. Another terrorist attack was simultaneously launched at the Shivalaya Mandir, a few hundred metres away from the Raghunath temple.

How did the land of Buddha, Mahavir and Gandhi get to be labelled the "most dangerous place on earth"? How did the cradle of creeds based on compassion, inclusiveness and peace become the land of hatred, exclusion and potential nuclear war? How did a civilization based on diversity mutate into militarized monocultures?

There are no one-dimensional explanations for this tectonic transformation. But three forms of violence have converged in space and time in the Indian sub-continent: the violence of globalization, the violence of a global war, and the violence unleashed by a politics of fragmented and fundamentalist identities. Globalization is forging globally shaped, narrow nationalist identities, whilst national sovereignty and economic democracy are destroyed. Fundamentalism and terrorism are the other side of the globalization coin.

The eruption of violence in India, the land of peace, is a product of the lethal mix of free trade and globalization – resulting in the impoverishment and vulnerability of the ordinary people and the death of economic democracy – and the rise of fragmenting politics based on fundamentalist ideologies, which both feed on people's insecurities and divert political energies from the search for justice, basic needs and equality to a politics of hatred and war. The global war against terror unleashed since 9/11 – with the backdrop of the "crusades" and the "clash of civilizations" – has also contributed to the spread of the virus of hatred.

Violence, war and genocide have been made the norm as corporate globalization is aided by the globalization of fascism. Fundamentalist Hindutva has gained support from the global war against terror to define Muslims as the “enemy”. As the General Secretary of the World Hindu Council, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), stated,

“It is necessary for India, Jews and the Western world to come together and fight Islamic militants.”²

However, this construction removes Muslims from their home in India and treats them all as potential terrorists. 9/11 and the response to it have reshaped the contours of India’s politics and culture. They have allowed the emergence of new fascistic tendencies emboldened by the global war against terror and the criminalization of all Muslims.

Different strands of terrorism are feeding on each other, creating vicious cycles of violence. The dominant forms of mutually reinforcing terrorisms are:

1. The economic terrorism of corporate globalization and trade liberalisation.
2. The cultural terrorism of the excluded and the extremism born of economic insecurities and mutant cultural identities.
3. The political terrorism of states supporting globalization and promoting fundamentalism.

“Globalization” and “terrorism” are the dominant terms of our times. They are usually treated as separate, but are intimately interconnected at multiple levels. They reinforce each other and create vicious cycles of violence.

Globalization as Economic Terrorism

To terrorise is to fill with terror and fear, to coerce by threat or violence. Terrorism is the systematic use of terror as a means of coercion.

Globalization in the form of coercive rules of trade and trade liberalization, whether embodied in the structural adjustment conditionalities of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), or in the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), is clearly a form of terrorism. The financial

conditionalities of the World Bank and the trade sanctions of the WTO are the systematic use of terror against the poor and the Third World to coerce them to give up what little they have and transform it into the property and markets of global corporations. This terrorism is particularly vicious in the area of vital resources such as biodiversity and water, and basic needs such as food. In this sense, globalization is genocidal. But it is also suicidal as recorded in the collapse of Enron, WorldCom, Vivendi and other corporations.

Globalization as Source of Insecurity and Exclusion: The Context for Rise of Terrorism

Globalization is a war against people, especially the poor. Anti-globalization movements and movements for the defence of people's rights to livelihoods and basic needs are the democratic and peaceful response to the terrorism of globalization. These are movements based on hope – they strive to create a better world. They are movements focussing on economic injustice and seeking to correct it through democracy.

However, the economic exclusion and economic insecurity intrinsic to globalization also create a climate of fear and hopelessness, especially among those who are unable to grasp the roots of their insecurity in the terrorism of globalization.

The negative economy of globalization creates a culture of despair and fear. It integrates markets globally, but excludes people from the economy and from democratic decision making.

Economic exclusion creates political, social and cultural exclusion and insecurity. Exclusion and insecurity provide fertile ground for breeding extremism, terrorism and fundamentalism. It is a child of economies built without concern for people.

Democracy emptied of economic and ecological freedoms becomes a potent breeding ground for fundamentalism and terrorism.

Over the past two decades, I have witnessed conflicts over development and conflicts over natural resources mutate into communal conflicts, culminating in extremism and terrorism. My book *Violence of the Green Revolution* was an attempt to understand the ecology of terrorism.³ *Harvest of Rage* drew similar links between the Oklahoma bombing and the US farm crisis, and how it creates fertile ground for extremist fundamentalist ideologies and actions.⁴

Globalization and the Rise of Xenophobic Fundamentalist Politics

When democracy is emptied of economic content, and national politics is emptied of economic sovereignty by shifting economic power and decision making to outside national boundaries – to the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF and global corporations – representative democracy feeds on and nurtures a politics of Divide and Rule on the basis of ethnicity, caste, and religion. Class issues and economic justice disappear and are replaced by the politics of identity. Centralized economic systems also erode the democratic base of politics. In a democracy, the economic agenda is the political agenda. When the former is hijacked by the World Bank, the IMF, or the WTO, democracy is decimated. The only cards left in the hands of politicians eager to garner votes are those of race, religion, and ethnicity, which subsequently give rise to fundamentalism. And fundamentalism effectively fills the vacuum left by a decaying democracy. Economic globalization is feeding economic insecurity, eroding cultural diversity and identity, and assaulting the political freedoms of citizens. Instead of integrating people, corporate globalization is tearing apart communities.

Terrorism and Fundamentalism in Support of Globalization

Social and political polarizations are also useful as threats, diversions and smokescreens to push through the agenda of corporate globalization, against which there is worldwide resistance and backlash. There is in fact a comfortable partnership between the supporters of globalization and the promoters of the politics of hate. By keeping people's energies diverted from issues of basic needs and economic democracy, xenophobia and communalism⁵ help keep an unjust and inequitable economic order in place. And the rise of terrorism is used to push forward the free trade globalization agenda. In Seattle in 1999, democratic forces had ground the World Trade Organization to a halt. We had even named the WTO the World Terrorist Organisation. However, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were used to resurrect a failing WTO and even enlarge its powers. As a Third World country representative has stated,

“September 11th is an act to be lamented by all humanity, but what gives cause for even greater regret, are the economic benefits that were extracted by the industrialized countries out of this disaster. I would even venture to say that if September 11 had not happened, the Doha ministerial declaration would not have contained even half of its obligations.”⁶

In Doha, Pakistan was silenced by a “one billion dollar plus” aid package to reward Pakistan's support of the US in Afghanistan. President Musharraf was in

Washington while the WTO Ministerial was under way one day after the conclusion of the Doha negotiations. That day the aid package was endorsed in Washington. India too was silenced at the last minute by making the accusation that opposing a new round for enlarged WTO powers implied supporting terrorism. While India and Pakistan were silenced in Doha, communities were divided and pitted against one another in the sub-continent.

During the worst violence since India's Independence, both genetically modified (GM) crops and a new Patent Act were cleared. Corporations gain from globalization and its fall out in terms of social disintegration.

The US "Homeland Security Act" has been used to create corporate subsidies for the information and biotechnology industry, it has been used to give immunity to the pharmaceutical industry.

In India, all anti-legislation in key sectors was passed when communal frenzy was at its peak.

Political Terrorism in Defence of Globalization

Those responsible for corporate globalization are increasingly trying to criminalize dissent and democracy by identifying the movements for justice and peace with "terrorism". The war against terror becomes a war against people fighting the terror of globalization. Using old laws from the fascist period, the arrest of twenty young activists of the anti-globalization movement in Italy on November 15, 2002 – a few days after the very successful and totally peaceful rally of a million people in Florence at the European Social Forum – is an example of how all democratic protest against undemocratic and brutal economic globalization is being criminalized and labelled as terrorist. In the language and perception of those supporting corporate globalization, defence of democracy = terrorism. This is a recipe for fascism and police states.

Instead of addressing the root causes of terrorism and fundamentalism along with the growth of economic insecurity and the collapse of economic democracy and ensuring that people's needs are met and their livelihoods protected, states across the world are equipping themselves with laws to shut down democracy and freedom in the name of fighting terror.

Whether it is the Patriot Act in the US, India's Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), or the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) of the UK, new

laws created after September 11, 2001 are not just laws against terrorists – they are also laws against citizens' democratic defence of their fundamental freedoms that are being trampled upon by the forces of globalization.

Fear and violence are currently the dominant forms of human expression. Rule through fear and violence is becoming the dominant mechanism for governance. In another period, it would have been described as the rise of fascism and totalitarianism – with the totalitarianism of corporate control over markets combined with the totalitarianism of militarized states, taking away from people their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Roots of Terrorisms

Even though globalization and terrorism are interconnected and support each other, the dominant system constructs the roots of terrorism as laying not in the economic insecurity and political exclusion of economic globalization, but in artificially constructed insular identities. This Cartesian essentialising is doubly convenient. On the one hand, it divorces terrorism from its roots by separating it from the context of insecurity and exclusion engendered by globalization. On the other, it allows the disease of globalization to be offered as the cure for the symptoms of terrorism that it has given rise to.

However, extremist violence and religious intolerance are growing and not disappearing as economic globalization spreads. It is helpful to pause and reflect on the context which creates violence, because that can help us find ways to build cultures of non-violence.

Violence and non-violence are not essential characteristics or traits of particular groups of people or cultures. They are potentials, which emerge according to the context. Just as the quantum measurement influences the property of quanta, the political and economic context create potential for violence or non-violence.

Year 2001 will be etched in our memory as a year in which the vicious cycle of violence was unleashed worldwide. The year of the Taliban bombing the two thousand year old images of peace, the Buddhas of Bamiyan. Of terrorists blowing up the World Trade Center on September 11, and attempting to blow up the Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, on October 1, and the Indian Parliament on December 13. Of a global alliance bombing out what remained of Afghanistan after two decades of Superpower rivalry, and civil war. Of Pakistan and India threatening to go to war as 2001 gave way to 2002.

But there has been terrorism before 9/11. In the 1980s Punjab was destabilised by extremism. The Oklahoma bombing was carried out in the heart of America by Americans. Terrorism cannot be identified with any particular group, race or religion. We have had terrorists of every race and religion. To understand the roots of terrorism, we need to understand the roots of violence:

Why is violence engulfing us so rapidly, so totally? Why has violence become the dominant feature of the human species across cultures? Could the violence characterising human societies in the new millennium be linked with violent structures and institutions we have created to reduce society to markets and humans to consumers?

Notes

1. Quoted from "Arab Frustration at US sills into violence", in *Financial Times*, November 27, 2002.
2. Pravin Togadia at a press conference in Mumbai, quoted in *The Asian Age*, February 7, 2002.
3. Vandana Shiva, *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics*, London: ZED Books, 1992.
4. Joel Dyer, *Harvest of Rage: Why Oklahoma City Is Only the Beginning*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1998.
5. According to Wikipedia.org, communalism "is used in South Asia to denote attempts to promote primarily religious stereotypes between groups of people identified as different communities and to stimulate violence between those groups. The sense given to this word in South Asia is represented by the word sectarianism outside South Asia." – Editor's note.
6. Quoted in Aileen Kwa, "Power Politics in the WTO", in Alec Bamford (ed.), *Focus on the Global South*, Bangkok, November, 2002, p. 13. Available on <http://www.focusweb.org/publications/Books/power-politics-in-the-WTO.pdf/>.