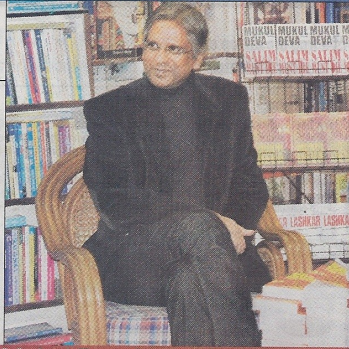


# The patriot fights back



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At war with terror, *Blowback* is Mukul Deva's combat weapon

Anuradha Shukla  
radhasankar@yahoo.com

The bomb blasts in Delhi ripped this soldier's being and pieces oozed out in the form of a series of books on the stark naked reality of our times. On tour for the third in a series of books on terror, *Blowback*, Mukul Deva talks in no uncertain terms that terror designs for "Balkanisation

of India" are real and going to get worse. His novels are part of the new genre he writes in military thrillers. It talks of fighting back the terrorists with a secret Force 22 of the Army, which goes on to eliminate the likes of Dawood. Though fictional, the details are all factual and research-based. "I have been researching on terror for two hours everyday for the past four years," says Mukul.

There is no questioning the writer who speaks with firmness and disgust that a country fighting over the issue that who will be the chief minister of Maharashtra days after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks has not learnt from its mistakes. The soldier has suffered not only serious injuries during years of combat in the Army but his heart has endured more pain at this passivity of the political masters.

He pints out the lacunae and asks why qualifications for entry-level security officers in police and intelligence have been lowered. "How can a less qualified officer fight an increasingly equipped terrorist taught in the language of *jihad*?" His works - *Salim Must Die*, *Lashkar* and *Blowback* - talk of an answer. This patriot does not mince words when he says individual terror heads need to be elimi-

nated. "We have to start thinking strategically and cannot talk peace with a nation which hinges on the hyphen between India and Pakistan," he says. "Military minds work alike. Entering India from the sea route was logical," he says. "Terror groups' websites speak their motto and a nation with the richest military tradition is still looking away," he wonders. This pain forms the base of his racy novels.

"We have the might but no political will to do away with illegal vote bank politics and money laundering. We are at war and have to be on our toes all the time because terrorists have to succeed just once," he says. The book does promise to change the way readers perceive and react to their reality plagued with terror threat. Yes, it is war and this patriot is fighting back, with his Macintosh.

Mukul talked to theatre personality Neelam Mansingh at the book launch at Capital Book Depot, Sector 17, where Finance Commissioner Vijay Vardhan read excerpts.

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