

# THE INDIA DOCTRINE

( 1947 - 2007 )



**M. B. I. MUNSHI**

Bangladesh Defence Journal Publishing



The several chapters written by this author covers the relations between India and East Pakistan/Bangladesh from 1947 to the present. It attempts a historical and geo-strategic appraisal of relations between the two countries but also offers a more wide ranging analysis involving the Indian external intelligence services (RAW) operations in Bangladesh and outside. The chapters cover some of the most important events in East Pakistan/Bangladesh history in which India has had an interest and where there is evidence available of its aggressive and hegemonic tendency towards its smaller neighbour. The principal themes of the chapter are the issues of Indian domination and control over Bangladesh and the methods and tactics that have been used to undermine the nations sovereignty and territorial Integrity and the example of the CHT is extensively and thoroughly discussed. The central idea or concept of the chapters is to show that the Indian design is not limited to simply harming the economic interests of the nation but also has a historical and intellectual underpinning that comes from the thoughts and writings of Jawaharlal Nehru and Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar amongst others. The idea of a United India (or an Akhand Bharat) is still a goal of Indian policy making in South Asia and several examples have been provided by the author to support his thesis that was originally published in 2001. The first edition of the book appeared in 2006 and was published by the Bangladesh Research Forum.



### **MBI MUNSHI**

Having been raised in London where he completed his formal education including a postgraduate degree in law from the London School of Economics (1994) and also qualifying as a Barrister (called to the Bar in 1997) he returned to Bangladesh in November 1996. He obtained his license to practice as an advocate of the High Court in Dhaka in 1998. It was during this period that he commenced writing articles on various topical issues which were published in local newspapers and also on the internet. His interests include politics, history, geo-strategy and security which led him to research on various aspects of Indian policy towards Bangladesh and other South Asian countries. In 1996 his first book was published titled 'The India Doctrine' which was met with wide appreciation and acclaim in Bangladesh and also internationally. It was due to this interest and demand that the author decided to write this revised edition elaborating on the themes raised in the original version of the book. He presently resides in Dhaka with his wife and son.

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(1947-2007)

Edited by  
**M.B.I. Munshi**

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*Dedicated to my loving wife Mahmuda Islam (Shiuly)  
without whose patience and understanding this book  
could not have been published and to my  
adorable son Tahmid Shahani Islam (Namir)  
who is now my true inspiration in life*

*And to my parents*

## Author's Note

It is now more than two years since the first edition of *The India Doctrine* was released to wide acclaim and very favorable reviews. There were, however, several errors and omissions in the text mainly due to the hasty manner in which the book was published with only three months from writing to printing and then finally publication. Considering the sensitive nature of the material the publication process was undertaken quietly and with extraordinary speed.

The main deficiency in the book was, however, the absence of chapters on Pakistan. This omission has been rectified for this new and revised edition with excellent contributions from eminent Pakistani writers Dr. Pervais Iqbal Cheema and Ahmed Quraishi. I would like to give them special thanks.

For my part I have revised all my chapters and written three new ones on Indo-Bangladesh relations on events and incidents just preceding the cancelled January 22, 2007 elections in Bangladesh. I have also written a new preface that provides a contextual analysis of the issues raised in the book which present an international background and perspective on the subject of Indian expansionism and hegemony.

For this edition the Bangladesh Defence Journal has kindly agreed to publish the work and its editor Abu Rushd has written a foreword being admirably suited to the task with several publications to his name on RAW (India's external intelligence agency) and on strategic and security issues of South Asia. I am indebted to him. I also thank my friend Zaman who gave invaluable advice and was exceedingly helpful with innumerable suggestions, ideas and references.

I should also thank Dhruvo printers and Mr. Shameem Akanda who designed the cover Mr. Sharif Uddin & Tamanna Begum for formatting the text and checking for corrections.

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# FOREWORD

By ABU RUSHD

The twelve chapters written in this wonderful book by Barrister MBI Munshi covers the relations between India and its neighbours in the South Asia region from 1947 to 2007. In a significant advance over the first edition the author discusses in great depth not only India's relations with Bangladesh but also Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

In this second edition he has given a detail picture of important events during the last 60 year period from a strategic, intelligence, military, political and economic perspective which are unique in depth, range of analysis and include thousands of references and source materials. In particular, the author has provided a broad survey of events during the critical period in South Asian history between the years 2006 and 2007. During these brief two years the situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated dramatically bringing the nation again to civil war through renewed conflict with the LTTE while to the north the Nepalese King was dethroned and new elections called , eventually bringing the Maoists to power after a lengthy and bloody decade long struggle. Similarly, in Pakistan there were violent upheavals in its border areas with Afghanistan and a growing insurgency in Balochistan. Bangladesh also witnessed increased instability in the lead up to its 2007 elections which was finally cancelled and an emergency proclaimed by the president on January 11 of that year.

The author discusses all these events in minute detail and provides extensive evidence of Indian interference in all these countries, both diplomatic and political, but also through its infamous and much reviled external intelligence agency- the Research & Analysis Wing or RAW. India's purpose and objective in destabilising and interfering in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries are aimed at achieving regional supremacy with the ultimate goal being the creation of an *Akhand Bharat* or greater India stretching across South Asia. As the author clarifies, this does not necessarily mean territorial annexation or direct military intervention (although both have been ad -opted in the recent past such as in Sikkim and Sri Lanka) but can include political, diplomatic and economic control over its neighbours that does not require direct military intervention or possession of territory. The author discusses all these issues and factors against the backdrop of superpower rivalries involving the United States and China but



also other international interests including that of the European Union, Britain, Russia and Israel.

The first edition was a turning point in political and historical writing in Bangladesh. The second edition continues this trend with further elaboration of issues those were covered in the earlier book but on very recent events such as the causes behind the cancellation of elections in 2007 and new material on the 1971 liberation war and India's motivations in assisting emergent Bangladesh. Having extensively researched and written several series of investigative reports and a book on RAW and Indian interference in Bangladesh, I was particularly interested in the chapters on the CHT (which have been updated to include incidents upto 2007) as well as on the border disputes that have often led to tension between the countries as occurred in 2001 after an incursion by the BSF which left 19 of their members dead and 3 BDR personnel killed.

The book also includes in-depth discussion on the nuclear deal between the US and India and on how this agreement will affect the regional balance. The author spends a great deal of time on the propaganda machinery of the Indian government and also on the inner workings of RAW which has been my area of speciality and study for several decades. On the other hand, the writer has correctly assessed and analysed the situation prevailing in Pakistan. Strategic factors influencing the superpower brawls is rightly outlined in the book.

The book is certainly a must read for those interested in South Asian affairs, geo-strategy, intelligence and the political, diplomatic and economic influences of an increasingly important region of the world which contains almost a sixth of the world population, two nuclear powers and several more in the near vicinity. The book will hopefully inspire others to explore the subject of Indian hegemony and expansionism and also allow policy-makers in the West to better comprehend the risks of permitting an unrestrained India to dominate the region. The book should also educate the policy-makers and military planners in Bangladesh about possible threats emanating from our neighbour and the consequences of New Delhi's influence in our internal affairs as well as the principal cause of instability.

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## **MBI MUNSHI**

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Having been raised in London where he completed his formal education including a postgraduate degree in law from the London School of Economics (1994) and also qualifying as a Barrister (called to the Bar in 1997) he returned to Bangladesh in November 1996. He obtained his license to practice as an advocate of the High Court in Dhaka in 1998. It was during this period that he commenced writing articles on various topical issues which were published in local newspapers and also on the internet. His interests include politics, history, geo-strategy and security which led him to research on various aspects of Indian policy towards Bangladesh and other South Asian countries. In 1996 his first book was published titled 'The India Doctrine' which was met with wide appreciation and acclaim in Bangladesh and also internationally. It was due to this interest and demand that the author decided to write this revised edition elaborating on the themes raised in the original version of the book. He presently resides in Dhaka with his wife and son.

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(1947 - 2007)

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# **THE INDIA DOCTRINE**

## **(1947 -2007)**

### **PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION**

By all accounts the first edition of 'The India Doctrine' was a book incomplete. While it covered the essentials of the periods 1947 and 1971 fairly well it managed to convey only a fraction of the notable events and incidents that were to take place during 2006 and which were to reach a climax in 2007. The years 2006-2007 had much less of the cruelty, violence and bloodshed associated with 1947 and 1971 but nevertheless represents a significant period of transition that witnessed a revival of great power politics in South Asia that was to significantly affect the terms of the India Doctrine. In all probability the turmoil that had overtaken South Asia in 2006 and 2007 will lead to equally momentous and epoch-making events that will stand out in history on the same terms as the partition of India and the break-up of Pakistan. While these two incidents concerned only three of the seven nations that compose the South Asian region today (excluding Afghanistan) the political instability that marked 2007 was to simultaneously affect nearly all the countries in this large sub-continental area. With this new update all the relevant years between 1947 and 2007 will be dealt with far more comprehensively and instead of the one-and-a-months that was allocated by the publishers to complete the first edition of this book the author has unilaterally accorded himself two whole years to complete this latest volume and an opportunity to provide the reader with more detail and in-depth analysis of the issues.

It was while conducting research for this volume that I discovered (quite belatedly) that the term 'India Doctrine' had been coined originally by several western security analysts who assigned the exact same meaning that was attributed to it in the first edition of this work. As far back as 1986 the term had been given serious consideration as an Indian defence policy but this was dismissed by experts on the grounds that, "Changes in the Indian strategic environment over the last thirty years have produced significant shifts in Indian defence policies. However, these changes have rarely, if ever, been officially assessed and communicated through strategic doctrines. There has been, for instance, no Nehru, Gandhi or Desai defence doctrine similar to an Eisenhower, Nixon, or Brezhnev doctrine. Instead, Indian defence policy has usually been characterized by flexibility and ambivalence." This impression did not substantially change even after more than a decade of simmering hostility in the South Asia region with one writer commenting that, "Yet another goal has been achieving some sort of Indian primacy in what is called "South Asia" (i.e., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Indian Ocean and many of its smaller islands, and the Himalayan States). These goals suggest that Indian policy resembles a South Asian variant of the 'Monroe Doctrine,' and some observers have in fact claimed that there is an 'India doctrine.' The 'India doctrine' seemed oppressive to India's neighbors especially during the 1980s when India tried to assert its status as the hegemonic South Asian actor, and perhaps had the military strength to do so. But, in the 1990s, lacking such strength (although remaining a heavily armed regional power), India seeks to be the primary but non-intimidating South Asian state acting in partnership with other nearby states." <sup>2</sup> I have tried to show in the first edition of 'The India Doctrine' that this perception of a benign India is entirely false and the domination of the South Asian neighbourhood is an ongoing process that started immediately after the partition in 1947. This idea is represented through the concept of an Akhand Bharat (United or Greater India) and achieves its practical application in the

Nehru-Indira Doctrines and the Forward Policy. One may, however, reasonably question why the smaller nation states of South Asia would find it at all distasteful to be under Indian hegemony. One obvious answer would be the dual virtues of freedom and sovereignty but also more realistically the whole idea of being under the control and supervision of a nation constantly on the verge of disintegration is an extremely unappealing proposition. There, of course, still remains the religious dimension and the potentiality of increased communal tensions if the smaller South Asian nations were brought under an Indian super-state or otherwise accorded dominion status with New Delhi as the centre of policy making for all of South Asia and especially in the areas of trade, defence and foreign affairs.

In this respect, the conclusions drawn by Alan Kronstadt and Bruce Vaughn in a CRS report for Congress about the terrorist violence in India is worthy of note, "As a vast mosaic of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions, India can be difficult to govern. Internal instability resulting from diversity is further complicated by colonial legacies such as international borders that separate members of the same ethnic groups, creating flashpoints for regional dissidence and separatism. Separatist movements in the northwestern Jammu and Kashmir state, and in remote and underdeveloped northeast regions, confound New Delhi."<sup>3</sup> In response to this form of divisiveness and separatism in a global context Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has provided a tentative solution in his book 'Identity and Violence'.<sup>4</sup> He argues that civilizational or religious partitioning of the world population (as advocated in the 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis and found in the literature of religious extremists) has yielded a 'solitarist' approach to human identity, which sees human beings as members of exactly one group only and the imposition of this allegedly unique identity is a crucial component of the 'martial art' of fomenting sectarian confrontation. The solution, according, to Sen is to recognize human beings as diversely different, "The hope of



harmony in the contemporary world lies to a great extent in a clearer understanding of the pluralities of human identity, and in the appreciation that they cut across each other and work against a sharp separation along one single hardened line of impenetrable division."<sup>5</sup> This theory appears as a tantalizing answer to the religious and ethnic strife wracking much of India but it fails to address the question of what the individual is to do when a particular identity is under constant threat or challenge by the state or a powerful hostile community. This is a debate that India has failed to engage in resulting in separatist violence in Kashmir, Punjab and the North-East (dealt with in Part 6B) as well in the ideologically motivated insurgency (more commonly called naxalism) in many of its eastern states.<sup>6</sup>

## **Symptoms of Militancy - India's Religious & Ideological Divide**

The rise of Hindu fanaticism during the 1980's that brought the BJP to government in the following decade has left a lasting impression on religious minorities and has helped stoke the flames of communal violence and hatred resulting in the demolition of the Babri Masjid<sup>7</sup>, carnage in Gujarat<sup>8</sup> (which some Indians still blame on the Muslims<sup>9</sup> although the incident that triggered the Hindu retaliation was shown to be entirely misrepresented and only after five years of intense and incessant pressure have a few of the ringleaders and masterminds of the Gujarat pogrom been successfully prosecuted)<sup>10</sup> and more recently the antagonism and hostility faced by Sikhs, Christians and Muslims over the compulsory singing of Vande Mataram (a celebrated litany of Hindu faith) in all educational institutions in 2006.<sup>11</sup> In the same year there was an attempt by the Gujarat state government to classify Buddhism and Jainism as branches of the Hindu religion and the preventing of low caste Hindus - known as Dalits - from embracing Christianity or Islam.<sup>12</sup> A similar incident occurred in Orissa state at the end of

2007 where 19 churches were burned down and four people were killed as a Hindu extremist leader led an anti-conversion movement in Kandhamal district.<sup>13</sup> One Bangladeshi commentator, recently remarked that Indian secularism was, in fact, a big lie, "Since the birth of India thousands of communal riots took place and millions of people, mostly Muslims were killed. Hindu religious zealots proclaim that Hindustan is for Hindus. Secular India is a big lie. The leaders preach secularism only to hide their hatred for the minority communities."<sup>14</sup> The dangers of such subversive thinking was obvious to seasoned Indian columnists such as Kuldip Nayar, who has stated that, "The BJP's onslaught takes the shape of Hindutva with a vengeance -- anti-secular and anti-minorities. The party will seek to communalise every field and try to polarise the society. This may affect economic development adversely because the BJP's attention is going to be focused on how to Hinduise the country, not on how to harness all communities for people's welfare. Institutions may face a relentless pressure from Hindu fanatics who will stop at nothing. Parliament and state legislatures may be hit. The BJP will measure every bill or business on the scales of religion. What will push the cause of Hindutva will be the criterion, not the country."<sup>15</sup> The extent to which the BJP was prepared to go to manipulate the democratic and legal system of India and how far the 'secular' authorities were willing to assist them was revealed in what became known as the 'CD scandal'. During the election campaign for a new assembly in Uttar Pradesh (UP) in April 2007 the BJP released a Compact Disc that vilified and denigrated Muslims. India's election code bans the use of language or material that could provoke caste or religious tensions. When the election officials filed charges against Hindu nationalist opposition leader and BJP president Rajnath Singh the UP police refused to arrest him. In a mockery of justice, Mr Singh and other senior BJP leaders, including LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, led about 2,000 party supporters to the police station at Hazratganj in the state capital. The BJP president told police that, as they were investigating a non-bailable offence, he

should be taken into custody. Police refused, saying they had no grounds to do so.<sup>16</sup> It was probably due to this type of religious chauvinistic arrogance that the BJP lost the elections to a Dalit woman, Ms. Mayawati, who forged an unlikely Brahmin-Muslim-Dalit voter alliance to secure victory at the polls.<sup>17</sup> The defeat managed to provoke some soul-searching within the BJP leadership who responded with a few cosmetic policy revisions but the heart of the party remains decidedly with the Hindu supremacist creed and the advocacy of communal violence where politically or electorally advantageous e.g. Gujarat.<sup>18</sup> This policy has brought the BJP electoral success with Narendra Modi winning another successive term in the Gujarat Assembly elections in December 2007 although he was held directly responsible for the massacre of Muslims in 2002. This phenomenon has been perceptively described by columnist Ram Puniyani, "... polarization has seeped in very deep in Gujarat's society. After every bout of communal violence, the major player of the violence, in this case the RSS affiliate, the BJP, emerges stronger. In this election also, as was the case in the last elections, the BJP's performance has been best where the carnage was maximum. In other parts of the country the polarization is reaching towards the critical line from where the rupture in the fabric of society becomes irreversible. It seems that this has already happened in Gujarat. A state that began as a Hindu Rashtra laboratory seems to be turning into a Hindu Rashtra factory. One of the major successes of the RSS-BJP combine has been that it has been able to propagate successfully that Hindu Rashtra is for the benefit of all Hindus, that there is a struggle between Hindu and Muslim interests and, perhaps most importantly, that the RSS is on the side of the Hindus, while others are against them."<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately in some intellectual circles in India this is perceived of as less of a threat to the nation's integrity than the phantom menace of Pakistan ISI sponsored terrorism.<sup>20</sup> That this perspective has now become the mainstream is reflected in the view that the Modi victory represents a consolidation of Hindu power around the globe, "Modi is becoming

the icon of a growing number of Hindus not only in India, but also in the Hindu diaspora spread across the world. The support for him is not confined only to the Gujarati-speaking Hindus of the world. It is spread right across the Hindu spectrum---- whatever be the language or ethnicity or place of origin of the Hindus concerned."<sup>21</sup> That such a fascistic tendency can be expressed with such approval is probably the scariest part of this development.

It would be a mistake to presume that such attitudes to minorities are confined to a few Hindu extremist groups on the margins of Indian society. The discrimination against Muslims in particular has been deep-rooted and pervasive as revealed by the Sachar Committee report released in November 2006. The report points out that Muslims "carry a double burden of being labelled 'anti-national' and as being appeased at the same time". The report further states, "While Muslims need to prove on a daily basis that they are not anti-national and terrorists, it is not recognised that the alleged appeasement has not resulted in the desired level of socio-economic development of the community." The single most important result of the committee's detailed exploration is the assertion of the latter fact. On the contrary, the report points out that "the community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development". The report adds that "by and large, Muslims rank somewhat above S.Cs/S.Ts but below Hindu OBCs [Other Backward Classes], Other Minorities and Hindu General [mostly upper castes] in almost all indicators considered."<sup>22</sup> The sense of inequity, says the report, is perpetual or a result of discrimination that the minority may face due to a difference in 'identity'.<sup>23</sup> The Sachar report further claimed that communal harassment is increasingly forcing Muslims into impoverished ghettos: "Fearing for their security, Muslims are increasingly resorting to living in ghettos across the country. This is more pronounced in communally sensitive towns and cities."<sup>24</sup> Not surprisingly Muslims are disproportionately represented in the prison population due to the, "deplorable socioeconomic conditions that they confront and of systematic anti-Muslim bias on the part of the police and judiciary. Thousands of innocent Muslim youths have been caught up in various "anti-terrorism" dragnets-dragnets that have made use of such draconian anti-terrorism laws as the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) and the Prevention of

Terrorism Act (POTA) and allow the authorities to hold people for weeks and months without charge."<sup>25</sup> The problems facing Muslims in India is viewed by the government as a security dilemma rather than as a social or humanitarian one. According to the Fatmi Commission report (prepared in response to the earlier Sachar Committee report) found that most Muslim majority towns were close to the international border and the coastline and their 'deprivation and discontent' could lead to security problems for the country.<sup>26</sup>

One area in which the Sachar report was not allowed to investigate was the number of Muslims working in India's armed services. Pranab Mukherji, India's Defence Minister had told Parliament that no survey would be conducted on this issue but data already available shows that Muslim representation is between 2.0-3.0% which is much lower than in most other government departments<sup>27</sup> and explains the communal nature of anti-terrorism efforts that involves the profiling and victimization of Muslims. This is a point that the Hindutva lobby often capitalizes upon when terrorist attacks occur, "ever on the prowl for an excuse to hound Muslims," as happened after the Mumbai train blasts where the Indian media and intelligence agencies that often echo the Hindutva line automatically assumed that a Muslim outfit was behind the blasts. The possibility of a Hindutva hand in the affair, which some have suggested, was totally ignored by the media as scores of Muslims were being arrested and harassed by the police in different parts of the country.<sup>28</sup> The question was never raised as to why Muslims would engage in terrorist acts but the refrain was simply that there existed a gathering threat identified as a small but increasingly deadly cadre of young and often educated Indian Muslims who are being drawn directly into terrorist operations.<sup>29</sup> After the terrorist attacks in Delhi, Ayodhya, Mumbai, Malegaon, Bangalore and Hyderabad it was not long before the loyalty and commitment of Muslims to the Indian state came under challenge and their intent and motivations were viewed with suspicion.<sup>30</sup> It was, however, the anti-Americanism of some Indian Muslims that caused most concern, fear and apprehension inside India as New Delhi swiftly moved towards closer military cooperation with the United States. It was felt that this strategic alignment with Washington would further antagonize and alienate the Islamists and provide them with new ideological incentives to engage in terrorist activities against the

state. Kuldip Nayar probably came closest in expressing the anxiety of the Indian establishment when he remarked, "What is disconcerting is that the Indian nation, nurtured in pluralism and tolerance, should have some people who place religion above the country. One can be proud of being Indian and Muslim at the same time." <sup>31</sup>

Another religious group that has been ritually discriminated against is the Dalit community which holds a lowly position within the Hindu caste system. During the late 1990's reports appeared of upper caste Hindus meting out violent reprisals against Dalit communities in Bihar and UP due to the, "refusal of the dalits to accept their traditional lowest position in the caste hierarchy. By asserting their rights for land, minimum wages, control of panchayats, a life of dignity and self-respect, etc, the dalits have invoked the wrath of the dominant upper castes who largely control the institutions of state like the police and the judiciary, not to mention the upper caste - upper class nexus that manages India's urban and rural economy. The evidence of atrocities against Dalits in Bihar is symptomatic of how India's upper castes engage in a violent reinforcement of the traditional caste hierarchy, with utter disregard for the rule of law. In a variety of situations ... the upper castes, the police, the judiciary and the state administration are locked in a coalition of interests against the dalits."<sup>32</sup> Most recently Dalits started converting to Buddhism in the thousands in protest at the continuing discrimination they encounter daily but several states have passed laws making it more difficult to convert,<sup>33</sup> "But for many Dalits, as Untouchables are now known, conversion is the only way to escape the oppression they still face in Hindu society. Untouchability has been illegal in India since independence, but it is still commonly practised. In many villages Dalits are not allowed to drink clean water from a well. In some areas, tea shops keep a different glass for Dalits to use, so higher-caste Hindus are not "polluted" by drinking from the same vessel, even after it has been washed. After the 2004 tsunami, Dalit survivors in Tamil Nadu were prevented from sharing water in relief camps."<sup>34</sup> Conversion to Buddhism had been the preferred course for leading intellectuals such as Dr. B.R Ambedkar who more than 5 decades earlier began the movement for Dalit rights who famously said, "I tell you, religion is for man and not man for religion. If you want to organize, consolidate and be successful in this world, change

this religion, [...] The religion that does not teach its followers to show humanity in dealing with its co-religionists is nothing but a display of a force. The religion that teaches its followers to suffer the touch of animals but not the touch of human beings is not a religion but a mockery. The religion that compels the ignorant to be ignorant and the poor to be poor is not a religion but a visitation!"<sup>35</sup> Astonishingly the Dalits have rarely if ever been engaged in terrorist acts but have nevertheless been the victim of atrocities by the upper caste Hindus who are themselves protected by the police and legal system, "The penalty for defiance of any kind by the Dalit man across India has always been -- at the minimum -- grievous injury and far too often a public lynching by bloodthirsty mobs. For Dalit women it has far worse -- humiliation, rape, mutilation and a painful death."<sup>36</sup> After several similar incidents in Punjab, Haryana and Maharastra the Dalits in desperation resorted to widespread violent protests carried out by organized militant groups in November and December of 2006.<sup>37</sup> Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has made some half-hearted attempts to improve the lot of the Dalits through affirmative action programs and enhanced quotas for lower caste applicants seeking government jobs but these have generally come in for intense criticism by the Hindu social elite or have been stalled by the courts and the bureaucracy on the grounds of policy or legislative contradictions.<sup>38</sup> The government did win a surprise victory, however, when the Indian Supreme Court finally approved a plan in April 2008 to allow controversial affirmative action quotas in colleges and universities.<sup>39</sup> Student groups unhappy over the decision have held large-scale and often violent protests over the order and it appears that the Indian educational system will face similar if not more serious dislocations and agitation as occurred in the United States in the 1950's and 60's when segregation was abolished and affirmative action programs were introduced in the face of intense and bigoted opposition. Not surprisingly the plight of the Dalits has become a prime concern for international human rights organizations. In particular Human Rights Watch, the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University School of Law, and the International Dalit Solidarity Network have all urged the Indian Government to follow through on its international human rights obligations especially in reference to the Dalit situation. However, on March 9 2007, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination (CERD) issued its Concluding Observations regarding India's compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Committee's report found that "de facto segregation of Dalits persists" and highlighted systematic abuse against Dalits including torture and extrajudicial killings, an "alarming" extent of sexual violence against Dalit women, and caste discrimination in post-tsunami relief.<sup>40</sup>

The Sikh minority was a target of Hindu violence and state oppression during the late 1970's but especially after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards who were retaliating against the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The cause for the conflict was the demand by a Sikh group led by Jagjeet Singh Chauhan for the creation of a Khalistan state carved out of the Pakistani and Indian states of Punjab but the movement was divisive and unrealistic and due to state suppression the movement eventually petered out (see below). In testimony to the United States Congress in 2004, Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, exposed Indian human rights violations against the Sikhs and other minorities.<sup>41</sup> Subcommittee Chairman Representative Dan Burton (R-Indiana) in his opening speech commented that, "India's insistence on resolving a political problem by force has dragged it down into a campaign of essentially lawless state terrorism." According to Dr. Aulakh the Indian government had murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948, over 87,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Bodos, Manipuris, Dalits, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." Rep. Giuda noted that, "Indian law immunizes its army and police from prosecution for actions committed under color of 'prevention of terrorism', enabling a hideous government-sanctioned repertoire of torture, rapes, murder, arson, and custodial killing." These findings were backed-up with hard evidence in a 123 page report published in 2007 by Human Rights Watch and Ensaaf titled, 'Protecting the killers: A Policy of Impunity in Punjab, India' which focused on the infamous 'mass cremation case' in which the security services were implicated in thousands of killings and secret cremations throughout Punjab to hide the evidence of wrongdoing. After more than a decade the National



Human Rights Commission had failed to independently investigate a single case and explicitly refuses to identify any responsible officials.<sup>42</sup> According to another report, this time by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are still being held<sup>43</sup> as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984. There appears to be a resurgence in Sikh militancy and renewed demands for an independent homeland as predicted by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in a speech on March 6, 2008. He claimed that there was credible information that the remnants of separatist groups in Canada, the UK, Germany and Pakistan were now regrouping to carry out violent acts in Punjab.<sup>44</sup>

### **Naxalism -**

Naxalites, an insurgent movement that dates from the 1960's, had spread its tentacles across an area of India that comprised 14 states constituting more than one third of the total land mass of the country and an area representing 35 per cent of its population by the end of 2006. The Naxalites is an indigenous Maoist movement primarily based in eastern India. It had gained significant strength and disruptive potential over the last few years with some estimates showing that it had doubled in size between 2004-2006 with more than 10000 cadres.<sup>45</sup> At least 165 districts in 14 States, out of a total of 602 districts in India, were affected by various levels of Maoist mobilization and violence by the end of 2005. Maoist violence also saw a significant expansion, consolidation and escalation in 2005 that was further enhanced in 2006 and 2007.<sup>46</sup> On November 4, 2004, the Prime Minister had warned that the cross-border linkages of the Maoists constituted "an even greater threat to India than militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast"; and further, that "Large swathes of tribal territory from Andhra Pradesh in the South to the border of Uttar Pradesh and Bengal in the North and East respectively have become the hunting grounds of Left Wing extremists."<sup>47</sup> On September 8, 2006, the Andhra Pradesh police in one of the largest-ever hauls of weapons in the country, recovered 875 rockets, 27 rocket launchers, 70 gelatine sticks and other explosive material belonging to the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), from the Mahabubnagar and Prakasam Districts. Further on, police at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh recovered 297 rocket shells and six rocket launchers from the Autonagar area on September 11, 2006.<sup>48</sup>

Only a few months earlier the most daring attack in the history of the Naxalite movement in India had taken place, approximately 150 to 200 armed cadres of the CPI-Maoist along with some 800 'sympathizers' attacked the Jehanabad District Jail in Bihar on November 13, 2005, and freed 341 prisoners, abducted more than 20 activists of the Ranvir Sena (a militia of upper caste landlords), and looted a large quantity of arms and ammunition. The Jehanabad attack was said to be a reiteration of the Maoist strategy of a protracted 'People's War' based on a constituent principle that seeks to surround cities from the countryside, where the communist-led forces establish base areas and liberated zones, expanding through the stages of the strategic defensive, the strategic equilibrium, and culminating in the strategic offensive.<sup>49</sup> Even as the Centre - headed by the Union Home Secretary with Chief Secretaries and DGPs of the Naxalite affected States as its members - grappled with the fall-out of the increasing Maoist activity, a unified strategy against the insurgent movement appeared entirely inadequate in tackling the Maoist threat as the 2006/2007 period witnessed some of the worst violence and economic disruption in recent memory.<sup>50</sup> To illustrate the point a spectacular jail break was perpetrated in strife torn Chhattisgarh state with almost 300 Maoist rebels escaping at the close of 2007 providing further awkwardness for the central government with some writers even absurdly suggesting complicity of Bangladesh in the incident.<sup>51</sup> The trend continued into 2008 with Maoist rebels attacking police stations in the eastern state of Orissa in February, killing 13 officers. Officials said several hundred rebels, including women fighters, were involved. Reports stated that between two and four police stations were attacked. One was set on fire.<sup>52</sup> This challenge to the authority of the affected states had been met with sharp reprisals resulting in gross human rights violations and the use of repressive and draconian laws which included the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2004, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, the National Security Act, 1980 and the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005.<sup>53</sup> On the ideological front, the Maoists and their counterparts in Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan had earlier linked up to form the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA) which held its fourth conference in 2006. In a political resolution the conclave resolved to 'deepen and extend the links between genuine Maoists of

the region'.<sup>54</sup> Over the last four years, CCOMPOSA has established itself as the principal coordinator of Maoist Movements in different parts of the region.<sup>55</sup>

In the early months of 2007 the Indian Maoists began a strategy revision in order that it could better mobilize mass support and increase their cadre base in light of several state governments having initiated moves towards the setting up of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and industrial zones that would require the acquisition and conversion of farmlands. The SEZ's had been the focus of much of the violence during 2006 and 2007 which also galvanized peasant support for the Maoist insurgency.<sup>56</sup> The Maoists ultimately decided on a strategy that would expand the armed struggle from 'guerrilla war' to 'urban and mobile warfare', focusing on industrial areas in particular.<sup>57</sup> Most worrisome for the Indian government was the apparent spread of Maoist operations to the volatile state of Tamil Nadu and especially its southern districts. These districts were believed to have strong sympathy for the LTTE, which led Indian security agencies to suspect a renewed nexus between the Naxals and the Sri Lankan terrorist group. Devyani Srivastava, a research analyst for IPCS, has provided an illuminating perspective on a possible alliance between the Naxals and the LTTE and the security implications for India, "With the Naxals wishing to intensify their struggle in India by entering new regions and the LTTE looking around to recoup their strength and resources, closer ties between the two seems imminent. The security implications of this possibility must be taken seriously. The state of Tamil Nadu has its vulnerabilities like caste politics, Dalit oppression, continuing strands of Tamil nationalism, a 'soft' government led by Karunanidhi (as opposed to Jayalalithaa's hard approach to extremism) and forested regions. It is crucial therefore for the state government to remain vigilant to ensure that none of these vulnerabilities are exploited by either group."<sup>58</sup> This branching out and escalation of the Maoist insurgency has naturally caused deep distress in policy making circles at the state and national level<sup>59</sup> but it appears likely that the problem will intensify in the coming years as the Indian government pursues a policy of further economic liberalization and a military alliance with the United States to which the Maoists (and many leftist political parties) have viewed with antagonism and intense distrust.

## **Great Power Politics and the South Asia Region**

The fifth CCOMPOSA conference held in early 2007 had as its prime objective for the year the mobilization of the peoples of South Asia against "the Indian rulers growing intervention in neighbouring countries." The press release issued on August 1, 2007 stated that, "The Indian rulers seek total domination of the countries of South Asia acting as the gendarme of the US in this region." CCOMPOSA further warned that, "South Asia has become a burning cauldron of revolutionary, democratic and nationality movements. CCOMPOSA supports all these just movements and calls on the peoples of South Asia to unite against their common enemy and not fall prey to the divisive policies of the rulers and their US imperialist backers in the region." The growing influence of the US and other great powers in South Asia did not remain a concern only for the communist-cum-Maoist insurgents since the rivalry that appeared to dictate strategic policy in the region had much wider and larger repercussions as will be shown in subsequent parts of this essay. The purpose here is merely to provide a backgrounder to the changing strategic scenario in South Asia over the 2006-2007 period. History will probably show that these two years will ultimately have had the most significant effect on the terms and implications of the India Doctrine leading to events even more significant than 1971. The geopolitical contest and rivalry between the US, China and India that was played out in large part in South Asia has put in sharp relief the even more antagonistic relations between neighbours in the region that has every possibility of boiling over in the coming years even with the presence of nuclear weapons in the immediate vicinity.

### **Uncle Sam, the Elephant and the Waking Dragon -**

The US preoccupation<sup>60</sup> with the economic growth and military strength of China has had a perceptible effect on developments within the South Asia region with India playing the most significant role. The preface to the first edition of this book had shown how the US and Indian governments were eager to forge a common platform and strategic policy in relation to China. It will now be necessary to look more closely at how Washington's attitude to Beijing has developed since the writing of the first edition and how its policy of containment had met the sometimes contradictory approach of New Delhi that sought to maintain its hegemony over South Asia and also counter

both US and Chinese influence in the region as potential counterweights to its dominance. What had not been envisaged in the earlier edition was the manner in which the internal dynamics and complexities of the smaller South Asian states would affect these relationships. The smaller states had been in most part reluctant to offend China and were also highly suspicious of Indian motives which inclined the US to take a more independent line when dealing with these countries that did not always go down well in New Delhi.<sup>61</sup> It might also be presumed that the US had always expected that India would play a subordinate role but until more information is made available from official sources inside Washington the conclusions can only be tentatively drawn.

In regard to the US attitude to China there is a wealth of public information and documentation. The preface to the first edition had cited the report prepared by Esther Pan of the Council of Foreign Relations which viewed the rise of China as a threat to US interests that needed to be counterbalanced with the support of other regional powers, especially India.<sup>62</sup> China's success in extending its influence across the globe through investment (principally in the natural resource sectors such as oil and gas and on infrastructural projects) and improved trade relations primarily with Central Asian, African and Latin American nations<sup>63</sup> - some of whom were designated as pariah states by the West - also heightened US anxieties about Beijing's economic rise and growing competitiveness.<sup>64</sup> This was widely viewed in government circles as both ominous and threatening to US interests as it appeared as an alternative to the western political value system that linked improved trade with internal democratic reforms.<sup>65</sup> China's concentration on energy security and its ability and preparedness to defend its economic interests and foreign investments also figured prominently in western calculations on the challenges posed by the Asian powerhouse.<sup>66</sup> The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), prepared by the US Department of Defense explicitly identifies China to be the nation with the "greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could, over time, offset traditional U.S. military advantages."<sup>67</sup> These improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of China's defense forces were described ominously by US government officials as a military build-up<sup>68</sup> that could potentially

threaten American preeminence in the Pacific and also regional peace. These predictions had been vehemently denied by Chinese officials as highly exaggerated and that the technological upgrades and modernization of its armed forces were necessary to maintain its territorial integrity against foreign aggression and hostile security arrangements.<sup>69</sup> The creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 by China and Russia and included amongst its original members the oil rich and strategically important states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was similarly viewed in Washington as a security threat and was believed to have been set-up in direct opposition to US interests in Central Asia and adjoining regions.<sup>70</sup> That the formation of the SCO and its series of huge military exercises in Central Asia might have been made as a response to NATO expansionism and US missile deployments on China's and Russia's periphery was rarely if ever discussed openly by defense analysts in the West but a Peoples Daily commentary in September 2006 finally broached the issue forewarning that, "with its tentacles stretching further and further ... NATO's forces are exceeding the 'defensive mode' and are going hand-in-hand with the US global strategy ... NATO's great ambition draws concern."<sup>71</sup> China's successful strategic, diplomatic and economic engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has also drawn American suspicions since, "U.S. strategy for Asia remains that of maintaining its primacy and preventing the rise of a regional power that would challenge the U.S. position. And that power is unquestionably China. Specifically, the United States is highly aware of the consequences of Chinese domination of Southeast Asia."<sup>72</sup> In the Middle East it had equally been predicted by a few American commentators that China's quest for oil in the region was threatening US energy and security interests and increasing the risk of a conflict between both nations.<sup>73</sup> To counter these perceived threats posed by China to US global interests and security the Bush administration had taken countervailing measures to contain Beijing's burgeoning influence and military reach.<sup>74</sup> On the economic level, the US persistently attacked China for not having reformed its economy sufficiently enough to meet international trade rules, standards of compliance and transparency issues and on the political front Washington continued to criticize Beijing for its dismal human rights record and lack of democratic

governance and opaque decision making processes especially in civil-military relationships and a lack of transparency in defense spending (which was partially rectified after China agreed to participate in the UN Military Budget Transparency System).<sup>75</sup>

During 2007 these attacks generally elicited a strong response from Beijing with similar aggressive counter-measures by the United States. It was in outer space that China chose to demonstrate its military prowess which was an approach complemented by the United States position as expressed in its National Space Policy (October 2006) that America would, "preserve its rights, capabilities, and freedom of action in space...and deny, if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to U.S. national interests." Moreover, the document further stated that the United States "will oppose the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit U.S. access to space." According to some critics of U.S. policy these statements have been interpreted to mean that Washington was intent on the unrestricted development of space weapons regardless of the suspicions and apprehensions that this might induce in other countries.<sup>76</sup> This was soon followed by US opposition to a Chinese proposal for a United Nations sponsored International Space Conference to prevent an arms race in space which according to the Bush administration was very unlikely and discussion of the issue entirely unnecessary. It, therefore, appeared wholly hypocritical<sup>77</sup> when the US publicly rebuked China for destroying one of its own (i.e. Chinese) disused weather satellites orbiting 537 miles up in space by firing a ground-based missile at it on January 11, 2007.<sup>78</sup> The diplomatic spat that ensued was exploited by Indian intelligence analysts who projected the disingenuous four point view of the incident as underlining once again China's, "determination to project [its] military capabilities on land, in the sea, in air and in space unmindful of the concerns which it might cause in the minds of the international community. Secondly, it calls into question the sincerity of China's projection of itself as a country with no ulterior motives in undertaking a rapid and expensive modernisation of its armed forces. It casts doubts once again on the benign intentions of China's military modernisation programme. Thirdly, it highlights its determination to achieve not only economic, but also military parity with the US. Fourthly, it underlines its ability to conceal vital elements of its military modernisation programme

away from the eyes and ears of the Western intelligence agencies."<sup>79</sup> These advances in Chinese military technology and reach - that appear as a direct response to US encroachments and intransigence on limiting Beijing's military potential<sup>80</sup> but also to deter regional threats and potential rivals<sup>81</sup>- were also bound to increase tensions over the balance of power across the Taiwan Straits which Washington (and possibly New Delhi)<sup>82</sup> was prepared to augment in Taiwan's favour through sales of sophisticated weaponry<sup>83</sup> to which China responded by making it the centre of its military planning and focus.<sup>84</sup> This militaristic solution by the US to protecting Taipei's political sovereignty and territorial independence likely influenced India to ally itself with America's 'concert of democracies' in Asia (Japan, Australia and to a lesser extent Taiwan)<sup>85</sup> to consolidate its position in South Asia against Beijing's influence. A few influential American commentators, however, wished to go further than merely containing China by surrounding it with militarized democracies. John J. Tkacik, Jr. of the Council on Foreign Relations proposed a radical departure from previous thinking suggesting that the US, "seek a democratic China." Quoting from President Truman who had declared in 1945, a "strong, united and democratic China is in 'the most vital interests of the United States.' Tkacik remarks that two out of three simply isn't good enough, "We now have a "strong and united" China which supports tyranny, nuclear proliferation, and lawless mercantilism. This undemocratic China is a greater challenge than a weak, disunited China."<sup>86</sup> This is a significant development from the earlier perspectives as it proposes a new ideological battle this time over the issue of democracy which in many ways resembles the US confrontations with the USSR during the Cold War and the expensive and dangerous arms race and proxy wars it helped to generate. Moderate voices within the US policy making processes have instead pressed for an alternative approach by encouraging China to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international community and for Washington to hedge against competitive or aggressive behavior by China<sup>87</sup> but these views have more recently been diluted by the Department of Defence and military analysts for a more aggressive stance against Beijing. The war games (operation Malabar) in the Bay of Bengal in September 2007 with the US, Japan, India and Australia (the democratic coalition or concert of democracies) as participants was an unmistakable signal to China of future intent. Many analysts



saw the military maneuvers by the newly formed 'Quadrilateral Initiative' as an effort to contain China and was expressed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as constituting 'an Asian arc of freedom' stretching across the Indian and Pacific Oceans and providing a democratic bulwark - presumably against non-democratic powers.<sup>88</sup> China's immediate response to these developments (including the US President and Congress honouring the Dalai Lama and arms sales to Taiwan) was to deny US warships and other military crafts the right to dock at Hong Kong harbour which effectively, in one stroke, changed the balance of power in the East Asia region since the U.S. Navy had now lost, "the ability to dock in Chinese controlled territories while the Chinese navy is gaining the ability to dock in Japanese territories. The frontier of the American sphere of influence is regressing, while the frontier of the Chinese sphere of influence is growing outward."<sup>89</sup> That the Chinese move, denying to US military ships rights of call, was made in response to hostile American gestures, such as the Quadrilateral Initiative, does not appear to have occurred to many US commentators and analysts.<sup>90</sup> (Similarly, with the defeat of pro-independence leader Chen Shwe Ben in the Taiwan elections in 2008 there exists a significantly reduced security threat for China in the region and with an apparent warming of relations with Tokyo (under prime minister Yasuo Fukuda) the aims of the Quadrilateral Initiative have now been effectively thwarted.)

India's participation in the Quadrilateral Initiative was a natural outcome of New Delhi's relations with Beijing which has been one of mutual suspicion and hostility that comes from sharing long, bloody and disputed borders<sup>91</sup> and a competitiveness and rivalry that has become part of the South Asian landscape since at least the 1950's but which has increased manifold over the last decade as both try to secure military and economic supremacy in the region.<sup>92</sup> The objectives of India's National Security Doctrine vis-a-vis China in 2003 had been stated by intelligence expert B. Raman to be two fold - (1) How to prevent a repeat of 1962 (i.e. when China and India went to war over a border dispute), by maintaining an adequate level of conventional military capability to deter any Chinese temptation to enforce its territorial claims against India by force? (2) How to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent against it?<sup>93</sup> This formulation, however, conveniently overlooks India's own expansionist policy and

ideological pretensions in South Asia (Akhand Bharat) and its security preoccupations on how to prevent China - and any other great power including the United States<sup>94</sup> - from gaining a foothold in the region which would be interpreted in New Delhi as being a diminution of its own influence and sway in the neighbourhood. These sentiments were reflected in the negative Indian media and intelligence portrayals of China when President Hu Jintao visited India in November 2006.<sup>95</sup> Prior to the visit one Indian analyst referred to the apprehension that, "Chinese investment in key infrastructure projects in the sub continent from Gwadar port in Pakistan to power projects in Bangladesh and greater engagement with Sri Lanka has led to the development of a 'siege mentality' in India. The idea that China is encircling India with the purpose of containing it has taken hold of the popular imagination."<sup>96</sup> Another cause for the unease attending President Hu Jintao's visit was the claim by China's ambassador Sun Yuxi that Arunachal Pradesh in India's north-east was Chinese territory.<sup>97</sup> Indian intelligence expert Dr. Subhash Kapila has correctly pointed out that China has undertaken boundary settlements with virtually all countries that it had border disputes with except India [and several other US allied states i.e. Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines and Taiwan] and that its recent claim on Arunachal Pradesh was a strategic pressure point against New Delhi.<sup>98</sup> Seen from a different perspective it might be observed that India has multiple boundary disputes with all its neighbours - including against China where it claims 38,000 square kms of territory in Kashmir - which have yet to be settled satisfactorily and all of which are used as pressure points by New Delhi against all of its neighbours which in turn breeds mistrust against it. So in an effort to overcome these negative impressions President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh issued a joint declaration that they would promote cooperation in the field of civil nuclear energy, set the foundations for a strategic partnership and agree to double bilateral trade between the countries to the tune of \$40 billion by 2010, upgrade bilateral ties to a "qualitatively new level" and open additional consulates-general in Kolkata and Guangzhou in China.<sup>99</sup> There were also promises on both sides to speed up resolution of the bitter border disputes that had plagued relations between Beijing and New Delhi for more than four decades.<sup>100</sup> However, it was obvious to most that these

pronouncements were mere shallow expressions and that strategic considerations would continue to bedevil relations especially the China-India-Pakistan and China-India-US triangular relationships; Beijing's growing political economic and military cooperation and influence over other smaller but increasingly assertive nations of the South Asian region; business, trade and energy resource competitiveness of the two countries; and finally the highly emotive border disputes none of which could be so easily wished away as the joint declarations might seemed to suggest.<sup>101</sup> These tensions were reflected in developments during 2007 as New Delhi increasingly adopted a defense strategy that was aligned to the US strategic position (now formalized through the signing of the 2005 "New Framework for India-US Defence Relationship" and the 2004 Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP)) focusing on China's military modernization and major new weapons acquisitions.<sup>102</sup> The Indian media and intelligence reaction to China's destruction of one of its own satellites, already noted above, mirrored the US response in being largely condemnatory of the tests and at the same time seeking to galvanise New Delhi politicians and the Indian defence industry to take up the technological and military challenge with 'The Indian Express' suggesting cooperation with the lone superpower in developing advanced space capabilities to counter the new threat posed by Beijing.<sup>103</sup> However, opportunities for cooperation on a wide range of issues including defense related matters soon opened up for India with the 2006 conference of the Japan-Australia-US Trilateral Strategic Dialogue which has as one of its main objectives, 'the maintenance of stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region, through giving support to emergence and consolidation of democracy and strengthening cooperative frameworks in the region' which could be interpreted to mean acting as a system framework to counterbalance Chinese power and military might in the region.<sup>104</sup> At roughly the same time India became an active participant in the trilateral forum that included itself, China and Russia as members and was probably intended by New Delhi's to allow it to maintain an independent line from Washington on certain foreign policy, natural resource and trade matters<sup>105</sup> and not surrender or compromise its special interests in the South Asia region<sup>106</sup> to the United States. Policymakers in New Delhi still continued to view China as the principal security threat - regardless of what some political

commentators and analysts might seem to suggest<sup>107</sup> - and preferred a US strategic alignment<sup>108</sup> that could potentially launch it to great power status in the decades to come. It would still have the scope to influence the terms of this cooperation in order to protect its special interests in South Asia but it would be a balancing act that would prove very difficult to maintain especially against a supremely confident, domineering and calculative partner who had no intention of playing a subsidiary role in a region of vital strategic interest to it.<sup>109</sup>

It was only a matter of time before the Japan-Australia-US Trilateral Strategic Dialogue evolved into the Quadrilateral Initiative (QI) which was tentatively formed at the sidelines of a meeting of the Asian Regional Forum (ARF) in Manila in May 25, 2007. Significantly, the first QI meeting was preceded by the first-ever US-India-Japan joint naval exercises where Indian naval ships first went to Okinawa for a joint manoeuvre with US forces before taking part in the trilateral exercises off the Tokyo Bay.<sup>110</sup> The Chinese reaction to the QI formation was instantaneous and stern with foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang describing it as a divisive move. Prof. Sun Shihai, Deputy Director of the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) reportedly observed that, 'The so-called democratic alliance is not good for Asia', as this alliance not only excludes China 'but also other countries of the region.' Prof. Sun cautioned India stating 'any attempts to take China as a rival or contain China will not work' and it was against India's strategic interests to be part of the 'democratic alliance'.<sup>111</sup> An olive branch was offered to the Chinese when the Indian military representatives offered to conduct a joint counterterrorism drill in October 2007 (the military exercises actually took place in December in China's south-western province of Yunnan) with the Army Chief of Staff J.J. Singh commenting to the press, "In principle, the Chinese have agreed to the holding of such an exercise...both armies are interested in expanding military-to-military ties." But as Jagannath P. Panda, an analyst for The Jamestown Foundation astutely pointed out, "Though these initiatives are seen as a significant step toward improving bilateral relations, a strain of mistrust, stemming from the long-standing unresolved border disputes and China's arms sales to Pakistan, continues to pervade Sino-Indian military relations. Two additional issues-the recent Chinese claims of Arunachal Pradesh and

China's visa-denial to an Arunachal Pradesh official have added a new twist to overall Sino-Indian relations. With this backdrop, observers question whether the proposed joint military exercise between China and India will bring any difference to the overall course of the bilateral relationship."<sup>112</sup> It was quite obvious that India gave less importance to this joint counterterrorism drill than to the massive five-nation naval exercise (Operation Malabar) in the strategically significant Bay of Bengal area that began on September 4 and included the US, Australia, Japan and Singapore as participants.<sup>113</sup> India's hosting of the exercises in this strategically important location which is part of the wider Indian Ocean Region (IOR) may have been motivated by what Indian analyst Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury claimed was, "Beijing's determination to contain and encircle India and thereby limit the growing influence of the Indian Navy in the region."<sup>114</sup> The real cause of Indian anxiety appears to be that China's involvement in the IOR would more likely limit India's expansionist trends in the region and as Dipanjan's argument suggests, "...in order to have a strong hold over the region, India needs economic assets as well as a strong military presence. India must have access in the region of Chinese influence, by establishing political, economic and security ties with East and Southeast Asian countries. New Delhi must strengthen its ties with other major regional and global forums to maintain its sphere of influence. At a strategic level, India will have to attempt to balance China's power realistically, through development of its own economic and military potential and through building strong relationships with neighbors, and regional organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (A.S.E.A.N.)."<sup>115</sup> Seen from another perspective the message being sent by Operation Malabar had serious security and strategic implications for China as, "India's invitation of three states that have anti-Chinese strategic orientations into waters that are witnessing Chinese naval encroachment has no ambiguity in meaning. Setting aside diplomatic niceties, this move was a strong message to China that its vulnerability in the Straits of Malacca (transit point adjacent to the Bay of Bengal that carries 80 percent of its oil imports) was exploitable by its rivals."<sup>116</sup> Such a decisive tilt towards the US did worry some Indian analysts as it could conceivably jeopardize India's own ambitions to regional hegemony (an Akhand Bharat) and pretensions for superpower status if both Beijing and Moscow

perceived New Delhi as a serious threat to their security. So in the best traditions of Kautilya (who wrote the classical Indian manual on statecraft) Dr. Subhash Kapila urged upon the Indian government the following observations -

\* India's strategic and foreign policy establishment must recognize that India's management of its strategic partnerships, both existing and evolving must be adroitly done

\* India's strategic stances must not generate reverberations from other global power centers, until India reaches the culminating stage of emerging as an independent power center in the world.<sup>117</sup>

It was, however, due to a lack of diplomatic skill, a good measure of political naiveté and constant shifts in policy and strategic emphasis that helped to sow confusion and divisions within India on ultimate objectives and the best means to achieve them. This constant juggling of priorities and policies managed to put at risk its relations with the US and jeopardize the much touted nuclear deal with Washington. China realizing the strains and tensions in Indian foreign policy made a surprise gesture at the end of 2007 by issuing a visa to Marpe Sora, a professor in computer science at the Rajiv Gandhi University in Arunachal Pradesh. This effectively reversed its long-held policy of refusing to give visas to Indians from the disputed Indian state and which has been the cause of friction between the two countries. Some have interpreted this move (probably wrongly) as a prelude to China ultimately accepting Arunachal Pradesh as part of India.<sup>118</sup> New Delhi has mistakenly perceived this as the successful outcome of their tough foreign policy initiatives astutely balancing the US and China against each other while keeping in sight its ultimate objective of military, political and economic preeminence in South Asia. This balancing act certainly appeared to be behind Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to China in mid-January 2008.<sup>119</sup> Such an approach has, however, been rejected by Dr. Kapila who argues that, "the trust deficit between China and India is likely to increase. China would continue outwardly to display its readiness to build cooperative relations and a partnership with India, but in parallel, China can be expected to limit India strategically and impede India's growth towards global power status."<sup>120</sup> In other words, "A strong US-India Strategic Partnership, without any containment measures but with active hedging strategies could serve the national security interests of both the United States

and India. This strategic partnership need to be reinforced and not be held hostage to the eventual outcome of the Indo-US Nuclear Deal." As shall be seen, Dr. Kapila advocates keeping both the US and Russia on good terms with India but to remain distrustful towards China. Kautilya would probably have been proud of such a fiendishly cunning plan but it is at the same time extremely unlikely that New Delhi would be able to maintain a balanced approach amongst the three international power centres while protecting its own strategic interests and designs in South Asia (Akhand Bharat) and beyond. This seems to have been borne out by Australia's decision in early 2008 to withdraw from the Quadrilateral Initiative to mollify China<sup>121</sup> which was soon followed by India's request to Beijing to host the second joint military exercises between the countries.<sup>122</sup> Relations between the countries, however, again appeared to be badly shaken by the Tibet protests that erupted prior to the holding of the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 in several cities in India.<sup>123</sup> India's relations with the US also encountered a strained period as New Delhi adopted an increasingly independent line on Iran by enhancing its trade and diplomatic ties<sup>124</sup> with that country putting at risk the nuclear deal agreed with Washington (see below).

### **The US-India Nuclear Deal -**

Such grandiose visions have, however been rudely shattered by the fiasco surrounding the nuclear agreement between the US and India. As noted in the preface to the first edition, the agreement signified a sea change in relations between India and the United States which had been touted as a strategic partnership to thwart China's growing political and military influence in the Asia Pacific region. This represented a dramatic shift in geo-strategic perspective and outlook when compared to the friendly relations that existed between China and the US during the Nixon presidency and the distrust and hostility that both countries had towards India that reached its climax during the 1971 Indo-Pak war culminating in the birth of Bangladesh<sup>125</sup> (see parts 1-4 of this essay). To accommodate India in the new strategic alignment the US was prepared to override decades of nuclear export and nonproliferation policy giving primacy to geopolitics, regional security strategy and international economic objectives.<sup>126</sup> It had consequently been predicted in the first edition of this book that because of the changed geostrategic circumstances Congress would

likely pass (in the face of some minor opposition) the nuclear agreement unless there was some unforeseen calamity affecting overall Indo-US relations.<sup>127</sup> To reiterate here the main points of the agreement the US (and other Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) members)<sup>128</sup> would be open to sell both nuclear fuel and technology to India for their peaceful uses while New Delhi would be required to separate its civilian nuclear facilities from its military ones and declare the former to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and place them under IAEA safeguards, and also sign an Additional Protocol.<sup>129</sup> The principal objections to the agreement had included the following-

\* India is one of only four countries that have refused to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)-a treaty endorsed by 188 nations. Under the terms of the NPT, the export of nuclear technology is banned to nations that don't accept international inspections of their nuclear programs. In addition, U.S. law prohibits the transfer of nuclear technology to a country that rejects full international safeguards. U.S. law also bans such technology transfer to a non-NPT country that has conducted nuclear test explosions.<sup>130</sup>

\* Apprehension that the deal would have negative implications for nuclear non-proliferation efforts on a global scale.

\* By treating India as an acceptable nuclear partner and continuing to treat Pakistan, Iran and North Korea as 'nuclear pariahs' has the potential of creating a very insecure and unstable world<sup>131</sup> borne out by the growing hostility between the US and Iran (an issue on which the Chinese have shown far greater consistency and whose policy prescriptions are more in line with the spirit of the NPT. China's diplomatic position on Iran has also been far less threatening to peace and security in the Middle East compared to the US)<sup>132</sup> throughout 2007 and the expanding war in Iraq.

\* According to one analyst, the deal allows India to build as many nuclear weapons as it wishes with its own nuclear supplies and operate un-safeguarded facilities for producing and stockpiling unlimited amounts of fissile material for its weapons program.<sup>133</sup> This has been confirmed by the Council on Foreign Affairs (CFR) in a



Council Special Report (CSR) which contends that India has not excluded the, 'possibility of testing its own weapons should other states test theirs first. India has agreed to submit fourteen of its twenty-two nuclear reactors to international inspections, but it has kept the remaining eight potentially available for producing nuclear weapons material, has made no definite commitments whether future reactors will be inspected or used for weapons production, and has made no promises to end its production of nuclear weapons material. In contrast, the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and China, the officially recognized nuclear weapons states under international law, have stopped producing nuclear weapons material.<sup>134</sup>

None of these objections seemed to faze members of the US Congress who on June 26, 2006 introduced a Bill to, 'exempt from certain requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 a proposed nuclear agreement for cooperation with India.' The justification used by the sponsors - and included in the terms of the Bill - had been that India had demonstrated responsible behaviour with respect to the non-proliferation of technology related to weapons of mass destruction and that it had a functioning and uninterrupted democratic system of government and a foreign policy congruent to that of the United States. To bring New Delhi fully within the concept of a strategic alignment of democracies (discussed above) the Bill articulated that cooperation with India would induce the country to give greater political and material support to the achievement of United States objectives in respect to dissuading, isolating, and, if necessary, sanctioning and containing states that sponsor terrorism and terrorist groups, that are seeking to acquire a nuclear weapons capability i.e. Iran.<sup>135</sup> As the Bill was being discussed in Congress opposition to it grew in India since it now apparently included newly attached provisions that were not part of the original agreement signed between President Bush and the Indian Prime Minister on July 18, 2005 and supplemented in a March 2006 separation plan and framework statement. It was apprehended that the Bill placed before Congress would unfairly restrain India's nuclear option which was a strategic necessity in a region where there were several nuclear weapons states with at least one considered to be hostile. Similarly, the safeguards and external controls that were to be imposed on some nuclear facilities was completely unacceptable as it would cover

installations that were set up without external resources, assistance or support and would therefore be an infringement of its sovereign rights. On the same grounds the Bill was considered entirely discriminatory as it would limit India's scope to engage in research and development in nuclear science and technology which were vital matters inseparable from national defense and in securing energy self-sufficiency.<sup>136</sup> Even after the US House of Representatives passed the Bill containing many of these and other extraneous conditions Prime Minister Manmohan Singh assured the Indian public that the government would not accept any dilution of the agreement of July 18, 2005 and the framework statements that would prevent India from securing the benefits of full civil nuclear cooperation and rejected outright the provisions that called for a moratorium on the production of fissile materials and also on nuclear testing. He continued to pin his hopes on the American democratic process believing that the Senate would amend the legislation to fit the original understanding made with President Bush.<sup>137</sup> However, before the proposed legislation could be heard in the Senate there was a growing chorus of opposition in the US calling for further and more stringent safeguards than was provided for in the Congress Bill and included the following advisories: A determination, prior to resumption of full nuclear cooperation, that India had stopped the production of fissile material; A determination and annual certification that U.S. civil nuclear trade would not in any way assist or encourage India's nuclear weapons program; Measures to ensure that the United States would not continue to provide nuclear assistance directly or through other suppliers in the event that India breaks the nonproliferation commitments outlined on July 18, 2005; A determination that the Government of India or any government-affiliated entities were not engaged in illicit procurement of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons-related items. In a Congressional Research Service report prepared by Sharon Squassoni, a national defence specialist, there were also expressions of concern about India's links with Iran since two Indian scientists had already been sanctioned by the US government in 2004 for nuclear related transfers to Tehran. The question was subsequently raised over the next several months as to whether India had adequate teeth to implement export control regulations to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons technology and also to reduce its economic and military ties to Tehran

including the proposed lucrative Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.<sup>138</sup>

When the Senate finally approved the legislation in mid-November 2006 it excluded some of the proposed amendments noted above but included a stipulation requiring New Delhi to help contain Iran's nuclear ambitions which was not viewed favourably by some political and diplomatic quarters in India.<sup>139</sup> In early December both the Congress and Senate versions of the legislation were reconciled softening the requirements on India's role in containing Tehran but nevertheless retained features that had been opposed by India as not being in accord with the July 18, 2005 understanding and separation plan or framework statements.<sup>140</sup> In any event, President Bush signed the 'Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006' into US law on December 18, 2006.<sup>141</sup> The controversial aspects of the Hyde Act from an Indian perspective (as listed by columnist Praful Bidwai) included the following points -

- \* The Hyde Act contravenes Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's assurances to the Indian Parliament that he would not accept any departure from the agreements signed with the US since July 2005.
- \* Dr Singh said that India would accept nothing short of full civilian nuclear cooperation. But the Act excludes uranium enrichment, spent-fuel reprocessing, and heavy-water technologies.
- \* India opposed any reference to a future nuclear test. The Act says that all cooperation would be stopped if India does in fact test. Under such an eventuality the US would have the right of return of any nuclear materials and equipment transferred to India and any special material produced by their use. Enforcement of this provision, in full or part, would lead to heavy financial losses from the closure of the nuclear reactor and in returning transferred nuclear materials and equipment to the US.
- \* Dr Singh opposed annual certification of India's compliance with non-proliferation pledges. The Act merely changes "certification" to "assessment."
- \* India insisted on creating strategic reserves of nuclear fuel over the lifetime of its reactors. The Act only permits non-strategic reserves.
- \* India wanted a specific reciprocal sequence for the steps remaining in the deal's completion. These include a bilateral "123 agreement" -- to amend the US Atomic Energy Act -- approval from the Nuclear

Suppliers' Group, and a safeguards (inspections) agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Hyde Act changes the sequence.

\* India opposes any scrutiny of its military-nuclear facilities. The Act mandates such scrutiny.<sup>142</sup>

As the debate ensued in India over the merits or demerits of the legislation and its likely affect on Indian strategic and national interests the real cause of disagreement revealed itself to be between those who believed that a subservient attitude to the United States at that particular instant would serve India's long-term objectives of domination and control over South Asia or whether a more independent course, would achieve the same imperialistic and expansionist designs. All sides were agreed upon the fact that India would remain a stunted global player unless it could exercise decisive influence in its immediate neighbourhood and it was the means to that specific end which divided political opinion on the question of the nuclear deal.<sup>143</sup> By January 2007 it was clear that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would likely have to face a rebellion within the governing alliance if he attempted to defend the agreement in its modified form with the leftist parties being the most belligerently opposed to the terms of the Hyde Act and the Hindu and secularist nationalists following close behind.<sup>144</sup> The first sign that the Congress government was prepared to press ahead with the agreement even in its present controversial form came when it temporarily set a cap to its programme to build inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and restrict their range to 5,000 km simply to allay American concerns and was seen by many as compromising India's sovereignty and strategic interests.<sup>145</sup> This impression was echoed by leftist groups as the Congress government then invited the USS Nimitz (a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier) to dock in Chennai amidst protests from political parties, non-governmental organizations and trade unions.<sup>146</sup> In the face of such opposition a 30 page 123 agreement was signed between the US and India in July 2007 after intense and prolonged negotiations that stretched to almost 300 working hours and was conducted in several cities around the world including New Delhi, Washington, Pretoria and London and was quickly and quietly endorsed by the Indian cabinet but with its provisions still veiled in secrecy from the scientific community, opposition parties and the

general public.<sup>147</sup> Once the terms of the 123 agreement were disclosed about two weeks later there developed a concerted campaign against its adoption by Indian politicians and scientists as it merely papered over the differences that existed in regard to the Hyde Act without giving any substantive assurances on the contentious issues of lifetime fuel supply, reprocessing rights, termination of cooperation, restrictions on transfers of dual-use technology and the right of return with some on the left arguing that the agreement hobbles India's sovereign right to determine its own foreign policy by rendering it subservient to US interests and ultimate dictation.<sup>148</sup> There were few outside the Indian ruling circles who were prepared to actively defend the 123 agreement and those that did seemed awkwardly limp, half-hearted and contradictory in their defenses.<sup>149</sup> Surprisingly non-proliferation campaigners in the US contended that too much had been given to India and that bending the rules so dramatically just to favour New Delhi would make nonproliferation allies lose confidence in U.S. leadership, as well as in the rules themselves. Put in another way, "When the leading rule-maker and enforcer tries to rewrite or bend the rules for its special friends while nailing its adversaries, the rest of the world loses confidence both in the rules and in the United States."<sup>150</sup> This did not seem to sway or impress opinion in India where it was felt by many that it was a bad deal and that too much was sacrificed by the Indian government to the Americans so that when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tried to defend the deal in Parliament his comments were met with loud and furious protests with several sessions ending in complete uproar and disarray. The Prime Minister next challenged the leftist parties to leave the governing alliance if they were not prepared to accept the terms of the 123 agreement which would have resulted in the collapse of the UPA government inevitably leading to the calling of snap elections with a strong possibility of the Hindu nationalists coming to power (who were probably more pro-American than the Congress making their opposition to the deal quite inexplicable unless framed in the language of power politics).<sup>151</sup> In response to this threat the leftist parties focused national attention on the Operation Malabar naval exercises describing them as merely another attempt to 'integrate India with the global strategy of the United States.'<sup>152</sup> In turn the United States refocused the debate back on to the nuclear deal - which appeared at the time to be permanently stalled and clearly on

its way to an early demise - by issuing a year-end deadline for New Delhi to wrap up nuclear negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) with the leftist parties describing the intervention as an insult to Indian democracy.<sup>153</sup> Within weeks, however, the leftist parties under intense political pressure from coalition allies (i.e. Congress party) agreed to a compromise formula where the government would be allowed to open negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on a nuclear safeguards agreement. The leftist parties would examine the IAEA accord and then make a decision on whether to veto it or not giving them an effective say on whether it (and the 123 agreement) should be formally approved by the government but this interpretation has been disputed by some officials.<sup>154</sup> So, as 2007 ended the possibility of finalizing the nuclear deal looked an ever distant prospect as wrangling between the political parties continued with disagreement essentially remaining on whether the accord would hurt India's strategic defense program and compromise its foreign policy and affects its overarching ambitions for an *Akhand Bharat*.<sup>155</sup>

In the midst of all this bickering and squabbling the first signs of the negative strategic consequences for India of the nuclear deal became apparent. On November 11-12, 2007, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh paid a short visit to 'strategic partner' and historical ally Russia where it was expected that he would sign a "Koodankulam Plus" agreement under which Moscow would help New Delhi set-up four civilian nuclear power reactors at Koodankulam in southern Tamil Nadu. These would have been in addition to the two already under construction under an agreement signed by India and Russia in 1988. Prior to the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Russia and the signing of the Koodankulam Plus agreement the US had expressed reservations on the deal as NSG restrictions had still to be lifted. The US had taken up the issue of the four new reactors not only with the Government of India at New Delhi, but also with the Russian Government at Moscow. Russian officials have been quoted by the media as claiming that while they were prepared to go ahead with the signing, India was not.<sup>156</sup> This sudden turn around by India on the Koodankulam Plus agreement finds some explanation in a commentary by Nicholas Burns, the U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, who urges upon Indian

policy makers the following advice on advancing military cooperation with the United States which had so far been, "impeded by the fact that much of the Indian military still uses a considerable amount of Soviet-era equipment. Barriers to closer coordination in training and the sharing of military doctrine remain in both governments. A significant Indian defense purchase from the United States -- for example, of the new advanced multirole combat aircraft that the Indian air force seeks -- would be a great leap forward and signal a real commitment to long-term military partnership."<sup>157</sup> In other words, a significant purchase by India of military equipment from the US would indicate a clear break with the past since Russia had been vying for the same orders and till recently it had been New Delhi's principal supplier of sophisticated arms. Seen in this context the Koodankulam Plus agreement if it had been approved would have been deemed an obstacle to closer US-India strategic ties as well as a breach of non-proliferation safeguards as defined and enforced by Washington.

Warning on the risks of an overt or pronounced strategic shift in favour of the US, Dr. Subhash Kapila advises caution, as India is now at a, "historical strategic cross-roads as it moves towards emergence as a global power. In such a trajectory it can hardly afford strategic tilts in its ascendancy. Time- tested strategic partnerships like that with Russia need equal if not more nurturing than the evolving ones which have yet to stand the test of time. India therefore, should avoid at all costs giving an impression to Russia that in its new found strategic infatuation with the United States it can let slip the Russian Strategic Partnership into a chilly phase as no strategic partnership can be taken for granted even if it is a 'time-tested' one."<sup>158</sup> The notion of India as an emerging global power will undoubtedly be of concern to other South Asian nations who are under the shadow of an expansionist and domineering neighbour whose strategic relationships whether with the US or Russia are mere expedients to achieving an Akhand Bharat. This assessment has been largely confirmed after the recognition in New Delhi that the Nuclear deal with the US was floundering and unlikely to be ratified.<sup>159</sup> The Indian government quickly reengaged with their erstwhile allies - the Russians - and in February 2008 signed the deal to construct the Koodankulam nuclear power plant reactors that they had earlier rejected.<sup>160</sup> This followed in

the footsteps of a joint-document signed between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao where, "the two sides pledge to promote bilateral cooperation in civil nuclear energy, consistent with their respective international commitments."<sup>161</sup> This in all likelihood does not signify another strategic realignment by New Delhi in favour of the SCO block (especially as its relations with Russia remain frosty)<sup>162</sup> but is probably an attempt to secure China's vote in the NSG meet if the nuclear deal with the US ever reaches this final stage of negotiation which at the time of writing seems unlikely.<sup>163</sup> If the deal does in fact fail the nascent US-India military alliance will probably continue apace (both perceiving China as a significant threat to their interests) but Washington is likely to treat New Delhi as an unreliable and opportunistic partner more concerned with achieving hegemony in South Asia than trying to help secure broader US goals. This is likely to become apparent to the Americans in any case as India gradually begins to tread a separate path whether the deal goes through or not.

### **The India-Israel military nexus -**

As noted in the preface to the first edition India and Israel over the course of several decades had established secretive diplomatic and military ties<sup>164</sup> that culminated in the controversial visit of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to New Delhi in 2003.<sup>165</sup> Since then relations between the two countries have become more public and open (especially in defence matters)<sup>166</sup> with Indian security forces increasingly adopting Israeli style military methods and tactics to suppress its Muslim and other minority groups.<sup>167</sup> The Indian government has also begun to implement draconian security measures along its borders effectively to contain and undermine neighbouring countries<sup>168</sup> that has included the use of barbed wire fencing that has an eerie resemblance to the wall that now separates Israel proper from the West Bank. Close military ties with Israel have therefore become a permanent policy fixture even with changes in political administration as, "the past NDA government led by the Hindu right BJP ratcheted up relations with Israel on account of its perceptions of an "anti-terror" (read anti-Muslim) axis between India, Israel, and the U.S., the Congress-led UPA government has maintained a steady intensification of ties between India and Israel while incredibly claiming that its commitment to all things principled in foreign policy



remain untouched. Notably, Indo-Israeli ties have expanded under the UPA to include a host of non-military economic relations as well.<sup>1169</sup> Not surprisingly there also exists significant commonalities in the ideological outlook of the influential extremist factions in both these societies, which is represented by the expansionist Zionist parties in Israel and the Hindu and secular nationalists in India, who have been trying to establish an Akhand Bharat in the South Asian region based on domination and control rather than direct physical occupation (except in a few extraordinary cases such as Sikkim which was effectively annexed by New Delhi). These common features have allowed the fanatical Hindutva groups to meet with, 'Zionist organizations to learn about strategies to advance religious nationalist agendas and suppress any criticism of their political movements.'<sup>170</sup> It was, however, the outwardly secular Congress leader and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who had originally granted Israel de jure recognition in September 1950 in a direct breach with his mentor Mahatma Gandhi who consistently rejected Zionism over a period of nearly twenty years despite unrelenting Zionist lobbying. It was also under Nehru that, "Israel opened a trade office in Bombay which gradually became a consular mission, and the first Israeli consul took over in June 1953; in early 1952, Nehru expressed his willingness to establish diplomatic relations. Another Congress leader, Rajiv Gandhi (1984-89), initiated a few direct and indirect contacts with Israel."<sup>171</sup> It has, therefore, been up to the Leftist Front parties under the umbrella of the Congress-led UPA government to shore-up India's 'traditional anti-imperialist' foreign policy credentials since, as Nicola Nasser, points out, "Indian communists are very well aware of their historical responsibility to pre-empt the potential alignment of their country's non-aligned foreign policy; they are careful to maintain their ideological and international solidarity relations with their comrades worldwide as well as with the national liberation movements, in particular the Palestinian national struggle."<sup>172</sup> This has, however, become the minority view in Indian political and intellectual circles with the vast majority calling for increased ties with Israel<sup>173</sup> and the West (meaning the United States) and abandoning India's non-aligned status.

While India's relations with the United States still has an ambiguous meaning for Bangladesh the close political and military bonds that

have developed between New Delhi and Tel Aviv have had a direct and adverse impact on the country. The cause for this has been the growing cooperation between MOSSAD and RAW to destabilize Bangladesh through propaganda and disinformation. It appears that Israeli intelligence had made common cause with their counterparts in India (i.e. RAW) to have Bangladesh labeled a safe haven for Islamist terrorists after the authorities in Dhaka arrested journalist Salah Uddin Shoab Choudhury on charges of sedition, treason and espionage having strong evidentiary grounds that he was a MOSSAD agent and was engaged in subversive activities against the state.<sup>174</sup> Choudhury had been arrested as he was about to board a flight to Israel, where he was due to deliver a speech on promoting mutual understanding between Muslims and Jews. This excursion would have been illegal under Bangladesh law as travel to Israel is specifically prohibited for Bangladeshi citizens wishing to enter that country on their national passports. While his case was pending for trial a campaign was launched in the United States for his immediate and unconditional release. The campaigners resorted to coordinated propaganda attacks against Bangladesh vilifying it as a corrupt and fundamentalist state repressive of its religious minorities and bent on spreading hatred throughout the region.<sup>175</sup> What was conveniently omitted from these polemics was the fact that Salah Uddin Shoab Choudhury had previously been charged for threatening former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with death as well as having worked for a radical right wing Islamic newspaper (i.e. 'Inqilaab' which later changed its colour to become a left-leaning secular daily) early in his career.

After seventeen months in detention Choudhury was released from prison but the charges had not been dropped and the government continued with a criminal prosecution against him.<sup>176</sup> The campaign, led by Congressman Mark Kirk (R., Ill.), Richard Benkin and the American Jewish Committee, now demanding an end to Choudhury's criminal prosecution, reached a peak<sup>177</sup> during the term of the non-political caretaker government appointed by President Iajuddin in October 2006 and which became an immediate point of controversy as the Awami League opposed its formation from the very start rendering it inoperative and extremely vulnerable to pressure (See Part 6A). It was at this time that the US State Department issued a strongly worded message on the dysfunctional legal and judicial

system in Bangladesh that clearly could not be trusted to provide the accused with a fair or impartial trial.<sup>178</sup> This was followed, on November 14, by Democratic Congresswoman Nita Lowey of New York, introducing a resolution in the House of Representatives calling on the government of Bangladesh to immediately drop all pending charges against Choudhury.<sup>179</sup> Two days later, the European Parliament passed a resolution expressing concern about 'violations of human rights' in Bangladesh, in which it mentioned Shoaib's case and called for his acquittal. According to Shameran Abed, writing in the *New Age* daily, "Shoaib has neither been the worst sufferer of government harassment, nor the worst victim of persecution by the fundamentalists. Yet the western media and parliaments have decided to single him out of the hundreds of cases of human rights violations that take place in this country every year. While some may put this down as proof of the power of the Jewish lobby within the United States that has taken up his case - he was awarded the Moral Courage Award 2006 by the American Jewish Committee - others suggest that the orchestrated campaign on behalf of Shoaib, which stretches from the US and Europe to Australia, lends credence to the allegation that he has ties with a certain foreign intelligence agency."<sup>180</sup> While Shameran Abed was probably referring to MOSSAD, it was obvious from Choudhury's articles that he supported the propaganda line advanced by RAW that Bangladesh was a failed or failing state overrun by Islamic fundamentalists which indicates that he had probable ties with both intelligence agencies (See Part 6A).<sup>181</sup> These contacts likely helped him in obtaining the overwhelming support in the United States legislature where in a vote of 409 to 1, Congress passed a Resolution that called on the Bangladesh government, "to immediately drop all pending charges" against Choudhury.<sup>182</sup> Due to the political uncertainty in Bangladesh and the intense international pressure over the criminal prosecution, Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury was quietly allowed to leave the country. He now travels frequently between Europe and America on speaking tours where he criticizes the government and the Islamic culture, history and politics of Bangladesh.<sup>183</sup> Choudhury will, therefore, remain an elusive and controversial figure for the country with his alleged ties with RAW and MOSSAD which gives him a modicum of historical significance and importance since it reveals a collaborative effort between the two intelligence agencies to create a politically and socially unstable

situation in Bangladesh. MOSSAD's purpose or objective in this would appear to be to gain some leverage and influence over an emerging Muslim nation while RAW would be seeking to increase New Delhi's power and control over its smaller neighbour in line with the vision for an Akhand Bharat. It was during the term of the Interim Government of Chief Advisor Fakhruddin Ahmed that RAW-MOSSAD cooperation reached new heights as disclosed in a report in the Amer Desh newspaper on November 27, 2007 which revealed an intricate plan to undermine and ultimately destroy certain political parties and infiltrate important sectors of Bangladesh society to influence policy making and opinion in the country.<sup>184</sup>

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175. Brett Stephens - Darkness in Dhaka (Wall Street Journal - October 10, 2006); Washington Times - Persecution in Bangladesh (October 20, 2006)
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180. Shameran Abed - West's curious interest in one man's plight (New Age - Nov 27, 2006)
181. Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury - Bangladesh: Journey towards dark tunnel? (NFB - January 09 2007); See also Arutz Sheva - Muslim Journalist on Trial for Supporting Israel (June 30, 2007); The New York Sun - Bangladesh Slipping Toward Islamic Extremism, Muslim Zionist Says (August 3, 2007)
182. NFB - US Passes Resolution on Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury (March 19 2007); Asian Tribune - US Congress wants the immediate release of Bangladesh journalist (February 16, 2007)
183. Bryan Schwartzman - 'Brothers' Share Intense Passion for Justice (Jewish Exponent - August 23, 2007)
184. Amar Desh - 'MOSSAD' O 'RAW' Totpor: Boro Dhoroner Nashoktar Ashska (November 27, 2007)



# THE INDIA DOCTRINE

(1947-2007)

## PART 1

### THE EMERGENCE OF INDIA: THE NEHRU-INDIRA DOCTRINE AND INDIA'S FORWARD POLICY

*"Whoso writes the history of his own  
time must expect to be attacked for  
everything he has said, and for everything  
he has not said; but those little draw backs  
should not discourage a man who loves truth  
and liberty, expects nothing, fears nothing, asks nothing,  
and limits his ambition to the cultivation of letters"*  
(Voltaire)

#### Introduction

Although the Indian government has made no official statement to the effect that it would pursue an expansionist policy seeking a reunification of India (however superficial) or what in some knowledgeable circles have called an 'Akhand-Bharat' - a United or Greater India but now much more loosely conceived taking into account the demographic realities of the South Asia region - based on the pre-1947 borders that had constituted the area under the jurisdiction of the British Raj it is the argument of this essay that this idea has remained the defining element of India's relations with its neighbours in the South Asian region. According to some experts the concept of an Akhand Bharat may extend even further to the territorial limits corresponding to ancient Buddhist and Hindu empires that are now only reminisced about in modern Indian literature and in some historical and religious texts.<sup>1</sup> Such a controversial policy for the actualization of an Akhand Bharat would certainly not constitute an explicitly stated element of Indian foreign policy but there are several political formulations<sup>2</sup> that obliquely refer to a project for a Greater India. The idea of an Akhand Bharat still

undoubtedly remains the centerpiece of Indian government policy making towards its near neighbours. This has been the case since 1947 and directly affects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Pakistan and Bangladesh but also extends to political and military hegemony and control over Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Afghanistan and the Maldives. The constant skirmishing between the Indian Border Security Force and the Bangladesh Defence Rifles with the unprovoked killing of Bangladeshi civilians<sup>3</sup> along the border areas is only a single instance of this aggressive expansionist policy. This essay will provide numerous more such instances of Indian aggression affecting the peace and security of the subcontinent. This attitude has been particularly pronounced in the unrest in Nepal, Sri Lanka<sup>4</sup> and in the Balochistan province of Pakistan in the first half of 2006 and the signs of a similar policy of destabilization was felt in Bangladesh in the run up to the 2007 General Elections which resulted in the calling of a state of emergency by President Iajuddin Ahmed and the cancellation of the elections scheduled for January 22, 2007.<sup>5</sup> As these recent examples demonstrate, the program for an Akhand Bharat now no longer implies actual physical occupation which would be disastrous to India's own unity and national integrity but more insidiously control and domination over neighbouring countries through political, economic, diplomatic, military and intelligence tools and only occasionally by direct annexation where alternatives no longer exist or seem viable.

## **Two Nation Theory**

It is quite incredible that so many intelligent and educated South Asians still remain ignorant of the fact that India has never accepted the concept of the Two-Nation theory which resulted in the break up of India into two separate parts in 1947 and which also cost the lives of an estimated 2 million people. It is widely known that India employs stooges and quislings in all the countries of the sub-continent promoting the view that the Two Nations theory based on religion was a mistake. This author would agree with that assessment but not in an attempt to distract from India's own fissiparous and centrifugal forces<sup>6</sup> or in a cheap attempt to break up Pakistan any further but to promote a more realistic evaluation and appraisal of India's conduct to its neighbours which depends largely on the ideological imperatives

of an Akhand Bharat. Two quite extraordinary books by Dr. Rafiuddin Ahmed and Rounaq Jahan<sup>7</sup> reveal the lack of commonality between the two parts of Pakistan (East and West separated by more than 1000 miles of Indian territory) and the inherent cultural anomalies within East Pakistan that sheds light on why a Two Nation Theory could not be a solution to Jinnah's fear of Hindu domination that had been the expressed ambition of Hindu writers in the nineteenth century. The Indian historian R.C. Majumder had said in this regard that, "The basis of national unity in India is Hindu religion. Hindu nationality embraces all the Hindus of India irrespective of their locality or language. The Hindus are destined to be a religious nation."<sup>8</sup>

However, the whole notion of Two Nations (Hindu and Muslim) originally enunciated by Sir Sayyid Ahmed and later adopted by Muhammad Ali Jinnah for Pakistan that was based solely and exclusively on religion was far too simplistic a solution to this problem as explained by Dr. Rafiuddin Ahmed: "If there were two religious 'nations' in India, there were many more cultural and linguistic 'nations'. Certainly what was true of the U.P. Muslims was not so of their co-religionists in eastern India, notwithstanding the fact that they professed the same faith. The dominant culture of the former was based on the Mughal heritage with Urdu as its nucleus, while the latter were integrated more with the local Bengali culture than with any heritage of Muslim rule in India. The former looked upon Kurta and pajama as the proper dress for a Muslim, the latter wore a modest lungi, if not a dhoti like their Hindu neighbors; one looked upon Urdu as the appropriate language of Muslims in India, the latter hardly knew any word of it."<sup>9</sup> The events of 1971 had substantially resolved this dichotomy but there still remains good reasons for minorities and Muslims in both Pakistan and Bangladesh to be apprehensive about current trends in India as the Congress Government and the Indian intelligence service (RAW) have taken a more hostile attitude towards these countries which has involved creating unrest in Balochistan<sup>10</sup> and the NWFP and also violent outbreaks in the industrial sectors of Bangladesh (this occurred prior to the handover of power to a caretaker government for elections that were originally scheduled to be held in January of 2007 and also a few months after the proclamation of emergency). These incidents

have been further incited by the constant goading of the BJP and RSS<sup>11</sup> that have taken on distinctly communal overtones which had been the original justification for the Muslim League's demand for partition in 1947: "...the growth of extreme Hindu nationalism with symbols repugnant to Muslims caused great uneasiness in their minds. A familiar idiom of nationalist Hindu militancy was the anti-Muslim rhetoric, which traced historically the Hindus fall from grace to the tyranny of the 'alien' rule. Muslims were contemptuously referred to as yavanas, melechchas, katchakholas and the like in the nationalist literature and exclusive Hindu symbols introduced as sources of Indian nationalism."<sup>12</sup>

In this authors opinion, it should not have been a Two-Nation theory but a 'Several Nation Theory' that could have been implemented in the 1947 partition program had there been the necessary will and foresight. That this would have been the far better solution to the communal and cultural divisions within India was subsequently shown in the several wars fought with Pakistan, the rise of Hindu fanaticism, the civil war in the Seven Sisters and the Indian governments brazen and obtrusive policy of domination and interference in the entire South Asian region that has been the cause of untold misery for the subcontinents inhabitants. It appears ill-fated that from this perspective Viceroy Louis Mountbatten became so enamored with a unified India (or was it with Nehru's idea and concept of India that must have been retold to him in their many private conversations together) that he failed to appreciate the autonomous tendencies within India itself, particularly in Kashmir and the Northeast region. It is likely that Mountbatten was unduly influenced by Jawaharlal Nehru since there is evidence that he had seriously considered a 'Three Nation Theory' that was originally cited in Collins and Lapierre - Freedom at Midnight (1982) but was later conveniently forgotten or deliberately ignored by historians of both Pakistan and India,

"If the implications in the plan that [Mountbatten] had sent to London were fully realized, the great Indian subcontinent would be divided into three independent nations, not two. Mountbatten had inserted in his plan a clause that would allow the sixty-five million Hindus and Moslems of Bengal to join into one viable country, with

the great seaport of Calcutta as their capital. A sudden inspiration struck Mountbatten. He would reassure himself privately, informally, with the Indian leader, whom to the distress of his staff, he had invited to vacation with him in Simla ... To show the plan to Nehru without exposing it to Jinnah would be a complete breach of faith with the Moslem leader. If he discovered it, Mountbatten's whole position would be destroyed. That night, Mountbatten invited Nehru to his study for a glass of port. Casually, he passed the Congress leader a copy of the plan. Jawaharlal Nehru began to scrutinize the text designed to chart his country's future. He was horrified by what he read. The vision of the India that emerged from the plan's pages was a nightmare, an India divided, not into two parts but fragmented into a dozen pieces ... The plan he believed, would exacerbate all India's fissiparous tendencies of dialect, culture and race to the point at which the subcontinent would risk exploding into a mosaic of weak hostile states."<sup>13</sup>

The consequences of this original Mountbatten plan of May 1947 would have seen the creation of another independent nation state separate from the Pakistan and Indian entities which might have been called the United States of Bengal or even Bangladesh. It would probably have been unacceptable to both Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League who would then have had difficulty in justifying a unified Pakistan if the plan had actually been put forward. This impression, however, has been contradicted by Stanley Wolpert who has claimed in his book 'Jinnah of Pakistan' that Muhammad Ali Jinnah told Lord Mountbatten in 1947 that he would be "delighted" if the proposal to create a separate, sovereign Bengal were accepted. Jinnah is also said to have expressed the view that Bengal without Calcutta would be of no use and that they had much better remain united and independent. Jinnah assumed such a state would be on friendly terms with Pakistan and supported the idea of its inclusion in the British Commonwealth. According to Wolpert, "Had Mountbatten followed the advice of Gandhi, Jinnah or Suhrawardy, instead of listening only to Nehru, Punjab and Bengal might have been spared the deadly horrors, and a richly United Bengal, with its capital in Calcutta, would have emerged instead of the fragmented, impoverished Bangladesh born from its eastern half a quarter of a century later."<sup>14</sup> At this point it is impossible to determine the

credibility of these findings of Wolpert but they directly contradict received historical wisdom<sup>15</sup> on Jinnah's predicaments on the creation of Pakistan and they do not appear to accord with commonsense but there appears to have been a dearth of this commodity during the partition talks. In fact, M.J. Akbar imputes a malevolent purpose behind Jinnah's plans for partition as he relates how H.S. Suhrawardy having set up a momentum for an independent Bengal, "an idea which Jinnah did not mind much because it meant another part of India was lost to Gandhi and Nehru. He told Suhrawardy that he would prefer the Balkanization of India after he got his Pakistan in the north-west; Suhrawardy could keep his Bengal."<sup>16</sup> However, M.J. Akbar's biography of Nehru suffers from being a mere hagiography of the Congress leader and a nominal Muslim apology for partition which taints the outlook and perspective of the entire project and must, therefore, be looked upon with some caution and even disdain. In any case, what is clear is that the Muslims of Bengal certainly saw advantages in having a separate state which would explain the terms of The Lahore Resolution that was moved by A.K. Fazlul Haq (Chief Minister of Bengal) at the 27th Session of the All India Muslim League, at Lahore on March 23, 1940 which stated categorically, "that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are in a majority, as in the north-west and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign." Probably if the resolution had been followed in its letter and spirit the tragedies of 1971 may have been avoided but under the gaze of a hostile India how viable such a state would in fact have been is another question that cannot be answered with any certainty or confidence. It appears on another interpretation that only after the Hindu Bengalis, Congress and the Muslim League poured cold water over a separate plan devised by H.S. Suhrawardy, Sarat Chandra Bose, Kiran Shankar Roy, Abul Hashim and Muhammad Ali for an independent, united and sovereign Bengal<sup>17</sup> (similar to the later Mountbatten plan which had only been disclosed to Nehru) that Suhrawardy in 1946 moved a resolution at the Delhi Convention of the Muslim League legislators modifying the Lahore Resolution of 1940 and thus amending the concept and idea of two autonomous and sovereign Muslim states to be carved out of British India.<sup>18</sup>

The economic advantages of a separate Bengal state encompassing both Kolkata and Assam is without dispute but such an entity would have had substantially weakened the argument for a United Indian state or for that matter a Pakistani one with two separate wings. This was clearly a view shared by Jawaharlal Nehru whose real fear was that if the idea had gained ground other regions of India would clamour for separation on ethnic or religious grounds without the option of reuniting them later on into an Akhand Bharat with a strong Indian centre. If the May 1947 plan had in fact come to fruition and if contrary to Nehru's predictions there was no further fragmentation of India the post-1947 Congress government would probably have invaded the new Bengal state not allowing it to survive beyond its first few months. This would have brought the Muslims of 'East Bengal' into the Indian Union and to an even worse fate than befell them within a moth eaten Pakistan but without the possibility of independence. A far better solution which oddly did not present itself to Mountbatten was to have formed a loose Confederation of Bengal States separate, distinct and independent from India (similar to what was envisaged in the 1905 division of Bengal and apparently by Suhrawardy) which would have been a viable entity since the Seven Sisters have no real affinity to India as recent autonomy demands have suggested. Nevertheless, many commentators in Bangladesh are now using the reverse argument for the unification of Bengal states but the difference is that according to their vision Bangladesh would merely become another province within the Indian Union with limited autonomy if any at all.

### **Jawaharlal Nehru - India's ideologue**

As it is impossible to understand Hitler's Germany without having read *Mein Kampf*, the same applies to India in reference to Jawaharlal Nehru's compositions and publications. This is, however, not an attempt at a comparison between these two men and their policies or outlook which differs in many fundamental respects but merely the offering of an illustration for ease of understanding - although the past BJP government would suitably fit such a comparison with Nazi Germany.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, it would not be an exaggeration to compare the ideological assumptions and imperatives of the Congress government and the Bush administration as they have many shared

interests with increased military and intelligence cooperation as well as a close affinity with neo-conservatism, political elitism and imperial expansionism driven by economic necessity. Returning now to the question of India's Foreign Policy objectives and designs these matters were in embryonic form in Jawaharlal Nehru's, 'The Discovery of India' (First edition-1946) which may be quoted at some length:

"If India is split up into two or more parts and can no longer function as a political and economic unit, her progress will be seriously affected ... but much worse will be the inner psychological conflict between those who wish to reunite her and those who oppose this ... Unity is always better than disunity, but an enforced unity is a sham and dangerous affair, full of explosive possibilities. Unity must be of the mind and heart, a sense of the belonging together and of facing together those who attack it. I am convinced that there is that basic unity in India, but it has been overlaid and hidden to some extent by other forces. These latter may be temporary and artificial and may pass off, but they count today and no man can ignore them... Yet the fact remains that considerable numbers of Moslems have become sentimentally attached to this idea of separation without giving thought to its consequences ... I think this sentiment has been artificially created and has no roots in the Moslem mind ... It may be that some division of India is enforced, with some tenuous bond joining the divided parts. Even if this happens, I am convinced that the basic feeling of unity and world developments will later bring the divided parts nearer to each other and result in a real unity. It is obvious that whatever may be the future of India, and even if there is a regular partition, the different parts will have to co-operate with each other and in a hundred different ways. Even independent nations have to co-operate with each other and must hang together or deteriorate, disintegrate and loose their freedom...

**Thus we arrive at the inevitable and ineluctable conclusion that, whether Pakistan comes or not, a number of important and basic functions of the state must be exercised on an all-India basis if India is to survive as a free state and progress.** The alternative is stagnation, decay and disintegration, leading to a loss of political and economic freedom, both for India as a whole and its various separated parts. As has been said by an eminent authority: 'The inexorable logic



of the age presents the country with radically different alternatives: union plus independence or disunion plus dependence.' ... There is grave danger in a possibility of partition and division to begin with. For such an attempt might well scotch the very beginnings of freedom and the formation of a free national state ... Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of any free state emerging from such a turmoil, and if something does emerge, it will be a pitiful caricature full of contradictions and insoluble problems."<sup>20</sup>

This is the program for an Akhand Bharat which has been the central foreign policy goal of all the Indian political administrations since 1947 and remains the primary objective in relations with all her neighbours in South Asia. In fact, it took priority even during the prime ministership of Nehru over his much touted Pancha Sheela (Five Principles) which, "were the ideological heart of Nehru's vision of the world: Sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality, peaceful coexistence - non-interference of every kind, political, ideological, military and economic."<sup>21</sup> That these principles were only applied outside the South Asian region became clear by the 1950's when Nehru laid the foundations for future interventions in Sikkim, Nepal and East Pakistan through treaties, agreements and understandings that were to bind the future leaders in those countries and eventually lead to an Indian expansionist trend from the 1970's onwards. However, a major drawback still remained to the whole United India agenda as formulated by Jawaharlal Nehru which was that 'a state called India never existed before August 15, 1947, when British colonial rule ended in the subcontinent'.<sup>22</sup> This reality check has unfortunately not restrained Indian policy makers since the time of partition from recreating and remoulding the concept of an Akhand Bharat to fit their own 'Grand Strategy' for the South Asian region which views the divisions of 1947 as an aberration in their mythologized view of the recent historical past. The modern versions of the Akhand Bharat thesis, therefore, veers from an extremist standpoint that demands physical reunification of India to a more astute perspective that requires control and domination over neighbouring countries through political, economic, diplomatic, military and intelligence tools and only occasionally direct annexation where alternatives no longer exist or seem viable.

## Historical Precedents

India's views on partition have not fundamentally changed from the original perspective provided in 'The Discovery of India' and what is clearly a romanticized impression of a united India but in fact may have become even more extreme in recent decades. Jawaharlal Nehru, was the Prime Minister of India from 1947-1964, having tremendous and pervasive influence and clout on subsequent generations of foreign policy makers in that country. This is an observation that is unlikely to be questioned or open to contradiction nor is it a particularly contentious statement in view of the continuation of his political dynasty through his daughter, grandson and great-grandchildren who have all worked along the same lines within the Congress party machinery. This was tacitly admitted to by Nehru's great grandson Rahul Gandhi when he claimed at a campaign meeting in Bareilly in April 2007 that his family had divided Pakistan. Rahul had specifically remarked that his family always fulfilled what it had set out to do, be it freeing the country from British colonial rule or breaking up of Pakistan or taking the country to the 21st century. This was the first time that an Indian politician openly admitted that India had divided Pakistan. India had previously maintained that it just supported the freedom fighters who had crossed the international border from East Pakistan after March 26, 1971 when the Pakistan army ordered a its crackdown. A Pakistani Foreign Office spokeswoman immediately shot back that the utterances of Rahul Gandhi proved the charge that India 'interfered' in Pakistan's internal affairs.<sup>23</sup>

The impetuous expressions of Rahul Gandhi is in keeping with the outlook of his great-grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru who on a much earlier occasion had made attempts to enfeeble and demoralize India's neighbour. Take for instance, India's and Pakistan's agreement on the division of financial and material assets of the British Raj. Pakistan had already received 200 million rupees as advance and was to receive a further additional 550 million rupees as balance of her share. The Indians argued that the money would be used to purchase arms to kill Indian soldiers, so India refused to pay the sum until the Kashmir problem was resolved. Consequently, a cheque issued by the Pakistan Government to the British Overseas Airways Corporation

bounced because of insufficient funds. This policy was sponsored by Sardar Patel and was endorsed by Jawaharlal Nehru and the whole cabinet although Mountbatten had gone to great lengths to finalize this comprehensive 'package deal'. Mountbatten described India's conduct as 'unstatesmanlike', 'unwise' and 'dishonourable'. The money was finally released to Pakistan after intervention of Mahatma Gandhi when he threatened to fast until death if India did not take the honourable course.<sup>24</sup>

India's attitude to partition and Pakistan was highlighted by Pandit Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi at a public meeting on November 30, 1970 where she stated, "India has never reconciled with the existence of Pakistan. Indian leaders always believed that Pakistan should not have been created and that Pakistan nation has no right to exist."<sup>25</sup> This by implication would include Bangladesh though very few intellectuals or politicians in the country have accepted or admitted this possibility and certainly would not do so openly even if inclined because of the likely consequences and repercussions. In the view expressed by Indira Gandhi it may confidently be surmised that India's role in the 1971 war was naturally an extension of its own policy considerations and ideological compulsions based on the idea of an Akhand Bharat which may be inferred from the following observation of Moudud Ahmed in his book "Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy": "India's support for Bangladesh basically emanated from its negative approach towards Pakistan. For political, historical, and economic reasons, it was India's natural desire to see that her rival power structure in the subcontinent is weakened. It was not so much love for democracy or sense of brotherhood for the people of Bangladesh that Indira Gandhi decided to support the Bengalis in their war to achieve independence. The then Government of India acted on its own calculations in order to achieve its own national and international objectives. Once India got involved she became greatly interested in seeing the struggle the Bengalis remain in its complete control. The Indian Government wanted to ensure that following the removal of the west Pakistani authority and effective government of its own liking was established in Bangladesh."<sup>26</sup> The extent to which the Indian government was prepared to go to achieve this end and the methods it would employ will become apparent in Parts 3-5 of this essay which deals with the

relevant period from a Bangladeshi national perspective. An explanation of the policy initiatives devised to advance the actualization of an Akhand Bharat and the consequential political and military domination over South Asia is the subject of the next section on the Nehru Doctrine and India's Forward Policy.

## **The Nehru Doctrine and India's Forward Policy**

The big brotherly attitude of India which the above narrative provides only a tiny glimpse in relation to the events in 1971 and which other nations in South Asia have also found overbearing and an irritant is a predictable culmination of the thinking of Pandit Nehru and India's Forward Policy. An example of this Forward Policy, not surprisingly, is found in what has been called the Nehru Doctrine. Its focus has been directed at Nepal but has meaning and resonance for all of India's neighbours. Pandit Nehru on 17th March, 1950 in Parliament expressed it thus, "apart from any kind of alliance the fact remains that we can't tolerate any foreign invasion from any foreign country in any part of the Indian sub-continent. Any possible invasion of Nepal will inevitably involve the safety of India." It was in light of the historical events in the first several months of 2006 in Nepal and Sri Lanka that indicated India may now be giving a far wider meaning and interpretation to the term invasion. It would seem that in an exaggerated sense of its own vulnerability India was prepared to actively intervene at the slightest intimation of foreign interest in a neighbouring country. In both the Nepal and Sri Lankan case the Chinese and to a lesser extent the Americans were making impressive and enormous strides in fostering relations with these countries, which was in turn making the Indian government increasingly nervous about its diminishing military and strategic importance in South Asia, especially in the face of such formidable and increasingly popular competitors and rivals.<sup>27</sup> This was strangely the consequences of what had been called the Gujral Doctrine but this doctrine was merely an extension of the Nehru Doctrine - as was the case with the Indira Doctrine<sup>28</sup> - but framed in diplomatic niceties<sup>29</sup> while still containing a subtle aggressive core intended to legitimize Indian assertiveness over the region.<sup>30</sup> This it dismally failed to do since the other nations of South Asia were not prepared to be cowed by such 'polite' intimidation.

## Nepal -

To provide a more specific and contextual setting to the Nehru Doctrine one may compare the situation in Nepal during early 2006 with a parallel scenario that occurred in Sikkim in 1973-75 and which is still probably the best exemplar of the Nehru Doctrine in practice. The political turmoil in Nepal bears a marked resemblance to the sequence of events in the Sikkim incident which saw the abolishment of the monarchy in that country through the indirect intervention of the Indian government. In the similar case of King Gayenendra of Nepal his defiant attitude to India with the dissolution of Parliament and proclamation of a State of Emergency twice, led to street protests in Katmandu and his eventual deposing from power in April 2006. The Indian government had been politically rebuffed on several occasions by King Gayenendra but also by his predecessor who refused to sign a secret agreement in 1990 that would have required Nepal to receive advice from India on the acquisition of arms, ammunition and other materials and equipment necessary for its security but also to obtain the same from India which would additionally provide assistance, coordination and training of its armed forces thereby effectively rendering Nepal a dependant and subservient entity. India's failure to subdue the monarchy on this occasion and more than a decade later with King Gayenendra who adopted an increasingly independent line on military and security issues India saw this as an opportune time to end the monarchy for ever. The main impetus to Indian interference was the growing relationship between the monarchy, political parties and the army with China.<sup>31</sup> The three chief protagonists in the Nepali drama were therefore the King, the Maoist rebels (CPN (M)) and the political parties (SPA).

The issue of the monarchy remained a contentious one during the negotiations that started in late 2006 for an interim government and constitution with the Maoist rebels demanding its complete abolition and Prime Minister G.P. Koirala reportedly being its lone defender. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN (M)) leader Prachanda in an interview with the BBC had initially accused India of, 'trying to keep the monarchy through different channels'<sup>32</sup> and that it was India and the Indian Army which has been in the forefront in safeguarding

the royal regime and assisting the Nepalese Army.<sup>33</sup> Most significantly he made a direct reference to India's grand design for the region when he called for, 'reconsideration of India's present policies towards smaller neighbours, he said that India presently follows Nehru Doctrine under which it seeks to intimidate, interfere, expand its influence and dictate its terms on its neighbours.'<sup>34</sup> These statements were clearly influenced by the resolutions of the Fourth Conference of CCOMPOSA (Coordination Committee of Maoists Parties and Organisations of South Asia) that was held in August 2006 at an undisclosed location. The resolution issued by the conference mainly targets the growing relations between the US and India which it intends to, 'burn to ashes' and calls on the, 'oppressed people of South Asian countries to join the struggle against Indian expansionism and particularly against the main enemy US imperialism.'<sup>35</sup> That for Prachanda the opposition to US imperialism (rather than Indian expansionism) became of primary importance and constituted a more significant threat to his entry and acceptance into the political arena in Nepal.<sup>36</sup> This attitude clearly guided his strategy during the negotiations process for an interim government and constitution in the mistaken belief that India would later provide him and Nepal with some freedom of action and independence in dealing with its own internal affairs.

India's involvement in the above mentioned negotiated peace process was initially expressed through military pressure with the doubling of troop levels to more than 10,000 along its north-eastern border with Bhutan apparently to eliminate camps used by regional insurgents and Maoist rebels from Nepal<sup>37</sup> but was also clearly intended to signify its presence in the peace talks. Whether India considered the Nepali Maoist threat as more destructive to its interests than the deposed king was put in some doubt when it prevented the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) government of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala from obtaining anti-aircraft missiles and other sophisticated weaponry carried by a Russian AN-12 aircraft which was detained in Ahmedabad in Gujarat state before it could enter Nepal's airspace.<sup>38</sup> This was allegedly a consignment of arms procured by the former regime of King Gyanendra which had also included aircraft from China and other heavy weaponry from European and Russian manufacturers<sup>39</sup> that brought India to intervene in Nepal at a

covert level that culminated in the toppling of the King. Under the SPA government under Prime Minister G.P. Koirala, Nepal's finance minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat had said the government would cut down military expenses, which had shot up during King Gyanendra's direct rule<sup>40</sup> and was perceived as a paramount threat to Indian domination over Nepal and the surrounding region.

The issue of arms management proved to be the toughest hurdle in the negotiations between the Nepal government and the Maoists and which was also being supervised by the UN. The Maoist position was that their arms caches would only be surrendered once the political and military restructuring had been completed to their satisfaction.<sup>41</sup> The demands of the Maoists appeared to be aligned with Indian interests in Nepal which promoted the abolition of the monarchy as happened earlier in Sikkim. By this time the King had already been stripped of most of his powers, including his status as supreme army commander.<sup>42</sup> According to Baburam Bhattarai, the second-in-command of the Maoists, "The main institution buttressing and supporting the monarchy is the royal army. It is still feudalistic, and it is still loyal to the monarchy and against democracy."<sup>43</sup> (This had also been one of the main arguments used by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (after the 1971 war) against the Bangladesh army which he distrusted intensely so he later sought the amalgamation of the Rakkhi Bahini paramilitary force that was personally loyal to him into the army's command structure. This led to the army's malfunctioning as a cohesive fighting force that also allowed Indian interference in the military machinery during the regime of President Ziaur Rahman which was also responsible for the numerous coup attempts against him that eventually led to his brutal assassination in 1981. In the case of Nepal assimilation between the Royal Nepalese Army and the Maoist cadres could contrarily have serious negative implications for India as well (see below)).

After the Maoists extended the ceasefire on October 29,<sup>44</sup> they proposed to place their weapons under United Nations supervision if the army did the same in order to revive peace talks and pave the way for elections in 2007.<sup>45</sup> On November 5, Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli arrived in India to seek Indian support for Kathmandu's efforts for peace with Maoist guerrillas. Oli had

informed reporters that he would "specifically" seek India's support to the ongoing peace process and that his visit would, "provide an ideal opportunity for both sides to review bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interest which will lead to strengthening of India-Nepal relations."<sup>46</sup> Only two days later the SPA government and the Maoists agreed a peace deal (to be formalized within the month) that would see the rebels join a transitional government, while their arms were put under UN supervision. The future of the monarchy would be solved by a constituent assembly to be elected in 2007.<sup>47</sup> The King would nevertheless lose all access to state administration and all properties acquired by him would be nationalized. Under the agreement an interim constitution would be promulgated and an interim cabinet set up with the Maoists sent to cantonments under the supervision of the UN. The Nepalese Army would under the agreement be restructured and democratized while being confined to the barracks. Their arms would similarly be kept in store monitored by the UN with a single lock system. An interim Parliament would also be established with 209 members of the seven parties and others who are members of the lower and upper house (excluding those who opposed the people's movement) with 73 members from the side of the Maoists. Those who stood against the people's movement would not be given membership in the interim parliament.<sup>48</sup>

This series of events in Nepal from the deposing of the king to the agreement on a peace formula had been in large part due to the successful interjection of the Indian government that had maintained contacts with the pro-democratic forces as well as the Maoist insurgents<sup>49</sup> and was therefore able to exert pressure for the Kings removal and for the finalization of the draft agreement detailed above. India would now expect Nepali politics, 'to function as that of a union territory in all but formal status'<sup>50</sup> thus severely curtailing the country's sovereign rights and independent decision making process. In his first address to the people of Kathmandu in 25 years the Maoist leader Prachanda appeared to signal his approval for further Indian interference in the political set up of Nepal. He stated that New Delhi helped create the ground for launching a people's movement against the monarchy and that India had "allowed a 12-point accord between the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists in Delhi in December [2005] that created ground to launch joint people's movement against



the autocratic monarchy to establish democracy."<sup>51</sup> According to Prachanda, "If India had not allowed, the accord could not be signed in Delhi and it was not possible to do the deal within the country due to the circumstances." He further claimed that the USA was still obstructing the peace process and helping the feudal forces.<sup>52</sup> Not to be outdone, Nepali Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, K P Sharma Oli, "promised an atmosphere conducive to Indian investors to assist in the development of its infrastructure, tourism, water resources, agro-business and other key sectors"<sup>53</sup> which does not appear to have offended Maoist ideology.<sup>54</sup> In response, India's Ambassador to Nepal S. S. Mukherjee said "as a close friend, neighbour and largest economic partner, we recognise the importance of our economic partnership and accept our responsibility."<sup>55</sup>

These expressions of mutual devotion have been viewed dismally by some Nepali commentators. A prolific writer on Nepali politics, Mr. M.R. Josse has suggested that, "Nepal's capital is shifting, if it has not already, to New Delhi."<sup>56</sup> The basis for his conclusion was the frequent visits of politicians from Nepal to New Delhi and the influence this accorded to India in the political developments occurring inside Nepal during the critical months of August to December. Josse focuses on the Foreign Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's heading of a nine-member delegation that had held talks with the Indian Foreign Secretary, Shiv Shankar Menon as reported by the Himalayan Times on November 6. According to Josse, "the shocking disparity in official positions (a DPM and foreign minister vs. a foreign secretary) between the two principal interlocutors could not have been missed by even the latest recruit to Shital Niwas. What was perhaps equally striking was Oli's public statement thereafter that one of the key objectives of his Bharat Yatra was support from India for establishment of 'loktantra' and peace in Nepal." This expectation of subservience from diplomats and politicians visiting India from neighbouring countries has bedeviled relations and has been a barrier to greater understanding and cooperation in the South Asia region. It was, however, the easy acceptance of this status by the Nepal FM that appears to have offended Josse as he states that, "The sub-text to that is this stirring corollary to what may be termed as the Oli doctrine: without India's nod there cannot be any 'loktantra' or peace in our land. In other words, it is India that is today firmly in Nepal's driver's

seat whatever the visionaries of a "new Nepal" might proclaim from the rooftops. Is this only the beginning of a regressive new age in Nepal's foreign policy?" Another Nepali writer, Shashi P.B.B. Malla, was even more strident arguing that, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) at Shital Niwas could easily be re-named 'the Ministry of Indian Affairs'! ... Nepal has become a prey to the Indo-American grand design of containing China and is on the way to becoming a satellite state in all but name."<sup>57</sup> This was probably very close to the truth as Dipankar Biswas, an Indian writer, pointed out with some alacrity, "Ultimately, India should prepare itself and the Nepalese people to accept the country as one of its states in a federal setup. Defense, currency, communication, vital transport, federal court and external affairs shall be retained by New Delhi and all other jurisdictions shall be conferred on the state of Nepal."<sup>58</sup>

Prior to the actual signing of the peace agreement between the SPA government and the Maoists the latter embarked on a recruitment drive with hundreds of young men and boys forced to join the rebel army. The Maoists denied they were responsible but the government said it was a violation of a code of conduct signed in May, shortly after peace talks began and a ceasefire was agreed.<sup>59</sup> The US also warned that the Maoist rebels would remain on the State Departments list of 'other terrorist organizations' until they started to behave like a proper political party instead of a militia and around the same time a report from Nepal's independent National Human Rights Commission claimed that the Maoists were still recruiting children. The commission said the rebels either lured children with money or forcibly took them away from their classrooms.<sup>60</sup> These disclosures did not affect the diplomatic moves for a signed peace settlement and on a visit to New Delhi in late November, Prachanda hinted at his future plans that were likely to have been made in consultation with the Indian government. He stated that he and his deputy would not join a new interim government that will include the rebels as he planned to campaign for elections due the following year. He implicitly set forth his personal goal and ambition when he commented that he did not want to be president of a Nepali republic, but if the people of his party and Nepal insisted then he would not refuse the responsibility.<sup>61</sup> His commitment to democratic values, however, did have limits which were set by Indian interests that were

fiercely anti-monarchical, "We will respect the verdict of the masses but we cannot support a monarchy even if the masses decide they want to keep a ceremonial monarchy."<sup>62</sup> Incidentally a few days later an official investigation into the shooting and killing of 'pro-democracy' protesters that occurred earlier in the year recommended that King Gyanendra should be punished and blamed 201 other politicians, royalist ministers, civil servants, army and police officers for human rights violations, abuse of authority and corruption in the clampdown.<sup>63</sup>

In terms of Nepal's security interests, Prachanda was in step with Indian requirements declaring that the Nepal army would be made smaller and number not more than 20,000-30,000 troops. While pushing Nepal into India's sphere of influence and undermining the national integrity of Nepal, Prachanda revealed that he had repeatedly turned down offers of support from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency during the 10-year insurrection on the grounds that it would have been against the "self-respect" and 'sovereignty' of the Nepalese people. Prachanda further alleged the king was encouraged to persist with direct rule earlier this year with "moral support from countries like Pakistan" failing to mention that he made similar accusations against India in an earlier interview with the BBC discussed above.<sup>64</sup> Pakistan's Deputy Minister for Information Tariq Azim subsequently told the BBC Nepali Service that Prachanda's remarks were "baseless" and that Prachanda had said these things "perhaps in an attempt to make some people happy."<sup>65</sup> Prachanda's efforts do not appear to have been in vain as the peace accord (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) was finally signed on the same day that the above reports concerning Pakistan's ISI appeared in the newspapers and the internet i.e. November 21, 2006.<sup>66</sup>

Within days of the signing of the CPA several provisions of the agreement were soon being implemented relating to the setting up of camps for rebel fighters<sup>67</sup> and the destruction of arms by vigilantes<sup>68</sup> and other ancillary matters<sup>69</sup> including providing citizenship to many Indian nationals in bordering areas. A comprehensive arms accord was also signed on 28 November between the SPA and the Maoists mandating the United Nations to begin monitoring rebel weapons and troops (the UN representative added his signature on December 8) that would allow the CPN (M) to enter an interim parliament.<sup>70</sup> In an

expression of republican fervour the national anthem of Nepal was changed with the new anthem making no mention of the King.<sup>71</sup> While India showed its appreciation of these developments by releasing two senior Nepali Maoists leaders<sup>72</sup> several US based human rights organization raised questions about disappearances, extra-judicial killings and torture during the 10 year civil war and reports of fresh recruitment drives, extortion, abduction and intimidation by the Maoists also appeared regularly in the international media.<sup>73</sup> In spite of this and the obstructionist tactics adopted on both sides<sup>74</sup> of the CPA, a draft interim constitution was formally agreed upon by the SPA and Maoist rebels in mid-December<sup>75</sup> with the Prime Minister performing the duties of head of state and the King completely removed from state affairs with a provision for constitutional assembly elections to be held in 2007 to finally decide on his fate.

On the very next day, Indian foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee conspicuously remarked that India was not threatened by the entry of Maoist rebels into Nepal's government even offering to supply food grains to them.<sup>76</sup> Prachanda's visit to India in November where he made his anti-Pakistan comments was viewed favourably in New Delhi and as Indian intelligence specialist Dr. S.Chandrasekharan points out, "Prachanda claimed that his visit had succeeded in overcoming the confusion of the international community about the Maoists and the motive of the insurgency the party waged. They gave the impression that they had nothing to do with the Indian Maoists and that the compact red zone from Tirupathi to Pasupathi was just a fiction that had never entered into their concepts."<sup>77</sup> The affinity of purpose between the Maoists and the Indian government was revealed when the SPA government announced the appointment of 13 ambassadors to countries including the US, India, Britain, Japan, Russia and China over the objections raised by the rebels who called nationwide strikes in protest and prevented the setting up of police stations which was all quietly supported by India as far as can be gleaned from Indian intelligence commentaries on the issue.<sup>78</sup> This issue was soon resolved in favour of the Maoists position with the government agreeing to consult with them before making any political appointments.<sup>79</sup> The Maoists continued to try to assuage Indian fears<sup>80</sup> about their ideological commitments and objectives which was a necessary prerequisite for success in elections to be held

in June 2007, CP Gajurel, the Maoist head of international relations, informed journalists that the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) would continue to have 'fraternal' relations with like-minded groups in India but that relations with those parties would not be working relations, "only theoretical relations because we have the same ideology. It will not affect relations between the two states."<sup>81</sup> This could only be described as a cynical massaging of Indian apprehensions and insecurities as the Maoists had already abandoned much of their ideological baggage to accommodate India's business interests in Nepal. The advantages of such a policy began to quickly accrue to the Maoists with the cabinet approving the finalized interim constitution on January 14, 2007. The Nepal parliament then unanimously approved the document the very next day giving the former rebels 83 seats in the new temporary parliament which they formally entered on the night of the 15th in their swearing-in-ceremony with their leaders Prachanda and his-second-in-command looking on.<sup>82</sup> The Maoists now took the important step of putting their arms under UN supervision<sup>83</sup> and disbanding the parallel governments and courts<sup>84</sup> set up by them during the insurgency. India's attitude to the Maoists remained largely one of suspicion and distrust and it became clear that it would not allow any single party to dominate events in Nepal as is ominously implied in the following Indian intelligence assessment, "Under the circumstances, only the incurable optimist could doubt that the Maoists would continue to seek to enforce their agenda on Nepal. It is useful, within this context, to remind ourselves that the constituent elements of the SPA leadership have a miserable record of governance and bickering, and are largely responsible for the turmoil in Nepal. Unless an unexpected consensus visits the SPA and non-Maoist political spectrum in the country, no solution - other than one eventually imposed by the Maoists - can be permanent."<sup>85</sup> Soon after the inking of CPA new signs of trouble emerged when two factional groups demanded the Terai plains, inhabited by people of Indian origin called Madhesis, be made a sovereign state and replace all security and government staff in the area with Madhesis.<sup>86</sup>

The violence in the Terai plains in the South escalated during January 2007 but the implications of the uprising became more apparent when a 16-year-old boy was shot to death in Lahan and dozens of vehicles were torched by protesters opposed to the Maoist's joining the government. The boy died after the Mahadhesi's Janadhikar Forum, fighting for land rights in the southern plains, had stopped a vehicle carrying former Maoist rebels who then opened fire on them.<sup>87</sup> In the following days dozens of government offices and buses were torched and as defence analyst Bishnu Raj Upreti observed, "The concerns of the people living in the Terai should be adequately addressed in the interim constitution. Otherwise there is a risk of a serious conflict between the people from the hills and the plains. This could develop as a separatist movement if not properly addressed in time."<sup>88</sup> G.P.Koirala on 23rd January while meeting the Nepali Congress Parliamentary leaders blamed the Maoists for "escalating" violence in Terai. The same day Prachanda admitted that his party had committed a mistake in the Lahan incident but blamed the royalists and the Hindu fundamentalists for the violent incidents. In fact, Prachanda went further and declared that there was no option left to the eight parties other than to declare a republic as the feudalists had increased their activity in the country - a call that was repeated more forcefully when violence failed to subside.<sup>89</sup> No one seemed prepared to blame Indian intelligence for the violence although several former ministers of King Gayendra had been arrested for conspiring in the violence<sup>90</sup> - more likely the arrests were to prevent a comeback by the monarchy on the back of the ensuing violence and chaos as the Gayendra administration had always been hostile to the demands of the ethnic Indian Madhesis who were denied citizenship until only recently.

Despite these arrests the Terai agitation quickly became solidified into a single movement. Originally two breakaway factions of the Maoists, the JTMM (Janatantrik Madhesi Mukthi Morcha) led by Jay Krishna Goit and Swayam Singh respectively, took the lead in the protests. However, a new outfit by the name of MJF (Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum) led by Upendra Yadav suddenly gained prominence and soon overshadowed all the other outfits from the Terai region. According to Indian intelligence analysts, "What started as a demand for fair representation of Madhesis (Terains) in the

governance of the country and proportional representation in the coming CA elections has now snow balled onto an outright demand for a separate Madhesi land. This demand of a separate Madhesi land is catching up fast and is finding resonance in almost all the districts of Terai.<sup>91</sup> To mollify Madhesi sentiment G.P. Koirala pledged that a future Nepal would be federal in nature but demonstrators in one southern city, Janakpur, staged protests against Mr Koirala's speech saying it did not go far enough.<sup>92</sup> It was at this point that Dr. Baburam Bhattarai (a senior Maoist leader) alleged that truck loads of Indians were coming into Nepal for participating in the agitation and certain other Maoist leaders began to refer to 'Indian expansionism' as a cause of the Terai rioting.<sup>93</sup> Indian intelligence analyst, Dr. S. Chandrasekharan tacitly expressed his support for the uprising in the following terms, "Some have the mistaken notion that the people from Terai and north Bihar who are similar in all respects are not from a martial community and can be subdued. They are mistaken. Many may not know that the Bihar regiments of India have fifty percent of North Biharis from north Bihar including those from the bordering districts of Sitamarhi, Champaran and Motihari. The issue has to be handled carefully. Unrest in Nepal will have repercussions in north Bihar too that needs careful watching from India."<sup>94</sup> On February 8, 2007 the MJF suspended a transport strike (but not protests) for 10 days to pave the way for talks with the government after P.M. Koirala reiterated his pledge for a federal constitution<sup>95</sup> but it became clear that this move by the MJF was intended to allow it to consolidate its position and regroup in preparation for further violent protests. Within days violence again erupted in the Terai region bringing the protestors in direct conflict with the Maoists and compelling new ethnically based organizations such as the National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN) to enter the fray.<sup>96</sup> On March 9, the Nepal parliament approved a plan to alter the constitution to change the country from a unitary state into a federal one. The amendment would increase the number of constituencies in the Terai plains giving the region half of the parliamentary seats but the MJF continued to demand full autonomy and called for more strikes which ultimately led to outbreaks of violence and disorder and numerous deaths.<sup>97</sup> The Maoists probably realizing that they no longer had the sympathy or trust of New Delhi sought immediate inclusion into Nepal's interim government<sup>98</sup> while the Prime Minister appearing

to appease Indian sentiments over the Terai violence called for King Gayendra's immediate abdication.<sup>99</sup> On April 1, several Maoists were sworn in as ministers in Nepal's interim government with control over five out of 21 ministries but there were already ominous signs that elections tabled for June would be delayed with serious consequences for lasting peace.<sup>100</sup> As the pressure mounted the Maoists became increasingly desperate for power showing their strength by holding public meetings demanding the immediate declaration of Nepal as a Republic for which India provided some propaganda support but they nevertheless continued their criticism of the CPN (M) for being too aggressive and domineering (which was also observed by neutral observers critical of the activities of the YCL - a youth front of the Maoists<sup>101</sup>) and for pushing a wider communist agenda in preparation for elections (a point also made by the US).<sup>102</sup> These maneuvers against the Maoists coincided with reports that began to appear in May and June that China was making deep in-roads into Nepal via the CPN (M) and even through the once docile SPA.<sup>103</sup> The Chinese Ambassador to Nepal had even warned that, "China shall not tolerate any foreign intervention in Nepal. Whenever the Nepali people face any problem or difficulty, China shall treat them as our own especially when the problems pertain to sovereignty or territorial integrity."<sup>104</sup> This statement was clearly intended to restrain India from any Sikkim type intervention in Nepal. RAW had also released a report showing that the King still retained some support amongst the general masses and was, of course, close to China and so remained a serious impediment to Indian designs in Nepal and should be removed with utmost haste, although New Delhi carried on a pretence of being ambivalent on the issue, probably to stir up more confusion and allow the situation to deteriorate further.<sup>105</sup> This ultimately led to the postponement of the June CA elections which were now to be held in October and which were in turn postponed till November. Things, therefore, had come full circle and in the best traditions of the Forward Policy and the Nehru-Indira Doctrine the Indian government started to demolish the carefully laid structure of peace and stability that had been built over the past year-and-a-half. Several Indian media sources disclosed that the Indian North-East separatist group, ULFA, had forged links with the CPN (M) and were even permitted to set up bases in Nepal. These allegations were vehemently denied by the Maoists but the ground work had been prepared for a full scale confrontation with India.<sup>106</sup>



To prevent such a calamity a clandestine meeting between the top leadership of the CPN (M) and high ranking officials of the Indian external intelligence agency (i.e. RAW) at Siliguri in West Bengal (reported in the July 31,2007 issue of the Dristi Vernacular Weekly<sup>107</sup>) helped to seal a deal in which the Maoists agreed to stop playing the China card in return for continued Indian support in Nepal. This understanding rendered the press statement on Nepali affairs issued by CCOMPOSA<sup>108</sup> in August 2007 (criticizing Indian assistance to Nepal as an exploitative ploy) completely irrelevant. This, however, did not bring the expected positive returns to the Maoists with India's intelligence, political and intellectual elites remaining aloof of the CPN (M) as the Terai protests and violence continued unabated with other ethnic groups now beginning to protest for special consideration by the state.<sup>109</sup> These incidents induced some wariness on the part of the Maoists who probably considered a return to the path of terrorism and insurrection as the looting of a police post in August seems to have indicated as well as the call for postponement of elections to April 2008 - a demand that was quickly retracted in the face of severe media and political criticism.<sup>110</sup> After King Gayendra's properties were nationalized<sup>111</sup> the Maoists took the extraordinary decision of challenging all 'unequal' treaties with India, including the '1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty' and the Sugauli Treaty of 1816 signed between British India and the Nepal Government. In a 28 point memorandum the YCL also demanded the removal of the Indian army from the Kalapani area, near the India-Nepal-China border in the far-west of Nepal and to carry out a thorough investigation of the alleged border encroachments by India in different places. They also sought the demolition of dams in the border areas that were causing submersion of Nepalese territory during the wet season.<sup>112</sup> Within days of the submission of the 28 point memorandum by the YCL the MJF struck an agreement with the government to participate in the November elections and to withdraw all protests and strikes that had been planned for September.<sup>113</sup> This was viewed by the Maoists as a serious threat to their political survival and intended as a curb on their already waning influence in the run up to the CA elections.<sup>114</sup> It was clear by now that the Indian strategy in Nepal was to play each side off against the other (even implicating the Pakistan ISI and Bangladeshi Muslims in the recent troubles) keeping the country in permanent uncertainty and constant instability.<sup>115</sup> The deterioration in the political situation in

Nepal was by year end inexorably titling towards civil war as the CPN (M) decided to quit the government on the pretext that the country should immediately be declared a republic, that a proportional representation system introduced and the elections again be postponed.<sup>116</sup> The first and second of these demands was partially accepted with modifications and the last was granted (elections were now to be held in April 2008) with some misgivings since there would now be a question mark over the legitimacy of the peace process and doubts would be raised about the credibility of the government especially with the Maoists rejoining its ranks.<sup>117</sup> There now existed a pervasive crisis of confidence and growing disillusionment inside Nepal just as Christmas and the New Year was approaching.<sup>118</sup> The general feeling of dissatisfaction was beginning to show signs of being directed against India which was blamed for much of the political chaos and confusion in Nepal. Nepal's Foreign Minister Sahana Pradhan even urged a high level Chinese delegation visiting Kathmandu to extend the Tibet rail-link into Nepal, "The request is particularly significant against the backdrop of Nepal's warning to India not to go ahead with a proposed highway along the India-Nepal border ... Moreover, Nepal and China have signed an agreement to widen and modernise the Lhasa-Kathmandu road and resume the Kathmandu-Lhasa bus service from January."<sup>119</sup> This was followed by a weekly magazine blowing, "the cover of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) officials posted under diplomatic cover in the Indian embassy in Kathmandu. The magazine published in Nepalese, Indian officials say, couldn't have named all the RAW operatives without the help of a section of the Nepal government." These were the first positive signs that India's designs in Nepal may just fail with the greater public awareness of their nefarious activities. Violent incidents, however, escalated in the first three months of 2008 especially in the Terai region - a possible sign of renewed efforts by India to keep Nepal in a destabilized condition after their recent intelligence set back.<sup>120</sup> On another front, allies of Nepal's king warned that the nation could slide back into civil war if forthcoming elections led to the abolition of the monarchy.<sup>121</sup> The elections itself, took place in a relatively peaceful atmosphere on April 10, 2008 but it remains unclear at the time of writing whether this merely signifies the calm before the storm.<sup>122</sup> The resounding Maoist victory, while satisfying India's demand for the abolishment of the monarchy introduced a new

security threat to the equation with the possibility of communist insurgencies in the region being provided support from Kathmandu with the new government now probably leaning heavily towards China to offset Indian interference.<sup>123</sup> The first shock for New Delhi came when the Maoists announced that the Nepal government would scrap the 58 year old Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty and review all other bilateral agreements.<sup>124</sup> Indian intelligence experts soon went on the offensive advancing the idea of a military takeover in Nepal on the given pretext that the Royal Nepalese Army must not now become patterned after the PLA of China - apparently the US also shares this exact same concern and is allegedly working in concert with the Indians to undermine the Maoists in favour of the other political parties or even the army.<sup>125</sup> The Maoists, however, soon scored another victory after the newly established Constituent Assembly voted on May 28, 2008 unanimously to abolish the monarchy creating an 'an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular and an inclusive democratic republic nation'.

## **Sikkim -**

India's policy towards Sikkim differed only in the details and went much further than merely controlling foreign policy and could be described as a direct and aggressive annexation of territory. The significance to India of this country has been explained by South Asian expert Dr. Shastra Dutta Pant in his definitive work on Indian intelligence, 'Machinations of RAW in South Asia.' In the book he argues that Sikkim was very important strategically for two reasons, "One was the Four Finger Theory which had been much talked about during the 1960's. This basically aimed at uniting the people of Nepali origin [many of whom resided in Sikkim]. The second thing was that India, as it already fought a war with China wanted to station its troops along the Tibet border. For these two reasons, the Sikkim operation gained high strategic importance."<sup>126</sup> The trigger for India's intercession in Sikkim was a belief that the Chogyal (Dharma Raja or righteous king) was intending to set up an independent kingdom with a flag of its own and a separate national anthem which would have been in contravention of an understanding between the Indian government and a Sikkim delegation that agreed to designate the country a protectorate of India in March 1950<sup>127</sup> but which had no binding force and could be amended by either of the parties unilaterally.

The Indians claim to have had evidence that the CIA was encouraging the Chogyal to seek independence so they instructed their own external intelligence agency RAW to stir up trouble. It seems likely that RAW concocted a plot implicating the Chogyal in a conspiracy to assassinate top leaders and civil servants which galvanized the population against their ruler and brought public resentment out on to the streets. This became a perfect cover for the Indian army to intervene in April 1973 on the grounds that it was protecting the Chogyal. The army was really brought in to intimidate the Chogyal into submitting to Indian demands which he promptly did by agreeing to popular government and a legislature to be elected every four years and on April 10th the Sikkim Assembly was able to say that, "the institution of Chogyal is hereby abolished and Sikkim shall henceforth be a constituent unit of India."<sup>128</sup> India's justification was superficially based on the idea of democracy and human rights but its true motivations were derived from the precepts of the Nehru Doctrine and the Forward Policy which was brought into play by the perceived US interest in Sikkim,

"India could least afford an unstable Sikkim or allow interference of any foreign country in Sikkim affairs ... It was also obvious that an unstable neighbour would become a grave threat to India's national security ... [So in] response to [the Sikkim Assembly] resolution, the Constitution (Thirty-Eighth Amendment) Act was passed by Parliament, making Sikkim the 22nd State of the Indian Union on April 26, 1975. RAW had helped in the bloodless transformation of a princely state into a democratic state of India. How far the Chogyal had personally masterminded the plot, to annihilate popular leaders and assume absolute power over Sikkim, remains a mystery.

Four years later, RAW was still moping up loose ends. There were still a few people who had to be paid off for services rendered. Payments had been delayed ... Fresh authority for funds to be released had to be sanctioned. These never came through."<sup>129</sup>

In a cynical political move to legitimize the de facto annexation a referendum was held in Sikkim within the short period of 72 hours on April 14, 1975 with the public assuming that they were being offered a choice between a monarchy and a republic but RAW, in a conspiratorial way, changed it into a choice between merger with India or against merger. The referendum was held in an atmosphere

of fear, tension and chaos with more than 20% of the people not casting their votes and Indian agents capturing the ballot papers at gun point.<sup>130</sup> It was of no surprise that when the ballots were counted a figure of 97.55% was recorded in favour of abolition of the monarchy and merger with India although this was not officially an issue in the referendum. In an article that appeared in Time magazine of May 5, 1975 it was claimed that although, 'there was little debate before the act of union was rushed through India's Parliament last week, one opponent of the bill did charge India's Foreign Minister Y.B. Chavan with behaving like "a very apt pupil of the British."<sup>131</sup> According to Dr. Pant this travesty was partly the fault of the treacherous activities of Sikkim's political parties, namely, the State Congress, Sikkim National Congress and Praja Sammellan Party or People's Conference Party, that was ultimately responsible for the final downfall.<sup>132</sup> He similarly condemns the political parties of his own country for meekly submitting to Indian pressure and predicts a similar fate as that befell Sikkim unless something drastic changes within Nepal's political culture. He was of course writing those words a year before the crisis in Nepal had led to the stripping of the King of almost all his powers and the constitutional settlement between the Maoists and the political parties in late 2006.

## **Sri Lanka -**

While the conflict in Sri Lanka between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority is a long one India's role has been more complex than in Nepal or Sikkim. There have been numerous allegations in the past that, "New Delhi supported the Tamils' demand for separate state in Sri Lanka by training the members of Tamil separatist groups especially the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in India."<sup>133</sup> The cause for this apparent favouritism was that India has its own Tamil minority located just 22 miles away from Sri Lanka's northeast and there was a fear that the conflict could have a spill over effect. It was due to this ethnic affinity between the Tamil communities in India and Sri Lanka that the former took up the separatist cause of their brethren in Sri Lanka and applied pressure on the Indian political leadership to intervene.<sup>134</sup> According to Gunaratna and Acharya, "This was exploited by groups like LTTE to the fullest extent. For example, LTTE exploited the Tamil empathy to develop beneficial political relations with Indian Tamil political organizations. These groups

became the lobbyists on behalf of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, influencing New Delhi's policies towards Colombo."<sup>135</sup> It is also possible to conclude that the Indira Gandhi administration in India allowed itself to be influenced and that their concern for the Tamils was only skin deep simply being another ethnic minority group amongst hundreds of others in India's melting pot of cultures, languages and religions that could be exploited for its wider strategic interests and objectives. The second reason identified by these authors for India's interventionist role in the conflict was Sri Lanka's geographical location which was considered important from an Indian security perspective as it was strategically placed facing out towards the Indian Ocean. As Gunaratna and Acharya point out, "Sri Lanka had good relations with Pakistan and China, two countries that had fought border wars with India. During the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, these countries were in the process of stepping up military assistance to Colombo."<sup>136</sup>

It was in order to neutralize these perceived threats to India's internal and external security that it has repeatedly intervened in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and gone as far as to seek the pinning down of Colombo, "in its own internal conflicts, so that in foreign policy affairs it would cease to be a matter of concern to India."<sup>137</sup> This is probably the clearest description of the Nehru Doctrine and Forward Policy applied to the Sri Lankan situation but could also be extended to anywhere in South Asia where India has intervened either covertly through RAW or overtly through military deployment and engagements. In the case of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka the justification for the involvement of the Indian military has been that, "New Delhi did not want the emergence of a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka as it would re-ignite Tamil separatist movement in Tamil Nadu."<sup>138</sup> This is, of course, a direct inversion of the argument that has been used for East Pakistan/Bangladesh where it was hoped in some circles that independence from Pakistan would inevitably lead to ascension into the Indian Union as it shared a linguistic and ethnic affinity with West Bengal.<sup>138</sup> It is also in another respect that India's assistance to the Tamil separatist outfits bears resemblance to the 1971 Liberation War where New Delhi provided the Mukti and Mujib Bahini sanctuary inside its own territory. Gunaratna and Acharya in detailing the evolving relations between New Delhi and the Tamil

separatists provide the following useful insights, "[Despite] denials, India had begun arming and training LTTE cadres on its soil between 1983 and 1984. However, the initial contact between the Tamil Nadu government and Sri Lankan Tamil activists was established in 1972 ... During the 1970s, Tamil youth activists used Tamil Nadu as a sanctuary to evade arrest from the Sri Lanka police. From the late 1970s, the LTTE developed links with a number of Tamil Nadu political groups."<sup>140</sup> However, it was not until 1983 that, "Tamil Nadu became the essential "outside base" for the insurgency in Sri Lanka, logistically ideal for supplying the militant's arsenal, and sanctuary for the Tamil insurgents from Sri Lanka."<sup>141</sup> Training was also a few years later provided at Chakrata the top secret military training facility known in intelligence circles as Establishment 22 where RAW imparted training to Bangladesh, Pakistan and Tibetan dissidents.<sup>142</sup>

The cause for this upgrading of Indian military and intelligence cooperation with Tamil insurgents during the early 1980's was Sri Lanka's active lobbying for military assistance from the United States, Britain, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Indira Gandhi told the Indian Parliament on August 5, 1983 that, "any external involvement would complicate matters for both the countries."<sup>143</sup> On the same day she telephoned President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka requesting him to accept India as the regional power and to make him realize the geo-political reality which he had ignored.<sup>144</sup> This was a veiled expression of what became known as the Indira Doctrine and has been explained in the following formula created by Dr. Bhabani Sen Gupta -

\* India has no intention of intervening in the internal conflicts of a South Asian country and it strongly opposes intervention by any country in the internal affairs of any other.

\* India will not tolerate external intervention in a conflict situation in any South Asian country, if the intervention has any implicit or explicit anti-Indian implication. No South Asian government must therefore ask for external military assistance with an anti-Indian bias from any country.

\* If a South Asian country genuinely needs external help to deal with a serious internal conflict situation, or with an intolerable threat to a government legitimately established, it should ask help from a number of neighboring countries including India. The exclusion of

India from such a contingency will be considered to be an anti-Indian move on the part of the government concerned.<sup>145</sup>

While India was clearly part of the problem it simultaneously saw itself as being part of the solution and there was to be no alternative which would be logically consistent with the Nehru-Indira Doctrine and the Forward Policy. Indira Gandhi telephoned President Jayewardene for a third time stressing that he should accept Indian mediation.<sup>146</sup> On this occasion the offer was accepted but unfortunately for Sri Lanka new considerations emerged in India's calculations which centered on President Jayewardene's involvement of outside interests and negotiations continued to falter while violence perpetrated on both sides of the ethnic divide continued to soar. In mid-1987 the Indian government suffered a serious case of blowback for its support of the Tamil insurgency when about, "22 small Indian Tamil political and militant groups campaigned for the establishment of Dravidastan, or an independent Tamil state in India."<sup>147</sup> Under these changed circumstances with India's own security now in peril an Indo-Lankan Peace Accord was signed on 29 July 1987 between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene. This Accord signaled a new phase in the conflict which was viewed in some Tamil quarters as outright betrayal and later as a precursor to Indian expansionism. Both accusations were in some senses true but Rajiv Gandhi was also seeking to implement the Nehru-Indira Doctrine and the Forward Policy to the new conditions in Sri Lanka as revealed in a letter to President Jayewardene where he states,

"[i] Your Excellency and myself will reach an early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel with a view to ensure that such presence will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

[ii] Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interests.

[iv] Sri Lanka's agreements with foreign broadcasting organizations will be reviewed to ensure that any facilities set up by them in Sri Lanka are used solely as public broadcasting facilities and not for any military or intelligence purpose."<sup>148</sup>



Under the terms of the Indo-Lankan Peace Accord<sup>149</sup> the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was formed to oversee the implementation of the peace accord. The mandate of the IPKF was to keep the peace between the main Tamil rebel group LTTE and the Sri Lankan armed forces. From the start, the LTTE did not trust the IPKF fully and the Sri Lankan forces and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) loathed the foreign presence on their soil.<sup>150</sup> The IPKF was soon perceived as an occupation force and began to behave as one committing acts of genocide and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and ethnic conflict that it was meant to subdue. Eduardo Marino recounts the changing role of the IPKF in his report to International Alert and describes the human costs associated with the expedition,<sup>151</sup> "It was not "cross-fire" that incidentally killed thousands of civilians. The majority were killed unavoidably inside their houses and huts under shelling, or were shot at random by the roads and on the streets."

This transformation of the IPKF was a direct consequence of continued LTTE resistance which culminated in a declaration of war issued by its leader Prabhakaran who defended his decision saying that, "Indo-Sri Lanka Accord fails to situate the essence and mode of our struggle as a liberation struggle, as a struggle for self-determination."<sup>152</sup> That the Indo-Lankan Peace Treaty acknowledges the Tamil guerrillas to be 'combatants' placed the LTTE in a prescribed role that it found impossible and unwilling to get out of. By 9th October 1987 the IPKF, "became operationally a war fighting military force and - as time has passed and the situation evolved - also a force of military occupation, at least in the Northern Province. To continue calling it a 'peace-keeping' operation [would be] a misnomer."<sup>153</sup> Against what seemed insurmountable odds the LTTE in its war with the IPKF managed to checkmate, "a much larger, resourceful and formally trained army," inflicting "nearly 5000 casualties on the Indian army ... The frustration and growing sense of purposelessness among the Indian soldiers ... was demonstrated by their senseless retaliation against Tamil civilians, including rape and torture."<sup>154</sup> In a wry twist to this phase of the conflict the Sri Lankan government resorted to undermining the IPKF by playing on Sinhalese fears of Indian expansionism and President Ranasinghe Premadasa, "struck a deal with LTTE and covertly financed and

armed LTTE to fight the IPKF which was in the island state to help the government weed out Tamil insurgents."<sup>155</sup> After a prolonged IPKF-LTTE military stalemate President Premedasa oversaw the withdrawal of the IPKF on 24 March, 1990. This, however, did not alleviate the bitterness felt by many Tamils towards India and in 1991 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a suicide bomber. An assassination that was believed to have been, "ordered by LTTE supremo Vellupillai Prabhakaran in revenge for the military intervention he [Rajiv Gandhi] ordered in Jaffna peninsula as guarantor of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan accord."<sup>156</sup>

For nearly an entire decade India had remained aloof from the conflict in Sri Lanka which had continued sporadically with sudden bursts of energy and violence taking a heavy toll in lives. The IPKF debacle and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi left a festering wound in Indian politics which only now appears to be making a swift and concerted recovery. With renewed vigor India started seriously considering the possibilities of furthering its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and the Nehru-Indira Doctrine appeared to make a come back with its focus on the deepwater port of Trincomalee which, "would not be allowed to be used for military purposes by third countries 'in a manner prejudicial to India's interests'.<sup>157</sup> Thus far India had been happy to leave mediation efforts to the Norwegians (after the Ceasefire Agreement in 2002 between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE) but this quickly changed with an upsurge in violence that marred Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse's first year in office.<sup>158</sup> It was claimed by some sources that India was unlikely to get militarily involved but neither would it allow another country or even the United Nations to intervene in the conflict<sup>159</sup>- which ironically still left open the possibility of armed intervention.

There were strong hints early on in 2006 that India had once again actively engaged in the conflict through its external intelligence agency RAW. According to a report which appeared on TamilNet on June 25, 2006, "Sri Lanka's Army-backed Tamil paramilitaries are seeking recruits amongst Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu ... The Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF), an India-based paramilitary group now operating in an anti-LTTE grouping under the Karuna Group, is seeking recruits from refugee camps and

orphanages in southern India ...The recruitment is being conducted with the knowledge of India's external intelligence agency, RAW (Research and Analysis Wing)."<sup>160</sup> The LTTE, in an apparent response to these reports, ratcheted up the ante with a suicide bomb attack that killed Major General Parami Kulatunge, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Sri Lanka Army, and two of his aides on June 26 which was followed by severe condemnation from the Indian intelligence community who were now warning of LTTE infiltration into Tamil Nadu that was beginning to pay some dividend for the rebels in their growing support base amongst the large Tamil community there.<sup>161</sup>

The LTTE's next move was to have its name removed from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) of the US State Department. According to one Indian intelligence analyst (B. Raman) attempts were made as far back as 2004 to have its name removed through the payment of bribes to US officials but more distressing was the revelation that the LTTE was in the process of purchasing surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and sophisticated dual-use technology like night-vision goggles, GPS equipment and software programs from what turned out to be agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), who posed as arms sellers in an elaborate sting operation to apprehend the buyers and their financiers<sup>162</sup> This attempt by the LTTE had been variously viewed as the rebels' increasingly desperate situation in its war with the Sri Lankan government or a possible precursor to attacking targets in Colombo and its suburbs as well as in engaging in international terrorist attacks.<sup>163</sup>

While Indian intelligence was naturally vocal on these particular developments in reference to the LTTE it has been nothing less than hysterical about Pakistan providing military advisers and training on tactics and strategy to the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF), "aid that was expected to be stepped up with the appointment of a senior Pakistani Air Force marshal as the new Pakistani high commissioner to Sri Lanka."<sup>164</sup> The former Pakistan High Commissioner had narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in Colombo and later accused India's spy agency the Research and Analysis Wing for the attack. While the High Commissioner survived, four Sri Lanka Army commandos and three bystanders died of the suspected C-4 plastic explosion.<sup>165</sup> Indian intelligence moved swiftly in defence of the LTTE and its leader

Prabhakaran, with B. Raman alleging, "that Pakistan was involved in a bid to assassinate the LTTE supreme Velupillai Prabhakaran, the man who was directly responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the husband of Sonia Gandhi, the President of India's currently ruling Congress Party."<sup>166</sup> Walter Jayawardhana, a frequent writer on Sri Lankan affairs, further reported that B. Raman had suggested that terrorist leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and his cohorts should never be killed and somebody else whom he calls "more moderate" should be made the leader of the terrorist outfit.<sup>167</sup> Such policy summersaults by Indian intelligence<sup>168</sup> were soon followed by the Indian government with its professing to help in the humanitarian crisis<sup>169</sup> in Jaffna caused by the Sri Lankan military offensive and the closing of the A-9 highway. This change in attitude was interpreted as entailing a threat and justification for direct military intervention by India<sup>170</sup> in the ethnic conflict especially with the recent involvement of Pakistani military advisers on the side of the Sri Lankan government. This sudden turn around in Indian government policy is clearly dictated by the imperatives of the Nehru-Indira Doctrine and the Forward Policy and reflected in the ongoing diplomatic and intelligence maneuvers by India. This had been prefigured by the late LTTE ideologue Anton Balasingam in his interview with NDTV in June 2006 where he requested the Indian government "to be magnanimous to put the past behind and to approach the ethnic question in a different perspective ... We do not want to have any unfriendly relationship with India because we have suffered a lot as a consequence of the contradictions between India and the LTTE. So we want to renew our friendship and engage in a positive relationship with India".<sup>171</sup>

By the end of 2006 the trend in Sri Lanka was towards outright war<sup>172</sup> with the army and airforce repeatedly targeting LTTE strongholds<sup>173</sup> after the breakdown in peace talks held in Geneva. The international donor community led by Norway, Japan, the United States and the European Union condemned what they called systematic and continued ceasefire violations by both the government and Tamil Tiger rebels.<sup>174</sup> President Mahinda Rajapakse had sought India's help to step up patrols of their common maritime border to prevent drug and arms smuggling and cross-border terrorism but was ignored.<sup>175</sup> Earlier India had expressed concern about the plight of

hundreds of thousands of people affected by fighting with the Tamil Tigers which was creating a humanitarian crisis. The Indian statements reflect a deeper concern voiced by B. Raman in his article, 'Sri Lanka: Marginalization of India', "Bolstered by Pakistan's continuing military support and encouraged by the US' diplomatic support to its military operations against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Sri Lankan Government of President Mahinda Rajapakse has been increasingly insensitive to India's concerns over the humanitarian catastrophe facing the Sri Lankan Tamil community."<sup>176</sup> According to B. Raman the donor nations seemed to have tilted too far in favour of one of the combatant parties as they, "came out strongly in support of the Sri Lankan Government and showed a calculated indifference to the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils." At a press briefing held after the meeting of co-chairs of Sri Lankan donors on November 21-22, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns categorically stated, "[The] LTTE, is a terrorist group responsible for massive bloodshed in the country and we hold the Tamil Tigers responsible for much of what has gone wrong in the country. We are not neutral in this respect. I'm talking about the United States Government now."<sup>177</sup>

Raman had viewed this approach with suspicion and as being highly prejudicial to peace and security in Sri Lanka. He regarded this stringent attitude towards the LTTE as being a direct consequence of the revival of the pre-1983 interest of the US Navy in acquiring a presence in Trincomalee. His predictions about peace seems to have been confirmed with the declaration by LTTE chief Velupillai Prabhakaran in his Heroes Day speech (November 27, 2006) that the Tamil people of Sri Lanka have no choice but to have their own independent state effectively ending the peace process with the government. This pronouncement also violated a 2002 pledge to accept a federal solution to the conflict under which the Tamils would enjoy broad autonomy and which originally paved the way for a ceasefire and Norwegian-brokered peace talks.<sup>178</sup> Predictably, Raman has blamed President Mahinda Rajapakse for the LTTE's change of course claiming that he, "wriggled out of the solemn commitments made by his predecessor-Governments to the Tamil people and the international community."<sup>179</sup> Raman, however, falls short of

supporting the LTTE demand for the creation of an independent Tamil Eelam that could ignite autonomy demands in Tamil Nadu if realized.<sup>180</sup> His recommendations to the Indian government include closely monitoring, "the activities of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from Colombo and convey its concerns in no unclear terms to the Rajapakse Government." It is not entirely clear why this should be of any concern to India or what the consequences would be for Sri Lanka if they ignore such warnings. One must, however, bear in mind the imperatives of the Nehru-Indira Doctrine that has provided the pretext for Indian intervention in several countries of South Asia since 1947. The US, on its part, rejected without reservation the LTTE demand for an independent Tamil State<sup>181</sup> and the International Crisis Group warned of an increase in violence<sup>182</sup> that was immediately acted upon by the LTTE with the attempted assassination of the Sri Lankan defence secretary and brother of President Rajapakse on December 1, 2006 in Colombo.<sup>183</sup> In response, the Sri Lankan government imposed several new anti-terror measures including the reactivation of provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and the Public Security Ordinance to curb the spiraling violence which has been criticized by Indian analysts describing the measure as extraordinary and unwarranted.<sup>184</sup>

By January 2007 the situation in Sri Lanka had degenerated into full scale war<sup>185</sup> which belied Indian objections to the legal and security measures introduced by the Sri Lankan government. As the offensive against the LTTE progressed Indian analysts began to equate the military action with the ethnic cleansing of Tamils especially in the Eastern Province where fighting was most intense and where rebel strongholds (Sampur in the Trincomallee area and Vaharai in the Batticaloa area) eventually gave way to the superior firepower of the Sri Lankan armed forces aided by the Karuna group that broke away from the LTTE in March 2004.<sup>186</sup> It was at this point that B. Raman pressed for the removal of Prabakaran as LTTE leader as he had apparently become a liability to the terrorist outfit and also because of his direct involvement in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1984. It would be impossible for the Indian Government to overtly support the LTTE while Prabakaran remained its leader although there seems to be some circumstantial evidence that Indian intelligence had been providing support through gun running across the Palk straits from

early 2007.<sup>187</sup> On February 28, the LTTE attacked Batticaloa airfield targeting Italian, US, French, Japanese and German diplomats with the Sri Lankan media pointedly indicating that neither the Indian High Commissioner nor any Indian diplomat was present in the aircraft carrying the foreign envoys.<sup>188</sup>

President Rajapaksa's tour of China and the Pakistan Defense Secretary Tariq Waseem Ghazi's visit to Colombo in March of 2007 to discuss defence ties and military cooperation led to further suspicions and straining of relations between India and Sri Lanka.<sup>189</sup> However, the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between the U.S. and Sri Lanka signed on March 5, 2007 did not elicit an immediate response from India probably reflecting the new geo-strategic alignment between it and the United States but it has nevertheless caused some disquiet in New Delhi. The ACSA provides a framework to transfer and exchange logistics supplies, and support and re-fuelling services during peacekeeping missions, humanitarian operations, and joint exercises but some analysts suggest that it could lead to the establishment of a US base on the island.<sup>190</sup> This type of military cooperation with an outside power has been a particularly contentious point with India as it contravenes the terms of the Nehru-Indira Doctrine and the Forward Policy that it has enforced in the South Asian region for more than half-a-century. If the ACSA was not enough to aggravate Indian anxieties the agreement signed between Sri Lanka and China to jointly develop Hambantota port must have finally brought about a realization in Indian governing circles that their backyard was no longer within their sphere of influence.<sup>191</sup> Apart from the growing ties with outside powers that both the ACSA and Hambantota Development Zone project helped cement it also assisted the Sri Lankan government in its continuing war with the LTTE through cooperative arrangements in law enforcement and counter-terrorism efforts<sup>192</sup> and a favourable media projection in the West. The Indian reaction to these developments was lukewarm and there was a hint of jubilation in some Indian political, diplomatic and intelligence circles when the LTTE managed to successfully carry out an air raid on a Sri Lankan military airbase damaging several helicopters and fighter jets in March 2007 allowing India a more interventionist role in the conflict on the pretext of its own security concerns in regard to the insurgents air (and later sea)

capabilities.<sup>193</sup> Several further air raids by the LTTE on Sri Lankan military targets merely added to Indian pressure for a settlement suitable to their national interests.<sup>194</sup> This has tended to take the form of a federal structure of the Sri Lankan state with devolved powers to the Tamil majority areas (alternative solutions proposed by the SL government have been shot down by the Indian media and intelligence)<sup>195</sup> but these ideas were consistently rejected by the Rajapaksa government (and several previous ones) and since India has not adopted a similar solution to the strife torn regions of the Seven Sisters, Punjab, Tamil Nadu or Kashmir it is unlikely that its neighbour would be entirely convinced of its benefits or advantages as advertised by Indian analysts and commentators. At the same time the US and UK were making further ingress into Sri Lankan politics through a series of pressure and inducement measures<sup>196</sup> adopting a similar method and tactic then being used in Bangladesh in the run up to the January 2007 elections that were subsequently cancelled.

In a coincidence of timing, the Indian government reasserted the Forward Policy and the Nehru-Indira Doctrine in Sri Lanka exactly at the same time as it was doing so in Nepal when it accused the Maoists there of collaborating with the North-East separatist insurgents ULFA. In the case of Sri Lanka, the Indian national security advisor, MK Narayanan, urged Colombo not to buy weapons from China and Pakistan to fight the Tamil rebels as, "We [India] are the big power in the region. It is very clear. Whatever their requirements, they (Sri Lanka) should come to us. We will give what is necessary," - but oddly this military assistance would not include 'offensive' weaponry.<sup>197</sup> If the Sri Lankan government refused to adhere to these strictures then it was threatened that India may support the cause of the Tamils<sup>198</sup> following the same policy guidelines adopted by Indira Gandhi almost three decades earlier. It was even suggested that Sri Lanka may be permitted to purchase offensive weaponry from India friendly nations like Israel and Russia<sup>199</sup> but not apparently the US or Europe. These abrasive remarks naturally brought a scathing rejoinder from the Sri Lankan military with former Army Chief Hamilton Wanasinghe claiming that India was partly responsible for creating the problem since "The LTTE was created by India. That's the truth" he said.<sup>200</sup> The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) leader, Somawansa Amarasinghe, in a letter to the Indian High Commissioner in Sri



Lanka was even more strident in his denunciation saying that, "The only country to have intruded on our sovereignty in the postcolonial period is India. The JVP over the recent years have thought that India's bad neighbor policy had been changed. Hence the JVP began to think of India in very positive terms. But the recent statement of Mr. Narayanan, one-time head of Indian spy agencies, gives us to doubt that. As a sovereign nation Sri Lanka has the full right to trade with any nation including from where we should buy the best arms."<sup>201</sup>

It appeared that by June 2007 the situation in Sri Lanka (as in Nepal) had come full circle<sup>202</sup> and India was now determined to impose its will on this South Asian nation.<sup>203</sup> The Sri Lankan military, however, continued on regardless of the Indian protests and secured victories in the east of the country most significantly capturing Thoppigala (Baron's Cap) which had been in rebel hands for many years.<sup>204</sup> After slightly more than a months respite the Sri Lankan military commenced operations in the north of the country where the LTTE was strongly entrenched.<sup>205</sup> As the Sri Lankan military scored strategic successes in the North and inflicted heavy casualties on the LTTE (including the death of the leader of the political wing of the LTTE, S.P. Thamichelvan, who was the highest-ranking member of the group to be killed by Sri Lankan Forces since the emergence of violence in the island nation in 1983.)<sup>206</sup> the Indian propaganda machine sought to undermine the Rajapaksa government through innuendo and disinformation<sup>207</sup> with a few commentators and analysts elaborating pretexts for future intervention in the conflict.<sup>208</sup>

On January 2, 2008 the Sri Lankan government formally withdrew from the ceasefire agreement with Tamil Tiger rebels.<sup>209</sup> On January 30, 2008 JVP parliamentarian K.D. Lal Kantha accused India of trying to thwart the Sri Lankan Army's successful campaign to crush the Tigers".<sup>210</sup> This was in spite of the fact that the Indian military armed forces were at this time providing some logistical support to the Sri Lankan army and navy probably so as not to be outdone by the US, Chinese, Israeli and Pakistani military assistance to the country.<sup>211</sup> It seems that the Rajapaksa government's forthright stance with India by ignoring their almost two years of protestations over the conflict had paid dividends in the end by allowing him to take a more independent course in his handling of the LTTE. The JVP, on the

other hand, continues to still contest that not enough has been done to deter Indian expansionism especially after the Sri Lankan government appeared to resurrect the 13th Amendment to the Constitution which if fully implemented would devolve power to the North and East of the country. According to the JVP the 13th Amendment was introduced at the imposition of India and should therefore remain dormant.<sup>212</sup> A similar forthright anti-Indianism began to make an appearance in LTTE statements probably in response to New Delhi's cooperation with the Sri Lankan military and this may be indicative of a new phase in the war bringing the conflict onto the Indian mainland and involving the large Tamil population in the South of the country.<sup>213</sup> It is clear that India's domineering and expansionist policies do not always have the desired outcome or result.<sup>214</sup>

### **Baluchistan -**

In 1933, Mr. C. Rahmat Ali and three other young Muslim Indians studying in England issued a leaflet declaring on behalf of thirty million Muslims in India their idea of a Pakistan that would be created from five northern units of India i.e. Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan. This plan was subsequently adopted by the Muslim League and Mohammad Ali Jinnah but in the case of Baluchistan in particular there was conspicuous dissent to joining Pakistan. Jinnah visited Baluchistan in July 1943 to address the Muslim League's third provincial conference where he "exhorted the Muslims of Baluchistan to shake off their lethargy and march in line with the nation." He urged them to "Give up your jealousies and sectional interests and differences over small things, petty quarrels and tribal notions" but such oratory appears to have been in vain as calls for a Greater Baluchistan were already being heard very soon after partition.<sup>215</sup> An armed separatist movement emerged in 1948 fomented by Prince Karim Khan that was orchestrated and planned chiefly from Kandahar in Afghanistan. With limited external and internal support and due to Prince Karim Khan's capture and sentencing in 1948 the insurgency soon petered out. However, another armed struggle was attempted in 1968 by Nawab Nowroz Khan but this also collapsed after he was arrested and executed along with his sons and nephews in Hyderabad jail.

It was, however, the rebellion of 1973-1975 that really tested

Pakistan's unity coming immediately on the heels of the 1971 war with India in which East Pakistan gained independence and became Bangladesh. Stanley Wolpert in his biography of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto narrates the events leading up to the uprising, "Before the end of January 1973, federal troops were ordered into Baluchistan. Lasbela had become a hotbed for 'miscreants,' and Akbar Bugti let it be known to Bhutto that he suspected Governor Bizenjo was preparing for the 'secession' of his troubled state. In Baghdad, moreover, a 'Baluch Liberation Front' office had opened, and hidden transmitters kept beaming broadcasts toward Pakistan from Iraq in four regional languages. Karachi was a beehive of rumors about an imminent 'Russian-backed invasion' and Indo-Soviet 'sabotage' aimed at turning Baluchistan into another Bangladesh."<sup>216</sup> The demand of the Baloch nationalists led by Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, Sardar Attaullah Mengal and Khair Bux Marri was for provincial rights but Prime Minister Bhutto was in no mood to compromise and sacked Ghaus Bux Bizenjo as governor on 14 February 1973 and appointed Nawab Akbar Bugti as the new governor. He further issued a proclamation removing Baluchistan's Council of Ministers that had Sardar Attaullah Mengal as its Chief Minister.<sup>217</sup> There soon erupted a nationalist insurgency that sucked the Pakistan Army into a massive and brutal operation inside Balochistan that resulted in thousands of deaths. Even then, the insurgency, "in Baluchistan kept escalating, though Tikka Khan poured his best regular army troops into that impoverished, underpopulated border province, whose tribal links with Afghanistan and Iraq as well as Iran had long raised the specter of a 'Greater Baluchistan' separatist movement."<sup>218</sup> Former Governor Bizenjo had even described Governor Bugti as the most hated man in Baluchistan and Bhutto warned the governor of a plot to assassinate him but mistrust soon developed between Bugti and Bhutto as the conflict progressed.<sup>219</sup> Bhutto and the Pakistan military's greatest fear was undoubtedly that the insurgency would turn into another East Pakistan fiasco with a second bout of dismemberment that could presage the dissolution of Pakistan as a nation state. Governor Bugti, nevertheless, resigned on the last day of October 1973 which was accepted by Bhutto two months later in January 1974<sup>220</sup> but the insurgency only ended after the army coup led by Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq against the civilian government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the appointment of Lt. Gen. Rahimuddin Khan as Martial Law Governor of Baluchistan.

The latest round of separatist related violence in Baluchistan began soon after the United States invaded Afghanistan in the first stage of what President George Bush called the 'War on Terror' which officially started in October 2001. Some have argued that the impetus to this third phase of the Baluchistan insurgency was caused by President Pervez Musharraf's attempts at election gerrymandering and the building of military cantonments in Gwadar, Dera Bugti and Kohlu. These seem only partial explanations as there existed a high military concentration and presence in the area and with the ruthless suppression of separatist groups by Lt. Gen Rahimuddin Khan, a sudden resurgence requires further elaboration. A more comprehensive and satisfactory answer may lie in the Bush administration's cooperation with Indian intelligence in Afghanistan advocated by experts in the American intelligence community and by military strategists. The new thinking in the White House likely reflected the internal criticisms later publicized in Steve Coll's Pulitzer Prize winning book, 'Ghost Wars' which sought to explain the CIA's failings in Afghanistan partially as a consequence of not engaging with regional powers like India and concluded that while, "the American government sought gradually to deepen its ties to New Delhi, it lacked the creativity, local knowledge, patience, and persistence to cope successfully with India's prickly nationalism and complex democratic politics ... As a result, America failed during the late 1990's to forge an effective antiterrorism partnership with India, whose regional interests, security resources, and vast Muslim population offered great potential for covert penetrations of Afghanistan."<sup>221</sup>

With Baluchistan bordered by Afghanistan on the northwest, Iran to the west and the Arabian Sea to the south the province has important strategic and economic implications for both the US and India. This has allowed a consolidation of interests especially after 9/11 resulting in a convergence of outlook and opinion over the perceived Islamic terrorist threat from religiously inspired states like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan.<sup>222</sup> It can be legitimately inferred that as both the US and India had originally backed the Northern Alliance led by Ahmed Shah Massoud and Pashtun tribal leaders against the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan a commonality of interests would eventually emerge. This cooperation with the US has allowed Indian intelligence to

effectively infiltrate into Afghanistan to use as a springboard into Baluchistan<sup>223</sup> in a latter day emulation of Prince Karim Khan's separatist movement of the 1940's. The simmering tensions that have remained latent due to perceived underdevelopment, discrimination by the Federal Government, and political grievances could easily be exploited to create an explosive situation with external support and logistics that was not available to the previous insurgencies. Some of the accusations aimed against the Pakistan government, therefore, seem quite reminiscent of the East Pakistani complaint about cultural arrogance and milking of natural resources which is a view that has been advanced by prominent Indian writers like Kanchan Lakshman in relation to the causes of the Baluchistan insurgency, "The prevailing circumstances have long led the Balochis to protest against the 'hegemony' of the Punjab province. For instance, Balochistan has some of the largest gas reservoirs in Pakistan at Sui, Pir Koh, and Marri, and while the province accounts for approximately 40 per cent of the country's total gas production, it exports 80 per cent of its output to Punjab. Utilization within Balochistan is a mere 17 per cent of its output."<sup>224</sup> This might, however, be due to Baluchistan accounting for only 6 per cent of Pakistan's entire population which is also a fact readily admitted to by Lakshman. Pakistani analyst, Nasim Zehra, has further contended that, "No government in Islamabad had contributed to the development of Balochistan as much as Musharraf's. While the previous administrations identified the issues, Musharraf pushed for practical steps - dams, schools, electricity, more royalty, more development budgets, larger presence of the Baloch in the security agencies etc."<sup>225</sup> It is Lakshman's contentions on foreign interests in Baluchistan that may have ultimately triggered India's antagonism and hostility leading them to fan the flames of Baloch separatism but he portrays these issues in a very different light writing that the, "Protests against the Federal Government's acquisition of vast tracts of land for mega military ventures, such as the Gwadar Port and City project, are snowballing, and feed the insurgency. The strategically located port, scheduled to be operational by 2005, is intended to handle transit trade with Central Asia, Afghanistan and western China. However, a relatively large section of the Balochis believe that the benefits will overwhelmingly be cornered by the Pakistani Army and non-Balochis." In the article just cited, Lakshman never once mentions Indian government concerns about these projects

and Ammara Durrani writing in the Asia Times<sup>226</sup> dismisses the notion of Indian instigation of the Baloch insurgents because of camaraderie between the arch-rivals (India and Pakistan) 'these days' and essentially points to strategic jockeying between the US and China.

How far Indian intelligence is responsible for disseminating propaganda information concerning Baluchistan is impossible to verify or substantiate but even official statements of the Indian government have been viewed as interference by Pakistan. On December 27, 2005, New Delhi had noted with 'concern' the heavy military action in Baluchistan and said Pakistan should 'exercise restraint and address the grievances of the people of the region through peaceful discussions.' President Pervez Musharraf termed this comment as 'intriguing' on India's part while the Indian External Affairs Ministry and senior government officials shot back that, "Why should there be inhibition on our side to say something on what is happening in our neighbourhood?"<sup>227</sup> It is, however, the specific allegations of India's active participation in the Baluchistan conflict that was the cause of most friction between the two countries. Dr. Matloob Hussain, in an article for 'The Nation' newspaper expressed the accusations in great detail, "It was in the middle of 2004 when Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Yousaf revealed that India's secret service RAW had been operating 30 to 40 terrorist camps at various locations in Balochistan, paying each terrorist approximately Rs 10,000 per month. On December 29, 2005, President of Pakistan also referred to a neighbourly country's involvement in Balochistan. He has sometimes said that India is interested in managing rather than resolving the conflicts."<sup>228</sup> The purpose behind this covert intervention according to Dr. Hussain and Pakistani officials is to 'fuel the activities of Baloch insurgent nationalists ... aimed at provoking a full-blown insurgency leading to the eventual breakup of Pakistan'. Such declarations were anticipated by Indian intelligence and Dr. Ajai Sahni, Executive Director of the New Delhi based policy centre 'Institute for Conflict Management' and editor of the 'South Asia Intelligence Review' (SAIR - for which Kanchan Lakshman also regularly contributes articles) has responded by ridiculing the suspicion of an 'Indian hand' in Baluchistan describing Indian intervention as limited, "to an expression of concern at the use of helicopter gunships and artillery against civilian population[s]."

Military operations that were launched by the Pakistan Air Force on August 24, 2006 using what Indian intelligence experts claimed were aircraft, helicopters and communication sets given by the US and missiles provided by the Chinese managed to kill the foremost Baluchi nationalist leader and former governor Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti and 36 other freedom-fighters belonging to the Bugti and Marri tribes.<sup>229</sup> Indian analyst, B. Raman, in an article condemning the attack and death of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti also provided an interesting link to the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, "The plans for a decapitation strike against Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti and the commander of the BLA had been drawn up by Air Vice Marshal Shehzad Aslam Chaudhury, when he was the Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Operations) last year and had been approved by Gen. Pervez Musharraf. He has since retired and has been posted as Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka to help the Sri Lankan Government in its operations against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)."<sup>230</sup> It may be recalled that B. Raman also alleged that the Pakistan military was out to assassinate the leader of the LTTE (Prabhakaran) for whom Indian intelligence appears to have developed a new found sympathy, although, Prabhakaran has been directly implicated in the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. It is, however, B. Raman's further comments in the same article that provides the crucial insight into New Delhi's attitude to the Baluchistan insurgency that is unquestionably influenced by the Nehru Doctrine and India's Forward Policy, "[The] successful decapitation strike launched by the Pakistan Air Force and Army is a major tragedy for the Baloch freedom-fighters, but they are not strangers to tragedies. This would only further strengthen their resolve to step up their independence struggle against the Punjabi-military colonisation of Balochistan, with the alleged assistance of China ... the anti-Chinese anger in Balochistan is likely to increase further." Chinese involvements in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan have all helped to heighten Indian insecurities about their diminished role in South Asia. China has invested heavily in the Gwadar port facility and naval base (now under-construction) as well as in the Jinnah naval base in Ormara (all are located in Baluchistan) and in return the Chinese navy will be allowed berthing facilities in Gwadar and Ormara as well as facilities for a Chinese monitoring station on the Mekran Coast of Balochistan.<sup>231</sup> Chinese engineers have often been the targets of

Baluchi insurgents with several being killed or kidnapped over the last few years by the Baluchistan Liberation Army (allegedly with the support and assistance for these operations provided by RAW<sup>232</sup>) on the grounds that the projects are intended to assist colonisation and allow the exploitation and expropriation of natural resources that will not likely benefit Baluchistan as a fair allocation of royalties would be denied them. Even the possibility of employment on these projects is said to be remote due to the discrimination and mistrust by the Pakistani central authorities of the local Baluchis.<sup>233</sup> The threat perception posed by China has fundamentally been an Indian preoccupation but writers like B. Raman while articulating the grievances of the Baluchis has introduced the issue instead as a security threat to US interests in the region, "The US is also greatly concerned over the increasing presence of the Chinese in this sensitive area. The completion of the Gwadar project and the likelihood of Chinese naval ships being stationed in the local naval base could pose a threat to US oil and naval interests in the Gulf region. However, it has not openly expressed its concerns so far."<sup>234</sup> The Pentagon did raise this issue openly in a 2002 report titled 'Energy futures in Asia' but in the wholly different context of the building of the Chittagong container port facility by China on the Bangladesh coast.<sup>235</sup>

With the death of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, Indian intelligence represented by B. Raman and others saw a renewed opportunity for India to engage with the Baluchistan insurgents as, "The Balochs, like the Sindhis, the Mohajirs and large sections of the Pashtuns, have always been the traditional friends and well-wishers of India."<sup>236</sup> The objective would be to make independent Baluchistan a reality and bring the dissolution of Pakistan a step closer. Such a possibility presented itself when the Baloch National Jirga met in Quetta on September 21, and called for revisiting the accession of Balochistan to Pakistan.<sup>237</sup> As Tarique Niazi (an expert on Pakistan affairs) further elaborates, "The jirga, which was convened for the first time in 130 years, moved the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to help end Pakistan's occupation of Balochistan. Earlier, the Balochistan National Party (BNP), a major nationalist grouping, resigned its seats in provincial and federal legislatures, dismissing them as no longer relevant. These events left most Pakistani shaken and unsure of



Balochistan's future in a federal Pakistan."<sup>238</sup> It should also be mentioned here that India was made a party to the ICJ arbitration by the Baloch Jirga on the question of their "Accession to Pakistan Pact". Indian military strategists like Col. (retd) Anil Athale have drawn comparisons with the 1971 war that saw the secession of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh.<sup>239</sup> Col. Athale while commending India's ability to accommodate diversity makes comparisons to fractious states like Pakistan which appears to show his sentimental leaning towards the program for an Akhand Bharat but he conveniently ignores the deep dissatisfaction within India's northeast and amongst the religious minorities and scheduled castes that are routinely discriminated against. Nevertheless, Bugti's death did unleash a torrent of abuse and criticism on the head of President Pervez Musharraf and the Pakistan military and momentarily galvanized the Baluchistan insurgency which was reflected in an increasingly anxious Pakistani press and media that left their Indian (and oddly Bangladesh) counterparts gloating with satisfaction.<sup>240</sup> However, not all the opinions and commentaries expressed on the Bugti killing was directed at Pakistan alone. According to Kuldip Nayar, a senior Indian journalist, in an interview with Bugti in the early 1970's relates the following remark made by the slain leader, "Bugti said that India should learn a lesson from Pakistan and analyse why Bangladesh became an independent country. Unless New Delhi gave full autonomy to the states, he said, it might endanger its integrity."<sup>241</sup>

By early September 2006 the Pakistan government went on the offensive to safeguard its unity and territorial integrity by first sealing all weapon supply routes from India and Afghanistan and then presenting its case to the media. At a meeting on September 4 held with Baluch ruling alliance politicians President Musharraf stated that, "Seeing the nature of subversive activities and evidence available with the government, one cannot rule out a possibility of foreign hand in certain areas of Balochistan."<sup>242</sup> The defence spokesman Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan and the Information Minister Mohammad Ali Durrani later alleged that the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) had pumped huge sums of money into Baluchistan along with arms and ammunition that included Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs) and 107mm rockets. Sultan further claimed that

Indian consulates in Kandahar and the Iranian city of Zahidan were sending arms and ammunition to certain parts of Balochistan for creating disturbance through anti-Pakistan elements.<sup>243</sup> The Minister of State for Information, Tariq Azeem, on September 6 stated that, "A violent situation is being created in Balochistan with the help of outside forces." In a separate press briefing, Tasnim Aslam, the Foreign office spokesperson added that, "Afghan territory is being used for anti-Pakistan activities by India."<sup>244</sup> Pro-Indian writers in the West such as Selig S. Harrison have dismissed these accusations appearing to take Indian denials at face value while also stressing that India has repeatedly brushed aside, "suggestions that it might be tempted to help Sindhi and Baluch insurgents if the situation in Pakistan continues to unravel."<sup>245</sup> However, the disappointment felt by Indian writer Kanchan Lakshman at the apparent disintegration of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti's Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) and the 'evidence of some disarray' amongst 'the leadership of other Baloch nationalist formations' is quite obvious.<sup>246</sup> He further informs us that there, "has been a momentary dispersal of the insurgents into the largely inaccessible hills" but nevertheless declares it is 'becoming increasingly difficult to quiten the rebellion in the province.'<sup>247</sup>

Indian intelligence analyst B. Raman has already predicted a recurrence of the 2006 violence due to Pakistan's decision to award responsibility for the management of the Chinese-constructed Gwadar commercial port to the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) International, as reportedly advised by China. A Dubai company had been initially proposed for the job but, "The Chinese were afraid that the Dubai Company might be used by the US intelligence community for collecting intelligence about the future movements of Chinese naval ships after the naval base in Gwadar, now under construction by the Chinese, is commissioned by 2010."<sup>248</sup> The Baloch insurgents have apparently come out against President Musharraf's decision to make the PSA responsible for the management of the commercial port for 40 years. To express its displeasure over the award of the contract to the PSA, the BLA fired two rockets at the Gwadar port area on the night of February 1, 2007, disrupting the power supply to the entire port area for several hours.<sup>249</sup> A more serious concern for India, however, appears to be the proposed rail link from Havelian in Punjab to Khunjrab on the Pakistan-China border. This rail line would pass

through Kashmiri territory in the Northern Areas, which India claims was illegally occupied by Pakistan in 1948. Under a resolution passed by the Indian Parliament in 1994, this area is an integral part of India. Pakistan has ignored these protestations and awarded to China several contracts for projects in the area. B. Raman claims that, "When these projects get going, over 6,000 Chinese engineers, many of them from the People's Liberation Army, are expected to be based right across the Kargil sector and in the proximity of Siachen."<sup>250</sup> The rail-link project was only one amongst many such projects undertaken cooperatively by the Pakistan and Chinese governments in Gwadar that appeared to have a military component to its design and construction<sup>251</sup> and which clearly undermined India's application of the Nehru-Indira Doctrine and Forward Policy in South Asia. It is for this reason alone that Indian intelligence continues to promote the cause of insurgent groups in Baluchistan<sup>252</sup> and this approach has taken on added emphasis with the opening of Gwadar port in March 2007<sup>253</sup> which has also attracted the ire and suspicion of the United States.<sup>254</sup> The incident of the Lal Masjid occupation in Islamabad by a cleric and his radicalized students in July 2007 may also be viewed in this light since the taking of Chinese hostages by the armed occupiers - followed soon after by the shooting dead of three Chinese workers in NWFP<sup>255</sup> - was promptly used by Indian intelligence analysts to try to create a rift between Pakistan and China.<sup>257</sup> This was merely another offshoot of the Baluchistan policy to destabilize Pakistan and undermine it in the eyes of the international community and especially its allies. Noting the serious risks to Pakistan's integrity if such activities were allowed to go unanswered the armed forces and intelligence agencies of that country pursued Baloch rebels operating in Afghanistan killing a top BLA leader, Mir Balaach Marri, in November of 2007.<sup>258</sup> B. Raman unable to restrain his grief over the death of Mir Balaach Marri, expresses his condolences on behalf of all of India for 'the legendary Che Guevara of the Baloch freedom struggle ... [praying] to God that He gives [the freedom fighters] added strength to continue marching to their independence."<sup>259</sup>

### **India's Forward Policy and Bangladesh**

The Forward Policy played an important role in India's strong opposition to a military pact between the United States and Bangladesh during the BJP administration and is being invoked over

the recent suspicions concerning Bangladesh's growing relations with China. The implications of the Bangladesh-China relations at least from a political, economic and strategic perspective has been explained in a short article by Prof. Ruksana Kibria of the International Relations department at Dhaka University titled, 'Strategic implications of Bangladesh-China relations.'<sup>1260</sup> According to Prof. Kibria, China has proven to be a time-tested and reliable partner of Bangladesh, and has extended economic and military assistance, as well as diplomatic support to it. Most importantly she asserts that China plays a significant, 'role in the maintenance of Bangladesh's security that no other country does, it being the largest and most important provider of military hardware and training to the latter's armed forces.'<sup>1261</sup> Viewed in the strategic context of South Asia, Prof Kibria asserts that Bangladesh's close ties with China cannot be reduced to merely the economic as this, "is not the sole basis on which the edifice of bilateral cooperation has been constructed. The fact is that this relationship is primarily politico-military in nature, which derives its significance when studied in the context of Sino-Indian competition in South Asia. What is apparently seen as purely economic and commercial also has profound political and strategic implications for both China and Bangladesh." This relationship found expression in the signing of the Bangladesh-China Defence Cooperation Agreement in December 2002 and instantly raised suspicion in India as to its actual scope and intent. The conclusions drawn on the wider implications of this relationship by Prof. Kibria is open to debate as she claims that, "Once South Asia comes within China's sphere of influence (and become its backyard), and its strategic dominance is firmly established (with the Bay of Bengal virtually turning into a Chinese lake), India, lagging behind in economic and military terms, is likely to "buy peace" by acquiescing in China's political-economic-military preeminence."

As one critic has pointed out this is an unlikely (and from a US standpoint undesirable) scenario and could pose a critical strategic dilemma for Bangladesh as, 'it should be noted that except for its seacoast on the south and a short border with Myanmar (Burma) on the southeast, Bangladesh is surrounded by India to its west, north, and east.'<sup>1263</sup> Urvashi Aneja, a research officer with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies based in New Delhi also identifies the

geographical factor as a limitation on broader Bangladesh-China relations. While providing a comprehensive survey of these friendly and extensive ties she also dismissed the view that China seeks to strengthen 'against-India' regions in order to challenge India's supremacy in South Asia. She adopts the view that while China desires to deepen ties with Bangladesh and other South Asian countries, "it would not want to jeopardize relations with India, thus posing no overt threat to Indian security in the near future."<sup>264</sup> She also rejects the findings of a 2002 Pentagon report, 'Energy Futures in Asia', which claims that, "The Chinese are seeking much more extensive naval and commercial access in Bangladesh" whereby "China, by militarily controlling oil shipping sea lanes, could threaten ships, thereby creating a climate of uncertainty about the safety of all ships on the high seas."<sup>265</sup> Aneja takes the optimistic view that through visible gestures of good will by India and concessions for improving the balance of trade should help to improve relations with Bangladesh she rehearses the propaganda line of Indian intelligence that while, "not disregarding the gravity of disputes between India and Bangladesh - including the illegal immigration of Bangladeshis and the problem of Islamic terrorism" which have brought calls by India's politicians for military intervention she also complains, "that there could be something lacking in the trade and foreign policy of Bangladesh".<sup>266</sup> The message being put forward here by Aneja is very clear.

A similar but more explicit message had been conveyed several years earlier by senior Indian strategic analyst Dr. Subhash Kapila while commenting on the Bangladesh-China Defence Cooperation Agreement 2002 remarking that India cannot ignore the strategic embrace of Bangladesh by China, whose strategic implications are: (1) China's strategic intrusiveness in South Asia gets further reinforced; (2) Bangladesh's enhanced military profile will have to be factored in India's future military plans; (3) India will now have to factor in a fourth strategic concern in its operational plans, namely China-Pakistan-Bangladesh military collusion in the context of any Indo-Pak or Sino-Indian conflict; (4) China's naval intrusions are facilitated by Bangladesh into the Bay of Bengal area.; (5) India's North East region's strategic vulnerabilities (especially the lines of communication) become more complicated; (6) India's IRBM deployments in the North East against China will now need more

securing. Kapila concludes that, "All the above concerns are realistic and one cannot be dismissive about them as conclusions of an overactive imagination."<sup>267</sup> Both Aneja and Kapila view Sino-Bangladesh ties as inherently hostile to Indian interests in South Asia.

The Indian government's attitude towards this new strategic realignment was even more unambiguous after it was revealed that the Interim Government led by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed had invited Beijing to develop the country's oil sector and build roads and pipelines that would allow China to ship out exports and import crude through two ports in Bangladesh while stalling on gas exports and a transnational energy corridor to India.<sup>268</sup> The most important manifestation of this apparent renewal and interest in the 'Look East' policy was the agreement on the Myanmar-Bangladesh road link that could eventually lead directly into Thailand and China and most importantly provide easy access to markets in South-East Asia.<sup>269</sup> The Indian reaction to these developments and other political ones was instant and unpleasant (see Parts 6A and B). As mentioned above both Nepal and Sri Lanka have been in India's cross-hairs for their increased collaborations with China (and Pakistan) in the economic and military fields and Nepal has recently faced Indian intervention in its domestic affairs which was predicated by the Nehru Doctrine and India's Forward Policy - a more devastating outcome could befall Bangladesh if Prof. Kibria's thesis proves correct or unless a contingency plan is adopted involving, "dynamic, pragmatic and effective political leadership capable of correctly assessing national interests and setting national priorities, identifying the main challenges and creatively engaging them through an appropriate mix of policy tools. It is also necessary to ensure that its foreign policy is informed by a strategic vision as well by economic considerations that realistically gauges the direction of regional and international changes."<sup>270</sup> The necessity for such astute statesmanship is due to the fact that the Indian government has already utilized the Forward Policy and the Nehru Doctrine in East Pakistan/Bangladesh with harmful and lasting consequences. This occurred during the Liberation War of 1971 and has been partially explained in the following terms by the then National Security Advisor Kissinger, "Despite Yahya's proclamation of an amnesty India made the return of refugees to East Pakistan depend on a political settlement there.

But India reserved the right to define what constituted an acceptable political settlement on the sovereign territory of its neighbour.<sup>1271</sup> The absence of the Congress party from power in India especially during the 1970's and 1980's could have provided an opportunity for other parties to change New Delhi's foreign policy direction but this rarely ever happened and is still a continuing cause of frustration for Bangladesh. The practical implications of this policy on the country during and after the 1971 war will be the subject of the following parts of this essay.

## **An Overview**

In the extensive survey of Indian interventions in Nepal, Sikkim, Sri Lanka Pakistan and Bangladesh the terms of the Nehru Doctrine and India's Forward Policy may now usefully be reiterated to encompass the preventing of any alliances which could necessarily be construed as a threat to India's supremacy in the region which it is prepared to defend jealously through the force of arms but more often by internal pressures such as sabotage and state sponsored terrorism. From these few examples given above it should be clear that the Nehru Doctrine flagrantly infringes upon the independent sovereign rights of nations and interferes in their internal decision making processes. If control is not de jure, it is certainly de facto but this has not prevented India from binding its neighbours to legal agreements and instruments that subvert the sovereignty of the weaker and smaller nations who are usually forced to acquiesce. India will, therefore, continue to assign the right to interpret the word 'invasions' expressed in the formula of the Nehru Doctrine and Forward Policy, according to its own wisdom and thought processes regardless of international opinion which can be so easily manipulated through the press and media. As was observed by Secretary of State Kissinger, "I did not find in Indian history or in Indian conduct towards its own people or its neighbours a unique moral sensitivity."<sup>1272</sup> This judgment coming from a man who oversaw the implementation of American foreign policy during the Vietnam War and has been accused of a fair amount of moral insensitivity himself but this should not be taken as hypocritical as it provides the insight of a statesman whose views are not tainted by illusions and sentimentality and which offers the reader a clearer analysis on Indian ambitions in the subcontinent.

It might be confidently stated that under all previous governments in India the attitude of the political and intelligence elite has been consistently the same and with only the methods changing according to circumstances and particular political inclinations.<sup>273</sup> The political and religious forms that this may take in the future was demonstrated by the strongest proponents of the Akhand Bharat ideal (and may well have been applauded by Nehru had he been alive to see their fanatical zeal for his vision) in a commentary for the Hindu magazine in 2005 where it states, "The RSS has never reconciled to Partition and has always been a proponent of the ideal of Akhand Bharat (unified India), which would also be a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu Nation). The only "common enemy" that the RSS has ever recognised is Pakistan and Islam. The rejection of Partition was clearly spelt out by the founding fathers of the RSS. In his 'Bunch of Thoughts', Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar<sup>274</sup> writes: "Our leaders who were a party to the creation of Pakistan may try to whitewash the tragedy by saying that it was a brotherly division of the country and so on. But the naked fact remains that an aggressive Muslim State has been carved out of our own motherland. From the day the so-called Pakistan came into being, we in the Sangh have been declaring that it is a clear case of continued Muslim aggression." Elsewhere in the book, Golwalkar calls Pakistan a 'self-declared theocratic Islamic State'. The clearest statement against recognising Pakistan as a sovereign nation comes from a statement issued by the RSS in 1965, which states: "So long as Pakistan exists as at present, she will continue to be hostile and aggressive towards Bharat. Pakistan was born in hatred of Bharat. It was carved out artificially by disrupting the natural, national integrity of Bharat. The K.K.M (Kendriya Karyakari Mandal or central working committee) is, therefore, of the firm opinion that peace and normalcy are inconceivable without the establishment of Akhand Bharat."<sup>275</sup> Some may argue that the RSS and Sangh Parivar were a mere aberration in Indian politics that did not substantially vitiate the secular ideals of the constitution. This is probably missing the point as the concept of Akhand Bharat has been a mainstay of Indian political culture since 1947 but has never been so explicitly stated in intellectual discourse inside India or elsewhere in South Asia. Instead the concept has been camouflaged by policy prescriptions such as the Forward Policy discussed in this section or under the guise of military tactics and operations such as occurred in Baraibari, Roumari upazila,



Sylhet on April 18, 2001 which led to an uprising by ordinary villagers in Bangladesh against the intruders. Unfortunately the brave BDR personnel that lost their lives in this confrontation have never been properly honoured for their sacrifice.<sup>276</sup> Major General ALM Fazlur Rahman (Rtd) who was then Chief of the BDR, has commented that the incident in Padua of Sylhet and Boraibari of Roumary represented a historical defence of the nations sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>277</sup> This was betrayed by the then Chief of Army Staff Harun-ur-Rashid and the governments of Awami League and BNP. The BNP government succumbed to pressure exerted from the Government of India to ensure the deposition and termination of Maj. Gen. Fazlur Rahman from his position as head of the BDR. Maj. Gen. Rahman asserts that the governments acceptance of this extortionate request is as good as compromising the sovereignty of the country. According to Maj. Gen. Rahman, his removal as BDR chief was instigated at the request of India and its acceptance by the Army Chief, PM and President represents a war crime for which they should be tried. He further asserts that the BDR soldiers who died in the fighting on that fateful day in Boraibari should be decorated with National Sword as Birsreshtho and should be commemorated in similar fashion to the martyrs of 1971.

### **Akhand Bharat and the Implications for Bangladesh**

In light of the above discussion Bangladesh's suspicion of India can only appear natural and healthy reflecting an instinctive will to survive. Historical evidence has shown that India did not have Bangladesh's best interests in mind after 1971 and if given half the chance would probably have tried to strangle the new nation at birth. It was only for the international condemnation, criticism and the likelihood of sanctions being imposed that dissuaded India from taking such an overtly aggressive course. But as shall be seen in Parts 2 to 5 of this essay the policy of undermining Bangladesh has continued without respite since 1971. The vision of an Akhand Bharat has remained a significant component of India's foreign policy objectives in the South Asia region and is reflected in its treatment of its near neighbours and Bangladesh has been particularly affected by this attitude.

The Bangladesh-India relationship from 1971 onwards can be most appropriately described as somewhat akin to absentee landlordism especially when the Awami League has taken occupation as the democratically elected tenants with extensive support and lobbying from New Delhi. Any of the other political parties coming to power (except those allied with the AL) in Bangladesh are considered mere squatters by India and are therefore in adverse possession of what Bangladesh's large neighbour views as their personal real estate. It is in this perspective of an improvised and imagined Akhand Bharat that we should interpret the comments, in an otherwise, fulsome description of Indo-Bangladesh relations provided by Indian External Affairs Secretary Rajiv Sikri in 2006, "Bangladesh is the most important neighbour and regional partner for India. In fact, I would say Bangladesh is special and unique for India because the Indian state of West Bengal, Bangladesh and the northeastern region of India had historically constituted an integrated space."<sup>278</sup> This is, of course, a complete misrepresentation of the history and culture of the region which was advanced by none other than Mahatma Gandhi who believed that the two Bengal's possessed a common culture as embodied in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore and has its roots in the philosophy of the Upanishads which was also, according to him, common to the whole of India. This is again another subtle expression of the Akhand Bharat that propagates the myth of a homogeneous and culturally unified 'Mother' India. Although there may be many similarities between Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims in respect of 'customs, habits, dress and food but as far as culture is concerned when the Muslims gave up idolatry and accepted Islam as a philosophy of life' they disassociated themselves from all cultural aspects based on Hindu idol worship and the Upanishads.<sup>279</sup> Apart from these religious or cultural differences there are many other good practical and sensible reasons why nations that share borders with India should be wary of its ideological intent especially when there have already been overt acts of encroachment as happened with Bangladesh in the case of the Talpatty islands and most recently in the Bay of Bengal where India unilaterally included 19, 000 sq km of Bangladesh territory within its own bidding blocks for proposed international gas exploration in 2006.<sup>280</sup> The purpose and motivation behind such encroachments (in a general international relations context) have been explained by a German mercantilist writer, von

Hornigk, who observed that, "Whether a nation be mighty today and rich or not depends not on the abundance or security of its power and riches, but principally on whether its neighbours have more or less of it."<sup>281</sup>

This acquisitiveness when wedded to the concept of an Akhand Bharat necessarily entails a beggar thy neighbour attitude which India has striven to achieve throughout the 37 years of Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan and an event which was viewed by New Delhi as simplifying the task of subverting the sovereignty of its new and callow neighbour in order to aggrandize itself at the latter's expense. The consequence to Bangladesh of such economic imperialism and hegemonic designs can be found in the attempted destruction of the industrial and commercial infrastructure of the country and the damaging of trade relations with third countries that had started with the looting by Indian soldiers occupying Dhaka and other towns after the defeat of the Pakistan military forces in 1971.<sup>282</sup> This was also the actual motivation behind the appalling acts of carnage and waste witnessed in May 2006 when almost 300 garment factories and other unrelated industries came under attack from unidentified miscreants most likely in the payroll of India. An allegation predictably refuted by some pro-Indian columnists writing in newspapers and magazines operating in Bangladesh who have consistently and loyally represented the interests and views of a foreign power that has since 1947 proven its inimical intentions towards the country. These incidents are the unfortunate consequences of the last Awami League government's (1996-2001) foreign policy objective of least resistance to India and the party's attitude of servile obedience in its relations with New Delhi. This neatly complemented the domineering and exploitative tendencies of India's political, intelligence and business elites that also allowed them the opportunity to infiltrate all sectors of Bangladesh society to carry out their nefarious activities even if their party of choice was defeated in national elections.

As a consequence it has become an unsatisfactory explanation to accord sole responsibility for this sorry state of affairs on the Indian government alone and it has now become necessary to apportion at least some of the blame with the responsible and educated sections of

civil society in Bangladesh for not being more judicious in their choice of leaders and also for their total lack of loyalty and commitment to the ideals of the liberation war. If Bangladesh is incapable of competing with its large neighbour because the conscious and educated elite of the country prefer to be indolent, opportunistic or simply apathetic with hardly any feeling of patriotism then as a nation we can only expect that India will take advantage of this situation at our expense, as is the norm in international affairs even amongst close and friendly States: "... the power of a nation-state by no means consists only in its armed forces, but also in its economic and technological resources; in the dexterity, foresight and resolution with which its foreign policy is conducted; in the efficiency of its social and political organization. It consists most of all in the nation itself, the people; their skills, energy, ambition, discipline, initiative; their beliefs, myths and illusions. And it consists, further, in the way all these factors are related to one another. Moreover national power has to be considered not only in itself, in its absolute extent, but relative to the state's foreign or imperial obligations; it has to be considered relative to the power of other states."<sup>284</sup> What had not been evident when this essay was originally written as a short article for the internet in 2001 was that if Bangladesh even attempts at an independent foreign policy the Indian government would directly intervene military to bring the Bangladesh government into line.<sup>285</sup> This explains the recent allegations of terrorist bases in Bangladesh which have been repeated in the international media but charges that still remain unproved and the ethnic cleansing taking place in West Bengal and bordering states against Muslims which is a possible ruse for military conflict if political circumstances in Bangladesh are not to India's liking. Even with such hostile actions and words Bangladesh should resist such provocations and also at the same time persist in developing an independent thought process that can be utilized in the best interests of the country.

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# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 2A

### THE 1971 WAR OF LIBERATION AND AFTER

*"The Athenians, it seems to me, may think a man to be clever without paying him much attention. So long as they do not think that he teaches his wisdom to others. But as soon as they think that he makes other people clever, they get angry whether it be from jealousy, ... or from some other reason" (Socrates)*

*" ... I shall prove that I am not a clever speaker in any way at all: unless, indeed, by a clever speaker they mean a man who speaks the truth" (Socrates)*

#### **Henry Kissinger and the Indian Dilemma**

The only senior diplomat and analyst that played an important role in the 1971 War in terms of the geo-strategic implications of the conflict was the former US National Security Adviser and Secretary of State<sup>1</sup>, Henry Kissinger who seems to have realized that India's cooperation to the East Pakistanis was motivated purely by self-interest guided by the dream of claiming all the territory ruled by the former British colonial power.<sup>2</sup> The creation of Bangladesh had brought with it untold difficulties for India as well as a long-term policy dilemma that was recognized by only a few perceptive individuals in Washington amongst whom the former Secretary of State was the most perceptive and in some of his pronouncements almost prophetic. Recently a Pakistani analyst, Gen. Ikram Sehgal, has entered the debate with a sardonic appraisal of the present Indo-Bangladesh relations which is a reflection of the inherent contradictions of Indian policy during the 1971 war, "Sovereign Bangladesh presently has seven well trained infantry divisions, two independent infantry brigades and an armour brigade. Given that nearly 90% of its borders are shared with India (only 10% or less with Burma), one may well ask, against whom do the Bangladeshis need this firepower? Whenever a Bangladeshi gun is fired in anger, the bullet will hit an Indian ... We have now again come a full circle, the State of Bangladesh having many more problems with India than Pakistan ever did when Bangladesh was 'East Pakistan'.<sup>3</sup>

The complications that an independent Bangladesh would create for India was a price that Indira Gandhi was prepared to pay for the disintegration of her country's arch-rival Pakistan but being an astute politician as she was she managed to extract written assurances from the Awami League leadership residing in Kolkata on the deference that would be expected to be paid by a post-war Bangladesh government to the administration in New Delhi. It was only after she had this written document in her hands did she embark on the road to war in the apparent defence of the East Pakistanis. Bangladesh was only able to release itself from many of these obligations and commitments after the events of 15th August 1975 which took the country on a drastically different course than was originally envisaged by Indira Gandhi and which also brought the pre-war concerns identified by Henry Kissinger to the fore. To understand the breadth, scope and complexity of the issues involved it is necessary to quote from Kissinger at some length:

"The inevitable emergence of Bangladesh - which we postulated - presented India with fierce long-term problems. For Bangladesh was in effect East Bengal. Separated only by religion from India's most fractious and most separatist state, West Bengal. They shared language, tradition, culture, and above all, a volatile national character. Whether, it turned nationalistic or radical, Bangladesh would overtime accentuate India's centrifugal tendencies. It might be a precedent for the creation of other Moslem states, carved this time out of India. Once it was independent, its Moslem heritage might eventually lead to a rapprochement with Pakistan. All of this dictated to the unsentimental planners in New Delhi that its birth had to be accompanied by a dramatic demonstration of Indian predominance on the sub-continent ... Mrs. Gandhi was going to war not because she was convinced of our failure but because she feared our success [in negotiations].

Ignoring the issues that had produced the crisis, she gave a little lecture on the history of Pakistan. She denied that she was opposed to its existence, but her analysis did little to sustain her disclaimer. Her father, she averred, had been blamed for accepting partition. And there was an element of truth, she said, in the often heard charge that India had been brought into being by leaders of an indigenous



independence movement while Pakistan had been formed by British collaborators who, as soon as they became 'independent' proceeded to imprison the authentic fighters for independence. Pakistan was a jerry-built structure held together by its hatred for India, which was being stoked by each new generation of Pakistani leaders. Conditions in East Pakistan reflected tendencies applicable to all of Pakistan. Neither Baluchistan nor the Northwest Frontier properly belonged to Pakistan; they too wanted and deserved greater autonomy: they should never have been part of the original settlement.

This history lesson was hardly calculated to calm anxiety about Indian intentions. It was at best irrelevant to the issues and at worst a threat to cohesion of even West Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi stressed the congenital defects of Pakistan so insistently that she implied that confining her demands to the secession of East Pakistan amounted to Indian restraint, the continued existence of West Pakistan reflected Indian forbearance ... what had caused the war, in Nixon's view and mine, went beyond the refugee problem; it was India's determination to use the crisis to establish its preeminence on the subcontinent ... [I] remain convinced to this day that Mrs. Gandhi was not motivated primarily by conditions in East Pakistan; many solutions to its inevitable autonomy existed, several suggested by us...

We had no national interest to prevent self-determination for East Pakistan - indeed, we had put several schemes to bring it about - but we had a stake in the process by which it occurred. We wanted it to be achieved by evolution, not by a traumatic shock to a country in whose survival the United States, China, and the world community (as shown in repeated UN votes) did feel a stake, or by a plain violation of the rules by which the world must conduct itself if it is to survive. India struck in late November; by the timetable that we induced Yahya to accept, martial law would have ended and a civilian government would have taken power at the end of December. This would almost surely have led to the autonomy and independence of East Pakistan - probably without the excesses of brutality, including public bayoneting, in which the Indian - trained guerillas, the Mukti Bahini, engaged when they in turn terrorized Dacca."<sup>4</sup>

This last point was also revisited by Ms. Sarmila Bose whose paper on the 1971 war was released in 2005 (and is the subject of Part 2B of this paper) but was largely ignored by Indian commentators and political columnists. Surprisingly it also received little attention inside Bangladesh as it aggressively challenges many of the myths that have been manufactured about 1971 by certain vested quarters in the fields of literature, the performing arts and academia. In an article for The Telegraph (India) in March 2006 Sarmila Bose again covers the same ground looking into the massacre of non-Bengali residents of Jessore who were butchered in broad daylight allegedly by the Bengali nationalists.<sup>5</sup> Bose relates the following horrific incident that occurred during the war of 1971, "In a front-page lead article on April 2 entitled 'Mass Slaughter of Punjabis in East Bengal,' The Times war correspondent Nicholas Tomalin wrote an eye-witness account of how he and a team from the BBC programme Panorama saw Bengali troops and civilians march 11 Punjabi civilians to the market place in Jessore where they were then massacred. 'Before we were forced to leave by threatening supporters of Shaikh Mujib,' wrote Tomalin, 'we saw another 40 Punjabi "spies" being taken towards the killing ground?'" Such incidents as these have yet to be revealed to the Bangladesh public because of what Bose describes as the, "political need to spin a neat story of Pakistani attackers and Bengali victims made the Bengali perpetrators of the massacre of Punjabi civilians in Jessore conceal their crime and blame the [Pakistan] army." Since much of the press coverage of the war was influenced by Indian propaganda the need to identify and blame Pakistan for all atrocities committed in the war was advantageous to New Delhi and such interpretations have been the staple of the Bangladeshi understanding and impression of the independence war for more than three decades. This manufacturing of information concerning particular events in the war also served India's purpose by distracting and guiding Bengali nationalism towards a common enemy, namely Pakistan. This approach was also adopted for the purpose of controlling and manipulating the sentiments and views of the Indian public as there was a deep-seated fear that the conflict could have unpredictable and dangerous consequences for India's internal security and stability even after the war had long ended as was indicated by Kissinger in his book.

Therefore, in reference to the centrifugal tendencies identified by Henry Kissinger above there also existed several other communal, ideological and ethnic pressures, that were not so prevalent in the 1970's, but are now forcefully exerting themselves upon the psychological fabric and territorial integrity of the Indian Union. These have recently become the subject of anxious and distressed debate within India and there have been dire predictions of the nation's eventual dissolution. Capt. (Retd.) Bharat Verma has argued in the April-June 2007 issue of the Indian Defence Review that, India would require an extraordinary amount of military power to keep the nation state as one single entity. The cause for India's possible disintegration, according to Verma, is said to be, "the fault lines in its surrounding and the instability caused by the serious shortcomings in the quality of domestic governance." In a sensationalist interpretation of Verma's article released by the Press Trust of India (PTI), it is claimed that Naxalism and insurgency affects more than forty percent of India's territory and that there is a psychological fragmentation over language, religion, caste and region that has spread throughout the country due to the use of vote-bank politics. The PTI version asserts that the writ of state governments were being "rolled back towards their respective state capitals by Naxalites" while the entire land border was facing different threats. According to PTI, unless these negative and divisive trends were immediately arrested and firmly reversed India could face the prospect of reverting to its pre-independence status of splintered territories, principalities and fiefdoms ruled by feudals and their private militias who may well seek outside military support to subjugate their kith-turned-adversaries. Capt. Verma is no less blunt and provides inadvertent support to the conclusions drawn by Henry Kissinger several decades earlier concerning the outcome for India of the 1971 war. Verma writes that "if one looks at the map of Asia, it will be observed that it is dotted with Islamic countries that surround India. Many of these have a regressive medieval outlook, which directly contradicts India's multi-religious, multi-cultural, unity-in-diversity progressive philosophy. The danger from this phenomenon can be witnessed in the creeping invasion, demographic changes and the ethnic cleansing of minorities that has occurred in Kashmir, Assam and the Northeast. To deal with this threat, besides excellent governance, we require formidable military muscle." The proposal for increased military

muscle although presented as a defensive measure is unquestionably expansionist and this is admitted to by Capt. Verma in a round about way, "what I am suggesting is likely to appear very imperial but without that kind of a ruthless winning attitude, a multi-religious and multi-cultural society surrounded by religious fundamentalists, cannot survive!" It would seem, therefore, that the war of 1971 has had as much influence on the South Asian region as the partition of 1947 and the outcome of the conflict has not been an unmitigated success for India which probably views the war as unfinished business. Verma provides implicit support for the Akhand Bharat project when he contends that, "Our elders unable to come to grips with the devious manipulation of our colonizers permitted the creation of Pakistan on the basis of religion, thus permitting the contradiction of our secular beliefs."<sup>6</sup> A remark that Jawaharlal Nehru would probably have been proud of.

### **State Department Report Focuses on 1971 India-Pakistan War**

In 2005 the State Department declassified a volume documenting the policy of the Nixon administration towards South Asia from 1969-72. The contents of the documents provide a clearer insight into the thinking of the Nixon administration during the 1971 crisis and how it was framed within the wider concerns of the Cold War. Behind the Nixon administrations support of Pakistan during the war was the anxiety in some circles that 'peace and stability in South Asia could be maintained by aiding Pakistan against a stronger India that was receiving military aid from the Soviet Union.'<sup>7</sup>In addition to this was the role played by Pakistan in US rapprochement with China<sup>8</sup> which eventually led to the communist split and rivalry between Khrushchev and Mao for control of international communist ideology and support. If properly interpreted, India's diplomatic maneuvers with the two superpowers and China was intended to make war more likely with Pakistan and was confirmed by the signing of the twenty-five year Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation which called on the signatories (India and the USSR) to refrain from giving assistance to any third country taking part in an armed conflict with the other, and committed each side to consult immediately with a view toward taking 'appropriate effective measures' in case either party was attacked or threatened with attack. In other words, the treaty removed one of the principal obstacles to a military conflict which according to

Indian military planners had been the possible disapproval to a war by the Soviet Union and the likely consequence that a widening conflict would have on the US and Chinese positions if India attacked Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> There was little doubt in the US that India had every intention of commencing hostilities against its neighbour and that New Delhi was the chief aggressor in this unfolding crisis. Robert Dallek in his book on Nixon and Kissinger describes the panic that overtook the White House as India prepared for offensive military maneuvers, "At the end of May [1971], when the White House received news of Indian troops massing on East Pakistan's border, Nixon and Kissinger were determined to deter New Delhi from toppling Yahya's government. If the Indians moved, Nixon told Henry, "By God we will cut off economic aid." Kissinger replied, "And that is the last thing we can afford now to have the Pakistan government overthrown, given the other things we are doing." Three days later, Nixon complained that "'the goddamn Indians' were promoting another war" Henry agreed, "They are the most aggressive goddamn people around." ... He expected India to attack Pakistan after the summer monsoons."<sup>10</sup>

Volume XI of the Foreign Relations of the United States devoted to the 'South Asia Crisis, 1971' reveals that Nixon had considered this possibility and famously tilted towards Pakistan when a wider war looked like a distinct possibility, "The tilt involved the dispatch of the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal to try to intimidate the Indian government. It also involved encouraging China to make military moves to achieve the same end, and an assurance to China that if China menaced India and the Soviet Union moved against China in support of India, the United States would protect China from the Soviet Union. China chose not to menace India."<sup>11</sup> In this event the only remaining barrier to India's intervening in East Pakistan was the Awami League leadership who were required to sign a 7 point agreement that ensured to India the continued support of Bangladesh who would be obliged to remain within New Delhi's sphere of influence once the conflict was over. When the news finally broke that the Indian military had invaded East Pakistan in December 1971 the reaction in the White House was of undisguised dismay. The disgust felt in the White House was nicely described in Dallek's book, "Henry reported to Nixon that 'Its more and more certain it's India

attacking and not Pakistan.' Nixon responded: 'Everyone knows Pakistan [was] not attacking India ... It's a tragedy, the Indians are so treacherous.'<sup>12</sup> Predictably the Indians have ignored these aspects of the unfolding drama of 1971 and now generally concentrate on the human rights angle of the war, especially in the East Pakistan campaign which again became an issue on the declassification of documents released by the State Department in 2002.<sup>13</sup> This may have appeared beneficial to the East Pakistanis at the time but had pernicious implications after the war since it presented India with a monopoly on how the war should be viewed not only in India but also in Bangladesh and the rest of the world.<sup>14</sup> This inevitably left no room for interpretation of the war from a Bangladeshi perspective and the only views permissible in Bangladesh are those that fit the Indian angle and standpoint on the conflict.<sup>15</sup>

### **Insights into India's Policy of Intellectual Hegemony**

This geopolitical analysis and the statement of facts in both the Kissinger book and State Department documents does not wholly square with the Indian interpretation as seen above in their concentration on the human rights aspect of the war in exclusion of all other issues. In fact, Kissinger seems to completely contradict Indian opinion on all the relevant points but appears more convincing and authentic than his opponents, at least in relation to the 1971 war. Present authorship in India has single mindedly attempted to demolish all the arguments and explanations made in Mr. Kissinger's book but has thoroughly failed in this respect. A case in point is 'Liberation and Beyond' by J.N. Dixit, a career diplomat and prior to his expiry in 2005 the head of Indian intelligence. Whereas Kissinger has attempted a global analysis of the 1971 conflict fitting it into a framework of international politics, Dixit has confined himself into dealing with it as if it were an episode solely happening in India's backyard and therefore a local matter of no interest to the international community or of wider interests in the region.<sup>16</sup> Even if sufficient credence is given to Kissinger's alleged bias or partiality, it does not explain the gulf between the two books in their portrayal of events before and during the 1971 war. Apart from the fact that Mr. Dixit has extensively used quoted paragraphs from Mr. Kissinger's book and completely taken those out of context by not detailing what

preceded the quoted section nor what it was intended to explain is damaging of itself. At least Mr. Kissinger had enough sense to be denigrating of the Pakistani's too, whereas Mr. Dixit clearly shows us his pro-India bias.

The major discrepancies between the two books reside in their interpretation and explanation of specific facts and circumstances that reflect the different preoccupations of the American administration and Indian government during the war. A pertinent example can be found in 'Liberation and Beyond' where the author unsuccessfully tries to defend what many in Bangladesh still consider a slight to their sovereignty and the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters during the liberation struggle. Though military operations had been conducted under a Joint Command Structure with General Osmani as the counterpart of General Jagjit Singh Aurora, General Osmani was not present at the surrender ceremony of Pakistani Forces in Dhaka. Dixit describes this as a 'major political mistake' and that the circumstances of General Osmani's omission created 'widespread suspicion' amongst the Bangladeshis. He describes the Indian 'formal excuse' as leading to an 'unfortunate aberration' in the Bangladeshi belief that India wished to highlight its role in the war at the expense of Bangladesh, which India could have apparently avoided.<sup>17</sup>

This section in Dixit's book is representative of much of Indian writing on the war as it merely states the problem but provides no answer to the question posed. If it was in India's power to ensure General Osmani's attendance then why did they not do so? Why a long-winded and ultimately confusing explanation that leads the reader to conclude that there is more here than meets the eye. (The former Chief of Staff of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army in 1971, General JFR Jacob visited Bangladesh in March 2008 to commemorate the events of the war and he voluntarily raised the issue of the surrender ceremony. He dismissed the notion that General MAG Osmani was debarred from attending the surrender ceremony claiming that "It was just a propaganda ... On the day, Osmani was in Sylhet and his helicopter was gun-attacked. That's why, he could not come to Dhaka to witness the historic event."<sup>18</sup> The question may then be posed as to why the ceremony was not postponed or cancelled and why Dixit did not allude to this incident in his book. It may also reasonably be pointed out as to why General Osmani would only be a

mere witness at the ceremony and not a full participant and who could possibly be firing at his helicopter when the Pakistani forces were already defeated? Why did not the Indians protest this breach of General Osmani's security at the ceremony to the Pakistan military representatives?) These prevarications and equivocations on the details of the 1971 war give the impression that India considers Bangladesh as a mere vassal state and that it was merely recovering a piece of its territory from the Pakistanis. Dixit says on several occasions that, "India would not liberate Pakistan-occupied Kashmir." This is an interesting choice of words and reveals a more honest and truthful expression of Indian attitudes to its Muslim neighbour that could also have implications for Bangladesh.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the chapter, the author provides a number of press releases emanating from the 1971 war that discloses atrocities committed by West Pakistan forces in East Pakistan. Ninety per cent of the newspaper cuttings are of Indian origin. This could mean that the propaganda effort on behalf of the Bangladeshi Government was carried out by India or that the author's research was very limited or he wishes to emphasize the support that India provided to Bangladesh. It could be assumed that it would be in India's interest to make Pakistan look exceedingly ugly regardless of what happened in the Eastern theatre of operations. It is not being denying here that the Pakistani military committed heinous acts of aggression and brutality upon the East Pakistanis but recent research also shows that the Mukti Bahini and Mujib Bahini's were also susceptible to such acts of violence and cruelty.<sup>20</sup>

The manner in which the author has constructed his chapters on the war puts India in good stead but there is a disturbing inconsistency in the chronology of events from that found in 'The White House Years.' This author would tend to find Mr. Kissinger's account more credible and believable, as it appears more logical in its lay out and description. In 'Liberation and Beyond' there is also a tendency to overplay the role of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the military sequence of events. Bhutto only appeared when the Pakistan military debacle became evident and he exploited this to eventually oust Yahya. Bhutto was certainly responsible for the break up of Pakistan and much disliked amongst many of his own people but according to a number of books he was unawares of the military option that was



being adopted by Yahya Khan. Kissinger virtually ignores Bhutto for most part and concentrates on the deeds of Yahya Khan.<sup>21</sup>

There is one section of the book where Mr. Kissinger praises the brilliance and sophistication of Bhutto but this was balanced by an immoderate, vindictive and emotionally unstable side that was probably hidden from the then US National Security Adviser but has been revealed in a book by Stanley Wolpert: "Zulfi suspected and feared collusion between Yahya and Mujib, and between Yahya and the fundamentalist Islamic parties of the West ... Zulfi felt neglected by Yahya, offended by that little general to whom he had extended much hospitality in Larkana and had been especially moderate, thanks to Peerzada's adroit diplomacy, never attacking him as mercilessly as he had attacked Ayub Khan. Soon Yahya's turn would come, however, for he had the temerity to speak of Mujib as "prime minister."<sup>22</sup> The central themes and arguments which appear to contradict in totality the narratives of Henry Kissinger and Stanley Wolpert may be summarized from 'Liberation and Beyond' as follows: According to J.N. Dixit it was Pakistan that conspired to create a situation against East Pakistan so as to find an excuse to make an assault upon India and its national integrity. In other words, it was Pakistan that desired a break up of India. India did not want a neighbouring country to be fragmented and destroyed but due to the humanitarian concern for East Pakistan, it could not stand by under such naked aggression of the Pakistanis against the East Pakistan populace. India tried its utmost to seek a diplomatic and negotiated settlement to the dispute but due to Pakistani intransigence, this was not possible. The United States was uncooperative by not pressuring Pakistan to adopt a more conciliatory stance and continued to supply military hardware to Pakistan even after an arms embargo was proclaimed. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was considered an important factor in the dispute implying that Pakistan wished to carry out his dream of eliminating India. India did not want a reversal of partition nor a reunification of those parts but was deeply convinced that religion alone did not make a nation. A non-hostile Bangladesh would be far more preferable than a hostile East Pakistan and a positive response to the Bangladesh movement would reduce chances of other states in India seeking autonomy. That the might of the Pakistan army in East Pakistan was so strong that the liberation struggle would eventually peter out without active support from India.<sup>23</sup>

There was much more that could have been included in this summary but the above will suffice to illustrate my point. The whole of the above paragraph is in complete conflict with Kissinger's perspective on the historical and political implications of the 1971 war and also certain parts of Wolpert's biography on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It might also be added that much of it does not accord with common sense or reality but these are not the considerations of an Indian elite bent on overturning the 1947 arrangement that saw India's partition and which substantially guides its foreign policy goals in South Asia. In a recent contribution to this debate, President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan (who was a Pakistan army commando in 1971) in his book, 'In the Line of Fire'<sup>24</sup> skirts around the issue of Bhutto's influence on the Pakistani army and their decision to crackdown in East Pakistan in March 1971 stating simply that, "It was a nexus between Bhutto and a small coterie of military rulers that destroyed Pakistan. The myopic and rigid attitude of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman didn't help matters and he played into Bhutto's and Yahya's hands by remaining rooted in East Pakistan, forgetting that now he was prime minister-elect of the whole of Pakistan and needed to tour the four provinces of the western wing in order to reassure the people there and allay their fears."<sup>25</sup> President Musharraf predictably (and also justifiably) tries to reverse the impression that it was Pakistan seeking the destruction of India in 1971 which had been propagated by Dixit and others writing that, "Under pressure from the wily Bhutto, and no doubt because he didn't want to lose power, Yahya Khan postponed the meeting of the Constituent Assembly indefinitely on March 25, 1971. He did not stop there. The very next day he outlawed the Awami League and arrested its leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the clear winner of the election. This act infuriated the Bengali masses of East Pakistan, who were already agitating and had a sense of deprivation and alienation. Tempers rose so high with the arrest of the undisputed Bengali leader that an open insurgency was launched by the populace. This was massively supported by the Indians from across the border. With the army completely bogged down in quelling the insurgency, India stabbed Pakistan in the back by blatantly attacking it across its border on several fronts in East Pakistan on November 21, 1971. All-out war between India and Pakistan commenced on December 3, 1971."<sup>26</sup> This narration of events preceding and during the war will certainly not settle the dispute

about whether it was Pakistan or India that sought war in 1971 but it does put forward the Pakistani point of view as Dixit had similarly done for India and Kissinger for the United States but an independent and original analysis is still to emerge from Bangladesh.

The purpose of the above exercise has been to show how false history can be induced into the national psyche of a people (i.e. brainwashing on a massive scale) which has effectively been the Indian propaganda method in Bangladesh since its independence from Pakistan. This is not to suggest that Mr. Kissinger's or President Musharraf's account is not tainted with national loyalties or personal considerations of their own but until a history is written by Bangladeshis the country will continue to be mystified about the recent past. The argument presented in this essay goes further than this and to be fully and clearly understood requires a survey of more recent events in Bangladesh which will hopefully show that history written by Indians about 1971 and propagated in Bangladesh has an objective and purpose directly related to the scheme of an Akhand Bharat which the entire discussion above only provides an elliptical sense of a much larger whole.

### **Reminders of 1971 Polarities and Post 9/11 Realities**

It has been the argument in this Part and will also be the object of discussion in other sections of this essay that since 1971 India has constantly pummeled Bangladesh with propaganda so that as a disunited nation we are constantly at our own necks and are thereby rendered incapable of developing an independent national identity that may eventually influence us in directions undesirable to India. The most recent of these attempts to instill confusion has been the stories concerning the growth of indigenous Islamic terrorism in Bangladesh aided in part by ISI agents roaming around Bangladesh creating havoc with the assistance of Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists.<sup>27</sup> This approach has conveniently melded the Indian perspective of 1971 (as discussed above) as a war against the realities of partition and the Two Nation theory that bestowed sovereign rights to Pakistan (and then Bangladesh after its independence) and the events in America on September 11, 2001. By creating fear within Bangladesh and outside, of the specter of Islamic terrorism within the country, it is hoped that the public may turn away from Islam and the

actualities of 1947 and adopt the secular mantra propagated by the Awami League and its foreign backers to more easily accommodate Indian requirements in the region and also to undermine the nations armed forces to render Bangladesh a defenseless entity through a distorted view of recent historical events. That this is the real purpose and aspiration behind Awami League politics was readily admitted to by Sheikh Hasina in her April 3, 2006 interview with Time Magazine,

**"How much of this conflict stems from unhealed wounds dating back to Bangladesh's war of independence, when the country was split between nationalists and pro-Pakistan Muslims?"**

**Hasina:** It goes back to 1971, or even 1947 [when the territory now known as Bangladesh became East Pakistan during India's bloody Partition]. It's an ideological split. We believe in secular politics. We're very liberal. We struggle for the common people. Their only aim is to make money, remain in power and exploit people, that's all. They never think about people. The question is: should this country be ruled by a military dictatorship, or by them, or by the people?"<sup>28</sup>

It would be reasonable to inquire how much of Sheikh Hasina's speeches and interviews were influenced by RAW money since it was widely known that the Indian intelligence agency had regularly allotted large sums to the Awami League for electioneering purposes and with such largesse conditions for its utilization included following India's ideological line was an obvious expectation.<sup>29</sup> In fact, the relationship had been very much reciprocal as revealed in another interview, this time with Outlook magazine that was given after the proclamation of emergency in 2007 when the military backed Interim Government initially prevented her return to Bangladesh from the United States and then Britain in May of that year. She stated in the interview that India should support her cause but she failed to mention either the Awami League or Bangladesh in the same plea which revealed quite a lot about her mindset and complete dependence on India for financial and moral support and also her total and utter disregard for the national interest which she presumably thought was interlinked with her own destiny - a mistake her father had unfortunately also made.<sup>30</sup> The intelligence dimensions of this relationship were conclusively proven after several senior AL leaders

were apprehended by the joint forces in the anti-corruption drive initiated by the Interim Government in 2007. In the confessional statements procured from AL politicians under interrogation at least two admitted to a RAW link that involved Sheikh Hasina as a prime mover. The confessions were published in several Bengali national dailies with the weekly Holiday providing a short English analysis by Samsuddin Ahmed who stated that, "The reported close link between AL and RAW is ominous. Obaidul Kader frankly admitted to the Taskforce Intelligence this week that Hasina used to maintain close link with Sinha, RAW station chief in Dhaka, during the BNP-Jamaat coalition government. He said Miraj, who has replaced Sinha, has also been keeping close liaison and occasionally meeting with the key AL leaders including Abdul Jalil." Samsuddin then elaborates the security and economic risks that this understanding between RAW and AL's top politicians had for the country, "Corroborating Obaidul [Kader's] statement about the close connection between AL and RAW. Sheikh Selim admitted that Awami League was involved in the arson attack to a BRTC double-decker near Hotel Sheraton in 2004, which saw 11 passengers burnt to death, and also triggering unrest in the garment sector in May last year [2006]."<sup>31</sup> Sheikh Hasina's interview with Time Magazine, therefore, clearly and irrefutably falls in line with the Indian objectives for Bangladesh that was alluded to in official circles in India and quietly released to the Indian press in April of 2006, "The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh," close defence exchanges and nuclear and missile cooperation between China and Pakistan, and left-wing radicalism are major security concerns for India. On Bangladesh, the annual report of the ministry of defence for 2005-06 states that "the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as well as the increasing incidents of terrorism and political violence, with their attendant repercussions on the security of India, are being monitored". India's concerns have been articulated at the highest political level with Bangladesh and the latter's stable, prosperous, democratic and secular polity is important for both countries, the report said."<sup>32</sup> The significance of this statement is revealed in Part 6 of this essay that deals with the events after the proclamation of emergency in 2007 and India's plan to implement its version of a democratic and secular Bangladesh on the people of Bangladesh.

The propaganda campaign concerning the alleged presence of international Islamist terrorists in Bangladesh has now conclusively been shown to be a complete charade engineered by the Indian media and backed by India's political and intellectual elite, "Contrary to Indian claim and the orchestrated blames heaped on Bangladesh, a researcher of the United States Institute of Peace dismissed that Bangladesh citizens were in any way involved in international terrorism. Dr Christine Fair, a US professor, said she had been told by the Indians that Bangladeshi citizens were involved in terrorism she did not find enough evidence to support the hypothesis. 'The entire blame-game was built around the premise of one Bangladeshi among the Guantanamo detainees and the deduction was sought to be made that there were many other Bangladeshis actively engaged in the terrorist training activities in Afghanistan,' said Fair when speaking at a seminar on 'Demand and Supply Side of International Terrorism' at the National Press Club."<sup>33</sup> It was only later in 2006 when Dr. Christine Fair teamed up with Indian writer Sumit Ganguly who had written several propaganda articles on Bangladesh<sup>34</sup> did her perspective substantially change on the existence of international Islamist terrorist groups in the country.<sup>35</sup> This collaboration between Fair and Ganguly started at the same time that India and the US were trying to foster closer security relations as a counter to growing Chinese influence in the region so Fair's viewpoint was clearly influenced by these important strategic considerations that ultimately compromised her impartiality and intellectual integrity which seems a defining characteristic of academics associated with the United States Institute of Peace.

With the arrest and execution of Sheikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai<sup>36</sup> as well as the dismantling of the (Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh) JMB command structure<sup>37</sup> more light will be shed over the coming years on the assistance provided to these groups by Indian intelligence especially in the form of supply of arms and explosives much of which had been recovered in raids on JMB hideouts and which bear Indian ordinance markings as well as in the provision of logistics and safe havens across the border.<sup>38</sup> There had also been several previous arrests immediately after the Mymensingh theater bombings in 2002 where low ranking army personnel were apprehended carrying detailed documents on military matters intended to be passed on to Indian intelligence across the border.<sup>39</sup>

One can only speculate how these documents may have been used and whether this incident had any relation to the activities of the JMB. Predictably many of the pro-Indian newspapers in Bangladesh had concentrated on the limited disclosures from Sheikh Abdur Rahman's interrogation that suited their assumptions and prejudices and completely ignored those confessional statements that were in contradiction to their editorial positions on Islamic terrorism in Bangladesh. In fact, the JMB disguise and camouflage of being Islamist crusaders against the communist terrorist groups located in the North-West region of the country convinced many in the government that the organization had a bona fide intent to rid the nation of this extreme leftist scourge but the protection initially afforded the group was to harm the BNP alliance irreparably<sup>40</sup> especially after Bangla Bhai and Sheikh Abdur Rahman started on their rampage of bomb attacks against civilian targets proclaiming a wider Islamist agenda. It is, therefore, revealing in this context that Sheikh Abdur Rahman had disclosed to his interrogators after his dramatic televised capture to having sympathies for Akhand Bharat and apparently little interest in the insurgents of Kashmir<sup>41</sup> which would seem to indicate Indian loyalties rather than pan-Islamic ones.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, sympathizers of the JMB such as Rajshahi University (RU) professor Asadullah Al Galib, a suspected militant kingpin and chief of Ahle Hadith Andolan (a principal source of JMB recruitment), had made secret tours to India in 1998 that was later challenged by RU registrar Muhammad Yunus as infringements of university rules. He was later murdered in 2004 by the JMB cadres on the orders of Sheikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai who both claimed responsibility for the killing.<sup>43</sup>

A sister organization of the JMB, the Harkatul Jihad al Islami - Bangladesh (HuJi-B) proved to be more difficult to locate but eventually their top leadership were apprehended and tried. Their most spectacular terrorist acts included the explosions at the Udichi cultural programme in Jessore and Ramna Batamul in Dhaka, the grenade attack on the Hazrat Shahjalal's shrine in Sylhet in which three persons were killed and seventy others injured including the British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury in 2004.<sup>44</sup> They were also involved in the attack on Shah AMS Kibria (A former finance minister) and Sylhet Mayor Badruddin Ahmed Kamran.<sup>45</sup> In some of

the confessional statements of the leaders of HuJi under interrogations it was revealed that a few had fought in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union and had links with several international Islamist terrorist organizations such as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Harkat-ul-Ansar of Pakistan and India.<sup>46</sup> How far the Huji-B organization was closely aligned with the JMB having logistical and material assistance from India is still unclear. The possibility remains that Huji-B is merely another manifestation of the global phenomenon arising out of the CIA's involvement in the Afghan War of the 1980's but its activities may nevertheless be sponsored by Indian intelligence in the same manner the CIA had used Islamic fighters two decades earlier to defeat America's arch rival the USSR. Until all the interrogation documents become available for public inspection it will be impossible to determine the antecedents of Huji-B but its significance for Bangladesh was incidental and short-lived but nevertheless spectacular. The probability is that HuJi would have been a less serious threat to Bangladesh security without its close ties to the Indian backed JMB as no major incident was perpetrated by the group after the capture of Sheikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai and its own leader and organizer Mufti Hannan.<sup>47</sup> (The importance of HuJi, however, dramatically changed in 2008 with the recovery of almost 130 Arges hand grenades and dozens of 36-MHE type grenades. - see below) This also raises doubts about its supposed links with international Islamist terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Harkat-ul-Ansar<sup>48</sup> as its ranks seem not to have been replenished and its activities remain severely curtailed. The JMB, and until recently Huji-B, did not even appear on the US State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) which severely undermined their credentials as international Islamist terrorist groups<sup>49</sup> as imputed by Indian intelligence and media. Harkatul Jihad al Islami - Bangladesh (HuJi-B) only made its appearance on the FTO list on March 6, 2008,<sup>50</sup> several years after its top leadership were captured and put in confinement. This was also in spite of the fact that HuJi of Pakistan has still not been designated an FTO, although, according to Indian intelligence it is directly linked with HuJi(B) at an operational level.<sup>51</sup>

Soon after the execution of Sheikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai in March 2007 there were already troubling signs that a new



phase in terrorist activity was to commence with fresh reports that remnants of the JMB were collecting funds for operations from local sources and also internationally from the Middle East but this was likely to be an exaggeration as later interrogation of suspects revealed extortion to be the chief financial source for operations.<sup>52</sup> The coordinated explosions at the Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet railway terminals on May 1 were insignificant in scale and caused little or no structural damage and were somewhat of an anti-climax compared to the outrages that were predicted by the press and media.<sup>53</sup> An apparently new Islamist group under the name of Zadid al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks and in a message left at the scene urged the Ahmadiyya sect to renounce their heretical beliefs or suffer dire consequences. They also specified NGO's as possible future targets for promoting allegedly anti-Islamic tendencies in society. The anti-Ahmadiyya and anti-NGO posturing had become a trade mark of groups sponsored by Indian intelligence as a convenient method to undermine the Bangladesh government for its apparent inability to protect its minority communities. Police officials also cast doubt on the al-Qaeda link stating that they had no information on cooperation between the groups.<sup>54</sup> In all likelihood Zadid al-Qaeda was merely a new front of the JMB but now under new leadership.<sup>55</sup> Indian intelligence analyst B. Raman showed scant interest in the Zadid al-Qaeda but instead focused on the activity of HuJi of which he conspiratorially comments, "The HUJI is viewed by the Bangladesh Army and military intelligence as a strategic weapon of potential use against India and, hence, has been spared of any action against it. There are no indications so far that the explosions of May 1, 2007, might have been carried out by it."<sup>56</sup> In another article Raman communalizes the HuJi (B) phenomenon stating, "The HUJI of Pakistan is a member of bin Laden's International Islamic Front (IIF) for Jihad Against the Crusaders and the Jewish People formed in 1998 and through its branch in Bangladesh, it has been trying to arabise and wahabise the Muslims of Bangladesh, who are in their overwhelming majority descendents of converts from Hinduism, and use them for carrying out its pan-Islamic agenda in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and southern Thailand."<sup>57</sup> Indian intelligence, therefore, preferred to ignore the fact that several top leaders of HuJi had been apprehended and were then facing trial in Bangladesh. RAW seemed to view this new phase of terrorist activity as a propaganda opportunity keeping

the Interim Government under pressure and subservient to India's needs and interests. It was significant that reports of the resurgence and regrouping of Islamist terrorist groups initially appeared almost exclusively in pro-Indian dailies of Bangladesh.<sup>58</sup> In one such report a JMB leader informs a correspondent over a cell phone that a new group had entered the northern region of Bangladesh from a neighbouring country presumably to plan and carry out terrorist operations in the area.<sup>59</sup> Most importantly the newly reorganized JMB outfit had chosen for its new leader one Abdul Makit Salafi of Bashirhat of the district of 24 Parganas in the Indian state of West Bengal.<sup>60</sup> The state of West Bengal had also been the base for Indian intelligence during the 1971 war when RAW assisted in the training of the Mukti Bahini and Mujib Bahini. It also became the headquarters of Dr. Kalidas Baidya who as a RAW operative pushed for the establishment of a United Bengal as a precursor to an Akhand Bharat. It remains to be seen whether Abdul Makit Salafi like his predecessor also believes in the creation of a reunified India.

The answer to that question may never be answered as the JMB significantly declined in importance and the Zadid al-Qaeda completely disappeared from focus with the advent of the new year.<sup>61</sup> By February 2008, it was HuJi-B that was surprisingly in ascendancy, grabbing the headlines after the recovery of almost 130 Arges brand hand grenades and several 36-MHE type grenades from captured members of the terrorist organization.<sup>62</sup> That B. Raman could visualize the significance and effectiveness of HuJi-B as a terrorist force, a whole year in advance and even with the capture of their top leadership, indicates excellent intelligence or a major set-up. Naturally, the investigations into the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an AL political rally began concentrating its attention on the involvement of HuJi-B as principal culprits as the grenades used in that terrorist incident were of the Arges variety and also its top leader Mufti Hannan had made confessional statements concerning his groups participation in the atrocity that left more than a dozen dead. Investigators also considered the possibility of linkages with the North-East Indian insurgent groups such as ULFA as suppliers of the grenades to HuJi-B. Unfortunately, other possible avenues of investigation were quickly excluded or were never opened including the involvement of Indian intelligence and their front organizations

which would include insurgent groups that were being sponsored by them to counter ULFA and who would naturally be supplied with military ordinance. The highlighting of HuJi-B in 2008 provided a convenient link between Islamist terrorist groups in Bangladesh and the Indian North-East insurgents. The territory of Bangladesh was according to these reports being used as a conduit for weapons and explosives supplies to Islamist groups operating in India.<sup>63</sup> What appears unusual or defective about these stories is the fact that Arges grenades had been originally used by Islamist militants in Kashmir who are alleged by Indian intelligence to be sponsored by the Pakistan ISI and military who manufactures these types of grenades.<sup>64</sup> Why in that case would Arges grenades made by Pakistan have to travel from Kashmir to the Indian North-East through Bangladesh and then back into India to supply Islamist militants operating in that country when more obvious and direct routes were available? Further contradictions began to appear in the official storyline on HuJi (B)'s involvement in the August 21 attacks after the arrest of another of its activists, Mufti Moinuddin alias Abu Zandal, who in his statements to the interrogators flatly contradicted the confession of Mufti Hannan about the source and manner of procurement of the Arges grenades and about alleged meetings with powerful BNP leaders.<sup>65</sup>

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# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 2B

### THE 1971 WAR OF LIBERATION AND AFTER

*"Agents, in the guise of envoys pretending to be motivated by friendliness, shall tell the chief principals of the enemy of the high regard the conqueror has for them, of the strength of his side and of the deterioration in the enemy's side. The principals, both civilians and soldiers shall be promised that they will not lose [i.e. have the same rewards and honours when the conqueror absorbs the territory]. The principals shall be looked after if they encounter calamities and be treated as a father would treat his children." (The Arthashastra - Kautilya)*

*"An archer letting of an arrow may or may not kill a single man, but a wise man using his intellect can kill even reaching unto the very womb" (The Arthashastra - Kautilya)*

#### **The Propaganda Offensive**

Ever since the independence of Bangladesh the Indian government and its intelligence agency RAW has taken on a propaganda offensive by flooding the country's markets with books that support Indian contentions of what happened during the liberation war but the literature is so inherently flawed that any intelligent reader could see them for what they really are. Apart from 'Liberation and Beyond', books published in India and Bangladesh have included Maj. Gen. Lachman Singh - Indian Sword Strikes in East Pakistan, Lt. Gen J.K.R. Jacob., - 'Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation' (Dhaka 1997), Jyoti Sen Gupta - History of Freedom Movement in Bangladesh, 1943-1973, Maj. Gen. Sukhwant Singh - The Liberation of Bangladesh, Brig. H.S. Sodhi - Operation Windfall: Emergence of Bangladesh, Capt. S.K. Garg - Spotlight: Freedom Fighter's of Bangladesh, Chandrika J. Gulati - Bangladesh Liberation to Fundamentalism, S.A. Karim - Sheikh Mujib Triumph and Tragedy (2005) and most recently Major General ATM Abdul Wahab's 'Mukti Bahini Wins Victory'(December 2005) all of which have contributed

a partial and consistently India centric view of the war.<sup>1</sup> The most self-serving and politically motivated of the recent books on the 1971 war has to be Enayetur and Joyce Rahim's 'Bangladesh Liberation War and the Nixon White House 1971' (February 2000) which is again another example of this trend of tendentious, fragmentary and partial historical writing that does not even pretend to objectivity. Although now somewhat dated the book offers an excellent example of a style of writing and presentation on the 1971 war that is still copied by many columnists today who expound views favourable to India.

It was quite predictable - at the time of writing of the first edition of this book - that a whole new series of books and political literature would soon appear prior to the holding of the 2007 parliamentary elections (which were scheduled for January 22 but were eventually cancelled due to widespread political disturbances orchestrated by the Awami League) to undermine parties and public sentiment that may have a capacity to limit Indian influence over Bangladesh affairs (see Preface to the second edition). There are also numerous other books written by Bangladeshis in Bangladesh that support the Indian line but the authors can be convincingly be described as mere intellectual brokers for India who have been paid large amounts of money to write such contrived and hackneyed histories (see below). Organizations such as the Muktijudder Chetona Bastobaion O Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Jatio Somannay Committee have also participated and contributed to this spreading of falsified history. To substantiate this point and extend the analogy to journalism and contemporary reportage one may usefully refer to an embarrassing revelation in August 2005 where the New Age daily reported that Indian journalists had been paid 'handsome money' to write articles against Bangladesh and two other neighbouring countries. The report continues,

"Arun Rajnath, New Delhi correspondent of the Washington-based online newspaper South Asian Tribune, said he was offered Rs 10,000 per month to write a story against Bangladesh, Pakistan or Nepal. Rajnath's revelation was published in a special report of the newspaper headlined 'Indian Officials Harassing South Asia Tribune New Delhi Correspondent' on July 27. The report, which had detailed

description of the Indian intelligence agencies' clout on Indian journalists, captures glimpses of the harassment towards journalists who refuse to comply with official directives. After refusing to be on the payroll of an intelligence agency, Rajnath, who writes on the Indian army and Kashmir, was refused accreditation by the external affairs ministry, and he became the target of frequent intimidating phone calls from the intelligence men. The correspondent claimed that many top Indian journalists covering news relating external affairs, home, and defence were on the payroll of the security agencies or the ministries concerned, and regularly receive 'handsome compensation packages'. Commenting on the report, a Bangladeshi intelligence expert said they have reports that not only Indian journalists, but also a number of Bangladeshi writers are on the payroll of Indian sources. Mentioning a lack of resources and motivation on the part of Bangladesh's intelligence agencies, he said, 'Very little can be done in the existing situation.'"<sup>2</sup>

The moral degeneracy of the press and media in Bangladesh was dramatically revealed when after the proclamation of emergency on January 11, 2007, the Anti-Corruption Commission disclosed that it had prepared a list of 72 journalists who were allegedly involved in rent-seeking from different companies, smuggling out money abroad through hundi and whose income and expenditure bore no similarity suggesting corruption had been their primary means of livelihood. In at least two cases reporters had purchased luxurious flats in Kolkata in fictitious names.<sup>3</sup> It may be fairly assumed from the revelations of Arun Rajnath that at least some of the ill-gotten wealth was acquired by journalists and media persons through writing stories that were largely invented or sham to create a negative image of Bangladesh abroad or portray a falsified history of the liberation war to serve certain internal and foreign interests. As already mentioned above Enayetur and Joyce Rahim's 'Bangladesh Liberation War and the Nixon White House 1971' is a good example of how blatant some of these articles and commentaries could actually be. The writers claim that the primary objective of their work is to provide verbatim documentation to the Nixon administrations policy, and involvement in the conflict. This could not be further from the truth and their praise for India ad infinitum is quite nauseating. The first part of their book claims to derive its materials from newspaper articles. At a

closer inspection, the entire first part is made up of articles from one newspaper "The Independent" and from write-ups from 26th February 1999 to 28th May 1999 which is stretching the claim to contemporaneity with the events of 1971 a little too far. To make matters worse all the articles in the first part have been written by the authors themselves in "The Independent" newspaper of Dhaka, so while proclaiming their objectivity they are publishing writings by themselves that are so slanted and biased to make the most prejudiced commentator wince but they have somehow received favourable reviews from sympathetic editors and columnists. The timing of these write-ups<sup>4</sup> and circumstances of their authorship would make anyone harbour doubts about the sincerity and objectivity of the writers. From reading the Preface to the book one is thrown back by how twisted and unbalanced the whole project is. They do not attempt to hide their prejudice or from what slanted perspective they are writing but seem to glorify in the fact that they are engaged in propaganda. One can, therefore, only conclude that this was supported with the tacit if not explicit support of the Awami League and the Indian Government. One should not be surprised that "The Independent" had also serialized the J.N. Dixit book. The same or similar conclusions could be drawn about S.A. Karim's book, 'Sheikh Mujib Triumph and Tragedy' (2005) which will be discussed separately in Part 3 of this essay.

It is becoming increasingly obvious to many Bangladeshis that the so-called educated elite in the country have with deliberate intent decided not to see through this propaganda game and have continued to propound a version of Bangladesh history that is partial, fabricated and purposely defensive of India's grand design and strategy for the region. This is demonstrated by the lack of enthusiasm for the subject of history and its limited reading by a literate few that is continuing its long and steady decline and being superseded by the writers of pulp fiction and light romantic dramas of no intellectual significance. Because of this mindset Bangladesh has so far been only able to produce personalized histories of the Liberation War that generally swallows the Indian version of events and avoids any introspective doubts or questioning of the writer's own basic assumptions and which generally conveys a shallow jaundiced perspective of the war.<sup>5</sup>

It is about time that historians and commentators of the 1971 war moved on to a more mature and well-researched analysis of the nation's recent history - a history written by Bangladeshis, for Bangladeshis, and without political interference or foreign motivation influencing the tenor of the work. In some respects, this is a project for a nationalist ideal that had been discarded soon after the liberation war to cater to Indian plans for domination over Bangladesh and any attempt at introducing a different perspective has so far led only to accusations of treachery and revisionism that is anathema to certain power elites in India and Bangladesh as was similarly the case in communist countries such as the Soviet Union under Stalin and in China under Chairman Mao.

The first accusation of treachery is certainly not true and the last (revisionism) may be accurate but only in that much of the history written on the 1971 war had already been distorted through a bias in perspective without any attempt at scholarly detachment or objectivity which was probably impossible so soon after the war and now requires a thorough rewrite for just that reason. In this regard, a noted historian and expert on the Mughal era reminds his readers that, "As time reworks us, we rework history. 'All works of history are interim reports,' says American historian John Noble Wilford. 'What people did in the past is not preserved in amber ... immutable through the ages. Each generation looks back and, drawing from its own experience, presumes to find patterns that illuminate both past and present.' No particular representation of the past has therefore any absolute validity..."<sup>6</sup> This would be in line with the current trends in historical writing and thinking that was originally expressed by R.G. Collingwood in 'The Idea of History' which should be the guiding influence for undergraduate study in Bangladesh and the challenge for this new generation of writers would be to cast away the inhibitions that have prevented imaginative reflections on the 1971 war and open the floodgates of intellectual inquiry in all areas of serious study in the nation's universities and academies.

### **Another War of Independence? - A personal note**

It is due to the policy of reunification or Akhand Bharat that was originally given expression to by Jawaharlal Nehru that after the Liberation War in 1971, with the tacit complicity of some in the

Awami League leadership, the nation was only able to change its masters and to a certain degree the quality of enslavement but not the situation or position of enslavement. This status still prevails for Bangladesh and its people today. Certainly the East Pakistanis were exploited and racially discriminated against by the West Pakistani military junta but that is still something Bangladeshis have to live with in the present - now that the nation is under new overseers, namely, the Indian government and international financial and media institutions that assist it.

Bangladeshis may no longer be physically in fetters but the nation's intellectual processes are still entangled and weighed down by a ball and chain. Outside forces encourage the Bengali penchant for dispute and argumentation that has often led to factionalism and disharmony which is merely the latter day policy of 'divide and rule' and its most recent manifestation has been the street battles in the run up to the scheduled January 2007 General Elections. Bangladeshis are constantly reminded of their weaknesses and deficiencies in face of a giant like neighbor and so discouraged from any form of independent thinking that is patently reflected by the state and standard of our educational institutions where very little if any original research is now conducted. In some respects reviewing the events of the 1971 war has become a prohibited area of investigation and study and so no new information has become available on the subject unless it is of Indian origin and even then many of these books are unavailable in Bangladesh due to their highly sensitive nature of their contents that would necessarily undermine our own view of the war.

Some may be astonished at this form of psychological warfare conducted by adherents of an apparently docile religion called Hinduism but unfortunately, they are assisted by persons bearing Muslim names and possessing Bangladeshi identity, who have often been described as Fifth Columnists by nationalist commentators within Bangladesh such as Col. Sayyed Farook Rahman who originally coined the term against the sycophants surrounding Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his books 'Alaron' and the 'Road to Freedom'. Notable examples of these Fifth Columnist elements today include the leadership of the Awami League, Shariar Kabir,<sup>7</sup> Taslima Nasreen,<sup>8</sup> Muntasir Mamun, Zafar Sobhan and the most significant of them all



(at least from a historical perspective) Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury who now resides and writes out of London but still conveys the aura of being closely in touch with events and public sentiments inside Bangladesh but manages to warp these to suit his own ideas and perceptions - which appears to be a similar trait of the other writers as well. He was present at the meeting addressed by Sheikh Hasina in London in October 2006 where she declared her opposition to the installation of the Caretaker Government under the proposed Chief Adviser Justice KM Hasan<sup>9</sup> which led to a prolonged constitutional crisis and resulted in serious damage to the national economy due to a series of blockades and hartals called by her party.

All these writers, journalists and academics have promoted the concept of an Akhand Bharat whether explicitly or implicitly. The last mentioned, Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury, has gone so far as to admonish the followers of the USA branch of the Hindu-Buddha-Christian United Council (Oikya Parishad) to take up arms to establish their rights in Bangladesh as the USA and India will not help them to do so. Praising the activities of the council he said, leaders of the Parishad have to go back to Bangladesh and start fighting against the present Taliban government i.e. the BNP-Jamaat-i-Islami Alliance government of 2001-2006. Gaffar Chowdhury threatened, 'Is there anybody in Bangladesh to resist if India provides logistic support to declare an independent Hindu region taking three districts of Bangladesh. Bangladesh will not exist without Hindus.' He further added, "...the promoters of Pakistani purposes are now being treated as patriotic in Bangladesh."<sup>10</sup> Bearing this provocative statement in mind and the image that it wishes to convey of a treacherous clique holding governmental power in Bangladesh and the exhortation to armed conflict it should be of no surprise that Gaffar Chowdhury reiterated his threat in 2007 but this time against the Bangladesh armed forces who were backing the interim administration of Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed. His call this time was intended to incite his readers to, "wage guerilla operation against the army" - this only days after the Dhaka University campus had erupted in violence with some in the print media alleging an Indian hand in promoting the destructive rampage of a section of the students." With this direct challenge to the army the attempts by Indian intelligence over the years to undermine the cohesiveness and unity of the Bangladesh

armed forces takes on a more ominous and worrying perspective. In this regard, one may recall that after the bomb blasts in Mymensingh district in 2003 several national newspapers reported that a junior commissioned officer of the army, a former lance corporal and a civilian had been arrested on a charge of spying for an Indian intelligence agency. One of the accused was charged with having supplied maps, designs, employment files of important army officials, directories of various formation training manuals, load table, move plan, permanent addresses of officers of different units, organizational structure of different units, list of arms and manpower, abbreviation books and resolutions of important meetings and other information. This particular accused sold off confidential documents to India for a large sum of money.<sup>12</sup> None of the above mentioned writers would describe this as an act of treason since they obviously view India and Bangladesh as one and the same nation divided only by an inconvenient episode in the subcontinents history.

This particular incident of Indian intelligence gathering is only one small part of a grand strategy to acquire sensitive information about the nations armed forces and similar cases of espionage are occurring in every sector of Bangladesh society and economy in order to keep Indian policy makers and military planners up-to-date about the country if they ever deem it necessary for armed intervention. This confirms the author's own bias towards the need for a new war of independence and a plan for how it will be fought and the means by which it shall be won since these are matters that the Bangladesh military forces and intelligence agencies should be primarily concerned with as India has not yet given up the Nehruvian vision of an Akhand Bharat. If Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury could exhort Hindus to take up arms in Bangladesh against Muslims then Muslims will accordingly retain the right to defend themselves even against India.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Indian politicians are no longer hesitant to use the language of war in references to Bangladesh (and Pakistan) and the excuse has been the ongoing insurgency in the volatile Seven Sister states of India's Northeast. In a news report titled, 'India wary of Dhaka-ISI nexus' published in The Times of India in late June 2006, Subodh Ghildiyal relates how New Delhi (the Centre) in its peace talks with the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) cast a glance towards Pakistan's ISI and Bangladesh as they were both believed to have

great influence over the actions of the militant outfit. India has rarely accepted responsibility for its failings in the North-East states but has conveniently transferred blame to Pakistan and Bangladesh for fomenting trouble in the region but has been unable to provide credible and substantive proof during the entire 50 years of the insurgency. In the Times report, the Centre, "feared that the ISI-Dhaka team may play the 'moderate versus hardline' game within the Ulfa to sabotage talks," which been a lame excuse in past talks to shift the issue away from independence demands and allege that negotiations have failed due to external interference and pressure. The report further claimed that, "That the ISI-Dhaka combo is inimical to talks is suspected in Dhaka's special protection to Ulfa despite global pressure to act against extremist outfits and to stop fomenting trouble in other countries." According to New Delhi, Bangladesh has permitted its territory to be used by insurgents for training and that India has repeatedly supplied lists of these "terrorist training camps" to Dhaka for necessary action. Dhaka has consistently and strongly denied the presence of such camps on its territory<sup>14</sup> and India has never provided either satellite imagery or human intelligence as to there whereabouts and in such a densely populated country it would be impossible to keep them secret had they existed.

Seemingly in response to the call by Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury the Indian Hindu revivalist/fundamentalist party the BJP demanded that India attack Pakistan and Bangladesh to dismantle terrorist centers in these countries.<sup>15</sup> BJP president Rajnath Singh said that international support should be garnered before such attacks. Soon after this outburst the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) asked its Bangladesh counterpart (BDR) to deport 113 militants, and to dismantle 172 camps run by northeastern insurgents in its territory.<sup>16</sup> The Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar later claimed there were at least 26 militant camps operating in the adjoining Bangladesh territory.<sup>17</sup> He proposed a dialogue with the Bangladesh Government for not allowing these groups to operate from their lands to prevent the disintegration of India. He also expressed regret that, "even after 59 years of India's independence, not just Tripura but the entire North-Eastern region was being totally neglected, which had virtually forced a section of the youth to pick up arms against the present system." While Bangladesh continued to deny the existence of insurgent

training camps on its territory Indian leaders began to emphasize diplomacy and international pressure with war only as a last resort.<sup>18</sup> The Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee categorically ruled out the possibility of entering Bangladesh to destroy terrorist camps there as had been reportedly demanded by West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. Pranab said the Indian government would continue to persuade the Bangladeshi government to dismantle them.<sup>19</sup>

This, however, only seemed to suggest that a case was being built for war and the change in strategy was only a temporary reprieve. That the allegations concerning terrorist camps inside Bangladesh were merely a propaganda ruse to bring Bangladesh under international pressure and leave the option open for military intervention if Bangladesh did not subordinate its interests to the wider strategic requirements of India (outlined in the Preface and Part 1 of this essay) as well as on transit rights and the export of gas. From an allegation concerning Maoist insurgent camps in Bangladesh the charges differed markedly after the bomb attacks in Ayodha, Veranasi and the 7/11 Mumbai train blasts to one where Bangladesh became interlinked to international Jihadi terrorism sponsored by the ISI and funded by money coming in from the Gulf.<sup>20</sup> It was apprehended that skirmishes along the India-Bangladesh border could blow up into a major flare-up as a consequence of these attacks in India. While India continued to implicate Pakistan long after the attacks it failed to find any credible evidence of the Bangladesh government's direct complicity.<sup>21</sup> As Sadeq Khan later pointed out, "Indian media campaign over the years accusing Bangladesh of involvement in the war of attrition carried on by ethnic insurgents in Northeast India had gone stale" and so something new had to be found.<sup>22</sup> Neatly juxtaposing the Israeli bombardment and propaganda offensive against Lebanon in August 2006 and India's threat to Bangladesh Sadeq Khan in a subsequent article focuses on the comments made by Arun Nehru, a former Indian minister in the Union Government, who has said that, "There are sufficient spy satellites in the system to report that our attacks are at the right places. The use of force is always justified in a 'just cause'."<sup>23</sup> That India is now using Israeli tactics and equipment against its neighbours was revealed in an article by M. Shahidul Islam in *Holiday* where he argues that India has encircled, "the nation from all fronts by installing sophisticated

surveillance and tracking equipment - including an Israeli-made long-range reconnaissance system - along the 4096 km frontier."<sup>24</sup> In addition to this, "The BSF has also been supplied with 900 handheld thermal imagers and Israeli reconnaissance and observation radar system, LORROS, which can track vehicles or people within 40 km inside Bangladesh. With barbed wire fences and Israeli technology, the Bangladesh-India borders look similar to Israeli-Palestinian or Israeli-Lebanese borders." Apart from making the Bangladesh/India border areas look like a war zone in the Middle East, New Delhi has also sought the cooperation of pro-Israeli policy centres and think tanks in the US to promote the view of a link between insurgency in north-eastern provinces of India and Islamic extremism in Bangladesh.<sup>25</sup> Ever since the call for war by Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury in 2003 the Indian military and intelligence agencies have geared up their operations against Bangladesh and preparations have reached such a state of readiness that there always exists a potential for imminent and unprovoked conflict as an editorial in The New Nation warned in August 2006,<sup>26</sup>

"An article was noted in a Bangladeshi newspaper recently in which its American writer contemplated the possibility of an Indian attack against Bangladesh. According to him, the attacks could be one for testing the morale and effectiveness of Bangladeshi fighting forces and aimed to occupy and retain physical control over parts of Bangladesh on the plea of keeping the occupied areas free from the activities of Islamic militants who allegedly pose a threat to Indian security. Conspicuously, the writer's prophecy coincides with what the top leader of the previous ruling party in India, BJP, suggested recently that India should attack Bangladesh to free it from Islamic terrorists who are a menace to India's security and for this India can seek the approval of the US government. Interestingly, the US writer in a local newspaper hinted that such an approval might be given since the days of collective security is over in some parts of the world where every country must ensure its own security.

The allegation that Bangladesh poses a threat to India's security is devoid of even common sense because anyone can see for himself that there are enough conditions within India itself to give rise to multiple insurgencies there. The Kashmiri militants rose in revolt

against Indian oppression in their homeland. Some years ago the Sikhs rose in similar revolt and they were suppressed with a heavy hand. There are many insurgencies in north-eastern India that feed on local discontent due to the neglect of the federal government to their needs and from pure separatist impulses. Therefore, it does not require a neighbouring country to instigate troubles in India."

It is fortunate for Bangladesh that occasionally due to the propaganda excesses committed by Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury and others they are acutely susceptible to harm that is self-inflicted and an interesting example of the damage such authors have done to their own cause was recently revealed at a State Department conference on the 1971 South Asia Crisis held in June 2005. In a revised version of a paper presented by Sarmila Bose and publicized in Bangladesh and Pakistan her findings on the events of 1971 show a contrasting vision of the liberation war vastly different from that propagated by the so-called pro-liberation forces in Bangladesh. Apart from fundamentally revising the established myths about the conflict she provides in her analysis a portrayal of events far removed from the black and white, good and evil distinctions made by writers and intellectuals who use the war as a vehicle for Indian political designs in Bangladesh. The following excerpt from the Daily Times report is worth quoting at length, "According to Ms Bose, while the Bangladeshis are more voluble about the birth of their country, they have done less well at systematic historical record-keeping. She also found a cultivation of "an unhealthy 'victim culture' by some of the pro-liberationists" as people are instigated at the national level to "engage in a ghoulish competition with six million Jews in order to gain international attention". These tendencies, she points out, hamper the systematic study of the conflict of 1971 and hinder a true understanding of a "cataclysmic restructuring in modern South Asian history". She writes that the 1971 civil war was fought between those who believed they were fighting for a united Pakistan and those who believed their chance for justice and progress lay in an independent Bangladesh. "Both are legitimate political positions. All parties in the conflict embraced violence as a means to the end, all committed acts of brutality outside accepted norms of warfare, and all had their share of humanity. These attributes make the 1971 conflict suitable for efforts towards reconciliation, rather than recrimination that has so far been

its hallmark," she adds.<sup>127</sup> Whether one agrees with any particular or specific finding in the paper Bangladeshis still have to view the nations past in a more critical and objective manner and not merely accept the words of a few self appointed experts who have in reality been waging an intellectual war on the country's independence and sovereignty for almost three decades without challenge or hindrance. Unfortunately there are few writers courageous enough to challenge basic assumptions of the war and there are even less who will take into account India's role in 1971 and the numerous abuses and cruelties committed under its authority by certain segments of the Mukti Bahini and later the Mujib Bahini although there exists a wealth of documentary evidence on the subject (See Part 3 and 4). The ultimate objective remains that of an Akhand Bharat and all the Indian propaganda activities are geared towards the attainment of Indian reunification that had been originally conceived and devised by Jawaharlal Nehru in several books authored by him and which has been the subject of this Part in relation to the 1971 war. It still remains to be seen whether Bangladesh can be sufficiently unified to ward off possible attack (whether diplomatic, military, political or economic) by India and to conduct National Elections that had originally been scheduled for January 2007 (but were cancelled on the grounds of state necessity) as its clandestine interventions will likely continue to be a crucial factor in future political developments.

## **INDIAN INTELLIGENCE - 101**

With this steady trickle of anti-Bangladesh propaganda and Indian interference in the political culture and dynamics of the nation which looks unlikely to abate, at least, for the foreseeable future there will most certainly have to be a sea change in the nations perspective on relations with India which could take as long as a decade with new generations having to appreciate their hostile intent and pernicious role in the history of Bangladesh. But long before then Bangladesh will have to become accustomed to not just important personalities moulding and influencing history but also that of the Indian intelligence agency, (RAW - Research & Analysis Wing) which will play a leading role in the next three parts of this essay. The deficiency in academic research which has not yet started investigating the relationship between historical events and the interference of foreign intelligence agencies is not unique to

Bangladesh and can be rectified with a refocusing of the debate to include the involvement of RAW in the storyline or narrative, where there is sufficient evidence of its sway or influence on political, military or on other national actors or in the incidents of sabotage, espionage or terrorism orchestrated and planned behind the scenes and away from public view. As Christopher Andrews, a leading intelligence scholar, noted in relation to the KGB in his book, 'The Mitrokhin Archive,'

"Mitrochin's archive contains much information which the KGB and its successors have tried to conceal or suppress. He is undoubtedly right to insist, however, that it is in the public interest that it should be revealed. The activities of the KGB both at home and abroad are an essential part of the history not only of the Soviet Union and its foreign relations but also of the states against which it conducted hostile operations. Without access to KGB files those activities cannot be adequately understood."<sup>28</sup>

Most academic historians have been slow to recognize the role of intelligence communities in the international relations and political history of the twentieth century. Though such aberrations by leading historians are due partly to the over-classification of intelligence archives they derive at root from what psychologists call 'cognitive dissonance' - the difficulty all of us have in grasping new concepts which disturb our existing view of the world. For many twentieth-century historians, political scientists and international relations specialists, secret intelligence has been just such a concept. As a new century dawns the traditional academic disregard for intelligence is in serious, if not yet terminal decline. A new generation of scholars has begun to emerge, less disorientated than most of their predecessors by the role of intelligence and its use (or abuse) by policymakers. A vast research agenda awaits them."<sup>29</sup>

In reference to the activities of RAW in Bangladesh it is unnecessary to wait for such an archive to appear as there have been numerous leaks in the Indian press and media and in Bangladesh of what these intrigues and conspiracies consist of but with several decades of this experience we still suffer from what psychologists call cognitive dissonance but which appears in our context as deliberate



ensorship.<sup>30</sup> There also exists a penchant amongst retired RAW officers of disclosing state secrets in their memoirs which makes the gathering of vital information on threats to Bangladesh security that much easier. However, this is not a satisfactory alternative to having an intelligence agency specifically set up to look into external exigencies that may pose a danger or menace to the nation's security and interests. The three most acclaimed and referenced works on RAW include an exhaustively researched book by Dr. Shastra Dutta Pant titled, 'Machinations of RAW in South Asia' (Institute for Rural Development - 2005) and a brilliant article by Gp. Capt. S.M. Hali titled, 'Raw at War - Genesis of Secret Agencies in Ancient India' (Defence Journal - Feb/Mar 1999). The third book has to be the still controversial yet highly insightful, 'Inside RAW' by Asoka Raina (Vikas Publishing House - 1981). For the purposes of understanding the organizational structure, ethos, methods of intelligence gathering, espionage and sabotage tactics adopted by RAW only the first two works will be referred to at any length and Raina's book although excellent in its portrayal of RAW's activities during the 1970's is now somewhat dated. The book will nevertheless be extensively referred to in the next 3 Parts of this essay which covers the period surveyed in 'Inside RAW' and which remains the primary source for researchers and students of intelligence and South Asian history.

The role of RAW in India's intelligence apparatus and its superior status (compared to other services) has been explained by Dr. Pant in mystical and spiritual terms as being the creator Brahma as RAW gave birth to Bangladesh. RAW is also, "Yamaraj, the God of death" as it, "killed half a dozen countries including Goa, Daman and Diu, Hyderabad, Pondicherry, Jammu and Kashmir and Sikkim." This reference to Hindu deities is quite apt as, "Varuna, one of the chief gods of the Vedic pantheon is considered to be a forerunner of Secret Services."<sup>31</sup> But as Capt. Hali points out, it is to Chanakya's final manifestation of this art in the Arthasastra that one must refer. Chanakya was the Chief Minister of Chandragupta (approx 321 B.C.E.) of the Mauryan dynasty and wrote the 'Arthasastra' as a treatise on statecraft and economic policy. As Capt. Hali explains, "The techniques of manipulating public opinion and creating disinformation, propounded by Chanakya anticipated modern intelligence systems by several centuries. No wonder then that the

nearly 2500 years old lessons in deceit, guile, hypocrisy, machination, and gore taught by that Master strategist, Chanakya alias Kautilya (literally meaning 'crooked') was adopted in toto by India and its chief intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)." The Arthashastra also details the different components of an effective secret intelligence agency which includes - Categorization of Agents; Recruitment of Secret Agents; Training; Control and Supervision; and Techniques of Espionage. The last of these may further be subdivided into - Motivation and Recruitment of Sources; Selection and Infiltration of Targets; Double-Agent Operations; Payment of Sources; Communication of Intelligence; Interception of Mail; Assessment of Information; Working Under 'Cover'; Counter-Intelligence; Disinformation and Dissension; Sabotage; and The employment of Visakanyas (Poison-damsels).<sup>32</sup> All these elements of an effective spy agency are brought together to achieve certain objectives within a field of operations that was originally set out in 4 points in Asoka Raina's book but which now appear redundant. However, the objectives originally enunciated may be expanded and abridged to take in account modern developments that appear as a regular feature in articles written by former RAW officers and which are displayed on websites sponsored by RAW such as the South Asian Analysis Group and the commentaries that appear there. Dr. Pant provides an alternative list of objectives that emphasizes the more pronounced aspects of RAW's mandate -

1. To expand Indian sovereignty to the unsafe and feeble neighbouring states which are in deplorable plight.
2. To turn India into a superpower by enhancing its strategic, political and cultural influence in the Indian Ocean.
3. To recreate a wholesome Chakravarti Bharatvarsha (long-lasting monolithic Indian sub-continent).<sup>33</sup>

Dr. Shireen Mazari adopts a similar analysis of RAW activities stating, "That Indian intelligence services Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has been fomenting violent destabilization within the domestic polities of the South Asian states ... Why did India feel the need to get into this form of activity within its neighbouring states? The answer to that question lies in understanding India's power

ambitions. Seeking regional hegemony and recognition as a major global actor since independence, India initially relied on military force to expand its borders as well as intimidate its neighbours into accepting Indian diktat ... [It] shifted its focus vis-à-vis South Asian states and China to covert interventions aimed at destabilizing the domestic polities of its neighbours. It was for this purpose that RAW was created in 1968."<sup>34</sup> The functions of RAW were designed to achieve the above objectives and include the following -

**Aggressive Intelligence:** The primary mission of RAW includes aggressive intelligence which comprise espionage, psychological warfare, subversion, sabotage, terrorism and creating dissension, insurgency and, ultimately, insurrection to destabilize the target country.<sup>35</sup>

All the countries of South Asia are familiar with RAW's use of the above techniques and its organizational structure was devised to facilitate the practice of Aggressive Intelligence explained by Isha Khan in his article for Global Politician where he argues, "RAW having been given a virtual carte blanche to conduct destabilization operations in neighboring countries inimical to India to seriously undertook restructuring of its organization accordingly. RAW was given a list of seven countries (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Pakistan and Maldives) whom India considered its principal regional protagonists. It very soon systematically and brilliantly crafted covert operations in all these countries to coerce, destabilize and subvert them in consonance with the foreign policy objectives of the Indian Government." The manner in which RAW conducted these intelligence operations is a central theme of this essay and bears close scrutiny, "RAW's operations against the regional countries were conducted with great professional skill and expertise. Central to the operations was the establishment of a huge network inside the target countries. It used and targeted political dissent, ethnic divisions, economic backwardness and criminal elements within these states to foment subversion, terrorism and sabotage. Having thus created the conducive environments, RAW stage-managed future events in these countries in such a way that military intervention appears a natural concomitant of the events."

For RAW to carry out the program of 'The India Doctrine' of which it is ideologically committed and shares the aspiration for an Akhand Bharat it has had to develop into a communal organization. According to a report published in the Outlook magazine there, "scarcely any Muslims working in India's 10,000-strong external intelligence agency, and neither Muslims nor Sikhs working as bodyguards for the country's top leaders." No Muslims had been recruited by the country's external spy agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, since 1969.<sup>36</sup> This probably has less to do with security concerns, reliability or even religious discrimination but more likely the inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities could jeopardize the project for an Akhand Bharat which itself has communal overtones and requires organizational integrity for its success. Recent books written by former senior RAW officers on the failings of the organization are probably part and parcel of the spy agencies methods to confuse its opponents since much of the information provided by the authors have been available for long as open source intelligence and they add nothing new to our understanding of India's external intelligence body.<sup>37</sup>

## END NOTES & REFERENCES

1. Other books that may be included in this category are Abul Hasnat - The Ugliest Genocide in History, Jamnadas Akhater - The Saga of Bangladesh, Arun Bhattacharjee - Dateline Mijibnagar, Sukharanjan Dasgupta - Midnight Massacre in Dacca, G.P. Bhattacharjee - Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh, Vice-Admiral N. Krishnan - No way but surrender, Kalyan Chaudhuri - Genocide in Bangladesh, Mohammed Ayob and K. Subrahmanyam - The Liberation War, Jyoti Sen Gupta - Bangladesh in Blood and Tears, Admiral S.N. Kohli - We Dared: Maritime Operations in the 1971 Indo-Pak War

2. Staff Correspondent - 'Indian agencies offer money to write against Bangladesh' (New Age - August 8, 2005); Mohammed Zainul Abedin - Reporters without borders and Saleem Samad (May 13, 2005); Sadeq Khan - 'BD can't slacken alert in diplomatic and security fronts' in Holiday December 13, 2002; See also 'India is

causing trouble' by Philip Bowring - International Herald Tribune Wednesday, January 22, 2003); Praful Bidwai 'Grave crisis in South Asian ties: Neighbours as enemies.' The Daily Star: February 17, 2003; Sheela Bhatt - ISI now outsources terror to Bangladesh (Rediff.com March 21 2006); Pramod Kumar Singh - Bangla terror to top talks with Khaleda (India Monitor March 14 2006); Chris Blackburn - The Threat of Bangladesh (FrontPage Magazine March 13 2006); Wilson John - Contours of a new terror matrix (The Pioneer March 26, 2006); Sadeq Khan - Attitudinal change in India, but same mindset in RAW (Holiday - April 14, 2006); Staff Correspondent - 'Promote objective journalism for better Indo-Bangla ties' (The Daily Star - June 26, 2006); UNB - Politicians, bureaucrats responsible for bitter Indo-Bangla ties: editor (New Age - June 26, 2006); Editorial - The role of media in improving Bangladesh-India relations (New Age - June 27, 2006); Brig. Gen. Shahedul Anam Khan - Reaping the Whirlwind (The Daily Star - July 20, 2006); Sadeq Khan - Indian agencies plot to implicate Bangladesh (Holiday - August 11, 2006); Staff Correspondent - Indian media launch propaganda against Bangladesh (New Age - August 14, 2006)

3. The News Today - ACC serves notice to four journalists (June 25, 2007)

4. prior to the 2001 elections

5. Rafiq-ul-Islam - "A Tale of Millions" (October 1981)

6. Abraham Eraly - Emperors of the Peacock Throne (Penguin - 2000) pg. iii

7. The Daily Ittefaq - Chattra Bicov Shariar Kabir Bhumika cilo: gopon Indian Awami Leager (August 31, 2007); See Hindustan Times - Chetia conducting ULFA operations from Dhaka jail: Kabir (May 21, 2007)

8. Sadeq Khan - SAARC drifting on undercurrent of tension (January 28, 2005) - In his article Sadeq Khan makes the following reference to a meeting held in Calcutta, "On the same day, Bangladeshi newspapers published reports from their Kolkata correspondents that demands to punish Bangladesh were voiced by Indian speakers and some Bangladeshi expatriate non-Muslim delegates in an

'international' conference attended by a French journalist and briefly by Taslima Nasreen, the self-exiled Bangladeshi writer. The demands included economic blockade of Bangladesh by India, other (military?) forms of Indian pressure to be brought upon Bangladesh to accommodate 'two crore' fugitives of Bangladeshi origin in India in a chunk of territory to be ceded for that purpose. The coincidence of the three-pronged propaganda drives must be deliberate."

9. The News Today - Hasina opposes Hasan (October 23, 2006)

10. The Independent - Tuesday 11 February 2003

11. See Part 6A

12. See for a recent example: The New Nation - Suspected RAW agent held at Tetulia border, sent to jail (December 6, 2007). A suspected agent of Indian intelligence agency RAW was held at Banglabanda border on Tuesday. BDR patrol party held Ilyas Ali (60), a former army personnel, while he was crossing the Banglabanda border in the late evening darkness. He hails from Dhaijanpara village in Tetulia sadar upazila. Handed over to the police, Ilyas was today sent to jail hajat when produced before the court. BDR sources said they suspected from the movement of Ilyas that he had long been acting as a mole of RAW. As former army personnel he knew many secrets of the country which he used to transfer to the Indian intelligence agency. After arrest Ilyas was taken to BDR battalion headquarter. During interrogation he provided irrelevant information. At one stage he claimed himself a recruit of DGFI, which was proved wrong on check. Tetulia thana officer Anwar Hossain said they are investigating into his activities for possible prosecution with sedition charge.

13. That none of this is far fetched or exaggerative will become obvious in Parts 3, 4 and 5 of this essay where we will review the extremist writings of inter alia Dr. Kalidas Baidya who is the arch inspiration for the above writers as well as many others.

14. The Times of India - Bangladesh denies anti-India rebel bases (August 29, 2006)

15. India Daily - BJP demanded that India attack Pakistan and Bangladesh to dismantle terrorist centres in these countries (August 12, 2006); M Serajul Islam - BJP president's call to attack Bangladesh (August 23, 2006)
16. The Hindu - India asks Bangladesh to deport 113 militants (August 29, 2006); Subir Bhaumik - Dhaka urged 'to hand over rebels' (BBC News - August 30, 2006); Rediff News - Destroy militant camps, India to B'desh (August 31, 2006); Tilak Rai - 'Chetia not in Bangladesh' (The India Express - September 1, 2006);
17. The Hindu - 26 terror camps across Bangladesh border: Manik Sarkar (September 26, 2006)
18. Zee News - India should build pressure against Bangladesh (September 1, 2006)
19. Zee News - India won't enter B'desh to destroy terror camps: Pranab (September 9, 2006); The Indian Express - India to persuade Bangladesh to dismantle terror camps: Pranab (September 9, 2006)
20. Murali Krishnan - Bangladesh approach on terror worries India (M&C News - September 17, 2006)
21. AFP - India files charges alleging Pakistan (New Age - December 1, 2006)
22. Sadeq Khan - Mumbai train bombings (HOLIDAY - August 11, 2006)
23. Sadeq Khan - Indian leaders' Israel-like outbursts call for serious talks with Delhi (HOLIDAY - August 25, 2006)
24. M. Shahidul Islam - Delhi using Israeli radar on Indo-Bangla border (November 3, 2006)
25. Moinuddin Naser - USIP blames Dhaka for insurgency in NE India (HOLIDAY - September 15, 2006)
26. Editorial - Campaigns against Bangladesh (The New Nation - August 27, 2006)
27. Khalid Hasan - Indian scholar sifts 1971 fact from fiction (Daily Times - December 18 2005)

28. In the Foreword to Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin - The Mitrokhin Archives (2000)
29. pg. 707-708 Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin - The Mitrokhin Archives (2000)
30. See in particular Abu Rushd - Raw in Bangladesh (2005) and Zainul Abedin - Raw and Bangladesh (1995)
31. S.M. Hali - 'Raw at War'
32. S.M. Hali; See also Raza Haider - Anatomy of Indian Intelligence Services and Alliances (Telespy - June 1, 2008)
33. Dr. Shastra Dutta Pant - Machinations of RAW in South Asia pg 30
34. Dr. Shireen M. Mazari - India's Unconventional War Strategy (Defence Journal - January 1999)
35. S.M. Hali
36. Reuters - Muslims excluded from India's spy agency: report (New Age - Nov 8, 2006); Praful Bidwai - Lessons from Amsterdam: How not to fight terrorism (The Daily Star - September 4, 2006)
37. See Saikat Datta - Inside, RAW (OUTLOOK - July 2, 2007); Maloy Krishna Dhar - The Intelligence Bureau: India's Prime Intelligence Agency (Defence & Strategic News - Jul 31st, 2007)



# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 3

### THE CIRCLE OF HISTORY

*Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us - if at all - not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men  
(T.S. Eliot - The Hollow Men)*

It is often said that history comes full circle and it would be true in the case of this essay which has tried to recount a certain part of our history that spans from 1947 to the present. But the narrative has primarily concerned itself with the events from the 1971 war that created an independent Bangladesh but has so far failed to take account of the events preceding this period when the Indian government and intelligence were most active in trying to create an Akhand Bharat on the subcontinent. It has been my opinion from my first attempts at writing this essay in 2001 that the story would be incomplete if left within the confining time frame of 1971 and after. The purpose now would be to look at 1971 and before but from a specifically East Pakistani standpoint as we then were. I have covered elements of the post 1947 period as an introduction to the Akhand Bharat vision envisaged by Jawaharlal Nehru and taken account of the Two Nation Theory espoused by Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The latter became a practical reality while the former is still in its drawing board stage awaiting its imminent realization if circumstance and opportunity permit. Although the active measures taken by India and its propaganda network have been thoroughly covered during the post-1971 period what has been lacking in my thesis is a similar coverage of the pre-1971 era when it could be said that India came one step closer to achieving its dream for an Akhand Bharat.

It is not to be supposed that this is another attempt to undermine the efforts of our martyrs who fought for liberation and the author has no interest or attraction to see a reunited Pakistan. More accurately this is a study of contrasts and comparisons between the ideals that inspired many of our youth to give up their lives and the motivations that guided India and its troops which was altogether different and far reaching. I do not think it would be an exaggeration to suggest that India's assistance in the creation of Bangladesh was only a step to its eventual destruction and the reformation of a United Bengal within the larger entity of an Akhand Bharat.<sup>1</sup> This part will deal with three books in particular and hopefully in later editions to expand with the inclusion of other documents and materials as they become available to the author. The three books under discussion are (1) Faiz Ahmed - Agartala Mamlā: Sheikh Mujib O Banglar Bidroho (1997 edition); (2) Asoka Raina - Inside RAW the story of India's Secret Service (1981) and (3) Major General S.S. Uban - Phantoms of Chittagong: The "Fifth Army" in Bangladesh (1985). All the books mentioned have become authorities in the areas they cover but have not been given wide prominence in Bangladesh due to their content and historical disclosures made within their pages. I hope that a reading of the text and analysis of perspectives will shed light on India's role prior to the 1971 war and its objectives for a newly independent Bangladesh and how this all fits in with the grand design for an Akhand Bharat. For any credence to be given to this theory a link has to be established between the principal agents behind the idea of an Akhand Bharat and Indian involvement with the principal leaders of the nascent autonomy movement in East Pakistan who probably had different notions from that willed by the Indian political elite. In other words, it is necessary to show that India's purpose in undermining central authority in East Pakistan was to further their goal in dividing the two halves of Pakistan with eventual secession<sup>2</sup> of one half and then to bring the newly independent nation under the control and influence of India to realize at least a partial Akhand Bharat until all regions of the pre-1947 partition arrangement comes within its dominion.

## **THE AGARTALA CONSPIRACY CASE**

The first intimation of any link between the Nehru administration (or the Indira Gandhi government from 1966) and leaders of the Awami League of Bangladesh begins with the 1968 sedition case of the State

vs. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others (popularly known as the Agartala Shorojontro Mamlā or the Agartala conspiracy case). The allegations brought by the Ayub Khan government against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman appears to be that he had conspired with P.N. Ojha, the First Secretary to the Indian High Commission, to seek secession from Pakistan with supplies of weapons from India via the district of Agartala in Tripura state.<sup>3</sup> The formal charge in part reads that the accused persons had conspired 'to deprive Pakistan of a part of its territories, mainly the province of East Pakistan, by an armed revolt with weapons, ammunition and funds provided by India and to establish therein an independent government recognised by India.'<sup>4</sup> It has also been subsequently claimed that Mujib's wife had been used as a courier in communications between the Indian diplomat and Mujib.<sup>5</sup>

This particular point has generally been ignored by supporters of Sheikh Mujib (as no formal charges were laid against Mujib's wife presumably due to the negative impact that this would have on East Pakistani opinion) who have also dismissed the charges against him as trumped up. Indian commentators have pointed out that although Sheikh Mujib did cross into India in 1965 New Delhi was never party to his leaving Pakistan and on their discovery of his presence in India he was requested to return.<sup>6</sup> According to legal and political analysts the case was brought in order to tarnish Sheikh Mujib's reputation in East Pakistan and arouse public wrath against him for his alleged collusion with Indian agents.<sup>7</sup> This attempt at discrediting Sheikh Mujib abysmally failed and led to wider protest movements in East Pakistan organised by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani through his Gono Obhyutthan, the All Parties Student Resistance Council and the Central Students Action Committee. Passions were further enflamed after Sheikh Mujib's statement to the tribunal where he denied the allegations and then went on to deliver a political speech against the central authorities.<sup>8</sup>

The West Pakistanis were sure that a conspiracy emanating from Agartala and involving senior Awami Leaguers had existed but its decision to prosecute and score political points against India was in part clouded by their unjustified over reaction to the six point formula put forward by Sheikh Mujib which merely sought to address the

disparities between West Pakistan and East Pakistan caused by the economic exploitation of the latter by the former and the negligence and indifference of the central government towards the defence of East Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> *(It might, however, be convincingly argued that after several years of political turbulence in East Pakistan, partly organized and financed by Indian agents and provocateurs the central government authorities might understandably be edgy about new demands made by leaders closely associated and identified with Indian interests. Nevertheless it still remains clear that had West Pakistan acted less aggressively and condescendingly towards its Eastern half things may not have deteriorated to such an extent that separation proved to be the only solution to their escalating disputes which could have been easily resolved through compromise and negotiation. This appears to have been the stated approach of Field Marshal Ayub Khan but according to his diaries it was the intransigence of the East Pakistani politicians that prevented any progress in dialogue. In his dairies he contends that the economic woes that plagued East Pakistan was primarily caused by the ill-conceived and backward socialist/communist policies adopted by the politicians in Dhaka. The consequent economic stagnation was blamed on West Pakistan which was accused of exploiting the East and draining its resources. In an entry for November 15, 1967, Ayub Khan writes, "It is baffling but true that in spite of much larger development allocations to East Pakistan in recent years, the disparity has risen from 28 to 39 per cent. The Planning Commission has identified the causes: a weak administration, neglect of agriculture, wrong priorities of projects and hostile attitude towards private sector, especially investment from West Pakistan."<sup>10</sup> There appears to be some credibility to these accusations as many of the problems identified by Ayub Khan reappeared soon after independence with even worse consequences for the population who died in their hundreds of thousands from famine which was in no way attributable to the 1971 war. It was, however, the failure of West Pakistanis in not explaining these issues properly to the people of the East or in appreciating the cultural differences between the two parts which probably made understanding more difficult. The principle failure of the West arose in its response to the 6 point formula which ultimately led to the dismemberment of Pakistan.)* The six point formula that was to prove a turning point in relations between the two parts of Pakistan had put forward the following demands:

(1) The character of the government shall be federal and parliamentary and on the basis of universal adult franchise. (2) The federal government shall be responsible only for the defense and foreign affairs (3) There shall be two separate currencies mutually of freely convertible in each wing for each region, or in the alternative a single currency, subject to the establishment of a federal reserve system in which there will be regional Federal Reserve banks, which shall devise measures to prevent the transfer of resources and flight of capital from one region to another. (4) Fiscal policy shall be the responsibility of the federating units. (5) Constitutional provisions shall be made to enable separate accounts to be maintained of the foreign exchange earnings of each of the federating units, under the control of the respective governments of the federating units. (6) The governments of the federating units shall be empowered to maintain militia or paramilitary force having Naval Headquarter in East Pakistan in order to contribute effectively towards national security.

For the central authorities in West Pakistan this was considered the first step towards a call to secessionism.<sup>11</sup> Whether there were any substantive grounds for such a belief will only become clearer as more information and documentation becomes available. However, what was known to the Pakistan government about a parallel conspiracy would have put the central authorities on alert but probably did not amount to sufficient or adequate evidence to implicate Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself. It did, nevertheless, demonstrate the extensiveness of the Indian network operating in East Pakistan and the various channels that were potentially open to the senior leaders of the Awami League who could now easily gain access to the Indian government and intelligence agencies through their operatives in Dhaka.

According to Masudul Haq in his book *Bangladesher Shadinhata* (Judeh RAW Abong CIA) (Bangladesh Independence War: RAW and CIA) the Pakistan Director of Intelligence Bureau (DIB) knew by 1962 that at a house (probably Sunny Villa) located in Kolkata, Bhabhanipur area, an operational headquarter of the Indian Central Intelligence Agency had set up an association called the Shadin Bangla Biplobi Parishad (Independent Bengal Revolutionary Council) whose purpose was to secede the eastern part of Pakistan in order to

create a new country. The DIB also knew that Chittaranjan Sutar and Kalidas Baidya, who were both Pakistani citizens, had a connection with this secret organization.<sup>12</sup> The Shadin Bangla Biplobi Parishad (SBBP) in 1964 infiltrated the student community through the leadership of Shirajul Alam Khan (Chattra League General Secretary) along with Abdur Razzak (Chattra League Assistant General Secretary) and Kazi Aref who were to become the central cell of the student chapter of the organization. Abdur Razzak was to maintain links with Sheikh Mujib and the Awami League on behalf of the SBBP.<sup>13</sup>

It was only after the publication of the 6 point demand that the SBBP were able to focus their operations on the real objective of secession<sup>14</sup> which was probably the trigger that set alarm bells ringing in West Pakistan. The SBBP wanted to use Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's populist image to further their own goals but it was realized that he would not approve of such an overt alignment so the three student leaders of the SBBP carried on their work in secrecy and no one came to know of the council's existence<sup>15</sup> or its program to dismember Pakistan. It is, however, apparent that by 1971 there was a real fear in the West (US and Britain) not just of secessionism but that India would eventually try to take Pakistani territory by force and also seek the break-up of West Pakistan in the case of armed conflict.<sup>16</sup> This would certainly have been the final culmination of many years of planning and conspiring but was in the end probably prevented by U.S. intervention through the activation of its Seventh Fleet during the 1971 war and the widespread fear within India that a major escalation involving the Americans may also bring in the Chinese and Russian military forces.<sup>17</sup> This would have doubtless overturned any short term gains that may have been achieved by the Indian military through a conflict limited by the objectives of expediting the secession of East Pakistan and the weakening of the West Pakistan armed forces in direct combat. The purpose was, therefore, not the total disintegration of the Pakistan army which would have required a prolonged war involving the participation of global players who had a whole set of different and conflicting agendas and policy imperatives that were likely detrimental to India's vision of an Akhand Bharat.

This plan for secessionism developed by the SBBP would gain credibility if there had indeed been a conspiracy in 1968 or earlier between India and the senior Awami League leadership in East Pakistan that was centered on Agartala and could be connected to Sheikh Mujib as well. One is, therefore, instantly alerted to the confusion amongst commentators on the Agartala Conspiracy Case as to whether they are defending Sheikh Mujib against a conspiracy that was alleged to have occurred in Agartala or in Dhaka or in both places at different times. The only documentary evidence that is strongly suggestive of a conspiracy involving Sheikh Mujib is the written statement made to Mr. Mafidul Haq in 1991 by the former Chief Minister of Tripura and published in Faiz Ahmed's book in Bangla on the very last page. A rough and literal translation of the statement is as follows:

### **Sheikh Mujib's relation with Agartala**

#### **Chief Minister of Tripura**

**In 1963 my brother Sri Omesh Lal Singh along with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 10 others at Tripura, Palom District, through subdivision Khoai, Agartala, arrived at my Agartala Bungalow at 12.00 am. After the preliminary discussions Sheikh Sahib came to my sister Hemangini Devi's residence one and half miles away from my bungalow where food and lodgings had been managed. Afterwards, according to Mujibur bhai's previous proposal, I met with our Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and accompanying me was Sri Sri Raman, Chief Secretary. I left him (Sri Raman) in Foreign Secretary Sri Bhanderia's room while I met with the Prime Minister. He [Nehru] did not accept that Mujibur Rahman should be left publicly in Tripura because after the conflict with China he did not want to take such a big risk. So after 15 days he [Sheikh Mujib] left Tripura. Sonamura, a subdivision of West Tripura, attached to Comilla. It was promised to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that all forms of assistance would be provided to him.**

#### **Sri Shachindra Lal Singha**

#### **Chief Minister Tripura**

According to Mafidul Haq, the former Chief Minister when writing this statement was in weak health and suffered from poor eyesight which would explain the obvious mistakes in his memory and disjointed expression and train of thought. However, there is no question that Sri Shachindra Lal Singh was indeed the Chief Minister of Tripura from 1963-1971 and who passed away in the year 2000. The former Chief Minister's recollection of this particular incident does not square with the official Indian position on the Agartala case nor with Sheikh Mujib's defence team. What is astonishing about this affair is that no attempt has been made to rebut this statement and even if we were to discount it on grounds of plausibility or authenticity there should be some official record of disapproval and rejection but there is none. The implausibility lies not in the truth or otherwise of the above statement but in the fact that RAW's involvement in the 1971 war was instantaneous and without any prior engagement with the top leadership of the Awami League. To have been effective at such a critical juncture there must have been some long standing relationship, understanding and cooperation between Indian authorities and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other leaders of the independence movement at least by 1965 if not much earlier.

The emphasis on Sheikh Mujib as the chief protagonist in the Agartala conspiracy case has over shadowed the involvement of the other accused persons in the case and their clandestine dealings with the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. The principal accused that sought and obtained confidential contacts with P.N. Ojha, the First Secretary, include Lt. Col. Moazzam Hossain (accused No. 2) and Manik Chowdhury (accused No. 12) and from the allegations contained in the charge sheet<sup>18</sup> they were merely following a course that had already been set by Sheikh Mujib in 1963 or 1965 in his trip to Agartala. It would have been fatal to the defence case if any link could have been established between Lt. Col. Moazzam Hossain and Sheikh Mujib as Moazzam was actively engaged in a revolutionary organization working for the independence of East Pakistan as early as 1967.<sup>19</sup> If the trial had continued it is more than likely that evidence would have been produced showing India's collusion with at least some of the accused but whether their objectives were confined to simply carving up Pakistan is debatable.



That India had other ulterior motives or agendas and viewed the creation of Bangladesh as only one step to their ultimate aim of establishing an Akhand Bharat may not have been in the contemplation of the leaders of the Awami League or the revolutionaries but we will probably never know their true intentions or the answers to the many questions that have been left unanswered by the fortuitous closing of the Agartala conspiracy case.

## **RAW AND THE MUKTI BAHINI**

Much has already been written about RAW's active role in assisting in the liberation war of 1971 but that it may have had an objective of its own and used the freedom fighters as mere agents in pursuit of this wider ambition is only now being researched and discussed.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, no in-depth textual analysis is available from where we can draw conclusions about RAW's intervention before and during the war and how they used this preexisting network to infiltrate (and where necessary plant) the political, military and intellectual classes into official power in Bangladesh and how this all fits into their wider plans for an Akhand Bharat.

It is my contention that India sought out political and student leaders in East Pakistan during the 1960's to groom them for leadership once Pakistan had been successfully vivisected<sup>21</sup> and the 1947 political geography rewritten in India's preponderant favour. This section will attempt to show that RAW, soon after its establishment as India's external intelligence agency in 1968, was involved in East Pakistan and actively participated in the war as advisers and coordinators to the guerilla forces. This cooperation merely reflected a continuing relationship between the Indian military and political authorities with Sheikh Mujib and other political figures of the Awami League and student fronts that probably predated the alleged contacts in Agartala in 1963 or 1965.

That my thesis has been confirmed in several respects in Asoka Raina's book of 1981 has yet to filter into the Bangladesh mainstream media and the only omission from the book is a direct enunciation or elaboration of India's broader goals in the subcontinent. It should be mentioned that Asoka Raina presents India's assistance to East Pakistan as one of benevolence to a people long oppressed by an

arrogant and distant ruler and that RAW and the Indian military were forced into play through humanitarian considerations caused by the neglect and repression of the central authority but he only hints at India's own expansionist interests in this unfolding tragedy. To appreciate the significance and historical context of Raina's account it is necessary to extensively quote and paraphrase<sup>22</sup> from Chapter 6 of the book under the apposite title of, 'Special Operations: Bangla Desh':-

"The Bangla Desh Operation possibly began a year before the actual operation was underway. Even when the world did get a whiff of it in shape of the Mukti Bahani, many remained unaware of RAW's involvement. By then Phase one of the operation was already completed. Phase two saw the Indian Armed Forces poised for the liberation of Bangla Desh. RAW, along with Mukti Bahani, when they developed into a formidable force, provided information to the Indian forces.

In order to present a clear synopsis of the events that finally brought RAW into the Bangladesh ops, one must review the intelligence activities that started soon after its formation in 1968. **But by then Indian operatives had already been in contact with the "pro-Mujib" faction. A meeting convened in Agartala during 1962-63, between the IB foreign desk operatives and the Mujib faction.**

The meeting in Agartala had indicated to "Colonel" Menon (which in fact was Sankaran Nair's nom de guerre), the main liaison man between the Mujib faction and the Indian intelligence, that the 'group' was eager to escalate their movement. "Colonel Menon" had warned them that in his opinion it was far too early for them to take any positive action. The plans they had presented were half baked, and would not work. As Colonel Menon rightly put it ... "they jumped the gun." They raided the armoury of the East Bengal Rifles in Dacca but this initial movement failed. In fact, it was a total disaster, just as Colonel Menon had anticipated. A few months later, on January 6, 1968, the Pakistan government announced that 28 persons would be prosecuted for conspiring to bring about the secession of East Pakistan, with India's help. Mujib was implicated twelve days later as an accused. This was known as the Agartala Conspiracy Case."

This should have finally and definitively settled the argument about a conspiracy back in 1981 when the book was originally published but for some reason this disclosure from an authentic and reliable Indian source has hardly ever been alluded to amongst Bangladeshi historians, journalists or political analysts or commentators.<sup>23</sup> It would be useful to investigate the reasons behind this quite evident conspiracy of silence amongst those who would be expected to be most vocal about redressing the errors in our historical understanding of an important stage in our independence struggle and also in preventing Bangladesh's incorporation into an Akhand Bharat that this might entail if our leaders were not sufficiently cautious.

The remaining pages of Chapter 6 are no less surprising in the unearthing of factual and historical truths that are still considered controversial subjects as the narrative takes us next to the advent of war in 1971 -

*"RAW Steps up its Activities* - Efforts were stepped up to help establish an underground network in East Pakistan. The year of "a hundred spies" had begun. RAW cells were set up all along the border ... Colonel Menon's ... tours helped in the selection of local cell chiefs. Of the more prominent ones, led by Colonel M.A.G. Osmani were Major Khaled Musharaff, Major Saifullah and Abdul Kader Siddiqi, nicknamed "Tiger Siddiqi", who later became the contact man between the Mukti Bahani and the RAW operatives.

*Assessment of RAW* - RAW agents were reported to have infiltrated almost every nook and corner of East Pakistan by that time [December 1970]. The number of double agents working for RAW ... were in or near the helm of affairs. A senior Pakistani officer, who had stayed in Dacca till the emergence of Bangla Desh, provided invaluable information to the RAW operative, and was pulled out one day before Dacca fell.

[A] few hours before the crackdown, Mujib agreed to a few of the members leaving for India. They were Tajuddin Ahmed ... along with a few others who were to travel overnight with the RAW operatives, to Mujib Nagar ... and to establish the Bangla Desh government in exile. The others who accompanied Tajuddin were Nazrul Islam, Mushtaq Ahmed, Syleht Azad and four student leaders - Fazlul Haq Moni, Tufal Ahmed, Abdul Razakar and Shiraz-ul Alam Khan.

The events had drifted well into March and Tikka Khan struck with all his might on 25th March. April 12, 1971, saw the establishment of the Bangla Desh **provincial**<sup>24</sup> government in Calcutta.

**Mukti Bahani** - RAW sanctuaries all along the Indo-East Pakistan border provided adequate cover and the vast border made it difficult for Pakistani security forces to ferret out the Mukti Fauj. The Mukti Fauj was known as the Mukti Bahani two months after its formation on the night of March 25, 1971 ... the role of RAW in helping the Mukti Bahani to become an effective fighting force has yet to be written."

This last sentence even after more than twenty years has still not been the subject of serious study and writers have tended to avoid this entire episode of the war. What this portion from the book illustrates is the close and personal relationship that prevailed from the early sixties right to the start of conflict between the Indian authorities, military and intelligence representatives in East Pakistan with Sheikh Mujib and the Awami League clan. That it continued after independence is tersely admitted to by Asoka Raina as RAW agents were said to have kept an eye on developments in the newly born country which the occupying Indian army were later very reluctant to leave.<sup>25</sup>

## **FORMATION OF THE MUJIB BAHINI**

It would be a grave omission to leave this section without mentioning the name of the chief architect and mastermind in this phase of RAW's 'blueprint' for East Pakistan and whose later machinations in Bangladesh set the stage of increased bitterness and suspicion between the two nations when the country turned nationalist and constitutionally Islamic from 1975 onwards and less dependant on Indian tutelage and guidance - the more important factors in India's calculations for an Akhand Bharat. His name was Rameshwar Nath Kao, the head of both RAW and the Directorate General of Security, and specially appointed for these posts by Indira Gandhi and who was in turn influenced by her father Jawaharlal Nehru who knew Kao personally.<sup>26</sup> Presumably he was also considered the ideal person to implement the vision for an Akhand Bharat which may initially have brought him to the attention of the two Prime Ministers.<sup>27</sup>

It was essentially through Kao that a special relationship developed between the Indian operatives in East Pakistan and the future leaders of Bangladesh who were diligently fostered for that purpose by RAW. Asoka Raina provides a useful overview of this relationship but it fails to convey the warmth and personal bonds that developed between the Awami League leadership and the Indian military and intelligence. That this almost familial association has often been represented in Indian intellectual circles as of a big brother towards a wayward and at times reckless sibling or a master to his loyal dog or slave is scrupulously avoided in Bangladesh but its repercussions are felt today in the troubled relations of the two countries.

Through the divisive policies advocated by Kao before and during the war suspicion and intrigue immediately dominated the post independence political landscape in Bangladesh. It was Kao that accorded special status to certain youth leaders of the Awami League who then formed themselves into the Mujib Bahini and were felt to be the only ones 'who could deliver the goods'. The most prominent and favoured of these youth leaders were Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni, Tufail Ahmed, Shirazul Alam Khan and Abdur Razzak. It was because of their stauncher loyalties and closeness to Sheikh Mujib that they preferred to be named Mujib Bahini rather than be associated with the Mukti Bahini who were said to include amongst their number many of their political enemies. The Mujib Bahini was trained and organized separately under the supervision of Major General S.S. Uban who later wrote a revealing book on his daring exploits with these specially selected 'commandos' in the 1971 war.<sup>28</sup> It is due to this special treatment of Mujib loyalists by RAW that provided the grounds for distrust and misgivings soon after independence as they soon transformed themselves into the much reviled and detested Rakkhi Bahini.<sup>29</sup>

Although Major General Uban nowhere mentions that he was working as a RAW operative and he misleadingly describes his superior, Mr. R.N. Kao, as a mere Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat, we are now fully aware of their real designations within the Indian intelligence apparatus and their true motives in the war.<sup>30</sup> The fact that, the decision to create the Mujib Bahini was made at the house of Chittarangan Sutar in the presence of Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni, Tufail Ahmed, Shirazul Alam Khan and Abdur Razzak at the

end of May 1971 with Major General Uban in attendance<sup>31</sup> unmistakably imprints all those at the meeting as under RAW supervision and control which was later definitively confirmed by Dr. Kalidas Baidya<sup>32</sup> and other experts on Indian intelligence. The key RAW figure at these meetings was undoubtedly Chittaranjan Sutar, who had been appointed Sheikh Mujib's representative in India and had direct access to the Indian Prime Minister and other senior officials of the government. He was later assigned the important task of making Bangladesh a part of India<sup>33</sup> of which the Mujib Bahini may come to have played a crucial role until events escalated out of their control in 1975.

It is, however, clear that during the 1971 war Kao had no intention of giving the Mujib Bahini a free hand in important policy decision making and sought to enflame jealousies and rivalries between different factions of the Awami League and with the other political parties so as to keep all the sides disunited and seeking Indian patronage and support. None of this is overtly mentioned within the pages of Major General Uban's book but the implications and results of these policies are all there for the inquiring historian and general reader of political and historical events. It was also at this time that the political and military chain of command was severely disrupted as the Mujib Bahini did not accept the orders of Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed or come within the control structure headed by Colonel Osmany and General Aurora.

That Kao chose to juggle with the different political personalities and groups reflected Indian uncertainties over Sheikh Mujib's whereabouts and whether he was alive or dead. On his release by Pakistan after the war the Indian government provided full support to him and his acolytes in the Awami League and accepted with alacrity his generous offer to have Major General Uban as his Personal Advisor.<sup>34</sup> One can only speculate on how influential Major General Uban was in formulating the ideology of Mujibism that visualized democracy based on socialism and secularism that was foisted upon Bangladesh with the attendant atrocities committed under its name by what came to be known as BAKSAL (one party rule with Sheikh Mujib as President for life) and enforced by the Rakkhi Bahini both of which are glossed over in Uban's account. His objective in writing the book can be surmised from the epilogue where he provides a

hagiographic and almost surreal portrayal of Sheikh Mujib in order to promote the Indian ideals that distort the political, religious and geographical outcome of 1947.<sup>35</sup>

Sheikh Mujib's blind and sentimental attachment to India heavily tinged with his unlimited and at times irrational ambition led to the eventual and inevitable betrayal of Bangladesh as liberation only brought the dream of Akhand Bharat that much closer as the safeguards to Bangladesh's independence were gradually removed until 1975 when they were again reemployed. This was not the ideal for which millions struggled, fought and sacrificed in 1971. A more independent and self-interested philosophy for Bangladesh could have saved the nation from the coming catastrophes wrought by Indian interference and domination in the internal affairs of the country.

### **APOLOGISTS FOR SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN**

In an earlier part of this essay I dealt with several books that presented contradictory viewpoints on the 1971 war<sup>36</sup> in this section I will try a similar approach on a single biography of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by drawing in relevant points from the analysis and discussion given above. It is hoped that the reader will appreciate the manner and consistency in which India has managed to distort our history in order to fit their requirements for Bangladesh and how our local authors have enthusiastically propagated this slant and been willing parties to the deliberate falsification of historical record and national recollection. It has in recent years become a fashion for authors to ingratiate themselves to populist sentiment and presumably Indian interests to author books that glamorize the life of Sheikh Mujib and portray him in mythical terms unsullied by conspiracy or personal ambition.<sup>37</sup> One such example presents itself in the form of S.A. Karim's, 'Sheikh Mujib Triumph and Tragedy' (2005) which attempts to cover the most significant events that contributed in forming the personality of the Sheikh and the 'East Bengalis' and the social, religious and political pressures that led to the independence of Bangladesh. For most writers this would be an endeavour of immense magnitude and for many beyond their limited capabilities. One is therefore left disappointed by the efforts of Mr. S.A. Karim who should have talent in abundance since he is a graduate of the Universities of Calcutta and Dhaka and the London School of

Economics as well as being a member of the Foreign Service of Pakistan and Bangladesh since 1950.

It is only necessary to refer to one chapter of the book to demonstrate the fabrications adopted to save Sheikh Mujib from controversy and the resultant public obloquy and denigration that would have followed. In Chapter 34 on the Mukti Bahini the author makes the following astounding and thoroughly discreditable statement, "One reason for the dilution of quality of the Mukti Bahini was the siphoning off of the more promising youth to form a parallel force: Mujib Bahini. This was a product of the underhand maneuvers of Sheikh Moni. Since his arrival in India Sheikh Moni had developed a good working relationship with RAW, the Indian intelligence service, through Chittaranjan Sutar. It was Moni who persuaded Kaw [Kao], the RAW chief, that it would be a good thing to have a separate force outside the control of the provisional government. Major General (Retd.) Uban of the Indian Army, who had overseen the formation of guerilla groups of Tibetan refugees, was put in charge of training the Mujib Bahini. Mujib Bahini did not play any active role in the liberation war. It was kept as a force-in-being for possible use after liberation." We know from Asoka Raina and Major General S.S. Uban that RAW was involved in organizing, training and equipping the Mukti Bahini and the Mujib Bahini. It is also untrue that the Mujib Bahini did not see action during the war as Uban details certain operations in which the Mujib Bahini took part in the Chittagong and Dhaka zones. The purpose of this falsehood would seem to be the exoneration of India and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the subsequent debacles and catastrophes that befell Bangladesh after independence and put the blame squarely on the shoulders of Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his band of followers. Although the author names Uban directly he does not provide any reference to where he collected his information on the Mukti and Mujib Bahini and their connections with RAW which could only have come from Uban's and Raina's books. Such an omission is universally considered a lack of integrity and honesty amongst writers and intellectuals the world over especially by those engaged in serious scholarly study.

To draw too fine a distinction, as Mr. S.A. Karim does, between RAW's nurturing of Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and their utilization of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman before and after the war leads one to logical



and historical absurdities and is not consistent with the data now available. Prior to the 1971 war Moni supported Sheikh Mujib on the issue of the 6 point demand against those who favoured a one point demand for an independent socialist state. This fitted in with RAW's program of creating a compliant bahini that would be used to eliminate communists, socialists and others of the leftist persuasion that were viewed as a threat to India. This was particularly so, in the case of the Mukti Bahini who were believed to have a large section of members sympathetic to the leftist cause and who may not tolerate Indian interference in a post-war government in Bangladesh. The purpose behind the creation of the Mujib Bahini was not to fight the Pakistan Army but to liquidate the perceived enemies of India such as the Mizos and the communists and socialists. In reference to the latter two groups this policy of eradication was to be achieved through the secret assassination of known activists *[Many of the murders were subsequently blamed on the Razakers or collaborators to the Pakistan Army who did commit acts of isolated atrocities but not on the scale that has been assumed. That the Razakers were an ineffective fighting force was revealed by L.K. Gen. AAK Niazi, who was the chief of Pakistan Army in 1971. In his book, 'The Betrayal of East Pakistan' Niazi states, "To cater for only one light machine gun and one sten gun per Razaker platoon, we required a minimum number of 2,500 light machine guns and an equal number of sten guns. Unfortunately, we could only provide them with 275 light machine guns and 390 sten guns. This reflects the poor state of weapons with the Razakers. It adversely affected their morale and their overall performance in the field against the well equipped Mukti Bahini. The Razakers felt that they were not being trusted with superior arms."*<sup>88</sup> *The Mujib Bahini on the other hand were a highly motivated force well organized, disciplined and possessing all the weapons necessary to carry out their activities being dictated by Indian intelligence. It is more logical to assume that they were responsible for a significant number of killings which was a mere precursor to what they were to do after independence as the dreaded Rakkhi Bahini.]* These operations began in August 1971 with the entry of the Mujib Bahini into the then East Pakistan theatre of war and their activities involved the betrayal of leftist sympathizers to the Pakistan Army such as Swapon Chowdhury who was the first to propose an independent socialist state for Bangladesh. On the instructions of RAW the Moni faction did not

spare freedom fighters or even members of the Mujib Bahini who were felt to have leftist leanings.<sup>39</sup>

After independence these operations against the communists, socialists and leftist thinkers became a matter of personal ambition and self-gratification for Moni who formed a private army called the Awami Jubo League to continue this process of selective killings which on occasion became very random and indiscriminate. These sentiments of distrust against the leftists were also shared by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who it is claimed had proudly expressed the opinion that the leftists in East Pakistan would be soon eliminated.<sup>40</sup> Sheikh Mujib later used the Rakkhi Bahini, of which Moni was one of the key figures, to exterminate all his opponents<sup>41</sup> who tended to be on the left wing of the politics spectrum and who were also opposed to Indian domination. This was to be the lowest ebb of Sheikh Mujib's rule and was partly brought about by the signing of the Twenty-Five Year Treaty 1972 with India which provided for the formation of a paramilitary group to take on the responsibilities of the army and which also shackled Bangladesh to the security and strategic arrangements imposed by New Delhi, "When Mujib signed this treaty with India, Maulana Bhashani opposed and criticized Mujib for having traded 'the political and economic sovereignty' of Bangladesh to India. Sirajul Alam Khan, the guide of the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal or JSD (Jalil-Rab), also expressed the same view and incited anti-Mujib anti-Indian agitation. And that influenced ordinary people significantly."<sup>42</sup>

It is clear that S.A. Karim has not made the necessary connections between Indian expansionist designs and the complementary gestures made by both Moni and Sheikh Mujib to facilitate their project in East Pakistan and later in Bangladesh. Ultimately Sheikh Mujib became distant and emotionally divorced from the people who made the greatest sacrifices for freedom during the liberation war. This was revealed by a close associate, Ruhul Quddus, who - as a former CSP, Agartala conspiracy case co-accused and drafter of the 6 point demand - was able to acquire first hand knowledge of the Sheikh's personality. According to Quddus, Sheikh Mujib was reluctant to accept the contributions of others in the bringing of independence to Bangladesh. He could not believe that Bangladesh achieved independence in his absence and he never asked those who did the

actual fighting about their experiences or suffering.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, S.A. Karim presents Sheikh Mujib in this period, soon after his return from Pakistan (via London), as a man befuddled by long confinement and easily misled by Moni and to some extent the Indian government but generally ignores the deeper threads interwoven in this story and especially the dark side of Mujib's personality which he glosses over with euphemisms.

Similar inconsistencies, contradictions and fallacies as narrated in Chapter 34, 39 and 40 of S.A. Karim's book appear through out the volume but are most egregious in Chapter 35 on the 'Impact on India'; Chapter 42 on 'Domestic Affairs' but is really a defence of the Rakkhi Bahini; Chapter 50 on 'Mending Fences with India' which merely absolves India of blame on border disputes, the enclaves issue and the Farraka Barrage; Chapter 54 on 'Mujib's Second Revolution' that papers over the unconscionable assault on democracy through BAKSAL; Chapter 55 on 'Siraj Sikder' which unconvincingly searches for an excuse and an alibi to Sheikh Mujib's involvement in the leftist leaders murder; and in Chapter 57 on 'End of the Mujib Regime' which details the plot behind the Sheikhs assassination on 15th August 1975 and ultimately blames Moni for everything that went wrong during the preceding 3 years. Moni has effectively been used as a device to cover up the misdeeds of RAW and the Indian government who are kept well away from the real drama and their voices are represented through the persona of Moni. Basically the book tries to divert our attention away from the real issue of India's schemes and stratagems that were employed in East Pakistan and Bangladesh for their more distant vision of an Akhand Bharat which seems to be the whole purpose of the introductory chapters of S.A. Karim's book which reminisces over a United Bengal.<sup>44</sup>

## **END NOTES & REFERENCES**

1. Khodeja Bejum - Historical illumination on attempts to create a United Bengal and Akhand Bharat (Dainik Ajjal Khobor - November 24, 2003): This is an excellent introduction into how India has made active attempts to reunite Bengal and thereby bring Bangladesh within the larger Indian union. It provides a detailed summation of most of the relevant events, documents and authorities that have engaged in this endeavor.

2. See Rick Fountain - Bangladesh War Secrets Revealed (BBC News World Edition - January 1, 2003)
3. Kuldip Nayar - Facts, not fiction, about Pakistan's debacle in Bangladesh (Indian Express - January 24, 2001); Moudud Ahmed - Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy (1991)
4. Moudud Ahmed - Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy (1991) Ch. 6
5. Salman Akhter - 1971 (<http://faculty.babson.edu/ahussain/Papers/popper.pdf>)
6. Kuldip Nayar - Facts, not fiction, about Pakistan's debacle in Bangladesh (Indian Express - January 24, 2001)
7. Kuldip Nayar - Facts, not fiction, about Pakistan's debacle in Bangladesh (Indian Express - January 24, 2001); Moudud Ahmed - Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy (1991); Banglapedia - Agartala Conspiracy Case([http://banglapedia.org/HT/A\\_0059.HTM](http://banglapedia.org/HT/A_0059.HTM))
8. This now appears deceitful and discomfiting in light of the new evidence of his rapport with India.
9. Banglapedia - Six-point Programme ([http://banglapedia.org/HT/S\\_0426.HTM](http://banglapedia.org/HT/S_0426.HTM))
10. Diaries of Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan 1966-1972 (UPL - 2007) pg. 175
11. Moudud Ahmed Ch. 6; Syed Badrul Ahsan - 7 June 1966: Revisiting the Six Points (The Daily Star - June 7, 2006); M. Waheeduzaman Manik - The Significance of the Six-Point Movement and its Impact on Bangladesh's Struggle for Freedom and Self-determination (NFB - June 8, 2006)
12. Masudul Haq - Bangladesher Shadinhata Juddeh RAW Abong CIA (Bangladesh Independence War: RAW and CIA) (1990) pg. 10-12
13. Masudul Haq pp. 31-32
14. Masudul Haq pg. 35
15. Masudul Haq pg. 44
16. Rick Fountain - Bangladesh War Secrets Revealed (BBC News World Edition - January 1, 2003); After 30 years and a new warming

of relations between the United States and India there is less concern in America if Pakistan were to disintegrate and already eulogies are being written: Michael F. Scheuer - A Back of the Hand (The Washington Times - April 7, 2006)

17. Manjeet Singh Pardesi - Deducing India's Grand Strategy of Regional Hegemony from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives (Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies - April 2005) pg. 29; Robert Dallek - NIXON AND KISSINGER (PARTNERS IN POWER) (Harper Collins - 2007) pp. 344-345

18. Moudud Ahmed Ch. 6; Faiz Ahmed - Agartala Mamla: Sheikh Mujib O Banglar Bidroho (1997 edition)

19. Moudud Ahmed Ch. 6; This outfit has many similarities to the JMB of 35 years later.

20. Md. Zainul Abedin - RAW and Bangladesh (1995)

21. Praveen Swami - Covert Contestation (Frontline Magazine - Volume 22 - Issue 19, Sep 10 - 23, 2005); B. Raman - 'We should leave Pakistan to stew in her own juice (January 18, 2003); Dr. Shireen M. Mazari - India's Unconventional War Strategy (Defence Journal - Vol 3 No. 1 January 1999)

22. I have generally ignored Asoka Raina's paragraph structure which I think is idiosyncratic and have freely adapted it for the ease of reading and comprehension.

23. Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin - The Mitrokhin Archives II (2005) - On page 347 the authors state, "By the late 1960s the Kremlin seems to have come to the conclusion that the separation of Pakistan's western and eastern wings would be in Soviet, as well as Indian, interests. The KGB therefore set out to cultivate the leader of the autonomist Awami League, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ('Mujib'). Though Mujib was unaware of the cultivation, the KGB claimed that it succeeded in persuading him that the United States had been responsible for his arrest in January 1968, when he had been charged with leading the so-called 'Agartala conspiracy', hatched during meetings with Indian officials at the border town of Agartala to bring about the secession of East Pakistan with Indian help. Through an intermediary, Mujib was told in September 1969 that the names of all the conspirators had been personally passed to Ayub by the US Ambassador. According to a KGB report, Mujib was completely

taken in by the disinformation and concluded that there must have been a leak to the Americans from someone in his entourage." (pg. 347)

24. Author's emphasis. What is actually being implied by the term provincial unless he was confusing the word with provisional which I doubt? A Freudian slip perhaps?

25. ...and when they did they left with much of our military equipment, tables and chairs right down to the water faucets and taps. ( see Mohammed Zainul Abedin - No room to pay homage to Aurora (NFB - March 27, 2006)

26. B. Raman - 'We should leave Pakistan to stew in her own juice (rediff.com - January 18, 2003)

27. It should not be surprising that many of the intelligence heads appointed in India have shared similar opinions about the 1971 war and after and in this respect J.N. Dixit, the subject of Part 2A of this article, was the intelligence chief appointed by the Congress party that attained power in the 2004 national elections.

28. S.S. Uban - Phantoms of Chittagong: The "Fifth Army" in Bangladesh (1985)

29. Mahmud Hasan - Mujib Bahini Vs. Mukti Bahini (Holiday - November 11, 2004)

30. It is only in Chapter 16 of Uban's book that a hint is made of Kao's responsibility as external intelligence chief but this is so obscurely stated that a reader may actually miss its implications.

31. Masudul Haq pp. 68, 97, 176

32. In his book 'Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib' to be discussed in the next part; Isha Khan - RAW: An Instrument of Indian Power (Global Politician - August 6, 2006)

33. Sutar's importance to Indian designs, of which the Mujib Bahini were to play an important part, were revealed in an interview of Humayan Rashed Chowdhury, a former diplomat to the UN and India and a former speaker of Parliament, where it had been disclosed to him that Chittaranjan Sutar had been instructed by Indira Gandhi on 28 December, 1971 to make Bangladesh a part of India (Masudul Haq pg. 162)

34. S.S. Uban was only one of many advisers that were sent to Dhaka on secession of hostilities. See Moudud Ahmed - Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1983) and Lt. Gen. JFR Jacob - Surrender at Dhaka (UPL - 1997) pg. 149

35. See page 2 and Chapter 15 of the same book to get a clear appreciation of Uban's views on the Two Nation Theory; See also Manjeet Singh Pardesi pg. 26-27

36. See part 2B

37. However, recent research does seem to indicate that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was not as gullible as the Indians had hoped or wished nor was he as ideologically committed as some of his supporters seem to think (see Tuhin Reza - Mujib, 7 March 71 Speech and Call for Independence (NFB - April 3, 2006). This theory would suggest that at heart Sheikh Mujib was no more than an opportunist who craved power above all else and probably would have settled for a lot less than independence if a power sharing arrangement had been finalized with Yahya Khan. To elaborate on this theory it was due to the arrogance and a lack of perspicacity of the Pakistani central authorities Sheikh Mujib's hand was forced and events moved beyond his control while he was incarcerated on the charges brought against him in the Agartala Conspiracy Case (and on an earlier charge based on the Six Point Demand). Once the students and Awami League leaders were psychologically geared towards independence it was too late for him to back out without losing face so he burned all his bridges and opted wholly for the Indian cause. The only problem with this thesis is that we would be expected to believe that for two decades Sheikh Mujib had been playing the Indians and Pakistanis against each other and simply miscalculated at the last moment! (See also Tuhin Reza - Father of the Nation Controversy: My Comments (NFB - May 25, 2006)

38. This was approvingly quoted by The Daily Star in a report titled, 'Niazi's book mocks Jamaat's claim' on December 19, 2007.

39. Masudul Haq pp. 50, 96, 124, 127, 203, 204; see also Manjeet Singh Pardesi pg. 121

40. G.W. Choudhury - The Last Days of United Pakistan pg. 119 cited in Masudul Haq pg. 65

41. Masudul Haq pp. 131, 155,

42. Abdul Quader Chowdhury - Mutual cooperation can be beneficial (part 1) (Holiday - May 26, 2006)

43. Masudul Haq pp. 136, 169-170

44. Abu Al Sayyid - Shatcholisher Akhand Bangla Andalon (1999); Dr. Kalidas Baidya - Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib (2005)

# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 4

### THE BETRAYAL OF BANGLADESH

*The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.  
(Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam - Edward Fitzgerald)*

Sheikh Mujibir Rahman was confident in the knowledge that India had practically installed him into power through almost two decades of nurturing and cooperation and then direct military intervention in 1971. India could therefore be said to have had a huge investment in his continued occupation of the post of Prime Minister and leader of Bangladesh. This hubris probably started him on his precipitous decline into megalomania, dictatorship and political intimidation. This phase in the country's history has been thoroughly documented by numerous authors of varying quality, depth and bias but what has generally been omitted from these narratives, is the role played by India, in implanting the contradictory premises and ambitions of the different political characters and personalities within the polity of the new nation.<sup>1</sup> As we have already seen the creation of the Mujib Bahini was essentially a policy initiative of RAW. That other groups were also courted by Indian intelligence and military officials indicates that they were not prepared to put all their eggs in one basket but also primarily to ensure that the competing political factions sought out only Indian assistance in 'impartially' adjudicating their internal disputes. The main consequence of this approach was that a combination of these parties could never become a united entity that may one day turn against their supposed benefactors and adopt an independent line from New Delhi.



This is illustrated by the fact that India had no real affection or fondness for Sheikh Mujib who they saw merely as a pawn in their wider political chess game in creating an Akhand Bharat and is expressed in the crudest and coarsest terms by Dr. Kalidas Baidya in his book, 'Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib' published in 2005. It is likely that Sheikh Mujib and the Awami League were aware that they were only tolerated by India for the services that they could render to that country in exchange for the power that would be conferred upon them through Indian arms once Bangladesh achieved independence. It was also probably for this reason that Sheikh Mujib was resistant to declaring independence until the very last moment (Dr. Kalidas Baidya has argued that the Sheikh never actually declared independence) since he correctly realized that a bargain with the West Pakistanis would be better than a pact with the devil. However, once the decision was taken irrevocably out of his hands due to his voluntary confinement in Pakistan he opted completely for the Indian cause on his return to a now independent Bangladesh. Dr. Kalidas Baidya would probably discount Sheikh Mujib's reliability after he took control of power but his subsequent decisions only increased India's stranglehold on Bangladesh which was reversed only after his death by President Ziaur Rahman. It is more than likely that Dr. Baidya is still aggrieved that Sheikh Mujib did not go even further in accommodating Indian interests but it ignores the ground realities in Bangladesh and the sentiments of the people who would not have tolerated further encroachment which may have encouraged a counter-revolution. One should also not make the mistake to think that Dr. Baidya is an impartial and objective observer with no axes to grind or political agendas to fulfill through the falsification and manipulation of facts and opinion. In this same respect, one will not find a consistent and ideologically committed Sheikh Mujib as he was never truly in control of events and was prepared to prevaricate and bargain when it suited him and his ego.

## **BANGLADESH OR EAST BENGAL**

An extensive review of 'Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib' will help to provide insights that will clarify the ambiguities that may be in the readers mind between the independence struggle and India's aim of an Akhand Bharat which was intended to be the logical consequence to an Indian liberated East Pakistan. It will also

shed light on the subsequent calamitous decisions made by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that were to substantially impair the nation's sovereignty and posed a risk to its territorial integrity. Although the term Akhand Bharat does not appear in 'Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib' it is an unspoken aspiration hidden beneath another no less threatening agenda of an independent 'East Bengal' which if successful would lead inexorably to the ultimate prize for India - reunification and the subjugation of the Muslim population. In Robert Dallek's book on the Nixon-Kissinger White House years the agenda for an 'East Bengal' was revealed to be part of the Indira Gandhi administrations policy on the unfolding crisis in East Pakistan. In September 1971, the Indian ambassador to the United States, Lakshmi Jha, asked Kissinger what, "interest the United States had in keeping East Bengal a part of Pakistan." Kissinger had replied that America's aim was to head off not secession but a war that could turn "into an international conflict."<sup>2</sup> This slip by a senior Indian diplomat in her reference to 'East Pakistan' as 'East Bengal' adds immense credence to the disclosures of Dr. Kalidas Baidya concerning the Indian governments aggressive intent in 1971 and its earlier conspiracies.

It should be mentioned at the outset of this discussion on 'Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib' that Dr. Kalidas Baidya is the head of the Bangla Sena, an organization outlawed by Bangladesh and which operates from Kolkata. Official requests by the Bangladesh government have been made to the Indian government to halt the activities of this group but to no avail. This, of course enhances Dr. Kalidas Baidya credentials as a spokesman for Indian designs on Bangladesh and which is further reinforced in the introduction to the book written by Pabitra Kumar Ghosh, a journalist and advisor to the Dainik Bartaman, who assures us that Dr. Baidya had been working for East Pakistan's freedom soon after Pakistan's establishment in 1947.<sup>3</sup> He was also a close associate of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and took on onerous responsibilities which allowed him to witness the changes in this historical period from the vantage point of an insider. He had become acquainted with Sheikh Mujib from the time of the 1952 Language Movement. The information provided in the book, according to Kumar Ghosh, can have only come from Dr. Baidya who has publicized matters that have never before been disclosed about

these historical upheavals. In the final analysis, it is for the reader to determine how much of what has been written in the book is factual, truthful, authentic and reliable and which parts are influenced by the desire to confuse, deceive and manipulate opinion.

It is necessary to adopt a critical approach to the text as under the section titled 'Writers Words' the author makes his viewpoint clear and that the remainder of the book will be tainted with this outlook and perspective. According to Dr. Baidya it was due to the [alleged]<sup>4</sup> oppression of Hindu's in Pakistan that animated him into seeking Pakistan's break up. Once Pakistan had been shorn of its eastern half this separated segment would be enthused by Bengali nationalism that would bring an independent 'East Bengal' into existence. On this premise he devised a plan for 'East Bengal's' actualization but to his great disappointment after Pakistan was divided by the 1971 war no 'East Bengal' appeared. This he blames on Sheikh Muibur Rahman who he claims promoted Islamic nationalism and this remains a sore point for him but the author fails to mention that his own conception of an 'East Bengal' would advance Hindu nationalism at the expense of the majority Muslims in Bangladesh. This threat to the integrity of Bangladesh seemed to have escaped the policy makers in the Interim Government (in the early phase of its administration between March-June of 2007) who had enthusiastically approved a rail and bus service between Dhaka and Kolkata which was been interpreted in the latter city as strengthening a cultural bond as well as connecting the two Bengals.<sup>5</sup>

In the first chapter of the book, 'Our Work Begins in Dhaka' we are told that the author, Chittaranjan Sutar and Nirod Majumder entered Dhaka at the end of 1951. As we already know from 'Sheikh Mujib Triumph and Tragedy' (2005)<sup>6</sup> Chittaranjan Sutar was a RAW operative and so the author unwittingly discloses his own identity as a RAW agent. While Kalidas (Dr. Baidya) gets admitted as a student at Dhaka Medical College to engage with the student community the other two engage themselves in social welfare and start a public relations drive. We are informed that it was behind a curtain of secrecy that the three worked. It is in the chapter on 'Sheikh Mujibur Rahman' that the author expresses his animus towards Sheikh Mujib whose affiliation to H.S. Suhrawardy and his active participation in

the infamous 1946 Kolkata riots indelibly marks him out as suspect and a communalist.<sup>7</sup> It was, however, long before the 1964 Kolkata riots that Chittaranjan Sutar (Chittababu) and Kalidas gave Sheikh Mujib the assurance that all the Hindu's of East Bengal would accept him as their leader and under him support the movement for self-rule of 'East Bengal'. This crucial piece of information fits in very well with the narratives in Faiz Ahmed and Asoka Raina's book providing a third link to a conspiracy involving Sheikh Mujib.

This connection is further strengthened in the following two chapters, 'Understanding with Sheikh Mujib' and 'Six Point base for self-rule demand' but receives its strongest endorsement in the chapter specifically on the 'Agartala Conspiracy'. Both Sheikh Mujib and Chittababu were held as prisoners in Dhaka Central jail where Kalidas' father-in-law was office head assistant to the Dhaka IG (Prisons) and who arranged meetings between the two. Whatever was discussed was passed on from Chittababu to Kalidas who was acting as his physician. If it was necessary for Sheikh Mujib to get out emergency information this would be informed to Kalidas who would then transmit it to the designated persons. In this way secret communications were distributed through Kalidas. This chapter not only provides a link between RAW and Sheikh Mujib but also its modus operandi during the period when the conspiracy was meant to have taken place (1963-1967) and also during the pendency of the trial when surveillance would have been at it's highest.

It is in the chapter on the 'Peoples Freedom Party'<sup>8</sup> that an Akhand Bharat is alluded to and for which a political party was formed in 1970 whose hidden agenda was an independent East Bengal. On the coming of Bangladesh and it's renaming from East Pakistan, Kalidas absurdly states that his party took possession of West Bengal. It was at this time, that Kalidas discovered a lack of political consciousness of the Hindu's. By naming itself Bangladesh it became the rightful owner of the Bangla language and therefore has an unrestrained and unhindered right over it, which was not protested by West Bengal or India. By not discerning this obvious danger, India through its recognition of Bangladesh has accepted a small part as if it considered it as the whole but a part can never be a whole but this was not in the comprehension or understanding of the Indian political leaders at that

time, according to Kalidas. In its convoluted way this chapter presents a political program that advocates the creation of an 'East Bengal' to be amalgamated or absorbed into an Akhand Bharat. It was for this reason that Kalidas and Chittababu's primary objective was for Sheikh Mujib to issue a declaration for the independence of 'East Bengal'. It was agreed that Chittababu would become Sheikh Mujib's representative in Kolkata and would work secretly there for the establishment of an East Bengal.<sup>9</sup> The manner in which this campaign was presented to the people had to be carefully orchestrated so that if Sheikh Mujib did betray them in end the movement could not be stopped and it would continue of its own momentum.

Suspicious were aroused when Sheikh Mujib voluntarily sought detention with the Pakistan Army after the start of the military crackdown when he could have easily escaped along with the other Awami League leaders to India. Kalidas raises the questions as to why Sheikh Mujib did not give a written declaration of independence to his party members who were allowed to flee across the border with RAW's cooperation.<sup>10</sup> It was due to this omission on Sheikh Mujib's part that Major Ziaur Rahman had to declare independence in his stead - this issue still remains controversial<sup>11</sup> and Kalidas is probably the first Indian to discuss this matter so openly. The reason for Sheikh Mujib's behaviour could be that he wanted to negotiate further with the Pakistanis while in captivity but he would be at a serious disadvantage without access to the outside world. The more plausible answer which fits his character<sup>12</sup> best was that he did not want to take the risks associated with war as he was on the verge of achieving personal victory. He did not want to make a final decision on independence until he was sure of the outcome and most importantly he was not confident enough to decide between an independent Bangladesh that may antagonize his Hindu/RAW supporters or an East Bengal that may turn the entire nation against him. The best policy for him was to remain silent until power was handed to him either through a Pakistan power sharing compromise<sup>13</sup> or an Indian military victory bringing in an independent Bangladesh or an East Bengal which would be conveniently decided without him.

From this point onwards Kalidas follows a similar course to other writers that have covered this subject from a RAW/India standpoint.

He identifies Shirazul Alam Khan, Abdur Razzak, Sheikh Moni and Tofail Ahmed as having the greatest contribution to Mujib's rise. In Kolkata these four student leaders and Chittababu had regular meetings along with Abdur Rab Serniabat and then later Sheikh Kamal and Jamal. In the chapter, 'Movement starts in Kolkata' Kalidas digresses back to his favourite bugbear about the renaming of East Pakistan to Bangladesh but he adds an ominous twist to his argument. He states that the Hindu refugees now in India will create a homeland and reside there. Once Bangladesh becomes independent it will be necessary to raise the issue of a homeland but this will be publicized very cautiously and in extreme secrecy. According to Kalidas the Indian government gave its approval for this secret campaign for a Hindu homeland to commence. This could only mean that Bangladesh would be carved up to furnish an enclave or an adjoining area to India so that Hindu's could have their so-called homeland which would be based on an analogy with the state of Israel which is not acknowledged directly by Kalidas but this is evident in his pattern of thinking. In many ways there does exist a similarity of contention made by the Zionists for Palestinian land but in the case of a Hindu homeland India would not settle for less than the entire landmass of Bangladesh which would be the natural progression if only a small portion was to be made available due to the economic repercussions for the country. As an Akhand Bharat cannot be achieved directly it must be attained by a more circuitous route through demands for an East Bengal or a Hindu Homeland.

In the same way that Hitler used false accusations and charges against Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria of oppressing their ethnic German population before invading those countries,<sup>14</sup> Kalidas adopts the same methods as an excuse to interfere in East Pakistan/Bangladesh internal affairs. Staged acts of cruelty against Hindu's were (and are being) used to promote the idea of a Hindu Homeland and to constitute a defense force for their protection. It was for this reason that secret training was to be administered to Hindu youth and to another elite force separate from the Mukti Bahini. This new bahini would be 'non-communal' in character and after independence would take on the main responsibilities normally carried out by an institutionalized army. The members of the bahini would also be involved in and control the executive running of state and would help diminish the power and strength of the 'communist'

**Mukti Bahini.** Chittababu proposed the name of Mujib Bahini that would be led by the student leaders listed above. The student leaders, themselves believed, that if the Indian government gave permission for the activation of the Mujib Bahini and if they were able to work along the lines discussed above then the political and military power would automatically devolve into their hands. As a result, the new government could never be capable of asserting a different course from that desired by New Delhi. Chittababu and Kalidas were of the opinion that the two Bahini's would continue to be plagued by ill feeling and jealousy which would be exacerbated with contradictions that would emerge later on with the Bangladesh government itself.<sup>15</sup> If it was possible to set up a separate Hindu Bahini then this would act as a balance between the competing groups and ultimately would have the final say in the decision making process. The training for the Hindu Bahini would be completely secret and covert with only the Indian Prime Minister and the Army Chief knowing anything about it. Obviously, the Bangladesh government and its Army Chief could not be taken into confidence on this RAW initiative. The proposal for a Hindu Bahini was immediately accepted by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and training for the Mujib Bahini was started under the guidance of Major General S.S. Uban.

The most damning indictment against the Awami League leadership and the student leaders holed up in Kolkata comes at the end of the book in the chapter entitled, 'Pakistan-India war preparations and war'. During the final phase of the conflict or at least very soon after the 1971 war (Kalidas does not specify a date)<sup>16</sup> an agreement was signed between the Bangladesh government in exile by Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam (Sheikh Mujib had not been released by Pakistan by this time) and the Indian government which contained the following seven points:

1. Those who actively participated as Freedom Fighters and were recognized as such would according to ability, run the state administration of Bangladesh and the others would be removed from their employment and service.
2. The Indian and Bangladesh armies would be made into a joint or combined army whose head would be the Indian Army Chief. Only on his command could war be waged.
3. Bangladesh will not have its own military force.<sup>17</sup>

4. Instead a paramilitary force would be established to take care of the internal law and order situation.
5. There will be an open market between the two countries but from time to time through mutual discussions the principles of trade would be settled.
6. The Indian Army will remain in Bangladesh for an indefinite period.
7. India and Bangladesh would have the same foreign policy based on discussions between the two countries.

After this agreement was signed Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took steps for war with Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> On the 16th of December 1971 the Indian Army is said by Kalidas to have taken 'possession' of Bangladesh. In the surrender and sovereignty power document which was signed by General Niazi on behalf of the defeated Pakistan Army and handed over to General Aurora it was nowhere mentioned whether this document was then passed on to the Bangladesh government later on. Kalidas seems to be implying that with the possession of this document still in Indian hands 'legal title' to the sovereignty of Bangladesh remains with India. Kalidas adds that up to this time neither government, separately or jointly, has ever cancelled the 7 point agreement.

It may be useful to note that at the time of signing of the 7 point agreement there did not exist an internationally recognized Bangladesh government with its own territory, army or any of the other recognized symbols of statehood. There were no legitimate representation of the Bangladeshi people, as there was no Bangladesh state for them to be citizens of or represented by, at the signing of this document as the Mujibnagar government was based in Kolkata and was generally understood to be a transitional authority. Doubly detrimental to the agreement's significance is that if all its provisions were scrupulously followed a Bangladesh state or government could not have come into existence to implement them since they would be perceived as mere puppets carrying out the dictates of the central authority in New Delhi which would negate the fundamental attributes of statehood. The lack of a date to the agreement is therefore a deliberate ploy by Kalidas to avoid these uncomfortable



facts and a pretence to entrench in the Indian public's mind the erroneous belief in the legal status and enforceability of the agreement which would by pen and paper have written in 'East Bengal as another province of a still incomplete Akhand Bharat.'<sup>19</sup>

The supposed agreement (of which we have no proof) has no legal validity for the reasons just stipulated and is therefore not binding on the successor administration to the East Pakistan government. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was said to have denounced its provisions when he came to know of it from Tajuddin Ahmad, although, this may have been for public consumption because at least in one respect (point 4) he did see the agreement through to its tragic end when he gave tacit approval for the creation of the Rakkhi Bahini.<sup>20</sup> As for the remainder of the agreement the provisions were given legal validity and effect by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman when he signed the 25 year Friendship Treaty with India. The Treaty came about as a result of growing international disquiet at the Indian army's continued presence in Bangladesh and who appeared to be an occupying force rather a liberating one. Their extended stay was also breeding hostility amongst Bangladeshis because the Indian army was seen taking away, 'the arms, ammunitions, equipments, machineries and even furniture and household goods in convoy of trucks across the border.'<sup>21</sup> For Sheikh Mujib the major cause of concern was that many countries were still withholding recognition because of the Indian army's continuing presence in Bangladesh after the end of hostilities.<sup>22</sup> For these reasons Sheikh Mujib was forced to submit to this Faustian bargain of which the relevant articles are -

**ARTICLE 4** - The High Contracting Parties shall maintain regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting the interests of both States, through meetings and exchanges of views at all levels;

**ARTICLE 5** - The High Contracting Parties shall continue to strengthen and widen their mutually advantageous and all-round cooperation in the economic, scientific and technical fields. The two countries shall develop mutual cooperation in the fields of trade, transport and communications between them on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual benefit and the most favoured nation principle.

**ARTICLE 8** - In accordance with the ties of friendship existing between the two countries each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declares that it shall not enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party.

Each of the High Contracting Parties shall refrain from any aggression against the other Party and shall not allow the use of its territory for committing any act that may cause military damage to or constitute a threat to the security of the other High Contracting Party.

**ARTICLE 9** - Each of the Contracting Parties shall refrain from giving any assistance to any third Party taking part in an armed conflict against the other party. In case either Party is attacked or threatened with attack, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to take appropriate effective measures to eliminate the threat and thus ensure the peace and security of their countries.

**ARTICLE 10** - Each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declares that it shall not undertake any commitment, secret or open, toward one or more states which may be incompatible with the present Treaty.

**ARTICLE 11** - The present Treaty is signed for a term of twenty-five years and shall be subject to renewal by mutual agreement on the High Contracting Parties.

The Treaty shall come into force with immediate effect from the date of its signature.

In a prearranged agreement between the two governments the Indian Army was withdrawn on March 12, 1972 and in return, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi paid a short visit to Bangladesh and signed a Joint Declaration along with the Friendship Treaty on March 19, 1972.<sup>23</sup> As can be seen, the 7 point demand was virtually incorporated in nearly all its respects into the four articles reproduced above except for point 6 which was amended to take into account the new international realities. But the adapted formulation in articles 8-10 has had an equally pernicious effect on the country's sovereignty and national integrity because while Bangladesh was held strictly to the terms of the agreement India followed it more in its breach. India

never intended that the Treaty would apply to it and so disregarded any pretense at a meticulous or faithful observance of its letter or spirit. India's interpretation of the agreement has given the words friendship and amity a novel and different meaning to that found in any dictionary since its lack of sincerity is far removed from the real sentiments behind these words - as shall be seen in Part 5 of this essay - which has resulted in the gradual diminishing of Bangladesh prestige and respect on the world stage during the Treaty's existence and validity which expired in 1997 and has not been renewed.

It may be useful to note in this regard that the terms of the Treaty were very similar to the version India signed with the USSR (The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation, 9 August 1971) but with an important difference contained in Article 11 of that agreement which stated the duration of the Treaty to be of twenty years which could be automatically extended for each successive period of five years unless either party declared a desire to terminate it by giving notice to the other party twelve months prior to the Treaty's expiration. The Treaty would also be subject to ratification and come into force on the date of the exchange of Instruments of Ratification within one month of the signing of the Treaty. These provisions guaranteed the sovereign rights of both countries and respected each nation's internal ratification procedures. Neither of these provisions was included in the Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty which in effect empowered Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to unilaterally enter into an agreement that gave away the nations sovereign rights without the possibility of termination for a period of twenty five years.

In order to accommodate the Treaty into the constitutional framework of the country Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in another act of national infamy and disgrace amended Article 63 of the constitution in 1973 and this amendment is now the last remaining remnant of the invalid 7 point agreement and the defunct 25 year Friendship Treaty. The original Article 63 had read as follows -

(1) War shall not be declared and the Republic shall not participate in any war except with the assent of Parliament.

(2) In case of actual or imminent invasion of Bangladesh by land, sea or air, the President may take whatever steps he considers necessary for the protection and defence of Bangladesh, and Parliament if not sitting shall be summoned forthwith.

(3) Nothing in this Constitution shall invalidate any law enacted by Parliament which is expressed to be for the purpose of securing the public safety and preservation of the State in time of war, invasion or armed rebellion.

By the Constitution (Second Amendment) Act of 1973 clauses (2) and (3) were omitted while providing for preventive detention and conferring power on Parliament and the executive to deal with emergency situations.<sup>24</sup> In other words, without Parliament's assent it would be impossible for Bangladesh to wage war even a defensive one in the face of military attack by a foreign power. This would mean that if Indian troops were to enter Bangladesh in an act of hostile and aggressive intent the country would have to wait for Parliament to convene, debate the threat and then assent or reject the proposal for reprisals, retaliation or war. In the context of Bangladesh's parliamentary politics this would take several weeks to accomplish and by which time the Indian officers would be sitting inside parliament ordering the terms for surrender. Prior to 15 August 1975 this type of walk-over victory would have been much easier for the Indian troops to have achieved as they already a well equipped and trained fifth column awaiting their instructions inside Bangladesh and who were named ominously the Rakkhi Bahini.

## **THE RAKKHI BAHINI AND THE DECLINE INTO DICTATORSHIP**

As we have just seen in Part 3 and in the above discussion India had taken elaborate measures to prevent Bangladesh ever coming out of its grasp and this was assisted by a number of initiatives of Sheikh Mujib on assuming power in 1972. The most far reaching and pernicious was the formation of the Rakkhi Bahini under the pretext that the law and order situation was out of control due to the decimation of the police force and the inadequacy of the Bangladesh Rifles after the events of 1971. With the Mukti Bahini apparently running amok and the availability of arms left in the hands of

thousands of people who fought in the war it was felt that something needed to be done. The intervention of the Bangladesh army was ruled out on the lame excuse that it was still disorganized and that it would appear politically imprudent to seek its assistance in civilian matters. The Awami League also believed that the country would do better without an institutional Army which according to Moudud Ahmed suited the plan of the Indian authorities, "Now that Bangladesh had a friendly relationship with India it was not necessary for her to have a regimental army .... ' It was said that India could be depended upon to stand by Bangladesh in case of external aggression.<sup>25</sup> It was never made clear what would happen if India became the aggressor.

The Rakkhi Bahini soon out grew its law and order responsibilities and became a tool of political repression not merely to those opposed to Sheikh Mujib and the Awami League but also to the blatant Indian interference in Bangladesh. That the Rakkhi Bahini was essentially a RAW inspired phenomenon appears in the writings of the Pakistani defence specialist Ikram Sehgal who claims that the Indian intelligence agency had raised the parallel military organization to be a loyal force to the Awami League and India. The Rakkhi Bahini was headed by Brig. Nuruzaman who had, as Captain in the Pakistan Army, been tried for treason in the famous Agartala Conspiracy Case<sup>26</sup> which would then connect him with the revolutionary organization that maintained contacts with the Indian High Commission in Dhaka already mentioned in Part 3. This contention has only found limited support in Bangladesh<sup>27</sup> but with our knowledge of RAW's role in supervising, training and organizing the membership of the exclusive and elite Mujib Bahini we can for a number of valid reasons come to a similar conclusion to that of Ikram Sehgal especially since Major General S.S. Uban also assisted with the training and equipping of the Rakkhi Bahini.<sup>28</sup> We also know that amongst the Indian trainers of the Mujib Bahini there included a Major Malhotra who also went on to train the Rakkhi Bahini.<sup>29</sup>

The admission (probably inadvertent) by an Indian analyst who has attempted to address the question of why the Rakkhi Bahini was regarded as an extension of India's authority in Bangladesh (even before we were aware of the secretive organization called RAW),

finds a clue in the fact that military equipment was supplied to this paramilitary force by India, as per the request of the Bangladesh government and that they also used an identical uniform to that worn by the Border Security Force<sup>30</sup> - all allegations that were originally raised by Moudud Ahmed in his book, 'Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman' (1983). The Indian writer nowhere makes a categorical denial of these factual assertions but instead feebly opines, "The service provided by the Indian bureaucrats, at the request of Bangladesh government, was considered as interference and the looting - the 'spoils of war' - is a much overstated incident". This partial acknowledgment and concession to the truth by an Indian author simply raises further doubts on the received wisdom from self-appointed experts on the actual genesis of the Rakkhi Bahini. These experts have uniformly viewed the formation of this group as an internal requirement of Sheikh Mujib without any outside input or contribution. The falsity of this claim is countered by the fact that soon after independence a contingent of Indian 'advisers' comprising civil servants and technical experts entered Dhaka to restart the civil administration<sup>31</sup> and as we already know Major General S.S. Uban was appointed as Personal Advisor to Sheikh Mujib so that any request for arms for the Rakkhi Bahini would be in reality akin to any provincial government within the Union of India asking for a similar consignment of weapons from central authorities to quell public unrest or violence.

That after the fall of the Sheikh Mujib government the Rakkhi Bahini sought sanctuary in India to carry out terrorist raids into Bangladesh<sup>32</sup> also further confirms our opinion of a RAW link with the setting up and organization of the paramilitary force. According to Moudud Ahmed the idea of introducing the Rakkhi Bahini into Bangladesh was originally conceived by the government in exile at Kolkata and the conceptual underpinning of the new force was politically motivated for the specific purpose of creating a counter-balance to the Army which would be in the interests of both Sheikh Mujib and the Indian government. This correlation of interests had horrendous effects on the discipline and morale of the Rakkhi Bahini once it became an operational force since its unstated and naturally undeclared function was to carry out extra-judicial killings of opposition groups that had sprung up against the Awami League. It

was widely perceived that the party had increasingly displayed a subservient and slavish attitude to India and this was resented by Bangladeshis who must have felt betrayed by the broken promises of independence.<sup>33</sup>

The legal framework for the Rakkhi Bahini was only promulgated with retrospective effect after training and recruitment were complete and actual operations had started. The language adopted in the Rakkhi Bahini Order provided little legal structure or restraints on the activities of the Rakkhi Bahini as there seemed to be no specific object or scheme contained within its provisions, which merely stated that, 'it [the Rakkhi Bahini] would be employed for the purpose of assisting the civil authority in the maintenance of internal security when required and it would perform such function as the government would direct.'<sup>34</sup> With the minimal of legal constrictions the Rakkhi Bahini commenced on a rampage through out the length and breadth of the country that involved killing, looting and even raping. One author relates the example of a 17 year old boy who was found to have 'disappeared' after four days of torture and the Supreme Court when it finally intervened severely castigated the Rakkhi Bahini for operating outside the law. The court found that the Rakkhi Bahini had no code of conduct, no rules of procedure and no register of arrests and interrogation. Instead of reining in the outfit, Sheikh Mujib in his now characteristic manner stripped the court of its powers to intervene in such matters.<sup>35</sup>

The Indian government was prepared to tolerate many of the excesses committed by Sheikh Mujib, the Awami League and the Rakkhi Bahini simply because everything was done with India's connivance and it was crucial to its strategy that this man, this party and these thugs retained power in Bangladesh at whatever cost. These sentiments are reflected in the propaganda output of two authors who have worked for Indian intelligence during some period in their long and illustrious careers. In the case of J.N. Dixit his principal regret was that Sheikh Mujib did not heed the advice of the commander of the Rakkhi Bahini, Brig. Nurruzaman, to issue the paramilitary force with tanks and armoured personnel carriers.<sup>36</sup> One can only imagine the efficiency and speed with which the Rakkhi Bahini could have accomplished their task of murder and loot with these military

vehicles at their disposal. Mr. Dixit never alludes to the atrocities committed by the Rakkhi Bahini and the other writer under review Major General S.S Uban glorifies their patriotism, independence and fearless character which now seems particularly deceitful and duplicitous in light of what we now know about the Rakkhi Bahini and the help provided by him in training and equipping them for their 'duties' as law enforcers.<sup>37</sup>

From the above discussion and analysis it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been working hand in glove with the Indians to secure his position as unrivalled leader of the independence movement and then as Prime Minister of Bangladesh while at the same time protecting India's interest in having a quiescent and submissive eastern neighbour. But once this realization dawned on the people of Bangladesh civil unrest and sporadic uprisings occurred throughout the country especially where the disastrous economic policies of the Awami League were hardest felt. To subdue this growing despondency and potentially revolutionary situation more extreme and draconian measures were introduced that complemented the barbarities committed by the Rakkhi Bahini.

In quick succession several new laws and constitutional amendments were passed of which the most controversial were the President Order 50, Constitution Second Amendment Act 1973, Printing Press and Publications (Declaration and Registration) Ordinance, Special Powers Act 1974, Proclamation of Emergency Order 1974 and the Newspaper (Annulment of Declaration) Ordinance. These were all intended to stamp out dissent with ruthless vigour but the most destructive of democratic principles was the Fourth Amendment to the constitution that brought in the BAKSAL governing system. The implications of the Fourth Amendment were explained by the leading authority on constitutional law Senior Advocate Mahmudul Islam,

"In January, 1975 the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act, 1975 was passed transforming the Constitution beyond any resemblance with the original. Part VIA was incorporated prescribing that there would be only one political party in the State, thereby rendering a severe blow to the democratic set up of the Constitution. Art. 102(1)



which conferred power on the High Court Division to enforce the fundamental rights was repealed. The parliamentary form of government was replaced by a form of government which was an apology of a presidential form as the normal checks and balances of a presidential form of government were not incorporated. The President became the repository of the executive power of the Republic which he would exercise with the assistance of ministers selected by him. The President was empowered to appoint the Prime Minister and other ministers. The Judges of the Supreme Court were made removable by the President on the ground of misbehaviour or incapacity. The system introduced was a mishmash of parliamentary and presidential forms of government and the upshot was that the President emerged as the all-powerful authority in the Republic."<sup>38</sup>

It therefore came as no surprise to Bangladeshis that in the early hours of 15th August 1975 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his entire family (excepting two daughters then in Europe) were killed along with Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni, Abdur Rab Serniabat and some of their family members.

## **END NOTES & REFERENCES**

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2. Robert Dallek - NIXON AND KISSINGER (PARTNERS IN POWER) (Harper Collins - 2007) pp. 338-339
3. See contradictory opinion: New Age - India wasn't architect of Bangladesh: former RAW deputy chief (August 7, 2007)
4. In the text where I have included brackets with a comment enclosed it is to signify my own opinion and not that of Dr. Baidya.
5. India eNews - Train to Dhaka - a cultural chord between two Bengals (July 18, 2007)

6. See Part 3; Abu Rushd- Raw in Bangladesh (2005) also has the same information. It is likely that Mr. S.A. Karim copied from this book but did not provide a reference to the original text which would constitute plagiarism.

7. See also Bhaskar Roy - BANGLADESH: Searching for a Road (SAAG - December 12, 2007)

8. This issue was again referred to in a later chapter 'Movement Starts in Kolkata.'

9. S.A. Karim in his book phrases it slightly differently, 'Sheikh Mujib Triumph and Tragedy' (2005), "He [Chittaranjan Sutar] was a Hindu Awami Leaguer from Barisal who had been asked by Mujib in the late 1960's to settle in Kolkata in maintain contact with the Indian authorities in case any help was needed from them."

10. Major General S.S. Uban - Phantoms of Chittagong: The "Fifth Army" in Bangladesh (1985); Tuhin Reza - Father of the Nation Controversy: My Comments (NFB - May 25, 2006); Isha Khan - RAW: An Instrument of Indian Power (Global Politician - August 6, 2006); See also Bhaskar Roy - BANGLADESH: Where is India in Dhaka's New Foreign Policy? (SAAG - October 19, 2007)

11. Jalal Uddin Khan - Politics Bangladesh style: Something is rotten at the heart (Holiday - September 15, 2006)

12. It has been said that he could be two faced and in a RAW assessment he was not trusted by the US, USSR or even India who only allowed to remain in power because there was no alternative then available. (Masudul Haq - Bangladesher Shadinhata Judder RAW Abong CIA (Bangladesh Independence War: RAW and CIA) (1990) pp. 138, 142); See also Bhaskar Roy - BANGLADESH: Searching for a Road (SAAG - December 12, 2007)

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14. William L. Shirer - The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (1960)

15. Mahmud Hasan - Mujib Bahini Vs. Mukti Bahini (Holiday - November 11, 2004)
16. Muhammed Zainal Abedin asserts the date October 1971 in his book 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts: A Victim of Indian interference' (2003) on page 117 but it is not clear where he got this information. He does make reference to an interview of Mr. Humayun Rashid Chowdhury (Masudul Hoque - RAW and CIA in the Liberation War of Bangladesh (1991)) but he does not specify whether he got the date from this source or somewhere else.
17. See Dr. Mahbubullah - Bangladesh's national security and its armed forces (October 9, 2006) - An analysis that derived much of its detail and theory from the First Edition of this book.
18. Masudul Haq pp. 92-93
19. It would still lack its Western portion constituting today's Pakistan.
20. Masudul Haq pg. 140
21. Moudud Ahmed - Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman pg 183; Lt. Gen. JFR Jacob - Surrender at Dhaka (UPL - 1997) pg. 150
22. Moudud Ahmed pg. 185; Masudul Haq pg. 165; Lt. Gen. JFR Jacob pg. 150-151
23. Moudud Ahmed pg. 186; see also Abdul Quader Chowdhury - Mutual cooperation can be beneficial (Holiday - May 26, 2006); Isha Khan - RAW: An Instrument of Indian Power (Global Politician - August 6, 2006)
24. Mahmudul Islam - Constitutional Law of Bangladesh (Second Edition - 2002)
25. Moudud Ahmed - Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1983); See also Dr. Mahbubullah - Bangladesh's national security and its armed forces (October 9, 2006)
26. Ikram Sehgal - India and State Terrorism (Globe - August 1999)
27. CAF Dowlah - Crossfire extravaganza: Mindless playing with fire? (New Age - January 31, 2005)

28. Major General S.S. Uban - Phantoms of Chittagong: The "Fifth Army" in Bangladesh (1985); Dr. Kalidas Baidya - 'Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib' (2005)

29. Masudul Haq pg. 99

30. Smruti S Pattanaik - Internal Political Dynamics and Bangladesh's Foreign Policy Towards India (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis - Strategic Analysis Vol. 29, No. 3, Jul-Sep 2005)

31. Moudud Ahmed pg. 2

32. Smruti S Pattanaik - Internal Political Dynamics and Bangladesh's Foreign Policy Towards India (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis - Strategic Analysis Vol. 29, No. 3, Jul-Sep 2005)

33. A.K. Faezul Huq - When 'crossfire' crosses limits (The Independent - October 23, 2004); CAF Dowlah - Crossfire extravaganza: Mindless playing with fire? (New Age - January 31, 2005); Enayetullah Khan - The Limits of Power (November 11, 2004); Pratirodh Durbar', Abdul Awal Thakur, Itihash Parishad, Dhaka,1993 (Pages:102,186,203-4, 258-9); 'Bideshi Sangbadikder Dristitey Sheikh Mujiber Bangladesh', Hasnat Karim, Society for National Studies, Dhaka,1979 (Pages:63, 70-8, 83-6); 'Ja Dekhechi Ja Bujhechi Ja Korechi, Lt Col Shariful Haq Dalim, Nabajagaron Prakashani, Dhaka,2001 (Pages:371-400)

34. Moudud Ahmed - Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1983)

35. Anthony Mascarenhas - Bangladesh - A Legacy of Blood (1986); Moudud Ahmed - Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1983) - the Rakkhi Bahini was subsequently given indemnity by conferring retrospective legality on some of their actions.

36. J.N. Dixit - 'Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relations' (First Published 1999)

37. Major General S.S. Uban - Phantoms of Chittagong: The "Fifth Army" in Bangladesh (1985)

38. Mahmudul Islam - Constitutional Law of Bangladesh (Second Edition - 2002)

# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 5A

### THE AFTERMATH

*Perfection of a kind, was what he was after,  
And the poetry he invented was easy to understand;  
He knew human folly like the back of his hand,  
And was greatly interested in armies and fleets;  
When he laughed, respectable senators burst with laughter,  
And when he cried the little children died in the streets.  
(W.H. Auden - Epitaph on a Tyrant)*

*History is the history of cruelty, not love, as soft men think. We have experimented with every human capacity to see which is strong and admirable and have shown that none is. There is only practicality ... The one true god is death. This is how it is - without cowardly illusions. (Saul Bellow - Herzog)*

The death of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was felt more acutely in India than it was in Bangladesh where there was quite rejoicing at the fall of the tyrant, the disbanding of the Rakkhi Bahini and the repeal of his hated and maligned laws and constitutional amendments. India's quest for its idealized Akhand Bharat also suffered a near fatal setback on the morning of 15th August 1975 but this did not deter them from pursuing their objectives with added zeal now that Bangladesh was finding its own voice distinct from that of India. Many in Bangladesh would lose their lives for this audacity<sup>1</sup> but the nation was on an irreversible course that could only be disrupted through sabotage, terrorism and propaganda but the indomitable courage and determination of the people would not compromise on their new found freedom. India's plans in dissecting Pakistan and then undermining the sovereignty of Bangladesh would in their view hopefully lead to a reunification of the subcontinent was very provocatively (and one might add distressingly) expressed by one of India's most distinguished and highly regarded defence historians and

analysts Ravi Rikhye, "My belief is that India should, at the earliest opportunity, incorporate Pakistan into the Republic, followed by all the territories that composed the India before independence. It is my contention that if India does not expand to fill its natural borders, then the centrifugal tendencies inherent in the situation get the upper hand and the country starts disintegrating inwards. The chaos engulfing us today is no accident: once India was partitioned, then the process of disintegration began and will continue till reversed. The natural boundaries of India encompass the present-day states of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Our geo-strategical imperatives requires a subordinate Sri Lanka, Burma, Nepal and Bhutan, and a buffer Tibet and Afghanistan. It demands that the Indian Ocean be just that, an Indian ocean. No matter what the cost, we must start the process of reintegration. The later we put it off, the more the eventual cost. Because Pakistan is second only to India in terms of wealth and power, the reintegration process must start with that country. Once Pakistan returns to the fold, the combination of the two countries is such that the other states will return at a fraction of the cost and effort. Reintegration can be conducted either peacefully or by war."<sup>2</sup>

There was a third course of action other than peaceful or aggressive reintegration which Ravi Rikhye failed to mention that would be to foment subversion within the country to be reintegrated. This method would gradually wear away the control of government authority and paralyze the state machinery which would force the country to seek accommodation with India. (This was probably what Indira Gandhi meant in an interview with the BBC on August 20, 1975 when she stated, "Whatever be the new situation in Bangladesh, India will remain dominant in the affairs of Bangladesh.")<sup>3</sup> This has been the preferred method in the case of Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Maldives and Bhutan where Indian intelligence has infiltrated all sectors of government, political opposition, print and satellite media, cultural circles and the bureaucracy and state machinery. India is therefore freely able to conduct acts of propaganda, sabotage and terrorism without any risk to itself and also conveniently from within the territory of the target nation.<sup>4</sup> It is also interesting in this respect that Rikhye's notion of Akhand Bharat includes so many countries that were independent of its suzerainty during the British Raj or even that of the Mughal Empire when Hindu, Buddhist, Tamil or tribal

kingdoms and principalities were out of its reach or were allowed to continue on terms. It is likely that Rikhye is harking back to a much earlier period in India's ancient history that can only be sensibly referring to the rule of Ashoka the Great who was the third emperor of the Maurya Empire from approximately 273 BC - 232 BC. His empire encompassed much of present-day South Asia and was even further inclusive of territories and domains from Afghanistan to Bengal to Mysore.<sup>5</sup> It was a Mauryan belief that expansion - an offensive action - was a defensive response and the empire's survival depended on the exploitation and annexation of its neighbours and their divisions.<sup>6</sup> The period that constituted the Mauryan Empire also saw the emergence of a statecraft that was to influence Ashoka's expansionism and was adopted wholesale by the Indian government and its military strategists, diplomats and intelligence agencies of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It was through the writings of Kautilya (or Chanakya), the author of the Arthashastra and the Chief Minister of Chandragupta (approx 321 B.C.E.), that the Mauryan rulers, '... sanctioned the use of covert actions, spies, assassinations, sowing discord among enemy leaders, spread of disinformation, making and breaking treaties as and when they suited national interests, in addition to a host of other 'hyper-realist' stratagems to subdue and subjugate the enemy. According to him, the enemy must be dominated/accommodated or defeated by clever stratagems. However, Kautilya was very aware that stratagems would work only when backed by credible military power."<sup>7</sup>

These methods worked profitably for Chandragupta and his successors including Ashoka and were subsequently used by the Indian intelligence agency RAW to great success in destabilizing neighbouring countries and disintegrating independent states through the practice of the Chanakyan principles of deceit and guile.<sup>8</sup> It is, therefore, of some significance that on January 26, 1950 the Indian government also adopted the Sarnath Lion Capital and Chakra of Ashoka as its National Symbol and which appears on nearly all government seals and official documents as well as on its national flag. On how the Ashoka Empire can again be reunited is the subject of Rikhye's piece and the matter of Bangladesh reappears often within his pages, "In 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was assassinated. Though Mrs. Indira Gandhi first considered intervention and though

the Army alerted three divisions, in the end the Government hesitated and the moment passed. The result: our chance to keep Bangladesh in our camp vanished. India would have been fully justified in intervening under the same doctrine that lets the Soviet Union intervene in Poland and Afghanistan and the Americans, intervene in Nicaragua and Grenada." It was not a moment of hesitation that restrained India from direct military intervention in Bangladesh but simply that Indira Gandhi had called a state of emergency on June 26, 1975 in relation to incidents that were taking place inside her country and the timing would have been extremely inopportune for such adventurism as proposed by Rikhye.<sup>9</sup> After several months had gone by and the turmoil subsided in India the new government could then give its uninterrupted attention to an armed assault on Bangladesh but it would certainly have caused an international outcry and attracted widespread condemnation. There still remained the possibility of arming insurgent groups operating from India and striking into Bangladesh when it would be least expected and causing the most damage to property and life provoking rebellion or inciting revolution.

In an act of despicable treachery Tiger (Kader) Siddique was prepared to offer his services to India to wage a guerilla war or insurgency on Bangladesh. This perfidious proposal was made on the pretext that he [Kader Siddique] was determined to keep alive the memory of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and with that purpose in mind brought 2000 of his followers into India for sanctuary against alleged reprisals in Bangladesh and also to receive unofficial support and funds to regroup themselves for armed combat against the Bangladesh government.<sup>10</sup> According to Asoka Raina the Indian government acceded to these demands but on the condition that it fight within the borders of Bangladesh and for the limited objective of reviving the aspirations of Mujib.<sup>11</sup> If the authorities in Bangladesh were ever to discover the source of Kader Siddique's support base the Indians would falsely accuse the Bangladesh government of harbouring Mizo rebels and allowing China to train them inside their territory. This can be reasonably implied from Asoka Raina's phrasing of this imputation and one could also justifiably interpret Kader Siddique's motivation as being entirely self-serving probably reflecting his ambition to become the heir to Sheikh Mujib's political legacy since both of



Mujib's eldest sons were killed on 15 August 1975.<sup>12</sup> It was fortunate that the Desai government in India did not look at all favourably on the activities of RAW and reduced its manpower and funding and even went so far as to hand over suspected terrorists wanted in Bangladesh.<sup>13</sup> It was due to this internal conflict between the Indian government and its intelligence agency that Kader Siddique's plans came to naught. It was, however, not long before a more propitious atmosphere returned in New Delhi and a more benevolent attitude to RAW's foreign intrigues allowed it to stir up trouble in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

## **INSURGENCY IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS**

After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the disbanding of the Rakkhi Bahini the main theatre of operations for RAW was the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) where ample opportunity lay for it to engineer a secessionist plot that was intended to undermine the integrity and unity of the state leading to the scenario outlined above by Ravi Rikhye for an Akhand Bharat in South Asia. It will be shown in this section that the claims of the secessionists are entirely unjustifiable and that they are aided and abetted by RAW with the concealed motive not for independence but instead a covert amalgamation with India. The conflict in the CHT is so densely overlaid with historical inaccuracies, deliberate distortions and emotive nonsense that a comprehensive survey of the subject becomes necessary to fully understand and appreciate the complex dynamics that are at play in this region of Bangladesh. The differing contentions that have become a feature of the CHT issue predates nearly all the historical materials that have been discussed in this essay and relate to matters that are beyond living memory but with some textual analysis and analytical research it is possible to tweeze out the false claims and demands made by the tribal peoples (especially the Chakmas), who are being sponsored and manipulated by RAW, to secede the CHT from Bangladesh by force of arms. The more justifiable stand has been taken by President Ziaur Rahman, H.M. Ershad and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia whose policies have been to maintain the territorial integrity of the nation and reject outright the attempts at secession by the tribal insurgents and terrorists.

## **Inhabitants of the CHT**

The basis of this section will be a point-by-point refutation of a paper written by Eleanor Dictaan-Bang-oa<sup>14</sup> (Dictaan) entitled, 'In Search for Peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh' published by the UNDP in 2004. As Dictaan correctly points out the area of the CHT is approximately 5, 093 square miles<sup>15</sup> but according to some writers the size of the district had originally been 6, 796 square miles but was reduced twice in the last century in 1901 and again in 1947 by the British colonial authorities to its present approximation,<sup>16</sup> and which now constitutes one-tenth of the total land mass of Bangladesh. It should be pointed out that these diminutions in CHT's total geographical area have come at the cost to Bangladesh's own natural and historical territorial boundaries as the CHT is an integral and inseparable part of the country and any reduction in its size is a corresponding reduction to that of Bangladesh and any further attempts at truncating the CHT would be an intolerable threat to the nations integrity which would justifiably lead to war for its defence.

From this partially accurate beginning Dictaan soon falls into a common error by accepting uncritically the notion that the CHT has been inhabited by several indigenous peoples 'since time immemorial' who are known to have been living there for centuries, with their own forms of governance and sociopolitical institutions - all these statements are highly dubious and not based on facts, historical record or recent anthropological research. The several indigenous peoples or tribes that Dictaan refers to are the Bawm, Chak, Chakma, Khumi, Khyang, Lushai, Marma, Mro (Mru), Pankhua, Tanchangya and the Tripura, none of whom can be remotely described as indigenous to the region of CHT and as Bushra Hasina Chowdhury points out, are of Sino-Tibetan descent, but then in the face of conclusive evidence to the contrary, absurdly describes them as the original inhabitants of this area.<sup>17</sup>

Several Indian writers cited in Mohammed Zainul Abedin's book, 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts - A Victim of Indian Intervention' (2003) and in 'Human Rights Violation in CHT: Myth and Reality' (2005) provide an unbiased and objective assessment of the origins of these tribal peoples. According to BG Verghese, "The tribes live in CHT are of Tibeto-Burman/Mon Khmer stock similar to that found in

India's North-east ... The CHT tribes migrated into the area between the 16th and 19th century with Bengali settlements along the Chittagong coastal plain."<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note that Bushra Hasina Chowdhury (Bushra) makes no mention of the BG Verghese book but provides an unsupported and unreferenced preposition indirectly challenging his findings. According to her, the early Bengali settlement in the CHT took place during the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and the first half of the twentieth centuries for various unspecified reasons<sup>19</sup> - BG Verghese puts Bengali settlements at least a full century earlier implying that on arrival of the tribal peoples in the CHT region it had already been inhabited by the native Bengalis.

In reference to the more numerous Chakma migrants Biroj Mohon Dewan states categorically that, "It is crystal clear that the Chakmas are not the sons of the soil of CHT ...The Chakma's are not the original dwellers of this district (CHT) and they entered Bengal [in the] 14th century having the favour of the Sultan", and the reason for their migration was that they were, "... [being] attacked by the Burmese imperial power the Chakmas became weak and achieved the approval and assistance of the Subadar of Bengal on humanitarian ground to be settled down for the first time on the bank of the river Toinchari to protect their mere existence."<sup>20</sup> Even though the Chakmas are stated to have entered the CHT in the 14th Century their numbers must have been so small that 700 years later the Chakma population would never have exceeded 280, 000 persons<sup>21</sup> as attested to in the 1991 census which showed an even lower figure. It is also worth pointing out that the data provided by Biroj Mohon Dewan confirms that a Mughal administration was operating in the CHT in the 14th Century presumably assisted by Bengali bureaucrats and settlers.

Certain intellectuals identified by Zainul Abedin in 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts - A Victim of Indian Intervention' have tried to establish that a Chakma civilization, culture, literature and language that was distinct from that of the Bengalis existed but their efforts being spurious and contrived have been decisively dismissed by Biroj Mohon Dewan and Ashok Kumar Dewan<sup>22</sup> and many other writers. Bushra Hasina Chowdhury, an active proponent of the Chakma demands for autonomy has also had to admit that, "The Chakmas speak a dialect close to "Chittagonian," a dialect that is spoken by the local people of Chittagong, which is a deviation of the Bangla

language. They also have a script resembling Burmese, but they seldom use the script. Significantly, Bangla, the state language of Bangladesh, is the lingua franca for inter-tribal communication and is understood by most tribes."<sup>23</sup> It is apparent from the above discussion that the tribals are not indigenous to the CHT and may appropriately be described as nomads, refugees and asylum seekers who have no distinguishable cultural characteristics (apart from certain ritual and culinary differences) that would separate them from the native Bengalis, which is an expected outcome from centuries of assimilation with the local people (i.e. the Bengalis).

### **Muslim Influence in the CHT Region**

This of course, does not fit the interpretation presented by Dictaan and Bushra and many Bangladeshi writers, who have rather concentrated on the alleged oppression, perpetrated by Muslim leaders such as the Sultans under the Mughal Empire. They claim that the Sultans were fiercely resisted by the Chakma kings who adopted Muslim names to appease the rulers they were fighting<sup>24</sup>, which seems a singular and peculiar way of expressing defiance and antagonism to the authorities one is aggressively subverting. However, Dictaan suggests unconvincingly, that the Mughal's were never able to subdue the tribal inhabitants and failed to impose its authority in the CHT area. The only concession that the tribal leaders made to the Mughal emperors was an annual payment of cotton bales as a mark of suzerainty (Treaty of 1713) but Dictaan insists that the CHT remained outside their jurisdiction.

As we have already seen, this has been disproved by Biroj Mohon Dewan whose research has confirmed that a Mughal administration existed in the CHT in the 14th Century and also by Bushra Hasina Chowdhury who narrates the story of the Chakma chief Jalal Khan, who refused to pay tribute to the Mughal administrator in Chittagong,

"Consequently he was attacked by the Mogul dewan, or state minister, Kishan Chand, and fled to Arakan, where he died afterwards. By 1737, Chief Shermust Khan yielded to the Mogul authority. Under the influence of the Moguls a new administrative post designated as dewan was introduced in the Chakma tribal administration, and continued up to 1900."

It was not uncommon for uprisings to occur under Mughal rule but the true test of allegiance and fealty is the inscription on the coins issued by Chakma Kings. Numismatic research has discovered coins that bear the names of the Sultan or Emperor and even the term 'Allah-hu Rabbi' were sometimes inscribed upon them as a show of subservience.<sup>25</sup> Whether any of this could be described as oppression by the Mughal emperors is debatable since we would be implanting 20th century European ideas to an 18th century Muslim society that would not have understood these concepts. Intrinsically they behaved as they did, to maintain their empire and to keep order amongst their subjects - thoughts and considerations also playing upon the minds of Europe's monarchs and their powerful advisers and ministers who oversaw the administration of the imperial possessions and colonies. It was also necessary for the European imperial administrators to ensure that their colonial trade was not disrupted by rebellious natives in far away lands who had originally been subjugated to their rule by force - a distinguishing feature of colonialism that is not comparable to Muslim rule in Bengal and the CHT where Islam gained ground through the teachings of holy men, Arab traders and merchants and not as commonly thought by the sword or the scimitar which came much later.<sup>26</sup>

In the many papers, articles and books written on this subject there has been little or no in-depth study of the Islamic influence in the area which would incontrovertibly establish that the Muslims (whether Arab traders, Mughal Generals or Bengali settlers) were the first to inhabit and settle in the CHT region and that Bangladesh is the rightful heir to this history and tract of land that is so closely associated with it. It is necessary, therefore, to explore the literature on the issue of Muslim settlements in the CHT region and come to a conclusion on the strength of their numbers and control and authority of the rulers over this area. According to Dr. Muhammad Enamul Haq, the Arab Muslim settlers in the Chittagong region had gradually grown to be a compact and influential community at around 951-957 A.C.E.<sup>27</sup> and 'had in the course of time organized an independent principality of their own comprising the coastal belt of Chittagong and Noakhali districts, and that the ruler of this Muslim principality bore the title of Sultan.'<sup>28</sup> The title of Sultan most certainly does not refer to the Mughal emperors or any central authority based in Delhi

but it can be inferred that an organized and cohesive community existed in the Chittagong long before the arrival of the Muslim armies. Mohammed Mohar Ali in his magnificent and authoritative book, 'History of the Muslims of Bengal' explains the importance of this initial Muslim settlement in Chittagong,

"It may be noted in this connection that the Muslims first established their political authority in the west and northwest Bengal in the opening years of the thirteenth century A.C... Yet, Arabian influences generally are very thin in this area, whereas these are the most pronounced and extensive in the districts of Chittagong and Noakhali, the very areas which were the last to come under the Muslims' political domination. The only explanation of this peculiar development is that this locality had been exposed to Islamic Arab influences for a long time before its conquest by the Muslim generals coming from the side of northern India"<sup>29</sup>

It was not until Muhammad Tughlaq succeeded to the Delhi throne (March 1325 A.C.E.) that the Muslim dominium under the political authority of the Sultanate was extended from Sunargaon to the east-south-east up to Chittagong.<sup>30</sup> Under Sultan Fakh al-Din, Muslim rule was consolidated over the entire eastern Bengal area up to Chittagong which was said to be well under his control and it was during this period that he proclaimed independence from the Delhi Sultanate and ruled Bengal till his death in 1349 when his son took over but who was then ousted by one Haji Ilyas who founded the Ilyas Shahi dynasty.<sup>31</sup> We next hear of a Sultan Jalal al-Din who acceded to power in 1415 who was a Muslim convert and whose father was a influential and mighty Hindu King named Raja Ganesh. Sultan Jalal al-Din issued coins from Chittagong in 1420 which seems to point to a 'dramatic reassertion of the sultanate's authority through out the delta'<sup>32</sup> but this does not seem to have lasted very long and either the Arakanese or Tippera forces under the rule of the Tripura King Dhanya Manikya occupied the area of Chittagong, less than a century later, from around 1509-1516. It was not until 1516 that Crown Prince Nusrat Shah, or as a Persian history would have it, 'King or prince of Bengal', conquered the territory of Chittagong and made it a Dar-al-Islam.<sup>33</sup>

It is at this point that the Mughals come into the picture with the entry of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur and his son Humayun but

they did not interfere with the Bengal Sultanate under Nusrat Shah who remained on the throne till he was assassinated by Firuz Shah who was himself ousted from power by Mahmud Shah who reigned as the Sultan of Bengal from 1533-1538.<sup>34</sup> It was on the death of Mahmud Shah that the Afghan leader Sher Khan took over power in 1538 and started what became known as the Afghan kingship that lasted till the death of the last king Daud Shah in 1576. Still Bengal did not come under the Mughal sway due to pockets of resistance from Afghan warlords and it was during this troublesome period that the Arakanese ruler Meng Khamaung extended his authority up to Chittagong where he built a fort and stationed a strong naval garrison.<sup>35</sup>

The conquest of Chittagong was undertaken by Emperor Aurangzeb's maternal uncle Shaista Khan and in a naval battle with the Arakanese fleet on January 26, 1666 defeated the enemy navy and effectively brought the whole of northern Chittagong under Mughal control.<sup>36</sup> The suzerainty of the Mughals was extended through out the CHT region in the coming decades and the only threat to their authority came from the British, after King James II while renewing the charter of the East India Company, specifically empowered them to make war and peace and to enter into alliances with the Indian rulers.<sup>37</sup> So from the period of Muhammad Tughlaq to the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah in 1757 the only forces that opposed Mughal rule were the Arakanese (allied with the Portuguese) and then later the British commercial interests but nowhere is it mentioned that tribes in the CHT ever stood against their rulers. In fact the only people that have been described as indigenous to the region share no physical or cultural similarities to the tribes mentioned by Dictaan above and as Richard Eaton's description of their social practices suggest they either died out or converted to Islam,

"The Chittagong interior was at the time [1666] inhabited by indigenous peoples described as having dark skin and little or no beard. And their religion, wrote Abu'l-fazl, 'is said to be different to that of the Hindus and Muhammedans. Sisters may marry their own twin brothers, and they refrain only from marriage between a son and his mother.' The material culture of these people was based on jhum, or shifting cultivation."<sup>38</sup>

Dictaan claims that the tribes she describes in her paper are the Jumma People - a word derived from jhum - but this is clearly a

mistake since they do not resemble in any conceivable way the indigenous inhabitants described in the quotation above. It is likely that the original inhabitants simply became extinct through their obnoxious social practices or converted to Islam because soon after the Muhgal conquest of 1666, 'mosques and shrines began proliferating throughout the Chittagong hinterland' which was the outcome of a grants system provided for an emerging religious gentry who built hundreds of mosques and shrines dedicated to Muslim holy men. They also converted forest lands into rice fields and the indigenous inhabitants became rice-cultivating peasants, 'at once both the economic and the religious clients of a new gentry.'<sup>39</sup>

This method of gradual conversion and the initial settlements of the Arab traders and merchants in Chittagong afford a reliable explanation to the results of the first official census of 1872 which showed Muslims totaling 70 percent and more in the Chittagong, Noakhali, Pabna and Rajshahi districts.<sup>40</sup> This corresponds to 2, 323, 008 Muslim inhabitants in Chittagong alone (and of these 5, 025 claimed foreign ancestry) which easily out numbers all the tribal people's identified by Dictaan several times over.<sup>41</sup> It is my contention that these tribal peoples never amounted to a significant proportion of the population of the CHT at least until 1900 and the majority that now inhabits that region probably migrated there during the better part of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries with only a tiny minority that can trace their roots to the fourteenth century when the Muslim Subadar permitted a few Chakmas to settle in the area on humanitarian grounds in their flight from the Burmese King.

## **END NOTES & REFERENCES**

1. Zainul Abedin in his book 'Raw and Bangladesh' makes the following statement in Chapter 30, "A noted Indian parliamentarian Mr. Subramaniam Swamy, provided important insight about RAW's plan to assassinate Ziaur Rahman. He stated in an interview given to the weekly magazine 'Sunday', 'RAW had plotted the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman with 'approval from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Mr. R.N. Kao, the RAW Chief and Shankaran Nair, a senior official of RAW had plotted to kill General Ziaur Rahman. The scheme was already at an advanced stage with Mrs. Gandhi's approval. But the Congress government fell and Mr. Morarji Desai became Prime Minister. Mr. Desai was appalled to learn about



- assassination plan. He called halt to the murder plot. The RAW warned the Prime Minister that it was too late to back out now and that many RAW assets would be endangered if the plan was aborted at this stage. However, Desai remained adamant and finally RAW abandoned the assassination.' Mr. Subramaniam Swami commented, 'Zia was assassinated after Indira Gandhi returned to power but India said that she was not involved.' See also Abu Rushd - RAW in Bangladesh (2005) Chapter 7 pp. 68-71 and Samsuddin Ahmed - Destination of Khaleda and Hasina unknown (HOLIDAY - June 15, 2007)
2. Ravi Rikhye - The War That Never Was (Chanakya Publications (1988))
  3. Rabindranath Trivedi - Indo Bangladesh Relations and Coup in August 1975 (Asian Tribune - August 4, 2007)
  4. A method that was expertly devised by the KGB as disclosed in 'The Mitrokhin Archive' by Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin (2000)
  5. Ashoka (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka>); Vincent A. Smith - The Early History of India (1962) pp. 169-171
  6. Manjeet Singh Pradesh - Deducing India's Grand Strategy of Regional Hegemony from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives (Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies - April 2005) pg. 32
  7. Manjeet Singh Pardesi pg 20; see also Majumder, Raychaudhuri & Datta - An Advanced History of India (Second Edition -1950); Vincent A. Smith - The Early History of India (Fourth Edition - 1964); Subir Bhaumik - Insurgencies in India's Northeast: Conflict, Cooption & Change (East-West Centre - July 10, 2007) pg. 10
  8. Gp Capt SM Hali - RAW at War - Genesis of Secret Agencies in Ancient India (Defence Journal - Feb/Mar 1999); Isha Khan - RAW: An Instrument of Indian Power (Global Politician - August 6, 2006)
  9. The reasons behind Indira Gandhi's decision to call a State of Emergency which virtually paralyzed Indian decision making on Bangladesh after 15th August 1975 and prevented an immediate military response can be gleaned from 'The Mitrokhin Archive II ' by Christopher Andrews and Vasili Mitrokhin.
  10. Subir Bhaumik - Insurgencies in India's Northeast: Conflict, Cooption & Change (East-West Centre - July 10, 2007) pg. 31
  11. Asoka Raina - Inside RAW the story of India's Secret Service (1981); see also Abdul Quader Chowdhury - Mutual cooperation can be beneficial (Holiday - May 26, 2006)

12. Dr. Kalidas Baidya - *Bangaleer Muktiyuddhe Antaraler Sheikh Mujib* (2005)
13. Asoka Raina - *Inside RAW the story of India's Secret Service* (1981)
14. Who writes for Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples International Centre for Policy Research and Education), Baguio City, Philippines
15. Dr. S. Kharat gives the figure of 5, 138 sq. miles in his research paper 'From Internal Displacement to Refugees: The Trauma of Chakma's in Bangladesh (2003); While reading through the paper I was amazed at the number of inaccuracies and imprecise data contained within its pages.
16. Mohammed Zainul Abedin - *The Chittagong Hill Tracts A Victim of Indian Intervention* (2003). Since the writer provides no reference it is not clear where he got these figures but one can assume they came from the British land records. Also see S. Mahmud Ali- *The Fearful State: Power, People and Internal War in South Asia* (1993) also cited in Abedin's book.
17. In Part 1 of Bushra Hasina Chowdhury - *Building Lasting Peace: Issues of the Implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (ACDIS Occasional Paper - 2002); This is a point that even Amnesty International has chosen to accept without any real investigation into the history of the region (*Bangladesh - Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Amnesty International - February 2000) pg. 2); Dr. Nandita Chaudhuri - *Ethnicity, Human Rights Violation and Colonial Legacies in Bangladesh: The Post-colonial Trajectory of the Jummaland Movement* (2003) pg 3-4
18. BG Verghese - *North East Resurgent Ethnicity, Insurgency, Governance, Development* (1996); Quoted on pg. 53 of Zainul Abedin's book *The Chittagong Hill Tracts A Victim of Indian Intervention.*; Dr. Nandita Chaudhuri - *Ethnicity, Human Rights Violation and Colonial Legacies in Bangladesh: The Post-colonial Trajectory of the Jummaland Movement* (2003) pg. 3-4
19. Part 1 of *Building Lasting Peace: Issues of the Implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (see note 11)
20. Biroj Mohon Dewan - *The Chronicle of the Chakma Nation* (1969); Quoted on page 8-9 of 'Human Rights Violation in CHT: Myth and Reality' (2005) by Zainul Abedin.; *Global IDP Project - Profile of Internal Displacement: Bangladesh* (January 21, 2005) pg 20; Dr. Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury & Dr. Mohammed Abdur Rab - *Parbata Chattagram Bhu-Ragniti O Biponno Sharbovhumoto (Chittagong Hill Tracts Geo-Politics and Endangered Sovereignty* (1997)) pg 7-10

21. This is even after we take account of the 40 000 or so Chakmas that migrated to India during the 1960's.
22. Ashok Kumar Dewan - An investigation into the history of the Chakma Nation (1991); Mohammad Zainal Abedin - CHT tribes are not 'Adivashis' in Bangladesh (Thomas Paine's Corner - August 26, 2006)
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24. Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelly - The Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh: the Untold Story (Centre for Development Research - 1992)
25. Mohammed Zainul Abedin - The Chittagong Hill Tracts A Victim of Indian Intervention (2003) pg. 62; Richard M. Eaton - The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760 (OUP 1997) pp. 53, 54
26. Richard M. Eaton - The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760 (OUP 1997)
27. A.C.E. stands for 'After the Common or Christian Era' and B.C.E. refers to 'Before the Common Era' which has replaced AD and BC as acceptable historical terms for the periods they refer to.
28. Muhammad Mohar Ali - History of the Muslims of Bengal (1985) pp.37-38; Dr. Muhammad Enamul Haq - Purva Pakistane Islam (1948) pg 17
29. Mohar Ali pg. 40
30. Mohar Ali pg. 117
31. Mohar Ali pg. 122-123, 126
32. Eaton pg. 54
33. Mohar Ali pg. 201, Eaton pg. 237; Majumder, Raychaudhuri and Datta - An Advanced History of India (1961)
34. Mohar Ali pp. 217-231
35. Mohar Ali pp. 235-348
36. Mohar Ali pp. 433-442; Majumder, Raychaudhuri and Datta pg. 493
37. Mohar Ali pg. 507
38. Eaton pg. 236; See also Mohammad Zainal Abedin - CHT tribes are not 'Adivashis' in Bangladesh (Thomas Paine's Corner - August 26, 2006)
39. Eaton pg. 239
40. Eaton pg. 119
41. Rafiuddin Ahmed - The Bengal Muslims 1871-1906 (OUP 1988) pg. 17

# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 5B

*"Miraculous results can be achieved by practising the methods of subversion"*

*(The Arthashastra - Kautilya)*

### Causes of the CHT Insurgency

With Shaista Khan's victory over the Arakanese fleet in 1666 and his appointment as Viceroy of Bengal by the Mughal Emperor Aurengzeb, disagreements started almost immediately with the English traders represented by the East India Company and were aggravated further under diwan and naib-subahdar of Bengal Murshid Quli Khan who remained in this post from 1713-1727. This state of affairs continued until the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah in 1757 through a conspiracy involving the British and members of his own administration such as Mir Jafar, Amir Beg, Yar Latuf Khan, Khadim Husain Khan, Jagat Seth, Nanda Kumar, Mir Madan and Sri Babu as well as powerful Hindu interests represented by Govinda Ram Mitra, Manik Chand, Rai Durlabh Ram and Umichand.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence of this defeat the CHT region was ceded to the East India Company in 1760 by Qasim Ali Khan, the deputy governor, of Bengal and in 1860 it was annexed to the province of Bengal (Act No. XXII of 1860) in retaliation for raids on the British 'carried out by the people living in Mizoram, farther to the east'<sup>2</sup> but reportedly not by the Chakma tribesmen or other inhabitants of the CHT. Dictaan, however, claims that in 1776, the CHT peoples waged a war of resistance against the British East India Company and that the CHT remained relatively autonomous from British control until 1860. This is the first time that the tribal peoples of the CHT makes a significant and noteworthy appearance in the historical records relating to the Mughal and British periods and is only referred to by Dictaan and Bashra without any further supporting evidence from where we could test its authenticity. According to Bashra, Chief Sherdaulat Khan (of the Chakma tribe) having stopped payment of taxes to the East India Company in 1777

brought instant retaliation from the company which resulted in intermittent wars between the two groups which lasted till 1785 when Jan Baksh Khan, the son of Sherdaulat, finally submitted to Warren Hastings.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the wide discrepancies between Dictaan and Bashra one may also question why this episode appears in no other reputable and authoritative publication. A far more plausible explanation about the unrest is that it was in fact the Mizos of present day Mizoram in India that posed the greatest threat to the British in the CHT during the late eighteenth century and not the Chakmas who seemed to have remained relatively docile after their initial confrontation in 1777. Modern writers have deliberately confused the two tribes to give some authenticity to their claims that there was continual resistance by the inhabitants of the CHT to foreign or external authority and control. As Dr. Nandita Chaudhuri has pointed out, it was to fend off Mizo attacks from the east that the British stationed troops on the eastern borders of the CHT.<sup>4</sup> It may at the very least be stated that a minor incident involving the Chakmas was enlarged upon and exploited by the British as a pretext to occupy the CHT in gradual phases and to prevent further Muslim immigration and settlement in the area.

The myth of Chakma resistance was later propagated by the British authorities against the Muslim settlers and Jan Baksh Khan seems to have been used as a mere conduit or mouth piece for future policy initiatives, as he is said to have precipitated the crisis with the British due to his prohibition of the plains people (Bengali Muslims) from entering the CHT.<sup>5</sup> This interdiction was subsequently incorporated into Regulation 1 of 1900 (popularly known as the 1900 Regulation or Manual) which gave the British the authority to impose restrictions on Bengali immigration and land ownership and later amendments clearly enunciated the intent behind these arbitrary powers,

"No person other than a Chakma, Mogh or a member of any hill tribe indigenous to [the] Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Lusai Hills, the Arakan Hill Tracts or the state of Tripura shall enter or reside within the Chittagong Hill Tracts unless he is in possession of a permit granted by the Deputy Commissioner at his discretion."<sup>6</sup>

Under Rule 51 of the Regulations the District Commissioner was also empowered to expel non-tribal people from the area and was enforced through the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police Regulation of 1881 which determined that the police force would be manned by the tribal peoples and likely led to intimidation and threats to the Muslim settlers who now found themselves disempowered and at the mercy of the hostile client tribes of the British.

The motive behind the introduction of these discriminatory provisions was to reverse the results of the 1872 census which showed an overwhelming number of Muslim's in the CHT region<sup>7</sup> who could have posed a serious threat to British operations in the area and also in their use of the port facility especially in a time of crisis or rebellion as occurred in 1857. The 1900 Regulation also had the intentional effect of favouring certain tribes over others through the division of the CHT into three revenue circles, each headed by a Rajah. The three circles were known as the Chakma, the Mong and the Bohmang which was essentially given jurisdiction over the other ten tribes in the CHT. This privileged position was enhanced when the CHT was accorded special status as a 'Totally Excluded Area' as provided by the Government of India Act 1935, 'which meant relative autonomy for the CHT under the jurisdiction of their traditional chieftains, with direct administration by the central government.'<sup>8</sup> Put together these changes were a classic example of the 'indirect rule' and 'divide and conquer' strategies of the British Raj,<sup>9</sup> which in this particular case rendered the rightful owners and inhabitants of the CHT (the Muslims) mere second class 'subjects' in their own lands, while hypocritically claiming to 'preserve minority tribal culture and heritage'.<sup>10</sup>

The contradictions in this policy became more pronounced during the negotiations on the Partition of India in 1947 and the decision on whether to include Calcutta and Chittagong in East Pakistan which would have been the most appropriate course as both regions possessed a Muslim character, history and population. The burden of drawing the new boundaries in Bengal fell upon Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a strange choice considering that he knew nothing about India and had 'never written about it or become involved in any of the complex legal problems. Indeed, [he] had never set foot on the subcontinent.'<sup>11</sup> He

was, however, assisted by expert Boundary Commissions that were to demarcate boundaries on the 'basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims, and in doing so to take into account also other factors'<sup>12</sup> that were never specified. Due to the deep divisions between the different members on the Partition Council a public statement was issued pledging its members to accept the awards of the Boundary Commissions whatever they might be and to enforce them impartially.<sup>13</sup>

The unfairness in the demarcations made by the Boundary Commission especially in regard to Calcutta which was basically traded off for the CHT is a direct consequence of the 1900 Regulations and the promotion of certain newly discovered tribal groups against the much larger Muslim population that inhabited the Chittagong region. This was reflected in the stilted phrasing of certain basic questions that Sir Cyril considered to be important in making his awards in Bengal,

1. To which of the two States [Pakistan or India] was the City of Calcutta to be assigned, or was it possible to divide the City between them?
2. If Calcutta as a whole must be assigned to one State, what were the latter's indispensable claims to territory such as adjacent river systems on which the life of the city and port depended?
3. Who was to have the Chittagong Hill Tracts, with their small Muslim minority but their intimate physical and economic association with East Bengal?<sup>14</sup>

It was quite disingenuous to lump all the tribal groups into one block as it was only the Chakma tribe that sought autonomy and the Muslims only became a minority due to the 1900 Regulations that restricted their settlement in the CHT. If the actual demographic calculations were to be made the Muslim population and the ten tribes other than the Chakmas would have constituted an absolute majority but the questions were framed in such a way to as to leave open the door for a deal on Calcutta (which also had a large Muslim population) that was to be given to India, however, unjust this would

be to East Pakistan. Even with such a favorable outcome for India their contingent never accepted these boundaries and their reaction to the CHT/Calcutta formula devised by Sir Cyril is significant in that it was sign of what was to come in the following decades.

In a letter sent by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (a Congress leader) to Mountbatten about a deputation of the Chittagong Hill tribes<sup>15</sup> (probably only the Chakmas since none of the other tribes cooperated with India after 1947) who had expressed to him their 'grave' fear that their area was to be included in Pakistan made the following remarks related in H.V Hodson's, 'The Great Divide',

"I have told them,' wrote Sardar Patel, 'that the proposition was so monstrous that if it should happen they would be justified in resisting to the utmost of their power and count on our maximum support in such resistance.' The Chittagong Hill Tracts were in fact awarded to Pakistan. No reason was given by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, but according to the Governor of Bengal, in advice to the Viceroy, the whole economic life of the people of the Hill Tracts depended upon East Bengal."

This may have been a belated attempt at redressing the wrongs committed by the British in the CHT against the Muslims since the passing of the 1900 Regulations or it could be simply trying to make the loss of Calcutta appear more palatable to the Bengali Muslims. Either way the Congress Party's representations in favour of the Chakmas were a mere ruse to keep the province of Bengal united and under Hindu control and influence. It was with the backing of these communal interests that some Chakma groups in an act of pure opportunism raised the Indian flag on August 15, 1947 in the CHT. The pro-Indian Chakmas had even called for an armed struggle which was quickly abandoned as they soon accepted the inevitable when the Baluch regiment of the Pakistan army took control of the region.<sup>16</sup> In the case of the Congress Party and the powerful Hindu interests in Calcutta the partition of Bengal was only grudgingly accepted with the hope of a retrieval of the lost portion at some point in the future. They continued to raise murmurs against what they considered an unfair distribution in favour of the Muslims who they had thus far become accustomed to discriminate against educationally,



economically and politically and which was aptly demonstrated in their condescending attitude to a proposal by the British authorities for a university in Dhaka since the, 'Muslims of Eastern Bengal were in large majority cultivators and they would benefit in no way by the foundation of a university'.<sup>17</sup>

The Congress Party had already expressed many of these same anxieties and sentiments in their opposition to the proposed administrative division of Bengal in 1905 by the British Viceroy Lord Curzon. The original proposal of 1902 put forward by Andrew Frazer, later lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, had been to enlarge the province of Assam with the addition of the eastern districts of Bengal (to be separated from the administrative structure of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) that was reportedly favoured by local opinion in Chittagong<sup>18</sup> but was vociferously opposed by the Congress Party and West Bengal's powerful Hindu business and political elites. David Gilmore in his biography on Lord Curzon notes that, 'While no one in the area wanted to belong to Assam, the Muslim inhabitants, who formed seventy per cent of the population, would be happy with a new province based at Dacca to which Assam could be united.'<sup>19</sup> This amended proposal was anathema to the Hindus in West Bengal whose protestations formed the basis for their subsequent petitions to the British in 1947 during the consultations on the findings of the Boundary Commission reports and the heated negotiations within the Partition Council.

This obdurate stand on a United Bengal (i.e. an Akhand Bangla) that animated Hindu opinion in 1905 had clouded the views of many in India and West Bengal and was to sour relations with its Muslim neighbour for many years to come. The growing animosity between the two religious communities that originated over their conflicting stands on the 1905 partition was discussed in a recent book by Nitish SenGupta whose anti-Muslim bias and support for a reunified Bengal and an *Akhand Bharat*<sup>20</sup> is quite obvious as he proclaims, "Thus a great divide had already been created when the partition of Bengal, a sinister move to curb the influence of the anti-British Hindu elite, took place on 16 October 1905. No doubt the anti-partition agitation was the first of the great people's movements against colonial rule. But, paradoxically, except for a handful like barrister Abdulla Rasul,

the majority of the Muslims in East Bengal supported partition and viewed the great anti-partition agitation as an attempt to deny them an opportunity to have a Muslim majority province and as an all-out effort by the Hindus to continue their dominance - an aspect that has been ignored by Indian national historians.<sup>1121</sup> Nitish SenGupta tends to gloss over the fears of ordinary Muslims about the cultural and economic domination perpetrated by Hindu elites and projects the Muslims as having been against the movement for independence but as events unfolded it was clear that Congress leaders had a better understanding with the British than the Muslim leadership. It was these same political, social and religious Hindu elites (which also included many 'secular' Hindus) who later desired to see the entire region reunified along the pre-1947 partition boundaries of an Akhand Bharat. This is abundantly clear from the writings of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar and Dr. Kalidas Baidya who later contested East Pakistan's right to the CHT and objected to the 'infiltration' of Muslims into the region during the era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The award of Chittagong to East Pakistan in 1947 has, therefore, remained a particularly sore point and the depth of feeling as illustrated in the context of 1905, is articulated in a book by Abu Al-Sayeed entitled, 'Shat Cholisher Akhand Bangla Andalon: Purbo Pakistan theke Bangladesh' (47 United Bengal Movement: East Pakistan to Bangladesh). Sayeed argues that after the division of Bengal in 1905 when Dhaka became the capital of East Bengal, Kolkata had been grievously insulted and the greatest harm was inflicted upon the Kolkata seaport. It was feared that Kolkata's importance would be reduced by a vibrant and successful Chittagong port and there would be economic repercussions for all of West Bengal's Hindu society especially the business and merchant classes.<sup>22</sup> It was, therefore, with some relief in the Bengali Hindu community that the partition of Bengal was revoked by George V at the Delhi Durbar in 1911. However, after the partition of 1947 India's Bengali Hindus again reverted back to the 1905 position and sought the recovery of the CHT and the Chittagong Port facility through the use of secessionist movements or by negotiation and inducements as was offered in one case by former Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, at a seminar in Dhaka, organized by the Centre for Policy Dialogue in 1998. He had proposed the floatation of a sub-regional economic zone comprising the CHT and Chittagong with Tripura and Mizoram states

of India<sup>23</sup> that would have resulted in the virtual annexation of the CHT and the Chittagong port from the rest of Bangladesh<sup>24</sup> and embroiled the country in the disputes surrounding the insurgency afflicted regions of the Indian North-East.

With such communal and ethnic divisions prevailing in India the situation of the CHT since 1947 may be viewed quite favorably when compared to the condition of the once independent states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam,<sup>25</sup> Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura which were annexed by the British and ceded to India after 1947. They were never before dependent on New Delhi and were free from its suzerainty since time immemorial and they have a distinct culture and history separate from the Indian peoples. Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur only became a state of India in 1972, Nagaland in 1963, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh achieved this status in 1987 and in all of these cases there is an insurgency brewing with regular outbreaks of violence and unrest.<sup>26</sup> The CHT as we have seen is in direct contrast, an integral, dependant and an inseparable part of the Bangladesh main land for the best part of 800 years when the first Muslim settlers arrived on Chittagong's shores and Bengali settlements started in the region during the rule of the Bengal Sultanate and the recent insurgency by the Chakmas is merely a consequence of India's interference to redress the dispensation of 1947.

### **The CHT from 1947-1971 - The Pakistan Period**

During the Pakistan period the special status and immigration restrictions imposed by the 1900 Regulations were repealed and in 1964<sup>27</sup> its designation as a 'Totally Excluded Area' was constitutionally abolished reestablishing Muslim authority over the CHT region. It was due to this legal, political and constitutional change in the CHT's status that a sudden reversal of the discriminatory effects of the 1900 Regulations was witnessed with the CHT's lowland population increasing by about five times from 26, 000 to 119, 000 between 1951 and 1961.<sup>28</sup> If the natural rate of population growth and demographic progression was allowed to continue unimpeded from 1900 then one can only imagine the improvements that would have come from large scale habitation and land use in the intervening fifty years but instead

the area was allowed to remain stagnant, uncompetitive and monopolized by British commercial and trade interests.

In an effort to modernize and develop the CHT region the Pakistan government approved the Kaptai Hydro-Electric Project (1959-63) funded by the United States Agency for International Development. Other important investments were made in the area through the setting up of the Karnaphuli Paper Mills which utilized the dense forests in the CHT hinterland where different varieties of timber were introduced and there was already an abundance of teak and bamboo to facilitate the production of paper pulp.<sup>29</sup> However, in the construction of the Kaptai Hydro-Electric Project (hereafter referred to as Kaptai Dam) it is estimated that 54,000 acres<sup>30</sup> or 40% of the total cultivable land was inundated and that almost 100, 000 tribal peoples (mostly from amongst the Chakma tribe<sup>31</sup>) were rendered homeless.<sup>32</sup> One may cogently argue that this is the inevitable and acceptable costs of progress for the greater good of the nation provided that all precautions and necessary measures have been taken for the rehabilitation and resettlement of those affected by the dramatic changes in their environment and adequate compensatory packages are made available to those affected.

Amongst the many writers, commentators and experts on the CHT issue there appears a sharp divergence of opinion as regards the compensation and rehabilitation measures undertaken by the Pakistan government, as the figures on the actual assistance package differs very widely<sup>33</sup> but overall it does appear to have been grossly inadequate. This became a cause of continuing resentment amongst the Chakmas in particular, who were the worst affected by the project, but their protests seem to have been quire subdued and never turned violent or militant at least during the Pakistan period. This maybe explained by the fact that Raja Tridib Roy, 'Chief as well as symbol of integrity and cohesion of the Chakma tribe, was pro-Pakistani in his political outlook. When Bangladesh came into being in 1971, he remained in and subsequently opted for Pakistan, leaving the Chakma tribe without a chief until 1978.<sup>34</sup> This demonstrates that even within the Chakma tribe there were many who were naturally inclined to the Muslim rulers but the problem of the displaced peoples provided India with the opportunity to interfere in the CHT as they had always promised to do since the partition of 1947.

It is estimated that almost 40,000<sup>35</sup> displaced peoples (predominantly Chakma) voluntarily migrated to India after the construction of the Kaptai Dam which had caused their displacement and for which insufficient funds and assistance had been provided by the government. But this was also a problem that all Bengali Muslims had to face in regard to the much needed input and investment in all sectors of the East Pakistani economy that was reportedly being diverted to West Pakistan to build their capital city. Many of these refugees went to the sparsely inhabited areas of Mizoram, Tripura, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in India and in the last of these states their initial attempts at getting Indian citizenship failed. Only when reports surfaced that the government might be seeking to evict them that the Supreme Court of India ruled that the Chakma people living in Arunachal Pradesh were Indian citizens<sup>36</sup> but the government allegedly continued with the evictions in violation of the court order.<sup>37</sup> This is symptomatic of India's treatment of all displaced peoples under its own river linking, irrigation and dam projects and the Sardar Sarovar reservoir instantly comes to mind, as well as the 3600 other dams that India has commissioned since Independence and which Arundhati Roy has roughly calculated to have displaced 33, 000, 000 - 50, 000, 000 people for which no provision or assistance was rarely or ever provided.<sup>38</sup>

With this background it is obvious the manifold grievances, misunderstandings and outright hostility that India could exploit and manufacture for its own advantage in order to redress what it perceived as an unjust award of the CHT to East Pakistan in 1947 as well as entirely rewrite the Partition program to bring in an Akhand Bharat. A strong believer in this idea was Major General S.S. Uban, who we have already met in parts 3 and 4, and whose operations in the CHT during 1971 was to become the precursor to future militant insurgency movements in the area in the following three decades after Bangladesh independence. In his book, 'Phantoms of Chittagong' he dedicates an entire chapter to the Mizo tribe that were the indigenous inhabitants of Mizoram. To include an entire chapter on a tribe that was irrelevant to the outcome of the 1971 war and the military operations undertaken in Chittagong, there is a certain incongruity in its inclusion in the book unless one looks back at the overall British policy on the CHT and its relation to the tribal groups in Mizoram,

Tripura and Myanmar. As we have already seen the 1900 Regulations stated that no person other than a Chakma, Mogh or a member of any hill tribe indigenous to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Lusai Hills, the Arakan Hill Tracts or the state of Tripura could enter or reside within the Chittagong Hill Tracts unless he was in possession of a permit granted by the Deputy Commissioner at his discretion.

The Arakan Hill Tracts is located in present day Myanmar and the Lusai Hills now constitutes the separate state of Mizoram in India which seems to suggest that through the fiat of the 1900 Regulations the British were forging an alliance with the disparate tribal groups that inhabited this area and to create an autonomous zone encompassing all the geographically contiguous regions bordering and including the CHT. The British soon came to realize that the CHT could not be equated with Mizoram or Tripura since the latter regions had a long history of independence and self-government and whose inhabitants were predominantly tribal in character and outlook not tainted by exposure to foreign ways and thinking until the arrival of the Europeans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the case of Tripura the tribal kings had ruled for hundreds of years without interruption and in Mizoram the Mizo tribe who had originally arrived from China at around the 5th Century A.C.E. still now accounts for almost two thirds of the entire population.<sup>39</sup> Mizoram was appropriately designated a 'Totally Excluded Area' in 1935 alongside Assam which helped in enflaming their sentiments and passions for freedom and liberty inculcated by the British that led to demands for independence soon after their incorporation into India. The involvement of the British in sowing the seeds for future instability has drawn the ire of Major. General S.S Uban and the establishment that authorized him to eliminate the Mizo threat during the 1971 war,

"The British Government banned any kind of political organization in these sensitive border areas, but British missionaries were given full facilities to convert these simple tribes into Christians and spread Western education and culture into these areas as much as they could absorb.

Mr. Macdonald, the British Political Officer, played the notorious villain's role and wrote pamphlet after pamphlet to educate people in what he called their self-determination. He used the Church leaders

and Missionaries to warn Mizos about their cultural and religious exploitation by India and the impending danger of their complete Indianisation and losing the recently acquired Western tastes. He went to the extent of threatening Mizo Union leaders with dire consequences if they did not stop towing the line of the Indian National Congress, the majority freedom party of India. He told them, "You would be treated as traitors and the future generation would dig your very bones out of the graves and scatter them in muck."<sup>40</sup>

It is indicative that the British took a completely different line with the tribal people of the CHT and did not try to proselytize them into their way of thinking and rejected outright the idea of a confederation with India which had been put to the Congress Leadership by the Hillman Association that had been formed by some traditional Chieftains of the area in 1946. On the other hand, the situation of the Mizo tribes was substantively different in terms of both history and culture so that calls for liberty and freedom could not be simplistically attributed to the teachings of British missionaries and diplomats alone. On 22 October 1961, a political party was formed in Mizoram that named itself the Mizo National Front (MNF) led by its President Mr. Laldenga<sup>41</sup> who had expressed the desire for an Independent Mizoram State and who is said to have authorized the creation of insurgent bands<sup>42</sup> to violently realize this dream if necessary. It was the duty of Major General Uban to infiltrate and then crush the Mizo tribe in his guerrilla operations in the CHT during the 1971 war and a useful pretext for these actions was to scapegoat the Pakistani and Chinese militaries<sup>43</sup> and divert attention of his Special Frontier Force into attacking Mizo strongholds in the region where many had sought refuge. What Uban fails to have mentioned is that on the commencement of hostilities with the Pakistan Army it was well within their rights to assist freedom movements in Mizoram and cooperate with the Mizo tribal insurgency in combined operations against the Indian military. In most cases, however, it seems the Pakistanis and Mizos were acting defensively and it was the SSF that was the aggressing party as can be surmised from Uban's retelling of his exploits in 'Operation Eagle'.<sup>44</sup>

Another aspect of Uban's mission can be gleaned from chapter 9 of his book in which he provides detailed descriptions of the geography and topographical features of the CHT area that bear the hallmarks of

a typical military surveying and reconnoiter of the region for possible future use. This information was probably of invaluable assistance in RAW's coordinating the Chakma secessionist insurgents, the Shanti Bahini, from the 1970's onwards. Uban tacitly indicates that this cooperation started during the 1971 war with the inducement that the SFF would be used to destroy the Kaptai Dam<sup>45</sup> (a plan that was subsequently abandoned presumably on the premise that the Indians would need it when they were able to wrench away control of the CHT from Bangladesh) but their instructions were eventually confined to the more limited but no less important objective of securing the Chittagong Port facility.

It is Uban's open admission of Mr. Rameshwar Nath Kao's<sup>46</sup> full support in all 'legitimate action' for the SFF that leads us inexorably to the RAW historian Asoka Raina who expressly admits to a link between the Indian intelligence agency and the Shanti Bahini,

"Towards the extreme end of Bangla Desh in the eastern borders, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Chakma guerillas operated, who like the Mukti Bahini, had closely assisted RAW operatives and the Indian Army during the liberation of Bangla Desh. The features of the Chakma tribesmen were no different from the Mizo rebels, who were also equipped with arms to be used for prolonging the insurgency in India's North-East. The Chakmas offered to lose themselves in the Chittagong hill tracts and infiltrate among the Mizo rebels, and pass on information to the Indian government, in lieu of asylum to their families. This offer was accepted."<sup>47</sup>

This was the prelude to the sustaining and deepening ties between RAW and the Shanti Bahini that was renewed after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. In a more contemporary setting the above discussion also helps explain India's eagerness for transit rights<sup>48</sup> that would dissect Bangladesh offering a direct route to the fractious North-East states and indirectly assist in the prolongation of the secessionist insurgency in the CHT which could be then more easily controlled and integrated to the wider scheme for an Akhand Bharat as we shall see in the next part.



## END NOTES & REFERENCES

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# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 5C

*"In the enemy's country, those who are easily subverted shall be won over by conciliation and gifts. Those who are not easily subverted shall be tackled by sowing dissension, use of force or by pointing out to them the defects of their own king." (The Arthashastra - Kautilya)*

"Undeclared war is using secret agents and occult practices against the enemy" (*The Arthashastra - Kautilya*)

### **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the CHT**

On the independence of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971 and the installation of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Prime Minister the new nation was instilled with the combined ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism and a national character that emphasized the 'exclusive primacy of Bengali culture, heritage, language, and the sacrifices made by the Bengalis in the liberation struggle' being the emotive sentiments expressed by the PM during the debate on the draft constitution. Apart from raising certain ambiguities in our relations with the majority culture and population of West Bengal additional vagueness was introduced in the original constitutional provisions of Article 3 which declared the state language to be Bengali and the related Article 6 that made the citizens of Bangladesh to be henceforth known confusingly as Bengalis. This all demonstrated a lack of understanding in the leadership of Bangladesh between the concepts of culture, language, history and ethnicity with that of citizenship and the rights that such legal status accords to the holders of that entitlement and privilege whether by birth or naturalization. As a result or at least as an excuse, Manabendra Narayan Larma, the Chakma leader and a member of the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly in 1970 and a prominent figure in the politics of the CHT<sup>2</sup>, 'refused to endorse the constitution, since it did not recognize the existence of other national communities or sub-national identities.'<sup>3</sup> During the constitution making process and in the

very early years of nation building, a delegation led by the Mong King Mongfru Shine,<sup>4</sup> which also included M.N. Larma amongst the delegates, met with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1972 and submitted a four-point manifesto that could be interpreted as the beginnings of their secessionist designs: (1) Autonomy for the Chittagong Hill tracts, including its own legislature; (2) retention of Regulation 1900 in the Constitution of Bangladesh; (3) continuation of the tribal chiefs' offices ; and (4) a constitutional provision restricting the amendment of Regulation 1900 and imposition of a ban on the influx of the non-tribal people into CHT.<sup>5</sup>

Sheikh Mujib rejected the document in a furious rage and urged the indigenous peoples to embrace Bengali nationalism and assimilate into the majority culture.<sup>6</sup> With the benefit of hindsight and our knowledge of the ensuing secessionist insurgency this was probably the worst approach to take with the Chakma leaders and an alternative appeal based on citizenship obligations and duties could have been offered to the delegates citing the Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provisions) Order, 1972 and the Citizenship Act 1951 which was just then being amended by Sheikh Mujib's legal experts. Sheikh Mujib should have pointed out the rights and duties associated with citizenship and explained to the delegates the meaning of the legal expression 'permanent resident' which could be altered by simply leaving the country with the intention of never returning and adopting a new domicile of choice as the Chakmas had originally done when they settled in the CHT in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries and again when 40, 000 of their tribe left permanently for India after the building of the Kaptai Dam. It is glaringly obvious that 1, 2 and 4 of the delegations demands were inherently contradictory to the territorial integrity of Bangladesh and therefore contrary to the acquiring of citizenship in the new nation which they were entirely free to vacate as they had no other rights that could be enforced - since they were clearly not indigenous to the CHT region. It may be redundant to mention that the 1972 Constitution made no provision for special status for the CHT and the demands that could have been accepted (see note 5 below) were ultimately rejected due to the inclusion of the demands on autonomy and retention of the 1900 Regulation which were the principal reasons for the manifestos submission.

As a consequence or in anticipation of this failed meeting with Sheikh Mujib the Rangamati Communist Party was secretly formed by M.N. Larma on May 16, 1972. The Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Association (PCJSS - The Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti) was also launched as a mass contact organization for this party in the same year, although, it appears to have been formed some months earlier to the Rangamati Communist Party.<sup>7</sup> The main purpose of the PCJSS was to campaign for the autonomy of the CHT and was based on the Panchayat system<sup>8</sup>, with members supposedly elected by the village members but was in reality a dictatorial and highly selective body consisting of Chakma tribesmen who were the predominant force in its make up and operations. The Shanti Bahini was the next to be unleashed on the CHT region forming the armed wing of the PCJSS and the group most responsible for human rights abuses in the area. Their introduction on the scene in January 7, 1973 was separated by less than 8 months from the floating of the PCJSS which shows a well prepared plan and program of action.

The two constitutional principles that held together the nation and defeated the arguments for autonomy or secessionism were virtually obliterated by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in another of his ill conceived and servile decisions that gave an added incentive to the PCJSS and the Shanti Bahini to engage in a low intensity war with the Bangladesh government in the CHT. The provision for a unitary state in Article 1 and the territorial integrity of Bangladesh contained in Article 2 were both gravely undermined when Bangladesh entered into the Land Boundary Agreement signed by Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in May of 1974. Article 1.14 of the agreement stated, "India will retain the southern half of South Berubari Union No. 12 and the adjacent enclaves, measuring an area of 2.64 square miles approximately, and in exchange Bangladesh will retain the Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves. India will lease in perpetuity to Bangladesh an area of 178 metres x 85 metres near 'Tin Bigha' to connect Dahagram with Panbari Mouza (P.S. Patgram) of Bangladesh." In compliance with the agreement Bangladesh ceded Berubari and even passed the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1974 to achieve this but India has not reciprocated by leasing the Tin Bigha corridor to allow access to Dahagram and Angorpota which was



agreed through an Exchange of Letters on October 7, 1982 between the Foreign Minister of India Narasimha Rao and Mr. A. R. Shamsud-Doha, the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. Both the Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court of India ruled that the lease of the Tin Bigha was completely lawful but the Indian government still procrastinates after more than 32 years of the signing of the 1974 agreement.<sup>9</sup> This surely can be described as another example of the ubiquitous Akhand Bharat phenomenon in Indian statecraft and politics which is also singularly a vision shared by some of the Chakma insurgents<sup>10</sup> and any cessation of land can only provide encouragement to such groups especially when so carelessly given away. It was only with the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that dealings with India rigidified and the government's attitude to the PCJSS and the Shanti Bahini became far less tolerant or lenient. The general public's outlook was also increasingly guided by the nation's self interest and in maintaining its territorial integrity and any type of encroachment in any vicinity of Bangladesh was fiercely repelled with the help of the army or BDR even when the country's political will became fearfully hesitant or was entirely absent as happened during the last Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina (e.g. incursion into Baraibari, Roumari upazila, Sylhet on April 18, 2001) which contributed to her party's landslide defeat in the 2001 elections.

### **The Situation from 1975-1981**

After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman direct military intervention by India had been considered but was eventually dismissed as being prohibitively risky with the political turmoil created by the State of Emergency (called by Indira Gandhi on June 26, 1975) the situation could have taken a more serious turn bringing international condemnation and censure if the Indian government had taken armed recourse in response to the events inside Bangladesh. Alternative modes of interference were, therefore, adopted and RAW was instructed to actively seek out, communicate and engage with the Shanti Bahini developing upon a prior relationship with the Chakmas during the 1971 war.<sup>11</sup> RAW began training the members of the Shanti Bahini to carry out subversive activities to destabilize the CHT region<sup>12</sup> and their collaborative network was further reinforced with the setting up of terrorist camps on Indian territory in direct violation of the terms of the 25 year India-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty, ". In

1975, the RAW was instructed to assist the Chakma rebels with arms, supplies, bases and training. Training was conducted in the border camps in Tripura but specialized training was imparted at Chakrata near Dehra Doon. Shantu Larma's Shanti Bahini members were flown to Chakrata and then sent back to Tripura to infiltrate into Chittagong Hill Tracts. A RAW office and its operatives at Agartala monitored the progress of the trainees. In 1976, the Shanti Bahini launched its first attack on the Bangladesh force. A new insurgency had been born and India's secret war in the hills of Bangladesh had begun."<sup>13</sup> That the CHT insurgency was initially used as an alternative to direct Indian military intervention in Bangladesh and as a response to the events of 15th August 1975 also appears clearly in a paper written by BBC correspondent Subir Bhaumik, who writes,

"The immediate provocation for the Indian sponsorship of the Shanti Bahini guerillas, made up of Chakma, Marma and Tripura tribesmen, was the military coup that killed Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and many members of his family. To Indira Gandhi, the coup amounted [to] a political act in defiance of India. Within a week of the coup, senior RAW officials arrived in Tripura's capital, Agartala to take the Chakma dissident leaders of the Chittagong Hill Tracts to Delhi for negotiations ... [The] PCJSS was slowly veered towards a course of confrontation with Dhaka. The opportunity came in 1975 when Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was killed in a military coup and an angry India took the initiative to arm and train the Shanti Bahini. By the end of 1979, India had trained seven to eight hundred guerillas of the Shanti Bahini including its entire military leadership. Just before Mrs. Gandhi was defeated in the 1977 parliamentary elections, RAW officials told the Shanti Bahini that India was prepared to support upto 15, 000 guerillas with both light and heavy weapons like mortars. Shanti Bahini leaders remember how they were asked to get used to dry Indian-made rations for deep penetration strikes inside the CHT."<sup>14</sup>

This low intensity war started taking a serious toll in human lives and property from 1977 onwards when the Shanti Bahini initiated attacks on the Bangladesh military and paramilitary personnel and their bases in the CHT, as well as against non-tribal settlers, 'resulting in hundreds of deaths and the abduction of foreign nationals for

ransom money.<sup>15</sup> These incidents of kidnapping and extortion convinced multinational companies like Shell to withdraw their investments in the area and abandon their oil exploration projects to the detriment of the entire Bangladesh economy which could have benefited hugely from any hydrocarbon deposits found in the region.<sup>16</sup> On assuming power in 1975, President Ziaur Rahman took several decisive and proactive steps to rein in the insurgency and rectify the imbalance created by the 1900 Regulations in the demographic make up of the CHT area that was originally embarked on by the Pakistan authorities and by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman but both in a limited and negative fashion simply continuing the policy of unrestrained movement into the region as prescribed by Article 36 of the Constitution that guarantees to every citizen the right to move freely throughout Bangladesh and to reside and settle in any place therein. Taken alongside Article 42 that accords to every citizen the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property the only bar to entry into the CHT would be the personal considerations of safety and socioeconomic advancement. Sheikh Mujib did not inspire much confidence in his abilities to secure a safe environment for new settlers and his sycophantic administration was lacking in inspiration and also in new policy measures and the guidance provided by the necessary bold initiatives of a great leader. All these defects are reflected in the small number of internal migrants (from other parts of Bangladesh) to the CHT, at around a mere 50, 000 individuals (which is likely to be an exaggerated figure) from 16 December 1971 to 15 August 1975.<sup>17</sup> Even this small number was considered a serious threat by Dr. Kalidas Baidya who blames the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman administration for 'artificially' increasing the Muslim population in the CHT and antagonizing the Chakmas who took up arms in response to these intrusions. According to Kalidas the Muslims were infiltrated into the CHT to try to transform the region from a Dar-al-Harb to a Dar-al-Islam<sup>18</sup> which would probably be the biggest obstacle to his program of an Akhand Bharat and RAW's attempts at secession of the CHT. He has, however, failed to mention that Crown Prince Nusrat Shah had already proclaimed the CHT area a land of Islam as long ago as 1516 A.C.E. This could not, therefore, be the real cause of Chakma resentment on which the premises for conflict has been based but on an altogether different supposition related to a determination made by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman early in his career as Prime Minister.

If, therefore, the true cause of the Chakmas frustration that had been implanted by Sheikh Mujib could be removed then the will to fight might be sufficiently pacified to allow for compromise and discussion and secure the entry for Bengali migrants into the CHT region. President Ziaur Rahman by Proclamation Order 1 of 1977 wisely amended Article 6 of the constitution which now prescribed that all citizens of Bangladesh would henceforth be known as Bangladeshis denoting an inclusive and non-discriminatory entitlement and equal representation for all ethnic, cultural and religious groups within the states jurisdiction. This, however, did not mollify the Chakma rebels who now wanted unreasonably to impose the provisions of the 1900 Regulation on the CHT by coercing the government to stop settlements by Bengalis from the plain lands. President Ziaur Rahman ignoring these unjustifiable demands took active measures to encourage settlers to move into the area and with the assistance of USAID, the Government of Sweden, the World Health Organization and UNICEF he was able to provide the migrants with 'transportation, money, a six month food supply, and 2.5 to 5 acres of land for each family'.<sup>19</sup> This consequently became a contentious and politicized issue with RAW sponsoring several highly prejudicial conference reports and book publications disclosing inflated and inconsistent figures for the numbers of Bengali settlers moving into the region that ranged from 441, 000 Muslim individuals during the period of 16 December 1971 to 24 March 1982 onwards<sup>20</sup> or 400, 000 Bengalis up to 1985<sup>21</sup> and in another estimate the same number in the short space of 1979-1984<sup>22</sup> and regardless of which approximation is adopted the government managed only to bring the number of Bengalis residing in the CHT to 473, 301 as recorded in the 1991 census report. That the RAW sponsored figures and the corresponding aggregates are fabricated and can be proven to be logically irrational is patently evident if one considers that during 1951-1961 the lowland population of the CHT increased from 29, 000-119,000 so if a similar number entered the area from 1961-1971 the Bengali settlers would exceed 200,000 which only allows for a further 200,000 settling in the period between 1971-1991<sup>23</sup>. The manipulation of these statistics was intended to legitimize Chakma violence by artificially inventing new causes for unrest that was meant to conjure up comparisons with the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip but which has no basis in the factual

situation on the ground nor in the historical backdrop to the CHT region which had been under Muslim control for the better part of 800 years.

President Ziaur Rahman continued to promote immigration into the CHT from other parts of Bangladesh by creating opportunities for social and economic advancement in the area by setting up the Chittagong Hill Tracts Board and an Export Processing Zone. A Multisectoral Development Program was also undertaken with a view to create the 'necessary conditions for the longer-term socioeconomic development of the region'<sup>24</sup> but it was mainly due to the intransigence of the PCJSS and the Shanti Bahini under the guidance and supervision of RAW that prevented a more sustained economic take off in the area. With the 1977 ambush of an army convoy by the Shanti Bahini the CHT region was brought under the GOC of the Twenty-Fourth Division<sup>25</sup> of the Bangladesh Army and counter-insurgency operations were started which involved in some cases the relocation of a few tribal peoples to cluster villages aiming at the isolation of the militant Shanti Bahini cadres<sup>26</sup> and also the creation of the Village Defence Police to allow the Bengali settlers to resist their attacks.<sup>27</sup> Due to the upsurge in violence instigated by the Shanti Bahini in 1977 several thousand Chakma tribe's people left for the Indian state of Tripura. It actually became incumbent upon them to go there if they could not live peaceably as citizens of Bangladesh or suffered a conflict of loyalties in that regard - in the end they clearly preferred being stateless refugees living in squalor and deprivation in India. Midway into his presidency Ziaur Rahman had appointed Rajmata (the mother of the Chakma King) Benita Roy as his advisor, later to be replaced by A.S. Prue Choudhury to reassure the Chakma tribe of his good will and sincerity towards them and his commitment to resolving the issues plaguing the region but 'the political move did not produce the intended results, as both advisors belonged to the royal family and the insurgents did not have much confidence in their efficacy.'<sup>28</sup> In a further attempt at consensus building the President set up a Tribal Convention on 2 July 1977<sup>29</sup> to mediate between the government and the PCJSS but was also subsequently rejected by them as internal dissension within that organization escalated as many Chakmas must have felt that doing RAW's bidding was no longer in their interests. With the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in

1981 - who was rumoured to have been killed in a conspiracy organized by RAW - negotiations with the PCJSS were temporarily stalled.

### **Negotiations with the PCJSS & The Final Betrayal**

Opportunities for negotiations again opened up after Lt. General H.M. Ershad seized control of the Government in a coup on 24 March 1982 ousting an ineffectual Justice Abdus Sattar and appointing himself President. Internal infighting between the PCJSS and the members of their militant wing resulted, 'in the killing of all thirty members of the Shanti Bahini and injuring twenty-two others. Manabendra Narayan Larma, the leader of Shanti Bahini was also killed on 10 November 1983'.<sup>30</sup> This civil war within the PCJSS split the organization into two factions, one led by the brother of the slain leader, Jyotindra Narayan Larma (widely known as Shantu Larma), and Priti Kumar Chakma. The Priti faction reached agreement with General Ershad in 1985 and 300 fighters of this breakaway group accepted a rehabilitation package offered by the government but which was rejected by the main body of the PCJSS now headed by Shantu Larma.<sup>31</sup> Ershad achieved this breakthrough by following the policies adopted by President Ziaur Rahman that included continuing the counter-insurgency operations, taking steps to develop socioeconomic structures and pursuing initiatives to ensure a comprehensive political settlement.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the situation in the CHT deteriorated in 1986 after the Shanti Bahini massacred 38 Bengalis and injured 24 in the northern villages of the CHT in Tainting, Tanakkopara, Sentilla and Assalong and in response, Bengali communities took swift and violent reprisal on the local tribal communities which led to an organized exodus<sup>33</sup> of 50, 000 Chakmas to five refugee camps situated at Kathalchhari, Karbook, Pancharampara, Silachhari and Takumbari in the Indian state of Tripura.<sup>34</sup>

Dialogue between the government and the PCJSS was revived under the auspices of the National Committee of the CHT and in the second of these dialogues held on 17-18 December, 1987, the Chakma delegation put forward a five-point demand that unequivocally set out a proposal for autonomy and if implemented even partially would have eventually led to secession. The five

demands were subdivided into 47 sub-demands<sup>35</sup> which called for devolved authority to the CHT under a Regional Council that would have limited executive powers and but the ability to approve its own annual budget independently from the central government in Dhaka. The salient points of the demands as set out by Dictaan were: 1. Removal of non-indigenous peoples settled in the CHT after 1947; 2. Withdrawal of all Bangladeshi armed forces from the CHT including non-indigenous police force; 3. Retention of the CHT regulations of 1900 and a constitutional provision restricting its amendment; 4. Autonomy for the CHT with its own legislature and recognition of Jumma nation's right to self-determination; and 5. Deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force and implementation of these measures under the auspices of the UN.<sup>36</sup> These demands were rejected by the government as being incompatible with the constitution and six further dialogues were held between the National Committee and the PCJSS but all culminated in failure.

With no further tangible progress in the talks the government unilaterally changed the administrative structure of the CHT and devolved certain powers to newly created region councils. The Bangladesh Parliament in 1989 enacted the Rangamati Hill Tracts Local Government Council Act of 1989, the Khagrachari Hill Tracts Local Government Council Act of 1989, the Bandarban Hill Tracts Local Government Council Act of 1989, and the Hill District (Repeal and Enforcement of Law and Special Provision) Act of 1989. The Special Affairs Ministry was constituted by the government in July 1990 to look after the affairs of the CHT.<sup>37</sup> These Acts created three district councils in Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban each composed of a two-thirds tribal majority with a tribal chairperson. This allowed for the smaller tribes to be involved in the political process which had been dominated by the Chakmas, the Marmas and the Tripuris.<sup>38</sup> The Councils were given limited administrative and supervisory authority over a number of government departments including Fisheries, Agriculture, Small Cottage Industries, Public Health and Primary Education.<sup>39</sup>

The PCJSS and the Shanti Bahini managed to find excuses to reject these changes principally at the instigation of RAW as it did not go far enough in meeting the Indian demands which would require a framework that could lead to final secession of the CHT region. This

decision was unpopular amongst many Chakmas who were fighting a cause they no longer believed in and which was amply demonstrated when 2,294 insurgents and 30,390 tribals returned from camps across the border.<sup>40</sup> It was for this reason that the PCJSS boycotted the elections held in 1989 anticipating a protest vote from their own community against their destructive activities and inflexible negotiating positions. Discussion were again dogged by mutual suspicions between the Khaleda Zia government and her Indian counterparts over the repatriation of Chakma tribal peoples staying in camps in Tripura, Mizoram and Arunchal Pradesh during the election campaign period of 1995-1996 when the opposition Awami League staged mass anti-government protests and called nationwide strikes which inflicted huge damage on the national economy. It was later discovered that RAW had been paying enormous sums to the leaders of the Awami League during this period and had been a reliable source of funds for journalists, cultural activists and politicians working against the interests of Bangladesh.<sup>41</sup> It was, therefore, no surprise that the Awami League won the elections in 1996 with the prodigious support of the Indian government and intelligence agencies and other front organizations. The Indian government could now extract a handsome return on its clandestine investments in Bangladesh and the form this took was revealed by Motiur Rahman Rentu in his book, 'Amar Fashi Chai'.<sup>42</sup> In the book, Rentu describes a visit to Bangladesh in late 1996 of the Chief Minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu who in a personal meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganabhaban, advised her to sign a treaty with the tribal people of the CHT which would allow them to collect their own taxes and assess their own revenue and the government could do nothing in the region without their permission. Jyoti Basu instructed her to name the accord a peace treaty and informed her that he had already assured the Indian Prime Minister, Home Minister, Defence Minister and the tribal leaders of the CHT that her government would implement this plan. She should publicize the agreement as bringing peace to the CHT region after many years of conflict and bloodshed and that she may even be awarded the Nobel Prize for this initiative. He also wanted her to accept transit facilities for India and also to hand over control of the Chittagong Port which along with the CHT Treaty had already been promised by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the Indians during his premiership.



These concessions would have reversed the 1947 partition of 'East Bengal' and bring an Akhand Bharat several steps closer to realization but this does not seem to have been of much consequence to Sheikh Hasina who followed to the letter Basu's instructions on forming a Committee on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) with Abul Hasnat Abdullah (son of Abdur Rab Serniabat) the Chief Whip, as its Chairman. After a number of meetings held in Dhaka between the NCCHT and the PCJSS a CHT Peace Accord was signed by Abul Hasnat Abdullah and Shantu Larma on 2nd December 1997 in the presence of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina but the accord did not, as its terms of reference cynically suggest, find a 'permanent political solution within the framework of the state sovereignty of Bangladesh'. The agreement could not technically be called a Treaty as the signatories were not two different countries but the Bangladesh Government and a small section of its own citizenry. It is for this reason that the accord is inherently defective because as long as the Indian government is not bound by the terms of a treaty and its obligations supervised by an independent body there will remain the threat from insurgents based in India attacking Bangladesh on the orders of RAW. It was for this exact reason that Article 8 and 9 was included in the 25 year Friendship Treaty but this has not restrained the Indian government from training, organizing and equipping insurgent outfits operating from its territory as a hostile gesture to Bangladesh. With the devolution of power to unaccountable and unrepresentative bodies and with officials answerable to only themselves this accord if fully implemented would have given India a prime opportunity for interference in the CHT but on a grander scale and helpfully financed by the Bangladesh taxpayers and businesses. For these reasons the most objectionable provisions of the 1997 Peace Accord include the following which have been taken from Part 4 of Bushra's article -

## **General**

1. Both sides, considering the CHT as a "Tribal Populated Region," recognized the necessity of protecting the character of the region while making provisions for its overall development.

## **Hill District Local Government Council/Hill District Councils**

Both sides agreed to change, amend, add, and repeal the Hill District Local Government Council Acts of 1989, and the various sections described in the accord, such as:

2. The name of the Hill District Local Government Council shall be amended and this council shall be renamed as the Hill District Council.

3. "Non-tribal permanent resident" shall mean a person who is not a tribal and who has lands of lawful entitlement in the hill districts, and who generally lives in the hill district at a specific address.

4. (d) The following sub-section shall be added to section 4:

"Whether a person is a non-tribal or not and, if so, which community he is a member of, shall be determined, subject to his producing a certificate from the concerned Mouza Headman/Union Council Chairman/ Municipality Chairman, by the Circle Chief concerned; without a certificate in this connection being received from the Circle Chief, no person shall be eligible as a non-tribal to be a candidate for the post of a non-tribal member."

24. (a) Sub-section 1 of section 62 shall be amended as follows:

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, sub-inspectors and all members of ranks subordinate thereto of the hill district police shall be appointed by the council as per regulations and prescribed procedure, and the council shall be competent to transfer them and take punitive action against them in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the regulations, provided that the tribal of the district shall have preference in case of the said appointment."

26. Section 64 shall be amended and enacted as follows:

"(a) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, no land and premises, including the leasable Khas lands, within the territorial limits of the Hill Districts shall be transferable by Ijara (leasing), settlement, purchase, or sale except with the prior permission of the council, provided that this provision shall not be applicable in respect to the area of Reserved Forest, Kaptai Hydroelectric Project, Betbungia Satellite Station, state-owned industries and factories, and the lands recorded in the name of the government."

"(b) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, no land, hill forest under the control and within the jurisdiction of the council shall be acquired or transferred by the government without consultation with, or the consent of, the council."

27. Section 65 shall be amended and formulated as follows:

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the responsibility of collecting the Land Development Tax of the district shall rest in the hands of the council and the collected tax of the district shall be deposited in the fund of the council."

### **Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council**

1. Subject to the amendment and addition of the various sections in the Parbattya Zilla Sthanio Sarkar Parishad Ayin, 1989 (Hill District Local Government Council Act XIX, XX, and XXI of 1989) for the purpose of making the Hill District Council more powerful and effective, a Regional Council will be formed comprising the local government councils of three Hill Districts.

9. (a) The council shall coordinate all of the development activities carried out by the three Hill District Councils, and shall also superintend and harmonize all affairs of, and affairs assigned to, the three Hill District Councils. In the event of lack of harmony or any inconsistency being found in the discharge of responsibilities given to the three Hill District Councils, the decision of the Regional Council shall be final.

(c) The council shall coordinate and supervise the three Hill Districts in matters of general administration, law and order, and development.

10. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board shall discharge the assigned duties under the general and overall supervision of the council. The government shall give preference to the eligible tribal candidates in appointing the chairman of the Development Board.

### **Rehabilitation, General Amnesty, and Other Matters**

In order to restore normalcy in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region and, to that end, with respect to the works and matters of rehabilitation, general amnesty, and allied issues, both parties have arrived at the following consensus and agreed to undertake programs as follows:

4. A Land Commission shall be constituted under the leadership of a retired justice for settlement of disputes regarding lands and premises. This commission shall, in addition to early disposal of land disputes of the rehabilitated refugees, having full authority to annul the rights of ownership of those hills and lands which have been illegally settled and in respect of which have been illegally settled and in respect of which illegal dispossession has taken place. No appeal shall be maintainable against the judgment of this commission and the decision of this commission shall be deemed to be final. This provision shall be applicable in the case of fringe-lands.

8. Land allocation for rubber and other plantations: out of the lands allocated to non-tribal and non-local persons for rubber and other plantations, the lease (allocation) with respect to the lands of those who did not undertake any project during the last ten years or did not properly utilize the lands shall be cancelled.

17. (a) After the signing and execution of the agreement between the government and the Jana Samhiti Samiti, and immediately after the return of the members of the Jana Samhiti Samiti to normal life, all temporary camps of the army, the Ansars and the Village Defence Party (VDP), excepting the Border Security Force (BDR) and permanent army establishments (consisting of those three at the district headquarters and those at Alikadam, Ruma and Dighinala),

shall be taken back in phases from the Chittagong Hill Tracts to permanent cantonments and a time limit shall be fixed for this purpose. In cases of the deterioration of law and order in the region, in times of normal calamities, and for similar other purposes, the armed forces may be deployed under the authority of the civil administration in adherence to law and rules as are applicable to all the other parts of the country. In this respect, the Regional Council may, in order to get the required or timely help, make requests to the appropriate authority.

(b) The abandoned lands of military and paramilitary forces and cantonments shall be transferred to their original owners or to the Hill District Council.

18. Permanent residents of the CHT, on a priority basis for the tribal, shall be appointed to all posts of officers and employees at all levels of government, semi-government, council offices, and autonomous bodies in the CHT. The government may assign a deputy for a term of a certain period, provided that qualified candidates among the permanent residents of the CHT are not available for a particular post.

Taken together these provisions if fully implemented would overturn 800 years of Muslim history in the region and leave Bangladesh virtually defenseless against a new insurgency in the CHT or a military incursion by Indian troops into the area. The accord also tries to re-impose the discriminatory and inequitable rules of the 1900 Regulations with many of the policy making and administrative bodies created under the agreement to be composed overwhelmingly with tribal people from amongst the Chakmas and Marmas and there is also a provision effectively reintroducing the iniquitous Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police Regulations of 1881. It was with some mild relief, therefore, that the 1900 Regulations had come under legal challenge, after 150 years of its original enactment and almost a decade after the signing of the Peace Accords, in the High Court Division through the petition of a private individual under the Writ Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court but which faced stiff opposition from certain vested quarters and was ultimately withdrawn after much controversy.<sup>43</sup> There is, however, some suspicion that this challenge was a provocative act to highlight the claims of certain tribal groups

before the scheduled 2007 elections - that were eventually cancelled - to incite a new round of violence and unrest or it may have been just another electioneering ploy by either of the main political parties. Nevertheless, neither of these explanations should undermine the innate justice in having the Regulations invalidated and nullified in toto as being contrary to the provisions of the constitution and against the rights of the people of Bangladesh. If the challenge had been successful this would have required several amendments to the accord which may itself also have become subject to the requirements of the constitution and whole provisions of the agreement would have had to be rewritten. Since the case appears to have now collapsed - which seems the most likely explanation as there is no follow up reports in the press or media or discussion amongst lawyers - the door to further legal challenge to the 1900 Regulations and the Peace Accord has finally been opened and cannot now be shut. This realization seemed to have dawned on at least one Bangladeshi citizen who filed a Writ Petition (No. 6451 of 2007) against the entire CHT Peace Accord in July 2007 just under ten years after its original signing. In the matter of Md. Tajul Islam Vs. Bangladesh, the petitioner, also a lawyer of the High Court Division, contended that -

1. The Accord not only denies the unitary character and existence of Bangladesh rather it grossly violates most of the Articles of the Constitution particularly 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 19, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 36, 42, 55, 59, 66, 94, 106, 122, 145 and as such the impugned Peace Accord is liable to be declared to have been entered into without lawful authority and is of no legal effect.

2. That it is stated in Section 2 of Part 'Ka' of the Accord it was agreed that to implement its terms the Government would formulate new laws, by-laws, rules or to bring changes/amendments to the existing laws and rules which is absolutely illegal as the power to legislate has been vested in Parliament which has not delegated the same to any other body nor was the Accord approved by Parliament and as such the impugned treaty is without jurisdiction and lawful authority.

3. In Section 1 of Part-A of the Accord the CHT has been recognized as a Tribal Populated Region but this is contradictory to the Articles of the Constitution as Bangladesh is a unitary, independent and

sovereign Republic and there is no scope for regionalism or a federal system of government and as such the CHT Peace Accord is ultra vires the constitution.

4. That in the CHT more than 50% of the inhabitants are not tribal and by declaring the area as a Tribal Area the existence of non-tribal people in the CHT has been denied which is contradictory to the principal concept of the constitution that 'All citizens are equal before law.'

5. That as per Section 1, 3, and 4 of Part B of the Accord a person cannot be a resident of the CHT who has no land property in the area and that a non-tribal person is not entitled to purchase land in the area and in this way all the non-tribal people have been deprived of being permanent citizens as well as voters (by virtue of Section 17 of the Parbottya Zilla Parishad Ain) in the CHT area which is violative of Art. 122 of the constitution as well as the election laws of Bangladesh.

These were the main grounds on which the petition was based with 17 minor or lesser grounds included in the petition. In a supplementary affidavit the legality of the implementing Acts was challenged and these included: The Chittagong Hills Tracts Regional Council Act 1998; Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council (Amendment) Act 1998; Khagrachari Hill District Local Government Council (Amendment) Act 1998; and the Bandarban Hill District Local Government Council (Amendment) Act 1998. On August 27, 2007 the High Court issued rule upon the government to explain why the CHT peace agreement signed with the erstwhile Shanti Bahini in 1997 should not be declared without lawful authority.<sup>44</sup> In obvious ignorance of this case and the legal grounds on which it is based the Chief Advisor Fakhruddin Ahmed on March 26, 2008, stated quite categorically that the CHT Peace Accord had maintained total and firm loyalty towards the country's sovereignty and integrity for upholding political, social, cultural, educational and economic rights of all the people living in the hilly region.<sup>45</sup> It is hoped that on the full hearing of the case such misperceptions of the true nature and purpose of the agreement will be removed and a complete reassessment and reappraisal of its provisions considered by the highest political authorities.

## **India and the CHT Peace Accord**

Since this essay is primarily concerned with the issue of Indian expansionism the criticisms leveled at the past BNP government for non-implementation of the accord and the matter of rehabilitation of tribals now residing in India becomes totally irrelevant in the face of threats to the nations integrity and sovereignty.<sup>46</sup> As long as India maintains terrorist camps on its territory the question of removing Bangladesh military and paramilitary forces from the CHT does not arise and there cannot be any compromise on this issue. With the chance of fresh violence in the region possibly inspired by RAW, Article 17 (a) on removal of military forces from the area is a non-issue for Bangladesh and the accord itself stipulates no time limit on withdrawal. That the PCJSS has not given up its violent ways and is still merely a front for RAW operations was revealed in Dictaan's paper which contains an interview with the Chairman of the Liaison Committee between the Bangladesh government and the PCJSS, Mr. Hangsadhvaj Chakma, "If the government is not going to show sincerity on the peace agreement, then it is not giving the people any other choice but to launch another movement - whether armed or unarmed."<sup>47</sup>

It is the lack of sincerity on the part of some of the Chakma tribal leaders that is really in doubt with their consorting with a foreign intelligence agency and furthering the Indian agenda for an Akhand Bharat which is discernible from the rejection of the accord by the Pahari Gano Parishad (PGP or Hill Peoples Council), Pahari Chattra Parishad (PCP or Hill Students Council) and Hill Women Federation (HWF) who argue that it does not go far enough in meeting the aspirations of the tribal peoples for full autonomy (read independence).<sup>48</sup> This repudiation of the accord has been backed up by insurgent groups such as the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF)<sup>49</sup> and the Jhum Liberation Army (JLA). Moral support has been extended to these groups by some western human rights agencies who often receive distorted and prejudicial information from local non-governmental organizations that overplay the alleged human rights abuses of the Bangladesh army and the Bengali inhabitants in order to seek their removal from the CHT.<sup>50</sup> Nearly all the human rights organizations support the accord but do not explain why if it is so essential to peace in the region the Indian government



does not sign a similar agreement with the freedom fighters in Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and the other Seven Sister states.<sup>51</sup> They do not even acknowledge that the legal framework applied to the CHT is no where near as oppressive as in the Seven Sisters where the Indian government has imposed draconian laws such as the Preventive Detention Act of 1950, Defense of Indian Rules 1962, Maintenance of Internal Security Act 1971, National Security Act 1980, Terrorists and Disruptive Activities Act 1985, Essential Services Maintenance Act 1980, Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958 and Disturbed Areas Act (Assam) 1980.<sup>52</sup>

The main perpetrator of human rights abuses in the CHT is not the Bangladesh Army who have had an unblemished record in international peacekeeping operations - until 2007 when a motivated campaign was started against them in Sudan (then later in Congo<sup>53</sup>) with one Bangladeshi peacekeeper accused of serious infractions of UN policy and conduct and three others being repatriated for not reporting him to the relevant authorities in time but these allegations were later corrected and deemphasized<sup>55</sup> as the most serious violations were perpetrated by more than 300 other peacekeepers of several other nationalities - but the insurgent groups such as the Shanti Bahini, UPDF and the JLA who have resorted to robbery, torture, extortion, kidnapping, murder, rape and arson amongst other less serious crimes.<sup>56</sup> The purpose behind this propaganda campaign that emphasizes perceived human rights abuses of the Bangladesh Army but then tries to legitimize the conduct of the Shanti Bahini and other Chakma terrorist groups is to have the military forces removed from the CHT. This would render the area defenseless against Indian aggression which would be aided by certain tribes that have shown themselves to be more opportunistic than ideologically committed and probably do not appreciate the logic of an Akhand Bharat that will leave no one free from Indian hegemony and control. In fact, as a consequence of this superficial ideological outlook much of the recent acts of violence that have been perpetrated in the CHT have been between the two main rival ethnic minority groups that have taken the form of reprisals and have led to a significant number of deaths on both sides. According to law enforcement agencies the two ethnic minority groups engaged in these activities have been the PCJSS and the UPDF. As has already been mentioned the UPDF has rejected the

accord signed between the AL government and the PCJSS claiming that the accord has compromised the political interests of the ethnic minorities living in the CHT. Reports suggest that activists of the UPDF, "have frequently engaged in armed clashes with their PCJSS rivals in recent times in a bid to expand their control over the hills, triggering a volatile situation in the hill tracts and prompting the administration to step up security measures."<sup>57</sup> It should be added that many members of the pro-accord PCJSS and anti-accord UPDF also collect tolls in an organized way from business enterprises and contractors.<sup>58</sup>

It can only be imagined what would happen if the army were to be removed from the CHT under these circumstances but some RAW sponsored organizations continue their campaign for the full implementation of the CHT accord. An essay by Prajnalankar Bhikkhu titled 'Empowering the Jumma Indigenous people within the framework of the CHT Accord'<sup>59</sup> published on the internet in November 2006 became the latest in a series of articles and conference papers sponsored by India's foreign intelligence agency to disseminate views on the CHT that was designed to undermine the territorial integrity of Bangladesh. Bhikkhu claims in his essay that the CHT Accord was intended to empower the Jumma indigenous peoples and "non-indigenous permanent residents" through a decentralization of power but he fails to mention that the unstated purpose has been to undermine Bangladesh sovereignty and control of the area. It is because the successor BNP Alliance government in Bangladesh understood the adverse implications of the Accord and respected the principle of the unity of the state enshrined in the country's constitution that it had been reluctant to implement all its provisions. It is irrelevant to contend, as Bhikkhu does, that this is some concerted Islamization policy since the region has been under Muslim control and suzerainty for the greater part of 800 years.

The most disturbing element of Bhikkhu's essay is his attempt to dehumanize the Muslim Bengali inhabitants of the CHT which is clearly a product of a mindset prevalent amongst India's governing elite, military, intelligence and security agencies and apparatus. The victims in Bhikkhu's story is more accurately, therefore, not the so-called indigenous communities but the majority Muslim Bengalis

who have had to face discrimination and violence from the Chakma insurgents who have been aided by the Indian government and military in order that the region should secede and join with the Indian Union. Predictably, the PCJSS and several leftist political parties of Bangladesh aligned with India had made calls for the full implementation of the CHT Accord during the caretaker administration of President Iajuddin Ahmed (2006-2007).<sup>60</sup> Santu Larma in a speech made at the Women Volunteers Association auditorium on December 2, 2006, stated categorically that if the government did not implement the peace treaty the PCJSS would be compelled to restart the guerilla war.<sup>61</sup> Such inflammatory comments ceased after a State of Emergency was declared in January 2007 and a new Interim Government (IG) was installed with military backing. However, in an effort to build confidence and trust in the region the army withdrew 16 camps from Rangamati in February 2007 initiating a gradual and measured response to the PCJSS call for the implementation of the Peace Accord.<sup>62</sup>

However, this did not seem to satisfy the likes of Prajnalankar Bhikkhu who issued a letter (in the name of the Peace Campaign Group) to the Chief Advisor to the Interim Government, Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, on February 28, 2007 expressing deep concern over gross human rights violations by the "joint forces" against 'indigenous' political and student leaders in the Chittagong Hill Tracts under the state of emergency for their apprehension of Mr. Satyabir Dewan, General Secretary of PCJSS, and several others.<sup>63</sup> The arrest of these people were part of the ongoing anti-corruption and anti-terrorism drive initiated by the interim government against all parties throughout the length and breadth of the country and was not confined to the CHT alone but this fact was not mentioned in Bhikkhu's letter to the Chief Advisor. Unfortunately, the IG in keeping with its appeasement of India (which became apparent early on with proposals for transit, gas export and investments in the energy sector all receiving enthusiastic endorsements by certain advisors) was determined to implement the entirety of the CHT Peace Accord regardless of national security implications and so they approved the withdrawal of a further 48 security camps in March 2007.<sup>64</sup> Meetings were then commenced at advisor level to have the CHT agreement implemented in full and was headed by the Foreign Affairs Advisor

Iftekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury<sup>65</sup> and no objections were raised that this may be outside his jurisdiction as an issue concerning the internal security of Bangladesh and not involving any external considerations or international obligations. Even after the many compromises made by the IG this did not appear to mollify the likes of Prajnalankar Bhikkhu who in another article written on behalf of the Peace Campaign Group in June 2007 titled, "CHT on Historical Outline with Special Reference to Its Current Situation," lambasted the government as it was allegedly acting as a, "shadow of the country's elite military force engaged in preparing a ground for replacing Bangladeshi political model with Pakistani one -- but in different setting -- in the smokescreen of cleaning up corruption in the country. It is using 'corruption' as a political tool against the leaders of mainstream political parties as part of its design, they feel." In reference to the IG's initiatives on the CHT Bhikkhu argues that, "The Fakhruddin administration is an absolute and ruthless military dictator with regard to the Jumma people of the CHT. Here, unlike in other parts of Bangladesh, it is using the emergency rule for a different purpose: to liquidate the political leadership and organizational capabilities of the Jumma people once and for all so as the national integration policy can quickly be put in practice without any challenge." It should have been apparent to the IG after this tirade and polemic that India's ambition for an Akhand Bharat would brook no compromise and only a complete secession of the CHT from Bangladesh would satisfy Indian demands.

## **COMMUNALIST SECESSIONIST CONSPIRACIES**

In tandem with the secessionist conspiracies in the CHT the Indian intelligence agencies have engineered new communalist movements in Bangladesh based on the ideas of Dr. Kalidas Baidya discussed in Part 4 of this essay in relation to the creation of an East Bengal and the 1971 war. These groups also seem to derive inspiration from Hindu fanatical leaders like Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, the father of the RSS, who had been the most active proponent of the Akhand Bharat ideal after Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The principal objective of Kalidas has been to set up a Hindu Homeland by carving out a large portion of Bangladesh that would include the districts of greater Khulna, Jessore, Kushtia, Faridpur, Barisal and Patuakhali. Kalidas

has sought the return of the Hindus that migrated to India during 1947 and in 1971 to a Hindu Homeland that is to be called Bangabhumi or 'Swadin Bangabhumi' as it was officially declared on 24 March, 1982.<sup>66</sup> The Bangabhumi Movement started its operations on August 15, 1977 under the name of 'Nikhil Banga Nagarik Sangha' (All Bengal Citizen's Organization) with Dr. Kalidas Baidya as its General Secretary.<sup>67</sup> Another of the key figures in this movement is Chittarangan Sutar who as a RAW operative maintained close links with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and had established himself in Bangladesh during the 1950's. Like the PCJSS in the CHT the NBNS set up its own armed wing called the 'Banga Sena' with Dr. Kalidas Baidya as its commander. In a memorandum<sup>68</sup> titled, 'Bangabhumi, the Homeland for Refugees from Bangladesh' and addressed to the then Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, Kalidas Baidya sets out the Banga Sena's programme of action and political ideology. In the memorandum Kalidas claims that Bangladesh became an Islamic state after its recognition by the UNO and proceeded to oust the Hindus and other minorities according to the dictates of the Quran. The president of the Banga Sena, Sri Partha Samanta has in consequence declared Bangabhumi a free and sovereign state for 15 million Hindu refugees from Bangladesh in India and also for 20 million minorities still in Bangladesh. As President of the 'Government of Banga Bhumi, Sri Partha Samanta has also formed the Banga Sena force and appointed Dr. Kalidas Baidya, Commander-in-Chief of the Banga Bhumi which is located on the south side of the river Padma (i.e. an area that includes several districts of Bangladesh). In effect this is a call for an armed revolt against the Government of Bangladesh to seek the forced secession of certain districts in the country to form an entirely new state. In fact, such a state would never come into existence as it would immediately be annexed by India in line with the requirements for the eventual formation of an Akhand Bharat that supersedes all other considerations and demands for local autonomy and is in actuality the ultimate goal of the Banga Sena and Dr. Kalidas Baidya.<sup>69</sup>

Over the years the Bangabhumi Movement has tried different methods of infiltration into Bangladesh under various guises with front organizations providing publicity and coordination which have included the Bangladesh Refugee Welfare Organization, the Mohajir

Sangha and the Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad<sup>70</sup> and there are numerous others that could have been mentioned but these have had less success in their nefarious activities. The ultimate aim of all these endeavors is the creation of an Akhand Bharat which was the candid and honest admission of Dr. Kalidas Baidya in an interview with the Dhaka Courier in May 1989 where he was asked by the interviewer, "Well, tell me, what may be the alternative to Bangabhumi movement?" Kalidas immediately replied, "[The] alternative is only one - Bangladesh may accept submission and become a part of India. The Bangabhumi movement may be stopped if it [Bangladesh] accept (sic) total submission."<sup>71</sup>

The latest manifestation of the Bangabhumi Movement has appeared in the form of the Human Rights Congress on Bangladeshi Minorities (HRCBM) that has highlighted fabricated cases of Hindu oppression in Bangladesh and gained international sympathy for their cause. The HRCBM and its subsidiary cyber group, the UnitedMinority, is an exclusively Hindu organization which intends to create communal violence in various parts of Bangladesh to force Hindus to relocate in border districts of the country and then oblige India to annex these districts into the larger Indian State (i.e. the program for an Akhand Bharat).<sup>72</sup> This outrageous plan for the balkanization of Bangladesh was disclosed by two patriotic Bangladeshis who joined HRCBM in a brilliant and quite uncommon example of intelligence work and investigative journalism and has been reported by Alochona eForce<sup>73</sup> (an internet based group) in, 'HRCBM - An Enemy of the State'. Their findings are based on emails exchanged between the leaders and supporters of HRCBM and so is a personalized record of the inner workings of the group and their motivations in Bangladesh. The author of this essay is familiar with one of the leading personalities behind HRCBM, Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, and can testify to the veracity of the report. In the preface to the report the tactics and strategies of the group are detailed which include -

- portraying Bangladesh internationally as a Talibanised country
- encouraging the boycott of Bangladesh made products
- expounding that Islam is the cause of evils
- seeking support from extremist Hindus worldwide

- damaging relations between Bangladesh and the UN and other countries
- inciting India to be actively hostile against Bangladesh
- creating social unrest within Bangladesh

Although the report nowhere mentions the vision of an Akhand Bharat there can no longer be any doubt that the guidelines above are intended to try to achieve this impossible Nehruvian goal. The conclusion to the report lays out the specific allegations against the HRCBM -

### **"HRCBM is an Enemy of Nation States**

**HRCBM** has sought to exploit the post-election violence in Bangladesh by seeking an easily identifiable social grouping and acquiring the trappings of a cause that carries much currency in the post September 11 world.

The activities and motives of HRCBM as exposed in this report indicate irrefutably that it poses a serious threat to the security, sovereignty and long term socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

The HRCBM agenda is one of religious extremism disguised as human rights and secular principles and as such also constitutes a threat to the security, sovereignty and social stability of **any** nation state where there is a significant Hindu community.

HRCBM, its allies and collaborators, its sponsoring and supporting organizations (e.g. RSS, VHP) represent an **axis of sedition** against Bangladesh and Bangladeshis everywhere, irrespective of class, sex or religion."

If the HRCBM organization had been able to continue its activities unimpeded a serious calamity would have certainly befallen Bangladesh. It was only through the bravery and foresight of two Bangladeshis that any untoward incidents did not occur as a consequence of HRCBM conspiracies. It is clear that many people still believe that it is worth defending Bangladesh against the

machinations of the Indian government and its intelligence agencies which was at its most threatening during the period prior to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's death and then again during the insurgency in the CHT. It is unfortunate, then that Western governments continue to adopt the findings and opinions of organizations such as HRCBM that portray an utterly warped picture of communal relations in Bangladesh.<sup>74</sup> The extent to which such views have infiltrated mainstream political discussion was revealed in a news report by Rediff News (an Indian news network) on November 2, 2006. According to the report, the US Commission on International Religion Freedom (USCIRF) slammed Bangladesh for continuing persecution of minority Hindus. The USCIRF report recalled that during and immediately after Bangladesh's Parliamentary election in October 2001, 'there were numerous reports of illegal land seizures, arson, extortion, sexual assault, and intimidation of religious minority group members, particularly Hindus'. The members of the USCIRF visited Bangladesh and obtained this information from minority group representatives and human rights groups who, "ascribed these attacks to armed militant groups or to partisans of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which is led by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia." It is not specified who these minority representatives and human rights groups are but the Rediff report does mention the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) which is a sister organization of the HRCBM and the Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad.<sup>75</sup> Such importance was accorded by the commission to the observations of the HAF that it was invited as a respondent at a meeting it convened on Capital Hill to coincide with the report's release. Ishani Chowdhury, HAF's executive director, told Rediff, "... the commission's report was in concert with the HAF's detailed report on human rights violations in Bangladesh against minority Hindus." It still remains unclear whether American legislators and policy makers are fully aware of the organizational links to Indian intelligence of the HAF, HRCBM and the Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad and their clandestine attempts to dismantle Bangladesh via a sustained propaganda effort sponsored by RAW.



The efforts of these communal Hindu organizations and RAW became more assertive and sustained during 2006 especially in the run up to the January 2007 elections and also after declaration of the state of emergency when Indian governing elites began to feel discomfort at the arrest of senior leaders of the AL, stalled business deals and the slow progress on negotiations for transit rights and the Myanmar-Bangladesh-India gas pipeline. Superficially the cause for their renewed protests was the plight of minorities in Bangladesh but the actual incentive and motivation was an ideological commitment to an Akhand Bharat which appears in some of their literature in an implied and circuitous way. A good example is the articles by Rabindranath Trivedi who writes in the April 9, 2007 issue of the Asian Tribune, "The so-called Bangladeshi nationalism in Bangladesh's politics is a revival of two-nation theory. Here 'Bangladeshi' means the Muslim citizens of the land, others like Hindu, Buddhists, Christians and tribal origins are aligning citizens, they would be absorbed in the majority community by conversion or make them compelled to leave Bangladesh."<sup>6</sup> In other words, only in a unified India could these minorities be safeguarded and protected but the fallacy of this argument is obvious when one considers the dire situation of the Muslims, Christians, scheduled castes and other minority groups in India today. That Trivedi himself managed to reach the upper echelons of state power in Bangladesh as Additional Secretary and then Press Secretary to the President speaks volumes about the tolerant nature of Bangladesh society.

As Indian concerns mounted about the direction that Bangladesh was taking after the emergency the language of commentators and analysts became more vituperative and arrogant. Dr. Anand Kumar writing for the Indian intelligence website South Asia Analysis Group (SAAG) states, "The pitiable of state of secularism in Bangladesh under a democratic form of government has also been recently pointed out by the Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty. He stated that democracy would be stronger in Bangladesh if it could establish a 'real secular country like India'. While addressing a function on the occasion of foundation laying of Chandranath Temple in Sitakunda in Chittagong he said, 'Bangladesh is a secular country but there is no real practice of secularism... as there is a religious ministry here.' The high commissioner said

democracy is very strong in India as there is no division or discrepancy among the people of different faiths and values and real secularism is practiced there. He suggested that Bangladesh follow his country for practicing real secularism, which would help it establish a strong democratic country removing all discrepancies among the people of different beliefs and values."<sup>77</sup> The comments of the High Commissioner cited by Kumar brought an instant and angry reaction from Bangladeshis and were interpreted as favouring pro-Indian parties in the scheduled January elections. The change of attitude represented by the article by Anand Kumar was also reflected in the action of HRCBM in filing in the Kolkata High Court on June 19 a writ petition, "seeking refugee status for the members of Bangladesh minorities who took shelter in India to escape what the petition said was 'violence in their home country.'" According to M. Shahidul Islam in 'Holiday' the filing of the case was not only, "an act of prejudice against a friendly neighbour, it was a conspicuous political ploy to serve India's foreign policy interests."<sup>78</sup> The legal basis of the petition seems to be that due to certain discriminatory laws of Bangladesh (Enemy Property (Custody and Registration) Order II (EPO II) later renamed the Vested Property Act 1974) Hindus have had to routinely enter India illegally from the time of the passing of the EPO II. Under these circumstances the Indian government and state authorities are legally obliged to designate the entrants as refugees for which special international law provisions apply. This would necessarily impose burdens on the central government and the West Bengal state which was intended to bring both in conflict with Bangladesh.

To further isolate Dhaka HRCBM also helped organize an exhibition in the United States in July 2007 on Bangladesh minorities titled 'Asru' or Tears. The exhibition was obviously intended to stir anti-Bangladesh sentiment in the United States with the promotional advertisements claiming that, "Terrorism in Bangladesh has been going on for decades. The suffering of the Bangladeshi people, minorities in particular, continue even today. Rape and murder, as weapons of genocide, have been used extensively against the minorities in Bangladesh."<sup>79</sup> A similar campaign had been launched several years earlier when the BNP alliance had secured victory in the 2001 national elections but this time around the target was a

politically neutral Interim Government headed by a top bureaucrat and the timing of its launch just happened to coincide with a cooling of relations between New Delhi and Dhaka (See Parts 6A and B). After the arrest of Sheikh Hasina in mid-July there was a further deterioration in relations between the two countries and a disinformation campaign was soon launched against Bangladesh - probably as a sign of growing displeasure at political developments inside the country - in which the oppression of Hindus featured prominently. With HRCBM's inroads inside the political establishment of the United States including its press and media the campaign against Bangladesh was made significantly easier. Russell Working of the Chicago Tribune was the first to write on the issue drawing a comparison between the situations in Pakistan and Bangladesh, commenting on the latter, "actions against Hindus by Islamic fundamentalists included ... incidents of murder, rape, kidnappings and temple destruction."<sup>80</sup> This was followed by a scurrilous write-up by Rabindranath Trivedi who while extolling the virtues of an Akhand Bharat and lamenting the realities of partition, for which he blames the British, he relates the massacre of Hindus (numbers of dead not provided) on August 16, 1946 (Direct Action Day) in Dhaka, by the Muslim population and compares this to the war of 1971 and the recent communal violence (as alleged by Hindu human rights organizations) in Bangladesh coming to the conclusion that the division of 1947 was all a terrible mistake.<sup>81</sup> Coinciding with these articles was the launching of a book edited by Salam Azad titled, 'Bangladesher Niryatita Hindu Sampraday: Prekkaphat Muktijuddha (The tortured Hindu community of Bangladesh in the background of the war of liberation).'<sup>82</sup> The book is essentially a compilation of write-ups in Bangladesh newspapers about the torture inflicted upon Hindus during the Bangladesh war. These recent propaganda materials concerning atrocities committed against Hindus before and after partition as well as in 1971 appear intended to create a Hindu 'nationalist' consciousness that complements the program adopted by Dr. Kalidas Baidya and HRCBM.

### **Conclusions -**

This short section should help in clarifying for politicians in the West and in Bangladesh the subversive plots aimed at the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bangladesh which is still ongoing and unlikely

to see any respite in the foreseeable future. Agents of India are located in every sector of Bangladeshi society which includes an array of personalities and characters involved in politics, the bureaucracy and administration, press and media, academia, cultural organizations, judiciary and the legal profession<sup>83</sup>, Non-Governmental Organizations and human rights groups (such as the HRCBM but may also include less vocal entities posing as secularists or feminists) all of whom individually or in combination help to undermine the proper functioning of the state and which leads to dislocation and inefficiency in the administration of the country and demoralization amongst the people. The true motivating factor behind these extensive networks and collaborations is to assist in the realization of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's dream for a unified India or an Akhand Bharat.

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# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 6A

*"A very revealing document came into my hands. Mr. Khalil of Daily Jang received a photocopy of a dispatch order written by McConnaughy, US ambassador in Pakistan, to Chester Bowles, US ambassador to India, approving of his proposal to encourage the BANGSAM movement to promote US interests. BANGSAM stands for a country that will be made by the amalgamation of the two Bengals and Assam ... McConnaughy had gone on to say that this proposal has the blessing of Dean Rusk and it should be pushed at all costs. He has also gone on to say that the history of Bengal has always been defiance of Delhi and the present demand by East Pakistan for autonomy is, in fact, a demand for self-determination. It is necessary to remain in touch with the leaders of this movement and give them all encouragement regardless of the susceptibilities of Pakistan and India" (Field Marshal Ayub Khan - Diary entry for July 21, 1967)<sup>1</sup>*

### INDIA'S END GAME - BANGLADESH AS A FAILED STATE

The dissolution of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state with a distinct political, territorial and national identity was the central motivating factor behind the campaign to have the country declared a failed state by the international community that would eventually allow for intervention by outside forces (i.e. India) to determine and control the nation's fate through proxy agents already established within the centres of governance and authority in Dhaka. While it is not entirely clear how or where the debate on Bangladesh becoming a failed state was started the reaction against such a categorization was apparent in many English and Bangla language newspapers by early 2004. In a few of the opinion columns and editorials a full endorsement of Bangladesh was, however, lacking with the editor of 'The Daily Star', Mahfuz Anam, in June 2004 dismissing outright the idea that the country was a failed state but nevertheless declaring that, "Bangladesh has a failed government and many of its institutions are falling apart. There could have been a

confusion in the choice of words between 'government' and the 'state'.<sup>2</sup> To clarify matters he provides the following elucidation, "Regardless of whether we agree or not I think a very strong argument can be made about Bangladesh having a failed government at the moment. The way fundamental institutions of the state have been and are being distorted and politicized, many of us can quite legitimately

conclude that we have a failed government and that failure is actually leading to severe erosion of the effectiveness and efficiency of the state." While there appears to be no real discernible difference between a failed state and a failed government several deficiencies within the governing system were identified by Anam as contributing to the pervasive malaise within the state machinery such as corruption, inefficiency, insincerity, short-sightedness, a highly partisan and self-serving leadership and a destructive political culture. While Anam is able to list all the various elements that were conducive to the gradual deterioration in governance rendering the state 'dysfunctional', at no point does he elaborate on the 'hard-earned successes' that he casually and off-handedly mentions except for the, "Liberation War, which is the biggest, the brightest and the most precious jewel in our crown of national achievements."

In another editorial piece for 'The Daily Star' this time written by Kazi Anwarul Masud<sup>3</sup>, a litany of complaints is again leveled against the government but with an intellectual flavour provided by references to Roberto Rotberg (writing in *The Washington Quarterly*), John Locke, Alexis Tocqueville and James Madison. Kazi Anwarul Masud in his descriptive presentation of Rotberg's ideas on failed states also manages to set out the themes that would dominate discussion on this issue for the next two years especially with the rise and fall of Bangla Bhai and the JMB terrorist group. According to Masud, "Roberto Rotberg emphasises the absolute necessity to understand the nation-state failure as they become hospitable to and harbour non-state actors such as warlords and terrorists. Failed states are tense, writes Rotberg, deeply conflicted, and bitterly contested by opposing factions. Insurgencies, varieties of civil and communal unrest, and a plethora of dissent of violent nature directed at the state machineries fill the landscape of a failed state. Added to this cascade

of violence, the massive deterioration of the living standard of the people, decay in the infrastructure of their daily life, and the greed and kleptomaniacism of the rulers overwhelming the conscience of the ruled and foreign actors (principally the donors/international agencies) lead the failed state towards an abyss like a train without a driver."

Without much further encouragement Indian intelligence swiftly set out the guidelines of a propaganda campaign to have Bangladesh declared a failed state with the additionally dubious distinction of being actively engaged with Islamist terrorist organizations and sponsoring their agenda within Bangladesh and abroad. The Indian army has devised certain modalities for engaging in such propaganda activities that target state (and non-state actors) and is probably also followed by India's intelligence agencies in their operations against Bangladesh. Reference may usefully be made to The Indian Army Doctrine (IAD) 2004 which provides that, "Information is one of the several means to target the human mind. Psychological warfare is achieved through mass media such as newspapers, radio and television broadcasts and distribution of leaflets. The prevailing state of information technology allows effective psychological warfare to be conducted in a very subtle manner. In order to be effective, psychological operations need to be conducted in conjunction with other operations. During peace time and in LIC [Low Intensity Conflict] operations, this effort can be termed as "psychological initiatives".<sup>4</sup> Following in the terms<sup>5</sup> of this simple advisory a write-up for the RAW sponsored internet forum 'South Asian Analysis Group' by Dr. Subhash Kapila asserts that, "Bangladesh seems to be sitting on a volcano whose political explosion could have serious implications for India and the region and so also for the United States besides violent upheaval in Bangladesh itself."<sup>6</sup> The cause of Dr. Kapila's apprehensions were the dual incidents of a grenade attack on an Awami League political rally in Dhaka on August 21 2004 that was addressed by Sheikh Hasina and the persecution of the Ahmediya community that resulted in the desecration of their places of worship by self proclaimed defenders of the Islamic faith under the banner of the Khatime Nabuwat Andolan Parishad (Bangladesh).

In reference to the first incident cited by Dr. Kapila there later appeared several press and media reports that the culprits who



threw grenades at the AL meeting were hiding across the border in India frustrating the investigations into the attack.<sup>7</sup> In another report it was revealed that 23 top criminals of Bangladesh amongst whom were the masterminds behind the August 21 carnage were staying in different places of West Bengal and Tripura under the protection of Indian secret service intelligence agency RAW.<sup>8</sup> A confessional statement of one of the accused nabbed inside Bangladesh confirmed the identity of the team leader who was then residing in Kolkata and who also suggested that the plan was to attack the spectators but spare the AL leaders on the dais.<sup>9</sup> It would not be far-fetched to conclude that the attack on August 21 was pre-planned and stage managed by RAW in collaboration with hardened criminals of Bangladesh and some insiders in the AL who had remained on the dais during Sheikh Hasina's speech when the explosions started and which left 18 AL supporters dead. Later allegations of Harkatul Jihad (Bangladesh) (HuJi (B)) members also being involved in the attack was disclosed by confessional statements made by its leader Mufti Hannan<sup>10</sup> which suggests a close triangular relationship between the criminal underworld,<sup>11</sup> pseudo-Islamic militants and Indian intelligence. Further investigation has also revealed a BNP link with the August 21 attack<sup>12</sup> (this revelation unfortunately helped close other possibilities of inquiry) which is not surprising as RAW had also infiltrated that party allegedly through Gisasuddin al-Mamun, a close associate of Tareq Rahman. (There have been further attempts to link Huji with the North-East insurgents and the August 21 attack after the recovery of almost 130 Arges hand grenades and several 36-MHE type grenades from captured HuJi members with the biggest haul in February 2008<sup>13</sup> but for some reason other possible avenues of investigation had been excluded or were never even opened including the involvement of Indian intelligence and their front organizations. Doubts should have crept in after the statement made by Mufti Moinuddin alias Abu Zandal, a senior operative of HuJi (B), who flatly contradicted the confession of Mufti Hannan (See Part 2A)) It appears, the purpose behind the elaborate and cynical charade surrounding August 21 was to portray to the entire world the impression of Bangladesh as a state out of control and in the grip of Islamic fundamentalists opposed to the Liberation War and secular ideals of progressive and liberal society and democracy.<sup>14</sup>

This imagery was supplemented by what Dr. Kapila describes as the Bangladeshi fundamentalist replay of Pakistan's persecution of the Ahmediya sect of Muslims and the Taliban style aggression on non-Sunni Muslim sects. But even here there appears a RAW nexus this time in cooperation with journalists and literary personalities who were covering the story of anti-Ahmediya violence. In a documentary titled 'The Ahmadiyya's - Muslim or Heretic' directed by Naeem Mohaiemen (a regular contributor to The Daily Star) and screened at the Russian Cultural Centre in May 2004 a very biased and superficial presentation was afforded to the viewers. Its lack of objectivity was broadcast on the official website which stated boldly that, "The battle over Ahmadiyyas reflects a larger struggle for Islam's soul - a struggle between liberal Muslims who believe 'Islam is in the heart' and extremists who are fighting for Iranian-style Islamic States. This documentary focuses on the growing crisis, and the resistance that is coming from Bengali activists." This conception of the issues fitted in neatly with the campaign for Bangladesh to be declared a failed state and with the participation of Shariar Kabir, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Ajoy Roy who were all interviewed for the documentary a link with RAW could tentatively be established. With the inclusion of Sara Hossain (daughter of Dr. Kamal Hossain) a noted human rights activist and feminist writer and married to a Jewish journalist working for a British television channel whose correspondents were earlier arrested for subversive activities and then deported only added to suspicions of foreign influence which further helped undermine the documentary's credibility. It was never once mentioned in the entire film that the Ahmadiyya's are themselves dogmatically intolerant believing that they represent the true Islam., That they have also been vigorous in their condemning of Christianity with their leader Ghulam Ahmad proclaiming that he was sent by God to 'break the cross and slaughter the swine' or that Muslims who reject the Ahmadiyya doctrines were kaafir and out of the fold of Islam.<sup>15</sup>

The debate on Bangladesh as a failed state would follow a certain motivated trend in the next few years exploiting the inability of the government to tackle increasing internal disorder with the manufactured growth of Islamist terrorist groups that had been predicted by Dr. Kapila and supervised and supported by RAW

operatives in India. Dr. Kapila conveniently sets out the terms of the debate and defines precisely the factors to look out for in the ever deteriorating political situation in Bangladesh but he also ominously remarks on how these changes affect India's own security perceptions regarding its neighbour, "India would be the most seriously impacted by an explosion of political violence in Bangladesh. Spillovers of any violent uprisings in Bangladesh lead to an influx of Bangladesh refugees on a mass scale and raising of both political and economic costs. Also such a situation, (reminiscent of 1971) would not permit India to remain as a passive and impotent observer." Such comments were bound to influence international opinion about Bangladesh so it should not have come as a surprise that Jane's Foreign Report of January 25, 2005 would argue that Bangladesh was on the brink of becoming a failed state making it a, "perfect target for Al-Qaeda and its ever-expanding network of Islamic extremist organisations. Virtually unnoticed by the world at large, Bangladesh is being dragged into the global war on terrorists by becoming a sanctuary for them."<sup>16</sup> The report further contended that, "The US and its Western allies are gradually waking up to the potentially explosive situation developing in Bangladesh, which former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, leader of the Awami League, the main opposition party, calls the "Talibanisation" of Bangladeshi society." The propaganda tirade and polemic initiated by Indian intelligence was next taken to the negotiating table of the donor nations by 'The Peace Campaign Group' headed by Prajnalankar Bhikkhu in regard to what he called the alarming increase in Islamic fundamentalism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In a letter to the Bangladesh Development Partners Participating in A Special Meeting on Bangladesh (23-24 February 2005) in Washington he claimed that, "The country with Islamic extremist policy-makers in power is now on the brink of a "failed state" with strong potential [to be] a 'terrorist state.'" He then made a similar plea to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Fourth Session held in New York on 16-27 May, 2005.

With the idea of Bangladesh now firmly established as a failing state in the Western mind political commentators in the Unites States and Europe began to parrot the tried and tested formula of the spread of Islamic fundamentalism that was now plaguing the country and

even quoting directly from Indian intelligence sources to backup their claims. A remarkable instance of this was an article written by Dr. Charles Tannock MEP for the Daily Times of Pakistan in its July 21 issue where he states, "The danger inherent in Bangladesh's course is very real. Indian intelligence officials allege that the leader of a BNP coalition partner maintains ties to the banned armed Islamist group Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, or Huji, which in turn is allegedly linked to Al Qaeda."<sup>17</sup> The final denouement in this long and treacherous campaign against Bangladesh came with the publication of the first annual 'Failed States Index' by the influential Foreign Policy journal in their July/August 2005 issue that was also sponsored by The Fund for Peace. Using 12 social, economic, political, and military indicators, the index ranked 60 states in order of their vulnerability to violent internal conflict. Out of the 76 countries that were ranked in the index Bangladesh stood at 17th place with a total score of 94.3 making it a potentially failed state. It scored particularly high in the category of 'Criminalization and Deligitmization of the State' but more surprising was its score on 'Intervention of Other States or External Actors' at an above average 6.0 (with some countries actually scoring 10) which clearly implies that interference by Indian intelligence though playing a significant role in the undermining of the state in Bangladesh was not adequately represented in the statistical data. While the basic premise of the study may be flawed<sup>18</sup> its use as a propaganda tool was unquestionable and writers in India soon began to use the failed state tag to push an aggressive agenda against Bangladesh. MV Kamath writing for the News Today in September 2005 remarked that, "Bangladesh is a rift-ridden country which, in the first place, has no right to exist. Partition of Bengal under Lord Curzon had to be annulled for peace to be re-established in the province. If we have to have peace again, serious thought has to be given on how to handle present day Bangladesh." His proposal to rectify this situation was for, "full-length invasion of Bangladesh ... India will not put up with a failed State ' as Bangladesh presently is' any longer, in India's own interest, as well as in the interest of peace in the subcontinent."<sup>19</sup>

In 2006 the tempo of verbal and written assaults on Bangladesh increased with several more western commentators joining the propaganda bandwagon against Bangladesh. Chris Blackburn in his

report for 'The International Intelligence Summit 2006' promotes the notion of Bangladesh as a haven for international Islamic terrorist organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda and concludes that, "Analysts, journalists and academics have long been warning that Bangladesh is rapidly evolving into a failed state. Its function as a safe haven and training ground for radical Islamists poses a direct threat to India and also has repercussions beyond the region. The added worry that Pakistani intelligence is manipulating subversive and terrorist groups in Bangladesh with the aim of destabilising India looks like a continuation in its proxy war, a decrease in activity in Kashmir looks like Bangladesh has become the new avenue for the continuation of hostilities. This will increase the likelihood of direct conflict between India and Pakistan should a major terrorist attack on India be attributed to the new nexus in Bangladesh." This has been the textbook propaganda line of Indian intelligence and military for almost a decade providing a convenient but spurious pretext for intervention in Bangladesh - if it were ever deemed necessary - in order to protect India's strategic interests in South Asia in accordance with the Forward Policy and the Nehru-Indira Doctrine. The only novel element in this profusion of Indian inspired propaganda was the introduction of the concept of the failed state as a determining factor in Indian security perceptions for the region. In this context the Failed States Index for 2006 showed no marked improvement for Bangladesh as its ranking amongst 146 countries now stood at 19 and its overall point score had actually increased to 96.3. In May of that year industrial disturbances in the garment sector saw 300 factories torched or ransacked with factory owners and later BNP politicians blaming the riots on "agitation and provocation by "vested quarters," hinting at a pre-election ploy by the A.L. to discredit the government and warning of a conspiracy orchestrated by India -- a textiles competitor -- to destroy Bangladesh's garment sector."<sup>20</sup> This incident was to seriously tarnish Bangladesh's image abroad and confirm it as a failing state in the major capitals of the world. This was not helped by politicians such as Sheikh Hasina and former president Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury who both supported the claim<sup>21</sup> and by commentators like Maneeza Hossain writing in the US magazine the National Review. With an eye on the scheduled 2007 elections Maneeza asserts unconvincingly that, "If Bangladesh becomes a failed state, it would be the first instance ever of a democracy being

defeated by radical Islamism."<sup>22</sup> A spirited defense of Bangladesh was made by Prof. Abdullah Abu Sayeed and Prof. Talukdar Maniruzzaman<sup>23</sup> but with the controversy surrounding the installation and continuance of the Caretaker Government and opposition to the head of the Election Commission by the Awami League the language of political debate deteriorated to the level of the streets with public lynching, blockade, hartal and terror tactics in the Supreme Court as the notable features of this period. In this political climate characterized by fear, violence and widespread property damage the label and lexicon of a failed state began to be resorted to more regularly by columnists and politicians.<sup>24</sup> Bangladesh soon had another dubious distinction conferred upon it as a direct consequence of these events, this time by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) that ranked the country 75th among 165 democracies and grouped within the category of a 'flawed democracy' which was probably not such a bad thing as only 28 countries were classified as 'full democracies' with a further 55 states considered authoritarian and 30 'hybrid regimes'.<sup>25</sup> The issue of Bangladesh's democratic deficit was to dominate political debate through out much of 2007 (see below) and became an ideal propaganda tool for the country's detractors whose ultimate aim was to have Bangladesh administered by a government compliant to Indian interests and who would eventually allow Bangladesh to compromise its sovereign state interests.

India's involvement in the propaganda efforts to have Bangladesh branded a failing or failed state during the pre-electioneering period of 2005 and 2006 did not, however, go entirely unnoticed and was perfectly summed up in an editorial article for 'The New Nation' by Shahid Alam who stated that, "New Delhi has sought to maximize its own interests in terms of Bangladesh by leaning on it, with largely unsubstantiated accusations, using official (including diplomatic) and unofficial channels to malign it and its government (the BNP-led regime, which was probably the catalyst for its rather unfriendly actions) as being Islamic terrorist-friendly and being a failed state to foreign governments, particularly the influential players on the global stage, and, as several knowledgeable Bangladeshis suspect, a section of its officialdom trying to undermine the government by using shady tactics."<sup>26</sup> Under any other circumstances to have described Bangladesh as a failing or failed state especially during 2005 and

2006 when it had achieved unprecedented economic growth could only have been termed as completely preposterous and a distortion of the facts. According to a World Bank fact sheet (2005-2006) Bangladesh was the 10th most rapidly growing economy among 31 large developing countries and income poverty had declined by 1 percentage point per year since 1990 - faster than almost all other developing countries.<sup>27</sup> Primary school enrollment was almost 100% - one of the highest rates in the developing world. The ratio of girls to boys in primary school was higher than most developing countries. Bangladesh was also the only country to have eradicated polio in South Asia. Other sources indicate that Bangladesh was fast becoming a good home for global investment with proposals from foreign investors in the telecommunications, banking, gas and coal sectors.<sup>28</sup> Goldman Sachs' economic researchers had placed Bangladesh among the "Next 11" countries after Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC), which have the potential to be substantial economies in the coming decades.<sup>29</sup> These conclusions were borne out by the Failed State Index for 2007 where Bangladesh no longer even received or warranted a mention<sup>30</sup>(this change also probably signified a US warning to the country after the proclamation of emergency on January 11, 2007) but this improved prospect received hardly any coverage in the pro-Indian press and media in Bangladesh. The only plausible explanation for the motivated campaign against Bangladesh, therefore, was that the country's success was seen as a challenge to Indian economic hegemony and as German mercantilist writer, von Hornigk, explains, "Whether a nation be mighty today and rich or not depends not on the abundance or security of its power and riches, but principally on whether its neighbours have more or less of it."<sup>31</sup> This beggar thy neighbour attitude took on a three pronged approach that included (1) disrupting the country's economy through propaganda and misinformation (2) engineering or encouraging of political instability within Bangladesh (3) propagating the specter of Islamic terrorism in Bangladesh. This last approach was also intended to advance a policy of psychological and physical isolation of the country from India's volatile Northeast since a destabilized and weak Bangladesh could send revolutionary undercurrents throughout the entire region which could also spell India's own doom and eventual disintegration - this effect would also probably occur if Bangladesh became too strong economically, politically and militarily - which

clearly demonstrates India's preoccupations and fears about its own internal and divisive contradictions rather than any ambitions on Bangladesh's part. In order to prevent this last outcome of Indian fragmentation and disintegration from ever materializing the dissolution of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state with a distinct political, territorial and national identity has been the prime objective of Indian policy makers who are still pursuing the vision of an Akhand Bharat more than sixty years after the partition of the subcontinent essentially to restrain the driving force of regionalism (which helped to create Bangladesh) and to promote the idea of India as a superpower.

### **Economic Propaganda**

The least noticeable of India's strategies to undermine Bangladesh has been the incessant attack on the country's economy which is viewed as a potential and increasingly real competitor in global markets and is therefore perceived as a growing threat to Indian hegemony in the region. For India to secure its political and military supremacy and control over the South Asian region it has become necessary for it to continuously maintain and protect her lead over other economies even by unfair means such as sabotage, fomenting and encouraging political instability in neighbouring countries and most obviously through propaganda. Reference may again be made to the Indian Army Doctrine 2004 which provides the following advice on how to conduct such operations, "Economic Information Warfare. This form of warfare uses information as power to destabilise the economy of the adversary. Since all revenue-generating industries of a country such as aviation, transport, power, banking and the like use computer-based systems, IW [Information Warfare] at the strategic level can play havoc with the national economy of the adversary."<sup>22</sup> Information warfare in this context is further defined as, "actions taken to achieve 'information superiority by adversely affecting the adversary's information, information-based processes, information systems, and computer-based networks whilst simultaneously protecting one's own information, information-based processes, information systems and computer-based networks'... IW has a vital impact ... by disrupting the enemy's observation and surveillance systems, corrupting his orientation and misguiding his perception and



thereby inducing him to arrive at wrong decisions."<sup>33</sup> The reason that such nefarious and pernicious activities receive only scant press and media attention is due to the fact that Indian operations are conducted through local organizations, policy centres, criminal networks and a few political parties who are in turn supported by certain newspaper editors and columnists who are employed to distract the public attention away from the nexus between Indian intelligence and different groups and interests based inside Bangladesh.

It was not until August 2006 that this became a public and politically contentious issue with a vocal and ebullient Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment, Mahmudur Rahman, bringing legal proceedings against five board members of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). The dispute started when the Board of Investment (BoI) chief claimed that the CPD had distorted economic data and was involved in politics and that they were tarnishing the country's image outside by disseminating 'distorting' information. Mahmudur Rahman also alleged that the CPD's character is to implement a foreign agenda in the country by taking foreign funds and assistance. The BoI chief said the CPD was first founded by funds from the Ford Foundation and since then it has been engaged in implementing a political agenda of a foreign country to tarnish the image of Bangladesh. The Executive Director of the CPD, Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, denied each of these allegations at a press conference in Dhaka saying that the CPD only administers the Executive Opinion Survey in Bangladesh and sends the original filled in questionnaires to the World Economic Forum (WEF) for analysis and report presentation. He also countered the BoI chief with some choice aspersions stating that, "I am an analyst and Mahmudur Rahman is a salesman. I try to analyze things and Mahmudur Rahman tries to sell his things by resorting to exaggerations." Manzur Elahi, a Trustee of the CPD, went further remarking that, "Many people said he (Mahmudur) is a razakar. I will not call him a razakar directly, but he was a collaborator in 1971."<sup>34</sup> In retaliation to these last comments, Mahmudur Rahman, promptly filed defamation suits against Chairman Prof. Rehman Sobhan, Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Syed Manjur Elahi, M Sayeduzzaman and Laila Kabir, all of whom are trustees of the CPD, resulting in the issuance of arrest warrants in each of their names. In the lawsuit, Mahmudur Rahman complained

that that the accused made libelous, disgraceful, indecent, misleading, conspiratorial, false, fabricated and baseless statements against him.<sup>35</sup> He later said that Dr. Bhattacharya should not have the right to live in the country as he was, "One who speaks ill of his motherland, is called a black sheep. I don't have any words to comment on such a person, who terms the country 'a bad commodity'."<sup>36</sup> In a spirited defense of the five accused, Mahfuz Anam, lambasted the BoI chief for his audacity in bringing legal proceedings against these five 'eminent' citizens of Bangladesh and concludes that, "A fundamental feature of fascism is to intimidate its citizens and civic bodies. This it does by twisting, distorting or even falsifying what they say or stand for and then using the legal framework to harass them or even put them in prison. And in doing this, they use super patriotism as the overall cover."<sup>37</sup> What the editor of The Daily Star failed to mention in his sardonic commentary on the legal challenge against the CPD chairman, Executive Director and trustees was the widespread belief within Bangladesh that the organization is merely a front for foreign interests and in particular for India where it has ties with several policy centres most notably the Centre for Policy Research, Indian International Centre, Coalition for Action on South Asian Cooperation and Indian Council for South Asian Cooperation.<sup>38</sup> Its links with India are far more extensive and organized than any other country in the South Asian region and would naturally lead to apprehensions and suspicions in Bangladesh about its motivation and purpose.

While the accusations and counter-accusations between the BoI chief and the CPD trustees continued throughout the remainder of 2006<sup>39</sup> Mahmudur Rahman was pressured to withdraw his law suit against the 5 accused through active mediation efforts by diplomats from the USA, UK, Australia and Canada, and the UNDP representative in Bangladesh. In his petition to the court for withdrawal of the case Mahmudur Rahman mentioned that the defendants had issued a rejoinder through an advertisement saying that their statements against the BoI chief were published in a distorted way. The compromise formula negotiated by the foreign diplomats also led to the issuing of a joint statement signed by Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya and Mahmudur Rahman stating that the heated exchanges between the two were a misunderstanding and that

both of them would now like to move forward.<sup>40</sup> This whitewash, however, did not prevent the World Economic Forum (WEF) from ranking Bangladesh a place lower, than in the previous year, in its Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) for 2006.<sup>41</sup> Its chief operating officer, Andre Schneider, had earlier painted a 'bleak picture' of Bangladesh in his letter of August 15 to the BoI chief who had started this exchange of correspondence seeking a clarification on the WEF's methodology for the GCI. Mahmudur Rahman, in his reply, dated August 27 angrily retorted that, "A bleak country cannot probably achieve GDP growth of 6.7%, export growth of 21%, investment growth 30%, and annual poverty reduction of 1.6 %." He further argued that '15 years of sustained growth from 1991 to 2005 cannot be termed short-term cycle growth [as mentioned by Schneider]' and that the WEF outlook had been prejudiced by misinformation provided by the CPD to legitimize a pre-determined conclusion of a bleak Bangladesh.<sup>42</sup> In total disregard of these complaints, the WEF still ranked Bangladesh 99th from amongst 125 countries in its 2006 competitiveness report<sup>43</sup> with poor performances in infrastructure and institutions pushing the country's position to a lower level from the preceding year.

It was unlikely to expect that the compilers of the GCI (and the corresponding 'Bangladesh Business Environment Study') would have directly or specifically commented on the political instability caused by the AL (through hartals and violent street protests during the preceding several months of 2005 and 2006) which included undermining state institutions such as the judiciary, parliament, Election Commission and the office of the President and blocking infrastructural projects like the third Karnaphuli Bridge<sup>44</sup>; opposition to private companies operating gantry cranes in Chittagong Port (CP) (which led to tense confrontation only later in the year<sup>45</sup>) and preventing the setting up of private container terminals<sup>46</sup> in the CP. These AL initiatives had received tacit approval from India which has consistently opposed outside investment in the strategic assets of Bangladesh in line with its Forward Policy and had shown undue favouritism to the AL in its clashes with the Caretaker Government and 4-party alliance led by the BNP in the run up to the scheduled National Elections in January 22, 2007 (see below). Mahmudur Rahman responded to the 2006 GCI by challenging its methodology

and its data collection methods which tended to rely excessively on the Executive Opinion Surveys but he was unable to effectively counter the main findings of the report which identified corruption as the main cause for Bangladesh's poor standing in the index and also the failings in the power sector which was also a direct victim of graft.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the BoI chief was able to claim one victory with the WEF proposing to look carefully into his various contentions and promising to provide greater details in how the results were obtained for the next GCI.<sup>48</sup> This statement finally seemed to put an end to this bitter dispute but in an ironic and unexpected twist the CPD who had been campaigning to remove the influence of black money on elections was learnt to have been asked to clear itself of the charge of holding black money. The New Nation reported on December 11, 2006 that sources had said, "grants and allowances that CPD gets from local and foreign donors are normally not taxable if such money is spent against respective projects. Money not spent and collected as surplus after the completion of a project is, however, taxable, sources said. Sources said tax demands made against CPD range from tens of lakh taka a year to as high as taka one crore a year."<sup>49</sup> Predictably this news item slipped from public view very quickly and very quietly especially as the major English and Bangla dailies aligned with the AL and India never carried the story. The allegation was, however, repeated in the April 6 - 12 issue of PROBE magazine in the interrogation report of Giasuddin Al Mamun (a close business associate of Tareq Rahman and other former MP's and Ministers of the BNP government of 2001-2007) in which he claimed that Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya had made much of his black money white and was among the top 10 in this regard.<sup>50</sup>

A more serious concern for Bangladesh has been the credibility of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) since it was this organization that published yearly reports that found Bangladesh to be the most corrupt nation (amongst the countries that it surveyed) for five consecutive years based on the mere perception of businessmen and trade organizations operating in the country and which would, therefore, greatly influence the Executive Opinion Surveys distributed by the CPD which is used to draw up the GCI. This issue was highlighted in an editorial piece in The New Nation published on August 7, 2006 which stated, "Recently, the two high-profile

organisations have been caught on the wrong foot for distorting facts and figures and putting partially whatever achievements the incumbent democratically elected government has made in various economic and development fields in nearly five years. The purpose allegedly being to brand Bangladesh as either an ineffective state or world's most corrupt nation."<sup>51</sup> The charges against the TIB were brought by the BNP Secretary General, Mr. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, whose ministry had been identified for widespread corruption by the organization in a 2006 report but according to Bhuiyan there was no credible evidence of corruption against his ministry and he challenged the authors of the report directly at a press conference in which the TIB representative could not give any satisfactory answers and his embarrassment was broadcast on all the television channels across Bangladesh.<sup>52</sup> TIB faced further public assaults on its credibility when PROBE magazine published an investigative report in August 2006 showing that the government authorities had expressed suspicion about the income tax returns submitted by a prominent member of the Trustee Board of the organization. A number of other allegations of corruption were also leveled against him in the report along with several other staff members of TIB and the financial accounts and expenditures of the organization were equally shown to be highly suspect and incriminating.<sup>53</sup>

Serious doubts about TIB's credibility, however, had originally surfaced in 2004 when the country had been designated the most corrupt country for the fourth consecutive time. The glaring deficiencies in terms of methodology, data collection and interpretation in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for that year was criticized by this author in a series of articles published on the internet in October 2004.<sup>54</sup> The issues raised in the articles have never been properly countered by TIB or its numerous media and press guardians. The articles were written in response to what seemed to this author expressions of jubilation and rejoicing (compared to the despondency that met the 2006 report where Bangladesh was placed 3rd from the bottom<sup>55</sup>) by 'patriotic' citizens who appeared to applaud TI's declaration of Bangladesh as the most corrupt country for the fourth time in a row. The articles never attempted to deny that Bangladesh had a pervasive corruption problem but the CPI 2004 appeared to be deliberately slanted against Bangladesh in several

important respects. TI's data - on which the CPI 2004 report was based - relating to perceptions concerning corruption in a particular country were derived from different agencies and institutions such as the World Economic Forum, Economist Intelligence Unit, International Institute for Management Development, Freedom House, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank. In the case of the WEF, it has already been shown that it relied exclusively on information collected and provided by the CPD for the Executive Opinion Surveys that were used to formulate the GCI 2006. The other agencies and institutions mentioned above would have reference to the local Bangladeshi media and press who in most part follow a pro-Indian line with some journalists being paid by Indian intelligence to write negatively about Bangladesh.<sup>56</sup> The EIU, on the other hand, has had a consistently anti-Bangladesh outlook for several years labelling the country as a failing state in line with the editorial policies of the Economist magazine which seems unduly influenced by Indian propaganda (as does the reporting by the BBC on South Asian issues).

Apart from the numerous methodological flaws in the CPI 2004 it was the South Asia Survey<sup>57</sup> (SAS) published by TI and supported by USAID that cast most doubt on the CPI ranking for Bangladesh. The SAS in its investigation on perceptions of the most corrupt public institutions in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka it came to the following conclusions, "In India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, 100% of respondents that interacted with the police during the past year reported encountering corruption. In Bangladesh, this figure was 84% and in Nepal, 48%. In their experiences with the judiciary, nearly all Indian (100%), Sri Lankan (100%), and Pakistani (96%) households polled reported paying bribes. Judicial corruption was also significant in Bangladesh (75% of users) and Nepal (42 % of users) ... After the police and judiciary, land administration was identified as the next most corrupt sector across the region, according to the experiences of South Asian households ... In Pakistan, 100% of respondents with experience with the land administration authorities reported corruption and in Sri Lanka this figure was 98%. Land administration was somewhat cleaner in Bangladesh (73% of users reported corruption), India (47% of users) and Nepal (17% of users)." In nearly every respect, Bangladesh fared better than its counterparts

in South Asia. If we use TI's own assumptions (based on the Global Corruption Barometer<sup>58</sup> (GCB) 2003 and 2004 results that deal with a very similar range of issues as the SAS but only includes Pakistan and India from the South Asia region) there should be some correlation between the SAS and CPI results - but there are none. The reason for this rests on the methodological deficiencies referred to in a FAQ attached to the CPI 2004 which states, "In terms of perceptions of corruption, the CPI is a solid measurement tool. The reliability differs, however, between countries. Countries with a low number of sources and large differences in the values provided by the sources (indicated by a high Standard Deviation) convey less reliability as to their score and ranking." TI does not say whether perceptions and sources can be manipulated or distorted through propaganda and misinformation and the CPI's reliance on businessmen and analysts for information provides an extremely partial view of the corruption scenario in any given country and is easily subject to preconceptions perpetuated by the media and press who may lack journalistic integrity as in Bangladesh.

By 2006 the CPI was being taken far less seriously and became the subject of adverse comment and criticism not only by Bangladeshi politicians and columnists but even by western businessmen as reported in *The Financial Express*, "... the leader of the visiting German business delegation Peter Clasen said the other day in an interview with this paper. He was particularly critical of the Transparency International (TI). He was rather blunt when he remarked that the TI was doing a great injustice to Bangladesh by putting the country repeatedly on top of the list of the most corrupt countries on earth. He even questioned the source of data as well as the methodology of calculation TI employs to prepare its corruption perception index. According to him, a certain degree of bias against Bangladesh was also noticeable in such evaluative branding when compared to many African countries where corruption is rampant."<sup>59</sup> That corruption in Bangladesh is to a large extent inspired by external factors could be inferred from the TI Bribe Payers Index report of 2006 which found that Chinese and Indian firms were the most willing to pay bribes to do business abroad and that French and Italian firms were named as the worst culprits for paying bribes in low-income countries.<sup>60</sup> That both China and India are two of the most

important trading partners of Bangladesh with both competing for influence over the country's foreign and domestic policies the pressures on public officials can be irresistible. This is compounded by the fact that for more than three decades smuggling has constituted the largest proportion of trade between Bangladesh and India<sup>61</sup> and has been decisively in the latter's favour easily exceeding the official trade between the two countries which has also helped to encourage corrupt practices in the former which is a point hypocritically exploited by Indian propagandists.

In 2007 the extent of corruption in Bangladesh was revealed with the arrest of several dozen politicians and businessmen under the interim government headed by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed. Amongst those arrested were Tareq Rahman, Giasuddin Al Mamun, Najmul Huda, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Mohammed Nasim and others belonging to both the AL and BNP parties. From the disclosures through interrogation of the financial dealings of those arrested and from the money recovered from abroad the total amount of black money owned by the 200 corrupt politicians, businessmen and employees of utility companies arrested probably never exceeded \$1 billion (accumulated over a 10 year period or more) which pales in comparison to the wealth amassed by more corrupt governments in the Middle East, Asia, Africa or South America which may be estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars if one also includes Iraq or Indonesia under Suharto or even the Philippines under deposed leader Ferdinand Marcos. In the final analysis, the numbers arrested on charges of corruption were miniscule and the amounts far less than were originally envisaged but this would not in any way help diminish the despicability and contemptibility of these individuals in the eyes of ordinary Bangladeshis who would have been the ultimate gainers had the money misappropriated been utilized properly rather than being pocketed by the corrupt. The action taken by the Interim Government, however, should have been reflected in international reports on the Bangladesh economy but astonishingly the World Bank found in July 2007 that the country was backsliding in abating graft. That the World Bank was then mired in corruption allegations with its president Paul Wolfowitz having to resign earlier in the year making the whole exercise of branding countries corrupt or otherwise quite dubious and irrelevant.<sup>62</sup> The TIB



Corruption report for 2007 similarly continued to rank Bangladesh very low (this time standing as the seventh most corrupt nation) which predictably brought protests from economists and the general public who questioned the credibility of the whole exercise and also doubted the impartiality and expertise of those publishing and preparing the reports.<sup>65</sup> The GCI 2007-08 report prepared by the WEF and CPD had only collected and interpreted data on the February 2006 - January 2007 period and not unsurprisingly ranked Bangladesh 15 places below its previous years ranking. More critically for the Interim Government of Fakhruddin Ahmed Bangladesh slid down 19 places in the Business Competitiveness Index<sup>66</sup> (BCI) which left a negative impression about the country's commercial potential and future performance in the minds of foreign investors that would further undermine the IG's goodwill amongst the general public unless economic indicators were to dramatically pick up in 2008. The CPD Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman dourly remarked, "It is frustrating that all the survey results are giving negative indications. It is not good for the economy." What the pro-Indian media failed to highlight in these latest reports, however, was the improved ranking for Bangladesh in the areas of market size, financial market sophistication and labour market efficiency which indicated a strong economic foundation for future growth if government could provide necessary and timely policy support.<sup>65</sup> Probably the most galling aspect for the Interim Government was the fact that after more than one year after their anti-corruption drive began Prof. Muzzafer Ahmed referring to a forthcoming TIB report to be published in April 2008 showed that corruption still had not come down but was in fact increasing.<sup>66</sup> This news item appeared when India was exerting intense pressure on Dhaka through manipulation of food exports so making Prof. Ahmed's inconvenient comments doubly troubling for the Fakhruddin administration. TIB later issued a clarification disowning Prof. Ahmed's viewpoint stating that the report in question had yet to be finalized.<sup>67</sup>

### **Political instability & the economy**

The political instability that engulfed Bangladesh in the months leading up to the national elections in January 2007 was widely viewed as being driven by foreign interests although the rivalry

between the two competing political camps that fed the flames of violence and chaos allowed certain external players (i.e. diplomats and foreign ministry officials visiting Bangladesh) to gain undue influence over political developments in Bangladesh guiding the course of events that eventually culminated in the proclamation of emergency by President Iajuddin on January 11 in order to stave off a possible civil war.<sup>68</sup> The incidents that contributed to the declaration on January 11 can be separated into two distinct phases with the first leading up to and ending with the handover of power to the caretaker government (CTG) by the outgoing BNP-Jamaat administration and the second commencing with the assumption of power by the CTG and ending with the imposition of emergency rule by the President. A third phase may also be usefully considered here which includes events that occurred after the declaration of emergency that saw the setting up of a new political order by the CTG and its military backers which at the time of writing has not yet been completed and is a work still in progress. In dealing with these significant and important events in Bangladesh history in three distinct phases it will be easier to grasp the differing and often contradictory roles played by India on the one hand and America and Britain on the other. The cause for this differing approach may reflect a complementary strategy or a competitive one mirroring the geo-political and strategic tensions wrought by renewed western involvement in South Asia. In either case, it is still a decade too soon to draw conclusions on this particular issue and will require many years of extensive study and research.

### **Phase 1 - Justice K.M. Hasan & the AL/BNP Duologue**

India's input in the unfolding events started with a news report in The Times of India (ToI) on June 25, 2006 titled, 'Dawood's Bangladesh mission worries India.'<sup>69</sup> The allegations contained in the report were to have far reaching effects and was clearly intended to interest the United States and Europe the political situation in Bangladesh and especially in the outcome of the next elections slated to be held the following year. The article contended that a secret meeting between absconding underworld don Dawood Ibrahim and two high-profile Bangladeshis (i.e. Khaleda Zia's eldest son Tareq Rahman and the Director General of the NSI) had taken place in Dubai under the noses of Indian and Western intelligence agencies.

The meeting was allegedly a 'well-concerted' move to smuggle in arms consignments to Bangladesh for creating countrywide disturbances before the next national elections. According to the report, "The meeting led to prompt results. On April 16, a commander of the banned Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji) of Chittagong received a consignment of arms explosives that reached Chittagong port. On May 16, a large consignment of arms - certainly not meant for security forces - was brought in at an air force base near Dhaka by a Kuwaiti C-130 aircraft. The whole operation, being highly secretive in nature, was supervised by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence. Investigations reveal that a Kuwaiti NGO Al-Harmain (a banned organization having links with Al-Qaida) was the funding agency for the arms transshipment for Bangladeshi terrorists." While there may be some truth about a meeting between Dawood Ibrahim and Tareq Rahman the sensationalist nature of the report with the inclusion of Al-Qaeda, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, Al-Harmain and the DGFI rendered the entire story highly dubious and suspect with US Assistant Secretary of State, Richard A Boucher dismissing the whole idea of the presence of international Islamist terrorist outfits in Bangladesh.<sup>70</sup> It was later disclosed in investigations against Tareq Rahman that the meeting with Dawood may have concerned nothing more innocuous than the sale of an apartment building in Dubai that was owned by the latter. More damaging to the ToI reports credibility, however, was the arrest and trial of senior leaders of Huji by the BNP government in the preceding months of 2005 and 2006 - an important fact that seems to have escaped the notice of the compilers of the report. Also the arms that supposedly entered the country were never used even after the AL went on the rampage killing numerous BNP and Jamaat party workers in October and November of that year should have raised doubts about the reports truthfulness especially as no other international news agency took up the story which should have alerted the most credulous observer to its basic flaws. The main defect in the story, however, was that it followed too closely the propaganda line disseminated by RAW on the alleged Islamist influence on the BNP alliance government and its close association with international terrorism. The purpose behind the ToI report, therefore, seems to have been less about convincing the general reader than scaring Western governments into backing India's candidate in the forthcoming elections i.e. the AL.<sup>71</sup>

The crisis on which Indian and Western interests initially centered upon was the likely appointment of Justice K.M. Hasan as Chief Adviser (CA) of the CTG. The appointment of Justice Hasan should have been automatic as he satisfied the procedural requirements prescribed in the constitution but the AL claimed that he had been politically affiliated to the BNP almost 25 years before<sup>72</sup> and as a High Court judge he was embarrassed to hear the Bangabandhu Murder Case - as were several other judges - which concerned the trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The embarrassment of the judges had a lot to do with the intimidation and threats of violence by the AL if the verdict did not satisfy their predictions of guilt of the several accused.<sup>73</sup> The AL had further contended that the BNP Alliance government deliberately extended the retirement age of Supreme Court Judges in order to facilitate the ascension of Justice Hasan to the post of CA.<sup>74</sup> The demands of the AL in short consisted in preventing Justice Hasan from assuming the post of CA but later on it was expanded to include major constitutional changes and substantial reforms in the election process necessitating a delay in the holding of the polls which the BNP were adamant had to be held on time. On the substance of the dispute the Indian government, foreign policy makers and intelligence analysts presented a facade of neutrality calling for 'free and fair elections' and a preparedness to work with "any government the people decide to elect" provided that it was a 'secular democratic' government that was in place.<sup>75</sup> In other words, the Indians were implicitly supporting the 'secular' AL over the religiously inclined alliance led by the BNP. This was clearly evidenced by the frequent visits of the Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri to the residence of Sheikh Hasina (and other AL leaders) a courtesy call she rarely if ever accorded to BNP politicians.<sup>76</sup> However, it was Veena Sikri's departing comments to JaiJaiDin editor, Shefiq Rehman, which was the clearest sign of Indian intent and the impending chaos that was to overtake Bangladesh in the coming months. In answer to a question posed by Rehman concerning the political situation in Bangladesh she said that if an election is not held then the alternative would be military rule and that this time a military government would continue much longer in Bangladesh.<sup>77</sup> This statement was to prove exceptionally prescient but as a seasoned and well-informed diplomat she probably had foreknowledge about the probable course of events especially as it was likely that the AL

would be defeated at the polls and the situation was likely to deteriorate until the AL was completely satisfied that they had a strong chance of success in elections. The AL had already decided to use the tried and tested tactics of manipulation, intimidation and violence that would meet with the tacit approval of India whose primary interest in Bangladesh at this point was for the retention of a 'secular democracy' led by an AL government.

The Americans, on the other hand, appeared to be less concerned with the religious hue of the democracy practiced in the country (at least in their public statements as India were already stressing the point) and were far more preoccupied with the actual maintenance of Bangladesh's democratic credentials<sup>78</sup> and US Assistant Secretary of State, Richard A Boucher voiced his apprehensions on his August 2, 2006 visit to the country when he asked a group of civil society members, "what would the situation be if the two major political parties failed to reach any agreement on how to hold a free and fair election. He also wanted to know whether the civil society leaders would be able to play any role in the wake of a deadlock between the two major political parties."<sup>79</sup> These remarks seem to suggest a tentative nudge towards a national government if the situation on the ground deteriorated significantly but how far this US proposal was influenced by fears instilled by Indian propaganda on the growth of Islamist militancy in Bangladesh is difficult to assess or whether geo-strategic concerns about China's power projection in South Asia played a larger role in US calculations would be equally speculative at this point in time. The US government had previously tended to deemphasize the religious colouring of the BNP led alliance government of 2001-2007 always referring to Bangladesh as a moderate Muslim nation and a model democracy so it appears that the Bush administration had not taken seriously the Indian propaganda line on the alleged growth of Islamic militancy in the country and its supposed links with international Islamist terrorist networks.

The American approach to the election issue in Bangladesh including the dispute over the appointment of the CA and the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner Justice M.A. Aziz (a point the AL later tagged on to its charter of demands) contrasted sharply with the European position. The Washington based National Democratic

Institute (NDI) in several statements starting from September 11, 2007 expressed support for the appointment of former Chief Justice K.M. Hasan to the post of the CA but at the same time they communicated their doubts over the competence of the CEC Justice M.A. Aziz to ensure a free and fair election. Their argument in favour of Justice K.M. Hasan was that his political past should not automatically disqualify him from becoming the Chief Adviser; a point that was stressed by visiting NDI representative and former Majority and Minority Leader of the United States Senate Tom Daschle who argued that, "past service to a political party should not be an automatic disqualification to public service. The credentials of a candidate for an important position must be examined in their entirety."<sup>80</sup> The final report of the NDI team then visiting Bangladesh was somewhat skeptical about the forthcoming elections suggesting that the domestic or international communities should not be complacent about the future of genuine democracy in the country. Tom Daschle had earlier hinted at possible military rule if the constitutional process was jeopardized through elections being held hostage by intransigent positions of either party.<sup>81</sup> According to the left leaning New Age daily it was the NDI mission in its support for Justice K.M. Hasan that failed to create a congenial political or electoral environment instead involving itself in domestic political controversies.<sup>82</sup> Such a conclusion was, however, rarely ever applied to the Indian or European diplomats who appeared to be the most intrusive and prejudiced during this period. The Europeans clearly tilted towards the AL position on both the CA and CEC issues and generally confined their visits to individuals and groups that were supportive of the AL perspective with the EU observer teams often seen at Sheikh Hasina's or some other senior political functionaries residence or party office discussing the latest developments.<sup>83</sup> The EU team also expressed their apprehensions about the forthcoming elections<sup>84</sup> which implied possible and prolonged military intervention that had already been predicated by a pro-Indian columnist writing in The Daily Star and then by the NDI dignitaries visiting Bangladesh and finally and more astutely by the Indian High Commissioner. To many educated Bangladeshis it appeared that a political blueprint had already been decided upon with the Indian government setting the final agenda but there were signs of friction between the various diplomatic camps operating in Bangladesh which

was reflective of the wider geo-strategic struggles being waged in South Asia for control and dominance primarily between the US and India<sup>85</sup> - a sharing of economic perspective did not necessarily translate into political cooperation and relations between the two nations were shaped more often than not by rivalries especially in reference to matters South Asian which India felt to be exclusively within its own domain and sphere of influence.

It was, therefore, the US ambassador to Bangladesh, Patricia A. Butenis, who made the first attempt to break the political deadlock between the AL and BNP and offered American mediation to resolve the crisis<sup>86</sup> which was very likely to escalate after a threatened AL led opposition boycott of the polls unless their demands for electoral reforms were fully met. The concern in US policy circles partially voiced by the NDI team was that the continued political impasse in Bangladesh could possibly be exploited by extremist groups - whether communist, Islamist or some other ideologically motivated band was not specified - who may try to disrupt the election process<sup>87</sup> and would likely gain a toe-hold in the national mainstream due to the prevailing dissatisfaction over the prolonged stalemate between the AL and BNP over the electoral reforms agenda.<sup>88</sup> Both the Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri (now playing catch-up with her American counterpart) and the US ambassador Butenis pleaded with the AL leadership to participate in a dialogue with the BNP government<sup>89</sup> but the matter of the venue was to prove highly controversial.<sup>90</sup> The suggestion by the AL General Secretary, Abdul Jalil, that the dialogue (or duologue as it became known) should be held at the residence of the US ambassador and which was approved by the AL presidium was met with a storm of protest and condemnation from all sectors of society.<sup>91</sup> Apart from the immaturity and opportunism that the suggestion displayed it also had the effect of temporarily diminishing the influence of the US on the course of political events and allowing the pro-Indian elements a short period of ascendancy. In an expression of frustration at foreign influence on political developments The Bangladesh Today had earlier commented,

"There seems to be a rush of foreign diplomats and leaders of various organisations, agencies and NGOs air-dashing to Bangladesh to render unsolicited advice to it as the country is grappling with its

political crisis ahead of the general election scheduled for next January. According to sources, they are visiting Bangladesh in the name of 'pre-election observation' or providing assistance for holding fair election, but their over enthusiasm and uncalled for advice on internal politics are making people sceptical about their real intentions and bona fides. Who are inviting these so called observers to this country and what prompts them to poke their nose in the internal politics of a sovereign country remain the vital questions to be answered. People want this naked interference in internal politics to end immediately Bangladesh has currently become a free-style playground of foreign diplomats, donors and 'observers'. Perhaps, nowhere in the world, other than Bangladesh, do foreigners interact with locals so publicly, issue sermons on state policies so frequently and interfere in the internal politics so nakedly. This interference has intensified recently as the country is heading for a general election amid political impasse caused by government-opposition discord."<sup>92</sup>

Unfortunately this diatribe was reserved for the NDI, EU, International Republican Institute, the Commonwealth, Japan, the OIC, China, South Korea and the UNDP but nowhere was Indian interference ever mentioned although this was easily the most egregious when considered from a sovereignty perspective. In any case, the duologue between the AL and BNP did take place over a period of several weeks with the venue more suitably located in the Parliament building but this was a process that was destined to fail with neither side confident of a successful outcome which would have required hard bargaining and ultimately painful sacrifices on the issue of the CA and the CEC. By October 20, 2006 it was clear that the duologue process had failed and the AL opposition alliance began its program of civil disobedience that resulted in violent clashes with the police and BNP-Jamaat party workers and preparations were already underway for the infamous Dhaka blockades that were to last for days on end and which left the capital city completely paralyzed.<sup>93</sup> The US ambassador in a last minute intervention visited the residence of Justice K.M. Hasan on October 22 in order to know his 'mindset'.<sup>94</sup> This naturally had little effect on the sense of foreboding that now engulfed the country in the run up to the handover to the CTG and several Bangladeshi columnists openly discussed the possibility of the army's role in future political events<sup>95</sup> which had already been openly



alluded to by pro-Indian columnist Brig. Gen. Shahedul Anam Khan in June 2006 and then by NDI's Tom Daschle and finally more specifically by the Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri. Both the Indian and American diplomats seemed to view a military takeover as the only means to stave off Islamic militancy in the case of a serious deterioration in law and order but the former tended to see this as a means to further undermine Bangladesh with manifold propaganda possibilities but the latter had more substantive considerations to ponder over and these deliberations were mirrored in a country analysis prepared by the International Crisis Group in late October 2006 that reasoned that as,

"Islamic militancy has flourished in a time of dysfunctional politics, popular discontent and violence. The questions of whether Bangladesh's traditional moderation and resilience will see it through or whether escalating violence and political confrontation could derail its democracy are vital ones. Serious instability in the world's third most populous Muslim country could not fail to have wider implications ... The international community can help to address the graver risks but only if it takes Bangladesh seriously as a strategic partner and moves towards more mature political engagement ... Islam has always been an important strand of identity; that it has grown in significance since Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 is neither surprising nor alarming. Offered a choice at the polls, Bangladeshis have consistently rejected religious extremism. Although the Islamists have gained in influence by manoeuvring themselves into government, they have not increased their share of the vote ... For the international community, the challenge will be finding ways to support the workings of democracy ... Improving democracy is the best guarantee against the growth of extremism."<sup>96</sup>

It was for this reason that the US diplomats made such strenuous efforts to find a solution to the political impasse while the Indian High Commission was far more passive in its approach seeing an opportunity in chaos and even military rule if 'secular democracy' under an AL government could not be guaranteed in Bangladesh. At a time when foreign investors were flocking to Bangladesh and economic takeoff was being predicted for the country<sup>97</sup> the Indian propaganda machine orchestrated a international media and press

campaign to project a negative image of Bangladesh claiming that it was not a good place for investment and business but at the same time continually foisting the Tata investment proposal upon the BNP led alliance government.<sup>98</sup> Through India's tacit support of the AL the economic demolition of Bangladesh took on added impetus and stimulation in the coming weeks this time under the cover of political protest but this was nothing more than national extortion and economic blackmail and ruination.

## **Phase 2 - Handover to Emergency**

The period from October 27 - December 1 witnessed the beginning of a new phase that was heralded by the most searing and graphic acts of violence ever witnessed on Bangladesh television and which has unquestionably scarred the national psyche for decades to come. These particularly brutal and horrific acts were also immediately broadcast right across the globe within minutes of their occurrence and which were perpetrated on the whole by AL thugs and lawyers.<sup>99</sup> While it is not intended here to provide a detailed chronology of events during this period there were at least two major incidents that stood out and which should have elicited a strong foreign reaction but didn't - silence provided its own sad commentary on the passivity of the diplomatic community who were until then extraordinarily vocal, opinionated and interfering. In the chronology of events leading to the two incidents in question, the ball was set rolling on October 27, when Justice K.M. Hasan made his intention clear to decline the position of CA<sup>100</sup> in the face of violent street protests and blockades of the capital by the AL with the US and UK making their usual ineffective and impotent calls for a peaceful resolution of the dispute.<sup>101</sup>

The following day President Iajuddin proposed himself for the post of CA but this was instantly rejected by the AL on the grounds that the constitutional procedures relating to the appointment of the CA had not been exhausted with Article 58C (5) specifying that, "If no retired judge of the Appellate Division is available and willing to hold the office of Chief Advisor, the President shall, after consultation, as far as practicable, with major political parties, appoint a Chief Advisor from among citizens of Bangladesh who are qualified to be appointed as Advisors under this article." The President through his

hastily placed proposal essentially ignoring the procedural requirements stated in Article 58C (5) rendered himself controversial and ineffective<sup>102</sup> for the remainder of the crisis and triggered an instant and violent reaction from the AL workers on the streets. The Indian press painted an exceptionally distorted picture of events on October 28 showing the BNP-Jamaat party workers as the real initiators of aggression and belligerence in the street clashes that took place on that day. The Hindu, an influential Indian daily, presented a particularly biased and damning commentary stating that, "Thousands of Opposition activists torched and attacked houses and other buildings owned by the "people's enemies" and faced the ruling party cadres, who in turn allegedly attacked them with guns, bombs and other weapons ... They fought against the guns, bombs and sticks of the government supporters soon after Ms. Zia gave a televised speech to the nation on Friday night."<sup>103</sup>The actual incidents of October 28 (as opposed to the Indian interpretation and rendering) will remain an infamy in the minds of Bangladeshis for decades to come and is one of the defining moments of this period with its historical implications described by Shahriar Noori in the weekly HOLIDAY,

"Just a day after the victory from Pakistani occupation, thirty-five years back a grotesque real-life drama was enacted at Dhaka Stadium on December 17, 1971. The actor was freedom fighter Kader Siddiqi, and the victims were two men. Alleged to be Razakars, they were bayoneted to death by Siddiqi in front of a group of cheery crowd of the Muktibahini or the liberation armed groups ... The horrifying AP photo series "Death in Dacca' haunted the then government. And it was one of the reasons why all the prisoners of war (POW) of 1971 were immediately shifted to India for safety. A repeat performance of the bizarre stage show on October 28 of beating up one man to death by [other] young men ... On that date Awami League-led 14-party alliance workers swooped upon allegedly one Jamaat worker and beat him to death in broad daylight in presence of many people. Video footage recorded from TV channels of the ghastly murders is now circulating around the world with a note of caution ... It has severely shocked the mass psyche."<sup>104</sup>

In another graphic description of what occurred has been provided by Mir Ashfaquzzaman cited by Sadeq Khan in the same issue of HOLIDAY,

"It was a poignant demonstration for many who had only heard of and read about but never seen a person beaten to death. The young man lasted a couple of minutes or so, after his rivals swooped on him with sticks and bamboo poles. He was down and out within the first 30 seconds, but the beating continued. He regained consciousness, stood up and wobbled in a vain effort to walk away. He could make a few paces through the flurry of strikes from all directions. Then he fell down and moved no more. He was dead but that was no excuse for the assailants to step back and let the dead body be. It seemed their murderous hatred would not be satiated until the lifeless body was torn into pieces. The sane few in the blood-thirsty mob tried to put an end to the savagery. They failed, as a few of their overzealous comrades leapt and landed on the dead body a la a championship bout of the World Wrestling Federation. As the gruesome show of savagery was played and replayed on different private news channels, the fainthearted might have switched the television off or tuned to some other channels. The images had been etched deep into their conscience by then, images that would haunt them forever ... The death toll meanwhile, in the trail of the 4 days of siege or relaxation of siege, rose to thirty."<sup>105</sup>

In response to the fast deteriorating situation the EU, UK and India on the 29th of October all issued separate press notes with the British deploring the political violence and calling for calm while the Europeans suggested a peaceful, democratic and constitutional solution to the crisis over the establishment of the caretaker government. The Indians, on the other hand, adopted a very different approach putting the onus of responsibility on the BNP-Jamaat alliance declaring that they wanted to see stability in Bangladesh and hoped the people of that country would be "allowed" to exercise their franchise in a "free and fair manner".<sup>106</sup> American opinion found expression in an article by David Montero, in The Christian Science Monitor (TCSM) who warned that, "It is a crisis the country can ill afford, given the disturbing expansion in recent years of Islamist political power and a culture of intolerance." Referring to analysis of the International Crisis Group, Montero pointed out similarities to other crisis ridden nations suggesting that this is a story that has been repeated from the West Bank to Somalia with Islamist groups like Jamaat-e-Islami stepping in where the government has failed arguing

that although the, "Jamaat's leaders insist their party is committed to democracy and that their aim is to introduce an Islamic state through the ballot box ... many observers say their rise has contributed to an environment of intolerance and, by extension, militancy."<sup>107</sup> In all the comments just cited not a single diplomat or foreign journalist was prepared to condemn the AL for the disgraceful and appalling acts witnessed on October 28. The official position of the Indian government was to defend the AL resolutely and exonerate them completely while blaming the victims of AL violence for the atrocities that were committed against them.

In light of the politically degenerating conditions the President unilaterally assumed the office of CA on the 29th of October without having exhausted all the constitutional provisions set out in Article 58 outlined above. The AL in response to this development reserved its decision on whether to participate in elections stating that this would depend on the measures taken by the President in his new role as CA. It also deftly argued that it would neither accept nor reject President Iajuddin Ahmed's taking up of duties as CA but it termed this move as a violation of the constitution. Sheikh Hasina questioned the neutrality of the President saying that he was a political appointee, "but as he has taken the charge, it is now his responsibility to perform neutrally and implement the reform proposals to create a congenial atmosphere for holding a free and fair election." At the best of times this would have been an onerous task but in the mood then prevailing in Bangladesh it was almost near impossible to guarantee especially with the AL now setting the terms and conditions of what constituted a 'free and fair' election and a judgment that was to be enforced on the streets through protest, blockades and sieges of the capital. Amongst the electoral reforms that were being demanded by the AL there included the use of transparent ballot boxes for the polls, preparing a voter list with voters' photographs and a reconstitution of the Election Commission with the resignation or removal of the sitting CEC Justice M.A. Aziz as a precondition for free and fair elections.<sup>108</sup> The difficulty with this last demand (task) was that the CA or the CTG were not empowered by the constitution to interfere in the composition of the EC and this would prove to be a serious obstacle to progress especially with a CEC who was adamant to remain in his post.

The American ambassador and the outgoing Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri then paid separate courtesy calls on Sheikh Hasina with the US diplomat urging all political parties to refrain from sponsoring street agitation and requesting that time be given to the President to meet the 11 point demands that had been issued by the AL (which were described as tasks rather than demands by Hasina's political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury with Abdul Jalil later hinting at civil war unless these tasks were fully implemented )<sup>109</sup> while Sikri expressed that it was in the interests of both Dhaka and New Delhi that Bangladesh had a strong and stable democracy.<sup>110</sup> It appeared that a chorus began to develop around this theme from the moment that concerns were expressed about a military takeover and which had lately been repeated by the International Crisis Group and TCSM with the threat of Islamic militancy gaining more currency and becoming a primary cause of concern as a possible destabiliser to democratic institutions and norms in Bangladesh. The Economist magazine now joined the fray expressing the same disquiet about the ambitions of the military and unease over the perceived spread of Islamist groups and ideas in the country but also blaming the two political parties for this state of affairs arguing that, "Bangladesh's voters are for the most part a tolerant bunch with surprisingly astute political judgment. They are not easily bullied or hoodwinked. But their disillusionment with the main parties has created a vacuum, which the Islamists are trying to fill. Some are harmless charitable workers. Some have dangerously illiberal social views. A few are violent jihadists. Bangladesh is still a long way from becoming a hardline Islamic state, but its secular rulers are doing their best to give secularism a bad name."<sup>111</sup> This was a very dishonest and motivated way to describe the situation that arose out of October 28 without actually once referring to it but it was clear that the international media was toeing the Indian line on the issue and absolving the AL of as much guilt as possible.<sup>112</sup>

Now that the appointment of the CA had been settled the next few weeks were taken up with the selection of the other ten advisors and a compromise formula was initially found with the AL and BNP putting forward five names each. However, over the next two months the advisors chosen in this way were regularly changed due to resignations and dismissals with the President making appointments

to these posts on his own initiative thereafter. The AL during November made several extensions to the deadline on fulfillment of its demands - with the reconstitution of the EC now taking priority - but at the same time threatening further blockades, sieges and street protests on which they did not hesitate to act upon even after pleas from the business community that it was severely hurting the economy. The AL also continued to bait and challenge the President on his neutrality and the BNP were accused of trying to influence the President, the EC and government administration from behind the scenes. Western diplomats were also seen desperately shuttling between the two main political protagonists and occasionally holding meetings with the President and EC officials while the Indian High Commission confined itself to discussions with the AL high command. New Delhi expressed its views on the political situation in Bangladesh through a tersely worded press statement that appeared to show some irritation and annoyance at the developments that were taking place in the neighbouring country and which were clearly not to its liking or preference.<sup>113</sup> The US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher visiting Bangladesh in mid-November responding to a question posed by reporters warned that a military takeover would be a bad thing to do - a Q & A that reflected the dismal mood overwhelming Bangladesh at the time.<sup>114</sup> With the pressure now building the European Parliament urged the CTG to take immediate steps to reconstitute the Election Commission obnoxiously suggesting that this would disarm, "the supporters of Islamist groups engaged in actions and propaganda characterised by religious intolerance" but failing to condemn the incidents of October 28 in their resolution. The Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizami was compelled to remind the members of the European Parliament that the CTG was not empowered by the constitution to reconstitute the EC and that their comments on Islamist groups were an, "extremely partisan view that coincide with Awami League ... It is unbelievable that members of the European Parliament have not watched horrific murder scenes of October 28." Nevertheless several Western diplomatic missions strongly urged the CTG to reconstitute the EC without further delay but provided no advice, recommendation or solution (at least in public) on how to overcome the lack of legal and constitutional provision for such a move that was clearly beyond its powers<sup>115</sup>

Without any obvious way out of this dilemma India appeared to prepare for the worst with reports of huge quantities of firearms and explosives being smuggled into Bangladesh by land and water from across the border especially through Satkhira, Chuadanga, Kushtia and Sunamganj districts.<sup>116</sup> If accurate these reports would suggest that the Indian government was seriously following through on the advice of security analysts such as Dr. Suvro Kamal Dutta who warned menacingly that, "The recent violent problems and the assumption of power by the Bangladesh president has serious consequences not only for the political and democratic destiny of that country for also for the internal security of India and the government of India should not take things lightly it should be prepared for all kinds of situations if things get more serious in Bangladesh and the way things are going in that country it seems there is every likelihood of that to happen."<sup>117</sup> The fear in Bangladesh was that different agencies of the Indian government would become involved in the growing turmoil and begin to patronize and exacerbate the vicious circles that were developing inside the country in a bid to make the prevailing instability [even] more dangerous.<sup>118</sup> Under the confused and antagonistic political conditions then predominating in the country Bangladesh would have been ill-prepared for the clandestine and apparently violent activities being planned by its neighbour which would likely have spelled national disintegration and the collapse of the state so it was with intense relief when the CEC Justice M.A. Aziz went on leave for 90 days on November 22 with little likelihood of returning to his post.<sup>119</sup> This alleviated the tension appreciably but not the political stalemate that still persisted with the acting CEC Justice Mahfuzur Rahman being only slightly less controversial than his predecessor and opportunists like Dr. Kamal Hossain making abominable and irresponsible statements such as claiming that the President had 'grabbed' the office of CA which, according to him, was a treasonable act and subject to trial by the people. He argued that the people would be compelled to lay siege to Bangabhaban to force the chief advisor to quit if he continued to act illegally and demanded the immediate arrest of the corrupt BNP ministers and MPs.<sup>120</sup> This was all to take place in any case only a few weeks later (except the part about the trial of the President) but Dr. Kamal Hossain would remain untouched by the anti-corruption drive that was to be instituted by the post-emergency interim administration although there were allegations of



tax evasion against him. The immediate consequence of this disgraceful outburst, however, was to create indiscipline amongst the lawyers who were to soon disregard professional restraint and dignity for the behaviour of a vicious and rampaging mob.

On November 30 during the hearing of a constitutional matter in the High Court Division challenging the assumption by President Iajuddin Ahmed of the office of Chief Advisor, the Attorney General applied for a postponement of the case in order that a larger bench could be formed as intricate constitutional issues had been raised which in the opinion of the senior most law officer required wider consideration by more judges. The two judges hearing the case hesitated in their decision and so the Attorney General obtained a stay order on the proceedings directly from the Chief Justice. There was no question of any illegality in the order issued by the Chief Justice as this was entirely within his discretion and jurisdiction and several senior lawyers including Dr. Kamal Hossain and Barrister Amir-ul-Islam had used this device to their advantage in other cases that they had been engaged in. But in response to this particular order of the Chief Justice pro-AL lawyers embarked on an orgy of violence and savagery, "in which outsiders also took part, the offenders ransacked the office and chamber of the chief justice, destroyed furniture and windowpanes of the rooms and properties in the corridor; ransacked the office of the attorney general, attacked two other court rooms and burned lawyers' cars parked outside the court building. They also were also accused of pulling down the national flag and destroying it."<sup>121</sup> It is reported that the ring leader, Barrister Rokonuddin Ahmed, had shouted out to the marauding mob, "from now on, the chief justice is nothing. No more he will be called honorable nor the chief nor the justice." Subsequently a case was filed against 200 pro-AL lawyers who included the president of the Supreme Court Bar Association Barrister Amirul Islam, vice president of the Bar Council Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud and Dr Kamal Hossain for the alleged provocation and in leading the violence.

An anti-AL lawyer is said to have remarked, "that those who were involved in this ugly incident wanted to prove the country as a defunct state. He said the election commission is paralyzed, it can not function, the caretaker government is helpless and now the highest

seat of the judiciary is coming under renewed attack.<sup>122</sup> The lawyer described these activities as "blatant sabotage" None of this, however, appeared to stir the diplomatic community who obstinately refused to condemn the attack on the Supreme Court in even the mildest of terms.<sup>123</sup> Protests from Western governments, diplomats, International NGO representatives and the UN mission were not forthcoming with their principal occupation for the next few weeks appearing to be to create more confusion through contradictory advice and selective reprimands that generally tended to favour the AL position (this was especially the case with the Europeans who were more numerous and interfering as well as the Australians and Canadians) on all major issues which in turn helped to encourage even more chaos and bloodshed in the country.<sup>124</sup> This did not prevent the US government from issuing a fresh warning through Deputy Assistant Secretary John Gastright who said that, "I don't think army step is the right thing for Bangladesh. It would certainly negatively affect military-to-military cooperation, give a negative signal to the whole world and affect Bangladesh's participation in the UN peacekeeping mission."<sup>125</sup> This was the first real indication of American intent and purpose (and the threat was later repeated by the US Ambassador and the Europeans)<sup>126</sup> but also an illustration of waning Indian influence and power in the internal affairs of Bangladesh that was to become more pronounced in the weeks ahead. The reason for such intense US (and British) interest in Bangladesh had, at least, publicly to do with concerns about Islamic fundamentalism and militancy which they felt would increase if the elections were disrupted resulting in a serious escalation of violence that could be exploited by Islamist groups and as British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury succinctly put it, "This is a country of 150 million Muslims and if we lose them to a radical umbrella it will change the geopolitics of our engagement with Islam and our efforts in counter terror."<sup>127</sup> That such concern was exaggerated and built on doubtful premises was probably known to the US and British governments but this served as a useful pretext to move on to Indian turf and balance Chinese influence. The principal drawback and defect to the US and British policy for free and fair elections in Bangladesh was their insistence on the participation of the AL (who had threatened a boycott of polls on several occasions) which allowed that party to hold hostage the entire election process in order to have all their demands accepted and implemented however

unreasonable or extortionate. It was this US/British policy that was to lead to the eventual debacle (or was it a controlled change over?).<sup>128</sup>

Indian opinion completely ignored the incidents of November 30 and instead concentrated on the misdeeds of the President accusing him of, "acting in a manner which shows that he has taken charge of the Caretaker Government (CTG) to implement the agenda of his political masters from the BNP and Jamaat. Probably, with this aim he has also called out army on the pretext of maintaining law and order. Though president is once again willing to negotiate with the 14-party opposition alliance, his actions are hardly above board."<sup>129</sup> The actions of the President/CA were unquestionably suspect and dubious but the AL led opposition did not afford much opportunity for compromise holding the entire nation to ransom with its sieges, blockades and violent protests but these were rarely ever referred to by foreign diplomats or governments whose impressions were influenced by the likes of Dr. Kamal Hossain, The Daily Star editorial board and the AL high command.<sup>130</sup> By December 15 the CTG was half-way through its term but the AL was already talking of boycott and time was fast running out for a political solution. Of the several demands made by the AL very few could be achieved within the timeframe allocated to the CTG and there was no constitutional provision for an extension of time.

On January 3, 2007 the AL led opposition combine decided to boycott the national elections once and for all, the Economist Intelligence Unit published a report on the very next day stating that, "As the EC has said the vote will proceed as planned, with only the formerly incumbent BNP and its allies participating, the result will lack legitimacy. This will undermine the credibility of the next government and will leave it open to challenges by the AL and its allies-not to mention scorn from the international community. (Even if the AL had agreed to participate and had lost, as had seemed likely, it would have probably challenged the result given its complaints about the partisan nature of the EC and the caretaker government.) A political vacuum of one sort or other therefore looks likely to materialize once the poll has been held."<sup>131</sup> Western governments and diplomats naturally expressed their disappointment at the AL decision having received assurances that the party would participate in the

January 22 elections but their decision then to withdraw election monitors seemed to ascribe blame for the boycott and the ongoing crisis solely on the President and the CTG.<sup>132</sup> The boycott was, in fact, called in response to a High Court ruling against former President H.M. Ershad who as leader of the Jatiya Party was an important element of the AL alliance but whose participation in the national elections was now put in doubt by the judgment. There was a strong chance that the opposition would be comprehensively defeated without his active involvement in the campaign.<sup>133</sup> In a desperate bid for a settlement the US, UK Australian, NDI, IRI and the EU imposed pressure on the president and the CTG to secure the participation of all parties<sup>134</sup> but this was now a forlorn hope as the AL had been receiving encouragement for their actions and decisions from the Indian diplomats and were not now looking to retreat while ahead. Apart from diplomatic assistance the AL<sup>135</sup> (and its allies) had been provided with massive and favorable media coverage and propaganda support from the Indian side.<sup>136</sup> The only occasion when the AL received adverse reaction from its India backers was when it opted for an opportunist alliance with the 'hard-line Islamist group Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish (BKM).'<sup>137</sup> The AL even went as far as signing an MOU accepting some of the demands of the BKM relating to application of Islamic principles and rules in Bangladesh which was viewed with scorn by many leftist politicians within the opposition alliance and their cultural and intellectual affiliates. The commotion surrounding this agreement subsided once it became clear that the AL intended to boycott the elections but this new scenario considerably heightened tensions and the nation braced itself for civil conflict. Only a few days earlier, the FBBCI, the premier business association of Bangladesh, had called for a state of emergency to be declared if the political impasse continued - a state of affairs that seems to have already been envisaged by Christine Fair in an article for the United States Institute of Peace.<sup>138</sup> The New Age reported in its January 11 issue that the, "envoys of the United States and the United Kingdom had already been active and recently they even met the army chief."<sup>139</sup> The significance of this statement was revealed on that very night. After all the dire predictions it was with the declaring of a state of emergency on the night of January 11, 2007, by President Iajuddin Ahmed (who also tendered his resignation as Chief Adviser and later cancelled the January 22 elections) that saw the media and

international community (led by the US, UK, EU and India) begin to view the situation positively in Bangladesh with the possibility of holding free and fair elections under army supervision.<sup>140</sup> A very strange turn around in events and perspectives with the US and UK taking the lead in ushering in the new military backed interim administration.<sup>141</sup>

One aspect of this phase of developments that has yet to be touched upon is the economic consequences of the AL led oppositions program of blockades, sieges and violent protests that assisted the country's chief competitor India to undermine confidence in the Bangladesh economy. Respected journalist Shahid Alam writing in *The New Nation* noted that, "Ershad and several in the "Grand Alliance" might also be dancing to the tune of a foreign intelligence agency, one that does not look kindly upon the economic development of Bangladesh, which has been taking some strides forward, and which would place it in direct competition in several sectors with that country. That agency would like nothing better than to have a compliant government, which is represented by the "Alliance", in office, and, as knowledgeable circles in Dhaka have been strongly asserting, has been instigating parts of the "Alliance." into creating a situation that would allow it to come to power through the back door, if necessary."<sup>142</sup> During the preceding two years there had been several favourable international forecasts and reports concerning the advances in the Bangladesh economy which predicted that in the following few years the country would witness accelerated economic growth putting Bangladesh at the forefront of South Asian economies.<sup>143</sup> In order to prevent this from happening a foreign hand (only vaguely alluded to by Shahid Alam but widely believed to be India) was providing support and encouragement to the AL for the political disturbances and violence coordinated by the party in the name of democratic protest in order to inflict grave damage upon the nation's economic standing and performance and also to deter international investors from entering into business in Bangladesh.

On October 30, only two days after the gruesome public lynching of a Jamaat worker, newspaper headlines were screaming about the destruction of the economy caused by the AL inspired blockades, sieges, protests and the repeated closures of the Chittagong Port by

fiat of the Chittagong City Corporation mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.<sup>144</sup> Policies that were supplemented from abroad by supporters of India through a well coordinated media campaign to destroy the RMG sector and its allied industries in Bangladesh.<sup>145</sup> Even proposals for the privatization of certain operations in Chittagong Port to increase efficiency that was also favoured by the business community were vetoed by Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury and used by the AL as a political weapon to further destabilize the economy.<sup>146</sup> The utter hypocrisy and cynicism of the AL in this game of high stakes was perfectly expressed by Sayed Kamaluddin in the New Age, "... what has also surprised most observers and analysts is the fact that neither the leaders of the AL nor those of the smaller parties of the combine have shown any concern towards the colossal losses that the national economy has been suffering because of the prolonged political unrest. They simply don't seem to care about the economic well-being or the lack of it of the country. All they apparently bent upon is to show that they have the capacity to create havoc for the people of this country in the name of the people themselves."<sup>147</sup> Quoting from an IDLC Monthly Business Review report for October 2006 Sayed Kamaluddin details the gravity of this pernicious campaign, "Political violence over appointment of chief adviser of caretaker government has taken a heavy toll on the economy. The railroad blockade and work stoppage at country's seaports have brought all economic activities to a grinding halt. Government has lost revenues worth about Tk30 million a day due to virtual halt of Chittagong port operations. Export and import through land ports, including one at Benapole, also remained suspended for two days. Country's apparel sector incurred a loss of more than Tk10 billion, including Tk4.5 billion in terms of production following the political violence."<sup>148</sup> The reasons for the political violence had less to do with political brinkmanship and more to do with international trade competition as implied by Kamaluddin who refers to a November 2006 issue of The Economic Times which stated, "India is simply losing out in the fresh wave of competition from smaller players such as Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan and Indonesia. Growing at a phenomenal pace, the countries have thrown a spanner in India's export expansion plans." To thwart further growth in these areas prolonged political turmoil in Bangladesh would pay dividends in India and the AL obligingly led blockades, sieges, protests and the

intermittent closure of Chittagong port until the proclamation of emergency in January.

### **Phase 3 - Proclamation of Emergency and after**

The Proclamation of Emergency issued by President Iajuddin just before midnight on January 11, 2007 had been precipitated by the tremendous pressure exerted by the international community led by the US, EU, the UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon, the Commonwealth, UK, Japan, Australia and Canada.<sup>149</sup> Several had decided to suspend their election observation missions and the European Commission even threatened to reassess trade relations and cooperation with Bangladesh if the elections scheduled for January 22 did not comply with democratic and human rights standards.<sup>150</sup> An anxious army high command was forced to intervene convincing the President to declare a state of emergency after the UN issued a warning that a direct military role in the Bangladesh government (i.e. military coup followed by martial law) would jeopardize Dhaka's peacekeeping operations. The singularity of this threat becomes obvious as one considers that no similar threat was ever made when the military took over power in Pakistan, Fiji and Thailand during the preceding five or six years.<sup>151</sup> Western reaction to the emergency was initially very positive with the resignation of the President as CA and the appointment of a completely new set of advisors led by former Bangladesh Bank governor Fakhruddin Ahmed greeted very warmly with no apparent objection to the military acting from behind the scenes in support of the new administration as criticism of the changes were extraordinarily muted. (In fact, the introduction of such a system had already been espoused by Christine Fair of the USIP who wrote in a special report for January that, "... the constitution's thirteenth amendment includes a doctrine of necessity, which permits the NCG to pursue its own policies if it deems such actions necessary for the well-being of the state. the constitution's thirteenth amendment includes a doctrine of necessity, which permits the NCG to pursue its own policies if it deems such actions necessary for the well-being of the state.")<sup>152</sup> The AL and BNP were ultimately held responsible for creating an environment where the declaration of emergency became the only realistic option for the president so as to restrain a decline into civil war that would, according to Western analysis (influenced

by Indian propaganda), result in a rise in Islamic militancy.<sup>153</sup> Both parties were also blamed for their own ultimate downfall with the start of an anti-corruption drive that saw an entire political class (including many prominent businessmen and bureaucrats) completely and utterly discredited with many put behind bars for gross misconduct that revealed a shocking lack of patriotism and a superficial ideological commitment to the nation with the AL tending to be the more treacherous of the two. During the early stages of the emergency Western governments occasionally pressed for early elections but this was always with a caveat that this should only occur after the clean up of politics was complete so that free and fair elections could be guaranteed.<sup>154</sup> Some within the US political and security establishment saw this democratic hiatus as an opportunity to form security and business linkages with Bangladesh to help combat Islamist terrorist groups operating in the country and also presumably to contain Chinese military power and economic influence in the region.<sup>155</sup> This much appears to be evident from a letter sent by former Congressman Curt Weldon to President George W. Bush in April 2007 and co-signed by Colonel (Ret) Timothy D. Ringgold PhD., Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense W. Bruce Weinrod, Maj. Gen. Ronald J. Bath (Ret) USAF and Commander Michael D. Kearney USCG (Ret) on behalf of Defense Solutions which stated inter alia that,

"Given the importance of the present moment for the future, we believe that the US should strengthen further its support for Bangladesh by making every effort to support those far-sighted leaders who are working towards a genuine and corruption-free democracy that is aligned with the West in its struggle against Islamic terrorism ... By making Bangladesh a priority, the US can help ensure a democratic and pro-Western nation, and prevent the emergence of another highly unstable Islamic nation vulnerable to extremism ... As a starting point, the US should seek to help minimize tensions between Bangladesh and its close neighbor India. The US has already played a similar role in, for example, northeast Asia, where it has acted as an honest broker between Japan and South Korea."

The last two sentences of the quote could only be a veiled reference to the containment of China through strategic alignments and security



cooperation between once hostile or antagonistic neighbours in a common cause to restrain the influence and power of the economic and military giant.<sup>156</sup> Doubts have, however, been raised as to whether Defense Solutions actually represents the views of the US government<sup>157</sup> but this issue is less important if one considers the context in which the organization make its pitch to the President for greater military support to the Bangladesh government. The Indians probably viewed the US agenda in South Asia (especially the containment of China and combating Islamist terrorism) quite favourably, having promoted much of it through its propaganda efforts over the previous few years. so that during the early months of the emergency their were expressions of optimism emanating from New Delhi about the democratic prospects for Bangladesh only occasionally tempered when a few corrupt AL members and pro-Indian journalists and newspaper editors were rounded up by the joint forces (i.e. army, RAB and Police).<sup>158</sup> An obvious reason for India playing second fiddle to the West was that the CTG (now more appropriately referred to as the Interim Government or IG) was determined to appease New Delhi through trade deals and the further opening up of the Bangladesh market to Indian business investments.<sup>159</sup> Amongst the many proposals that were seriously considered by the IG in only the first few months of the emergency there included the import of 200 megawatt of power from West Bengal which was flatly rejected by New Delhi on the grounds that it did not have surplus energy to export<sup>160</sup>; the import of 120000 tonnes of diesel through the Bharat Petroleum Corporation's refinery in Assam although the premium rate was higher than other available sources with the added costs related to security risks<sup>161</sup>; an Indian proposal for transit facilities between Akhaura and Agartala which had been consistently rejected by previous elected governments of Bangladesh<sup>162</sup> due to its perceived unpopularity amongst the electorate as well as the related security risks involved; a USAID proposal for interconnecting the national power grid of Bangladesh with the north-eastern power grid of India<sup>163</sup> which would be a first step to integrating the region under Indian/US control and likely rendering Bangladesh energy dependant on its neighbour even as the nuclear option remained open with China agreeing to cooperate with Dhaka on this matter; a tri-nation pipeline running from Myanmar through Bangladesh into India which the past BNP government had stalled on

the grounds that New Delhi was not allowing hydro-electric import to the country from Bhutan and Nepal<sup>164</sup> and there were also serious security issues to consider which ultimately help block the deal; launching of a train service between Dhaka and Kolkata (that had its first test run in July 2007 but further commercial services were then stalled on grounds of security)<sup>165</sup> which some predicted to be a precursor to an extended service all the way to India's North East so in reality being a transit facility by another name<sup>166</sup> as well as a foreign exchange loser for Bangladesh; approval by the IG for Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to build a 240-MW power plant in the country which was hardly a transparent decision and accusations of corruption were made on what seemed quite valid grounds<sup>167</sup> - it was also later calculated that Bangladesh would incur a loss of Tk. 150 crore as the contract was found to contain clauses that were defective and were intentionally inserted to favour the Indian company;<sup>168</sup> requesting India's help for setting up a 600 MW nuclear power plant<sup>169</sup> that appeared to many to be undermining the national interest when more viable options were available and which appeared particularly obsequious and deferential towards New Delhi.<sup>170</sup>

The Indian press and media heaped fulsome praise upon the IG for turning over a new leaf in relations between the two countries that was reflected in its willingness to consider the above trade proposals and also for assuring New Delhi that insurgent groups would not be permitted to use the territory of Bangladesh to engage in terrorist attacks against India which has been wrongly interpreted to mean that such sanctuary was allowed in the past.<sup>171</sup> The IG's subservient attitude to New Delhi seems to have been influenced by the 2007 SAARC summit (hosted by India) that promoted the idea of increased connectivity in South Asia<sup>172</sup> which was merely a cover for expansionism and control of the region (an Indian magazine even described the other SAARC countries as a bunch of failed states<sup>173</sup> ) apparently favoured by some of the Advisors in the interim government. There was such euphoria in Indian circles at the submissive attitude of the IG team that one senior Indian official was said to have remarked that, "We are happy because the pro-Pakistan and pro-ISI elements are no longer in control. The even-handed approach of the new team is good for us. The new powers have made it clear that Bangladesh will not tolerate any anti-India activity from

its territory."<sup>174</sup> The tone of Indian commentators, however, dramatically changed when senior members of the AL including Sheikh Hasina became the subject of extortion and murder cases with a few Indian analysts arguing that Bangladesh was being run behind the scenes by a 'Pakistanised' army who were forging an 'unholy alliance with Islamists' who were using Bangladesh as a Jihadi training camp to launch terrorist operations against India.<sup>175</sup> This change in perspective and mood was not as sudden as it appeared as Sheikh Hasina seemed to receive reassurance from the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh through a secret letter passed on to her through the Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty prior to her departure to the United States in mid-March 2007 from where she issued tirade after tirade against the IG in a burst of renewed energy and confidence galvanized by India's support and backing.<sup>176</sup> The Indian attitude became increasingly hostile and belligerent when the IG tried to prevent Sheikh Hasina from reentering the country on a stopover in the UK and she readily admitted that she was in constant contact with the Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Indian High Commissioner Kamallesh Sharma during this incident.<sup>177</sup> Of the more outrageous and provocative Indian opinions appearing during this time came from Sumer Kaul writing in *The Statesman*, "With the army now in the saddle in Dhaka, things are likely to get much worse. So what are we doing about it? Keeping "an eye on the situation" means nothing. Vacuous pronouncements will deter no one. Only action will ~ both punitive and pre-emptive. What we need to do immediately is to seal the border with Bangladesh, shoot-at-sight any and every intruder, and send back all the illegal immigrants without further delay or dither. Are we up to it?"<sup>178</sup>

The cause of such anxiety was the impression that developments in Dhaka were now being guided solely and exclusively by the West (in particular the United States) and that India had lost its influence over its neighbour's internal affairs although both the US and India put up a united front in public on the issue of reintroduction of democracy in Bangladesh within what they hoped would be the shortest possible space of time.<sup>179</sup> The reason for India's reduced influence over its neighbour was ironically a direct consequence of Indian propaganda concerning Islamist terrorist groups operating in the country with

alleged links to Al-Qaeda which allowed the US (and the UK) to assert its authority on how things in Dhaka should proceed with counter-terrorism being the principal area for cooperation between the two countries and with India watching from the sidelines. In fact, the West's reaction to the Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia exile fiasco was a great deal more subdued than the Indian response and carried more weight in Dhaka but occasionally boundaries were overreached and this tended to grate on nationalist sensibilities especially after Sheikh Hasina's antics in the UK where she held meetings with Lords and MPs denigrating the nation and when a few Western politicians, think tanks and policy centres aligned with Israel and India criticized decisions of the IG and the military on motivated or spurious grounds apparently determined to have Bangladesh declared a failed state.<sup>180</sup> Overall, however, the West was supportive of the IG even with the emergency in place and as long as reforms to the political process continued apace.<sup>181</sup> While there were expressions of dissatisfaction from some quarters about Dhaka's apparent over dependence on Western approval<sup>182</sup> this view was somewhat dispelled after several top politicians and businessmen closely associated with the West<sup>183</sup> were arrested by the joint forces for corruption in May. The Indians, in the meantime, were becoming more and more exasperated especially after reports emerged that China was also making significant inroads primarily in the oil and gas sectors of Bangladesh.<sup>184</sup> This had occurred after New Delhi had expressed reluctance in allowing energy exports from Nepal and Bhutan across Indian territory to Bangladesh. The Indian press and media response to developments in Dhaka from May onwards became confused and highly inconsistent (possibly reflecting a hope that some arm-twisting and cajoling would eventually bring Dhaka around to their point of view) with a few continuing to emphasize the supposed Islamist threat from Bangladesh and the nations inherent anti-secularism,<sup>185</sup> others concentrated on the perceived failure of the reforms process,<sup>186</sup> some even bestowed exaggerated praise upon the IG and the military<sup>187</sup> while a few suggested possible avenues for cooperation in different fields but maintained a condescending and patronizing tone.<sup>188</sup>

This varied and contradictory approach reflected New Delhi's wait-and-see policy on political developments inside Bangladesh which lasted slightly more than a month but by June end it was probably decided in Indian policy and intelligence circles that Dhaka had

irrevocably chosen a less submissive approach to its big neighbour whose demands seemed to have no limits. The impression was that nationalist elements had gained the upper hand in Dhaka and were now influencing policy making to an increased extent. One of the first Indian salvos aimed at Bangladesh came from Sumanta Sen writing in the June 21 issue of *The Telegraph*, "[New Delhi] thinks the dispensation in Bangladesh will stick to its promise of being a good neighbour. That hope has now been belied. There is no indication that Dhaka will stop sheltering subversive elements from this side of the border. Intelligence reports show that these elements in Bangladesh are receiving more funds from the Inter-Services Intelligence and the Organization of Islamic Countries. Dhaka also shows no signs of a change in policy. The Myanmar-Bangladesh-India gas pipeline is still to be cleared. New Delhi has decided to toughen its stand, but will Dhaka really respond?"<sup>189</sup> This strident propaganda strategy was complemented by a diplomatic offensive with the Indian foreign secretary Shivshankar Menon visiting Dhaka in June calling for improved, "physical, economic and mental connectivity."<sup>190</sup> Indo-Bangladesh relations again suffered a steep nosedive during July<sup>191</sup> as Dhaka continued to stall on major investment deals by Indian business houses claiming that India would ultimately snatch away the 'absolute gains' of greater integration in the region.<sup>192</sup> The most serious differences of opinion, however, emerged after the detention of Sheikh Hasina on July 16, 2007 with *The Hindu* daily describing the Interim Government's actions as 'playing with fire'.<sup>193</sup> Indian government annoyance was expressed indirectly in the undiplomatic, condescending and patronizing tones of the visiting state minister for commerce Jairam Ramesh who remarked, "India wanted to see Bangladesh a stable, peaceful, secular democracy committed to economic development...We're confident that present caretaker government will work towards restoration of a political system based on representative government."<sup>194</sup> The inference being made was clear.<sup>195</sup>

In less than two weeks Dhaka University was to erupt into disorder and violence<sup>196</sup> with students and outsiders attacking law enforcement and army personnel. The protesters also set fire to vehicles, burned effigies of the Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U. Ahmad and damaged private property, including a Chinese restaurant almost 4 miles distant from the campus. At this critical juncture, the Indian

government unhelpfully reiterated the opinion that it would be interested in a democratic Bangladesh.<sup>197</sup> This may be interpreted as direct interference by New Delhi to galvanize protesters to overthrow the interim government as the violence now spread to many other educational institutions including schools and colleges. However, only eight days after the initial outburst, student passions began to subside and was completely extinguished after the pronouncement of a general curfew, the closing of all educational establishments and censorship of the press and media. Subsequently, five senior university professors of Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities<sup>198</sup> were arrested on the grounds that they were involved in organizing anti-government demonstrations and political agitation in violation of the Emergency Power Rules. The professors were strenuously defended by pro-Indian groups such as Mukto-Mona Humanist Forum which described their detention as comparable to the arrest of university teachers during the 'Pakistani occupation period in 1971.'<sup>199</sup> These offensive remarks were intended to distract from the allegations then appearing in some newspapers and described in context by Shahid Alam in The New Nation daily, "And talking of conspiracies, it has come to light that a number of people, including the arrested academics, had taken their cue from a certain foreign country, including through its mission in Dhaka. Again, for a long time, at intervals, this column has been dwelling on the strong possibility of one or more foreign governments and intelligence agencies being engaged in trying to portray Bangladesh as a failed state, mounting relentless vicious propaganda to smear its image in important foreign capitals, making it out to be a hotbed of Islamic militancy, and undermining its economy, especially by trying to destroy its vibrant and thriving RMG sector."<sup>200</sup> On August 28, the Indian High Commission categorically rejected media reports that alluded to the involvement of its officials in the student protests. New Delhi, at the same time, called again for the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh through peaceful, free and fair elections which was repeated at regular intervals during the next four months<sup>201</sup> - as this would probably have brought the AL to power as both the BNP and Jamaat were now in complete disarray. The Indian government also dismissed as 'misleading' and 'malicious' Bangladeshi media reports that External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee had secretly met some politicians and activists of the neighbouring country prior to the violent incidents erupting in Dhaka.<sup>202</sup>

The US and UK were in contrast very supportive of the IG welcoming the security measures adopted by the government to quell the rioting. The British High Commissioner, Anwar Chowdhury, termed the disorder an 'orchestrated incident' and, 'seconded the government claim that money and conspiracy were involved in spreading the student unrest at Dhaka University across the country.'<sup>203</sup> According to reputed columnist M. Shahidul Islam, "India did not seem to have liked the government's success in addressing the crisis and launched a blame game against Bangladesh for the August 25 terrorist attacks in the Indian city of Hyderabad. The attacks in Hyderabad 'may be the work of terrorists from Pakistan or Bangladesh', Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy said within hours of the twin bomb blasts."<sup>204</sup> Inexplicably the usually vocal Indian intelligence website South Asian Analysis Group (SAAG) was completely silent on the issue of the student uprising which would seem to suggest a level of collusion in the conspiracy involving RAW and a coterie of university professors and students. The animosity felt towards Bangladesh after the successful suppression of the rioting and the arrest of the university teachers was reflected in an article (on Indo-Bangladesh relations) by SAAG analyst Bhasker Roy who questions whether there is, "a regret in some sections of Bangladeshi leadership i.e. bureaucrats, politicians, military personnel over the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan? Or are they still confused between "goolami" and nationalism? So only when they sort this out one could expect a smoother India-Bangladeshi relationship."<sup>205</sup> This poisonous sentiment against Bangladesh was transferred to other sectors and found expression in the comments of Indian High Commissioner Pinak R Chakrabarty who blamed Bangladesh for stalling negotiations on establishing a rail link between the two countries, adversely remarking, "There exists partition in the minds [of the two sides] following the partition of 1947. I think this legacy should be eliminated."<sup>206</sup> Further criticisms of the government came from legal experts with pronounced Indian sympathies and viewpoints such as Justice Golam Rabbani, Dr. Shadeen Malik, Advocate Sultana Kamal and Justice Naimuddin Ahmed after a speedy trial court sentenced four Rajshahi University (RU) professors (Moloy Kumar Bhowmik, Dulal Chandra Biswas, Selim Raza Newton and Abdullah al Mamun) to two years' rigorous imprisonment for participating in a procession on August 21 at the

height of the uprising that was appearing to encourage the student rioters to even further violence and non-cooperation with the authorities.<sup>207</sup> These legal perspectives were followed by highly condemnatory editorials in *The Daily Star* and the *New Age* as well as several other pro-Indian dailies who expressed disbelief that university teachers could be treated with such disdain and high-handedness.<sup>208</sup> Throughout the country various associations and organizations with pro-Indian leanings expressed their solidarity with the four RU professors with statements signed by the likes of Kabir Chowdhury, KM Subhan, Hena Das, Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Ajay Roy and Shahriar Kabir.<sup>209</sup> This incessant pressure by pro-Indian elements led to the disgraceful climb-down by the Interim Government which released the RU professors from confinement just days after their sentencing with the lame excuse that the families of the convicts had appealed to the President for mercy which was duly granted in recognition of the public's demand. The families of the professors later denied having sought mercy from the President and filed appeals against their conviction.<sup>210</sup> The subsequent release of four Dhaka University teachers and several students for breaching the Emergency Power Rules<sup>211</sup> was no less humiliating for the country turning the professors into overnight celebrities and heroes while condemning Bangladesh to further Indian inspired conspiracies and sabotage.

The cause of the IG's weakness and growing lack of support during this period had very little to do with the plight of the university professors. A far more pressing factor behind public disapproval of the government was the sky-rocketing price of essentials that was creating financial distress to the low and middle income groups that constituted the vast majority of the population of Bangladesh. The reasons given for the price inflation included the international cost of crude oil which neared the \$100 mark;<sup>212</sup> decline in the value of the dollar making imports more expensive; flooding of large sections of arable land caused by the careless release of excess water from dams and barrages<sup>213</sup> on the Indian side of the border during the monsoon season; failure of the aman crops due to the repeated flooding in 2007 that submerged farm lands and destroyed stock; and the general ban on exports of essentials by the Indian government that was introduced in 2006 just as Bangladesh was entering a period of serious political



upheaval and instability. The IG had on several occasions requested the Indian government to lift its ban on the export of essential commodities to Bangladesh but these entreaties generally fell on deaf ears.<sup>214</sup> In early November, through an act of pure malevolence the Indian government suddenly raised the export price of rice by \$115 per tonne to \$425 and allowed limited exports to Bangladesh at the new official rates.<sup>215</sup>

It was only after Cyclone Sidr reaped its devastation across the southern districts of Bangladesh that India partially lifted its export ban on non-Basmati rice to the country.<sup>216</sup> The Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee announced an additional release of five hundred thousand tonnes of rice for export (at market value) after his tour of Bangladesh in December.<sup>217</sup> After lengthy delays the Interim Government had to officially request New Delhi to expedite the export of rice that had been committed by its External Affairs Minister.<sup>218</sup> This niggardly response was compounded by the embarrassing revelation that, "despite a mixed basket of donations pledged so far by India, its overall contribution to the suffering multitudes of Bangladesh still rank as one of the lowest among the commitments made by other countries."<sup>219</sup> It was also noted by senior writer and columnist Sadeq Khan that the manner of Indian response to the, "catastrophe that hit Bangladesh provoked some criticism from the media in New Delhi. The Times of India wrote on 20 November: 'India, the biggest and most powerful nation in South Asia, has pledged a paltry \$1 million or Rs. 4 crore, to help its poor neighbour, with which the government hopes to improve ties. Think about it: Rs. 4 crore can at [best] buy you a couple of decent apartments in Delhi.'<sup>220</sup> To add insult to injury, it later transpired that the export of rice by India would depend on the export of Hilsa fish to West Bengal by Bangladesh. This transformed the Indian gesture from one of humanitarian concern into a purely international trade matter which tended to help sour relations between the two countries. On the very last day of the year, it was also reported by several newspapers that India had raised export price of rice to Bangladesh to US\$ 500 per ton, equivalent to Tk 35kg, rendering the import from the neighbouring country uncertain.<sup>221</sup> The Indian High Commission later contended that the measure was not in fact country specific but applied to all destinations where rice was to be exported. This remark

assisted to further undermine the humanitarian nature of the offer to Bangladesh which was initially intended as a friendly gesture to help alleviate the suffering of the cyclone affected areas of the country.<sup>222</sup> The Indian High Commission did state that the rate rise would not affect the 500 000 tonnes of rice committed under the food-for-aid programme<sup>223</sup> for Bangladesh but this remained a fictional proposition as the rice had not reached the country even after a month from the declaration by the Indian External Affairs Minister. In another news report it became clear that the new rate would apply to letters of credit opened after December 27, 2007<sup>224</sup> which could theoretically still affect the consignment under the food-for-aid programme. The consequence and outcome from all this confusion was that the domestic market witnessed a steep rise in the price of rice causing deep dissatisfaction<sup>225</sup> and suffering amongst the general public with blame being directed against the Interim Government for willful negligence.

With the arrival of the new year, there soon emerged further evidence of deliberate Indian manipulation of rice prices in Bangladesh aided by the incompetence and guile of certain Advisors to the interim administration.<sup>226</sup> Even after Myanmar, Vietnam, Pakistan and Thailand had all agreed to export rice to Bangladesh the Indian government continued to prevaricate on their commitments and after several rounds of consultations - and a visit by a delegation from Dhaka in January 2008 - the "additional" 0.5 million tonnes had still not left India. New Delhi clearly preferred to leave the matter stewing in a bureaucratic pot.<sup>227</sup> Only on the final day of a four day meeting between negotiators from the two sides held in February did India agree to export the additional rice at \$399 per tonne.<sup>228</sup> This, however, did not prevent New Delhi from taking advantage of the Interim Governments embarrassment over the Sheikh Hasina case (in which the High Court ruled that the charges framed against her under the Emergency provision rules were illegal - a ruling that was subsequently overturned) by again banning the export of rice. Exports were only resumed after it was agreed that the purchase price would be raised to \$505-510.<sup>229</sup> The Interim Government quickly sought agreement on a state-to-state basis for the procurement of the additional 5 lakh tonnes (at the \$399 rate) to offset a sharp inflationary trend in rice prices caused by the export ban and the subsequent price

increase.<sup>230</sup> The Indian High Commissioner contended that the export ban and price rise was absolutely necessary since his government needed to feed its people first before exporting rice<sup>231</sup> but this did not adequately explain the timing of the new policy which left almost 300 rice laden trucks stranded on the border between the two countries as those were imported on Letters of Credit at lower rates.

These developments inevitably brought a dangerous rise in social and political tensions initially over the hike in prices but also with the legal turmoil caused by the Sheikh Hasina case which was then pending in the Supreme Court. In anticipation of the coming political turbulence, India adopted a policy of direct and deliberate interference in the internal affairs of Bangladesh, with Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty meeting with the AL Acting President Zillur Rahman and the Khaleda Zia backed BNP Secretary General Khandakar Delwar Hossain on February 5, 2008.<sup>232</sup> He later expressed the view that the interim government should hand over power to an elected government holding the national election by December which would in all likelihood and probability have brought the AL to power.<sup>233</sup> It was of no surprise then, that two senior leaders of the AL, Abdur Razzak and Suranjit Sen Gupta, visited India during this critical period. There also began at this time the public hectoring by the EU delegation and the US Embassy and State Department for holding of the national elections.<sup>234</sup> This was probably in response to recent events over the Hasina case and the failure of the government's reforms program as well as Indian maneuvering. In this respect, the first consignment of the 'additional' rice committed by the Indian External Affairs Minister arrived on February 16, 2008, consisting of a meager 1,010 metric tonnes of rice, 50 tonnes of wheat, 750 blankets, 10,000 sarees and 6,000 mosquito nets all at a total value of 3 crores<sup>235</sup> (Tk. 30 million or \$441176). The rice, of course, was paid for at concessionary rates so the actual value would be far less than the 3 crores stated in newspapers. The Indian government, however, found further pretexts to stall the remainder of the additional rice from reaching Bangladesh on one pretext or another in the following weeks and months.<sup>236</sup> The most tragic aspect of this episode was that no one found the gift of 6 horses to the Chief of Army Staff Moeen U. Ahmad (at a cost to the Indian government of \$850, 000<sup>237</sup> and to be fed by the Bangladesh taxpayers) at all distasteful or repugnant. That the IG then bent-over-

backwards to facilitate the passenger train service between Dhaka and Kolkata by agreeing to construct fencing boxes within 150 yards of the border line<sup>238</sup> (or zero point) in contravention of the border guidelines agreed between the two countries (i.e. Joint Indo-Bangladesh Guidelines 1975) hardly raising a murmur of disapproval in the country.<sup>239</sup> This was inspite of the fact that Bangladesh had previously resisted any attempt to construct fences or roads within the 150 yard perimeter which often led to violent clashes with the Indian B S F.<sup>240</sup>

It seemed that after several months of modest resistance to Indian pressure the IG finally succumbed to their coercive tactics but with very little to show in return. In fact, the Indians became so confident that they were able to make an explicit demand through their High Commissioner, Pinak R Chakravarty, for use of Chittagong Port and transit facility through Bangladesh.<sup>241</sup> These demands were probably intended as preconditions for the export of the remaining additional rice to its neighbour. Turning up the pressure in this regard the Indian government raised the price of export of rice to \$1000 at the end of March and the state-owned Indian oil company Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) also similarly cancelled petroleum exports to Bangladesh at around the same time.<sup>242</sup> Some of these problems could have been alleviated had the Interim Government imported rice on a massive scale<sup>243</sup> (from sources other than India) immediately after Cyclone Sidr had struck and buying the same at international market rates of around \$320 (rather than \$430<sup>244</sup> or higher) which would also have helped to restrain the Indian government from exploiting the food crisis in Bangladesh for its own political ends and putting Dhaka at the mercy of its neighbour.<sup>245</sup> The 'additional' remaining 4 lakh tonnes rice began to be imported at the height of the Boro cultivation and harvesting in Bangladesh which rendered the Indian assistance otiose and also a financial burden and handicap for the Interim Government. Even after the IG had conceded on almost every point to New Delhi, Saumitra Mohan, an Indian analyst, was still able to arrogantly remark, "Notwithstanding India's attempts to improve and consolidate its bilateral relations with Bangladesh, the latter continues to indulge in hostile acts that compromise India's security and territorial integrity .... It is obvious by now that Dhaka deliberately ignores the disruptive activities of

Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), which is out to destabilise India's North-East as part of its long-cherished desire to bleed India through a thousand cuts and eventually dismember the state.<sup>1246</sup> No political representative in Bangladesh was prepared to protest against these types of provocative allegations and defend our national interest and honour so this responsibility was left to the BDR Director General Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed who blandly dismissed the Indian allegations about insurgent camps in the country after a meeting with his BSF counterparts.<sup>247</sup> The Interim Government nevertheless still went ahead with the Dhaka-Kolkata train service<sup>248</sup> and was rewarded by violent protests from some Indian aligned Islamist groups<sup>249</sup> (who had in 1997 signed an MOU with the AL) using the pretext of a policy on women's rights to create mayhem in the second week of April 2008 in and around Baitul Mukkaram Mosque but who (along with some AL politicians) contended that the actual perpetrators of the attacks on the police were outside elements. This statement was meant to imply the Jammata-i-Islami who was then facing demands for the trial of their leaders as war criminals. These carefully orchestrated protests and the insinuations against the Jammata-i-Islami were probably intended to undermine their support base since they were the only organized political grouping left that could challenge Indian interests in Bangladesh.<sup>250</sup> With these political successes the Indian lobby now appeared confident enough to revive several stalled business deals including the Tata Groups proposed investment of \$3 billion in the steel, fertilizer, power and coal mining sectors in Bangladesh as well as ask for connecting Tripura with Chittagong Port and Ashuganj river port.<sup>251</sup>

Some in Bangladesh were still unable to perceive that the unstable and volatile political situation that was an unintended consequence of Indian machinations was nevertheless to its economic advantage as a weak eastern neighbour would serve its purpose and design admirably. This aspect of the crisis was openly expressed by the editors of The Bangladesh Today who on May 25, 2008 visualized several possible justifications for direct military intervention by India, "There is no doubt that our neighbor India is not only keeping a close watch on the unfolding situation inside our Country but is also actively involved in our politics to ensure that its interests are well protected. Other powers such as the USA and EU are not so much

concerned about Bangladesh as about India. Any large-scale social and political unrests, conflict and chaos in Bangladesh will invariably affect India adversely particularly in its separatist-prone south-eastern regions which will then affect the burgeoning Indian economy in which the USA and EU have invested so heavily. Moreover, in order to protect itself, India might decide to militarily preempt should it see a situation of civil conflict or civil war in Bangladesh, in which case the entire region would face a period of extreme instability such as that of 1971. Worries and calculations such as these have prompted India, USA and UK to openly comment about what sort of politics and government Bangladesh ought to have."<sup>252</sup> Whether there is military intervention by India or a political arrangement approved by it and established in Dhaka there would in either case be a serious diminution in the sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh that would likely result in conflict within a decade as an externally imposed power structure is almost certain to collapse with the formation of a new nationalist political elite ready to takeover and reassert the interests of the nation leading to renewed tensions with New Delhi.

It soon appeared to many in Bangladesh that the IG and certain sections of the army had already sought some understanding or compromise with India (especially with the release of Sheikh Hasina in June 2008 and the unnecessary courtesies afforded to her by several advisors) and that the whole post January 11 2007 set-up was intended not to avert civil war but to revive the fortunes of the AL as two successive electoral defeats would have likely destroyed their support base in the country. That the BNP had its entire organizational structure destroyed by the military backed IG in the name of fighting corruption seemed now a dubious proposition as the AL was left virtually unscathed and was assiduously wooed to participate in the forthcoming elections scheduled for December 2008. It appeared that India has quietly achieved most of its objectives through the IG and quite bathetically had still not completed delivery of the 'additional' rice that it had promised after Cyclone Sidr almost seven months before.<sup>253</sup> One school of thought continues to suggest giving Gen. Moeen U. Ahmed the benefit of doubt and to wait and see but to many this advice now seems a Panglossian virtue .....

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24. Sirajul Islam - BNP-AL negotiations: Let the people be heard (New Age - October 12, 2006); Harun-ur-Rashid - Diplomacy, Dhaka style (The Daily Star - Nov 15, 2006); The Daily Star - Bhuiyan criticises 'statement' against verdict (Dec 16, 2006); Professor Mahfuz R. Chowdhury - Is Bangladesh A Democracy or Autocracy (American Chronicle - Nov 29, 2006); Reuters - Four Bangladesh advisers quit over army deployment (Anis Ahmed - Dec 12, 2006); MI Ali - Politicians turning Bangladesh into 'bottomless basket' (HOLIDAY - Dec 15, 2006); Kandaker R. Zaman - Adverse political culture can make us a failed state (HOLIDAY - Dec 15, 2006); Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury - Journey towards dark tunnel? (Blitz - Dec 19, 2006)
25. The Daily Star - Bangladesh put in category of 'flawed democracy' (UNB - November 26, 2006)
26. Shahid Alam - Bangladesh foreign policy : Inescapable and self-imposed limitations (The New Nation - Oct 17, 2006)
27. AFP - Number of poor falls sharply (New Age - Nov 10, 2006); The New Nation - Bangladesh 'Golden Boy' of South Asia: UNDP (UNB - Nov 10, 2006)
28. Faruque Ahmed - Certain quarters appear upset at foreign investors' keenness (HOLIDAY - August 25, 2006); Khawaza Main Uddin - Bangladesh seen as next South Asian rising star (New Age - October 11, 2006); Financial Express - Dhaka attracts highest ever FDI in 2005 (October 17, 2006); The Daily Star - FDI records 50pc growth (October 17, 2006)
29. Mamun Rashid - Bangladesh in the Next Eleven (The Daily Star - October 29, 2006); New Age - Trade with top 5 partners surges 17 per cent (November 13, 2006); New Age - India losing market to Bangladesh, 3 others (November 24, 2006)

30. The Financial Express - Failed State Index (June 21, 2007); New Age - The Failed States Index 2007 (July 30, 2007)
31. German mercantilist Von Hornigk - From Paul Kennedy - 'The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers (First Published 1988); see also Manjeet Singh Pardesi - Deducing India's Grand Strategy of Regional Hegemony from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives (Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies - April 2005)
32. The Indian Army Doctrine - pg. 14
33. The Indian Army Doctrine - pg. 13
34. The New Nation - CPD denies allegation of distorting information (August 8, 2006); The Independent - CPD trashes BoI chief's tirade against it (August 9, 2006)
35. The Daily Star - Arrest warrants against 5 eminent citizens (August 10, 2006); The Financial Express - Mahmud files defamation suit against five CPD functionaries (August 10, 2006); The New Nation - Mahmudur Rahman files defamation case: Arrest warrant issued against Rehman Sobhan, 4 others (August 9, 2006)
36. The Daily Star - Debapriya should not have right to live in country (August 10, 2006)
37. Mahfuz Anam - Hail the Super Patriot (The Daily Star - August 11, 2006); See also ANM Nurul Haque - Of eminent citizens and so-called patriots (The Daily Star - August 14, 2006); Syed Fattahul Alim - Government's cynicism about its critiques (The Financial Express - August 8, 2006)
38. The New Nation - CPD and TIB (Editorial - August 7, 2006); NFB - The Profile of Centre for Policy Dialogue (A Bangladeshi expatriate - August 15, 2006); Dewan G. Ahmed - Re: The Profile Of Centre For Policy Dialogue (CPD)- Centre For Awami - Indian Promotion. (NFB - August 17, 2006)
39. The Daily Star - BoI chief again takes a swipe at 5 eminent citizens (September 5, 2006); The Daily Star - BoI chief takes 'save image' vow again (September 24, 2006)

40. The Daily Star - BoI chief drops case against 5 eminent citizens (September 8, 2006); New Age - Mahmud withdraws case against CPD trustees (September 8, 2006)
41. See Global Competitiveness Index - Table 1: Global Competitiveness Index rankings and 2005 comparisons (2006)
42. New Age - BoI, WEF lock horns over competitiveness ranking (September 3, 2006)
43. See New Age - BoI indifferent to Bangladesh's slide in global competitiveness (September 30, 2006); BSS - Rules on FDI encouraging for investment: CPD (September 30, 2006); The Daily Star - Graft, poor infrastructure pull country down (Oct 1, 2006); New Age - Graft, poor infrastructure, political anomalies cited as top drawbacks (Oct 1, 2006); The News Today - Bangladesh drops one notch down global scale (October 1, 2006) The Financial Express - Fallen, overtaken or stagnant? (Oct 2, 2006)
44. The Daily Star - Noman for keeping Karnaphuli bridge issue above politics (July 22, 2006); The Financial Express - Noman, Mohiuddin take tough line on Karnaphuli Bridge (August 1, 2006); New Age - Mohiuddin vows not to allow pillar bridge over Karnaphuli (August 4, 2006); HOLIDAY - Conflict over third Karnaphuli bridge (August 4, 2006)
45. The Daily Star - Full operations at Ctg port yet to resume (November 17, 2006); BangladeshNews.com - Rival dockers face off over gantry crane use (November 26th, 2006); The Financial Express - CPA faced with yet another intimidation from Ctg mayor (November 23, 2006); The Financial Express - Rivalry between CBAs over gantry crane operation (November 25, 2006); The Financial Express - An unjustified demand (Editorial - November 28, 2006); The Daily Star - Operations resume after 17-day stalemate (November 30, 2006); BangladeshNews.com - Port performance dips for underuse of cranes (December 21, 2006); OEC NEWS BULLETIN - Congestion persists at Chittagong CT as dock strife simmers (12/22/2006)

46. BBC - Bangladesh dockers call strike (May 1, 2002); BSS - CPA Chairman favours private port. (August 26, 2002); Mahtab Haider - Dubious details fog pvt. container terminal deal (HOLIDAY - September 27, 2002); HOLIDAY - SSAB clarifies its position (October 18, 2002); Haroon Habib - A year of troubles (Frontline - October 12 - 25, 2002); The Hindu - U.S. firm loses legal battle over Bangladesh project (May 21, 2003); New Age - Tension in Ctg port over New Mooring terminal handover (March 19, 2006); New Age - 85pc of land dev works of Pangaon Container Terminal ends (July 29, 2006); Shahiduzzaman Khan - Privatisation to improve port functioning (The Financial Express - September 3, 2006)
47. New Age - BoI rejects competitiveness ranking (October 5, 2006); Asjadul Kibria - Power crisis, corruption hinder competitiveness (HOLIDAY - October 20, 2006)
48. New Age - WEF agrees to consider carefully BoI objections (November 22, 2006)
49. The New Nation - CPD asked to clarify tax evasion (December 11, 2006)
50. PROBE - Mamun reveals more ... Interrogation report (April 6 - April 12 2007 Vol. 5 Issue 41); Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya was nevertheless appointed as permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in September 2007 which was an extremely unpopular decision and soon challenged in the courts.
51. The New Nation - CPD and TIB (Editorial - August 7, 2006)
52. Predictably The Daily Star published a defense of the TIB in an article by ANM Nurul Haque titled 'Of eminent citizens and so-called patriots' (August 14, 2006) which was merely a polemic against Mr. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan for his challenge of TIB's assertions against his ministry.; See also UNB - Saifur 'fed up' with donors' allegations about graft (The Daily Star - September 26, 2006); UNB - Saifur asks Danish envoy not to interfere in internal affairs (New Age - September 26, 2006); Badiul Alam - How transparent is Transparency International Bangladesh? (PROBE - August 3, 2006)
53. Badiul Alam - How transparent is Transparency International Bangladesh? (PROBE - August 3, 2006)

54. The articles appeared on NFB and several yahoo discussion groups such as Shetubondhon and Muktochinta in late October 2004 under the following titles, 'Re: Bangladesh and Haiti topped the list of Corruption-TI Report,' 'TI CORRUPTION INDEX - A FURTHER ANALYSIS BY MBI MUNSHI,' and 'A FAILURE IN JOURNALISM (THE TI CORRUPTION INDEX)' ; See also Mamun Rashid - CPI and Bangladesh (The Daily Star - May 5, 2007)

55. The Financial Express - Bangladesh's position in corruption perception index improves slightly (Nov 7, 2006); The Daily Star - Bangladesh improves from bottom to third Doesn't mean graft declined (Nov 7, 2006); New Age - Bangladesh no longer tops global corruption index (Nov 7, 2006); The Financial Express - Bangladesh's status on TI's corruption list (Editorial - Nov 8, 2006)

56. New Age - Indian agencies offer money to write against Bangladesh (August 8, 2005)

57. Transparency International - Corruption in South Asia - Insights & Benchmarks from Citizen Feedback Surveys in Five Countries (December 17, 2002)

58. The Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer (July 3, 2003)

59. The Financial Express - The culture of branding and labelling (Editorial - May 30, 2006); The Bangladesh Journal - Corruption deprives country of MCA fund (February 13, 2006)

60. BBC News - China and India 'top bribe list' (October 4, 2006)

61. See The World Bank - India & Bangladesh: Bilateral Trade Potential Free Trade Agreement (2007); Sayed Kamaluddin - DhakaDiary (New Age - Jan 18, 2007)

62. Fazle Rashid - Bangladesh still a backslider in abating graft! (July 13, 2007); See also New Age - Bangladesh left out in WB reform rating (September 27, 2007); New Age - Internal reviews question WB, competence, research (November 3, 2007)

63. New Age - Bangladesh's rank improves but not corruption situation: TIB (September 27, 2007); New Age - No progress in curbing corruption says Zillur Bhuiyan doubts if TI report depicts real situation (September 28, 2007); New Age - Corruption of few should not be allowed to malign image of many (Editorial - September 28, 2007)

64. The Daily Star - Dhaka goes down with glaring graft (November 1, 2007)
65. See also HOLIDAY - Bangladesh well poised to be an MIC in a decade - I (November 2, 2007); The Financial Express - Declining Competitiveness (November 4, 2007)
66. The Daily Star - Graft not coming down (April 6, 2008)
67. The Daily Star - TIB says it's Muzaffer's own remark (April 7, 2008)
68. The Financial Express - Instant end to anarchic situation proves justification of 1/11 (July 15, 2007)
69. See also Bhaskar Roy - Innovative Ideas for Bangladesh Election System: Democracy with Bangladeshi Characteristics? (SAAG - September 26, 2007)
70. Badiul Alam - The Boucher Mission (PROBE - August 11-16, 2006 Volume : 5 Issue : 7)
71. This also seems to have been the purpose behind the release of a fake news report of Lt. Col. (Retd.) Khandakar Abdur Rashid's presence in Dhaka in late September. He was convicted in the Shiekh Mujib Murder Case but had been absconding after the Awami League obtained power in 1996. He remained outside the country after he was found guilty by a trial court in 1998. The news report that appeared Telugu Portal stated, "Rashid's appearance in Dhaka ahead of parliamentary elections has raised eyebrows in political circles. There is also concern among security experts since Rashid's name figured in a 1999 plot to assassinate Sheikh Hasina, Mujib's daughter and former prime minister whose government brought him to trial." (See Telugu Portal - Mysterious reappearance of Mujib's 'killer major' (September 22, 2006))
72. The Daily Star - JS sees debate on Justice KM Hasan's 'political affiliation' (The Daily Star - Sept 20, 2006); The Daily Star - KM Hasan was involved in BNP politics in 1979 (Sept 21, 2006); New Age - Debate in JS on KM Hasan's role (Sept 20, 2006); New Age - Debate on KM Hasan in JS again (Sept 21, 2006)); Abdul Bayes - On judges and judgments (The Daily Star - Oct 10, 2006); Shakawat

Liton - Hasan 'thinks' controversy irrational (The Daily Star - Oct 19, 2006); UNB - Hasan has no point of backing out (The Daily Star - Oct 23, 2006); The News Today - Hasina opposes Hasan (Oct 23, 2006); The New Today - AL to accept any suitable man except Hasan (Oct 18, 2006)

73. It has also been admitted that Justice Hasan being a relative of two of the accused would have disqualified him to hear the case anyway. see Editorial - Honour of Judiciary: How can lawyers disparage the sanctified institution (Holiday - June 16, 2006); Faisal Rahim - Pro-AL Lawyers shut down Supreme Court gates (Holiday - June 16, 2006); The Independent - AL has become isolated for calling hartals (June 12, 2006)

74. UNB - Extension of judges' retirement age has no link with caretaker chief (The Daily Star - Sept 23, 2006); The Daily Star - Mahmudul sought extension of judge's retirement age (Oct 11, 2006); The Daily Star - Mahmudul's proposal on hold, implemented after his retirement (Oct 11, 2006); Shahiduzzaman - Retirement age for judges raised at former CJ's request: Moudud (New Age - Oct 11, 2006)

75. Dr. Anand Kumar - Bangladesh - Developments in the Run up to Elections (SAAG - September 11, 2006); See also Kuldip Nayar - An Indian viewpoint (The Daily Star - December 18, 2006)

76. The Daily Star - Reform talks to pave way for strengthening democracy (October 12, 2006); The Daily Star - Whirlwind move to make two parties sit (September 28, 2006)

77. JaiJaiDin - Question Time in the Land of Four Queens (October 21, 2006); This possibility of army intervention had been earlier posited by pro-Indian columnist Brig. Gen. Shahedul Anam Khan - Caretaker government, president and the armed forces (June 29, 2006)

78. Dr. Anand Kumar - Bangladesh - Developments in the Run up to Elections

79. Badiul Alam - The Boucher Mission (n. 59)

80. The New Nation - NDI backs Justice Hasan as head of caretaker govt: Doubts about CEC Justice Aziz's competence (September 11, 2006); The Daily Star - NDI concerned over public distrust of CEC (September 12, 2006)



81. HOLIDAY - NDI wants Govt. and Opposition to resolve issues thru' dialogue (September 15, 2006)
82. New Age - NDI mission draws a blank (September 15, 2006)
83. The Daily Star - Aziz must go for EC to regain its credibility (September 15, 2006); The Bangladesh Today - EU team calls on AL leaders, CEC (September 15, 2006); New Age - EU team talks election issues with Ctg mayor (September 21, 2006); The Daily Star - Polls won't be free and fair under present CEC (September 22, 2006)
84. The Daily Star - EU team has doubt about polls, says Ershad (September 19, 2006)
85. The long drawn out negotiations on the US-Indian nuclear deal was just one later manifestation of this trend as well as the signing of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between the U.S. and Sri Lanka on March 5, 2007.
86. The Daily Star - US offers to mediate talks on electoral reforms (September 15, 2006)
87. New Age - NDI fears terrorist acts in next polls (September 23, 2006)
88. This approach was most likely influenced by the prejudice amongst certain American policy makers about what they perceived as the inherently violent and aggressive nature of the Muslim creed. This negative attitude was bound to influence US priorities in Bangladesh especially during a time of crisis or societal collapse which extremists might try to exploit to their advantage - but such a conclusion could be drawn about any ideologically driven movement and not just the Islamists. The US policy in Bangladesh, therefore, appeared to be to avert social upheaval and chaos and to maintain order at any cost even if this meant the stalling of democratic rule for a limited period of time.
89. The Daily Star - Whirlwind move to make two parties sit (September 28, 2006); The New Nation - Butenis meets Hasina: Dialogue almost certain (September 27, 2006)

90. The Bangladesh Today - Dark shadows of US interference in Bangladesh politics BNP-AL duologue uncertain? (October 3, 2006); New Age - Dialogue takes a tumble (October 3, 2006); The Daily Star - Venue complexity takes reform talks back (October 3, 2006)

91. The Daily Star - AL's incredible suggestion (October 4, 2006); The Daily Star - Butenis' tea turns cold (Staff Correspondent - October 4, 2006); The Daily Star - Morshed shocked at 'proposal' for talks at envoy's residence (UNB - October 4, 2006); New Age - People respond angrily to US envoy's invitation (October 4, 2006); New Age - BNP declines to hold talks at US envoy's house (Shahidul Islam Chowdhury - October 4, 2006); New Age - Morshed slams proposal for dialogue at US embassy (Staff Correspondent - October 4, 2006); The New Nation- No desire to mediate between parties: US (UNB - October 4, 2006); Financial Express - United States reaffirms support for democracy irrespective of party (October 4, 2006); The News Today- AL decision draws flak (October 4, 2006); Financial Express - PM criticises opposition for taking up local issues with foreigners (October 5, 2006); Fazle Rashid - Jalil's acquiescence and backtracking proves AL's political immaturity (HOLIDAY - October 6, 2006)

92. The Bangladesh Today - Why foreigners' rush to render unsolicited advice to Bangladesh? (September 14, 2006); see also New Age - No to envoy's residence, yes to Sangsad Bhaban (October 5, 2006)

93. The Daily Star - Opposition targets Hasan takeover (October 20, 2006); Sadeq Khan - Nation heading for civil strife? (HOLIDAY - October 20, 2006); The News Today - Dialogue spells a fiasco (October 20, 2006); The Daily Star - BNP ready to take control of streets (October 21, 2006); The Daily Star - 200,000 sticks, oars ready for AL (October 21, 2006); The Daily Star - Let not the dialogue fail (October 21, 2006); The New Nation - A ploy to continue street movement as victory marches (October 21, 2006); The Bangladesh Today - BNP and AL reach a point of no return (October 21, 2006); New Age - Resistance if govt hands over power to Hasan: Hasina (UNB - October 21, 2006); New Age - BNP, AL to face off Oct 27-29 (October 21, 2006); The New Nation - 6th round of dialogue Monday: BNP, AL preparing for major showdown (20 Oct 2006);

The New Nation - No fair election possible under Hasan: Hasina (UNB - Fri, 20 Oct 2006); The New Nation - Power handover to Hasan to be resisted: Jalil (UNB - Fri, 20 Oct 2006); The New Nation - Is head-on collision imminent? (20 Oct 2006); Financial Express - People to build up resistance if Hasan made CG chief: Jalil (10/21/2006); The News Today - AL to resist power transfer to Hasan (October 21, 2006); The News Today - Ruling coalition bracing for street faceoff (October 21, 2006); The News Today - Fair poll under Hasan impossible: Hasina (October 21, 2006); The News Today - Opposition out to disrupt election: Bhuiyan (October 21, 2006); The News Today - Will the dialogue bear any fruits? (October 22, 2006); The News Today - Quick resistance if Hasan made CA, warns Jalil (October 22, 2006); BBC News - Bangladesh faces political crisis (October 26, 2006)

94. The New Nation - Butenis meets Justice Hasan (October 22, 2006); The Daily Star - Butenis meets Hasan for hour (October 23, 2006);

95. Ghulam Rahman - Caretaker controversy and the army (October 24, 2006); Shamsuddin Ahmed - Should Army have role against internal disorder? (The New Nation - October 4, 2006)

96. International Crisis Group - Bangladesh Today (October 23, 2006)

97. Khawaza Main Uddin - Bangladesh seen as next South Asian rising star (New Age - October 11, 2006); The Daily Star - Bangladesh in the Next Eleven (October 29, 2006); The Daily Star - Bangladesh closes trade deficit with India by 14pc (October 6, 2006)

98. Faruque Ahmed - Certain quarters appear upset at foreign investors' keenness (HOLIDAY - August 25, 2006); Prof. Mahfuz R. Chowdhury - Why Countries Like Bangladesh Remain Poor (American Chronicle - September 20, 2006); Prof. Mahfuz R. Chowdhury - Bangladesh: A Country Thrives on Extortion (American Chronicle - September 29, 2006); Shah Abdul Halim - 'Fundamentalist Economy in Bangladesh': An Analysis (NFB - October 4, 2006)

99. See for example New Age - AL-led combine perpetrated 69pc poll-related incidents: Odhikar (November 24, 2006)

100. The Daily Star - Hasan 'unwilling' to be caretaker chief (October 28, 2006); The New Nation - Justice Hasan sick, oath taking not yet fixed (27 Oct 2006); Reuters - B'desh caretaker PM-designate ill, uncertainty looms (Oct 28, 2006);

101. New Age - US, UK call for peaceful resolution of dispute (October 28, 2006)

102. New Age - Political complexity takes new turn (October 29, 2006); Mahfuz Anam - President, our last hope, keep yourself above controversy (The Daily Star - October 29, 2006); Julfikar Ali Manik - Options not explored before president's offer (The Daily Star - October 29, 2006); The Daily Star - President offers to be chief adviser (Oct 29, 2006); New Age - The ball is in your court, Mr President (Editorial - Oct 29, 2006); New Age - BNP ready to accept president's decision on CA, says Khaleda (Oct 29, 2006); The Daily Star - President should follow constitution (says Hasina) (Oct 29, 2006); The Daily Star - Accept whatever president decides (Tough-talking Khaleda asks opposition) (Oct 29, 2006); The New Nation - BNP won't accept Amin, Hamidul Huq as CA (UNB - Oct 29, 2006)

103. The Hindu - BNP faces backlash (October 29, 2006)

104. Shahriar Noori - Spine-chilling broad daylight murders send wrong signal (HOLIDAY - November 3, 2006)

105. Sadeq Khan - AL, allies should say if they accept CG (HOLIDAY - November 3, 2006); See also Em Eye - Street violence: A test case for caretaker government (HOLIDAY - November 3, 2006)

106. The Daily Star - EU, UK, India for democratic solution (October 30, 2006); The News Today - India wants peace in Bangladesh: Pranab (October 31, 2006); see also New Age - Annan concerned about violence in Bangladesh (November 1, 2006)

107. David Montero - Riots in Bangladesh may benefit Islamists (The Christian Science Monitor - October 30, 2007)

108. The Daily Star - 14-party to watch Iajuddin (October 30, 2006); The Daily Star - Blockade to go on until interim govt formed 'as per constitution' (October 30, 2006); Julfikar Ali Manik - Bangabhaban did not strictly follow constitutional provisions (October 30, 2006); New Age - Hamidul says he didn't decline offer to head caretaker govt (October 30, 2006); Zayd Almer Khan - Onus on president to undo BNP's machinations (New Age - (October 30, 2006); New Age - President sworn in as chief adviser (Oct 30, 2006); The Daily Star - President sworn in as chief of caretaker govt (Oct 30, 2006); New Age - Al-led alliance conditionally accepts caretaker chief (Oct 30, 2006); The New Nation - Hasina hopes President will act neutrally (UNB - - Oct 29, 2006); New Age - Khaleda expresses satisfaction at power transfer (UNB - Oct 30, 2006); The Daily Star - Options not explored (Oct 30, 2006); Abdul Latif Mondal - President's decision: How correct is it? (The Daily Star - Oct 30, 2006); Harun-ur-Rashid - Putting the cart before the horse? (The Daily Star - Oct 30, 2006); New Age - President bypassing constitution, says Oli (Oct 30, 2006); The News Today - SCBA accuses President of violating constitution (Oct 30, 2006); New Age - We are determined to hold free and fair election: Iajuddin (UNB - Oct 30, 2006); The New Nation - Hasina got invitation letter not in time (UNB - Oct 29, 2006); The News Today - President takes oath as CA amid AL boycott (Oct 30, 2006); New Age - 8 more killed, 300 hurt as violence continues (Oct 30, 2006); Financial Express - 10 more killed in third day's violence (Oct 30, 2006); The Daily Star - More violence, more deaths (Oct 30, 2006); The Daily Star - CEC's village home set on fire (Oct 30, 2006); New Age - Talks at Bangabhaban fail (Oct 30, 2006); New Age - President under the microscope (Editorial - Oct 30, 2006)

109. The Daily Star - Agitation if Iajuddin fails to do 11 tasks (November 2, 2006)

110. New Age - Butenis, Sikri meet Hasina (November 1, 2006); The Financial Express - 3-4 days not enough for CA to meet all demands: Butenis (Nov 1, 2006)

111. Economist - Blood feud in Bangladesh (November 1, 2006)

112. See Dr. Anand Kumar - Bangladesh: Caretaker Govt. Installed amidst Chaos and Political Uncertainty (November 6, 2006)

113. The Daily Star - Polls to be free, fair, hopes India (November 15, 2006); The Daily Star - India observing situation, acting envoy tells Hasina (Nov 18, 2006); The Daily Star - Nothing to be done beyond constitution (November 6, 2007); New Age - Foreign envoys suggest fresh talks to end impasse (November 7, 2006); The Daily Star - Butenis urges Hasina to give CG more time (Nov 9, 2006); New Age - US envoy calls on Hasina, urges restraint (UNB - Nov 9, 2006); The New Nation - Diplomats will be more helpful if they move as a team (Commentary - 10 Nov 2006);

114. New Age - Boucher offers US support for holding free and fair polls (Nov 12, 2006); The Daily Star - AL fears polls might not be free, fair Boucher meets Hasina (Nov 12, 2006); The Daily Star - CG, EC must respect their neutral roles Boucher says after meeting Iajuddin (UNB - Nov 13, 2006); New Age - CG, EC must work without influence: Boucher (UNB - Nov 13, 2006); New Age - IRI delegation from US meets CEC Aziz refuses to talk to reporters (Nov 13, 2006); The Daily Star - Why me worry, says Aziz; UN local chief concerned at crisis (Nov 14, 2006); The Daily Star - Butenis against street violence, behind-the-scenes manipulation (November 15, 2006); New Age - US envoy asks all parties to stop pressuring caretaker govt (Khawaza Main Uddin - Nov 15, 2006); The New Nation - US, EU laud move of Caretaker govt (Nov 14, 2006)

115. The Daily Star - EU parliament asks CG to reconstitute EC (Nov 18, 2006); New Age - European Parliament wants decisive CG, EC recast (Nov 18, 2006); The Financial Express - Int'l pressure for EC reforms rising (November 19, 2006); The New Nation - Nizami indignant at EP's ignorance about Constitution (Nov 19, 2006); New Age - Govt terms some EU Parliament allegations baseless (UNB - Nov 20, 2006); The Daily Star - People lost trust in EC Says Butenis; UK envoy concerned (Nov 20, 2006); New Age - EC lost people's confidence, says Butenis (November 20, 2006); New Age - Four diplomats for EC recast for credible polls (November 21, 2006); New Age - Bangladesh may step backward if it fails to hold successful polls: UK envoy (Nov 22, 2006); New Age - Bangladesh may step backward if it fails to hold successful polls: UK envoy (Nov 22, 2006)

116. New Age - Arms, explosives smuggled in: Intel reports (November 18, 2006)
117. Dr. Suvrokanal Dutta - Bangladesh turmoil and its security implications in India (INDOLink - Nov 20, 2006); see also Dr. Anand Kumar - Bangladesh: Controversy over Electoral Reforms Deepens (SAAG - November 20, 2006)
118. The New Nation - Unrest leads to speculations in India (November 20, 2006)
119. New Age - Aziz steps aside, stalemate remains (Nov 23, 2006); The Daily Star - Aziz agrees to go on 90-day leave, but doesn't say when (Nov 23, 2006); The Daily Star - Aziz's decision should end political standoff Iajuddin says he will appoint 2 more commissioners (Nov 23, 2006)
120. New Age - President's assumption of CA's office tantamount to treason: Dr Kamal (November 23, 2006)
121. Faruque Ahmed - Judges slate blatant attack by partisan lawyers (HOLIDAY - December 8, 2006); The Daily Star - CJ's unprecedented stay order before ruling sparks violence (Dec 1, 2006); New Age - CJ's move sparks mayhem (Dec 1, 2006); New Age - AL, BNP trade blame Section of lawyers wants CJ to quit (Dec 1, 2006); New Age - Jurists say CJ's order unprecedented (Dec 1, 2006); The Daily Star - Chief justice violated constitution: Dr. Kamal (Dec 1, 2006); New Age - Lawyers to appeal for stay order withdrawal (Dec 1, 2006)
122. Faruque Ahmed - Judges slate blatant attack by partisan lawyers
123. Sadeq Khan - Undermining state's institutions is a grave offence (HOLIDAY - December 8, 2006)
124. The Daily Star - House of Lords airs doubt about free, fair polls (Nov 25, 2006); The New Nation - Annan concerned over political situation: Top UN, US officials due in Bangladesh (Nov 28, 2006); The Daily Star - Key question now is whether politicians can forget differences (Nov 30, 2006); The Daily Star - UN concerned about free, fair polls in Bangladesh (Nov 30, 2006); New Age - Local, int'l moves on to resolve impasse (Nov 30, 2006); The Daily Star -

Butenis meets Khaleda Discuss political situation (Nov 30, 2006); New Age - UN envoy seeks bolder CG steps to resolve impasse (Dec 1, 2006); New Age - UN envoy terms situation worrying (Dec 2, 2006); New Age - 1.22 crore excess voters in updated roll: NDI survey (Dec 3, 2006); The Daily Star - 5 envoys meet Jalil, discuss current impasse (Dec 3, 2006); The Daily Star - 1.22cr false names on voter list Excess ballots, clerical error may make election result not perceived as credible, says NDI (Dec 3, 2006); New Age - No indication of fraud in excess voters, say NDI, Butenis (Dec 4, 2006); The Daily Star - Acting CEC bins NDI claim of excess voters (Dec 4, 2006); The Daily Star - NDI clarifies voter list survey (Dec 5, 2006); The Daily Star - Stalled EC talks saddens US, UK, Canada (Dec 11, 2006); The Daily Star - Donors shocked, worried (Dec 12, 2006); The Daily Star - The resignation not a good sign for Bangladesh (Dec 12, 2006); The Daily Star - CA's resignation 'impractical' (Dec 14, 2006); Zee News - US looking forward to Bangladesh elections (Dec 16, 2006)

126. New Age - Bangladesh to have polls most monitored ever: Gastright (Dec 6, 2006)

127. The Daily Star - EU concerned over army deployment (Dec 16, 2006); The Daily Star - CG has not always worked neutrally (Dec 18, 2006); The News Today - EU urges President to send army to barrack (Dec 18, 2006)

128. M. Shahidul Islam - Why are all mum over foreign interference? (HOLIDAY - December 8, 2006)

129. The Daily Star - US wants fair polls, AL participation (AFP - Dec 16, 2006); The Daily Star - Western envoys meet BNP leaders, advocate all party participation in polls (Dec 21, 2006)

129. Anand Kumar - Biased Caretaker Government Brings Bangladesh on the Verge of Constitutional Crisis (SAAG - Dec 15, 2006);

130. The Bangladesh Today - Caretaker govt has failed to act neutrally: Butenis (Dec 18, 2006); New Age - US wants CG role in ending political impasse: US envoy (Dec 18, 2006); The Daily Star - CA plunges nation into crisis (Dec 21, 2006)



131. ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT - Bangladesh politics: Pre-election chaos points to a failed system (Jan 4, 2007); See also Waliur Rahman - Is Bangladesh heading towards disaster? (BBC News - Jan 8, 2007)

132. The Daily Star - US, UK, EC disappointed (January 4, 2007); The Daily Star - Act swiftly, impartially to create conditions for all-party polls (Jan 6, 2007); The Daily Star - EU poll mission may not go ahead if crisis persists (Jan 7, 2007); The Daily Star - US, UK envoys hold closed door meeting with Hasina (Jan 7, 2007); New Age - Electoral process failure a major setback for Bangladesh: EU (Jan 7, 2007)

133. There was also a perception that the High Court ruling was obtained by political influence peddling by the BNP which was very possible as the judge hearing the case was a known supporter of the party and whose continued employment depended on their victory in the forthcoming elections. It was still doubtful whether the AL could actually win the elections even with the participation of Ershad who had dithered between both the main parties trying to secure financial inducements as reported in some newspapers. In this episode everyone was playing dirty and neither party could claim the moral high ground on this issue. The AL boycott was a tactical retreat from elections which they would have soundly lost.

134. The Daily Star - Pressure on CA mounts to ensure all-party poll (Jan 9, 2007); New Age - Foreign diplomats doubt polls' credibility (Jan 9, 2007); The Daily Star - Create conditions for fair, transparent polls (Jan 10, 2007); New Age - Polls without all won't be credible: Canadian envoy (Jan 10, 2007); The Daily Star - NDI, IRI won't watch Jan 22 elections (Jan 11, 2007); New Age - Polls observers back out (Jan 11, 2007)

135. The Daily Star - Indian envoy meets Hasina (Dec 12, 2006)

136. Dr. Anand Kumar - BANGLADESH- The Alliance led by Awami League decides not to participate in the Elections. Bangladesh Monitor- Paper No.1 (SAAG- January 5, 2007); The Daily Star - Situation in Bangladesh, other neighbouring states discussed (January 4, 2007); see also the highly contradictory discussion in Rukmani Gupta and Supriya Singh - Recent Developments in Bangladesh and Elections 2007 (IPCS - Jan 5, 2007)

137. Dr. Anand Kumar - BANGLADESH- The Alliance led by Awami League decides not to participate in the Elections; New Age - Bangladesh may revert to '91 condition: Milam (Jan 11, 2007); The Daily Star - AL scraps fatwa deal with bigots (February 13, 2007); New Age - AL scraps MoU with Khelafat, seat-sharing deals with allies (UNB - February 13, 2007); R. Upadhyay - Bangladesh - In a Perpetual Whirlpool of Medieval Politics - Bangladesh Monitor -- Paper No. 6 (SAAG - February 16, 2007); Delwar Hossain - Islamism And Expediency In Bangladesh (Open Democracy - 16 January 2007); Nicholas Schmidle - The Islamist challenge to secular Bangladesh (Boston Review - May/June 2007 )

138. New Age - FBCCI wants state of emergency if crisis not resolved (Jan 7, 2007); The Daily Star - FBCCI for emergency if deadlock prevails (Jan 7, 2007); A. Tariq Karim & C. Christine Fair - Bangladesh at the Crossroads (USIP Special Report 181 - January 2007)

139. New Age - President, political parties compromise the country's sovereignty (January 11, 2007)

140. The Daily Star - US, UK reaction to emergency (Jan 13, 2007); Kazi Anwarul Masud - Back from the brink (The Daily Star - Jan 14, 2007); BSS - Next polls in Bangladesh to be free, fair, hopes India (New Age - Jan 13, 2007); New Age - AL-led alliance scraps all agitation programmes (Jan 13, 2007); The New Nation - FBCCI hails emergency (UNB - Jan 13, 2007); UNB - Create conditions for holding credible polls EU urges new CA (The Daily Star - Jan 14, 2007); Sadeq Khan - 'Economist' report energises Dhaka's C'wealth diplomats (HOLIDAY - Jan 26, 2007)

141. But not everyone appears to have been on the change of tactics as Congressman on the January 10th was still calling for an all party election (The Daily Star - Congressman Crowley wants all-party poll (Jan 11, 2007))

142. Shahid Alam - Hard choices, unpleasant truths, limiting democracy (The New Nation - Jan 9, 2007)

143. The Financial Express - Dhaka attracts highest ever FDI in 2005 (October 17, 2006); The Daily Star - FDI records 50pc growth (October 17, 2006); see also Mamun Rashid - Bangladesh in the Next Eleven (The Daily Star - October 29, 2006); AFP - Number of poor falls sharply (New Age - Nov 10, 2006); The New Nation - Bangladesh 'Golden Boy' of South Asia: UNDP (UNB - Nov 10, 2006); New Age - Trade with top 5 partners surges 17 per cent (November 13, 2006); New Age - BoI still hopeful of \$1b FDI in '06 (Nov 19, 2006); New Age - India losing market to Bangladesh, 3 others (November 24, 2006)

144. The New Nation - Avoid destruction of economy (October 29, 2006); The Financial Express - Economy comes to a standstill (October 30, 2006); The Financial Express - Political violence takes a heavy toll on economy (October 30, 2006); The Financial Express - Political unrest forces foreign RMG buyers to go for alternative sources (November 2, 2006); The Financial Express - FDI scenario amid political turmoil (November 2, 2006); Asjadul Kibria - Port stoppage, railway blockade, political violence decelerate economy (HOLIDAY - NOV 3, 2006); The New Nation - Avoid economic catastrophe (November 4, 2006); The Financial Express - Political uncertainty to exact 'high economic costs' (November 4, 2006); The Daily Star - All eyes set on Ctg port (November 12, 2006); New Age - Country risks losing \$8b garment market due to blockade (November 12, 2006); New Age - Chittagong, Mongla ports paralysed (November 13, 2006); New Age - Business grinds to a halt across the country (November 13, 2006); The Daily Star - Goods pile up at ports on political gridlock (November 13, 2006); New Age - Economic fall-out of power play (November 13, 2006); Reuters - Political woes threaten Bangladesh economic growth (November 13, 2006); The Daily Star - Blockade adds to sick industries' woes: BGMEA (Nov 13, 2006); The Bangladesh Today - Cargo loading-unloading at Ctg port suspended (Nov 13, 2006); New Age - Economy looks down the barrel as ports stay shut (Nov 14, 2006); The Daily Star - Economy under great strain Exempt the core export sectors from siege (Editorial - Nov 14, 2006); New Age - All work stopped at Ctg, Mongla and land-ports (Nov 14, 2006); New Age - BGMEA wants an end to political stalemate (Nov 14, 2006); The News Today - Production, export the biggest casualty of blockade

(Nov 15, 2006); The New Nation - National economy in peril (Nov 14, 2006); The Financial Express - Politicians should consult their inner selves (Nov 15, 2006); The News Today - Ctg, Mongla ports function partially (Nov 15, 2006); New Age - Blockade knocks out tourism (Nov 16, 2006); New Age - Let not the economy be brought down to its knees (Nov 16, 2006); The Financial Express - Standoff between politics and economy (Nov 16, 2007); New Age - Bangladesh 'medium' risky for business: Control Risk (Nov 18, 2007); New Age - Operations at sea, land ports grind to a halt (Nov 21, 2007); New Age - All sea, land ports but Mongla remain inoperative (Nov 22, 2006); New Age - Political unrest may ruin RMG sector (Nov 23, 2006); The New Nation - Costs of the blockade (Nov 22, 2006); The Financial Express - Blockade bleeds industries (Nov 23, 2006); M. Abu Eusuf - Let's all save RMG sector - the vital lifeline of Bangladesh economy (The Financial Express - Nov 25, 2006); The Daily Star - Businesses seek urgent steps to resume activities (Nov 27, 2006); The Bangladesh Today - Political instability to have crippling effect on country (Nov 27, 2006); The New Nation - Destructive politics ruins country (Editorial - Nov 27, 2006); The Financial Express - Desperate RMG owners want operational leeway (November 29, 2006)

145. The New Nation - Virulent campaign (November 2, 2006); The New Nation - Bangladesh has huge potential if propaganda can be stopped (November 9, 2006); The Daily Star - Propaganda against RMG sector protested (Dec 12, 2006); The Financial Express - What is stunting RMG sector's growth? (Dec 14, 2006); The Financial Express- Well earned image cannot be allowed to be spoilt (Dec 15, 2006); The New Nation - Orchestrated campaigns (Dec 17, 2006); The reason for India's concern at the phenomenal growth of the Bangladesh RMG sector may be found in the following: Business Standard - Bangladesh set to overtake India in garment exports (July 05, 2007); Shamsul Huq Zahid - Why should neighbours be jealous of Bangladesh RMG's success? (The Financial Express - July 9, 2007)

146. The Financial Express - An unjustified demand (November 28, 2006); The New Nation - Keep Chittagong Port functional (Nov 28, 2006); The Financial Express - Gantry crane operation at Ctg port resumes (Nov 30, 2006)

147. Sayed Kamaluddin - The impending blockade (New Age - November 30, 2006)

148. Also see New Age - Turmoil starts taking toll on FDI prospects (Dec 2, 2006); The Financial Express - Negotiations on large investment proposals suspended (Dec 2, 2006); The Financial Express - Landports fear shortfall in revenue earning (Dec 2, 2006); New Age - Political unrest to slow down growth: ADB (Dec 4, 2006); The Financial Express - Economic dangers from weird politics (Editorial - Dec 4, 2006); The New Nation - Adverse impact on economy (Dec 4, 2006); The Financial Express - Costs of political confrontation going too high (Dec 7, 2006); The Daily Star - Political turmoil slows Bangladesh's growth (Dec 8, 2006); The News Today - GDP to slow down to 6.2 pc for political turmoil (Dec 14, 2006); The News Today - GDP growth (Dec 15, 2006); Faruque Ahmed - Political instability plummeting economic growth (Dec 15, 2006); New Age - Unrest puts economy in jitters (Dec 31, 2006); The Daily Star - Bangladesh may lose out to other S Asian competitors (Jan 4, 2007); The Financial Express - Endless war over a nonexistent ideology (Jan 9, 2007); New Age - Apparel exports to EU leap to €4 billion in Jan-Oct (Jan 10, 2007)

149. See International Crisis Group - Restoring Democracy in Bangladesh (April 28, 2008) pg. 7

150. The Daily Star - Int'l community puts immense pressure on Iajuddin, his govt (Jan 12, 2007); The Daily Star - Nizami believes diplomatic missions made it happen (January 13, 2007); The Daily Star - US, UK deny role in domestic politics (January 15, 2007); SI Zaman - Conspiracy theories and foreign diplomats (The Daily Star - March 6, 2007)

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152. A. Tariq Karim & C. Christine Fair - Bangladesh at the Crossroads (USIP Special Report 181 - January 2007)

153. The Daily Star - US, UK reaction to emergency (January 13, 2007); The Daily Star - Create conditions for holding credible polls (January 14, 2007); Jake Skeers - Bangladeshi president postpones election and imposes state of emergency (WSWS - 15 January 2007); Anirudh Suri and Josh Kurlantzick - Bangladesh: State in Decline (The New Republic - January 15, 2007); USIP - On the Issues: Bangladesh (January 17, 2007); The Economist - The army, not the politicians, now runs Bangladesh (January 18, 2007); New Age - US, UK, EU, India assure govt of continued support (Jan 30, 2007); M. Shahidul Islam - Genesis of emergency: A high drama (HOLIDAY - March 2, 2007); IHT - U.S. official says stability in Bangladesh needed to keep it from becoming terrorist haven (March 7, 2007); Simon Robinson - Bangladesh's State of Emergency (TIME - January 25, 2007); NVT - Bangladesh in the Generals' Grip (April 15, 2007); The Financial Express - Instant end to anarchic situation proves justification of 1/11 (July 15, 2007)

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Today - Move on to file case if she refuses to leave country (April 10, 2007); The Daily Star - US happy with CG actions Envoy tells CA (April 17, 2007); The Daily Star - State of emergency cannot remain for long Butenis tells Rajshahi chamber leaders (April 18, 2007); New Age - CPA suspends Bangladesh membership (May 9, 2007); New Age - US wants restrictions on Bangladesh politics, media lifted (May 9, 2007); The Daily Star - US supports steps to hold polls in Bangladesh (May 10, 2007); New Age - US wants govt to move fast to hold polls (May 11, 2007); The Daily Star - US congressmen for fair, early election in Bangladesh (May 12, 2007); The New Nation - Butenis for allowing political activities alongside reform (May 16, 2007); The Daily Star - EU encourages polls before timeframe (May 22, 2007); The Daily Star - 'US wants to see fully functional democracy in Bangladesh' (May 18, 2007)

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156. See M. Shahidul Islam - CG should defer deals with India, US to elected govt. (HOLIDAY - May 18, 2007)

157. Mashuqur Rahman & Tazreena Sajjad - Weldon's visit to Bangladesh (New Age - June 2, 2007)

158. New Age - Next polls in Bangladesh to be free, fair, hopes India (January 13, 2007); Dr. Anand Kumar - Bangladesh: President Resigns as Chief Advisor after Declaring Emergency (SAAG - Jan 16, 2007); Supriya Singh - Emergency in Bangladesh: What Next? (IPCS - January 16, 2007); Dr. Anand Kumar - Appointment of New Chief Advisor Makes CEC Aziz Leave Bangladesh Monitor-Paper No. 3 (SAAG - Jan 26, 2007); The News Today - India hopes everything will be all right soon (January 29, 2007); The Daily Star -

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162. The Daily Star - Delhi for more land ports to boost trade with Dhaka (February 14, 2007)

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169. The Hindu - Bangladesh seeks India's help to set up nuke reactor (May 7, 2007); New Age - Delegation likely to visit Myanmar to discuss hydropower plant (May 10, 2007)

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190. New Age - Delhi wants talks for problem resolution, not outside intervention (June 28, 2007); Haroon Habib - Let there be realistic approach (SAN-Feature Service - June 29, 2007); Dr. Anand Kumar - Indo-Bangladesh Relations: Visit of Indian Foreign Secretary (SAAG - July 9, 2007); The Indian press still continued to bank on the scheduled visit in August 2007 of Gen. Moeen U. Ahmed to help improve relations but this was postponed by Bangladesh on the grounds of floods which was then devastating the country: The Telegraph - Bangla reunion diplomacy (July 2, 2007)

191. During the month of July and August the Western response to events in Bangladesh were relatively muted especially after the departure of Ambassador Patricia Butenis. Apart from a few critical op-ed and editorial pieces by pro-Israeli liberal, or pro-Indian newspapers and magazines very little of significance occurred at a policy level from the US and the EU or any other western capital. In fact, overtime it seemed that the West was becoming increasingly sympathetic to Dhaka's predicament: The Bangladesh Today - EU for lifting ban on indoor politics, holding polls as soon as possible (June 10, 2007); New Age - Hold elections without dragging process:

Boucher (UNB - June 12, 2007); New Age - Butenis urges govt to lift ban on indoor politics (June 13, 2007); New Age - Butenis calls for political activity resumption (June 14, 2007); The New Nation - EU supports political, electoral reforms in Bangladesh (June 16, 2007); The New Nation - EU supports political, electoral reforms in Bangladesh (June 16, 2007); The Daily Star - Govt to jeopardize its legitimacy if polls not held at earliest Butenis tells The Daily Star (June 16, 2007); New Age - US against military involvement in politics: Butenis (UNB - June 19, 2007); The Daily Star - An unelected govt for a long time can be dangerous (UNB - June 23, 2007); Colin Murphy - Democratizing Dhaka (Wall Street Journal - June 26, 2007); William B Milam - Many big rivers to cross (Daily Times - June 27, 2007); The Economic times - British parliamentarians call for Hasina's release (23 Jul, 2007); The Daily Star - Hasina's arrest resented at House of Lord's seminar (July 26, 2007); New Age - Bush greets polls roadmap in Bangladesh (July 27, 2007); Reuters - Bush hails for terror, corruption hunt in Bangladesh (July 27, 2007); The Daily Star - 2 US congressmen write letter to CA Ask govt to respect HR, law (August 1, 2007); The Daily Star - US for polls as stipulated in EC roadmap (August 1, 2007); New Age - HRW urges govt to repeal emergency (August 3, 2007); The Financial Express - US Congressional body for lifting ban on Bangladesh politics soon (August 3, 2007); The Daily Star - Donors concerned at lack of progress (August 11, 2007); Only the Indian-American US Charge d' Affaires Geeta Pasi created occasional trouble with calls for lifting restrictions on doing politics and for early elections: The News Today - US envoy for lifting of ban on politics (August 1, 2007); The News Today - US calls for lifting ban on politics (August 13, 2007); New Age - US calls for lifting ban on politics (August 13, 2007)

192. The Bangladesh Today - India's Mittal Group keen to invest in Bangladesh (June 10, 2007); The New Nation - Mittal to invest \$2.9b in Bangladesh: Coal, gas exploration to get priority: VK Mittal (11 Jun 2007; New Age - Decisions on Tata, Asian Energy, Mittal Group offer by July 15: BoI (June 20, 2007); The Telegraph - Dhaka enforces ban on coal imports from region (June 22, 2007); The Financial Express - 'India takes it all' fear obstacle to greater regional integration: Aziz (July 9, 2007); UPI - Analysis: India drops MBI gas

pipeline (July 11, 2007); The Daily Star - Delhi pushes for transit facilities, investment deals (July 23, 2007); New Age - Transit cannot be a condition for increased trade with India (July 24, 2007); The Financial Express - New move to ask India to remove non-tariff, para-tariff barriers (July 25, 2007); Barrister Harun ur Rashid - Transit Rights in South Asia: Why no headway? (The Daily Star - August 18, 2007); UNB - Bangladesh unlikely to respond to Indian offer on power import: Tapan (New Age - December 14, 2007); The Financial Express - Stalemate over oil import from India (December 16, 2007)

193. The Hindu - Playing with fire (July 18, 2007); See also The Daily Star - Follow due process of law Urge US, UK, India (July 17, 2007); The Telegraph - ENDS AND MEANS (July 18, 2007); Dr. Anand Kumar - Bangladesh: Arrest of Khaleda Zia (SAAG - September 5, 2007); Mohammed Zainal Abedin - Indian RAW-sponsored upheaval that rocked Bangladesh (NFB - October 10, 2007)

194. New Age - India wants to see secular, democratic Bangladesh (July 23, 2007); New Age - Dhaka rejects Indian junior minister's comment (New Age - July 25, 2007)

195. Dr. Anand Kumar - Bangladesh: Arrest of Shaikh Hasina - Was it to Silence Her? (SAAG - July 23, 2007); Harsh V Pant - Bangladesh's deepening crisis (ISN - July 26, 2007); Muchkund Dubey - Democracy in Peril in Bangladesh (Mainstream - 29 July 2007); Bibhu Prasad Routray - From Anarchy to Authoritarianism (SAIR - Volume 6, No. 3, July 30, 2007); Vinod Vedi - Bangladesh political decapitation (Asian Tribune - August 11, 2007); R. Upadhyay - Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh- A Cocktail of ISI, Al-Qaeda and Taliban (SAAG - August 10, 2007)

196. Triggered by a dispute between students and soldiers at a football game.

197. The Daily Star - India interested in democratic Bangladesh (August 28, 2007)



198. Prof. Anwar Hussain, Chairman, Dept. of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and General Secretary, Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA); Prof. Harun-or-Rashid, Dean, Dept. of Social Science, Dhaka University; Prof Saidur Rahman, Former Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University; Prof. Abdus Sobhan, Convenor of Rajshahi University Progressive Teachers Society; Prof. Moley Kumar Bhowmik, Dept. of Management, Rajshahi University; Professor Anwar was found to have links with forces abroad and tried to use his skills acquired as the commander of Gono Bahini's Dhaka city unit during the turbulent days of 1974-76. In 1976, Anwar was one of the masterminds behind the botched attempt to kidnap the Indian high commissioner in Dhaka during an intrepid raid aimed at creating a crisis which India could have used to intervene militarily inside Bangladesh (M. Shahidul Islam - Hunt on for 'evil forces' trying to destabilise polity (HOLIDAY - August 31, 2007.)

199. Mukto-Mona Humanist Forum - A Fervent Appeal to Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser, Caretaker Government of Bangladesh (August 28, 2007)

200. Shahid Alam - Compounding the problem and international nexus (The New Nation - August 29, 2007)

201. New Age - India rejects media reports (August 29, 2007); New Age - New Delhi wants democracy restored to Bangladesh (August 29, 2007); The Financial Express - Indian High Commission refutes media reports on student unrest (August 30, 2007); The Financial Express - India calls for restoration of democracy (September 4, 2007)

202. ZeeNews.com - MEA trashes reports on Pranab meeting Bangla politicians (August 29, 2007)

203. See The Daily Star - Initially spontaneous, later money involved (August 27, 2007); The New Nation - British HC says: A lot of money injected in student movement (August 27, 2007); M. Shahidul Islam - Hunt on for 'evil forces' trying to destabilise polity (HOLIDAY - August 31, 2007; See also for western reactions to student uprising: The Daily Star - US, UK call for restraint (August 24, 2007); New Age - US, UK express support for interim govt

(August 24, 2007); The News Today - Crowley urges govt to refrain from student crackdown (August 26, 2007); NFB - Statement by Lord Avebury, Chair of the Bangladesh International Foundation & Vice Chair of UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group (August 27 2007); The Daily Star - C'wealth secy gen calls for lifting emergency Shows concern over violence against students, academics, journos (September 2, 2007); The Daily Star - EU renews support for interim government (October 18, 2007); New Age - Geeta Pasi lauds govt activities (October 31, 2007)

204. M. Shahidul Islam - Hunt on for 'evil forces'; See also The New Nation - Foreign Ministry rejects Indian media reports (September 5, 2007); Bhaskar Roy - BANGLADESH: Politics and the Two Ladies (SAAG - October 10, 2007)

205. Bhaskar Roy - BANGLADESH: Where is India in Dhaka's New Foreign Policy? (SAAG - October 19, 2007)

206. New Age - Indian envoy blames Dhaka for stalled resumption of rail link (October 23, 2007); New Age - Security, but no fencing, insists Dhaka (October 25, 2007)

207. The Daily Star - Jurists see poor evidence, question govt neutrality (December 6, 2007)

208. The Daily Star - Sentencing of RU teachers (December 6, 2007); New Age - A blow to public intellectualism (December 6, 2007); New Age - Teachers, not conspirators or criminals (December 12, 2007)

209. New Age - Tsunami of condemnation against RU teachers' imprisonment (December 6, 2007)

210. The Daily Star - Teachers to be 'freed' (December 10, 2007); The Daily Star - 4 RU teachers freed from jail (December 11, 2007); The Daily Star - Welcome moves to free teachers and students (December 11, 2007); New Age - Teachers, not conspirators or criminals (December 12, 2007)

211. The Daily Star - 4 DU teachers, 11 students acquitted (January 22, 2008); BBC News - Bangladesh teachers are released (January 22, 2008); The Daily Star - 4 DU teachers finally freed (January 23, 2008); The News Today - 8 DU students walk to freedom (January 24, 2008)

212. Faruque Ahmed - Dhaka worst victim of falling \$ price (HOLIDAY - December 14, 2007)
213. See negative effects of Farraka Barrage in New Age - BBC Sanglap suggests alternative barrage to tackle Farraka (March 23, 2008)
214. The Financial Express - Bangladesh to request India to lift export ban on rice, pulse, onion (October 31, 2007); The Daily Star - Dhaka urges Delhi to lift export ban (November 6, 2007); The Daily Star - No encouraging progress in lifting India's export ban (November 7, 2007)
215. The Financial Express - India raises rice export price to \$425 per tonne (November 8, 2007); See also The News Today - Indian traders make hefty profit on onion export (November 26, 2007)
216. The News Today - India lifts ban on rice export to Bangladesh (November 24, 2007)
217. The New Nation - Pranab meets CA: Ties are of utmost importance: India waives ban: Bangladesh can import 5 lakh tons rice (December 2, 2007)
218. New Age - Dhaka requested Delhi to expedite rice export: Iftekhar (December 10, 2007); See also The Bangladesh Today - India has positive indication from BD to export rice through official channel (UNB - December 16, 2007)
219. M. Shahedul Islam - Can he change Delhi's perception? (HOLIDAY - December 7, 2007)
220. Sadeq Khan - Pranab's gesture welcome, but India could do more (HOLIDAY - December 7, 2007)
221. The New Nation - India raises rice export price to \$500 per ton (December 31, 2007); New Age - Rice market heads for further volatility (December 31, 2007); The Daily Star - India ups prices of exported rice again (December 31, 2007)
222. The Daily Star - Indian HC clarifies rice price hike (January 1, 2008)

223. IANS - Rice price hike not to hurt Indian exports to Bangladesh (EARTHtimes.org - January 1, 2008)
224. The Daily Star - India allows rice export at previous rate (January 2, 2008)
225. BBC News - Bangladesh 'facing rice crisis' (January 3, 2007)
226. The News Today - India blocks 300 rice trucks (January 5, 2008); The Financial Express - Indian govt invites bids for supplying rice to Bangladesh (January 5, 2008); Bdnews24.com - Rice import from India hits snags: official (January 5, 2008)
227. The Daily Star - Deal to take 2 more weeks (January 28, 2008); The Financial Express - Indian agencies yet to synchronise rice import efforts to Bangladesh (February 6, 2008)
228. The Daily Star - Dhaka, Delhi fix rice import at \$399 per tonne (February 7, 2008); The Financial Express - \$200m deal with India likely for import of 0.5m tonnes rice (February 9, 2008)
229. Bdnews24.com - India halts rice exports to Bangladesh, traders claim (February 9, 2008); The New Nation - India bans rice export to Bangladesh (February 10, 2008); The Financial Express - India suddenly imposes ban on non-Basmati rice export (February 10, 2008); New Age - India orders fresh ban on rice export (February 10, 2008); The New Nation - Indian export ban in pvt sector Hundreds of rice-laden trucks stranded on other side of border: State level import of 5 lakh tons remains unaffected (February 11, 2008 ); The Financial Express - Stranded trucks of rice start for Bangladesh today (February 13, 2008); New Age - Rice import from India resumes (February 13, 2008); The Daily Star - Import of rice below \$510 price stopped (February 15, 2008)
230. The News Today - Five lakh mts rice to be imported from India (February 13, 2008); The Daily Star - 6,500 MT rice imported at higher price (February 14, 2008)

231. New Age - Delhi must feed its people first: Indian envoy (February 15, 2008); The News Today - Dhaka reacts to Indian HC's remarks (February 18, 2008)

232. The Daily Star - Indian envoy meets Zillur, Delwar (February 6, 2008)

233. The New Nation - CG will hand over power to elected govt by Dec, hopes Indian HC (February 9, 2008); See also Bhaskar Roy - BANGLADESH: Time for Multi-Party Politics (SAAG - January 30, 2008); New Age - US, India want Bangladesh to return to democracy (February 15, 2008)

234. See Abdur Rahman Khan - Political deadlock continues (HOLIDAY - February 15, 2008)

235. The Daily Star - 111 truckloads of Indian relief arrives (February 17, 2008)

236. The News Today - Uncertainty looms large over govt import of rice from India (February 21, 2008); The Daily Star - Fresh Indian restriction on non-Basmati rice (March 9, 2008); New Age - Indian rice import suspended for 2nd day (March 10, 2008); New Age - Uncertainty looms large over official rice import from India (March 11, 2008); The Financial Express - Indian govt relaxes rice export ban, but customs defiant (March 16, 2008); New Age - Import of 4 lakh tonnes of Indian rice may be delayed (March 18, 2008); The Financial Express - Talks on Indian rice import end inconclusively (March 19, 2008); The Financial Express - Troublesome import of Indian rice (March 19, 2008); The Bangladesh Today - Govt still faces obstacles to securing Indian rice (March 24, 2008)

237. The Daily Star - Gen Moeen goes to India today on 6-day visit (February 24, 2008)

238. The Daily Star - Council okays construction of fencing boxes near zero line (February 25, 2008); The News Today - CG for fence along Indo-Bangla rly track (February 25, 2008)

239. Exceptions include a forthright editorial in the New Age daily on February 26, 2008 ('Moeen's extraordinary India visit and govt's approval of security cage on border'). It is not clear whether this was written in anger over India's acceptance of military control over Bangladesh or a sincere concern at the undermining of Bangladesh's interests. Also Farhad Mazhar in an article written for Niya Diganta (Kothai Jachee Amra?) makes some excellent points on this matter.

240. Independent Bangladesh - BDR, BSF trade fires along Dinajpur frontier (January 31, 2008); The News Today - BSF bid to erect barbed wire fence foiled (February 5, 2007); The Daily Star - BDR firmly opposes border fencing (March 16, 2005); New Age - Tentulia border tense as BDR, BSF trade gunfire (October 29, 2006)

241. The Daily Star - India eager to use Ctg port, wants transit (March 19, 2008); See also M. Shahidul Islam - Is Dhaka turning into Delhi's client state? (HOLIDAY - March 21, 2008); The Hindu - India wants better connectivity with Bangladesh (April 20, 2008)

242. The Financial Express - Traders surprised at doubling Indian rice export price (March 30, 2008); The New Nation - India raises rice export price to \$1000 per ton (March 30, 2008); The New Nation - India stops fuel export to Bangladesh (March 30, 2008); The Financial Express - Indian co suspends oil export to Bangladesh on security ground (May 22, 2008)

243. See The Bangladesh Today - 'Crisis could have been averted if govt imported rice timely' (April 10, 2008)

244. The Daily Star - Rice deal with Delhi signed (April 4, 2008)

245. The News Today - Call for mass protest against Indian "conspiracy" (April 10, 2008); See also Harun ur Rashid - Saga of Indian Rice to Bangladesh IPCS - May 16, 2008)

246. Saumitra Mohan - Strengthening Indo-Bangla Relations (IPCS - April 10, 2008); See also The Hindu - 'India, Bangladesh trying to restore warmth in ties' (April 11, 2008); New Age - ULFA leaders doing business in Bangladesh: Indian minister (April 18, 2008);

Rupakjyoti Borah - Will Assam go the Kashmir Way? (IPCS - April 29, 2008); B. Raman - Terrorism: An Indian Perspective - International Terrorism Monitor: Paper No. 397 (SAAG - June 2, 2008)

247. The News Today - No Indian insurgent camps in Bangladesh: BDR DG (April 13, 2008)

248. The Daily Star - Train rolls to Kolkata from today (April 14, 2008); BBC News - Dhaka-Calcutta train link resumes (April 14, 2008)

249. There are also allegations that the Khelafat Majlis is Israeli sponsored. These allegations appeared in 2006 and 2007 but suddenly disappeared from view and so references are now unavailable. The AL predictably tried to create confusion over the violence at Baitul Mukkarram by blaming Jamatt-i-Islami which to the more gullible is synonymous with all Islamist groups including the Khelafat Majlis (The News Today - Jamaat behind Baitul Mukarram violence: AL)

250. Wilson John - The Bengali Taliban: Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (The Jamestown Foundation - May 15, 2008); It appears that this conspiracy against the Jamaat-i-Islami was also backed by the Israel lobby (see for example the Wall Street Journal - Polling Bangladesh (May 16, 2008); Bhaskar Roy - Bangla Jamaat Fomenting Communal Riots? - Advisor Matin Writes Taliban Recipe (SAAG - May 22, 2008)

251. The Financial Express - Govt-Tata talks likely to start very soon amid 'positive indications' (April 30, 2008); The Daily Star - Tripura wants access to Ctg Port, Ashuganj river port (June 3, 2008)

252. The Bangladesh Today - Internal instability invites external intervention (May 25, 2008); See also India Daily - A possible war between India and Bangladesh unless the Bangla regime stops anti-India terrorists and border infiltration (June 3, 2008)

253. The Financial Express - India fails to deliver major part of rice within agreed time (June 14, 2008)

# THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)

## PART 6B

*"We have to conquer the world. That we have to! India must conquer the world and nothing less than that is my ideal. It may be very big, it may astonish many of you, but it is so. We must conquer the world or die. There is no other alternative. The sign of life is expansion; we must go out, expand, show life, or degrade, fester and die. There is no alternative. Take either of these, either live or die." (Swami Vivekananda)<sup>1</sup>*

### **Propaganda on Islamist Terrorism in Bangladesh**

The third method by which the Indian government and intelligence agencies have attempted to undermine the sovereignty of Bangladesh is through the dissemination of false and fabricated information on the presence of Islamist terrorist groups allegedly operating from within the country posing a serious security threat to neighbours and the international community at large. This issue gained particular resonance in the West after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 when the WTC buildings in New York City and the Pentagon were attacked by al-Qaeda operatives using passenger aircraft as a weapon and detonator for mass murder. Bangladesh became an opportune target for this form of propaganda with the conclusion of the Afghanistan war in which the CIA had actively assisted Islamic fighters (mujahedin) by providing them with sophisticated weapons and logistical support against the Soviet Union during the 1980's. With Muslim fighters coming from all over the Islamic world to participate in the Afghanistan war it was logical that a few would be Bangladeshi nationals<sup>2</sup> inspired by the call to defeat the communist atheist intruders and liberate a Muslim land. With the war finally over in 1988 these Muslim fighters dispersed to their countries of origin to create revolutionary situations throughout the Middle East, Kashmir, Chechnya, Indonesia and North Africa having gained skills and experience in guerilla and asymmetric warfare and were now using these techniques against their own governments. Bangladesh was



presented in a highly exaggerated and motivated form as one such country facing an internal Islamist threat that had the potential to cross borders and bring Islamic terrorism to all of South Asia.

### **Phase 1 - 2001 to 2006 as the story unfolds**

One of the earliest examples of this type of propaganda aimed at Bangladesh starts interestingly with the Indian intelligence website South Asia Analysis Group (SAAG) which also appears to be the progenitor and inspiration for all the subsequent articles on the issue. Dr. Subhash Kapila in his February 5, 2001 write-up for SAAG titled, "Bangladesh Armed Forces and Islamic Fundamentalism" commences his tirade from the perspective of the Forward Policy and the Nehru-Indira Doctrine stating that, "The Bangladesh Army, like the Pakistan Army is totally dependant on Chinese military hardware. Despite initial opposition to the creation of Bangladesh, the Chinese relented and soon converted Bangladesh into a Chinese military equipment client state. India, in the Chinese context has to note that a very slender strip of 90km of Indian territory separates Bangladesh from Chinese controlled Tibet." Viewing Bangladesh in terms of a national security threat to India Kapila proceeds to justify his thesis on the unrelated ground of Islamic extremism. He argues, "Lately, Pan Islamic fundamentalist organisations including those linked with global terrorism have established themselves in Bangladesh, where they have found ready adherents." Kapila further suggests without evidence that, "Bangladesh stands specifically targeted by Pan Islamic and global Islamic terrorist organisations as spring board for Islamic Jihad against India and Myanmar. The fact that their existence and those of their training camps are being tolerated speaks of tacit complicity of government organs at some level." Kapila goes on to blame the Bangladesh armed forces for this state of affairs concluding that Bangladesh Armed Forces, "... seem to be convinced by contemporary factors that Islamic fundamentalist terrorism is a better weapon to keep India's might at bay." While the circumstances that led to the writing of this article by Kapila were context specific (i.e. border clashes between the BDR and BSF) its influence was to be far reaching and a consistent bane for many years to come.

In response to the drubbing that the BSF received at the hands of the BDR on 18 April 2001 after an attempted incursion into

Bangladesh territory, a former additional secretary of RAW, B. Raman, also writing in SAAG a few months after Kapila, similarly noted, "During the 1980s, many cadres of the JEI had participated in the fight against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and, in the process, established a networking relationship with different Afghan Mujahideen groups, with Pakistani jihadi organisations and with the HUI (Al Qaeda) of bin Laden."<sup>3</sup> Thus began the projection of Huji (B) that was said to have been formed under the leadership of Mufti Hannan but this was only to gain specificity a few more years down the line. The artificiality of Huji (B) appears from the description provided by Raman, "In recent months, a Bangladeshi version of the HUI has made its appearance and has been operating independently ... It has been projected as an organisation owing its inspiration to bin Laden and the Taliban of Afghanistan. Their slogan reportedly is: "Amra Sobai Hobo Taliban. Bangla Hobe Afghanistan'(We all will become Taliban and Bangla will become Afghanistan)." That the political slogan employed by Huji (B)<sup>4</sup> was said to have also been used by the Freedom Party (as alleged by RAW researcher Jaideep Saikia)<sup>5</sup> and the Jamaat-e-Islami<sup>6</sup> of Bangladesh all adds a sense of incredulity and suspicion to Raman's report. Nevertheless, the Western press and media took hold of the issue after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks<sup>7</sup> and used their imagination and creativity (fed by Indian intelligence analysts) to dream up fantastical stories of international Islamist terrorist networks preparing to take over power in Bangladesh and establish an Islamic state.

The first significant Western contribution to this debate came from Bertil Lintner writing in the April 4, 2002 issue of the Far Eastern Economic Review.<sup>8</sup> In the provocatively titled article, 'BANGLADESH: A cocoon of Terror' Lintner makes the following hyperbolic statement, "A REVOLUTION IS TAKING PLACE in Bangladesh that threatens trouble for the region and beyond if left unchallenged. Islamic fundamentalism, religious intolerance, militant Muslim groups with links to international terrorist groups, a powerful military with ties to the militants, the mushrooming of Islamic schools churning out radical students, middle-class apathy, poverty and lawlessness-all are combining to transform the nation." Similar sentiments had been expressed in the articles by Kapila and Raman and Lintner's intent could be interpreted as being no less nefarious

and deceptive. In fact, Lintner introduces HuJi (B) for the first time (Kapila and Raman had so far merely used HUI to describe this group thereby providing a tenuous Al-Qaeda linkage) as a full-blown terrorist outfit with links to Al-Qaeda and he uses verbatim the description provided by the two Indian intelligence analysts. The principal target of Lintner's piece were the madrassahs (religious seminaries) that had sprung up all over Bangladesh since independence and in the case of Pakistan and Afghanistan had fed the war against the USSR with new religiously inspired and motivated recruits as well as the Taliban. The fear was that the madrassah system might create a generation of disenchanting and unemployable youth who would be attracted to the promises of a new Islamic society being espoused by Islamist radicals and would eventually turn to terror tactics to realize this ideal. Lintner may be forgiven for not understanding or fully appreciating the cultural and historical restraints inherent in Bangladeshi society that would make such violent upheaval unthinkable, unattractive and ultimately impossible. The universal outrage at the bomb attacks perpetrated by the JMB and others is just one example of the abhorrence felt by Bangladeshis at such mindless violence and which finally spelt defeat for these groups as there was no ground swell of support for their obscurantist agenda.

Soon there were other reputable and influential magazines following the Kapila, Raman and Lintner bandwagon copying word for word what had been previously written and occasionally adding a few new anecdotes to enhance the impression of a country on the precipice of disaster.<sup>9</sup> Once this notion became internationally accepted as fact the propagandists became more confident and in equal measure unashamedly mendacious, deliberately introducing fabricated episodes of Islamist conspiracies into the mix. Alex Perry in his October 14, 2002 TIME Magazine article, 'Deadly Cargo,' describes the clandestine entry of M.V. Mecca into Chittagong port, "For nine months the exact nature of the Mecca's cargo or the shipment's eventual destination remained unknown. But there were clues. Portworkers that night said they saw five motor launches ferry in large groups of men from the boat wearing black turbans, long beards and traditional Islamic salwar kameez. Their towering height suggested these travelers were foreigners, and the boxes of ammunition and the AK-47s slung across their shoulders helped

sketch a sinister picture. Then in July, a senior member of Bangladesh's largest terrorist group, the 2,000-strong al-Qaeda-allied Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), told TIME the 150 men who entered Bangladesh that night were Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters from Afghanistan." Perry then absurdly claims that Al-Qaeda No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahiri, had been hiding out in the country for months after arriving in Chittagong. He then cites from an anonymous source that al-Zawahiri arrived in Dhaka in early March [2002] and stayed briefly in the compound of a local fundamentalist leader. Perry, however, admits that U.S. intelligence had no evidence that this report was true. While the purpose of the Islamic fighters on board M.V. Mecca in entering Bangladesh was never made clear or their identities properly verified Perry links this obviously fictitious event with the arrest of several foreign nationals of Middle Eastern and North African descent in Uttara (a residential area in Dhaka) on September 24, 2002. They were alleged to have had links with controversial Saudi-backed charity al-Haramain but the Dhaka branch of this organization had not been blacklisted by the US government nor had Washington subsequently lodged any formal complaint or protest to the Bangladesh authorities. The reason for this lack of interest becomes clear as Perry elucidates that, "Although Bangladeshi intelligence sources confirmed the suspects were being questioned about links to al-Qaeda, they cautioned that no relationship with bin Laden's terror network had been discovered, nor any evidence of training. They added that the men had been in Bangladesh for three years and were also being interrogated over allegations of child trafficking. Sources within Bangladesh's intelligence community, however, told TIME the authorities had been embarrassed not to find any evidence at al-Haramain's five-story offices in Dhaka and were trying to play down the raid .... Whatever the case, after being held for five days at a secret location, the men were driven to court and released on Sept. 29. No charges or proceedings were brought." Even then Perry reverts back to his HujI source to confirm his earlier story but is forced to concede that Bangladesh 'is no Afghanistan, or even Pakistan.' After taking the reader on a lengthy rigmarole unable to prove a single element of his story Perry resorts to the allegations originally advanced by Kapila, Raman and Lintner in their articles and reports cited above.

Even with all the innumerable deficiencies and factual lacuna contained in the Perry article this did not deter the Indian press and media from seizing an opportunity to undermine Bangladesh with accusations of harbouring Islamist terrorists and supporting Islamic 'fundamentalism' in the country.<sup>10</sup> This exercise was made easier after several bomb explosions went off in four cinema halls in Mymensingh district on December 7, 2002 and as pointed out in Part 2A there was circumstantial evidence of Indian intelligence complicity with the JMB terrorist group in carrying out such attacks in the country. Using this incident as a convenient backdrop B. Raman subtly changes the temper of the debate to suggest that terrorism in Bangladesh has a distinctly anti-Indian communalist agenda, "Like its Pakistani parent organisation, the HUJI of Bangladesh, which the US State Department in its annual reports titled "Patterns of Global Terrorism" identifies as HUJI-B, has a strong Wahabi and Taliban influence and has been carrying on a campaign against music, dancing, films, TV etc as anti-Islam and against the Indian cultural influence in Bangladesh, which it projects as the Hindu cultural influence."<sup>11</sup> To provide the suspicion of state sponsorship to these terrorist attacks he alleges that, "[Huji's] involvement, along with that of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI), a member of the ruling coalition in Dhaka, was strongly suspected in a series of violent incidents directed at the Hindu minorities after the present Government came to power in October, 2001." The systematic attack on Hindus as related by Raman was subsequently found to be entirely concocted and part of a wider propaganda onslaught against the BNP alliance government.<sup>12</sup>

This same tactic was used after the horrendous grenade attack on an AL political rally on August 21, 2004 where there was similarly some circumstantial evidence of Indian intelligence collusion with the culprits who belonged to the Dhaka underworld and HuJi fanatics.<sup>13</sup> Around the same time there began violent assaults on the Ahmediya community by a vocal group of self-proclaimed defenders of Islam. The issue was heavily exploited by human rights activists, filmmakers, journalists and lawyers also having suspected links with Indian intelligence who were intent on promoting an adverse image of Bangladesh to the outside world.<sup>14</sup> Dr. Kapila commented on these two episodes for SAAG in the following terms, "India would be the

most seriously impacted by a explosion of political violence in Bangladesh ... Also such a situation, (reminiscent of 1971) would not permit India to remain as a passive and impotent observer ... Failed states in any part of the world are a security threat to their neighbors to the region and also to the global unipolar power."<sup>15</sup> With such an enticing story line acclaimed journalist Eliza Griswold probably could not resist writing another fictional piece along the lines already set out by Bertil Lintner and Alex Perry. In her article for the New York Times titled, 'The Next Islamist Revolution?'"<sup>16</sup> she introduces to an international audience the spectre of Bangla Bhai and the JMB. Apart from the catchy title Griswold's style and the content of the piece were shallow and superficial with little worthy of quotation as she simply tread along the same path prepared by Kapila, Raman, Lintner, Adiga and Perry with only the debut of the JMB to interest the reader but this also fitted a stock characterization and description of an Islamist terrorist group.<sup>17</sup> There soon followed several equally hollow and derivative articles written for the international press and media that fixed the impression of Bangladesh as a hotbed of religious fanaticism and terror.<sup>18</sup> This problem was compounded when JMB activists adopted suicide bomb attacks to instill fear amongst the general public allowing Indian intelligence to further whet the vacuous and insipid intellectual appetite of the average Western reader with exaggerated stories of the impending collapse of the government and the takeover of the radical Islamist fringe in Bangladesh.<sup>19</sup> B. Raman heightens the tension by introducing a possible basis for future Indian intervention into Bangladesh as he remarks in a November 2005 SAAG article, "The Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET) has also opened a branch in Bangladesh, but it has not so far come to notice for any involvement in acts of terrorism in Bangladesh territory. It confines its activities to providing logistic support to the operations of the LET in Indian Territory from its sanctuaries in Bangladesh."<sup>20</sup> More ominously he advances a similar justification used by the United States in their War on Terror to bomb Afghanistan and Iraq, "The reluctance of the Government of Bangladesh to act effectively against the mushrooming Wahabi terrorist groups is facilitating the growth in Bangladesh of a jihadi terrorist infrastructure similar to what prevailed in Afghanistan before 9/11. This could pose a serious threat to peace and security in the belt extending from India's North-East to Southern Thailand." The point

was instantly picked up by Bertil Lintner in his review of Hiranmay Karlekar's book, 'Bangladesh: The New Afghanistan?' Lintner warns that there, "are reported to be over 50,000 Islamic extremists belonging to more than 40 militant groups who have received, or are receiving, military-style training in 50 camps all over Bangladesh." If true this would certainly be a cause for concern with the potential for an Islamist revolution to take place on the Iranian model but this ignores the tolerant version of Islam practiced by the vast majority of Bangladeshis which would make even the most ardent Islamist give up in despair. The answer to this conundrum of opposing and contradictory opinions was provided by the Dainik Sangram who posed the pertinent question, "Who are the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen? Are they really a pro-Islamic force? Do they really want to establish Islamic laws in the country or are they proceeding with a plan to turn Bangladesh into a failed state?"<sup>22</sup>

## **Phase 2 - 2006 the year of terrorist propaganda**

During 2006 there was a sudden rise in news reports about Islamist terrorism in Bangladesh which was followed by commentaries and analysis by foreign 'experts' who began to emphasize the incompatibility of Islam to democracy. It was probably no coincidence that national elections were scheduled to be held the following year and Indian intelligence and their Western collaborators were intent on defaming the nationalist and Islamic parties ahead of the polls.<sup>23</sup> Chris Blackburn of the Israeli backed 'The International Summit' following in the footsteps of Kapila, Raman, Lintner, Perry, Adiga, Saikia and Griswold commented in a country report on Bangladesh that, "Islamists in Bangladesh do not believe in democracy, they think that Allah is the only sovereign. They believe that people should not be seen as the sovereign and should not be allowed to develop or implement laws. Islamists use democracy as a way of surviving and being able to propagate their views, their end game is the destruction of democracy and the implantation of a totalitarian state based on Shariah law."<sup>24</sup> Such fallacious and motivated rationalizations have led to the West supporting authoritarian and totalitarian governments throughout the Muslim world even after the electorates in these countries had expressed their approval of Islamic parties in elections that were internationally

recognized as free and fair and which were then promptly annulled due to Western diplomatic, military and economic pressure. Blackburn implicitly justifies such an approach when he comes to the dubious conclusion, "Analysts, journalists and academics have long been warning that Bangladesh is rapidly evolving into a failed state. It's function as a safe haven and training ground for radical Islamists poses a direct threat to India and also has repercussions beyond the region."<sup>25</sup> The audacity of this statement (in light of the paucity of the evidence) was outdone by the remark made by Arnaud de Borchgrave in the Washington Times that, "Suicide bombings and grenade assassinations are more common in Bangladesh than in Israel, Gaza or the West Bank."<sup>26</sup> In a sprightly defence, Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Political Counselor at the Bangladesh Embassy, shot back, "Mr. Borchgrave's article is a highly motivated figment of his twisted imagination ... Using distortions to serve one's own interest and frame of mind is pure dishonesty and does not equate with professionalism expected of a journalist. Mr. Borchgrave would be well advised to take note."<sup>27</sup>

In terms of content the anti-Bangladesh articles that appeared during this period followed the lines already set by Kapila et al with only an exceptional few adding novel, interesting and sometimes picturesque asides that ironically posited India as the victim of Bangladesh/Pakistan aggression. Sumit Ganguly, in the YaleGlobal journal, writes, "In an effort to sow discord in India's troubled northeastern states, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI-D) has also penetrated Bangladeshi society. Despite the horrors that the Pakistani Army had perpetrated in East Pakistan in 1971, which contributed to the emergence of Bangladesh, a small segment of Bangladeshi society maintained its fondness for a unified Pakistan. In large part, loyalty to Pakistan stemmed from an unyielding hatred for India."<sup>28</sup> Such schizophrenic tendencies had largely subsided after the events of 15 August 1975 when a new nationalist outlook emerged and the minority that still viewed a unified Pakistan as a possibility were gradually marginalized and overtaken by a new post-1971 generation that had no recollection of pre-Liberation war events but instead saw the arrogance of an overbearing and domineering India as an existential threat to the nation which was to influence their outlook on South Asian matters from now on. That Indian writers,



such as Ganguly could still confidently spout such trite nonsense as illustrated in the YaleGlobal article showed more precisely a penchant for outright dishonesty and the deliberate manipulation of facts, opinions and historical record.

While the Indian writers were at least consistent their Western collaborators tended to be more whimsical and morally corrupt. It has been alleged that TIME magazine took an estimated \$1 million from the Bangladesh government to publish a favorable cover story by Alex Perry titled, 'Rebuilding Bangladesh.'<sup>29</sup> The allegation was that Perry had been invited by the BNP led government to Bangladesh and was accorded 'royal' hospitality and during his stay an underhand deal was made with the, "prestigious magazine with an amount of US\$ 1 Million for publication of the story, with the objective of improving the image of the ruling coalition government when the next election is just at the door." Whether the Perry article actually warranted a payment of \$1 million is highly debatable as it merely lists a litany of failures of the political parties since independence and promotes Indian business interests in Bangladesh while only grudgingly acknowledging the economic achievements of the government. The only section of the article that contained some appreciation for government efforts against Islamist terrorist groups came from a statement by a western diplomat who told Perry that, "Only two months ago ... 'I was telling people back home it was just a matter of time before we had the first car bomb or first attack on a foreigner.' The 'nightmare scenario that could have unhinged the entire country,' he adds, was for terrorist attacks to escalate during what is already expected to be a tense general election in early 2007-but that now seems 'pretty remote. What we're seeing looks like the implosion of the entire [militant] organization.'" It is probable that the allegations leveled against TIME were contrived and planted by an unknown source to undermine the optimistic note (although greatly tempered in its enthusiasm) of the piece by Perry. On the other hand it may show that Western journalism can be bought at the right price. That TIME magazine has so far failed to counter the allegations and it appears not to be making any effort to take legal action which sadly suggests the latter conclusion but it also demonstrates how easy it is to plant stories in the Western press and media and artificially create opinion both sanguine and adverse.

The Indians, however, were unrelenting in their declamations about Islamist militancy in Bangladesh engaging in a continuous tirade against the country. The constant refrain being that Bangladesh was increasingly becoming a haven for Islamic fundamentalism and terrorist forces, "threatening not only its fledgling democratic structure, but also causing grave security concerns for India."<sup>30</sup> With the repetitiveness of these warnings it gradually became a serious security and strategic concern for the West<sup>31</sup> especially so close to the elections which were scheduled for January 2007 and especially after the Mumbai train blasts. The anxiety in the West was heightened by journalistic hacks such as Selig Harrison writing in the politically influential Washington Post who describes the calamity about to befall Bangladesh in the following terms, "While the United States dithers, a growing Islamic fundamentalist movement linked to al-Qaeda and Pakistani intelligence agencies is steadily converting the strategically located nation of Bangladesh into a new regional hub for terrorist operations that reach into India and Southeast Asia."<sup>32</sup> Harrison enlarges the conspiratorial dimensions of the story claiming somewhat imaginatively for the gullible reader, "For Pakistan's intelligence agencies, especially Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the legacy of the independence war has been a built-in network of agents within the Jamaat and its affiliates who can be utilized to harass India along its 2,500-mile border with Bangladesh. In addition to supporting tribal separatist groups in northeast India, the ISI uses Bangladesh as a base for helping Islamic extremists inside India. After the July 11 train bombings in Bombay, a top Indian police official, K.P. Raghuvanshi, said that his key suspects 'have connections with groups in Nepal and Bangladesh, which are directly or indirectly connected to Pakistan.'" If this was not enough to scare US policy makers into action Harrison further contends, "A State Department report cited evidence that one of the Jamaat's main allies, the Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami, also headquartered in Pakistan, "maintains contact with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan." Bangladesh Harakat leader Fazlul Rahman was one of the six signatories of Osama bin Laden's first declaration of holy war against the United States, on Feb. 23, 1998. Since the October 2002 Bali bombings led to repression of al-Qaeda, some of its Indonesian and Malaysian cells have shifted their operations to Bangladesh." That the elusive figure of Fazlul Rahman has not made a reappearance after the bin Laden

declaration in 1998 casts doubt on his influence and some would say even on his actual existence and the other allegations were never substantiated or followed up seems to be beside the point. The piece by Harrison can only be described as a hatchet job on an entire nation to influence western opinion towards Indo-centric candidates in the forthcoming elections and to apply policy pressures both economic and diplomatic to that end. The resulting confusion has already been detailed in Part 6B.

In order to firmly establish a nexus to international Islamist terrorism prior to the hand over of power to a Caretaker Government the Indian media directly implicated both Bangladesh and Pakistan in the Mumbai train blasts of July 11, 2006 where scores of passengers were killed. The tragic incident likely sparked Selig Harrison's imagination leading to his unconvincing and disingenuous piece. Much of the information he utilized for the article was clearly gleaned from reports appearing in the Indian press and media who were then loudly opinionating and slandering India's two neighbours in light of the Mumbai blasts. Eminent journalist Sadeq Khan was forced to point out the glaring errors and hypocrisy in this approach, "The fact remains that it is the same officials of the Bangladesh government and armed forces men on deputation to the Home Ministry that successfully cracked the nascent terror network within Bangladesh that was largely supported by supplies and contacts across the border in India. Again, the US administration itself has been publicly disclaiming any credible evidence of Indian or Bangladeshi involvement in Mumbai train-bombings, as copied from Indian reports by Harrison."<sup>33</sup> The unfortunate aspect of this story is the assistance provided to the Indian propagandists by a certain section of the local Bangladeshi press who splashed the accusations on to their front pages propagating doomsday scenarios, "for the "nearly-failed" state of Bangladesh." Sadeq Khan adds that this particular propaganda stunt was presumably timed to coincide with the visit to Bangladesh by Richard Boucher the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian affairs who had come to assess the election situation in the country in the run up to the handover to a caretaker government.

Throughout August 2006 the Indian press and media manufactured fantastic stories linking the HuJi (B), JMB and the banned Students

Islamic Movement of India (SIMI).<sup>34</sup> In a sensationalist piece by Richard L. Benkin of The Intelligence Summit titled, 'New Evidence Supports Threat of South Asian Islamic Takeover,' there is disclosed the astonishing and totally misleading findings of an Indian documentary which insinuates that a, "A conspiracy has been hatched by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence and fundamentalists from Bangladesh to carve out an Islamic country comprising Asom, Tripura, and West Bengal," as well as Bangladesh.<sup>35</sup> The writing of the article coincided with the BJP demands for military action against Bangladesh for allegedly harbouring terrorist groups of the Indian North-East inside its territory (see Part 2B). This issue of the volatile Indian North-East will be dealt with in greater detail below but the interesting and more illuminating aspect of Benkin's article is his admitted reliance on Indian intelligence sources for information. It is probably due to this willful overdependence on RAW that Benkin could make the following preposterous observation, "Al Qaeda forces have been steadily relocating from Afghanistan through Pakistan and Kashmir to settle in neighboring Nepal. What is curious about that venue is that Nepal is 89 percent Hindu with most of the remaining population Buddhist. But while Nepal is not a candidate to become the next Taliban state, it serves as a safe haven for Islamists with their eyes on transforming Bangladesh into one. Nepal is almost contiguous with Bangladesh at one point and the porous border presents a potential entry point for Islamists to infiltrate that nation and skew its January election results in favor of their cohorts there. West Bengal, one of the states mentioned in the documentary, is the land mass between the two countries." While one may safely dismiss the Nepal factor as a ridiculous and irrelevant inclusion in the storyline and plot the mention of the January elections had fundamentally more significance for Indian designs towards Bangladesh. Benkin, however, still manages to spoil this collaborative (Benkin + RAW) effort by displaying his ignorance of South Asian geography by placing the 'land mass' of West Bengal between Nepal and Bangladesh which is factually incorrect as only twenty miles separate the two nations. Whatever the illogicality of the piece the trend in such propagandist scribbling and scrawling was to become more virulent as the handover to the CTG neared. An excellent example of such work is a polemical piece by Sumit Kumar for the Pioneer magazine who writes, "Bangladesh, a byword for sanctuary

of terror for a large section of security analysts, might not have become a failed State as yet, but it has certainly failed in becoming a responsible State. In the suffocating grip of radical Islamists, who care little about being pawns in the hands of forces nurturing morbid dreams of global jihad, Bangladesh is fast emerging as South East Asia's terror hub."<sup>36</sup> As the last sentence indicates Sumit brings together several pervious propaganda write-ups and compiles them into one overwrought and highly emotional piece. The article ends in a veiled threat leaving no illusions about Indian expectations for Bangladesh in relation to the election outcome as well as other bilateral issues, "The Al Qaeda has succeeded in creating a robust network throughout this corner of the world and Bangladesh has emerged as prime hunting ground. Militant outfits operating in the North-East, like ULFA, have made Islamic groups India operations much easier. The Indian Government will have to wake up to the new realities and evolve new strategies to combat terror export from Bangladesh instead of waiting for a regime change in Dhaka."<sup>37</sup> Certainly intended as a warning it nevertheless fitted in well with the BJP scare tactics calling for military air strikes into Bangladesh (see above). In other words, nothing less than an AL victory in the January elections would alleviate Indian concerns about Bangladesh and also allow them to further their business interests in the country while gradually achieving the implementation of their expansionist designs in the region.

The Bangladesh government response to these challenges was forthright but limited to the mere making of speeches<sup>38</sup> and the nationalist writers while protective of the country's interests and defensive of the governments anti-terrorist endeavours which on the whole were extremely successful<sup>39</sup> had been undermined by what this author has described as 'Fifth Columnist' journalism. In particular, Zafar Sobhan writing in The Daily Star, inclining towards the Indian position with unabashed candour argues for direct US intervention in Bangladesh as, "the US has nothing to gain and much to lose from refusing to take an uncompromising stand when it comes to terrorism in countries like Bangladesh."<sup>40</sup> Such unpatriotic sentiments could only harm Bangladesh's interests as Indian agencies continued to disseminate false information<sup>41</sup> to the press and media about Islamist terrorist groups operating out of Bangladesh attempting to intensify the concern in Western capitals<sup>42</sup> about the uncertainty of the elections

and the ongoing AL political agitation in Dhaka. Some of the language and expressions were downright offensive without any semblance of respect or appreciation for the sovereignty or integrity of Bangladesh. Noted columnist Balbir K. Punj writing in the influential 'The Pioneer' daily in September 2006 remarked, "Over 700 madarsas are propagating jihad in Bangladesh. No wonder most of the recent terrorist activities in the world - London, Ayodhya, Delhi, Mumbai and Malegaon - have one connection or the other with our eastern neighbour. And, thus, there is a growing concern over the 'basket case' turning into an incubator of Islamist terror."<sup>43</sup> However, as soon as the handover to a caretaker government took place at the end of October the propaganda assaults on Bangladesh dramatically subsided with a few insignificant die-hards speculating on the state of Islamist militancy in the country<sup>44</sup> but this only managed to attract marginal interest. The focus had now shifted decidedly to the holding of free, fair and credible elections and Islamic terrorism took a distant second place but the Islamic parties within the BNP alliance remained the target of inflammatory articles (and even the AL came in for some stick for its electoral pact with the Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish which formalized the use of fatwas<sup>45</sup>) by the usual hacks and political opportunists employed by Indian intelligence and affiliated pressure groups.<sup>46</sup>

### **Phase 3 - India resumes its propaganda offensive**

In the first few months of 2007 Indian propaganda alleging state sponsored terrorism by Bangladesh had virtually disappeared with only a small number of mediocre, convoluted, repetitive and poorly researched articles<sup>47</sup> appearing in the foreign press or media and on some intelligence websites probably indicating a wait-and-see policy by RAW and also in order to keep the Interim Government under constant (but not severe or insurmountable) pressure. However, as Indian concerns about the intentions and attitudes of the military backed Interim Government emerged a new round of allegations were started which exposed the artificiality of the whole bogus blame game concerning Islamist militancy in Bangladesh. It appeared that such accusations could, like a water faucet, be turned on and off at will, regardless of the surrounding political circumstances or the abilities, propose, inclination, ideology and loyalties of the particular groups in question. The allegations that began tentatively from February 2007

related to several earlier reports about the open availability of RDX explosives in West Bengal allegedly smuggled into India from Bangladesh through the porous border areas. The contradictory nature of these accounts were summed up in an expose by OUTLOOK magazine in its October 9, 2006 issue which noted, "Those familiar with Murshidabad district are least surprised by the availability of RDX. Points out Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, second-time Congress MP from Murshidabad: 'I can list out a dozen reasons that encourages infiltration and smuggling of dangerous explosives like RDX from Bangladesh into India. For starters, the state police's intelligence apparatus is non-existent. Most officers posted here are on a punishment posting and have no resources. The central intelligence agencies aren't any better and there is little or no coordination between the state police and the BSF. Bribes are paid so easily that I could have lunch in Rajshahi (the district in Bangladesh facing Murshidabad) and come back home for dinner. The patrolling on our side of the border is a joke.'"<sup>48</sup> The obvious question that arises from this statement of the Congress MP is that if security and intelligence is so lax or deficient how is it possible to ascertain where the explosives actually originated from? As RDX is widely used by the military and for industrial applications the source of such explosives could be found within India and any amateur chemist could manufacture any number of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's) for use without having to go too far afield.

Analyzed from this more realistic perspective the unstable situation in India has instead potentially serious repercussions for Bangladesh as pointed out by Sadeq Khan, "The situation in West Bengal, the "Maoist" belt from Nepal down to Andhra Pradesh through several Indian states west of Bangladesh and the insurgencies in the northeast and east in "Seven Sister" states of India and Myanmar evidently expose the security situation in Bangladesh to multiple external pressures. The state of emergency in Bangladesh therefore requires full regional cooperation and not caustic censure in the name of high principles."<sup>49</sup> In other words, the volatile situation in several Indian states bordering Bangladesh has major security implications for Dhaka but in the international press and media the issue is posited from an Indian standpoint emphasizing the threat to New Delhi but ignoring the hazards and risks faced by its smaller neighbour. In

summation, most of the terrorist incidents taking place inside India are perpetrated by homegrown insurgents who feel deep dissatisfaction and frustration based on their ethnic, religious, economic, class, caste and cultural differences but also ultimately on their overwhelming powerlessness. Under these circumstances Bangladesh appears as a convenient scapegoat that can be blamed by the Indian central government for any number of terrorist acts but these tactics also serve the dual purpose of a foreign policy instrument to project Indian interests on to its neighbour on the basis of the Forward Policy, the Nehru-Indira Doctrine and the idea of an Akhand Bharat. It should be against this background that the allegations leveled against Bangladesh concerning the Mecca Mosque bombings in Hyderabad (India) should be seen. The timing of the blasts unfortunately also coincided with a reassessment by India about the potentiality of the Fakhruddin interim administration to deliver on its numerous promises on business, trade and security deals. Put another way the Mecca Mosque bombings provided a timely opportunity for India to remind Dhaka who is the real boss in South Asia and what the consequences would be if Indian interests are not fully taken account of in policy initiatives concerning regional issues of interest to New Delhi - meaning almost everything and anything.

Within days of the Mecca Mosque bomb attacks on May 18, 2007, Dr. Anand Kumar of SAAG sounded the alarm bells (after the story had been sufficiently fleshed-out by the Indian press and media) on the involvement of Islamist militants from Bangladesh.<sup>50</sup> Identifying the HuJi (B) as the chief culprits and instigators behind the Hyderabad attacks he continues, "The bomb blast in Mecca mosque in Hyderabad shows that Islamists in Bangladesh are still strong. The law enforcement agencies of India are getting increasingly sure that a major player in this attack is Harkat-ul-Jehad-i-Islami's (HuJI) of Bangladesh. This group is known to be working closely with ISI, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish e Mohammad (JeM)." These are nearly in all respects exactly the same allegations advanced by Kapila et al several years earlier but refashioned to fit a more contemporary situation and a specific factual background. Anand attempts to further buttress his tendentious argument claiming, "The suspicion on HuJI for Mecca blasts is based on the fact that the SIM card on the cellphone attached to these bombs was purchased in Kolkata. The explosive material, RDX and TNT, are not available in India and



were imported from Bangladesh. Their local accomplices had to just put them together." The falsity of this statement becomes obvious as one considers that there are multifarious uses of RDX even in mundane household products as pointed out by the Global Security website which states, "Civilian applications of RDX include use in fireworks, in demolition blocks, as a heating fuel for food rations, and as an occasional rodenticide. Combinations of RDX and HMX, another explosive, have been the chief ingredients in approximately 75 products."<sup>51</sup> Other sites similarly describe the military, industrial and commercial uses of RDX which could, logically be obtained from within India itself. Yet with each passing day the hearsay evidence incriminating Bangladesh became more and more complex, elaborate and voluble, spinning a web almost impossible to disentangle and with the accusations constant repetition it soon became a conclusive fact of culpability in the minds of many people around the world. If read more carefully, however, these reports contain glaring omissions and factual lacuna such as confessional statements made by persons now conveniently dead and the inclusion of key characters in the story's plot line whose whereabouts and identities remain elusive, vague or ambiguous and in many cases completely unconnected to Bangladesh.<sup>52</sup> While there may have been some isolated individuals of Bangladeshi origin involved with Islamist terror groups and engaged in violent activities in Kashmir, Afghanistan and within India itself the Indian government and intelligence agencies had so far failed (even after almost 10 years of trying) to establish they were sponsored or supported by Dhaka or even that HuJi (B) (who New Delhi claimed to be the real masterminds behind recent terror attacks in several Indian cities) was of any real significance in the international Islamist terrorist network or that they had any actual operational existence in the neighbouring country especially after the arrest of their top leaders in 2006. Not surprisingly, only a month after the Mecca Mosque attacks allegations against Bangladesh petered out following the course of previous such incidents.

Once the outcry over the Mecca Mosque bombings subsided the political hiatus in Bangladesh provided new opportunities for propaganda attacks on Dhaka but this time the allegations oddly surfaced in the United States<sup>53</sup> with at least one writer urging the Bush administration to intervene directly before the Islamists could

takeover power. Maneeza Hossain in an unusually astute and articulate paper nevertheless manages to spoil the overall affect by overtly displaying her Indian sympathies remarking, "Virtually surrounded by India, a neighbor whom it regards as the regional superpower, Bangladesh has struggled to check Indian hegemony and to insure a degree of genuinely indigenous decision-making. In the military realm, there emerged a portrayal of "the Indian" as the "other," or the external threat. For example, training targets for Bangladeshi soldiers were presented as turbaned human figures that unmistakably resembled Indian special forces."<sup>54</sup> Other writers during this period presented an equally biased and more often superficial analysis of the growth of Islamist groups in Bangladesh<sup>55</sup> with almost all predicting an Islamic revolution in the near future probably hoping in vain for some form of external military intervention to prevent such occurrence or preparing the ground for an internal military takeover through the infiltration of the armed forces by remnants of the Rakkhi Bahini who now belonged to the senior officers class. Such attitudes were most prevalent amongst Indian intelligence analysts and commentators<sup>56</sup> who distrusted the sincerity of the Interim Government to tackle Islamist extremist ideology propagated by groups whose support base was already fragile and had been significantly undermined by the capture of the top leaders of these terrorist outfits in the preceding year. In spite of these facts, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasekhara Reddy, was still able to accuse Bangladesh of involvement and complicity in the terrorist outrage in Hyderabad on August 25 that killed 44 persons with casualties from both the Hindu and Muslim communities.<sup>57</sup> B. Raman quickly advanced the following theory to justify the allegations of the Chief Minister, "When the US intelligence agencies stepped up their operations in Pakistan post-9/11, Al Qaeda and pro-Al Qaeda organisations decided to transfer some of their activities to Bangladesh to escape detection and neutralisation by the US agencies. Jihadis from South-East Asia based in Pakistan were sent to Bangladesh. The HUJI (B) was asked to take over the responsibility for training and co-ordination in respect of the jihad in Southern Thailand, the Arakan area of Myanmar and North-East and South India."<sup>58</sup> These views and other concocted stories were promptly disseminated by other Indian commentators and were circulated around the globe through the internet, news media and even via

official diplomatic channels.<sup>59</sup> It was probably no coincidence that these allegations surfaced during the student uprising in Dhaka University which spread to other educational institutions around the country and substantially weakened the authority of the Interim Government.

The most shocking aspect of these terrorist episodes in India, however, was the revelation that the Hindu extremist group, the RSS, might have been involved in these barbaric acts and that the allegations leveled against Bangladesh and Pakistan was a ruse to hide this embarrassing truth. According to Jyoti Punwani, writing for The Times of India, "it is clear that in India's fight against terrorism, one group of terrorists is being completely excluded. This is despite the Nanded blast in April 2006, in which two persons died while making bombs in the house of an RSS member, and the recovery of fake beards from the house. This is despite the revelations during narco-analysis of the accused that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was training Hindu youth to commit terrorist acts outside mosques. Neither the RSS nor any of its militant wings are ever suspected by the police of being behind any of the bomb blasts that have targeted Muslims with regularity since the 2003 Parbhani blast."<sup>60</sup> Punwani further discloses how in a, "sensational letter written from Tihar jail by an ex-Intelligence Bureau (IB) informer detailing how IB, working with the Delhi Police's Special Cell, plants its own "jehadi maulvis" to lure Muslim youth to commit terrorist acts. The Central Bureau of Investigation, directed by the Delhi high court, has corroborated the most important accusations made by the informer." There were, unsurprisingly, no further allegations concerning the involvement of Bangladesh in Islamist terrorist acts for the remainder of the year but as the public's memory is short such fabricated accusations will definitely make a comeback in the near future.<sup>61</sup> The content of such allegations will, however, become less believable especially after the findings of a noted global al-Qaeda expert Dr. Rohan Gunaratna. He has expressed the view that although Bangladesh is vulnerable to al-Qaeda's ideological influence there are hardly any international linkages between local and international terrorist networks. His research further suggests that Bangladesh's indigenous culture and society work as a natural defence to extremism. While there exists the potential for groups to be

influenced by external ideological stimulus, Gunaratna points out, "A very small number of Bangladeshis went and got trained in Afghanistan. The large impact from al-Qaeda is not through those individuals but because of al-Qaeda's very huge investment in propaganda."<sup>62</sup> This prognosis, however, did not prevent the instinctive finger pointing at Bangladesh after the massive Jaipur blasts in May 2008 killing a score of people. One analyst did remark in response to these attacks that, "The key source of frustration for many Indians is the unholy combination of corrupt government officials and staid communists who between them have choked off many pathways to economic progress. This frustration all too often boils over, and results in terrorism of the sort witnessed in Jaipur. ... [The] main point is that only a people without hope would sacrifice themselves for ends of the sort that terrorists espouse. That leads us to conclude that India's terrorist masterminds do not sit in foreign capitals but in the country's own communist parties."<sup>63</sup>

### **The Indian North-East secessionist movement & Bangladesh - Policy Dilemma for New Delhi**

The question of India's volatile North-East has already been touched upon in Part 5B of this essay in relation to the CHT issue but it also has a direct bearing on the subject of New Delhi's attempts to have Bangladesh declared a failed state. Its efforts in undermining and occasionally decimating the economy of its neighbour and the propaganda onslaught concerning the alleged sponsoring and harbouring of Islamist terrorists by the Bangladesh government are both merely extensions of this policy dictation and requirement. The importance of the North-East in this regional scenario rests on the fact that unless India is able to restrain Bangladesh politically, economically, diplomatically and militarily the Seven-Sister states are likely to eventually secede from the Indian Union on the grounds that there is no overriding reason or imperative to remain within its confines when they could easily do better as independent nation states - of which Bangladesh would have been the best example had India not attempted to hamper its growth for more than three decades. So fundamentally the Nehru-Indira Doctrine, Forward Policy and the vision of an Akhand Bharat is not only meant to justify expansionism but also national unity and ultimately guarantee India's survival. This same conclusion can be drawn in relation to the hotly contended

issues of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Tamil Nadu (which all have functional secessionist movements) as well as the Maoist insurgency (naxalism) now engulfing much of North and South-East India but here it is to a far lesser extent due to the ideological pretensions and inhibitions of the insurgent groups concerned. Comparisons may also usefully be made between the North-East insurgency and the Kashmir dispute as the insurgency in both cases are arguably based on a demand for justice. As mentioned in Part 5B, the once independent states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam,<sup>64</sup> Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland,<sup>65</sup> and Tripura had been annexed by the British and ceded to India after 1947. They were never before dependent on New Delhi and were free from its suzerainty since time immemorial and they have a distinct culture and history separate from the other Indian peoples.<sup>66</sup> Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur only became a state of India in 1972, Nagaland in 1963, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh achieved this status in 1987 and in all of these cases there is an insurgency brewing with regular outbreaks of violence and unrest.<sup>67</sup> New Delhi has for several decades attempted to quell the insurgency alternating between offers of inducements and then punitive actions but this approach has been resoundingly unsuccessful and has come in for international criticism due to shocking human rights abuses perpetrated by its security forces.<sup>68</sup> To distract from its own failures the Indian government has accorded blame for the political impasse and consequent bloodshed in the North-East to conspiracies by the intelligence services of Bangladesh and Pakistan.<sup>69</sup> To fully appreciate the complexities of the North-East a brief background on the relevant states will serve as a useful guide -

### **Assam -**

The Indian government banned the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in 1990 and listed the guerrillas as a terrorist organization. ULFA continues to deny that it is a separatist group saying Assam was never a part of India and that the Union Government merely seeks to exploit the abundant natural resources (principally oil, tea and timber)<sup>70</sup> of the state to the detriment of the Assamese people.<sup>71</sup> In its fight with the rebels India has repeatedly accused Bangladesh of having offered bases to ULFA inside its territory increasing tensions between the two countries. In a news report titled, 'India wary of Dhaka-ISI nexus' published in The Times of India in late June 2006, Subodh Ghildiyal relates how New

Delhi (the Centre) in its peace talks with the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) cast a glance towards Pakistan's ISI and Bangladesh as they were both believed to have great influence over the actions of the militant outfit. India has rarely accepted responsibility for its failings in the North-East states but has conveniently transferred blame to Pakistan and Bangladesh for fomenting trouble in the region. In the Times report, the Centre, "feared that the ISI-Dhaka team may play the 'moderate versus hardline' game within the Ulfa to sabotage talks," which has been a lame excuse<sup>72</sup> in past negotiations to shift the issue away from sovereignty demands and allege that negotiations have failed due to external interference and pressure. The report further claimed, "That the ISI-Dhaka combo is inimical to talks is suspected in Dhaka's special protection to Ulfa despite global pressure to act against extremist outfits and to stop fomenting trouble in other countries."<sup>73</sup> According to New Delhi, Bangladesh has permitted its territory to be used by insurgents for training and that India has repeatedly supplied lists of these "terrorist training camps" to Dhaka for necessary action. Dhaka has consistently and strongly denied the presence of such camps on its territory<sup>74</sup> and India has never provided either satellite imagery or human intelligence as to their whereabouts.<sup>75</sup> The BJP has demanded that India attack Pakistan and Bangladesh to dismantle terrorist centers in these countries.<sup>76</sup> BJP president Rajnath Singh said that international support should be garnered before such attacks ensued. Soon after this outburst the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) asked its Bangladesh counterpart (BDR) to deport 113 militants, and to dismantle 172 camps run by northeastern insurgents in its territory.<sup>77</sup> While Bangladesh continued to deny the existence of insurgent training camps on its territory Indian leaders began to emphasize diplomacy and international pressure with war only as a last resort.<sup>78</sup> The Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee categorically ruled out the possibility of entering Bangladesh to destroy terrorist camps there as had been reportedly demanded by West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. Pranab said the Indian government would continue to persuade the Bangladeshi government to dismantle them.<sup>79</sup> Indian journalists and analysts, on the other hand, have tended to be less restrained and have intermittently called for military operations to be conducted inside Bangladesh.<sup>80</sup> This aggressiveness, however, remained in abeyance after the proclamation of emergency and installation of the Interim Government

which was seen by the Congress administration to be more compromising than the previous regime on Indian concerns over the North-East.

Looking at recent developments in Assam the Union Government (UG) on August 13, 2006 suspended Army operations against the ULFA and there was a further suspension of counter-insurgency operations with an extension for a further 15 days. A decision to this effect was taken at the meeting on August 23, 2006, between the Government and the ULFA-backed People's Consultative Group (PCG) to decide modalities for direct negotiations with the outfit.<sup>81</sup> The gesture of the UG came with a warning that negotiators should be top ULFA leaders and not from the middle level. New Delhi wanted direct talks with the guerrillas, but ULFA prefers to speak through the People's Consultative Group, which it appointed. ULFA's most important demand is the freedom for five top leaders from jail.<sup>82</sup> The UG on its part asked ULFA to give its consent for the talks in writing. ULFA responded by saying the Government must also state in writing that it would discuss the group's key demand of 'sovereignty'. ULFA had also demanded information on the whereabouts of 14 of its cadres 'missing' after the Bhutanese military assault in December 2003. Ultimately, peace talks were never allowed to get off the ground because of interference by the Indian army who were said to have opposed negotiations with ULFA right from the beginning and negotiating positions soon hardened on both sides.<sup>83</sup> By the end of September 2006 New Delhi called off the ceasefire and resumed military operations against ULFA who responded with violent attacks on oil and gas pipelines, transport and telecommunication facilities, security patrols and assassination of politicians.<sup>84</sup>

On December 5, the Supreme Court of India struck down the Foreigners (Tribunals for Assam) Order, 2006, which sought to protect minorities from harassment but was interpreted by Indian politicians and intelligence analysts as protecting so-called illegal Bangladeshi migrants to Assam. This in effect legitimized India's fencing of the border with Bangladesh that was intended to prevent illegal cross-border migration from Bangladesh. According to Indian commentators seven of the state's 23 districts have already become Muslim-majorities and the Muslims are said to be able to decide the fate of elections in at least 50 of the state's 126 assembly

constituencies, the economy of the state itself is said to be in the control of the Bangladeshi migrants.<sup>85</sup> This perspective is in line with the thesis advanced by Jaideep Saikia in his paper 'Terror Sans Frontiers: Islamic Militancy in North East India.'<sup>86</sup> The propaganda line adopted by Indian governments has been that, "... an increase in the clout of Islamic fundamentalist and militant groups in Assam and the Northeast who receive support from Pakistan courtesy [of] Bangladesh. While intelligence reports detail how Islamic fundamentalist and militant groups patronised by Pakistan have been active in Assam, there are also reports about the recruitment and regular dispatch of large numbers of youths belonging to areas dominated by suspected illegal migrants to Bangladesh and Pakistan for arms and other training provided by the ISI, LeT and other organisations."<sup>87</sup> ULFA has contradicted these assertions stating that, "'illegal migrants to Assam from the Indian sub-continent have threatened the existence of the state, created a chaotic situation in the social formation and occupied political and economic spheres at the expense of indigenous people." ULFA declared that "Indian rule and rulers are the main illegal foreigners and that the principal illegal occupying force in Assam is the Indian Army."<sup>88</sup> To make its point abundantly clear ULFA killed 48 Hindi speaking migrants, mostly labourers and traders, in a series of coordinated attacks on January 6, 2007 and dispatched a further 7 in follow-up incidents soon after which triggered massive counter-insurgency operations by the Indian Army involving 20000 combat soldiers that swept through several other Northeastern states.<sup>89</sup> Reports suddenly began to surface in the Indian and Bangladesh press, only a few days after the state of emergency was declared in Dhaka on January 11 2007, that the attacks were meant as a signal from Bangladesh not to interfere in the political crisis unfolding in the country. Another news item simultaneously appeared which also implicated ULFA and the DGFI in the August 21 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally that killed 23 people but this preposterous allegation was subsequently refuted by the ULFA chief himself.<sup>90</sup> The charge against ULFA originated from the confession (probably under extreme duress) of a captured rebel commander, Pallav Saikia, and was disclosed to the media by Assam police intelligence chief Khagen Sharma. In a brilliant analysis by Brig. Gen. M. Sakhawat Hossain (Retd.) the allegations against ULFA and the DGFI was expertly dissected and



shown to be completely absurd since, "... a credible confession came from [HuJi-B's] so called Amir Mufti Hannan ... His statement bore more credence keeping in mind the emergence of JMB [who also] took the responsibility for other bombing incidents ... What was common was that all the grenades used allegedly came from neighbouring India."<sup>91</sup> A one member judicial inquiry commission of Justice Joynul Abedin had also linked a unnamed foreign enemy with the August 21 attack but his report was not made public. Sakhawat then quotes Indian writer Partha S Ghosh from an article published in the 'South Asia Terror Portal which clearly reveals India's wider purpose and design in these propaganda assaults against ULFA and Bangladesh, "The economic development and security of the North East cannot be ensured without a free and uninterrupted communication network, both land and reverine, through Bangladesh."<sup>92</sup> One strategy advanced by Ghosh involves demographic invasion by allowing the Indo-Bangla border to be totally open, "making it possible for any Bangladeshi to migrate to any part of India. If there is an exodus of Bangladeshis to India it would destroy the very fibre of Bangladesh to remain as an independent country. In that situation India could create a political climate within Bangladesh for its merger with India ... Once this is achieved, Nepal's incorporation into the Indian Union would be just a matter of time and the same would be true with Bhutan. The eventual reunification of India and Pakistan could as well be contemplated in due course." Aside from these fantasies of an Akhand Bharat the allegations implicating ULFA and Bangladesh in the August 21 attacks (There have been new attempts to link Huji with the North-East insurgents and the August 21 attacks after the recovery of almost 130 Arges hand grenades and several 36-MHE type grenades from captured HuJi members with the biggest haul occurring in February 2008<sup>93</sup> but for some reason other possible avenues of investigation were excluded or had never even been opened including the involvement of Indian intelligence and their front organizations. Doubts should have crept in after the statement of Mufti Moinuddin alias Abu Zandal, a senior HuJi (B) operative, who contradicted outright the confession of Mufti Hannan (See Part 2A)) reflected the desperation felt after the Indian Army's failure to suppress the ULFA insurgents after many years of determined effort which finally compelled Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to issue another peace

overture after 73 people (mainly Hindi speaking migrant workers) were killed in incessant and violent attacks.<sup>94</sup> There has also been attempts to isolate ULFA from within Assam state through civil society organizations like the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and Assam Sahitya Sabha (ASS) and political associations such as the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) who have all spoken against the militant outfit and their objective for an independent Assam.<sup>95</sup> To further detach ULFA from the region and to influence events and policy-making in Bangladesh, Dr. Anand Kumar of SAAG declared in early February 2007, "Reports have indicated that ULFA is funding select candidates in the now deferred general elections in Bangladesh ... Intelligence sources say that it is partially funding at least 15 candidates, besides indirectly donating to party funds of a few major parties. Most of these candidates are also believed to be very close to the ISI ... It has been estimated that ULFA is pumping over Rs 300 million (nearly \$6 million) in the polls."<sup>96</sup> (The irrelevance of these claims after the proclamation of emergency seems to have escaped Dr. Kumar and STRATFOR who also later copied and disseminated the allegations<sup>97</sup>) Likewise the DGFI was accused of providing operational and logistical support to ULFA to carry out attacks in Assam during the past several months. Ultimately these accusations were intended to distract the Indian public's attention away from the failures of its security forces and intelligence and impugn Bangladesh for violent incidents in Assam. Unfortunately the Interim Government (IG) in Dhaka buckled under the incessant pressure issuing a statement through the Foreign Affairs Advisor Dr. Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury stating that, "The eastern frontiers with India will be tightened further by the caretaker government to stop the activities of (Indian) guerrillas from inside Bangladesh. They will not be allowed to set up camps on Bangladeshi soil."<sup>98</sup> While not an admission it smacked of subservience and a pathetic slavishness which was awarded with fulsome praise by Dr. Kumar who also expressed his satisfaction with the IG's decision to grant India lucrative energy and business contracts in Bangladesh. While news reports emanating from India seemed to suggest that Bangladesh had begun to take active measures against Indian militants inside its territory with a few even attempting to escape back across the border into the Seven Sisters<sup>99</sup> none of this had any tangible effect in Assam (or any of the other insurgency ridden states) as the bloodshed and violence<sup>100</sup> persisted

unabated and ULFA continued unflinchingly to stick to its demands for complete sovereignty.<sup>101</sup> This has necessarily cast serious doubt on the Indian contention of insurgents operating from the neighbouring country since with their activities now allegedly being severely curtailed by Dhaka there should have been a corresponding lessening of violence in the North-East states but this clearly did not happen (some have suggested that Indian intelligence may be behind some of the bomb attacks to undermine ULFA's standing in the community<sup>102</sup>). In the few isolated cases where there was a appreciable decline in militant activity this was attributed by Indian security analysts to causes other than the assistance provided by Bangladesh through its alleged driving-out of militants from its territory.<sup>103</sup>

In any case, whatever benefits that Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury thought he might obtain from New Delhi through his offer of assistance was quickly belied after the Joint Forces in their anti-corruption drive began to apprehend senior AL leaders known to be sympathetic to India. Indian intelligence immediately reverted to their previous stance claiming that, "Illegal arms and explosives are easily available in the clandestine markets in South East Asia and the militants bring it to the North East either through Myanmar or through Bangladesh. It is not possible for the security forces to guard every inch of the international border to check the menace. It would be difficult to overcome the problem till the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar extend their full cooperation to deal with this problem."<sup>104</sup> Influential quarters in Bangladesh have unsurprisingly expressed concern that the comments of the Foreign Affairs advisor Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury had indicated a demotion of Dhaka's own foreign policy interests in favour of India which would make Dhaka's situation and circumstance akin to that of Bhutan which is to all intents and purposes a vassal state of New Delhi.<sup>105</sup>

Thimpu (capital of Bhutan) has readily and consistently provided support to Indian counter-insurgency efforts and conducted joint operations with the Indian military on December 15, 2003 ('Operation All Clear') that substantially weakened ULFA and other NE insurgent groups during this period and it still continues to accord India unparalleled assistance in engaging militants near its border areas.<sup>106</sup>

India has now co-opted Myanmar in its counter-terrorism drive through pressure and inducements and received assurances that action would be taken on illegal activities such as arms and drug smuggling besides terror which will now be supplemented by real-time intelligence sharing between the two countries.<sup>107</sup> In October 2006, the Myanmar army started its crackdown on camps run by NSCN (K) and ULFA in the country's north. This is the part of Myanmar that borders Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The Myanmar operations were a possible quid pro quo with India after New Delhi supplied arms and ammunition to the Junta. India had supplied 98 truckloads of arms and ammunition to Myanmar in September 2006.<sup>108</sup> After only 4 months Myanmar anti-terrorism operations appeared to flag and the Myanmar government received stern rebukes from New Delhi for not having completely eliminated ULFA from its territory. Myanmar also became the target of a series of condemnatory articles by a host of Indian journalists doubting Yangon's determination and will to take on the insurgent threat and as a means of polite coercion they also focused their avid attention on the military junta's appalling human rights record and involvement in the illicit drugs trade.<sup>109</sup> Subsequently, Myanmar agreed to India's proposal to institutionalize cooperation between their armies for operations against ULFA and other insurgent groups in North-East India after India's External Affairs Minister paid a visit to the country in late January 2007.<sup>110</sup> On this understanding Myanmar recommenced counter-insurgency efforts that targeted rebels from Nagaland but still somewhat half-heartedly. Further talks were held on how to prevent arms reaching the NE rebels<sup>111</sup> as an Oxfam report has shown that the North-east had emerged as a major destination of illegal arms, so much so that the known countries of origin of illicit arms uncovered in North-east includes China, US, Russia, Belgium, UK, Czechoslovakia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand and Bangladesh.<sup>112</sup> To seek some resolution and possible headway on these issues New Delhi has sought trade, commerce and investment opportunities with Myanmar that would assist the North-East states economically<sup>113</sup> while putting relations between the two countries on a new and conducive footing but this has been hampered by Naypyitaw's (new capital of Myanmar) reliance on China for security, investment and diplomatic support against Western pressure.<sup>114</sup> This has forced New Delhi to abandon its 'ethical' pro-democracy stance in relation to Naypyitaw with the

Indian government even supplying sophisticated military equipment and weaponry (such as advanced light helicopters and Islander transport and surveillance aircraft)<sup>115</sup> to the Myanmar regime which India still refuses to provide to the Sri Lankan government (who are fighting their own ethnic insurgency) forcing them to shop for armaments in China and Pakistan. The arms supply to Naypyitaw has invariably brought international censure from human rights groups as such lethal and sophisticated combat weaponry could be used to suppress internal dissenters<sup>116</sup> as well as eliminate Indian insurgents seeking sanctuary in Myanmar. So far the counter-insurgency efforts of the Myanmar government has apparently not impressed New Delhi who have sought assurances about the counter-insurgency operations and who have persistently complained about the lack of ruthlessness employed by the Naypyitaw military regime against the Indian rebels.<sup>117</sup> For these reasons Myanmar had become the target of Indian intelligence propaganda attracting the adverse attention of the United States and other western powers.<sup>118</sup> Myanmar soon faced a lengthy period of instability from around mid-2007 due to the persistent agitation, protests and demonstrations by pro-democracy campaigners which had been triggered by a hike in fuel prices but initial pressure from India and then the United States probably contributed to its spread and longevity.<sup>119</sup> Amongst some Indian analysts the protests were viewed not only as anti-government but also anti-Chinese<sup>120</sup> which was the same propaganda ruse used on the Baluchistan issue to undermine Islamabad's ties with Beijing. A few influential US and Indian political commentators were also seeking a change in New Delhi's foreign policy so it could more forcefully support the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar and a few even suggested the co-opting of Muslim/ethnic separatist groups in this struggle.<sup>121</sup> If this strategy were to prove successful it would have significant implications for China since it is a one party state that has had to face pro-democracy protests in its own recent past and which finally led to the infamous Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. It appears, that on the question of Myanmar, there is likely to be continued cooperation between the United States and India primarily as a means to target China before the holding of the Olympics in Beijing in 2008. (It was also quite predictable that the neighbouring Chinese region of Tibet would also face some turmoil preceding and during the Olympics that would be exploited by the US and Indian media and intelligence.)<sup>122</sup>

During the month of August the focus returned to Bangladesh with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh urging Dhaka to repatriate ULFA's commander-in-chief, Paresh Barua and general secretary, Anup Chetia who had been confined in Dhaka Central Jail after his arrest several years earlier.<sup>123</sup> While Bangladesh has consistently denied the presence of top ULFA leaders on its territory a delegation sent to New Delhi and led by home secretary Mohammed Abdul Karim promised to do its utmost to track down Paresh Barua. This appeared to some Indian journalists as an admission that Barua was in fact present in the neighbouring country.<sup>124</sup> The proper interpretation would be that this was merely an expression of excessive exuberance on the part of the home secretary who had been following the subservient role that Dr. Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury had set for Bangladesh foreign policy in relation to New Delhi.<sup>125</sup> Indian media attention, however, quickly lost interest in the story when a new spurt of insurgency related violence engulfed Assam<sup>126</sup> (for which Bangladesh was again blamed as Indian news reports suggested that assistance was being provided to Jihadi groups to enter the state from the neighbouring country)<sup>127</sup> in the run-up to India's Independence Day celebrations on August 15. In response, the state government suggested conditional peace talks with the rebel outfit but later squandered the effort by rejecting ULFA's proposals for a negotiated settlement to the long running dispute.<sup>128</sup> Consequently the insurgent group continued to target Hindi-speaking migrants which resulted in numerous deaths during the month.<sup>129</sup> There followed continued sporadic acts of violence during the remainder of the year but with far lower casualty rates.<sup>130</sup> ULFA did suffer a minor set-back when 665 rebels surrendered to the Indian authorities on the last day of October but as one commentator points out, "the continuing reverses do not spell a necessary beginning of the end for the ULFA insurgency in Assam. That is principally because the issues behind the rise of the ULFA, ever since its formation on April 7, 1979, still remain to be tackled. And the group's slogan of the 'political' and 'economic' independence of Assam can only be met or addressed politically."<sup>131</sup>

In November a notable development came with the indictment of Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, a former chief minister of Assam who was charged with masterminding assassinations of a large number of relatives of ULFA leaders between 1998 and 2001. The Commission

of Inquiry on Secret Killings headed by Justice K.N. Saikia reported that, "There is enough evidence to show that the then Home Minister was at the helm of these extra-constitutional killings." The Saikia Commission also indicated at the involvement and complicity of the armed forces, pointing out that the assailants in each of the assassinations probed by it used sophisticated weapons "of prohibited bores" normally used by the police and other security personnel. The Commission in its report said that, "the army was ubiquitous. By army we mean the armed forces of the Union deployed in Assam in aid of civil power." According to the panel report there was also, "lurking evidence of police-SULFA [surrendered ULFA] nexus in the killings, some of the latter being constituted as an extra-constitutional authority and used as executioners. The modus operandi being to visit the family, ask members to persuade its ULFA members to surrender, failing which, to send an advance team to survey the location and structure of the house, then to send armed and masked men at dead of night, knock at the door to wake up the inmates and then drag him/them out and shoot him/them dead, or take him/them away and secretly kill and throw the bodies somewhere." The Commission probed 35 cases of what it termed the "remote orchestration of Ulfocide." The Commission recommended to the government "to try to first keep in abeyance, and then gradually dismantle" the Unified Command structure of the Army, the Assam police and the Central paramilitary forces as an immediate measure to prevent recurrence of such killings. In the Commission opinion, "To make the police and the army work together in a civil situation may result in politicisation of the army on the one hand and militarisation of the police on the other. The result will be that we have a militarised police and a politicised military. Indeed, in almost all the cases under reference, we found evidence of frequent visits of armymen to the Ulfa families and during some of these so-called encounters."<sup>132</sup> The indictment of Mahanta and the revelations about secret killings would seem to suggest that the many grievances voiced by ULFA insurgents over the years had some foundation in fact and the impression of the security services as an occupying force in Assam also appears to have some justification to it.

As the year sped out, there was one final significant development that could have important repercussions and political consequences in

the years ahead. This involved a dispute between the Bodo and Adivasi tribes with the latter demanding that the Assam government accord due recognition to it by granting them the status of a Scheduled Tribe (a constitutional designation) which would entitle them to certain state benefits. The Bodos who already had this status objected vehemently to the Adivasi proposal as this would dilute the rights and advantages afforded to them by the government. During violent protests in December 2007 one Adivasi girl was stripped naked and chased through the streets in full view of television cameras. This predictably heightened tensions within the state. In meetings held by Bodo political and student groups they issued the threat to resume their campaign for a separate state if the Adivasis were granted recognition as a Scheduled Tribe.<sup>133</sup> It was, however, the Adivasis who retaliated first, with a bomb explosion on the Rajdhani Express from Guwahati to New Delhi on 14 December. The leader of the Adivasi National Liberation Army (ANLA) accepted responsibility for the blast and warned that there would be further attacks. These incidents had the potential to ignite a new insurgency and the most worrying concern for Indian policy makers was that, "beyond the immediate, the situation is tailor-made for groups like the Ulfa to reach out to those most radicalised and angered by recent events as well as the trends of the past years in the tea community. This is what should be of deep, immediate and long-term worry for the state and central governments."<sup>134</sup> More obvious to an external and objective observer was the inherent fragility of the Indian political, social and constitutional framework with a single dispute putting into question the entire legitimacy of government in a country where there are practically hundreds of linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious divisions. In an effort to distract from these uncomfortable truths, Indian analysts continued to blame the DGFI and ISI for fomenting trouble in the North East and as the New Year approached reiterated the fabricated, extorted and concocted stories of terrorist bases inside Bangladesh.<sup>135</sup> This was partly due to the growing belief, at the time, that the military backed Interim Government may not be quite so pro-Indian after all and even less inclined to follow Indian dictates and designs. However, with the new year this impression about Bangladesh changed as the Interim Government buckled to incessant Indian pressure but this still did not bring any respite to the violence in the North-East as insurgent groups continued to target Hindi



speaking migrants workers employed in the region adopting new and more sophisticated tactics and strategies against India's security forces.<sup>136</sup>

### **Situation in other North-East States -**

With 331 militancy-related fatalities (138 civilians, 50 SF personnel and 143 militants) in 2005, Manipur ranked second among States worst affected by militancy in the country, behind Jammu and Kashmir, where 1,739 lives were lost. In the fragile northeastern region, over forty-six per cent of the total militancy-related fatalities was reported from Manipur, which accounts for just 6.3 per cent of the population, and 8.52 per cent of the land mass of the northeastern region. Official sources indicated that there were more than ninety cases of explosion or attempted bombings at different places in the State in 2006. The total neutralization of 449 militants (143 killed and 306 arrested) in 2005 had little impact on the militancy, with 15 active outfits operating in the State with an estimated combined strength of 10,000 cadres. Militant power, evident in the numerous decrees passed during the previous years, was further consolidated through new demands and decrees in 2005. The situation had begun to take a particular turn for the worse with the Army's image taking a severe beating since the alleged rape and custodial killing of Manorama Devi on July 11, 2004. Since then, the demand for the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) has been interspersed with demands for the complete withdrawal of the Army from the State. While the latter demand has been rejected as impossible to meet by the Union Government, its vacillation on the continuation of the AFSPA has attracted severe criticism in the State.<sup>137</sup> This growing dissatisfaction helped to sustain the violent trend set in previous years with 408 insurgency related deaths reported in 2007 making Manipur the second most conflict ridden State in the northeast region, just behind Assam which had a total of 437 militancy-related fatalities for the year.<sup>138</sup> As the SATP Manipur assessment for 2008 points out, "Fatalities alone, however, do not reflect Manipur's dire predicament. Activities of about 10,000 cadres of 15 militant groups of varying sizes and character, compound an endemic collapse of the administrative machinery, taking Manipur to the threshold of a failed 'state' within the Indian Union. Each of Manipur's nine Districts (four in the Valley and five in the Hills) has

been affected by the unending militant violence, severely impacting on the very limited local capacities for governance, justice administration, and the provision of minimal security to citizens. State Police sources indicate that, while almost all the 59 Police Stations have been reporting militant violence, as many as 32 of them have been slotted in the 'high' violence category."

The United National Liberation Front of Manipur is one of the oldest and most powerful armed anti-government forces in the region and is posing a serious challenge to the internal security, not just of its home state, but also to Assam. It has been held responsible for the upsurge in violence in Gawahati in alliance with ULFA. The UNLF has more than 2,000 hard core cadres operating in Manipur. They are provided training on rocket launchers, the AK-series of automatic rifles as well as other weaponry and explosives.<sup>139</sup> The Oxfam report cited above states that the UNLF has over 2500 weapons in its armoury. The deadly arsenal includes grenade launchers, assault rifles, and rocket propelled grenades, among other weapons. The arrest of three alleged Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) cadres in Manipur on December 19, 2006 has brought allegations against the ISI and DGFI for encouraging Islamic militancy in the state as well as in assisting established militant groups such as the UNLF.<sup>140</sup> This again is a reflection of the Indian Army's failure to subdue the insurgency although they outwardly claim success. The killing of six policemen on February 9, 2007 and fifteen soldiers on the 24th of the month is a testament to the failure of counter-insurgency operations in the state and the strength of the militant groups seeking independence.<sup>141</sup> There also now exists a growing political awareness amongst Muslim inhabitants of the state with two Islamic insurgent groups, People's United Liberation Front (PULF) and the Islamic National Front (INF), recently forming an alliance hoping to promote unity and also to bring together other such religiously motivated outfits to battle the Indian state. The INF Chairman is said to have stressed the specific religious nature of Muslim issues in Manipur arguing, "that their [INF and PULF] objective was to raise the indigenous minority Muslim communities - over seven per cent of the total population of Manipur are Muslims - to a status where the world would recognize their distinct culture and identity, which has been suppressed by the Indian establishment for many years."<sup>142</sup> He felt that there was no point in the

various revolutionary organizations struggling separately to pursue their common goal. Predictably, the Indian defense establishment has pointed its finger at Pakistan and Bangladesh for sponsoring these groups and for allegedly being their main source of operational and logistical support in the region.<sup>143</sup> That the grievances felt by Muslims in India may not require external impetus for it to translate into expressions of anger and frustration seem not to have occurred to the higher echelons of the Indian government administration. More likely this knowledge is conveniently hidden behind tirades thrown against neighbouring countries for allegedly conspiring to dismantle the Indian Union (a reverse Akhand Bharat?).

In spite of the continuing cease-fire (which was extended in July 2007)<sup>144</sup> between the Government and the militant outfits, Nagaland continues to witness factional violence, which is an indication of the deepened schism between militant outfits and the intransigent nature of the insurgency in the State.<sup>145</sup> Unabated factional clashes between the two warring factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) indicate that the cease-fire agreements signed between the Union Government separately with the Isak-Muivah faction of the NSCN in 1997, and the Khaplang faction of the NSCN-K in 2001 are being violated at will. Efforts to end the abiding and violent confrontation have had no visible impact on the warring sides.<sup>146</sup> The eight year-old cease-fire beginning from August 1997 has led to a significant reduction in insurgency-related fatalities in Nagaland. The fatalities in the post-cease fire period have overwhelming been the result of turf wars between the NSCN-IM and the NSCN-K. The chief demand of the NSCN-IM as interpreted by New Delhi is the integration of all Naga-inhabited areas in the Northeast (Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh) with the existing State of Nagaland to constitute a single politico-administrative and ethnically composite unit but the real demand appears to be self-rule.<sup>147</sup> The NSCN-K (a longtime partner to ULFA for whom they have provided sanctuary and the NSCN-IM is also known to have accorded them with safe passage through the state) appears to be gaining in strength in Nagaland, even as it continues to face reverses in its periodic encounters with the Myanmarese Army in the Sagaing Division across the international boundary.<sup>148</sup> According to some reports ULFA now dominates the North-eastern insurgent groups

including that of Nagaland and has some influence over both the NSCN-K and NSCN-IM but in the latter case their appears to be some strains in the relationship but not an open breach as some Indian analysts had been hoping.<sup>149</sup> New Delhi has also recently been pointing to what they describe as an 'abnormal' increase in the Muslim population in Nagaland which they blame on illegal immigration and the involvement of the ISI/DGFI which according to them may enflame future chaos and violence in the state.<sup>150</sup> Most worrying from an Indian perspective is the links allegedly being forged between the insurgents and arch-rival China as Vinod VEDI of the Asian Tribune ruefully explains, "The geopolitical scenario is also acquiring new dimensions. Last year the NSCN (I-M) delegation had travelled to China raising the spectre of a fresh dose of Chinese-sponsored insurgency on India's north-eastern flank. The latest development in which China has asserted its claims on Arunachal Pradesh will further tend to muddy prospects for peace not just in the north-east but further afield as well."<sup>151</sup>

Mizoram has remained relatively peaceful barring minor incidents of violence by the Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM). The activities of the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) have now ended with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the outfit and the Mizoram Government on April 26, 2005. Counter-insurgency measures yielded, among others, the arrest of four top leaders of the BLFM, including its 'president' Vanlalliana, 'vice-president' Vanrama, 'army chief' Romawia Meska and 'lieutenant' Lallawma, from different places of the State on April 22, 2006, by a joint team of the Mizoram Police and Assam Rifles.<sup>152</sup> A similar image emerges in Tripura where militancy seems to have been successfully contained. The number of extremist incidents declined further from 2004 to 2005. Civilian fatalities were down from 66 to 34 and SF fatalities from 38 to 8. Terrorist fatalities also fell from 63 in 2004 to 31 in 2005. Figures available for 2007 show a similar declining trend with only 39 militancy-related fatalities in the state and 79 incidents of insurgency-linked violence till November 30.<sup>153</sup> Consistent with Indian policy both the State governments of Mizoram and Tripura have blamed Bangladesh for the provision of logistical support and safe havens to the militants in a cooperative arrangement with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Indian intelligence

analysts claim that all three major insurgent groups, NLFT's Biswamohan Debbarma and Joshua factions and the Ranjit Debbarma-led ATTF, continue to operate from their bases in Bangladesh, and there is a strong conviction in strategic circles that militancy cannot be completely ended as long as safe havens continue to exist across the border. On June 28, 2005, the Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar told Press Trust of India in New Delhi: "The terrorist camps operating in Bangladesh should be smashed and terrorists should be handed over to India."<sup>154</sup> These outbursts are viewed as an excuse for not being able to meet the demands of the insurgent groups for independence so outside interference is often alleged.<sup>155</sup>

In Meghalaya the Achik National Volunteer Council (ANVC), under a cease-fire agreement with the Union Government since July 23, 2004, reportedly reiterated its demand for the formation of a separate state known as 'Garoland State' for the Garos. The 'publicity secretary' of the outfit, Arist Sengsrang Sangma, said that it is high time for all Garos to come under one umbrella and demand a separate state. However, 2005 witnessed a continuation of the decline in militant violence in Meghalaya. In 2005, a total of 29 fatalities, including 26 militants, were reported from the State. Following the cease-fire agreement between the Government and ANVC and the subsequent confinement of the ANVC cadres in designated camps, the Garo Hills in Meghalaya has been relatively peaceful. There still remains the potential for an upsurge in violence as a number of outfits were formed especially in the Garo hills area to fill the vacuum left behind by the ANVC after the ceasefire. Prominent among them are the Retrieval Indigenous Unified Front, UANF, UALF, ANLF, Hajong United Liberation Army, etc. Similarly, the Hynniewtrep National Special Red Army started operations in the Khasi Hills area. More recently Meghalaya has become a 'safe haven' for arms dealers and a transit route for insurgent groups operating elsewhere in the North-East region. The police reported movements of militants belonging to the NSCM-IM, ULFA and the IAEF in the entire Balpakram National Park of South Garo Hills district.<sup>156</sup> In line with Indian propaganda intelligence analysts claim that Meghalaya, which shares a 443 kilometers border with Bangladesh, serves as a traditional route for Bangladesh-based militants operating in India's Northeast - the usual allegations about ISI-DGFI-militant nexus is again repeated.<sup>157</sup>

In recent years Myanmar has become a primary focus for counter-insurgency measures outside of India. As Indian analyst Bibhu Prasad Routray states, "... the porosity of India's 1,643 kilometre-long international border with Myanmar, 398 kilometres of which passes along Manipur, has been exploited to the fullest by the militants. Apart from both factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the Assam-based United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), three major militant groups operating in Manipur, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), are known to have set up camps in the Sagaing Division and the Chin State of Myanmar."<sup>158</sup> India's attempts to galvanize the military junta in Myanmar have been largely unsuccessful but if it agrees to General Thura Shwe Man's (Chief of Myanmarese Army) wish list of military equipment consisting of 35mm field guns, helicopters, mortars, submarine detecting sonars, Islander aircraft and spares for MIG fighters then this might push the government to act against the above insurgent groups residing on its territory but pessimism remains in Indian intelligence circles.<sup>159</sup> In parallel to the pressure exerted on Myanmar Bangladesh may again be called on to combat ULFA insurgents allegedly based on its territory but it is a claim it has consistently denied and a point of contention between the two countries and could raise tensions between the countries in the coming years ahead.<sup>160</sup>

### **Indian Propaganda on Islamist militancy in the North-East**

The security and strategic vulnerability of the North-East states has become an overriding policy concern for New Delhi with the possibility of secessionism an ever present threat to the national integrity of the India Union.<sup>161</sup> Sandwiched between China, Myanmar and Bangladesh with only a thin strip of land connecting the Seven Sister states with the rest of the Indian mainland the NE region has the potential to spark regional conflict as its borders are bloody with insurgent violence caused by ethnic tensions and an aspiration for independence and statehood. In strategic terms the North East is an Achilles heal for Indian policy makers and defence analysts as it is now more volatile than Kashmir and has many more insurgent groups operating within this confined space with some vying for overall

strategic control and supremacy and the majority hostile to Indian cultural and political hegemony. Within this cauldron of rival contestants and ethnicities Bangladesh has played a neutral and impartial role avoiding any form of involvement in the internal affairs of the Seven Sister States. Dhaka has, nonetheless, been accused by New Delhi of instigating rebel groups to violence and providing safe-haven to their leaders and safe-sanctuary for rebel fighters evading pursuit by Indian forces across the border. Indian politicians on several occasions have called for military strikes into Bangladesh to eliminate terrorist camps of which no details concerning location or even proof of their existence has ever been provided. For New Delhi, the North-East has become a foreign policy tool to undermine Bangladesh by having it labeled an exporter of terrorism and also a failed state by the international community. Thus far neither of these goals have been achieved but after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks in the United States, the Indian propaganda machine has adopted a slightly different and more nuanced approach. Bangladesh is now being accused of promoting the Islamization of the North-East through illegal migration and also by sponsoring Islamist terrorist organizations operating in the region and globally with the tacit approval and support of Pakistan's ISI. All these elements of the new propaganda campaign were originally brought together in an occasional paper by Indian writer Jaideep Saikia for the University of Illinois and published in July of 2003.<sup>162</sup> In the paper impressively titled, 'Terror Sans Frontiers; Islamic Militancy in North East India' Saikia relates the changed circumstances of the North East in the following highly imaginative but ultimately fallacious terms,

"Islamic militant activities have begun to proliferate in the region with an urgency that could well have not only a motivation to usurp the separatist mantle from the ethnically based insurgent movements which have been flourishing in the region, but also with a conspiracy to further an agenda which has religious fanaticism and division as important coordinates. This conspiracy seems to be gaining ground particularly after Operation Enduring Freedom and the 'detalibanization' of Afghanistan, when active remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban reportedly entered Bangladesh, which abuts North East India. The region is also heir to myriad subterfuges by the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan and the Directorate General of

Field [actually Forces] Intelligence (DGFI) of Bangladesh, intelligence agencies that are beginning to expand their aid to North East insurgent organizations by including Islamic groups in the region. Indeed, this has been compounded by the fact that the present government in Bangladesh seems to be not only sympathetic to the separatist movements in North East India, but is also purportedly turning a blind eye to the fundamentalist engineering which is currently underway in the Islamic republic. [Bangladesh is not actually an Islamic republic]

Matters have not helped the situation with the state of Assam in North East India having not only a sizeable Muslim population, but also a long and porous border with Bangladesh, which has a predominately Muslim population. Indeed, the population of four geo-strategically positioned districts of Assam has become one of Muslim majority - a reported consequence of the illegal migration from erstwhile East Bengal, East Pakistan and now Bangladesh. Recent reports have also indicated that the ISI and the DGFI are reportedly encouraging the illegal influx with an eye to carving out a Brihot Bangladesh (Greater Bangladesh) in the region. The Islamic militant movements in the region are also finding an organized parish in the illegal migrant population whose ideology and socio-religious commitments continue to be informed by experiences from across the border, which has grown in magnitude as a result of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) - the most prominent, ethnic separatist movement in Assam - jettisoning the lofty ideals by which it took birth, in order to become a hostage of the ISI and the events and factors which are in play in Bangladesh and in the neighbourhood."<sup>163</sup>

This is in essence the argument being advanced by Jaideep Saikia in his occasional paper and propagated by Indian intelligence who most likely sponsored the entire project (see below). The ideological underpinning of this Indian propaganda campaign is directly related to New Delhi's drive for an Akhand Bharat which receives its impetus from the Nehru-Indira Doctrine and the Forward Policy. This is partially revealed by Saikia who disingenuously argues, "In India's eastern seaboard - the areas that abut North East India - 1971 was a turning point. The two-nation theory of the 1940's and the one that



brought about the dismemberment of India was found to be fallacious; and it seemed that culture had overridden religious concerns which had governed the balkanization of united India and the grouping of East Bengal to Pakistan. However, fanatical elements in the newfound nation began a course of action that was less culturally zealous."<sup>164</sup> Which according to Saikia led tragically to a turning away from India now that the, "political arithmetic has brought Bangladesh to what can be termed as a furtherance of the Islamic agenda." These comments refer to the installation of a BNP-Jamaat alliance government in 2001 that subsequently led to Indian intelligence exploiting the Islamist card in their propaganda efforts against Bangladesh so that the country would be declared a hub and haven for terrorist groups and also a failed state by the international community. The other accusation relating to illegal migration into India has been a persistent complaint of New Delhi's since the 1980's and has been detrimental to good neighbourly relations due to Indian claims that such movements of people across the international border has been coordinated by the BDR in a planned manner with tacit approval of the Bangladesh government.<sup>165</sup> According to New Delhi a central pillar of Dhaka's policy towards the North East is to create a demographic imbalance in favour of the Muslim population<sup>166</sup> in the region by illegally migrating its population into the Seven Sister States thereby forcing India to fence<sup>167</sup> its border and also engage in the inhuman practice of pushing-in persons of allegedly Bangladesh origin who are claimed by the BSF to be illegally residing in India but are more likely than not to be poor Muslim Indians (and also apparently Hindus who migrated to India in 1947 and 1971) while a few are even believed to be spies.<sup>168</sup> Such deliberately provocative actions have been roundly condemned by Dhaka and the allegations concerning illegal migration have been denied by government officials and refuted by a number of researchers<sup>169</sup> who have suggested that the growth in the Muslim population in some North East states is a natural phenomenon. It has been contended that Muslims have been inhabiting a number of Seven Sister states for much longer than presumed and in some cases have been a significant minority from, at least, the time of partition in 1947.<sup>170</sup> According to one interpretation, the real reason for India's fencing of the border with Bangladesh is to prevent future migration caused by climate change which certainly does appear a plausible explanation.<sup>171</sup>

Returning now to the more pressing issue of the alleged Islamization policy of the Bangladesh government in relation to the Seven Sister states as set out in Jaideep Saikia's paper already cited above. As indicated earlier there are strong grounds to believe that the paper prepared by Saikia was sponsored by Indian intelligence and the conceptual framework had also been articulated by them with only a narrative role left to the author. RAW's involvement in this project is glaringly obvious when one considers that a former high official of India's external intelligence agency was invited as panel speaker at the formal launching of the book in New Delhi.<sup>172</sup> In three articles<sup>173</sup> written in response to the occasional paper, this author has highlighted certain flaws contained within the text that reveals a RAW hand in the papers preparation and methodology. In a series of correspondences between this author and Jaideep Saikia (published on the internet website 'News From Bangladesh' in the summer of 2004) the question of Indian intelligence involvement was directly raised but has so far not received a response nor has the query ever been officially acknowledged by the Indian analyst. The following comments made by the author to Jaideep Saikia seems to have gone beyond his ability to answer so all further correspondence was immediately terminated by him,

"Dear Mr. Saikia,

I am a little disappointed at the quality of Indian scholarship that appears to be taken for a high level of erudition, knowledge and learning in international circles but is nothing more than a composite of opinions and beliefs lacking credibility and verifiability. In several places in your Occasional Paper you refer to reports, sources, documents, disclosures, interrogations, observers, confessions and interviews without specifying how you came upon these items of information and the form or type of cooperation that was necessary to acquire or procure any of this intelligence. Looking through the endnotes (i.e. the notes provided at the end of each chapter) does not reveal the manner or means by which you obtained such information.

I can only surmise that you were assisted by India's RAW in the reports compilation and possibly its conclusions. I am sure that such an accusation could tarnish the reputation of an 'independent analyst writer' (I am not sure exactly what this designation means but it is your choice of words) and lead to a libel action but I believe I am on

strong legal grounds and justified in my suspicions. The following are the most egregious example of what I have so far been referring to:

1. Chapter 2 - ('Swadin Asom or Brihot Bangladesh') on the top of page 6 (1st paragraph) you state, 'Intelligence reports made available to this author.' You do not specify how it was made available to you or by whom.

2. Chapter 2 - On page 7 (near the bottom) you state, '... intelligence reports have suggested that ...' You do not specify what intelligence reports and how you came by them.

3. Chapter 2 - On page 8 (paragraph 3) you state, 'Recent Indian intelligence reports ...' You do not specify what intelligence reports and how you came by them.

4. Chapter 3 - ('Events in the Neighborhood') on page 10 (paragraph 2) you state, 'An extensive search during the author's research at the university of Illinois has unearthed a list of such places along with the number of cadres. These have been made available to the author by a reliable source.' This statement requires explanation as I do not see why a reliable source should provide you with this information when it is already available at the University of Illinois. In other words, I have to infer from the context of your speech that the materials were not discovered during your research at the University of Illinois but through an external source unrelated to the university. In more comprehensible language this implies to me that during your research someone approached you and passed on this intelligence to you.

5. Chapter 4 - ('In the name of Islam') on page 3 (paragraph 9) you make the following comment, 'Quoting a senior Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) source - the premiere Indian external intelligence agency - Bhaumik goes on to say that the late P.N. Banerji, the then Chief of RAW's Eastern Division, in a briefing to RAW field officers at Calcutta in August 1971 had insisted that apprehension of the North East being cut off was primarily the reason for the Indian interest in sustaining the Bengali liberation effort in 1971.' You seem to have quoted this with some appreciation and approval but have not disclosed the identity of the senior RAW source that Bhaumik mentions. Elsewhere in your report you have no qualms in disclosing the names and identities of alleged ISI and DGFI agents. Why have you adopted this discriminatory and biased attitude?

Your report is meant to be an impartial scholarly effort so why accord the protection of anonymity to RAW agents but not to others unless they were your source of information and guide in this project."<sup>174</sup>

Even after this intricate demolition of Saikia's paper Indian intelligence continued to propagate the contents of his work which has unfortunately now become a reference point for researchers and journalists interested in the North-East insurgency. During the political upheavals in Bangladesh during the run up to the handover of power to a caretaker government in 2006 the information contained in Saikia's paper was used to pernicious effect to undermine the policies of the outgoing BNP alliance government. However, words of caution were advised to the reader before referring to information gleaned from the occasional paper as in the case of Sumit Ganguly who writes, "India, too, has concerns about the involvement of Bangladesh in its troubles in the Northeast, which could create an opportunity for Pakistani involvement. The empirical basis for this assertion is limited and partial: Unequivocal evidence of Pakistani involvement is hard to establish, and most of the assertions about Pakistani involvement come from Indian sources."<sup>175</sup> He, nevertheless, continued to rely on such discreditable source material with his final conclusions being based on innuendo and hearsay, "Is there clear-cut evidence of Pakistani collusion with Bangladeshi intelligence agencies to exploit the problems of India's Northeast? Incontrovertible, dispassionate evidence is hard to find. However, various Pakistani regimes have had few compunctions about exploiting disaffection in India, whether in the Punjab or in Kashmir. Accordingly, it seems likely that Pakistan would seek to utilize any avenue it could to sow discord in other parts of India. Given the extensive links that do exist between Islamist groups in Bangladesh and Pakistan, Indian claims about Pakistani attempts to destabilize the Northeast through sympathizers in Bangladesh may have some foundation."<sup>176</sup> This article was soon followed by a number of others with notable contributions from Dr. Richard Benkin<sup>177</sup> and Archana Upadhyay<sup>178</sup> who both parroted the allegations contained in Saikia's paper demonstrating the growing influence, reach and acceptance of his inane, scurrilous and destructive ideas. Not surprisingly, Saikia was again commissioned (probably by RAW) to write a more detailed book on the Islamist threat from Bangladesh and the North East

insurgency but this time in collaboration with several other writers of varying quality and expertise.<sup>179</sup> Many of the contributing authors had been active participants of the propaganda campaigns against Bangladesh in the recent past and a few others such as Bibhuti Bhusan Nandy had worked for Indian intelligence in a senior position. However, the chapter on the Assam insurgency by H.K. Deka<sup>180</sup> had nothing new or original to add and the book was an exceedingly poor addition to the propaganda materials already available on Bangladesh.

After the proclamation of emergency in Bangladesh on January 11, 2007 there was an initial period of respite from these internet based disinformation campaigns but after a sudden realization in New Delhi that the military backed Interim Government may be having second thoughts on submitting to Indian trade,<sup>181</sup> security and political demands the propaganda onslaught was recommenced this time with renewed exuberance and malice. Indian intelligence was to soon achieve a propaganda coup when the US based strategy group STRATFOR picked up on the story of the Islamization of the North East and published its own analysis directly accusing Dhaka and Islamabad of complicity in this nefarious design and strangely adding Britain to the list of culprits.<sup>182</sup> The STRATFOR article set off a vitriolic debate on the veracity of the claims made in the piece with M. Shahidul Islam probably coming closest to the mark suggesting with sufficient plausibility and acumen that the latest propaganda offensive had more to do with India, "desperately exploring possibilities of a transit route via Bangladesh to transport military personnel, arms and ammunition to the war-torn Northeast as well as to reduce freight cost and distance between Kolkata and Agartala. It seems that the anti-Bangladesh media campaign is designed to exert psychological pressure on Dhaka."<sup>183</sup> The economic advantages that would supposedly accrue to Bangladesh if transit (the more appropriate term would be corridor)<sup>184</sup> were allowed was publicly broached by the Indian State Minister for Commerce Joyram Ramesh in his speech on July 22, 2007 in Dhaka where he stated, "... transit is a political 'hot potato' in Bangladesh. But I want to make a point that transit is not only a concern for India but also for Bangladesh, Because Bangladesh could be a major supplier to the north and eastern parts of India using the transit facility."<sup>185</sup> Just in case Dhaka still did not get the message it was repeated with even

more frills and embellishments by Patricia Mukhim in *The Statesman*, "It is here that Ramesh's recent trip to Dhaka makes sense. Bangladesh is a natural neighbour and market direction for at least three states - Tripura, Mizoram and Meghalaya - which are landlocked. Chittagong port is our connecting link to the outside world. In a market-driven economy linkages are imperative. Transit facilities through Bangladesh is the only answer to the North-east's trade with South-east Asia and the world. Transit facilities through Myanmar may not be feasible for Meghalaya and Assam because of the distance involved. Informal trade ties have existed and continue to exist between Meghalaya and Bangladesh, often under the "watchful" eyes of the BSF and BDR."<sup>186</sup> Such rationalizing, however, appealed to very few in Bangladesh with the usually India compliant *New Age* arguing, "It is evident from the volume of Indian imports that domestic tariff regime [of Bangladesh] is friendlier to Indian products. But the Indian state minister for commerce has linked trade boost to transit facility through Bangladesh to its seven north-eastern provinces among other facilities. Such an attitude refuses to acknowledge that the Indian trade regime does not extend similar privileges to Bangladeshi products that Indian products receive in Bangladesh and that the onus is on India to remove its trade distorting barriers."<sup>187</sup> For good measure the editorial adds, "As far as transit is concerned, we contend that it is a show of India's hegemonic behaviour that is customary within the subcontinent." M.I. Ali writing in the August 3, issue of the *HOLIDAY* weekly suggested the following just and immensely reasonable solution to Bangladesh's concerns about according transit rights to India,

"... a completely new road system should be developed to accommodate the Indian traffic that will transit through Bangladesh. However, as this is the most densely populated country in the world and the new road system will displace a huge number of people who, in no way, can be resettled elsewhere in Bangladesh, after all, land is extremely scarce here, the only way this problem can be resolved in the short run is India agreeing to settle them temporarily in Arunachal or Assam, where unpopulated land is abundant, until industrial jobs are created for them in Bangladesh for their return. The population density in these states is very low and infusion of the temporary settlers, who are farmers, will help boost their agriculture. Bangladesh

can import these excess agricultural produces. Here, too, India can help Bangladesh by encouraging its industrialists to invest in Bangladesh. The sooner the jobs are created the sooner the displaced persons can return to Bangladesh."<sup>188</sup>

Certainly meant to be a tongue-in-cheek comment on New Delhi's attitudes towards Dhaka it was also probably intended to make the Indians feel very uncomfortable about Ramesh's undiplomatic remarks on the political situation then prevailing in the country and also his even more careless suggestion about transit facilities. In any case, there were soon new and more serious causes of concern for the Interim Government as the Indian propaganda machinery began to target Bangladesh's economic interests and in particular its trade relations with the far-eastern economies. Whether or not India was permitted to have transit facilities through Bangladesh it would try to prevent its smaller neighbour from implementing its 'Look East' policy which would mean better trading relations with the Far-Eastern economies as an alternative to the restrictive Indian markets. So in August, when several 'militants' (said to be of Bangladeshi and Myanmar origin) traveling through Manipur were arrested by the Assam Rifles they were instantly labeled by Indian intelligence as Al-Qaeda operatives. The reports suggest they had originally been residing in Thailand but were making their way back to Bangladesh via Myanmar and Manipur before they were eventually caught by the Indian security forces. B. Raman of SAAG painted the following distorted picture of the incident, "Thailand has a sizeable number of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and from the Arakan area of Myanmar. In the past, there had been reports of links between them and the jihadis indulging in acts of terrorism in Southern Thailand. There were also reports that the jihadis operating in Southern Thailand were being trained in secret camps of the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) and the Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen (JUM) in Bangladesh territory."<sup>189</sup> The BBC report, on the other hand, told a very different story with the militants actually being Rohingyas (Arakanese Muslims) and not Bangladeshi citizens at all and Maj-Gen BK Chengappa leading the Indian counter-insurgency forces in Manipur stated that there was no evidence of links to Al-Qaeda which had merely been speculative in any case.<sup>190</sup> The disinformation campaign then appeared to stall but only a few months later in May 2008 the

Indian propaganda machine again started to regurgitate the Brihot Bangladesh mantra in a new effort to undermine the country and paint it as an unreliable and aggressive neighbour with expansionist Islamist designs.<sup>191</sup>

## END NOTES & REFERENCES

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## **AHMED QURAISHI**

**(PAKISTAN)**

Mr. Quraishi is an investigative journalist who has probed the Japanese Red Army history in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon (1997) and the safe havens of Turkey's separatist PKK elements in Syria (1998). He is a columnist for The News International, Pakistan's largest English language daily newspaper, focusing on foreign policy issues. During the 1990s, Mr. Quraishi has worked as a roving reporter covering the trouble spots of the Middle East. He covered the Iraq crisis for a decade [1990-2002] and then spent eight months in Iraq during and after the 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation. Since 2006, he heads the Pakistan Project at FurmaanRealpolitik, a private, independent think tank based in Islamabad. Mr. Quraishi has executed public policy consulting assignments for government clients in the Middle East. He is the author of almost one thousand reports, briefs, and columns in both Arabic- and English-languages. He is currently engaged as a senior host of a foreign policy show for Pakistan's GEO Network.

# **THE INDIA DOCTRINE (1947-2007)**

## **THE PEACE CHARADE**

### **How 9/11 Helped India Penetrate Pakistan**

India in early 2008 is in advanced stages of a massive intelligence operation that in less than four years has destabilized Pakistan. Afghanistan is a springboard. Islamists are a tool. Israel has provided help. The position of U.S., Pakistan's ally, is ambiguous.

**Ahmed Quraishi**  
**(Islamabad, May 2008)**

A small incident in the Pakistani business hub city of Karachi in September 2007 gave Pakistani policy strategists a rare glimpse into the latest Indian game plan in the Pak-Afghan region. The incident fitted a pattern and signaled that New Delhi had not resigned itself to the new realities of the Pakistani-American close cooperation after 9/11. Unlike Washington, New Delhi saw Islamabad as part of the problem, not the solution, and it was going to do everything necessary to prove its point.

The incident was barely noticed by the otherwise boisterous Pakistani media, which was busy in covering a wave of Mideastern-style suicide attacks never known to Pakistanis before.

A car raced by a police check post in the city's busy downtown, stopped close enough for the policemen to see it but far enough to ensure an easy escape. Two men were inside. One of them pulled down the window, threw out some jackets on the street and then screeched away.

Suspecting a bombing attempt, the police called the bomb disposal squad. Their finding was startling: the unknown car had just dropped a few 'suicide vests' ready for use, with markings that indicated U.S. origin. Pakistanis have worked close enough with the Americans - and long enough - to recognize material manufactured for or used by U.S. intelligence operatives.

Karachi is well known to the Indian intelligence organizations. During the 1980s, the city was the focus of Indian intelligence as New Delhi tried its best to engineer an ethnic revolt in retaliation for Islamabad's perceived support for the Sikh independence movement in northwest India. But that was more than two decades ago and no one in Islamabad anticipated that the Indians were still maintaining sleeper cells and undercover contacts in Karachi in 2007, especially with the unprecedented normalization of Pak-Indian ties in recent months.

"It was a lousy act linked to the Indian intelligence services trying to create an impression that CIA was sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan," Zaid Hamid, a founding consultant of Brasstacks, a Rawalpindi-based intelligence assessment service, told this author in an interview [1].

"Neither the CIA nor the actual suicide bombers are in the business of dropping U.S. marked suicide vests on roadsides from moving cars in front of the police. It was a trap designed to mislead investigations," he said.

By 2007, Pakistanis were already watching Afghanistan turn into a base for Pakistan-specific destabilization operations under American watch. Some of the American moves on Pakistan's western regions adjoining Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia and China had already triggered suspicions within a segment of the Pakistani strategic community about U.S. intentions. In this atmosphere, the Karachi incident had the potential to trigger a chain reaction.

The Americans sensed this and feared a possible Pakistani backlash in the shape of reduced Pakistani military commitment to fight al Qaeda and Taliban in the tribal belt next to Afghanistan. Although it is not clear how the Americans precisely reacted to the news of Pakistani

law enforcement agencies discovering suicide vests with American markings that indicate a connection to either the U.S. military or intelligence agencies, the incident did catch Pentagon's attention.

Later that month, Washington sent a rare message to New Delhi that basically said, 'Please don't make things difficult for us. Try to get out of this Pakistan obsession. You are too important to limit yourself in this way.'

The message, in as many words, came in a rare and closed-door interaction [2] between the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Defense, James Clad, and a visiting group of retired Indian generals and diplomats. In a transcript released by the Pentagon, Clad told the Indian group that "the United States has de-hyphenated its relations with India from its relations with Pakistan. New Delhi should do the same."

The U.S. official was essentially telling the Indians they should not feel insecure because of the Pak-American cooperation in Afghanistan for the simple reason that it was not going to affect Indian interests. The Indians, Clad implied, should desist from trying to undermine Pak-U.S. ties based on that false notion.

But Clad's advice fell on deaf ears.

By early 2008, India was in the advanced stages of executing an ambitious intelligence operation suspected of having substantially contributed to the multiple and unprecedented security challenges that Pakistan faced in the period between 2004 and early 2008. The India-inspired troubles were above and beyond the issues resulting from the war on terror. India pursued this policy despite the Composite Dialogue launched by Islamabad in January 2004, in which Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf offered India risky and unmatched concessions to build mutual trust.

This chapter will demonstrate how a document prepared by two Indian security analysts in the year 2000, recommending to the Indian government a creative approach to expand Indian intelligence operations in Pakistan, inspired an ambitious Indian intelligence

expansion in and around Pakistan after 9/11, exploiting the unprecedented uncertainty on the ground in the Pak-Afghan region.

The ultimate goal of this massive operation was "to help [India] in the foreign policy objective of breaking the monopoly of the ISI and army over Pakistan," according to the document, aptly titled, 'India's Experience and Need for Action Against Pakistan,' authored by Dr. Bhashyam Kasturi and Pankaj Mehra [3]. "The aim is," the authors wrote, "to break the stranglehold of the intelligence agencies, the bureaucracy and the military in Pakistan."

Indian officials have long viewed the Pakistani military institution in particular as India's main adversary in Pakistan. Although the premise is flawed, it served a propaganda purpose. Publicly, Indian officials assumed the role of an underdog, accusing the Pakistani intelligence agencies of fomenting deadly insurgencies against India in the part of Kashmir under its control and in several Indian provinces that are fighting New Delhi for autonomy. Privately, the Indians knew they were going to remain hostile to Pakistan regardless of who was in power in Islamabad as long as the Pakistani military remained strong.

The document was drawn up in the mold of the infamous strategy documents produced by neo-conservative think tanks in the United States in late 1990s, advocating a global militaristic policy for the world's sole superpower to secure strategic interests. Reading the Indian document, it is hard to avoid the impression that the thinking behind the recommendations was heavily influenced by the Neocon policy papers that defined the Bush presidency. One relevant example is 'A Clean Break: A Strategy for Securing the Realm,' released in the year 2000 by the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies; and 'Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century,' released in the same year by The Project for a New American Century, a Washington D.C. think tank. The two American documents, and the authors behind them, played a major role in convincing the U.S. government to adopt the doctrine of preemption in international affairs, formally done in 2002.

The details of the unprecedented wave of domestic terrorism in Pakistan during 2007, targeting the Pakistani military, vital

installations and strategic projects involving China, and the associated disinformation campaign to demoralize the Pakistanis and spark a civil war, bear an uncanny resemblance to the recommendations that Dr. Kasturi and Mr. Mehra submitted to the Indian government as far back as the year 2000. If nothing else, it appears that the document did inspire a rethink in the Indian intelligence policy about Pakistan.

The following analysis shows how 9/11 and the subsequent events in Afghanistan gave India its best opportunity in decades to score major strategic points over Pakistan and push the long cherished Indian goal of encircling and engaging Pakistan on multiple fronts and achieve the strategic goal of distracting Pakistan's political, diplomatic and possibly even military energies away from the Kashmir dispute.

After a brief overview of the Indian experiments in inserting covert agents/teams inside Pakistan during the 1980s and the 1990s, this chapter explains how the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan offered New Delhi a chance it never saw coming to create major problems for Pakistan on its western and northern regions, and exploit and aggravate misunderstandings between Islamabad and its war on terror allies: NATO and the United States.

Evidence collected by the Pakistani government during the period between 2004 and 2008 shows[4] that India used the uncertainty following the quick war in Afghanistan in the winter of 2001 to move its intelligence operatives inside Pakistan, activate dormant sleeper cells from previous operations, and cultivate teams for psychological operations and sabotage. The Indians probably could not have done it without the help of Afghan assets recruited from within the considerable Afghan community in India, self exiled after the fall of Soviet communist regime in Kabul in 1992. They were mostly linked to the communist regime, which had close ties to India. After the fall of Taliban in 2001, they were back in power in Kabul.

New Delhi used Indian and Afghan agents to penetrate the Islamic groups that fled to Pakistan's tribal areas. As for the Arab fighters, India lacked the expertise to raise agents who could easily mingle with the Arabs without being detected. The job of penetrating the groups of Arab fighters in Pakistan's tribal areas was left to a special

team from Israel that came forward on Indian request to offer its expertise.

Throughout 2007, unknown saboteurs targeted Chinese civilian projects inside Pakistan, sparked unrest in border areas close to China, and undermined the position of the Pakistani military inside the country through organized disinformation, and there was a distinct attempt to magnify political and ethnic fault lines in Pakistan.

An enabling strategic environment helped India in this campaign, probably beyond the expectations of the original drafters of this intelligence effort. This enabling environment included the failure of the U.S. occupation to stabilize Afghanistan, Pakistan's domestic political weaknesses, and an emerging trust deficit in the Pakistani-American relationship. There is also the possibility that some lobbies in the U.S. government became open at some point to the idea of allowing India to establish a sizable military and intelligence presence in Afghanistan in order to pressurize a reluctant Pakistani ally. This possibility appeared increasingly real to the Pakistanis toward the end of 2007, and will be discussed in detail.

The new aggressive Indian activism in and around Pakistan was also the result of a meeting of interest between hawkish lobbies in three capitals: Washington, New Delhi, and Tel Aviv. This confluence of interest was partially demonstrated in the malicious U.S. media campaign that tried and almost succeeded in manufacturing a fake global threat alert about Pakistani nuclear installations and prepares the world opinion for a possible western military invasion of Pakistan on the lines of Iraq and Afghanistan [5]. The fact that the U.S. media led this campaign created serious doubts in Islamabad about where Washington stood. The resultant anti-U.S. feelings played right into the hands of Indian policy planners who have been trying to stir trouble in the Pak-American relationship since 9/11.

The inclusion of the Israeli connection here is not malicious but based on disturbing signs that elements in the Israeli security establishment have decided to ignore Israel's larger interest of forging trust with an important Muslim nation like Pakistan and opted instead to support the pursuit of narrow Indian objectives in the region.

## **The Genesis Of Pakistan Encirclement**

Western scholars make an academic mistake when they suggest that India, a large nation with bright prospects, is not and has no reason to be overly concerned about Pakistan. This argument is often used to paint India as a passive country bogged down by a troublesome Pakistan that in turn is paranoid about its larger neighbor for religious and historical reasons.

While there is no cure for chronic bias, empirical evidence suggests India is obsessed with Pakistan, not least because Islamabad managed, in less than five decades, to build an effective counterbalance to India in the region, creating a near-total military balance of power with an adversary five-times-larger. This is no mean achievement for a nation like Pakistan that, unlike India, essentially started from scratch. Any adversary that can make such a leap in a relatively short span needs to be closely watched. This is what India continues to do despite the well crafted image of a budding regional power not concerned about smaller neighbors.

The Pakistani story is one of resilience in the face of heavy odds. At the time of independence from Britain in 1947, many Indian officials were confident Pakistan will not survive beyond the first five years at best. Such Indian assessments were no based on just malice. There were good reasons for such conclusions.

At the time, the Pakistani state was a physical and political anomaly. Physically, the British and the Indians ensured that Pakistani authorities inherited very few British-government state assets. The British had also kept the Pakistanis [6] undereducated and underdeveloped for almost two centuries and favored the indigenous Indian Hindus in education and government jobs; a deliberate policy of divide and rule. The new Pakistani state had no proper state structure or enough trained professionals to run the country at Independence in 1947. The Indians did not even spare British military schools. The entire content of libraries in some of the British military schools that fell to Pakistan was transported to India on the eve of the independence of both nations from Britain.



Politically, Pakistan was also something of a rarity in modern political science. Most modern countries in the world were either single-ethnicity nations or confederations glued together by a long history and a functional bureaucracy. Pakistan was neither.

But Pakistan not only outlived pessimistic predictions, it went on to pose a serious political, diplomatic and military challenge to India.

In a new milestone, by 2007, Pakistan proved incorrect critics who charged that this Central-South-Western Asian country was incapable of growing out of its military-focused beginnings. Pakistan's impressive economic surge between 2000 and 2007 offered scholars a new perspective on Pakistan as an economically promising nation in addition to being militarily strong.

This Pakistani resurgence posed a threat from the Indian perspective because it meant making the Pakistani military stronger. The post-9/11 American alliance with Pakistan was seen as giving Islamabad a chance to become a greater threat to India. New Delhi faced the dilemma of showing the Americans on one hand that it was not obsessed with Pakistan but on the other hand there was no way that India was going to feel secure as Pakistanis grew stronger on U.S. aid and weapons.

Immediately after 9/11, India did offer Washington the use of its entire airspace and military facilities for the war against al Qaeda, in the hope that the war will expand to include Pakistan, vindicating persistent Indian propaganda, shared by some lobbies in the West, that portrayed Islamabad as 'terrorism central'. New Delhi was disappointed when Bush administration went along with Pakistan.

A Pakistani analyst has captured India's undeclared Pakistan insecurity in these words:

"India knows that it cannot destroy Pakistan militarily. The Kargil debacle, ending in the humiliating request by India to U.S. to save their encircled Army Corps in Leh and Drass [7], was the last nail in the coffin of the Indian Plan A. However, Plan B, put into effect after the realization that the risk of direct confrontation with Pakistan would lead to total annihilation, has been put into action. The Indian Plan B is to split Pakistan." [8]

The evidence of the past five years demonstrates that the Indian ruling establishment is willing to act on its chronic fears of a Pakistan that is too strong for India's good.

This paranoid face of India is the flipside of the carefully crafted soft image that New Delhi has been projecting internationally. This image building project included making inroads into the influential Jewish-American and neo-conservative lobbies in Washington, buying worldwide airtime and newspaper space for projection, organizing Indian-American political action committees, and the introduction of Indian faces onto the screens of major television news networks in the United States. The simultaneous and sudden work on these areas over the past eight was the result of meticulous planning and part of the larger objective of projecting India as a world power.

India has also been given a pass by the international community on many glaring failings - targeted killing of Christian missionaries, massive human rights violations in Kashmir, the genocide against a Muslim minority in 2002, massive poverty, high military expenditure, infanticide of girls, etc. - simply because of the romantic western fascination for everything Indian. While India's cultural aspects are admirable, New Delhi has milked them effectively for political advantage. The British colonial history of favoring Indian Hindus as docile and cooperative partners in the region continues today in a new form. The western romanticism for everything Indian permitted the United States in 1962 to ship weapons to the Indian army to fight China despite New Delhi's close ties to the Soviet Union.

So, are the Indians really capable of encircling Pakistan and do they have the political will to do so? The short answer is yes.

### **Indian Capacity To Encircle Pakistan**

From the 1970s and onwards -especially after the 1968 founding of the Research & Analysis Wing, the Indian intelligence service more commonly known as RAW- New Delhi has shown a deep interest in establishing itself as a regional power. India used diplomatic means to assert this role, as in its leadership role in the Non-Aligned Movement. But India never shied away from militant power projection when the need arose.

It is important to briefly examine this Indian capacity for ruthless power projection. This examination should prove that the bold Indian decision to encircle a beleaguered Pakistan post-9/11 was part of a pattern and not a policy shift.

This brief look is also necessary to counter skeptics, especially among the liberal-leaning scholars and academics in American and European universities who are willing to give India every benefit of the doubt. This analysis is all the more important now because a segment of the U.S. foreign policy establishment has blindly accepted the line that India is a force for stability in the region when major aspects of the clandestine Indian regional policy are counterproductive to the long term policy objectives of other regional powers, including U.S., Russia and China, not to mention Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and have often led to armed conflict.

In his book, *The Politics of Genocide*, Indian author Inderjit Singh Jaijee has given a chilling glimpse into New Delhi's capacity for ruthless power projection:

"More than 250,000 Sikhs were murdered by the Indian government, according to figures compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy. Another 52,268 are being held as political prisoners, according to the Movement Against State Repression (MASR.) Some of these political prisoners have been held since 1984. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has apologized for the November 1984 Delhi massacres in which over 20,000 Sikhs were killed. This establishes the guilt of the Indian government beyond any doubt. If he really wants to make amends, he should end India's occupation of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987. India has also killed over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and others. Tens of thousands of Muslims and Christians have been killed in other parts of the country. India is not a single country, but a multinational state that cannot hold together. We must do our part to see that this happens peacefully by supporting self-determination for all the people of [India]. We should also cut off our aid to India and our trade as well until basic human rights are observed fully and enjoyed by all." [9]

No discussion about India's willingness for ruthless power projection can be complete without mentioning two more brief examples.

The first is Bangladesh, where India has been involved in countless border skirmishes against a far smaller neighbor. The Indians have exploited diplomatic channels and produced and planted media stories to malign the image of Bangladesh in the eyes of major donors and supporter.

The full spectrum of ruthless Indian power projection in Bangladesh is stunning in that it shows how India lacks the grace to behave as a big regional country. The observations of Mohammad Zainal Abideen, a Bangladeshi author, as far back as 1995 have proven presciently true a decade later:

"[The Indian intelligence agency, RAW] has ... unleashed a well-organized plan of psychological warfare, creation of polarization among the armed forces, propaganda by false allegations of use of Bangladesh territory by [Pakistan's] ISI, creation of dissensions among the political parties and religious sects, control of media, denial of river waters, and the propping up a host of disputes in order to keep Bangladesh under a constant political and socio-economic pressure." [10]

As far as Pakistan is concerned, Indian rightwing political parties and organizations, many of whom were in government in New Delhi for the most part of the 1990s, have been very bold and direct in discussing their vision about how they see India's future relationship with Pakistan.

This influential segment of the Indian population has produced an impressive collection of written, video, audio and online material, ranging from a moderate vision of Pakistan reduced to an Indian satellite state to the other extreme of hoping that Pakistan is eventually annexed by India at some point in the future.

A rightwing Indian activist, in an article posted on Hindunet.com, titled, 'United Republic of India, a Greater India', recently wrote:

"The only way to achieve the goal of 'Greater India' is to reunify the Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese occupied territories with our motherland. I am an advocate of Pan-Indianism, i.e. a Greater India (Akhand Bharat) comprising of India, and including the whole of Jammu & Kashmir state, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and some territories of China." [11]

Imagine the outcry if religious groups in Pakistan came on record making similar statements, print books, create Web sites, and organize political activity around the objective of annexing India. This is exactly what is underway in India and yet it is completely ignored by mainstream American and British media. With this media blackout, many western observers tend to attach little importance to this huge anti-Pakistan body of work in India despite numerous signs that these ideas have found their way into the Indian military and intelligence, media and some political organizations, which bodes ill for the stability in the region.

### **Penetrate, Neutralize, Not Dismember**

India's political and military establishments have long been divided on pursuing a policy of weakening Pakistan as opposed to a policy designed to lead to the disintegration of this smaller neighbor to the west.

There are strong undercurrents in India that go from one extreme of advocating the destruction of the Pakistani state, to a school of thought that wants to see Pakistan reduced to a satellite country, to the other extreme of willingness to peacefully coexist with Pakistan. But the general theme even among India's Pakistan doves is that Islamabad needs to become 'harmonious' with New Delhi, which is a polite of way of saying that Pakistan should accommodate India's security and strategic objectives at the cost of Pakistan's own legitimate security and strategic considerations.

It is safe to say that the current Indian official thinking is that New Delhi does not want to see a disintegrating Pakistan, since that would adversely affect India's security. What is not clear, however, is how much of this position is designed to placate Washington, which fears that Indian hegemonic designs could distract Pakistan away from the vital cooperation with Washington on Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia.

## **The Four Prongs Of Pakistan Encirclement**

India has used four geographical areas as either targets or launching pads for an effective strategy to encircle Pakistan. The four areas are Kashmir, Sindh, Balochistan, and Afghanistan.

In Kashmir, India continues to win half of the battle against Pakistan by keeping the valley under its military control and thwarting Pakistani efforts to diplomatically engage India in peacefully resolving the dispute. But it is the other half of the battle that has forced India to change tactics in Kashmir and create new problems for Pakistan. The second half of the battle that India is losing is the hearts and minds of the Kashmiris, who continue to support and sustain the anti-Indian insurgency. The failure to dissuade the Kashmiris from sustaining an anti-India position is India's single biggest defeat in the Kashmir valley.

The resultant Indian frustration played a large role in convincing New Delhi to introduce two new elements in its covert battle with Pakistan. The two elements are: Fake Islamists and Israel.

Knowing that Islamabad has shown a soft corner for Kashmiri groups fighting in the name of religion, RAW introduced a new element to the equation: RAW-created Kashmiri groups claiming Jihad and spreading a hardline message that sometimes even backfires on the reputation of the real groups fighting Indian rule. The purpose of this exercise was to confuse Pakistanis and infiltrate the ranks of Kashmiris. Initially, the move proved effective and led to some successes in eliminating the real Kashmiri fighters. However, on the long run, the Kashmiris discovered the plot and it lost its effectiveness.

Since this Indian tactic was not a complete success, and previous counterinsurgency methods used by the Indian army failed, New Delhi was looking for new, more creative ways to seal the festering wound of Kashmir. Enter the second new element: Israel.

Israel was and continues to be a formidable help, with its sixty-year rich experience in dealing with entire populations sympathetic to insurgents fighting for their rights and motivated by a cause. Several reports have emerged since the 1990s about New Delhi requesting Tel Aviv to train Indian army's anti-terrorism units in Kashmir. But

Israeli assistance to India in Afghanistan is a fairly new development that has multiplied the threats facing Pakistan from Afghanistan. Mark Sofer, the Israeli ambassador to India, became the first Israeli official to go on record on the Israeli help to India in Kashmir.

In an interview to India's Outlook Magazine in February 2008, Sofer said:

"Certain issues need to remain under wraps for whatever reason ... The defense relationship [between India and Israel] got a major boost during Kargil when Israel came to India's assistance when it was in great need and brought about a turnaround in the situation on the ground. I think we proved then to the Indian government that you can rely on us, that we have the wherewithal."

It is not clear what prompted the Israeli ambassador to reveal at that point in time something that the Indians kept hidden for eight years: that the Pakistani stealth incursion into Indian occupied Kashmir in the Kargil area in the summer of 1999 had almost cut Kashmir from New Delhi. The ambassador underlined Indian panic at the time by saying India was 'in great need' of Israeli help and that a potential Indian defeat in the standoff with Pakistan was averted when the Israelis joined the battle. Of course, it is not clear what type of assistance Mark Sofer was referring to, but, in addition to military assistance, it is a known fact that the United States intervened diplomatically at the highest levels with Pakistan and pressured the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to hurriedly withdraw Pakistani forces, setting off a chain reaction inside Pakistan that ended with the fall of Mr. Sharif's government.

In Sindh, the Indians began cultivating separatist terrorist elements in the 1980s. Some retired Indian officials today justify this Indian interference in Pakistan as an acceptable retaliation for the perceived Pakistani support for the Sikh minority's long drawn armed struggle for independence from India.

But this argument is misleading. The Sikh movement was heavily financed by Indian Sikh citizens residing inside India, the Gulf Arab states and in several western countries, a fact well known to the intelligence services of many of these countries, especially Britain, Canada, United States, and several Gulf Arab states like Kuwait, Bahrain, and UAE's Dubai, home to wealthy Sikh communities. India

had sought the help of all of these countries to curb Sikh independence aspirations, in a sign of how strong was the role of the Sikh diaspora in sustaining the Sikh movement as compared to any Pakistani support, which would have been limited in the best of circumstances to symbolic support such the provision of safe passage through Pakistani territory and possibly some other minor forms of logistical support. Pakistan cannot be credited with sustaining the Sikh insurgency. This credit for this achievement goes to the committed and bold support of the Sikh diaspora, who provided money, weapons and fighters to sustain their own cause.

Unlike the indigenous Sikh revolt, the disturbances in Pakistan's Sindh province were a direct result of interference and financing by the Indian government through its intelligence arm, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). New Delhi recruited Indian Hindu citizens born into Pakistan's Sindhi heritage to use them to recruit Pakistani Sindhis living inside and outside Pakistan. A number of social and political associations were created in the Gulf, U.K., Canada and U.S. to gain supporters for the idea of carving out an independent state of 'Sindhu Desh' in Pakistan's Sindh province.

Indian intelligence operatives used the military coup against former Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a Sindhi, and then his trial and execution on charges that he ordered the murder of a political opponent as evidence that Pakistan discriminated against Pakistani Sindhis. A fringe group of self-styled Sindhi sub-nationalists picked up this message and decided to make it a rallying cry for a demand of separating the province from Pakistan. But they were largely unsuccessful in finding followers among the wider population of Sindh for the idea of breaking up Pakistan.

This is where Indian psy-ops provided great help.

Indian Hindu Sindhis began contacting educated Pakistani Sindhis in the Gulf, the United Kingdom and the United States to create social and political organizations. Members were indoctrinated in the concept of Sindhi sub-nationalism as opposed to Pakistani nationalism. Money was collected and funneled to poor peasants in Pakistan's Sindh province to encourage them to spread the message locally. RAW also used the Pakistani border with India across the Sindh desert and the Arabian Sea to smuggle Indian currency notes,



wall pictures of Mahatma Gandhi, and flags and printed propaganda material prepared by Indian intelligence agencies seeking supporters for the new cause. The fresh recruits of the new 'Sindhu Desh' movement used the money to buy new supporters and weapons and then to force the people in some remote villages of Sindh to remove the framed wall pictures of Pakistan's founder father, the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, from private and public offices and replace them with smuggled framed pictures of Mahatma Gandhi.

During the late 1980s, several Pakistani newspapers and newsmagazines reported incidents where Indian currency was found circulating in some remote villages of Sindh. It was a political statement more than anything else limited but very effective psychologically during those days. Stories about this in the mainstream Pakistani media added to the national confusion in a country that was facing a possible Soviet threat of invasion from Afghanistan and domestic instability because of the sidelining of politicians under a military-led government.

RAW is also believed to have inserted a team of saboteurs in Sindh that joined hands with a small group of local recruits and criminal elements in blowing up gas and power lines, railway tracks, and government buildings in remote areas. Some of the targets were carefully selected to create rift between Pakistani Sindhis and the natives of other parts of the country, including the Urdu-speaking Pakistanis concentrated in urban parts of the province.

This was an impressive operation by the standards of the 1980s and the reason the Indians were able to pull off most of it is that Islamabad's threat perception at the time was focused on the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. And considering this point, the Indians should have done better in igniting unrest in Sindh since Islamabad's attention was distracted elsewhere.

If the Indian effort failed in igniting a large scale insurgency in Sindh back in the 1980s, it was not because Pakistani counter-espionage measures were effective. The Sindhis, who had been at the forefront of the movement for Pakistan's independence and whose soil gave birth to Pakistan's Founding Father, largely rejected the elements advocating separatism and generally viewed with suspicion the activities of Indian-funded social forums created in third countries claiming to look after Sindh's interests.

But the Indian attempt to use what came to be known later as the 'Sindh Card' was not completely useless for the Indians. It helped RAW establish some kind of a presence in Pakistan's Sindh to be used in the future. And there is no question that this presence was shrinking with the passage of time. But, as explained later in detail, the events of 9/11 and the American occupation of Afghanistan revived India's interest in destabilizing Pakistan from the inside. One sign that Indian assets in Sindh were alive in kicking in late 2007 was the massive targeted destruction of strategic government installations and public property in the forty eight hours that followed Benazir Bhutto's assassination on 27 December 2007.

Many Pakistani observers and security professionals are not ready to believe that whatever happened in parts of Sindh province during those two days was the spontaneous outpouring of grief at the cold killing of a political leader that hailed from the province.

One of those skeptics is Dr. Salman Shah, an economist who enjoyed immense clout during the administration of President Pervez Musharraf between 2002 and 2007. He was the federal finance minister at the time of Bhutto's assassination.

Like many, he was stunned at the level of destruction in Karachi and Sindh, which some estimated to be in the tens of millions of dollars. Dr. Shah was not ready to mince words when a newspaper asked him about the loss. "It was a well planned conspiracy by a foreign country to cause devastation at such a scale," he said, adding, "the country's enemies had implemented their plan to target strategic communications, telecommunication and railway installations ... It was not a small disturbance but was a very calculated intrigue to create such a huge law and order problem in the country." [12]

The destruction was so overwhelming that some Pakistani news organizations, not known for exercising caution when telecasting dramatic news, suppressed a couple of stories where alleged mourners stormed small factories staffed by women and singled out for rape women from parts of the country other than Sindh, in what appeared to be an attempt to stir an ethnic backlash. The list of destroyed public property was not limited to cars, shops and offices. It included targets eerily similar to what a guerrilla army would prepare to attack in a civil war.

India's biggest recent intelligence successes in Pakistan, however, were not in Sindh but in those parts of the country that do not even border India: Balochistan and the tribal areas of North West Frontier Province.

Welcome to Balochistan and Afghanistan, the latest success stories in India's policy objective of engaging Pakistan on multiple fronts.

### **Exploiting 9/11: Penetrating Pakistan**

In the year 2000, two Indian security experts wrote a document urging an overhaul in Indian intelligence operations targeting Pakistan. Several Indian analysts were busy in revisiting the Indian military intelligence lapses following the Kargil mini war in order to draw lessons. But this document, written by Dr. Bhashyam Kasturi and Pankaj Mehra, was different. It came up with detailed recommendations that sought a major shift in what India should expect to achieve from its espionage in Pakistan.

In essence, the authors were suggesting a shift in Indian thinking. The idea was simple: From 1947 to 2000, India used intelligence as an information gathering tool for military applications and for occasional sabotage inside Pakistan. The new objective, according to the document, was to give India the ability to actually influence events inside Pakistan in a way that would serve Indian strategic interests.

This new policy proposal was ambitious to say the least and the two writers knew they were charting a new direction for Indian intelligence. Both of them, as explained in more detail below, were not very well known in the field, one a journalist-turned-intelligence expert and the other an amateur writer on intelligence issues. Obviously, the pool of Indian intelligence analysts had become so moribund that fresh thinking was now only available outside the system.

The Indian bureaucracy is not exactly known for major shifts in security matters. But this time the two authors must have known that their recommendations would find an instant audience. India in the year 2000 was fresh out of a mini-war with Pakistan in Kargil, where Mujahideen and Pakistani soldiers almost cut off Kashmir from India. New Delhi was humiliated into seeking urgent and immediate help from the Americans and the Israelis. Officials were determined this

would not happen again and were reviewing military and intelligence policies. This is where this policy document came in.

Titled, 'India's Experience and Need for Action Against Pakistan', the paper was written around Summer 2000. The interesting aspect of this paper is that the events in Pakistan since the end of 2004 and until early 2008 are not only in sync with most of the recommendations, but that many of the findings of the Pakistani security agencies in the two Pakistani provinces bordering Afghanistan - Balochistan and the NWFP - go in line with these proposals. To understand how ambitious the authors were in recommending that India destabilize Pakistan through Balochistan and the tribal areas, it is enough to mention that Afghanistan at the time was ruled by the Taliban who had good relations with Islamabad. It would have been very difficult to implement the ambitious recommendations of the authors at that time.

The document in its original draft injected new thinking into Pakistan-related intelligence research in India and could have been the foundation for a covert plan.

The circumstances surrounding the writing of this document are also noteworthy. The original draft of the paper appeared in the year 2000, was given to Indian government and security officials for feedback and improvement, and then was never published again in print or on the Web.

Only two portals carried the original draft when it first appeared. The first one is South Asia Terrorism Portal [[www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org)] which published the entire draft sometime in late 2000. This is the only known publisher of the entire original draft. The second Web site - [www.stratmag.com](http://www.stratmag.com) - describes itself on its homepage as "an unofficial Defence website, which is not endorsed or recognised by any Government or its institutions." The first portal, according to Indian journalists, is known to be linked to Indian intelligence.

Dr. Kasturi started out as a correspondent for the Indian newspaper Deccan Herald, focusing on security issues. His most active period in publishing was between 1995 and 2002. An online biography search in April 2008 listed results that showed him alternatively as an associate editor for the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund in New

Delhi and as an associate editor for the Indian Defence Review journal. One western journal introduces him as an "independent military analyst based in New Delhi." His coauthor, Pankaj Mehra, does not appear in any prominent journals. The two were apparently new to the business of intelligence planning and analysis. But it is interesting that both stopped publishing after writing a creative plan to hound Pakistan in a way that Pakistanis could not have anticipated.

The document written by the two was drawn up in the mold of the infamous strategy documents produced by neo-conservative think tanks in the United States in late 1990s, advocating a global militaristic policy for the world's sole superpower to secure its strategic interests.

This is not to suggest that the two Indian scholars were working in concert with the American Neocons. But the Indian policy planners appear at the time to be very impressed and influenced by what was going on in Washington. There is whole body of work by Indian writers that suggests that U.S.-trained or inspired circles within the Indian academia were urging New Delhi by the turn of the millennium to emulate the policy example of the Neocons in the United States and the examples set by Binyamin Netanyahu and Aril Sharon in Israel. These were seen as models of how an emerging power should conduct itself.

No one has described this Indian fascination with hawkish American and Israeli examples better than Vijay Prashad, an Indian scholar teaching in the United States who caught this trend in its early stages in 2001:

"The fantasy entertained by the Hindu Right government [in India in 2001] is that an alliance with the world's lions, USA and Israel, will allow India to sup at High Table, to eat high on the hog. Certainly the expectation is that trade will follow the military tie-up. For that reason, we see a wholesale sell-out by the Hindu Right to U.S.-Israeli foreign/military policy objectives. The Hindu Right recognizes the persistence of U.S. imperialism, and Israeli sub-imperialism-and they want a piece of the action in South Asia. It appears that the Hindu Right seeks the franchise for U.S. lackey against what it sees as Islamic fundamentalism and Chinese Communism.

Indeed, this philosophy remains at the heart of the Hindu Right's ideology, what is known as Hindutva." [13]

## **The New Strategy**

If Pakistan is sending Islamists into India, reverse the idea and use them against Pakistan. This was the essence of the recommendations by the two authors, as written by them in the preamble:

"In 1989, Pakistan began its proxy war against India by stoking the fires of discontent in Kashmir, very accurately described in a publicly available part-fiction, part factual account 'Operation Topac.' ... We therefore propose to outline a plan of action for India to play Operation Topac in reverse on Pakistan with the aim of weakening the stranglehold of those agencies who are focusing their attention on Kashmir and India."

By the looks of it, this was a brilliant idea that was not put into practice until after the war in Afghanistan in 2001. The massive destabilization on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, the removal of the Pakistan-friendly Taliban government, and the rise of several Indian assets in the new post-Taliban, U.S.-brokered government in Kabul, all of this provided India its first opportunity in almost three decades to try to engage Pakistan from 'the other side.'

The following is a slightly lengthy, unedited excerpt from the paper prepared by the two Indian authors:

"India has limited experience of covert operations against its western neighbor. Clandestine electronic intelligence gathering and aerial reconnaissance gives it some part of the picture. Additionally, it has gained experience in exfiltrating agents into POK [Pakistan-occupied Kashmir] into the training camps and this has helped in keeping tabs on activity in the POK region. But India's ability to influence events in Pakistan itself is limited. Small-scale moral and material support does go out to ethnic groups in Pakistan and some effort is made to infiltrate 'spies' by Military Intelligence in the border regions. But the larger picture is still dependent on Technical/electronic intelligence and even here capability to tap landlines in Pakistan is limited. Human intelligence from within Pakistan is much less than required ... Therefore, plans have to be made to covertly gather intelligence from inside Pakistan to help in foreign policy objective of breaking

the monopoly of the ISI and army over Pakistan. India has to have a plan of action to destabilize Pakistan, its economy and society, to the extent that it gives us leverage in foreign policy terms. It must however, be clear that it is not in India's interests to have a disintegrated Pakistan. The aim is to break the stranglehold of the intelligence agencies, the bureaucracy and the military in Pakistan ... The proposed strategy is to undertake covert passive and active measures against Pakistan including, psy-ops, disinformation, strikes in rear areas, border raids and so on. The last may include strikes by special forces against training camps in POK and Northern Areas. Such operations require a clear national will and motivation. They also require sustained funding from the political leadership and it requires highly trained and motivated manpower to execute this task. The objectives of such operations are to first, penetrate Pakistani society and its institutions of power. Obtaining intelligence from within the establishments of power is the main aim. Associated with this is the second, long-term aim of breaking the stranglehold of the main power brokers in Pakistan.

The aim of strikes is to create a situation where the establishment is caught in an over-reach situation. The rear areas, which are under the administrative control of Pakistan, but given its tribal and ethnic composition are quite independent, can be suitably engaged by India for its own purposes. Strikes will mean deploying more police and para-military troops to these regions and will stretch the Pak establishment ... The main aim is to infiltrate and subvert Pak institutions, the police, communication network and other important organizations. To this end, it makes sense to penetrate Pakistan from two sides, from outside the sub-continent and from POK. Then, in the next stage, focus moves to organizing and training subversive elements. These groups would target communication and logistic lines inside POK. Threatening the Mangla dam or Kahuta for instance, would be a major psychological factor. Third phase is hitting hard targets. First, to carry out disinformation campaign carried out by agent provocateurs and others. A few expendable agents are used to plant false information on police and intelligence agencies. At this stage, the strike teams begin hitting hard targets like economic centers, financial markets (like Karachi), ports and the like. Military installations like ammunition dumps, communication

centers, airfields can be targeted in case a war breaks out. Otherwise the aim is to penetrate and gather intelligence with the intention of breaking the stranglehold of the military over Pakistan society.

"The mission entails sending two teams of men (and women) into Pakistan for two separate missions. This first team will consist of sleepers, and agent provocateurs, and the second team will be the strike force. The sleepers and agents will consist of network builders and specialists who will recruit local people for both disinformation and strikes in the rear areas of Pakistan. The agent provocateurs will be placed such that they can engage in disinformation and activate sources within who can be expendable when required. The second team is for strikes against key targets of economic and military importance.

"Both teams will have to be infiltrated on the basis of genuine documents and placements in Pakistan. Identities can range from middle level social workers, journalists and political workers. Crucially, the persons selected for this job will have to be extensively trained for operations in living off the land in Pakistan. One may at this stage refer to the operation conducted by the Israeli Mossad in Syria aimed at the KHAD party. The agent was an Israeli but was trained to behave and live like a Muslim.<sup>16</sup> Therefore it should not be difficult to train an Indian, Hindu or Muslim to live in Pakistan. The key lies in creating excellent and plausible identities. Training has to be rigorous and thorough. Training will also be common initially and then separate and compartmentalized for the two teams - one, sleepers and agent provocateurs and two, demolition teams that will serve as strike teams in the rear.

While both teams need training in explosives, weapons and communications, each has a specific role, which calls for intensive training. For the sleeper the aim is to penetrate Pakistani society and build a local network for further infiltration. The important thing is therefore for these members to be 'Islamised.' For the strike teams it is going further afield, into Sind, Baluchistan and Northern Areas. This means differing identities and covers; identities are important. The first team has to consist of 'Pakistani nationals.' Punjabi or Sindhis, who are from abroad, can be targeted. Some thought can be given to



recruiting people from the Asian community in UK. Some members can be selected from Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan. For those coming in from the west, penetration point is obviously the United Kingdom, USA or Europe. Even the Middle East can be used. In other words, the potential areas for recruitment are large and this needs to be analyzed carefully.

"The strike teams could penetrate from Afghanistan or Tajikistan. The NWFP is full of Afghan refugees and the Northern Areas have Turks, Tajiks and Uzbeks. Finding these persons who are reliable and capable is going to be the tough part, but not impossible.

"Another option is to exfiltrate these teams from Indian soil. Therefore, the strike teams could penetrate from northern Kashmir. The northern areas of Jammu & Kashmir bordering Gilgit and Baltistan, mainly Kargil is a Shia dominated region, this could also serve as a recruiting base. There are also traditional routes that could be used for exfiltration into POK.

"Additionally, India can find local recruits from amongst the Turks and Tajiks in these regions who could act as couriers and informants. Similarly, in POK the Gujjars and Bakkarwals can be recruited for the same purpose. Seasonal migrants and sheepherders come from the Northern Areas, Chitral and Koistan areas. They can also be recruited. The aim of penetrating the strike teams is to get them to strike in the rear areas of Pakistan. The entire infiltration process of both teams, will take at least one year. Then it is a slow task of making inroads into Pak society.

"So it is clear that mission objectives of both teams are different and require different infiltration and exfiltration routes. As suggested above, the first team cannot jump off from India; the second might, given the right circumstances. The sleepers and agent provocateurs are always in danger of exposure. Thus their exfiltration will depend on their own resources and on the overall command and control of the mission. If mission control did want to abandon the task, then alternative exfiltration routes will require to be planned. The strike teams consisting of individuals, usually two to four must have routes of escape, and this is possible in those areas bordering India. It is thought best, diplomatically, at some stage to use Tajikistan as the

exfiltration route for those employed in the Northern Areas and surrounding regions. Those in Baluchistan, Sind and NWFP will have to use Afghanistan or get to the Arabian Sea for exfiltration.

"The first team should consist of 10-20 persons, both men and women who will be sent to Islamabad, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Lahore. The second team, consisting of only men will go to towns in Sind, Baluchistan and NWFP, as also the areas of Gilgit and Chitral. Numbers will depend on how much rear area attack is envisaged, perhaps initial numbers may be 8-10 in groups of two, to each region. The entire operation has to be planned keeping in mind that the initial period of infiltration and consolidation should be about four-six months. And then once the strike teams have got into place, situations can be created.

"The aim of the first team is to settle in Pakistan, infiltrate society, make inroads and build networks for information gathering and find niches in high places. The agent provocateurs will be expendable and need to be locally recruited, though for the sake of authenticity, one or two sleepers need to be expendable also. Key areas of penetration are the bureaucracy, the army, ISI, elite middle class and media. After a lull of a year, information should be leaked, through available means of the existence of these agent provocateurs, who will have in their possession, propaganda material, disinformation material and generally stories that lull Pakistani intelligence into a sense of complacency that they have achieved a coup. Further, as the Russians so successfully did with the CIA and MI-6, the agent provocateurs should talk of moles and other sleepers in the Pak military and intelligence establishment to create internal dissension.

"Once this leads to internal turmoil, it is time to activate the strike teams who will launch rear area attacks on installations of economic and military value. This will lead to further conspiracy theories being floated, leading to political uncertainty. The risk that this entails is that it will weaken the democratic process and possibly lead to military rule in Pakistan, but that is a contingency that India has to prepare for."

Briefly put, the idea was excellent. But there was no way that Indian intelligence managers could put this plan to an effective use without

some kind of access to Pakistan's western regions. The Indians did have that kind of access back in the 1970s and the 1980s when a Soviet proxy government in Kabul solicited India's help in countering pro-West Pakistan. But the Indians at the time were not competing for a superpower status and their Pakistan counterintelligence efforts were limited in objectives compared to what was being proposed now.

It was a different India in the year 2000 and the objectives were different. New Delhi was willing to pump in money and resources to establish itself as the preeminent regional power. But without the ability to access Pakistan's western regions, India's reach was limited to Pakistan's eastern regions bordering India, and the Pakistanis had already developed the ability to counter the Indians in those areas. Some old contacts in Pakistan's Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province could have been revived on third-country soil, like Dubai for example, but that was of no use without the ability to access the western regions of Pakistan by land in order to smuggle in money and weapons and insert special operations personnel. This was like U.S. needing Pakistan to invade Afghanistan, only in reverse.

The bold recommendations of Dr. Kasturi and Mr. Mehra were noteworthy but their utility did not become obvious and real until after 9/11.

### **How The New Game Started**

Officials in New Delhi spoke plainly when they offered the United States India's help in avenging 9/11. India's airspace, airbases, military supply lines and every type of logistical and military help was on offer if Washington agreed to take out not just the Taliban in Afghanistan but their supposed backers and supporters in Pakistan as well.

It was Indian opportunism at best. The Indians had been trying hard to convince the Americans for many years now that Pakistan is part of a regional problem. And what better time to drive the point home than in the immediate aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001.

For whatever reasons, Washington decided to go along with Islamabad after the famous 'bomb you back to the stone age' ultimatum delivered by a U.S. Department of State senior official to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

With this decided, the Indian offer was supposedly buried. But not exactly. Washington had sought the help of several regional players in addition to Pakistan to ensure that the Taliban were routed in the war against them that began on Oct. 7, 2001. The Russians and the Indians were immensely helpful. So were the Iranians, although their help remains largely undocumented. India hosted a large community of exiled Afghan officials from the former Soviet proxy government who fled Afghanistan after the defeat and withdrawal of the Soviet army in 1992. New Delhi had also been helping the anti-Taliban loose coalition of Mujahideen fighters, generally referred to as the Northern Alliance. Family member of many of the Alliance leaders were residing in India as guests of the Indian government.

So, while Washington heavily relied on Pakistani logistical and intelligence help to defeat the Taliban, New Delhi had a lot to offer in terms of helping put together a post-Taliban government. It is suggested that the effort to set up an alternative government in post-Taliban Kabul kept the Indians preoccupied for most of 2002. That was the year when Pakistan was busy trying to salvage whatever influence it left had in Kabul by convincing Washington to induct some of the moderate former Taliban into the new government. The Indians and others were busy in consolidating their gains in the new circumstances.

But something else happened. Soon after Washington's victory over the Taliban in November 2001, the Americans spent the next fourteen months getting ready to invade Iraq. On the ground in Afghanistan, the Indians were quick, many Pakistani analysts believe, to make the most out of the changed ground realities in Afghanistan. It is still not clear how much of what the Indian intelligence did in U.S.-occupied Afghanistan was official Indian policy and how much of it was the work of overambitious Indian intelligence officers, possibly encouraged by some elements in Washington D.C. or by those who believe that India should play a role larger than just a regional power.

Once the Taliban were defeated, the Indians dusted off their old files on Afghanistan and started off essentially with three tasks:

- **RESUCITATE B.L.A.** The Balochistan Liberation Army, known by the acronym BLA, is a Soviet relic. The KGB cultivated a few prominent young Pakistanis from Balochistan during the 1960s and 1970s, gave them lucrative scholarships in elite Soviet schools and indoctrinated them with revolutionary zeal and turned their sub-nationalism into something that is in conflict with the Pakistani state. The Soviets cultivated influential young Pakistani Balochis to further this goal in order to avenge Islamabad's close ties with the West.]

- **REVIVE CONTACTS IN TRIBAL AREAS.** Before Pakistan's emergence as an independent state in 1947, the Indians and the British had good contacts in the tribal areas adjoining Afghanistan, despite a majority of the Pashtuns being fiercely anti-British. Some of these British contacts opposed Pakistan's independence at the behest of their paymasters in New Delhi and London. The political influence of these anti-Pakistan elements was so limited that, just one year after independence, the tribesmen from this area overwhelmingly supported the Pakistani military in Kashmir and played a crucial role in securing almost half of Kashmir following the Indian invasion and occupation of the territory in 1948.

- **GENERATE ANTI-PAKISTAN ARMY PROPAGANDA.** The Indians exploited the anger resulting from Pakistani military's anti-terrorism operations in the area. With help from their Afghan assets in the new Afghan army and government, the Indians established links inside Pakistan's tribal areas and disseminated printed, audio and video material that encouraged the people to rebel against the government and the military in the name of jihad and religion. The Indians did not have to work hard here since the tribals were already enraged at Islamabad's cooperation with Washington.

This is where the document, "India's Experience and Need for Action Against Pakistan" becomes relevant. It recommended turning Pakistan's western regions into a mess. And that is exactly what happened. It was a difficult task made easier by the circumstances.

### **What Happened In 2004?**

In 2004, the focus abruptly moved from Afghanistan to Pakistan. And one can be sure that this was not part of Islamabad's plans.

Starting late 2003, Pakistan's entire western region stretching from the new port city of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea to the northern area bordering China gradually went up in flames. Pakistani officials did not connect the dots in the beginning, since they were preoccupied with the changing situation in Afghanistan and in the war on terror.

It was not until late 2007 that Islamabad woke up to the fact that it was besieged from all sides: terrorism, an organized campaign against its strategic and nuclear assets, internal instability, and what appeared to be major threats to the integrity of the Pakistani federation.

The situation was aptly captured in a paper written by Ahmed Quraishi and published on Nov. 19, 2007. The paper, titled, *The Plan To Topple Pakistan Military* [14], relied partly on circumstantial evidence and partly on evidence collected by several departments of the Pakistani government dealing with counterintelligence and Afghanistan.

The paper accused the Karzai government and elements in the Indian security establishment and some players in Washington D.C. of destabilizing Pakistan on three distinct levels:

1. **TRIBAL AREAS.** Powerful elements in the Karzai government aided by Indian intelligence operatives were indirectly supplying money, ammunition and equipment to religious militants fighting Islamabad.

2. **BALUCHISTAN.** Young Pakistani Baluchis were recruited and trained in camps in Afghanistan for sabotage inside Pakistan. Mr. Akbar Bugti, a wealthy tribal leader, was offered to lead an insurgency against Islamabad, providing a legitimate political face to BLA terrorism, with the promise that he will be installed as the leader of an independent, resources-rich state backed by the U.S., India and Karzai's Afghanistan.

3. **DOMESTIC POLITICS.** A tense political environment was made worse mostly by the U.S. politicians and media, who unleashing what unmistakably looked like an organized campaign questioning Pakistan's role in Afghanistan, warning of an impending implosion of the Pakistani state, suggesting that a U.S. military intervention in Pakistan was imminent, and warning of the impending fall of

President Musharraf's government, followed by chaos or a civil war. This environment unsettled the Pakistanis and encouraged political groups to launch anti-state street disturbances. Some Western-funded NGOs played a role in this, raising fears that some Western powers were trying to organize a 'color revolution' in Pakistan to overthrow the current government and bring to power a more pliant one.

Pakistan's decision makers and spymasters, overstretched by the scope of the internal and external challenge, went on high alert. A full bench of the Lahore High Court took serious notice of the street disturbances and linked them to the new findings [15]. It was natural that foreign actors will try to exploit the instability to weaken the country. The Pakistani government went back to some of the evidence collected in recent months from the country's western regions that suggested the involvement of outside elements in destabilizing the country. When the dots were connected, a fairly clear picture emerged confirming most of what was being suspected. As a result, President Musharraf and several other officials are on record as having said that destabilizing Pakistan would not serve the interest of anyone. The Indian role was particularly disturbing both because it ran contrary to the U.S. interest of working with Pakistan as an ally and because India was using Afghan soil to hurt Pakistan under American watch. One month after the Karachi incident involving suicide vests with U.S. markings, Ms. Tasnim Aslam, spokeswoman for Pakistan Foreign Office, delivered a warning:

"We have indications of Indian involvement with anti-state elements in Pakistan." [16]

Ms. Aslam did not elaborate. But in the paper, *The Plan To Topple Pakistan Military*, some more information was provided to understand the context of Ms. Aslam's significant statement:

"This is how a Pakistani official explained Ms. Aslam's statement: 'What she was really saying is this: We know what the Indians are doing. They've sold the Americans on the idea that [the Indians] are an authority on Pakistan and can be helpful in Afghanistan. The Americans have bought the idea and are in on the plan, giving the Indians a free hand in Afghanistan. What the Americans don't know is that we, too, know the Indians very well. Better still, we know Afghanistan very well. You can't beat us at our own game.' [17]

The Pakistanis had ceased the policy of accusing the Indians for anything that went wrong in the country ever since the launch of the Composite Dialogue with New Delhi in January 2004. The evidence on Pakistan-focused Indian activities from Afghan soil had piled up so much that Islamabad made this calculated breach of its own policy and directly accused India for terrorism inside Pakistan.

It is also important to understand Mr. Bugti's rebellion because, with the benefit of hindsight, it is not difficult to conclude that dragging the Pakistani military into an armed conflict, first in Balochistan and then in NWFP, helped Pakistan's regional detractors to peddle the Indian propaganda line that the Pakistani military "was killing its own people." The U.S. pressures to launch strikes in the tribal areas did not help.

Mr. Bugti formally launched his rebellion on Jan. 7, 2005. Before this, the only news of trouble from this part of the world was limited to Afghanistan and the U.S. fight against Taliban and the remnants of Al Qaeda. One of Mr. Bugti's biggest crimes in the eyes of many Pakistanis was the systematic way in which his insurgency hit Chinese targets in Pakistan. Thanks in part to Mr. Bugti, Chinese diplomatic missions in Pakistan were forced to issue safety alerts to their citizens for the first time in the history of Sino-Pakistani relations.

The large scale rebellion against the Pakistani state by Mr. Bugti came as a surprise. For years, Mr. Bugti controlled gas-rich areas that used to be owned by his cousins before he forcibly exiled them and their families to other parts of Pakistan. He spent years blackmailing the federal government on annual royalty payments for the gas. But this time it was not about payments. The size of his private militia and the types of weapons and rockets and their launchers he had at his disposal, not to mention the resources to recruit, train and equip a well armed fighting force, were all impressive to say the least and raised suspicion as to the sources of his funding and supply. The following table [18] shows how the capabilities of Mr. Bugti's rebels and fighters dramatically improved between 2003 and 2005.



2003

Total rocket attacks	239
Rockets falling on Sui	137
Total bomb blasts in Balochistan	37

2004

Total rocket attacks	626
Rockets on Sui	378
Total bomb blast	122
Blasts in Sui	16

2005

Total rockets attacks	663
Rockets on Sui	657
Bomb blasts	3

There was a discernible link between the events in Pakistan in 2007 and the regional rivalries involving Pakistan, China, Iran, U.S., and India, not to mention of course the stakeholders in the Karzai government in Kabul, out to settle their own scores with Islamabad. This is how the situation in and around Pakistan looked like in November 2007 from the perspective of the author of *The Plan To Topple Pakistan Military*:

"Mr. Bugti's armed rebellion coincided with the Gwadar project entering its final stages. No coincidence here. Mr. Bugti's real job was to scare the Chinese away and scuttle Chinese President Hu Jintao's planned visit to Gwadar a few months later to formally launch the port city.

Gwadar is the pinnacle of Sino-Pakistani strategic cooperation. It's a modern port city that is supposed to link Central Asia, western China, and Pakistan with markets in the Mideast and Africa. It's supposed to have roads stretching all the way to China. It's no coincidence either that China has also earmarked millions of dollars to renovate the Karakoram Highway linking northern Pakistan to western China.

Some reports in the American media, however, have accused Pakistan and China of building a naval base in the guise of a commercial seaport directly overlooking international oil shipping lanes. The Indians and some other regional actors are also not comfortable with this project because they see it as commercial competition.

What Mr. Bugti's regional and international supporters never expected is Pakistan moving firmly and strongly to nip his rebellion in the bud. Even Mr. Bugti himself probably never expected the Pakistani state to react in the way it did to his betrayal of the homeland. He was killed in a military operation where scores of his mercenaries surrendered to Pakistan army soldiers."

Akbar Bugti was killed sometime on 26 August 2007. His last moments were spent holed up in a mountain cave with hundreds of his militia fighters after being chased out of his hometown of Dera Bugti. The most credible version of his death involves betrayal on the part of a Baloch tribe that had an old enmity with Mr. Bugti, a ruthless tribal lord himself. His cave hideout was exposed by a member of the rival tribe. When a military unit was dispatched to seek Mr. Bugti's surrender, he refused and instead ordered his supporters to use rocket launchers and heavy ground fire against Pakistan army gunships. After giving him several opportunities to surrender, which he declined, the military commander in the area ordered the Pakistani law enforcement personnel to use full force against the offenders. Bugti died when a stockpile of ammunition in his cave exploded under a heavy exchange of fire.

Pakistani authorities were taken by surprise when they explored Mr. Bugti's treasure trove of documents and his 'war chest' left behind. After his escape from Dera Bugti, maps of an independent Balochistan were found stashed away in a number of hideouts he had used. This included documents that detailed how the government of independent Balochistan would look like after secession from Pakistan. The planning for a future independent Balochistan government and the first actions it would take were in an advanced stage. There is no question that Mr. Bugti had received strong guarantees from foreign handlers about political and military support that he was supposed to receive once he had launched a full fledged

rebellion. He was definitely expecting a foreign force to intervene on his behalf. There is no other way to justify why an educated senior politician like him, with strong contacts with the Pakistani government, the political elite and the military, who was receiving huge amounts of money by Pakistani standards in exchange for letting Islamabad exploit gas reserves in lands under his control would give up all of this and choose to hide in the mountains.

After Bugti came another shadowy figure. Abdullah Mehsud, who said he was a Pakistani supporter of the Afghan Taliban. However, after spending three years in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, he was released not to the Pakistani government but to Afghan authorities. Some reports suggest that his name was not listed in the records at Guantanamo Bay. After he was released, the first targets of his attacks after release were not the Americans or members of the Karzai administration in Kabul, but Chinese engineers working on government projects in Pakistan. His movements were also suspicious. He kept moving between Pakistan and Afghanistan with impunity and he seemed to have the resources necessary to raise a well armed and trained militia in a short time. His was strangely focused on fighting the Pakistani state. On a tip-off from the locals, Mehsud was surrounded in a house in an area close to the border with Afghanistan. He refused to heed calls to surrender and died fighting Pakistani security personnel who stormed the house on July 24, 2007. Locals reported that Mehsud had recently crossed into Pakistan from Afghanistan.

Another militant cultivated by the Indians and the Karzai government is Balach Mari, the suspected leader of BLA. His ties to Kabul and New Delhi were no secret. In fact, agents of the Pakistani government who were tracing his movements eventually found him on Nov. 21, 2007 trying to sneak into Pakistan after a quick visit to Kandahar and Kabul, where he met his handlers. Pakistani authorities explored the option of arresting him once he entered Pakistan. But it seems a decision was taken to confront him in a desert area a few kilometers inside the Afghan territory, where Mari was killed. In taking this decision, the Pakistani security officials probably wanted to provide the Pakistani public opinion with a proof that Mari, like Bugti, was not innocent of the crime of working for foreign agendas. It also served as a message to those trying to destabilize Pakistan from the outside that Islamabad was on to their game.

Ahmed Quraishi writes in **The Plan To Topple Pakistani Military:**

"This is where Pakistani political and military officials finally started smelling a rat. All of this was an indication of a bigger problem. There were growing indications that, ever since Islamabad joined Washington's regional plans, Pakistan was gradually turning into a 'besieged-nation', heavily targeted by the American media while being subjected to strategic sabotage and espionage from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, under America's watch, has turned into a vast staging ground for sophisticated psychological and military operations to destabilize neighboring Pakistan.

During the past three years, the heat has gradually been turned up against Pakistan and its military along Pakistan's western regions:

- \* A shadowy group called the BLA, a Cold War relic, rose from the dead to restart a separatist war in southwestern Pakistan.

- \* Bugti's death was a blow to neo-BLA, but the shadowy group's backers didn't repent. His grandson, Brahmdayh Bugti, is currently enjoying a safe shelter in the Afghan capital, Kabul, where he continues to operate and remote-control his assets in Pakistan [19].

- \* Saboteurs trained in Afghanistan have been inserted into Pakistan to aggravate extremist passions here, especially after the Red Mosque operation in Islamabad in July 2007.

- \* Chinese citizens continue to be targeted by individuals pretending to be Islamists, when no known Islamic group has claimed responsibility.

- \* A succession of 'religious rebels' with suspicious foreign links have suddenly emerged in Pakistan over the past months claiming to be 'Pakistani Taliban'. Some of the names include Abdul Rashid Ghazi, Baitullah Mehsud, and now the Maulana of Swat. Some of them have used and are using encrypted communication equipment far superior to what Pakistani military owns.

- \* Money and weapons have been fed into the religious movements and al Qaeda remnants in the tribal areas to make matters worse for Pakistan.

The elimination of three shadowy figures - Akbar Bugti, Abdullah Mehsud, and Balach Mari - with suspected ties to the Indians and the new intelligence service of the Karzai government, was a major blow to New Delhi and their new friends in Kabul, especially in the case of Mr. Bugti, who, unlike the others, was a prominent tribal leader and his voice and face gave an aura of credibility to the plan of breaking Balochistan away from Pakistan. In fact, the loss echoed in both Kabul and New Delhi.

In New Delhi, the Indian Foreign Ministry called the killing of Bugti 'unfortunate' and a 'tragic loss to the people of Balochistan and Pakistan.' The Indian media went a step ahead by calling on the Indian government to 'intervene' diplomatically on the side of the BLA terrorists, whom some of the Indian commentators referred to as freedom fighters. The Indian reaction in this case was quite similar to what how they used Tibet against China. For Pakistanis, it was amusing to see the Indian media taking such an unusual interest in a Pakistani province that is tribal and borders the Arabian Gulf, Iran and Afghanistan, with no visible links to India in any way.

In Kabul, President Karzai's spokesman and the National Assembly 'condemned' the death of Bugti, one step short of condemning the Pakistani government. During a debate inside the parliament, there was a clear gap between the positions of those members who were strongly anti-Pakistan and those, mostly Pashtuns, who argued that this was an internal matter of Pakistan and that Afghanistan had nothing to do with it.

An Afghan writer, Dr. Amin Tarzi, wrote the following for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty describing the Pakistani reaction:

"Responding to a question about Afghan and Indian concerns about Bugti's killing, Pakistani military spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan said on August 29 that his country's Foreign Office has issued a clear statement on the comments made by Kabul and New Delhi, deeming them a "violation of all diplomatic norms." Sultan added that these comments "point to the fact that if something happens in Baluchistan, [we know] who is involved in it." He did not elaborate but left no doubt that Pakistan sees an Indian hand with Afghan collaboration in Baluchistan unrest." [20]

Dr. Tarzi concluded his report with an advice to the Karzai government:

"The Bugti affair once again brings attention to the need for Kabul not to exacerbate its already troubled relationship with Islamabad. While Pakistan needs to accept Afghanistan as an independent country -- one not subservient to its demands -- Kabul has to be careful not to play the Pashtun and Baluch card or get involved in the Indian-Pakistani games so much that Islamabad goes on high alert."

This is one advice that Karzai's Kabul has vigorously ignored. By early 2008, Kabul had become an active participant in Indian plans for Pakistan in the tribal areas and Balochistan.

### **A Wedge Between Islamabad And Washington**

It is important to note here that precipitating a collision between Pakistan and the West and especially the United States has long been a cherished goal for the Indian foreign policy establishment. In this context, the close Pak-U.S. cooperation after Sep. 11, 2001, was a major failure for Indian diplomacy. But since 2004, India has been trying to achieve through intelligence operations what it failed to achieve through diplomacy: shift the war on terror from Afghanistan to Pakistan.

This Indian success would not have been possible without the Northern Alliance government in Kabul and the presence of a number of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters in Pakistan's tribal areas. The Pakistani military operations against them generated anger among the local Pashtun tribes. The Indian and the Karzai intelligence operatives aggravated the tensions by secretly pumping money and weapons into this area. They also inserted agents assigned to spread propaganda material with a religious touch that encouraged the locals to see the Pakistani military as an extension of the American occupation of neighboring Afghanistan and suggested the locals organize themselves for a holy war against the now infidel Pakistani state as a prerequisite to getting rid of the Americans.

The objective, in addition to making life difficult for Pakistan, was to create a situation where a worsening conflict within Pakistan's tribal areas would create pressure on the Americans to invade the region, leading to frictions and maybe even a confrontation with Islamabad. This objective was almost achieved when, by mid to late 2007, a chorus of U.S. media commentaries and reports built the case for taking the war to Pakistan, complete with supporting statements coming from Kabul and similar advice coming from New Delhi in the guise of academic commentaries from Indian terrorism experts.

Destabilizing the tribal areas of Pakistan was a deliberate policy pursued by multiple players based in Afghanistan. Many former Pakistani and Afghan Taliban fighters who have surrendered told their Pakistani interrogators about training complexes inside Afghanistan staffed by Indians and Afghans imparting training to Pakistan-focused saboteurs. Knowledgeable sources in Pakistan's intelligence services rarely talk about such matters even off the record in order not to compromise the sources of their information. But information has been leaking for quite some time that paints a picture of a wide network of intelligence outposts established in Afghanistan, possibly jointly by intelligence teams from several countries, to target not only Pakistan but also Iran, Russia, some of the Central Asian states and of course China. The details of this network are breathtaking. They are discussed in detail below. The U.S. role in all of this is complex and had been explained separately at the end.

This discussion unfolds on three levels:

1. The Wedge. The theory on creating a wedge between Pakistan and the U.S. in the war on terror;
2. Infiltrating Taliban inside Pakistan;
3. Intel outposts targeting Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and China

The September 2007 incident in Karachi, narrated at the beginning of this chapter, is a direct link to this theory of precipitating conflict between Islamabad and Washington based on mutual suspicion and war fatigue.

Students of the Indian foreign policy know that New Delhi has wasted no opportunity to invite West's wrath on Pakistan. The Indian officials have long been puzzled as to the reasons why Washington and the West continue to court Pakistan, a Muslim country, when a secular democratic India is right next door and is ready to be a better partner for the West.

During the period between January 2002 and late 2004, Indian writers and analysts went into an overdrive to moan Pakistan's rehabilitation after 9/11. In fact, a major Indian think tank, the Observer Research Foundation, dedicated an entire paper to the subject of 'Pakistan's Rise to Grace.' [21] The author of the piece advised the Indian government as follows: "India does not need to be unnecessarily worried about Pakistan's rise to grace [because] U.S. friendship with Pakistan has always been tactical in the sense that their close friendship has always ended once the U.S. achieved its objectives. In return, the Pakistani state received weapons, money and a place at the high table for a limited time."

Another retired Indian diplomat published an article with this interesting title, 'U.S. Elevates Pakistan to Regional Kingpin' [22]. The thrust of this article and other similar Indian commentaries has been to highlight that Pakistan's rise to grace is an unnatural development that needs to be examined and revoked if possible.

The backlash in Pakistan's tribal areas to the heavy handed attacks by the Americans and the Pakistani army provided the best opportunity for New Delhi to expedite a confrontation between Islamabad and Washington over Afghanistan. The plan was simple: Create enough mess in Pakistan's tribal areas to lure the Americans into launching military strikes, and then use the resulting anarchy and anger to fan a local rebellion while feeding Pakistani fears of an American conspiracy to break up Pakistan and take out its nuclear installations. The Indians were by no means leading this campaign. There were other players, certainly strong U.S. lobbies pushing this scenario, possibly even including U.S. government departments.

One of the best analyses in Pakistan on the core Indian role came in a restricted report of limited circulation released in Islamabad in late 2007, produced by BRASSTACKS, a Rawalpindi-based independent think tank. The report's author, Zaid Hamid, wrote:



"This was the golden opportunity that the Indians had been waiting for. Since 9/11, they had been on a mission to draw the U.S. and Pakistan onto a collision course. The Indians offered bases to the U.S. to attack Pakistan post 9/11 but the U.S. decided to take Pakistan as an ally much to the disappointment of the Indian planners. But they never gave up hope. The Indians knew that if they could convince the Americans that Pakistan is the root cause of all terrorism and violence in the world, then the U.S. would sort out Pakistan and India would be spared of the 'dirty job'. On the other hand, if they can further fuel the local anger against the Americans through their assets and strategy, then the collision between Pakistan and U.S. would be complete.

Also, the presence of the Northern Alliance government in Kabul allowed unprecedented access to India to meddle into Pakistani tribal and sub-nationalist affairs from the Afghan side. After accusing Pakistan of bleeding the Indian army and resources in Kashmir and the northeastern states, Indian war planners saw this as an excellent opportunity to draw Pakistan into its own tribal areas and initiate multiple insurgencies - both religious and sub-nationalist in tribal regions as well as in Balochistan. It was a historic moment for them and they were not going to miss it at any cost.

The presence of a huge number of Arabs in the tribal regions was a handicap for Indians as their specialty was the Afghans or the Pakistanis, not the Arabs. To handle Arabs, the Indians turned to their old ally specializing in Arab affairs - the Israelis.

The Indian-Israeli nexus was old in Kashmir. Israeli advisors have been routinely visiting the territory and advising Indians on how to handle Islamic militancy. Now their cooperation extended into Afghanistan. The objectives of Al-Qaeda and the Zionists are common - to bring about a collision between Pakistan and the West. These common objectives made it extremely easy for the Indians and the Israelis to create a clandestine support network which was to offer material and technical support to Al-Qaeda and local rebellious tribals in Pakistani tribal regions - on most of the occasions with full U.S. knowledge though not necessary under U.S. control.

On their part, the U.S. [is] supporting Balochistan Liberation Army for operations inside Iran and that is why BLA has not been declared a terrorist outfit by the Americans yet and it is also a fact that they also used these Pashtun tribal assets to create trouble for the Chinese in Pakistan. The kidnapping and killing of a Chinese engineer by Abdullah Mehsud [...] is a case to be noted. The presence of these militants in tribal regions and their war against Pakistan was necessary for U.S. objectives as well to justify long term American presence in Afghanistan as well as to create circumstances for Pakistan to commit more and more troops to the cause - which in turn would help to create a political environment for the creation of a new separate Pashtun regions and redraw the map of the region as proposed in the plans for the greater Middle East.

Hence, a conflict between the Pakistani state and the people of its tribal region [is] a fundamental requirement that suits all players - U.S., Israel and India. The Afghan government became a pawn in this whole game though they too had their own scores to settle with Pakistan.

While the American presence was providing overarching protection to the Indian-Israeli objectives, the Indian and Israeli strategy was much more short term - creating serious destabilization inside Pakistan and support terrorism and multiple insurgencies at various levels and even threaten the very State and the government. To achieve this fundamental objective, it was necessary to create a wedge between Pakistan and its tribal population as well as between Pakistan and the United States.

If the local anger against U.S. could be brought to explosive levels it would be easy to convince the American public and policy makers that Pakistan is an equal threat to U.S. interests as Iran is. The net result would be that U.S. would be convinced to beat the hell out of Pakistan much to the pleasure of Indians and Israelis. It was a fantastic but sinister plan and the environment was all there for its implementation after 9/11 and Pakistan's decision to side with the Americans and the growing Muslim and Pashtun anger against the U.S. and Pakistani militaries." [23]

## **Infiltrating Taliban**

The Indians were late entrants into the business of infiltrating Muslim religious groups and cultivating Muslim religious assets. This is an art perfected primarily by the Israelis and the British intelligence in the Middle East in the first half of the twentieth century. Almost everyone else came in later.

The idea to recruit officers from the Muslim population in India to break into religious Kashmiri groups fighting for independence came up in the early interactions between the Indians and the Israelis in the early 1990s. The Israelis had been long time watchers of the Islamic movements in Palestine and the Middle East, including Pakistan. The Israeli help to India to suppress the freedom movement in Kashmir came on several levels and culminated with the very high-level emergency military support to the beleaguered Indian army in Kargil heights in Kashmir in the summer of 1999, when around 1,000 Kashmiri and Pakistani fighters had almost cut Kashmir off India. [24]

After a visit to Israel in early 2007, an American analyst working for a Washington think tank emailed a Pakistani friend a fascinating piece of information. He wrote:

"During a recent visit to Israel, I learned that the Israelis have set up a School of Fiqh run by the Hebrew University. It is located in former Jaffa or Haifa, and it is training Indian and Pakistani origin people [...] in Fiqh (Islamic theology) and sending them for Tabligh (proselytism) with a particular message. Part of the game plan is in collaboration with India, some Indian Muslim organizations, and Central Asian Republics. The purpose of these individuals is to cause mayhem in Pakistan through surrogates recruited from Pakistan. This is part of the Indo-Israel collaboration in Afghanistan." [25]

The idea of infiltrating Taliban, cultivating assets and directing the militia's operations against Pakistan was a novel idea. The extent of its utility became more obvious when information emerged about how Afghanistan had effectively been turned into a springboard for covert operations in the surrounding countries.

## **Afghanistan As An Intelligence Outpost**

Of all the evils attributed to the Taliban, meddling in the affairs of Afghanistan's neighbors was not one of them. During their brief rule between 1996 and 2001, the Taliban are known not to have turned away fellow Islamists coming to Afghanistan from some of the neighboring countries. But there is no evidence that Taliban interfered as a matter of policy in the domestic affairs of Pakistan, Iran, China, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The same, however, can definitely not be said about their Al Qaeda allies.

The irony now is that, following the Anglo-American occupation of Afghanistan, far from becoming a beacon of democracy, the country has turned into a large intelligence and military outpost for destabilization operations in neighboring countries.

There is evidence now that, in addition to destabilizing Pakistan, work is underway to radicalize Chinese Muslims, to disorient Iran, and to disturb the pro-Russian Central Asian states.

Pakistani media has published many reports dealing with the new form of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan under its U.S.-installed government. But none of these reports contained detailed information. However, on March 26, 2007, a Pakistani news portal published an article by General Mirza Aslam Baig, the former chief of the Pakistan army, titled, Pakistanis Foil One Conspiracy, Time To Check Another One In Afghanistan. [26]

This was probably the most comprehensive Pakistani assessment of what was going on in Afghanistan. The only difference between his and the other assessments that have appeared in the Pakistani media is that he directly accused the United States of complicity with India in using Afghan soil for espionage against its neighbors. Gen. Baig qualified his findings by saying that the Pakistani government should have more detailed information than the one he received from his own sources.

Gen. Baig referred to the February 2006 announcement of the U.S. Department of State that declared that "Afghanistan, which has been part of Central Asia geopolitically, henceforth will be considered as part of South Asia." In his opinion, the "implicit purpose" of this move "was to bring Afghanistan within [the] easy reach of India to use it as a base for intelligence operations against the neighboring countries."

He listed the exact locations of the suspected intelligence outposts in Afghanistan. The following is an excerpt from Gen. Baig's report:

"We in Pakistan have enough information to identify this intelligence network inside Afghanistan, to accurately determine the dimensions of this Great Game.

The nerve center is at Jabal-us-Seraj, manned and operated by CIA, RAW, Mossad, MI-6 and BND (German intelligence). It's a huge setup with concrete buildings, antennas and all the modern electronic gadgetry one can conceive of.

Country-specific outposts there are:

- \* Sarobi and Kandahar against Pakistan;
- \* Faizabad against China;
- \* Mazar-e-Sharif against Russia and Central Asian states
- \* and Herat against Iran

As far as Pakistan is concerned, Sarobi is the nerve center, headed by an Indian General officer, who also commands the Border Road Organization (BRO). Its forward bases are Ghazni, Khowst, Gardeyz, Jalalabad, Asadabad, Wakhan and Faizabad.

BRO has built an all-weather road from Sarobi to Asadabad to Faizabad. Sarobi network, targets the province of NWFP, Pakistan. Dissidents from Pakistan are trained at Sarobi for missions inside NWFP.

Wakhan is infested with dozens of electronic outposts covering Pakistan, China, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Against Balochistan province, Kandahar has its forward bases at Lashkargah and Nawah. The dissidents from Balochistan are trained at Lashkargah for undertaking missions in Balochistan as well as in support of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). One of their tasks is to target the Chinese working in the province, particularly at Gwadar, Sandak and Hab.

The American anchorages on the Pakistani coast at Jiwani and Kalamat (The facilities at Jiwani and Kalamat were provided by Pakistan as logistic support bases to the Americans for operation in Afghanistan, but the same are now being used, to destabilize Balochistan and Iran.) jointly plan operations with BLA inside Balochistan.

They also use the Pakistani outposts at Mand for operations inside Iran. The American warships in the Arabian Sea and their intelligence base in Muscat provide the backup support.

The setup at Faizabad (Badakhshan) is against China and holds over 400 personnel mainly Muslim soldiers, engineers and workers from India. It serves as the training camp for the Chinese dissidents from the Xinjiang province of China. Indian Ulemas impart motivational education, giving the impression that the entire outfit at Faizabad was run by Pakistanis. The recently acquired facility for military deployment by India across the border in Tajikistan at Kalai Kumli adds a meaningful capability to India to operate inside Tajikistan, as well as Uzbekistan.

Against Russia, the intelligence base at Mazar-e-Sharif is run jointly by CIA, RAW, Mossad and BND. Chechen dissidents and agents from Turkmenistan are trained for operations in these countries. Rasheed Dostam and Ahmad Zia Masood are very active supporters of such activities in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Against Iran, the forward base at Herat and Farah are manned by CIA, RAW and Mossad for subversive activities inside Iran. Jointly operating from these bases and the bases inside Pakistan, such as Kalamat, Jiwani and Mand, they have been able to undertake terrorist action inside Iran, killing a number of security forces personnel. The terrorist organization named Jandullah has been used for conduct of such operations inside Iran.

The Karzai government in Kabul has granted all the main outposts of this network the status of diplomatic 'Consulates' to provide diplomatic cover for their activities, resulting into the worst kind of 'Terrorism Through Consensus' by the so-called civilized nations, in occupation of Afghanistan and the brutal violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty for this purpose.

It is surprising that after so much of suffering, as a result of this conspiracy, the government of Pakistan has woken up now to say that foreign hands are involved in the recent bomb blasts and suicide attacks.

To defeat this conspiracy is the daunting task the new government and the sovereign parliament would be facing and we all hope it will stand up to the challenge."

### **The Indo-Karzai Mischief And The U.S. Role**

There are three schools of thought in Pakistan as to the role of the United States in what appears to be Afghanistan's transformation into a beehive of conspiracies against Pakistan under U.S. watch:

1. The U.S. is not involved. Those who hold this opinion in Islamabad believe that terrorism inside Pakistan emanating from Afghan territories is the exclusive work of the Indians with help from former Northern Alliance elements in the Karzai government. The Americans are too busy with Iraq and Iran and in countering the Taliban resurgence to be distracted into this. U.S. officials constantly remind their Pakistani counterparts that Pakistan's stability is essential for U.S. objectives in Central, South and West Asia. Moreover, U.S. government officials who have been shown some of the evidence of the work of the Indian and Afghan intelligence inside Pakistan have assured their Pakistani counterparts they will investigate and ensure the cessation of such activities if the Indians and the Karzai government were found involved.

2. The U.S. is heavily involved. The holders of this opinion rely on a huge pile of real and circumstantial evidence that indicates that Washington has plans for the region that go beyond what has been shared with Islamabad. They also argue that there is no way for India or the U.S.-installed Karzai government to get involved in destabilizing Pakistan without nod from Washington. Also, and unlike London, Washington refuses to designate the Balochistan Liberation Army a terrorist organization. The unusually hostile campaign that the U.S. media launched against Pakistan throughout 2007 is also cited as proof that a weakened Pakistan is part of the U.S. strategy. Since there is no doubt the quality of the evidence that implicates the Indians and the Karzai government, the suspicions in Pakistan about the U.S. role stand unchanged.

## CONCLUSION

Whatever the U.S. role, it is a fact that, by early 2008, India had made important progress in its long cherished desire to punish Pakistan for not abandoning its claim over Kashmir. The post 9/11 uncertainty in Afghanistan, and the rise to power in Kabul of longtime old friends of New Delhi, provided Pakistan's antagonists in both capitals an opportunity to punish Islamabad for supporting the Taliban. The positions of both New Delhi and Karzai's Kabul are malicious and vengeful to say the least. Islamabad had taken pains to make clear to the post-9/11 government in Kabul, on numerous occasions, that the pre-9/11 chapter has been closed. Pakistan played a crucial role in ending the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Islamabad is also credited with ensuring that close to three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan participated in electing President Hamid Karzai and gave the whole election process a much needed credibility. Since 2002, the Pakistanis have been underlying the message that new realities after 9/11 required all sides in the region to move ahead with a new spirit of regional cooperation. A similar attitude was adopted in Islamabad toward New Delhi. The new U.S. policy of 'de-hyphenating' its relationship with both Pakistan and India also meant some form of reduction in the strategic competition between the two countries. Or at least that was the impression in Islamabad. All of these factors appear to have contributed to Pakistan letting down its guard in good faith while the Indians and elements in the Karzai government were busy in plotting unrest in Pakistan's western regions. The end result is that, before 9/11, Pakistan faced off India from the east. As of early 2008, Pakistan faces the Indian threat from the east and the west. The post-9/11 Pak-U.S. alliance has not met Pakistan's strategic interests at all.

[CONCLUDED]



## Footnotes:

1. BRASSTACKS is an independent Pakistani think tank that produces restricted situation reports and policy and threat assessment briefs for corporate, diplomatic and government clients. Web site: [www.brasstacks.biz](http://www.brasstacks.biz)

2. Dawn, Pakistan, 23 Sept. 2007, 'U.S. urges India to avoid Pakistan-centric policies' by Anwar Iqbal in Washington, D.C.

3. Apparently, the document was of limited circulation. The authors shared it with B. Raman, a former director of RAW and currently heading the Institute of Tropical Studies in Chennai. If further work has been done on the document, it was not made public. After an extensive search, the document was found posted in its entirety on one Indian Web site, and partially on another one. Both sites are forums used by Indian analysts. The two sites are [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/idr/vol\\_16\(2\)/kasturi.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/idr/vol_16(2)/kasturi.htm), and <http://www.stratmag.com/issueNov-1/page07.htm>. The postings at both sites date back to 2000. The document does not appear to have been published anywhere else after this date.

4. By late 2007, barring the President, the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Minister, almost all the senior officials who take questions on Afghanistan, terrorism or foreign policy explicitly accused India of involvement in widespread terrorism in Pakistan during that year. The accusers included the federal information minister, the federal interior minister, the governors of both Balochistan and NWFP, police officials in both provinces, and the spokesperson of the Pakistan Foreign Office.

5. See Pakistan's Collapse, Our Problem, by Frederick W. Kagan and Michael O'Hanlon, The New York Times, Nov. 18, 2007. This op-ed piece was the proverbial icing on the cake of the disinformation campaign in the U.S. media. Another example is Drawn and Quartered, New York Times, Feb. 1, 2008, by Selig Harrison. For the first time in the U.S.-Pakistani relationship, an organized campaign was launched in the U.S. media where arguments were made for restructuring the Pakistani state into a loose federation and the need to put American boots on the ground in Pakistan.

6. Pakistanis here refers to all Muslims in pre-Pakistan India. Pakistani identity is largely ideological and historical since Pakistan is the legitimate inheritor of the now defunct Muslim India, including Mughal India, which existed before the advent of the British colonialists. According to one loose interpretation, the word 'Pakistani' historically refers to everything Muslim in the Indian subcontinent. While no single ethnicity is referred to as Pakistani, in 1947 the identity encompassed the largely martial races of Bengal and present-day Pakistan.

7. In reality, it is the Israelis who came to India's rescue in Kargil. The U.S. intervention in favor of India was limited to diplomatic pressure on the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan. See the interview with Mark Sofer, Israel's ambassador to India, Outlook Magazine, Feb. 2008.

8. The Indian Strategy To Dismember Pakistan: From End of Kargil to The Present; an analysis, ThePakistanThinkTank.org, Aug. 2007, <http://www.pakistanthinktank.org/default.php/p/articles/pk/366>

9. The quote is taken from a letter dated Dec. 13, 2005, written by Indian Sikh activists to Hon. Edolphus Towns, member U.S. House of Representatives from NY. Inderjit Singh Jaijee, Politics of Genocide: Punjab 1984-1994 (Chandigarh: Baba Publishers, 1995).

10. RAW and Bangladesh, Mohammad Zainal Abideen, 1995, Dhaka.

11. [www.hindunet.com](http://www.hindunet.com)

12. Dawn newspaper, 31 Dec. 2007. [www.dawn.com.pk](http://www.dawn.com.pk)

13. Hindutva and Zionsim: Comprador States of Pentagon, Inc., Vijay Prashad, ZMagazine, <http://www.zmag.org/bios/homepage.cfm?authorID=81>

14. The Plan To Topple Pakistan Military, 19 Nov. 2007, [http://www.ahmedquraishi.com/latest\\_col.php?id=6](http://www.ahmedquraishi.com/latest_col.php?id=6)

15. Quote: "The Bench observed that the organized and planned activities of these miscreants lent credence to a recent article, written by Ahmed Quraishi, The Plan to Topple Pakistani Military," The Full Bench of the Lahore High Court, 6 Dec. 2007, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=84844>

16. Pakistan Foreign Office weekly briefing, Islamabad, 1 Oct. 2007.
17. [http://www.ahmedquraishi.com/latest\\_col.php?id=6](http://www.ahmedquraishi.com/latest_col.php?id=6)
18. Data collected in Sept. 2006, released by the provincial government of Balochistan.
19. Widely cited by Pakistani officials in background briefings to Pakistani journalists.
20. Report by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, by Dr. Amin Tarzi, 1 Sept. 2006, <http://www.afgha.com/?q=node/988>
21. Pakistan's Rise to Grace, by Happymon Jacob, 24 March 2007, [www.orfonline.org](http://www.orfonline.org).
22. US elevates Pakistan to regional kingpin, by M. K. Bhadrakumar, 27 Jan. 2007, Asia Times, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/IA27Df02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IA27Df02.html)
23. BRASSTACKS, [www.brasstacks.biz](http://www.brasstacks.biz). This report was made available to this author.
24. The secret part of the Indo-Israel defense ties will remain a secret' by Seema Sirohi, Outlook magazine, Feb. 2008, New Delhi, p.36.
25. Source prefers not to remain anonymous.
26. [http://www.ahmedquraishi.com/article\\_detail.php?id=252](http://www.ahmedquraishi.com/article_detail.php?id=252)

## **PROF. PERVAIZ IQBAL CHEEMA**

**(PAKISTAN)**

Dr. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema was born at Sialkot and was initially educated at Sialkot, later on he moved to Government College, Lahore where he completed his Master's in History. He also did Master's in Political Science from Punjab University, Certificate in Peace Research and International Relations from Oslo University (Norway), Diploma in International Relations from Vienna University (Austria), M. Litt. in Strategic Studies from Aberdeen University (U.K.) and Ph.D. from Quaid-i-Azam University (Pakistan).

Dr. Cheema has been a teacher for almost 28 years both inside the country (Pakistan) as well as abroad. Inside Pakistan he has taught at Government College (Lahore), Pakistan Administrative Staff College (Lahore) and Quaid-i-Azam University, (Islamabad). Abroad he has worked in various capacities like Research Fellow, Senior Fulbright Scholar, Visiting Scholar etc. for Australian National University (Australia), School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University (USA), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, (Singapore), and ACDIS, University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign (USA).

As a Visiting Lecturer, he has also delivered and still continues to deliver lectures at many professional and training institutions including National Defence College (Rawalpindi), Command and Staff College (Quetta), Joint Staff College (Rawalpindi), Foreign Service Training Institute (Islamabad), Information Services Academy (Islamabad), Allama Iqbal Open University (Islamabad), Pakistan Administrative Staff College (Renamed as National School of Public Policy, Lahore), Intelligence Bureau Academy etc.

Till July 1995 Dr. Cheema was working as a Professor of International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan and in July 1995 he started working for the Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan in the capacity of a Director General, Academy of Educational Planning and Management. From November 1996 to September 2000 Dr. Cheema worked as a Professorial Iqbal Fellow at South Asia Institute, Heidelberg

University, Germany. During his 19 years stay at Quaid-i-Azam University; Dr. Cheema served as the Chairman of International Relation's Department as well as Defence and Strategic Studies Department for more than 14 years. Since Oct.2000, Dr. Cheema has been working in the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) as its President.

Dr. Cheema is also a scholar of international repute. His articles have regularly appeared both in National as well as International Academic Journals, Popular Magazines and daily Newspapers. He has published more than 100 research articles and over 500 other general articles/columns etc. In addition, Dr. Cheema has authored many books and monographs including the following;

# **THE INDIA DOCTRINE**

## **(1947-2007)**

### **The Ongoing Kashmir Dispute and Pakistan-India Relations**

#### **Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema**

A simple glance at the Indo-Pak relations clearly indicates that the major source of their mutual hostilities is the continuing conflict over the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan's frustration stems from its inability to influence India to hold the UN approved plebiscite in the past and the future did not auger well either. Until recently India has been extremely sensitive over any reference to the Kashmir dispute as such references depict an ugly picture of broken promises and unfulfilled pledges which, in turn, hurt their pride. An injured Indian pride often reacts strangely and sometimes even contemplates punitive measures. However it needs to be stressed here that since advent of 21st Century attitudes seemed to have been considerably improved and references to Kashmir now appear to be taken in stride quite comfortably.

Judged by any yardstick it is quite clear that Kashmir has played a dominant role in shaping the two countries' foreign policies, which have been remarkably divergent. Acting together, India and Pakistan could expect to exercise quite a substantial, as well as useful, influence in international affairs, especially in matters relating to the interests of Asia, with which their own future is inseparably linked. This was however not to be the case. For the feelings of mistrust and hostility between India and Pakistan is perhaps nowhere more prominent than in the conduct of their foreign affairs; mutual fear and suspicion have conditioned the whole international outlook of the two nations.

Even after the passage of 60 years, the Kashmir dispute still continues to occupy a paramount position in Indo-Pak relations and it has abundantly become clearer that without its resolution, the peace of south Asia would continue to remain an illusive commodity. To comprehend properly the significance of the issue, one needs to understand all shades of the ongoing Kashmir dispute- more specifically how the dispute originated, what are the claims of the

involved parties, what developments have taken place so far which reflect the changing dynamics. The paper initially discusses the origin and nature of the Kashmir dispute along with highlighting the carefully contrived policies of the both countries followed by a discussion on the internationalization of the dispute. Finally the paper focuses on the new developments that have impacted upon the dispute and the current status of Indo-Pak relations.

## I

The seeds of the Kashmir dispute were sown at the time of the partition of the subcontinent into Pakistan and India and British Viceroy Louis Mountbatten's role in securing accession of most of the princely States to India, disregarding, when necessary, the principles he himself had laid down governing the processes of partition. Technically the fundamental principle of accession was that power to accede to one or the other of the new dominions was vested in the personal decision of the ruler but it was also recognized that the decision of the ruler should be governed by considerations of geographic contiguity to one of the dominions, composition of the population and above all by the wishes of the people. The Indians claim that since Maharaja had acceded to India and later the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir ratified the accession, therefore Kashmir had become an integral part of Indian Union.<sup>1</sup> Much later, the Indians claim that a resolution was passed by their parliament recognizing Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Union.

India insisted upon grabbing Junagadh and Hyderabad, because of the Hindu majority population in these states, despite the fact that the ruler of Junagadh opted for Pakistan and the ruler of Hyderabad preferred independent status. By this criterion, Kashmir should have automatically joined Pakistan. But, in the case of Kashmir, India applied a different criterion by maneuvering to obtain territorial contiguity with the State and securing the consent of the Maharajah to join India. Once the Maharajah had supposedly signed the instrument of accession, India relegated the principles of self-determination and geographic contiguity to a secondary position and pushed the legalistic approach to the forefront.

Pakistan claims that her stand on Kashmir is not motivated by any considerations of territorial ambition, and that she asked for nothing more than the extension to Kashmir of the principles that were enunciated by Lord Mountbatten in his address to the gathering of the rulers of states. The principles included the considerations for geographic proximity and the aspiration of the people of the state. Further, pointing out that India had justified her annexation of both Junagadh and Hyderabad on the ground that their inhabitants desired to join the Indian Union, Pakistan demands that India should permit the people of Kashmir to decide their future through an internationally supervised plebiscite. To the holding of such a plebiscite, Pakistan argues, India is officially committed through the Indian Government's repeated pledges to Pakistan as well as the United Nations.

On January 1, 1948, under Article 35 of the UN Charter (Pacific Settlement of Disputes), India took the case before the Security Council charging Pakistan with assisting the tribesmen and other invaders to violate her sovereignty. Interestingly India did not file the case under UN articles dealing with acts of aggression but insisted in the ensuing debate that Pakistan be declared as an aggressor which UN refuse to do. Pakistan lodged a counter complaint accusing India of the organized genocide of Muslims in East Punjab, Delhi and other places in India, the forcible occupation of Junagadh, and the well-planned action taken by India to secure the accession of Kashmir by fraud and violence.

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1. Both scholars and officials in various parts of the world have frequently questioned the issue of legal position of accession and raised many intriguing questions that require academic investigation. Was Kashmir invaded before the signing of accession instrument? Did Maharaja put off the signing and permitted a reference to the instrument of accession? Did Maharaja ever sign the instrument of accession? For detailed discussion see Alastair Lamb *Birth of a Tragedy: Kashmir 1947* (Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, U.K.:Roxford Books, 1994) pp.81-103



The UN Security Council, having heard both parties at length, passed two resolutions, one on 17th January 1948 asking parties involved not to aggravate the situation but to do everything to improve it, and the second on 20th January 1948, which established a mediatory Commission eventually to be known as the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP). The UNCIP went to the area and after lengthy consultations with both India and Pakistan passed two resolutions - the resolution of 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949. These resolutions were accepted by both India and Pakistan and endorsed by the Security Council.<sup>2</sup>

While recognizing that a vast majority of Kashmiri people are the followers of Islam, India justifies her possession of Kashmir on the basis of the Maharaja's instrument of accession, of which the legality and validity cannot be questioned, least of all by Pakistan, since she, India emphasizes, had shown no hesitation to accept the accession of the Nawab of Junagadh whose more than eighty per cent subjects were Hindus. As regards her undertaking to ascertain the Kashmiris' will through a plebiscite, India claims that she promised to do so "long before" the dispute was referred to the Security Council. Hence it was a promise "to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and not to Pakistan or United Nations and as such it does not involve any international commitment as far as the validity of accession is concerned". Still, although India was prepared to fulfill her promise to the people of Kashmir, the holding of a plebiscite was constantly obstructed by Pakistan's refusal to withdraw her troops from such parts of the State as were under her occupation. In the circumstances, India had no alternative but to let the Kashmiris decide their future through a "duly elected representative body", the Constituent Assembly, which, meeting on 17 November 1956, confirmed the States permanent accession to India. This being its people's voluntary verdict, Kashmir's accession to India is therefore final, complete, perfect and irrevocable".<sup>3</sup> Since then the Kashmiris have been expressing their desire through regularly held elections.

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2. See G.W. Chaudhury, *Pakistan's Relations with India 1947-1966* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966), pp.68-75. Also see S.M. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1973)

Pakistan of course does not accept the arguments advanced by India, and most other members of the United Nations thereon generally share her attitude. The Maharaja, it is pointed out, was in no legal position to execute the instrument of accession on 26 October, 1947, because two days previously his subjects had successfully ousted him from Kashmir, when they established the Azad (Free) Kashmir on 24 October. His decision to join India was therefore of a doubtful validity and as such could not be compared to the accession to Pakistan of the Nawab of Junagadh, who had signed the documents of accession as both the de-facto and de-jure ruler of his state. Furthermore, the Maharaja's accession to India violated the standstill agreement between Kashmir and Pakistan whereby; Pakistan was made responsible for Kashmir communications, as well as defense and foreign affairs.<sup>4</sup> This agreement, Pakistan claims, had never been repudiated and therefore was a bar to the subsequent accession of the State to India.

Thus pleading the invalidity of the Maharaja's accession, Pakistan maintains that the dispute should only be resolved through an impartial plebiscite because the said accession was meant to be "purely provisional and temporary until such time as the will of the people could be ascertained through a referendum"<sup>5</sup>. This was reiterated by the Government of India vide their White Paper of 1948, along with a special proviso to the Instrument of Accession in which the promise to hold a referendum was addressed, in Mr. Nehru's own words, "not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world".<sup>6</sup> The promise was emphatically repeated from national and international platforms and was successively renewed in the Indian Prime Minister's communications on Kashmir with the Prime Minister of Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> Thus India, the Pakistanis stress, is wrong in suggesting that she never gave any international commitment regarding the holding of a plebiscite.

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3. Chauhan, B.R.; Kashmir: its place in the Indian Union. Distributed by the Indian High Commission, London, and p. 13. No Date.

4. Khan, M.M.R.: The United Nations and Kashmir (Djakarata: J.B. Walters'. Groningen, 1955), p. 84.

5. Sheikh Abdullah "Kashmir, India and Pakistan" in International Affairs (R.I.I.A), April 1965, p. 529.

As regards the Indian allegations that the holding of plebiscite was made impossible by Pakistan's refusal to withdraw her troops from Azad Kashmir, the Pakistanis point out that they have always advocated a mutual withdrawal or reduction of troops on both sides of the then cease fire and now LOC (Line of Control).<sup>8</sup> An obvious sine qua non-for a genuinely impartial plebiscite, the Pakistani stand on the matter was indeed endorsed by the various United Nations mediators on Kashmir.<sup>9</sup>

Pakistan was not alone in dismissing India's claim that she has already redeemed her promise to the people of Kashmir who were allowed to express their opinion through an elected Assembly. For it is generally recognized that the Kashmiris will could not be reliably ascertained in a 'controlled' election in which 75 seats were contested by 75 candidates, all nominated by the ruling Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, which was openly pro India. Not surprisingly' in a resolution on 30 March' 1951, the Security Council affirmed that the convening of this Assembly and any action that the Assembly might take to determine the future of the entire State or any part thereto would not be in accordance with the principles already agreed upon namely, that the will of the people was to be expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. It was further confirmed by the UN Security Council resolution of 24th Jan. 1957 that 'the final disposition of the state will be in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.'<sup>10</sup>

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6. See the Indian Prime Minister's broadcast to the nation, (All India Radio, 2nd November, 1947).

7. See India's Solemn Pledges on Kashmir, Department of Film and Publication, Government, of Pakistan, 1965

8. The latest offer for mutual withdrawal of troops has been made by President Musharraf in the wake of the earthquake that hit both IJK and Azad Kashmir. For details see 'LOC opening and demilitarization' by Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema in The Post, Nov.8, 2005.

9. For details see Joseph Korbel: Danger in Kashmir (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

Cognizant of the dangerous consequences of free plebiscite, India began to inject all kinds of hurdles with the objective of delaying the holding of the plebiscite. Contiguous to Pakistan geographically, socially and ethnically, Kashmir had, at the time, a Muslim majority of nearly eighty per cent. It was expected that the people of Kashmir would opt for Pakistan. Hence India's determination not to allow the holding of the plebiscite.

Apart from her fear of its more or less predictable outcome, plebiscite was and still is also unacceptable to India for a number of other reasons. To allow Kashmir to secede could prove to be the first fatal step towards the 'Balkanisation' of India. It would serve as a remarkable morale booster for many other freedom movements including the Naga and the Mizo people, who would fully exploit the precedent of Kashmir to strengthen their own aspirations for separation from the Indian Union. Again, solely attributable to the presence of a large Muslim preponderance in the State, plebiscite would inevitably inflame the communal situation in the rest of India, where millions of innocent and peaceful Muslims would find themselves exposed to serious suffering and victimization. Such a revival of the Hindu Muslim antagonism India could not tolerate in the interest of her secularism, which, the Indians emphasize, was the only viable system for their country.

Many Pakistanis do not accept the argument that Kashmir's secession would endanger India's solidarity and secularism. Unlike the Kashmiris who can rely on Pakistan's continued support of their cause, the Nagas and the Mizos cannot hope to get any tangible, help from outside. Not to speak of actually assisting them in their struggle for their rights, few governments have bothered even to comment on their sufferings, which they have repeatedly experienced as a result of India's ruthless punitive operations. It is therefore highly doubtful that Kashmir's separation from India would bring the Naga and the Mizo aspirations any closer to realization. As regards the contention that the holding of a plebiscite in Kashmir would revive the Hindu Muslim animosity and rioting in India, one cannot but dismiss it with indignation. The communal riots with Muslims as their prime victims

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10. See Appendix VIII in *Kashmir Dispute: An International Law Perspective* by Ijaz Hussain, (Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, 1998), p.263.

have already become a regular feature in the post partition India. The latest communal riots took place in the state of Gujarat in 2002 in which reportedly more than 2000 Muslims were killed. Incredible though it may sound, the Indian Muslims only respite from riots came during the 1965 India Pakistan War over Kashmir.<sup>11</sup>

As regards the argument that accession of Kashmir was essential for the preservation of India's secular character, many Pakistanis curtly dismiss this argument on the grounds that heavy reliance on the retention of Kashmir makes the concept of secularism look extremely weak which, they believe, is not at all true. Many Indians proudly claim that their country is secular which derives its strength from the constitutional articles rather than from the forcible retention of Kashmir.<sup>12</sup> Admittedly the word secular was inserted in the preamble of the Indian constitution after the 42nd amendment in 1976, the concept in fact derived support from many of the constitutional articles which were part of the constitution right from its birth.

## II

The events of 1971 and the consequent dismemberment of Pakistan radically altered the power balance in the area. The Indian victory not only demonstrated India's military superiority but also provided the long awaited psychological boost for an average Indian to minimize, if not to altogether obviate, his incessant obsession with Pakistan.<sup>13</sup> This psychological fall out of Indian victory in 1971 substantially helped Indian decision makers to undertake a realistic approach towards Pakistan. The return of a more positive response in Indian reflexes vis a vis Pakistani moves produced a relatively relaxed Indian approach towards Pakistan. Thus Indian attitude at Simla was much more realistic than at other similar past encounters.

Pakistan went to Simla with the knowledge and awareness that all the trump cards were held by India: 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war, large tracts of occupied Pakistani territory, and all the psychological advantages accruing from military victory and the dismemberment of Pakistan. Yet Pakistan was able to secure the agreement without conceding too much. Perhaps the major concession on Pakistan's part

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11. Myrdal, G.: *Asian Drama*, Vol. 1, (London: The Penguin Press, 1968), p. 256.

was her acceptance of the transformation of the ceasefire line into the line of control. Initially India stressed that the ceasefire line should be transformed into an international boundary, while Pakistan argued for a return to the U.N. supervised ceasefire line as it existed before 1971. The compromise between two extreme positions produced the 'Line of Control.' Although "para IV of the Simla declared that in Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the time of Ceasefire of 17 December, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side," it is fairly evident that that the Indian position over Kashmir was strengthened.<sup>14</sup> Not only was the transformation of the U.N. ceasefire line into the line of control an important gain for the Indians but it also provided a new basis for the Indians to delink the new line from the old line along with its accompanying commitments. Besides, the new line also permitted them to retain a few strategic posts in the Kargil area which they had captured during the 1971 war. In view of India's military victory and her extreme negotiating stance, for Pakistan to secure a moderate agreement which did not compromise her basic position on Kashmir was certainly a great achievement especially when one realizes that Pakistan was negotiating from an extremely weak position. The proviso that the line 'shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side' was of course meant more for internal consumption as both sides do not recognize each others positions. But it does have an important political impact for containing the conflict. Pakistan still maintains that she is committed to her demand for a plebiscite and India still argues that there is no problem to solve.

Another important stipulation in the agreement is that 'neither side shall seek to alter it (the Line of Control) unilaterally irrespective of mutual difference and legal interpretations' and that 'both sides further undertake to refrain from the threats or the use of force in

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12. See 'The erosion of Indian secularism' in *The News*, March 17, 2002.

13. 'Indias and pakistan: Prospects for Détente' by Mohammad Ayoob in *Pacific Community*, Vol.8, Oct 1976, pp.155-58

violation of this line.<sup>15</sup> Thin renunciation of the use of force, as far as Kashmir is concerned, is another form of a (limited) no war pact for which the Indians had been trying for quite sometime.

Undoubtedly a major source of Indo Pak antagonism is still the continuing dispute over Kashmir despite the existence of Simla Agreement. Pakistan's frustrations stem from the increasing realization that she has not been able to influence India to hold the plebiscite in Kashmir in the past despite the employment of all kinds of available means, and the future does not seem to hold much promise in this regard. India has become extremely sensitive over any reference to Kashmir. Such references depict an ugly picture of broken promises and commitments which in turn hurts her pride. An injured Indian ego often reacts strongly and sometime even punitive measures are contemplated.

Compared to India, Pakistan has been extremely consistent in its Kashmir Policy. With the passage of time and with the advent of developments of even lesser significance, India has changed its tactics. For both sides Kashmir dispute is a complex issue that has exercised overwhelming influence over their policies since partition. For India Kashmir is a Muslim majority state whose ruler opted to accede to India. India does not apply the same principle to Junagadh whose ruler opted to accede to Pakistan but India forcibly occupied the state. The current intensity of freedom struggle of the Kashmiris is termed as Pakistani inspired pursuit rather than acknowledging it as a genuine expression of Kashmiri's desire for self-determination. For Pakistan Kashmir has become a symbol of Indian highhandedness and broken pledges. All Pakistan wants and insists is that Kashmiris are allowed to exercise their right of self determination under a UN supervised plebiscite in accordance with the resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949. The intensification of freedom struggle which the Indians call it an uprising during the 90s and early 21st Century is viewed as the expression of extreme discontentment of the

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14. Shelton Kodikar, 'Strategic factors in Interstate Relations in South Asia', Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defense No.19, (The Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1979), p.7.

15. *ibid*

**Kashmiris and renewed assertion to secure their legitimate right of self-determination.**

Indian interpretation of the current intensification of freedom struggle is that it has been externally fuelled - more specifically they tend to place the blame on Pakistan. It is intriguing that most Pakistanis and Azad Kashmiri leaders accuse the Pakistani leadership, for not doing even the basic minimum in the area of supplying weapons or even providing the training whereas the Indians tend to over credit the Pakistanis. Apart from one particular political party, which does not enjoy much electoral support, neither the Government nor other political parties were indulging in this type of pursuits. However it is encouraging and it needs to be mentioned here that almost all political parties are unanimous in extending their political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri's freedom struggle.

Compared to India, which has systematically eroded Kashmir's special status it gave to the State of J&K, Pakistan did not absorb either the Northern Areas or the Azad Kashmir. Determined not to allow Kashmir's possible accession to Pakistan and to retain it as a part of the Indian Union, India undertook series of well calculated moves to initially erode the special status it gave to J&K under the Constitutional articles and then merge the state completely into the Indian Union.<sup>16</sup> British surrender of their impartial role in partition processes facilitated the Indians to gain the necessary foothold, initially.

Over the last 20 years Pakistan has successfully managed to internationalize the Kashmir dispute. A three pronged approach adopted by Pakistan facilitated the process of internationalization. To begin with, Pakistan allowed the local as well as the international press including the Indian media to cover the consequences of the crisis on this side of the LOC. All interested visitors and human right activists were and still are allowed to visit AJK and talk to the unfortunate victims of the crisis. The second aspect of this approach consisted of Pakistani government's efforts to place the dispute before a number of international organizations including NAM, OIC, UNCHR etc. The third aspect was to send delegations consisting of parliamentarians thinkers, analysts, journalists to various countries with a view to educate those governments. The establishment of



Kashmir Committee was another development, which did contribute enormously towards Pakistan's Kashmir Policy.

Five other factors somewhat inadvertently facilitated the process of internationalization of the dispute. First, many research organizations, foundations, institutes and universities all over the world began to hold seminars and conferences on the Kashmir crisis. Second, many Kashmiri people living outside South Asia began to step up their efforts to educate the public in those countries. Third, many marches were organized to cross the LOC over the last two decades which, in turn, accelerated the process of internationalization. Fourth, the negative attitude of the Indians government with regard to open Kashmir for international journalists and representatives of various human rights groups further facilitated the process of internationalization of the dispute. Five and perhaps the important was inadvertent internationalization of the dispute by acquisition of nuclear weapon status by both Indian and Pakistan.

Compared to Pakistan's successful pursuit of internationalization of the dispute, India tried to paint Pakistani pursuits as efforts directed to highlight the Islamic character of the dispute. Indeed these were crude attempts to divert the attention from the real issues. The employment of terms like international Islamic Mujahideen tended to generate the impression that some kind of Islamic conspiracy exists which is continuously working against the established order.

There exist two sets of approaches. One consists of military and political approaches and the other entails bilateral and multilateral routes. The Kashmir dispute is essentially a political dispute requiring a political approach if the parties involved are genuinely interested in resolving it. Until the advent of current peace process India opted to employ a military approach. While the freedom fighters claim that they have been compelled to take up arms by the state government's and India's policies, the Indian government opted for military

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16. For detailed analysis of moves directed to absorb Kashmir into the Indian Union see chapter entitled 'India's Kashmir Policy' by Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema in Perspectives on Kashmir edited by Dr.K.F. Yousaf (Islamabad: Pakistan Forum, 1994) pp.97-118

approach right from the outset of the crisis. Not only Kashmir had remained under Governor's/President's rule for quite sometimes, half hearted attempts to introduce political approach were made periodically. Whenever Indian efforts to employ political approach failed, they immediately accused Pakistan rather than looking inward.

The government of Pakistan frequently expressed its willingness for a dialogue focused on Kashmir exclusively, the Kashmiri umbrella organization APHC also repeatedly expressed its willingness to talk to the Indian government but India's negativism effectively impeded any progress in this direction.

#### IV

Dialogue: Ostensibly both governments of India and Pakistan have repeatedly expressed their desire for a dialogue on Kashmir. India did not want to hold a dialogue with Kashmiri leaders as it relegated them as militants. As far as dialogue with Pakistan was concerned, Indian leaders have periodically demonstrated a tendency to express willingness but would refrain from demonstrating even a small gesture of good will in order to give the necessary boost to the process of initiating a dialogue. Mr. Vajpayee had expressed his desire to normalize relations with Pakistan on April 18, 2003 to which the counterpart in Pakistan responded quickly and positively.

It seems pertinent to stress here that dialogues between the Indians and the Pakistanis have taken place from time to time in which many issues including the Kashmir dispute have been discussed. The Simla Agreement, the Lahore Declaration and Agra Summit all bear testimony to periodic bilateral discussions. Pakistan goes to such dialogues with a view to resolve the disputes whereas the Indians frequently use the occasions either to extract Pakistani consent to cleverly devised Indian solutions or further delay the resolution by injecting additional complications.

A serious, if it can be called serious, effort to initiate a process of dialogue aimed to resolve the Kashmir dispute was made during January 1994 when the two foreign secretaries met in Islamabad to discuss Kashmir. The talk resulted in an anticipated deadlock. As

expected both sides accused the other for failure of the talks. Blaming Pakistan for the failure of January 94 bilateral talks, the Indian Foreign Secretary, at the time, Mr. J.N. Dixit expressed his governments willingness to resume talks within the next four months. The former Pakistani Foreign Secretary Mr. Shaharyar Khan who was leading the Pakistani side clearly and firmly highlighted that there was neither any progress on Kashmir nor the Indian side appeared to be equipped with any specific proposals. Obviously it meant that the Indians were not really interested in making any progress with regard to the resolution of the crisis. They were only keen to appear to the world that India is not only always ready for bilateral negotiations but frequently takes initiatives to resume such talks.

Another somewhat similar attempt was made in 2001 when the Indian Prime Minister invited Pakistani President for Summit level dialogue at Agra in May 2001. While Pakistani President's candid and logical approach at Agra earned him widespread and positive media coverage, the Summit was unable to agree upon a road map for the resolution of Kashmir dispute. On the contrary Pakistan's acknowledged sincerity to resolve the dispute was not only misinterpreted by the Indian counterparts but they successfully sabotaged another major effort towards the desired objective of peace in the region.

The April 18, 2003 initiative by Vajpayee appeared to have reflected another sincere attempt to start the much-delayed dialogue between the two estranged neighbors. Vajpayee made his offer in Srinagar, imbuing it with great symbolism because Kashmir embodies the chief contention between them and has been the scene of major operations in all previous India Pakistan conflicts. Prime Minister Vajpayee's offer of April 18, 2003 for a dialogue with Pakistan had not only been generally welcomed by almost all the peace lovers but has also raised hopes of early resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan. However many Pakistanis could not just overlook the irresponsible and somewhat provocative statements made by some BJP cabinet members intermittently. In fact such statements began to inject doubts in their minds.

Nevertheless the majority remained optimistic and began to look forward towards anticipated positives moves from both sides.

This offer was followed by appointing High Commissioners by both India and Pakistan as the High Commissioners were recalled during the period of tension. Latter an offer was made thereafter to increase the staff strength in the respective High Commissions. The next major steps revolved around how to restore transportation and communication links. After intense negotiations the two sides managed to restore air, rail and bus links. The process of normalization was facilitated by the visits of many delegations from both sides which included parliamentarian, journalists, academics, women, labor leaders, students, businessmen etc. These steps not only succeeded in recreating the situation that existed before the attack on the Indian Parliament and the border confrontation crisis but also generated enormous goodwill. The atmosphere rapidly improved. Apart from minor setbacks, the normalization process continued to make impressive strides

The year 2004 started with two momentous developments; the successful conclusion of 12th SAARC and a Joint statement by President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee. Both leaders welcomed the steps towards normalization of relations between the two countries and expressed the hope that the positive trends set by the CBMs would be consolidated. A welcome thaw in Indo-Pak relations and we have to take this thaw forward. History is made by arriving at an agreement to take the process forward to its logical culmination'.

The Foreign Secretaries of the two countries met in Feb. 2004 and decided the procedural aspects of the composite dialogue. Cognizant of approaching Indian elections the initiation of a dialogue was postponed till after the elections. The Indian elections produced unexpected results which brought Congress coalition government in power. This of course implied that new team has to be installed. Because of the change in government the initial dates for meeting were slightly advanced.

From June onward several meetings dealing with contentious issues were held during the year 2004. Although the first round of composite dialogue did not produce tangible results but the overall atmosphere considerably improved. It needs to be mentioned that the most successful meeting was one that was dealing with people to people contact. As far as other issues and dispute were concerned not only

both sides began to fully comprehend other's sensitivities and limitations but some marginal progress was made.

Given the complex nature of issues and disputes along with the background of long history of antagonistic relationship, to expect quick results certainly seems to be an unrealistic pursuit. Since June 2004, four rounds of talks have taken place and some progress in areas like people to people contacts, trade and CBMs have been registered but no progress has so far been registered in conflict areas like Siachin, Sir Creek, Water dispute and above all the Kashmir dispute.

## V

India and Pakistan cannot afford to remain hostile forever. They cannot change the geography but they can certainly adjust their foreign policies in order to move towards the much-desired normalcy. Similarly the Kashmir dispute cannot be whisked away. It must be solved in order to make South Asia a peaceful region. The past is filled with series of broken pledges, failed efforts and missed opportunities. 'We can't forget the past, but neither should we be the prisoners of the past. The past has been strewed with booby-traps on the ground, and high-tension wires in the air. We want to put an end to it. The relations will be based on trust, not mistrust, on frankness, not fear', asserted the former Foreign Minister Natwar Singh.<sup>17</sup> Indeed this was a positive approach. But the doubts still persist whether or not the two parties will be able to move forward especially on the Kashmir dispute.<sup>18</sup> On one hand the incumbent Indian Foreign Minister said that we should not be hostage to the past but on the other he suggested Simla Agreement, Lahore Declaration and Joint statement as the guide-panacea.<sup>19</sup> However it needs to be mentioned here that on Pakistan's initiative, a complete ceasefire was ordered on LOC, which still holds.

Since April 2003 the situation has considerably improved. Not only both countries have restored all communication and transportation links that were discontinued during the period of troops confrontation but have also

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17. For details see Dawn, June 2, 2004.

successfully concluded the 12th SAARC Summit at Islamabad. Perhaps the most important development was the signing of Joint Statement by President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee. As a consequence of Joint Statement the initial, though a procedural, round of talk took place during Feb.2004. The substantive talks were postponed because of the Indian general elections. New dates were given to start substantive dialogue on various issues.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps the most important pre-requisite to resume the dialogue was to take full cognizant of ground realities and be prepared to seriously consider a face saving devise or a compromise wherever it was deemed the only option.<sup>21</sup> Four prerequisites seem to be in order and deserve to be analyzed; creating conducive atmosphere, recognizing ground realities, establishing principled framework and accommodating sensitivities. All of these prerequisites, properly observed, could contribute substantively towards the resolution of even the most complex disputes.

Compared to India, Pakistan's approach seems far more realistic. It is somewhat evident that without the participation of the Kashmiris a workable solution is not going to be attained quickly. No solution is going to be a viable unless it has full support of the people of Kashmir. While the Indians need to de-link the Kashmir dispute from other insurgencies which are not really the product of partition processes of 1947 and recognize the fact that without the resolution of the Kashmir dispute South Asia is unlikely to experience real peace, the Pakistanis should give serious considerations to the likely impact of all the solutions that may be tabled for discussions. Serious commitments to assess realistically the likely adverse impact a proposal can have on the other party is essential in order to generate the requisite level of impression that desired sensitivities are being accommodated.

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18. Many Pakistanis are beginning to entertain notions that India wants progress sans Kashmir issue. See The Nation, May 29, 2004.

19. See South Asia Monitor, 31 May 2004.  
<http://www.southasiamonitor.org/diplomacy/2004/may/24dip1.html>  
later the Indian Foreign Minister telephone his Pakistani counterpart and stressed to bury the past. See The Nation, June 4, 2004.

In view of the complex nature of the ongoing Kashmir dispute, it seems imperative that both India and Pakistan should start exploring the possibilities of considering seriously the employment of 'a face saving device'; a device that could produce a win-win situation. To pave the way for such a device both India and Pakistan need to publicly express willingness to even step down from their declared positions if the negotiations so warranted. In this connection the formula advanced by President Musharraf could facilitate the process.

During his American visit President Musharraf unveiled four-stage formula to subject the complex Kashmir dispute to a process, which may lead to its resolution. Emphasizing step-by-step approach, the President stressed that the first step would be the initiation of a dialogue. The second stage implies the recognition of the Kashmir dispute as the central issue that needed resolution. The third step would be the elimination of whatever is unacceptable to India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. The final stage revolves around efforts to secure a win-win situation.<sup>22</sup> Later President Musharraf improvised his formula and the latest formula contains four points such as soft borders, demilitarization, self governance and joint management. This latest proposal is yet to elicit any tangible response from India.

Responding to a question regarding the possible solution, President Musharraf stated that one should only strive to initiate a process and refrain from talking about solution during initial stages of the dialogue. 'If we talk of solution now, we will not make any progress- so therefore go step by step and cross the bridge you come to the bridge'. Undoubtedly President was trying to communicate to the Indians as well as the important members of the international community that step-by-step approach could pay desired dividends.

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20. The new dates for nuclear issues are 19-20 June where as new dates for Secretary level talks are 27-28 June, 2004. *ibid.* See also *The News and The Nation*, June 2, 2004.

21. See 'Kashmir Dispute: some pre-requisite' by Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema in *The News*, Sept.2, 2001.

To produce a win-win situation especially between India and Pakistan with full knowledge of their historical baggage is not all that easy. But the very idea of win-win situation is reflective of one's earnest desire and determination to resolve the dispute. The first stage is merely the initiation of a dialogue. It is not too far fetched to assume that starting talks tend to contribute towards the improvisation of the atmosphere. Four principles are required to be adhered to in order to facilitate the process. These principles include, political will, flexibility, reciprocity, and accommodation.

There is no doubt that the leaders of both countries have already demonstrated their will to subject all disputes to some form of negotiations. However it is imperative that the demonstration of political will is periodically undertaken in order to generate the impression that the incumbent leadership fully supports the peace process. Flexibility has also been demonstrated in one form or the other. The principles of reciprocity and accommodations need to be practiced in order to find a win-win situation. If any positive action that has been undertaken by one party is not reciprocated with somewhat similar move, the chances are that the demonstrated enthusiasm would quickly dampen and eventually vanish. Such situations often provide the hardliners with welcome ammunition upon which they quickly begin to capitalize and effectively highlight the futility of the entire venture. Besides it saps the will and enthusiasm of the other party. It is imperative that all good moves are responded with similar good moves. The volume and degree of the moves may vary but some form of reciprocity must always be there.

Finally the principle of accommodation could also be very helpful. This principle mainly revolves around and aims to encourage both parties to learn to accommodate each other's sensitivities. This is indeed a very broad but very useful principle. It implies both parties need to understand each other's sensitivities and then make efforts with a view to accommodate as much as possible. It is possible that

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22. See 'Musharraf's recipe for Kashmir' by Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema in The News, July 6, 2003.



some form of conflict of interest may tread upon others' sensitivities, which may create unnecessary impediment. However if both parties are mentally aware of the need to accommodate and comprehend the significance then there are good reasons to believe that a way out of the situation may not be all that difficult.

## VI

Impediments causing unnecessary delay in resolving the Kashmir dispute are many and varied. Among them are the haunts of history, differing security perceptions, domestic dynamics, images and perceptions, internal disunity in APHC, delay in associating Kashmiris with ongoing peace process etc.

**Haunts of History:** Many writers contend that the roots of Indo Pak conflict go back to the day when Hindu Muslims clashed for the first time. Three distinct periods of history are quoted which seemed to have injected unnecessary complexities; the pre partition period, the inept partition processes, and the divergent policy pursuits following the partition. The initial argument, particularly among the Pakistani writers, revolved around that the inability of Hinduism to overwhelm Islam with its infinite reservoir of flexibility and absorbing qualities as it had already done vis-à-vis Bhuddism and Jainism left deep scars among the devoted Hindus. Islam's ability to trigger large scale conversion and its rise to power caused an injury to Brahman's sense of pride which eventually shaped the Hindu attitude towards Islam and the Muslims in South Asia.<sup>23</sup> While having been juxtaposed, the two communities (the Hindus and the Muslims) interacted with each other and even mixed with one another but they also maintained identifiable distinctiveness. Despite the conciliatory efforts of many Muslim Sufi saints along with their Hindu counterparts, the cleavage continued to widen. During the course of freedom movement the existing Hindu Muslim cleavage was transformed into Congress League rivalry. To make things more complicated, the ill planned and hurriedly prepared partition mechanism of the British contributed enormously towards conflictual cobweb. Towards the end of the British rule it seems that their policy of 'divide and rule' degenerated

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23. Hasan Askari Rizvi, *Pakistan and Geostrategic Environment*, (London: The Macmillan Press, 1993), pp.18-20

in to 'divide and run' leaving many complex issues for the successor states to sort them out.<sup>24</sup> The divergent policy pursuits after the partition further took them away from each other which seemed to have been the product of asymmetrical power balances. The three wars, of course, only further extended the existing gulf.

Deep rooted suspicions and distrust are the legacies of history with which nations have to contend with. To make things little more complicated, histories, written in both countries and the syllabus adopted in some schools seem to reflect negative images of the other. Many history books written by the Indian authors tend to project somewhat lopsided the golden periods of ancient Indian history like that of the Mauryas and the Guptas and only drastically reduced the long periods of Muslim rule of Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals to bear minimum in order to maintain some semblance of continuity but also tend to ignore the positive contributions of the Muslim rule in India. Similarly histories written in Pakistan tend to start with the advent of the Arabs rather than beginning with the ancient Indian period and leave the period of our history prior to the coming of the Arabs to the realms of archaeology. Such histories present somewhat distorted images of our rulers. A historian has to be mercilessly accurate with his facts. Unless the histories are written accurately, the lessons bequeathed would also be somewhat distorted encouraging inaccurate images of the adversaries.

**Differing Security Perceptions:** Conflict and tension also arose in South Asia because of different security perceptions and strategies adopted. The differing approaches to security could be viewed as the second most important hurdle effectively arresting the peace processes. Both India and Pakistan have legitimate security concerns which need to be acknowledged and accommodated. South Asia has an unbalanced and asymmetric power structure. The nature of incumbent imbalance and asymmetry is such that India is far

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24. See Ziring, Lawrence, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development*, (Folkestone and Colorado: Dawson, Westview, 1980) 19-40.

superior in terms of size, population, resources, and military strength compared to its neighbors. In view of this asymmetry India envisaged for itself a place of pre eminence in the area and was not only keen to assert its position but also expected to be acknowledged as such by its regional neighbors. Apprehensive about India's intentions and overwhelmed by feelings of insecurity, Pakistan joined the cold war defense alliance system with hopes and intentions to contain India on one hand and to be able to equip its own forces with qualitatively superior weaponry as it had realized that it could never match the Indians in quantitative terms on the other. Pakistan's drive towards security was misinterpreted by the Indians as her attempts to attain parity. What Pakistan was and in some sense still is striving for is not parity but merely to equip itself with a reasonable capability to defend its territorial integrity which, in fact, is a recognized right of every nation. To interpret Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities as an attempt to match Indian military strength or to attain parity is indeed ludicrous and unrealistic notion that must be brushed aside. Almost all independent smaller states living under the shadow of a bigger and ambitious neighbors that frequently acquires unfriendly postures, tend to concert with other powers or with multinational groupings in order to decrease and offset force of the pressures emanating or likely to originate from the presence of a big power in the area. Later following Sino-Indian war and consequently improved Sino-Pakistan relations which India began to dub it as some form of collusion against India further generated complications. Despite the improved Sino Indian relations especially following the signing of the troop's withdrawal treaty, Indian decision makers still employ perceived threat from China and Pakistan regularly as a major source of justification for the desired increase in allocation of resources to the defense sector. In May 1998 the Indian defense minister, in an attempt to justify the compulsions for nuclear tests, included China threat as the major contributor. Both India and Pakistan seemed to have been caught in an action reaction phenomenon. Not only the increase in one's defense budget would automatically provide sufficient justification for other to allocate increased resources but such action reaction syndrome has also been witnessed in many other areas. The latest round of buying spree of sophisticated arms by India has compelled the Pakistanis decision makers to seek viable balancing approaches. Not only it would indeed

be difficult for the Pakistanis to overlook the rapidly increasing gap in conventional capabilities but it would continue to remind the Pakistanis to seek out a practical panacea.

**Periodic Domestic Developments:** The third factor that often adversely affects the pace of normalization is the periodic domestic developments. Sometimes unforeseen developments in domestic politics can force a regime to modify the existing stances in international relations or adopt totally different policies from those that were mandated by either the previous regime or by the external considerations. Just as there exist countless examples in which attempts were and still are being made by one nation to influence the behavior of the other, history is studded with instances in which developments in domestic politics caused significant changes in foreign policy. The importance of linkage between foreign policy and domestic politics was admirably highlighted by Prime Minister Gladstone when said; 'the first condition of a good foreign policy is a good domestic policy'.<sup>25</sup> Admittedly it is not easy to define what good domestic policy is but one can still safely assume that a good domestic policy implies a reasonable level of stability and security coupled with ever increasing economic opportunities. While stability, security and economic development could help in producing a good domestic policy, three other factors seems to enjoy considerable influence that can contribute or effectively impede the desired directions of both domestic and foreign policies. These factors are ideology, images and perceptions, and public opinion.

Both India and Pakistan tend to strictly adhere to their chosen ideologies. While Pakistan tends to project its Islamic identity, India highlights its secular ideology in their respective foreign policies. Despite periodic set backs and discouraging responses of some of the Muslim countries towards Pakistani initiatives, Pakistan remained steadfast in its approach to cement closer ties with all the Muslim countries. In addition, Pakistan has also regularly expressed supportive gestures for the plight of Muslim minorities. While no government in Pakistan can afford to ignore the deliberate bashing and sufferings of the Indian Muslims, the most Indian governments have invariably viewed such Pakistani pursuits as deliberately contrived actions aimed to weaken internal unity of India. The rise of

Hindu militant nationalism has further complicated the situation in India. In fact it has made it rather difficult for secular minded ruling groups to demonstrate magnanimity because of being larger country and offer some concessions to Pakistan. Similar types of constraints also exist in Pakistan where some of the religious parties would exploit any gesture aimed to accelerate the process of normalization.

**Images and Perceptions:** Another factor that has made things somewhat complicated is the existing images and mutual perceptions. Both countries tend to entertain adverse images of each other. The Indians view the Pakistanis and some even actively try to paint them as fundamentalists who are continuously engaged to weaken the internal unity of India and see the ongoing struggle in Kashmir as part of Pakistan's designs. They refuse to accept the reality that the current movement in Kashmir is primarily the product of indigenous efforts and state government's mismanagement. No movement can last so long even with external injections unless the people themselves are not convinced in righteousness of their cause. On the other hand many Pakistanis still believe that India is still not reconciled with the creation of Pakistan and is determined to destroy it and to support their argument they tend to quote Indian involvement in the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971. Public opinion in both countries hardly contribute a substantive share on most issues of foreign affairs but vis-à-vis each other the share is exceedingly impressive. While the media, both print as well as electronic, in both countries is quite independent yet one finds their contribution more on reflecting nationalistic views rather than representing rational approaches..

With advent of the peace process, there is no doubt that the tone and manner in portraying the other is undergoing transformation but well established images and hardened attitudes would certainly take sometimes to erode.

**Inability to associate the Kashmiris:** It is my perception that no solution would be a lasting one unless the Kashmiri representatives are directly involved in discussion on the dispute. While Pakistan has

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25. Quoted in Hill, Norman L., *International Politics*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), p.199.

been consistently insisting that the time has come to associate the Kashmiris with the peace process, the Indians appeared to be taking quite sometimes in deciding and are continuously reflecting hesitancy.

## VII

For the last almost sixty one year the Kashmir dispute has been dogging Indo Pak relations causing wearisome debate with propitious arguments. Over the years the dispute has built up a set of attitudes and a way of thinking in both India and Pakistan which largely ignores the ground realities and invariably reflects the official policies. This, in turn, mortgaged their future relationships to this dispute. Unnecessarily hardened attitudes of both sides have effectively prevented any substantive strides towards its resolution.

Since both the Indian and the Pakistanis, at least at the non official levels, recognize that Kashmir is dispute that has gone on far too long and has consistently taken an unacceptably high toll of desired Indo Pak goodwill, it is indeed time to subject it to concentrated efforts aimed to secure some form of working solution. Whatever may be the interpretation of the disputants; these deserve to be accorded top priority. To ignore it or to put it far too down the list of priorities certainly implies non cooperation and could indeed further contribute towards the hardening of the attitudes. An encouraging development is that in the ongoing peace process the Kashmir dispute has not been ignored. On the contrary it has been accorded deserving attention and both sides have promised that they will continue their efforts to find an amicable solution. The Joint statements issued by leaders of the two countries at the end of each round of talks in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 reflect the determination of the two sides to carry forward the peace process and subject the Kashmir dispute to a purposeful and sincere discussion with the aim to secure a final settlement of the dispute.<sup>26</sup>

There exist many viable solutions and many regional scholars have come up with interesting panaceas which need to be seriously discussed at the official level dialogue. The Kashmir dispute requires an unending process of dialogue and at the end of each meeting the

date for the next one should be fixed. Besides the complex nature of the Kashmir dispute requires innovative and sincere approaches. Without the resolution of Kashmir dispute, not only India and Pakistan would never enjoy proper fruits of peace and cooperation but South Asia would also be deprived of much desired peaceful environment.

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26. For details see the Joint statements in Dawn, April 19, 2005 and Jan.7, 2004. Also see The News, Jan.7th.2004 and April 19, 2005.

