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Rising Terrorism in West Asia may reshape Geo-political Landscape!

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Guest Column by Dr. Sudhanshu Tripathi

As has been seen in the past that terrorism or any kind of uncontrolled violence perpetrated upon innocents for long have always resulted into large scale migrations from their homes to other safer places in the world, thereby affecting geo-politics- a branch of study which deals with relations between geography and politics.

With almost sudden spurt of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) led terror activities particularly in Iraq and Syria in the recent past, though the entire West Asia has become a burning cauldron of terror for the last many decades thereby turning the region into a virtual war zone, a new dimension in the phenomenon of terrorism is being seen in the world where hapless innocents are being butchered or shot dead in their forehead or back, or being burnt alive in a cage, or hanged upside down ultimately for killing and several hitherto unknown inhuman ways and these cruelties are being recorded to make viral on internet so that entire population upon earth may watch to their utter dismay and disgust. Besides causing several adverse indelible impacts upon the normal human psyche, the continuing ghastly massacre by the ISIS in the region has resulted into an uncontrolled mammoth flow of migrants/ refugees from West Asia into Europe thereby raising the issue of geo-politics, a study which deals with relations between geography and politics.

Unlike Al-Qaida, the ISIS has never been a hit-and-run jihadist group as its leader Abu Bakr al- Baghdadi has had his political ambitions very clear since 2013, when he fought for territories in Syria and Iraq and steadily expanded its reach, capitalising on the power vacuum created in these two countries by the wars led and sponsored by the West and their regional allies. The ISIS now controls territories as large as Great Britain and comprising some 10 million people. But of late, under counter-attack from different militia groups such the Peshmerga, Hezbollah and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the ISIS' expansionary project has come under enormous pressure. Meanwhile, an

entire continent has developed a siege mentality and European countries are being compelled to review and change their laissez-faire procedures and security doctrines under the huge pressure of uncontrolled flow of refugees from West Asia and other regions, besides terrorism. Obviously, terrorism or any kind of uncontrolled violence perpetrated upon innocents for long in the past had resulted into large scale displacement of communities all over the world as everybody wants safety and protection of one's life and person. But that raises many demographic as well as economic and political issues as huge influx of refugees tends to change the composition of existing native population as happened in India's Pak-occupied Kashmir (POK) in the state of Jammu and Kashmir immediately after independence where thousands of Pakistani tribal population, under instigation of Pakistan's government, intruded into valley and settled down there and that has fundamentally changed the demographic character of the valley today. The same had also happened in Palestine's Gaza strip where native Palestinians were uprooted from soil by Israeli army and Jews population were brought to settle down there during long course of past decades in the previous century. Earlier, the long course of second-World War saw the division of Germany into East and West thereby weakening its position as a powerful nation. Even much earlier, the painful Thirty-Years War causing 'Balkanisation of Europe' during 17th century brought to close by the famous Peace Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 had traumatised the consolidated power of Europe and that fear again looms large due to continuing civil wars in Syria and Iraq which has now metastasised into Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and now into Europe. Thus terrorism or war has its marked impact upon geo-politics of a country or a continent.

Thus the present phase of continuing terrorism, particularly by the ISIS, has already caused the large scale migrations from West Asia and Africa into Europe. The ISIS has its hidden agenda of forming a global caliphate with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as supreme Caliph which shall reshape the political geography of the region and also impact the nature of politics therein. That will propel a fresh wave of terror in the name of Islam or jihad in the region and also in the world which will adversely impact the on-going course of democratisation and liberalisation of international politics in the present age of globalisation. In fact, mounting terrorism and counter terror operations will result into excessive use of fire weapons, polluting the environment and endangering the human health and settlements. This is exactly going on there. As the entire region is oil and gas rich and the dependence of many of even highly industrialised and advanced countries on these is not going to lessen in near future, the pre-eminence of the region will remain same for their energy security reasons and it will remain a fierce battle-field for all powers of the world, as it continues to be since decades.

As a matter of fact, the on-going wave of terrorism and religious fundamentalism presents many unique challenges before humanity. The absence of a bi-polar world combined with increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has given individual terrorists enormous ability to wreak havoc on an unprecedented scale. The phenomenon of globalization has increasingly tightened the connectivity of nations in the developed regions of the world while at the same time widening the gulf between the developed and the developing nations. This division between the two must be narrowed if the war on terror is to be won and the geo-political status-quo is to be maintained for ensuring permanent peace and security in West Asia and also in the whole world, as ***nothing is beyond human endeavour.***

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