

Canada Free Press, July 25, 2006

Hindus and Radical Islam: Canadian Hindus ignored by media

by Arthur Weinreb

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Members of the Toronto area Hindu community held a vigil on Saturday in front of the Consulate of India. In a press release issued by the Hindu Conference of Canada, the organization's president, Venkat Nagarajan, said "India's current government has failed to protect Hindus from the virulent onslaught of radical Islam. We are calling on the government of India to take firm action against Pakistan-backed Islamist terrorists and terminate unproductive peace talks with Pakistan."

Although press releases were sent to the media, there was very little coverage of the proposed vigil in the mainstream media, despite the fact that there were prominent speakers including former Conservative Party candidate, Peter Kent. Only about 30 people attended the Saturday morning event according to Ron Banerjee, the Public Relations Director of the Hindu Conference of Canada. After the vigil was held, apart from brief snippets on *CTV* and *Global*, both the vigil and the grievances of the Canadian Hindu community were ignored by the mainstream media. A Lexis Nexis search between July 22 and July 25 revealed no hits.

When asked why he thought there was so little media coverage of the vigil that was also held to commemorate the almost 200 victims of the Mumbai bombings on July 11, Banerjee said that the media has "contempt towards Hindus." He also thought another purpose of the vigil, to show solidarity with Israel, likely led to a lack of interest on the part of the media.

In fairness to the media, the vigil took place on the same day that large anti-war, anti-Israel demonstrations took place throughout Canada. And the Mumbai bombings themselves quickly disappeared as a major story the day after they occurred when the current Israel/Hezbollah conflict broke out. But these happenings are really no excuse for the almost complete ignoring of the actions of the Hindu-Canadian community.

Perhaps the real reason why the Hindu community's vigil in support of the victims of what is now known as 7/11 was ignored by the media is that as a group they are terribly politically incorrect in aligning themselves with Israel. Hindus both in India and abroad are not afraid to "connect the dots" when it comes to Islamic fascism. And the use of the words "virulent onslaught of radical Islam" in the Hindu Conference's press release was not likely to endear the group to the mainstream media. The politically correct much prefer to look acts of terrorism around the world as much like earthquakes; isolated events that "just seem to happen". Hindus sees Israel as fighting the same enemy that threatening India. For example, an article appeared in the *Times of India* last Saturday, questioning whether the government should take action against the terrorists in Pakistan and the title of the article by Atul Sethi was "Can we do an Israel?" It's hard to believe that anyone in the mainstream Canadian media would ever link a terrorist act such as the one that took place in Mumbai with the actions that are now being undertaken by Israel.

Hindus are no doubt also ignored by the media because unlike many other minority groups in Canada, they don't seek to be viewed as victims of a racist society. And if minority groups are not victims, they can't generate a lot of media interest.