

CONFRONTING TERRORISM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN THE MOVIE ‘HOLIDAY’

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Abstract

The swift changing era of globalization has led us to Avantgarde technology which is indispensable for the development of an individual and society at a large but with this advancement has entered some bugs in the edifice of fraternity to hollow it within.

Terrorism, which now no more remains a word, is a widespread movement of terror throughout the globe. On a large scale, there are many anti-social groups responsible to promote terrorism. They have their own management, delegation of powers, execution system and set tasks. It's not that easy to deal with terrorism and try to get rid of it. There are so many agencies, government and non-government organisation fighting against it. On the national and world level, there are armies, police force, and intelligence bureaus working for peace making. Media, in all its forms, has always been credited for informing about various kinds of peace making activities and spreading awareness about the multifarious crimes. Media, in the silhouette of movies has time being shown all the aspects of terrorism using different plots.

Recently released Bollywood movie ‘Holiday: A Soldier is Never off Duty’ is a journey of a DIA officer Virat. The movie very effectively makes us realize the painful efforts which the peacemakers undergo.

This paper is an analysis of the strategies and ways for peace making depicted in the movie. It is also an attempt to examine the risks involved on organizational and individual level and its effect on the personal and professional front of the individual. The way in which these wayward, blind-folded anti-social beings put all their heart and mind in the game of destroying lives, in the same way, as shown in the movie, our peace makers should take steps to evacuate even the germs of terrorism, is also a major concern of this paper.

The movie elaborates the life of the peace makers. The protagonist 'Virat' from Indian Army, a role played by Akshay Kumar, comes for a holiday to his home town and an ambiance of merriment prevails in his family due to his arrival and talks about his marriage. While on vacation too, he is too vigilant as he is on duty towards the protection of the nation. Virat grabs one of the defendants of terrorism during a bus bomb blast. As Saibal Chatterjee puts up in his review of the movie, "Sure enough, the hero's holiday quickly turns into a protracted unofficial anti-terror military op". The masterminds, who with the help of sleeper cells (trained terrorists disguised as common men in society), were eagerly waiting to create havoc in the city were confronted by the brilliant mind of Virat. His eagle's eye approach could foresee the trap smitten by the sleeper cells to promote terrorism. The police force which is considered to be the life saviour of the masses has flaws in their system as they have a wrong commissioner (ACP) Ashok Gaikwad who has joined hands with terrorists in spite being a nation's protector. The hollowness of the system of the country's administration is shown to be in the weaker and hypocrite hands. Virat goes to the ACP's place and reveals his identity and discloses that he is a specialist of DIA (Defence Intelligence Agency), a secret agent in the Army and leaves him with no other option than shooting himself with his own gun. As shown in the movie, the head of these cells operates from the North Western Border of India, Thar.

Virat finds a blank paper in the bag of the caught terrorist later of which he knows is a hidden map which he traces and gets to know the plan of the terrorists to spread terror and massacre in twelve different areas of Mumbai by implanting bombs with the help of the sleeper cells. To beat this chain of sleeper cells, even Virat strategizes to build up a chain of Army men (his friends and colleagues) to cover each sleeper cell and shoot them at one time. The plan is well executed and the city gets saved in the hands of the peace makers. But it was not the end of the game. The sleeper cells were only a part of the plan; the mastermind still watched the whole game remaining outside it. Then came a stroke to the families of the Army men involved in the destruction of the sleeper cells; girls were abducted from their homes and kept at a place by the terrorist group. Virat intentionally switches the position of his sister with other Army man's sister. With the help of a trained dog, he manages to find them and destroys all the terrorists involved in abduction except one whom he keeps in his custody secretly and saves all the girls.

The strategies do not directly influence the real life situations but clearly helps in providing few suggestions and solutions. When Virat's sister who was too abducted by the terrorists says that why did he put her life in danger intentionally, he should have put his own life on stake instead of hers than Virat says

kyu tum civilians apni jaanhi de sakte ho? Jaan dene kathe kasirf ye military aur police walo ne hi le rakhai kya? Haan tum log to aaram se news channel dekh kar sofe pe beth kar aur comment pass kiyakaro; ye police walokona esakr nachahiye... nhinhinhi military waale galat kr rhe hain inko esakr nachahiye tha. Khudh kuchh mat kiyakaro

And when she asked him what if she would have died in this game plan of his? In response to this Virat says "Hazaarokomitanekairaadarakhne wale jb wo terrorists apni jaan dene kotaiyarhosakte hain to hum log apni jaan kyunhi de sakte? Socho".

By saying this, Virat actually raises a throbbing question for the society and its individuals. Instead of living in fear of getting killed or being a target of some bomb blast, why can't we show some spirit of courage and be alert and aware of what is happening around us. Modernisation has contributed a lot to our development but it has resulted in diminishing and evacuating social life. By social life, I mean meeting people, talking to them face to face, discussing over issues, etc. Now, all we have are well-structured societies, good infrastructure, well-built parks and Closed Doors; the only communication left is through social media or telephonic discussions.

While the conversation with his sister, Virat gets to know that the main terrorist is still alive. Again the effort of an Army man bore fruits but as said evil is something that does not go off easily from the globe. The Head of the terrorist gang did plan to catch hold of Virat being infuriated by seeing the massacre caused by him to his group members. He along with the Joint Secretary of Defence, who also is involved with this troop, plans to show the power of sleeper cells and thus all the twelve Army men are followed by one sleeper cell each. The Head of the group now calls Virat and informs him about it and to confirm it, a bomb is exploded by the sleeper cell and one of the Army men becomes the victim of it. Virat gets shattered and agrees to meet the terrorist's head as desired by him. Before that he goes to meet the deformed and retired Army men and informs them about the whole mishap and tells that he has secretly called for the 'Cyclonite' explosives used in the army and that they would have to make C4 plastic explosives from it and asks one of his colleague to take those explosives to the place where he would be taken by the terrorists and gives order to him that after fifteen minutes of his meeting with the terrorist, the bombs should be exploded. He inserts a tracking chip in his body so that the place that he visits could be traced. His plan was to destroy the Head of the sleeper cells because if he dies they won't get any orders for spreading such havoc anywhere and thus these sleeper cells will turn into 'Koma Cells'. As he says it's like 'A Suicide Attack' by him. When Mukund, the police officer and a very good friend of Virat listen the plan; he gets infuriated and tells Virat that he has a family and how could he sacrifice his life like that. He should think about them. Virat gets agitated and says "*Un logo kebhivarivar the jo Taj attack me mare gye. Wobhi ese hi raatkonikle the ye bolke kishubhahtakwapas aa jaenge apne bachoko.*"¹ He names few of them and tells him that even they had families and had he ever thought about them. Pointing to the deformed Army men, he says that some of them don't have eyes, other legs, and some arms but still they are happy. They too have families. It's an honour for an Army man to get such an opportunity. Repeating his dialogue he says "*Hazaarokomitanekairaadarakhne wale jb wo terroristsapnijaan de saktehain to hum rakshakrne wale nhi de sakte?*"² As per decided over the telephonic discussion with the Head of the terrorists, Virat goes to the place where he was called; a man from the terrorist group checks him there and takes his phone and gun from him. As instructed he was told to drive a car already parked there and to reach another spot where he finds another car and was instructed to reach Bombay Stock Exchange and thus there was car after car and destination after destination. Finally he was taken by a boat to another boat where he meets the Head of the terrorists' group. Virat gets to know there that he was used to implant bombs at various places in the city. The cars which he drove and parked contained bombs. The terrorist head's plan was not to explode them but to inform police about the bombs and get him behind the bars and show him as the culprit of spreading terrorism as there was a whole footage

¹Movie: 'Holiday'

²Movie 'Holiday'.

of his. He now also discloses that the credit of all this and to kill those sleeper cells would be taken by the Joint Secretary of Defence and thus he would be promoted as The Secretary of Defence. Their plan was to introduce these sleeper cells even in the Indian Army and promote their anti-social activities on a larger scale with ease. Meanwhile, as discussed, the explosives are set under the boat by Virat's colleague. An argument leads to a fight between Virat and the Head which in turn leads to elopement of Virat and the Head captured by him and the boat which had all the terrorists and data gets exploded. Virat also shoots the Head. Again Virat forces the Joint Secretary of Defence too to shoot himself from his own gun thus eliminating the core germs and threat from the city. Through the movie we get to witness that how Army helps to salvage Mumbai from exploding into flames by not just using weapons but using brains and employing different strategies. Nothing can break this lion-hearted soldier, Virat who upholds his valour-like a true jawan.

If we move around the sphere of media and movies, we would find many other movies too reflecting the role of terrorism, its impact and measures employed by various organizations, agencies and even at individual front to overcome it. One such example is the movie 'A Wednesday' directed by Neeraj Pandey where *The Times of India's* critic Nikhat Kazmi called the movie "an intelligent diatribe against terrorism, refreshingly packaged as a racy thriller, reminiscent of the Die Hard Series." A Wednesday (2008) was about giving a stern warning to terrorists and the system that a common man's resilience should not be taken for granted. According to the article "18.11...A code of secrecy *Movie Review*" in *Times of India*, "This film draws inspiration from it and goes a step further as it offers an anti-bomb blast solution." An anonymous caller informs the police of the city, Mumbai that he has placed five bombs in locations throughout Mumbai and if four militants aren't released, the bombs will be exploded by him within four hours. Obeying the demand of the caller, the four militants were left near a bench where after sometime an explosion occurs and three of them die, one being still in police custody as the police doubts the intention of the caller who according to them may not reveal the location of the bombs even after the release of the militants. The anonymous caller now reveals his plan of killing the terrorists and not releasing them. Also he informed that he does not belong to any terrorist organization. He wanted to avenge the terrorists' attacks these militants helped in carrying out in Mumbai, specifically the 2006 Mumbai train bombings. He finally demands that the officers should kill the fourth militant themselves or he would set off all five bombs in Mumbai. In response, Commissioner, Rathod orders his subordinates to kill the fourth militant and he didn't reveal the anonymous man's identity as that would give away his religion. The film ends on an idealistic note, with Rathod admitting that he knew the common man was disturbed because of the insecure environment and the incompetence of the governing authorities, but he never imagined a common man would go to such lengths to achieve this end. He also notes that the facts of this incident cannot be found in any written record but only in the memories of those who actually witnessed it, and further acknowledges that although the incident has ambiguous moral significance, he personally feels that whatever happened happened for the best.³ Not that the movie teaches us as individuals to revolt by our own, to take such decisive and revolting decisions but inspires every common man to realize their responsibility towards humanity. The anonymous caller did not avenge those jailed 'jihadis' (terrorists) for any of his personal reason but out of sheer frustration emerged from the persevering torture and fear him and many other Indians wake up daily with.

³https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Wednesday!

Another examples of mediafighting terrorism are movies like *Pukaar*, *Roza*, *Fanna*, *Maachis*, *Shahid*, *Punjab 1984*, *New Yorkin* Bollywood and *Blood Diamond*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Vanatge Point*, etc in Hollywood.

To sum up, I would like to say that the film ‘Holiday’ by A.R. Murugadoss (remake of the Tamil ‘Thupakki’) offers an intelligent plot, with blows, blasts and raw bone-cracking action (Greg Powell- of ‘Skyfall’ fame). Madhureeta Mukherjee in her review on the iDIVA website says, “It triggers a fear that anyone from your paanwala to pizza-delivery boy could be a ‘closet’ terrorist.” But that does not mean to suspect them all but just to be beware! Towards the end of the movie, Mukund bidding farewell to Virat as his holiday is over says

*Sachyaar army great hai. Aglegyarahmahinokeliyekisibarfilepahadpar
yaregistan me apnakhudhka tent lagwakar, apnakhudhkakhanapakakar, in
beete hue chaalisdinoke holiday ke bare me sochna, batuwe me lagiapni
family photo kobaarbaarnikalkedekhna. Ese hi jeenapadega. Hai na.*

This one applauds the jawans who live in the jaws of death, and is a ‘wake up’ call for all the ‘sleepers’ that abound. Bravo!

THANK YOU! Jai Hind.

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