



सत्यमेव जयते

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Dear

Thiru Chidambaram,

Congratulations on assuming the office of the Home Minister of India. It is in many ways an honour as well as a challenge, given the circumstances our country and people find themselves in today.

While I am sure, you will have many pieces of advice from many quarters, as you move to shaping a new strategy and response to the challenges posed by Terror, I would like to suggest the following for your consideration.

Code of Conduct for Media: I strongly recommend a code of conduct to enshrine in law for the media, especially those that cover Security actions like that in Mumbai. There have been instances of media coverage wittingly and unwittingly letting out Operational and Force Deployment information that can prove the source of information and intelligence to the terrorists. As you are aware, the current batch of terrorists was found to have blackberries with which they were monitoring media and news.

I have read today a news report that said - The suspected team leader "kept an eye on the round-the-clock coverage of the ongoing commando operations carried out by news channels". This code of conduct is important because information revealed like this wittingly or unwittingly as the case may be, will pose a serious danger to the lives of the anti-terror personnel as well threaten the success of the anti-terrorist operation as well. Media in general is responsible and important in our democracy, but in some cases is irresponsible, insensitive and unaccountable for the consequences of its actions. The collateral damage of this, in national security situations cannot be accepted or allowed. I recommend these guidelines be enacted and find place in the law as well.

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Crowds in Scene of Action : I further recommend a code of operations for local police in times of such operations – where local citizens are evacuated or cleared and then prohibited from entering a certain area around the scene of the operation. I draw your attention to the Nariman House operation, the scene of which was chaotic and had huge crowds of milling citizenry (and for good measure local politicians looking for photo ops!). This kind of situation presents additional opportunities for chaos for terrorists who can easily mingle with these crowds to create collateral damage as well to use the crowds and confusion to slip away. This represents further challenges and threats to the anti-terror operations itself if it has to be worried about crowd maintenance functions at the same time. I would urge you to examine this issue.

Given the anger, despair and fright that have gripped millions of our countrymen, I wish your stewardship of our nation's security all success. We will all pray for your success, for in that is the safety of all our people and nation.

Very truly yours,

Warm personal regards

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Thiru P Chidambaram
Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs
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