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EDITORIAL

Corruption is a Human Rights Issue

International law does not currently regard an act of official corruption as the violation of a human right. But as recent steps by Chinese leaders, political/security shifts in Pakistan, the EuroMaidan in Ukraine, and the Arab Spring all reflect, an international consensus is emerging that corruption is a pervasive and pernicious social problem, *structural obstacle to economic growth and threat to global security*.

Many countries have laws criminalizing corruption by government officials. But two researchers associated with a leading Washington research institution *go beyond that, saying that freedom from corruption should be a basic human right*. London Institute of South Asia fully supports this view as it sees South Asia as one of the most corrupt regions of the world. A consensus should be built that corruption is a major structural impediment to good governance and a threat to not only to national but global security. It has direct links to terrorism, poverty and social malaise. It should be recognised as global crime, violation of human rights and incorporated in the UN Charter.

Nepal and India

A country that refuses to learn from past mistakes is fated to remain on the learning curve. This is India's misfortune. The Indian mistake today in being intrusive toward its tiny northern neighbour Nepal bears similarity with the disastrous policy failure it experienced vis-à-vis its small southern neighbour Sri Lanka. This was reiterated by an eminent Indian analyst, diplomat and a former ambassador M K Bhadrakumar.

What India is seeking from Nepal is precisely what it used to demand from Sri Lanka in the past – how India's small neighbours must restructure their body polity. Nepal and Sri Lanka are unitary states and India has sought to micromanage their transition to a relatively federal system.

This constitutes blatant interference in these countries' internal affairs and, simply put, New Delhi is being prescriptive and its conduct is violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. The entire international

community is celebrating that Nepal adopted a constitution last Sunday and declared itself as a secular democratic country within a federal structure, which provides for extraordinary guarantee of “equal rights” to the weaker sections of society.

India is the solitary exception, sulking that the constitution is not “inclusive” enough, and protesting about state demarcation, citizenship and other provisions in the constitution.

This time Nepal is demanding respect, dignity and be treated as sovereign equal. Sadly Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s hypnotic charm and magic, which won the hearts and minds of Nepalese last year, has evaporated. Lt General Ashok K Mehta a retired Indian officer said India has lost the plot as its back-channel management went awry due to lack of strategic political guidance, resulting from the illusion that Mr Modi had won over Nepal for all times

India has a history of repeatedly coercing, intimidating and bullying all its neighbours but this demand of urging Nepal to amend its constitution is simply outrageous, preposterous and unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation.

Pakistan and India

Treatment meted to Pakistan by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is only a shade better than Nepal. The immediate out-of-hand dismissal of peace proposal (suggested by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif) by the Indian government has only underscored that the problem is really the India government’s apparent rejection of the very idea of talks with Pakistan.

Mr Sharif and his team have come up with four interesting points that have something for both sides. In our view the four points aimed at stabilizing the disputed region of Kashmir are worth considering.

Dawn wrote in its editorial that the mechanism has already been tried and tested and produced positive results for many years, it is a sound offer. Furthermore, to make such a call from the podium of the UN General Assembly hall and to request that the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan

step up its verifications suggests that Pakistan really does want to put a stop to the year-long violence along the LoC and the Working Boundary.

While the demilitarization of the disputed region and the withdrawal of troops from Siachen are perhaps longer-term goals that can only be realized once a full-fledged peace process is resumed, they do articulate a vision for what a normalized region could look like. All peace loving people should be concerned with Indian intransigence and realize that the continued violence along LoC in divided Kashmir and the working boundary between Pakistan and India has the potential of flaring up into a major conflict that could go out of control. Let us not forget that both nations are nuclear weapon states. *It is imperative that a full scale structured dialogue is resumed to restore some normalcy in the region.*

China –India/Pakistan - US

Chinese President Xi Jinping visit to the USA is of great interest to both India and Pakistan. While Xi was in the USA, one major development which all will be watching would be the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which will give it access to the Indian Ocean, and allow it to move across the Himalayas for the first time ever. Apart from its historical implications, which are immense, it also has great economic implications.

China is rapidly emerging as one of the largest economy in the world and it's only a matter of time before China grows enough to overtake the USA.

It is no coincidence that China and Pakistan have made common cause, and are using India's intransigence over Kashmir, on the same issue. One Chinese argument against Indian membership of the UN Security Council, like Pakistan's, is that a member which does not obey Security Council resolutions should not be made a permanent member. It should not be forgotten that China is a party to the Kashmir dispute, because it has a border dispute with Kashmir. Until the dispute is settled, that border cannot be settled. A settlement has been achieved with Pakistan of territory under Pakistani control.

One of China's main concerns is Afghanistan. US presence there is no more considered as important as it once was in the past and since USA willingly gave China a role in the Afghan negotiations.

That role may well serve as a means of ejecting India from its position there. Of course Pakistan would be pleased if Indian role is diminished in Afghanistan as it sees India using Afghanistan to destabilize Pakistan through its proxies there.

China-Iran

China wants to strengthen military ties with Iran, a senior naval admiral said on Thursday. Three months after Tehran signed a deal with world powers over its nuclear programme, China has decided to strengthen military ties with Iran

Chinese admiral Sun Jianguo during a visit to Tehran, China's defence ministry said in statement, noting that he hoped to continue pushing forward military relations between the two countries.

This visit may well be the beginning of cultivating a new strategic cooperation and enhance friendship. Iranian Defence Minister Hossein Dehghan said, "Developing military relations between both countries will reinforce stability and security on either ends of the Asian continent," China is Iran's largest petroleum buyer, and the United States threatened to punish it for its purchases as Tehran was locked in a standoff with the international community over its nuclear programme, amid fears it could develop atomic weapons.

"Along with powerful regional coalitions, the influence of the United States and the crises it provokes must be countered," Iran's defence minister added, referring to the "US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq... which strengthened terrorist groups. "He also hailed Russia's intervention in Syria, saying he "hoped Russia's positive actions would result in substantial changes in the fight against terrorism".

India –Pakistan: Hyphenated

Munir Akram

The Pakistan army chief's speech on Sept 6, Defence Day, highlighted the security threats which Pakistan continues to face from India 50 years after the 1965 war. That war lasted 17 days. If, God forbid, war was to break out today, it may last only 17 hours. Cross-border exchanges or incursions could easily escalate to general conventional warfare. This, in turn, could rapidly cross the nuclear threshold. The possibilities of such escalation have been widely analysed and validated.

When the Cuban missile crisis drove home the danger of mutual annihilation, the US and the Soviet Union rapidly initiated a process of bilateral and global strategic arms control. Pakistan and India have had several equivalents of the Cuban missile crisis: in 1987 (India's Brass Tacks military 'exercises'); 1990 (the last Kashmir insurgency); 1998 (the nuclear explosions); 1999 (the Kargil conflict); and 2002 (the year long border mobilisation by India and then Pakistan). Yet, no serious effort has ever been made to contain and reduce the danger of a conflict whose lethal implications for the two countries and their peoples have become graver by the day.

For its part, Pakistan has advanced a series of proposals for arms control, such as the post-1974 South Asia nuclear weapon-free zone and the post-1998 Pakistan-India strategic restraint regime. India has consistently spurned these proposals. Only a few 'confidence-building measures' have been agreed: prohibiting attacks on nuclear facilities and notification of military exercises and ballistic missile tests.

Historically, the prospects of arms control in South Asia have been severely retarded by the discriminatory restraints imposed against Pakistan by the US and Western powers, even as they tolerated and often encouraged Indian nuclear and conventional arms proliferation. Canada's supply of a heavy water reactor — CIRRUS — to India outside international safeguards and US transfer of missile technology, in the guise of helping India's space programme, are two well-known examples.

For a time, Pakistan was able to induct a semblance of equity into the security agenda. In the early 1990s, when India was battling the Kashmiri insurgency and Pakistan had embarked on nuclear enrichment, Washington agreed to promote a broad and balanced agenda for Pakistan-India talks. Again, in 1998, after Pakistan's reciprocal nuclear tests established nuclear parity, the parallel dialogue conducted by the US with Pakistan and India had an identical agenda, including Kashmir and nuclear and conventional arms control.

American discrimination against Pakistan was revived and institutionalised in 2007 when the then US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, proclaimed Washington's decision to "de-hyphenate" US policies towards India and Pakistan. This decision followed an American determination to build India as a bulwark against China's rising power. Washington entered into a formal defence pact and a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with India, notwithstanding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons' (NPT) prohibition of such cooperation with a non-party to the treaty.

Since then, external nuclear fuel supplies have opened the way for the exponential expansion of India's nuclear programme, and \$100 billion in advanced weapons have flowed annually into India from the US, Israel, France and others, entrenching New Delhi's intransigence on Kashmir and bellicosity towards Pakistan.

Pakistan's early warning that the Indian build-up would oblige it to enhance reliance on its nuclear and missile capabilities was brushed aside in Washington. Perversely, the US has continued attempts to restrain and restrict Pakistan's defensive response rather than India's aggressive armament.

New proposals are again being pressed on Pakistan to restrict its testing and deployment of short- and long-range missiles, accept a fissile materials 'cut-off' and even to unilaterally sign the nuclear test ban treaty (without waiting for India). In exchange, officials and think tanks in Washington have offered to support Pakistan's desire to be treated as a 'normal' state in its quest for membership of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG).

Washington's belief that some senior Pakistani officials are prepared to consider such an unequal bargain is disturbing. It could yield another Ufa. National security should not be sacrificed for job security.

The US has perhaps become convinced that strategic concessions can be extracted from Islamabad's leaders in exchange for personal perks and political gestures. In the summer of 2008, as the last PPP government assumed office, this writer was stopped midway from proceeding to friendly capitals to mobilise support for a vote in the International Atomic Energy Agency's board on the US-India Nuclear Safeguards Agreement. Several NPT parties had expressed deep reservations on the agreement. A vote in the IAEA board would have formalised their opposition and foreclosed a consensus in the NSG.

Pakistan, however, chose to allow acceptance of the agreement without a vote in the IAEA, opening the way for a US-propelled consensus in the NSG. The country has had to live with the consequences.

The subsequent quest for membership of the NSG is a fool's errand. In Western eyes, Pakistan will never be a 'normal' state so long as it is Islamic and a nuclear power. It is unlikely to be granted entry into the NSG without major concessions. Western nuclear plants will not be sold to Pakistan, nor can it afford them.

On the other hand, Pakistan has mastered the nuclear fuel cycle. It is in a position to offer civilian nuclear cooperation to developing countries, including Islamic countries. It is the NSG which should be asking Pakistan to join the suppliers' club to ensure that such cooperation adheres to international standards. There is no reason for Pakistan to plead for NSG membership.

Given the real and present danger of a devastating conflict between Pakistan and India, the US should stop India's militarisation and seek military de-escalation and arms control in South Asia. But to succeed in this objective, it will need to put the hyphen back in its policies towards India and Pakistan. Strategic restraint by Pakistan will be possible only if it is mutual and reciprocal with India.

The writer is a former Pakistan ambassador to the UN.

Indian diplomacy takes a major hit in Nepal

Lt General Ashok K Mehta (Former Indian army officer)

A country that refuses to learn from past mistakes is fated to remain on the learning curve. This is India's misfortune. The Indian mistake today in being intrusive toward its tiny northern neighbour Nepal bears similarity with the disastrous policy failure it experienced vis-à-vis its small southern neighbour Sri Lanka. This was reiterated by an eminent Indian analyst, diplomat and a former ambassador M K Bhadrakumar.

What India is seeking vis-à-vis Nepal is precisely what it used to demand from Sri Lanka in the past – how India's small neighbours must restructure their body polity. Nepal and Sri Lanka are unitary states and India has sought to micromanage their transition to a relatively federal system.

This constitutes blatant interference in these countries' internal affairs and, simply put, New Delhi is being prescriptive and its conduct is giving the pass to international law and the United Nations Charter. The entire international community is celebrating that Nepal adopted a constitution last Sunday and declared itself as a secular democratic country within a federal structure, which provides for extraordinary guarantee of "equal rights" to the weaker sections of society.

India is the solitary exception, sulking that the constitution is not "inclusive" enough, and protesting about state demarcation, citizenship and other provisions in the constitution.

Given the rupture of relations between India and Nepal, besides enhanced challenge from China that is likely to be incentivised with the election of KP Oli, New Delhi should restore relations with Nepal soon

The timing of the blockade could not have been worse: Just two days away from the week-long Dussehra festival, followed 10 days later by Tihar, the two biggest festivals in Nepal. This time though, some supplies are trickling in from some of the 22 transit points, unlike in 1989, when all the entry points were closed due to a spat between King Birendra and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Then, India delayed renewing the lapsed Transit Treaty, punishing the king for clandestinely importing weapons from China. It was the ordinary Nepalese who suffered and have not forgiven India. So harsh was the penalty that the Army Chief, General VN Sharma, pleaded with Rajiv Gandhi about its adverse effect on the morale of Gorkha soldiers and their families. Earlier in 1985, during the Gorkhaland movement, the Government was acutely concerned about its impact on the serving Gorkha soldiers.

In 2005, Maoists had laid siege to the Kathmandu valley, locking it for more than a week. Choked for essential supplies, National Security Advisor JN Dixit held an emergency meeting of three Service chiefs to consider a repeat of the 1986 bread-bombing of Jaffna. Kathmandu was contacted but it said, ‘No, thank you’.

This time around, Nepal has been quietly defiant, looking up, as in 1989, to China where two border points Tatopani and Rasua have been activated. Aviation fuel is being airlifted and the Government has tendered for petroleum products from abroad. While Nepal is blaming India for squeezing the border, New Delhi is disingenuously attributing the disruption to Madhesi resentment over the iniquitous new Constitution.

Anti-India sentiment is a seasonal phenomenon. Before the advent of multi-party democracy, it was blamed on monarchy for creating sovereign space. Now it is mainly the non-mainstreamed Maoists like the Mohan Baidya and Netra Bikram Chand groups which carry the can. *But sections of other parties and civil society have also joined the bandwagon, angry with New Delhi’s last minute demand to amend the Constitution.*

A torrent of nationalism engulfed the media, lambasting India, with Maoist supremo Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ saying, “We are friends of India but not its yes-men”, while an advisor to then Prime Minister Sushil Koirala emphasised Nepal’s sovereign right to make its own decisions. The anger and despair manifest in Kathmandu and other urban areas this time is different from the anti-India protests of the past triggered off by Madhuri Dixit, Hrithik Roshan and Madan Lal Khurana for what they allegedly said or did not say.

This time Nepal is demanding respect, dignity and being treated as sovereign equals. Sadly Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s hypnotic charm and magic,

which won the hearts and minds of Nepalese last year, has evaporated with the heat and dust of the blockade.

The genesis of the rupture of Government-to-Government relations can be traced to Mr Modi's sage but unwelcome advice that the Constitution must be based on consensus. The next trigger was the 16-point agreement after the earthquake between the four political parties (Big four) on June 8, to set aside residual differences over the Constitution, which came as a big surprise for India. In other words, India was not involved in forging the consensus.

On August 8, the Big four revealed a six-State map, later increased to seven States, which tore up the Madhesi and Tharu aspirations of autonomy. In Kathmandu on that fateful day, this writer learnt how one of the Big Four, the effervescent Tharu leader Bijaya Kumar Gachchhadar, looking at the map lamented: "Our head and feet have been chopped off." By September 20, the Constituent Assembly had passed the 302 Articles of the Constitution and promulgated it despite India's belated and brazen intervention.

It seems India lost the plot as its back-channel management went awry due to lack of strategic political guidance, resulting from the illusion that Mr Modi had won over Nepal for all time. New Delhi was presented a *fait accompli*. Agreements not assurances work in diplomacy and foreign relations, and that too at a high political level. Despatching the Foreign Secretary — after the horse had bolted from the stable — who is, after all, a bureaucrat, as Prime Minister's Special Envoy, did not signal the urgency of the mission. Never before in the history of India-Nepal relations has a prime ministerial envoy returned empty-handed.

By its support to the Madhesi who constitute 24 per cent of the population and along with Tharus make it 31 per cent, India has alienated the majority of Nepalese. The cause is just but the methods employed not so just. The episode has sharpened the strains between Pahadis and Madhesi and corroborated the strategic linkage between Madhesi and India.

The Madhesi political consciousness was inspired by India in 2007, which led to Madhesi parties winning 84 seats in the 2008 election, making them become virtual king-makers. This advantage was frittered away, with their strength declining to 56 seats in the 2013 election; this left the Madhesi a house divided

with little love lost between Tharus and Madhesis. Mr Gachchhadar is now a Deputy Prime Minister in the new Government.

A lesson from the blockade of 2015 is to seek alternatives for succour by land and air. In 1989, Kathmandu failed to do so. In the past the Chinese told Kathmandu it cannot be a substitute for India as a source of goods, supplies and other essentials. With an economy nine times bigger than India's and growing — with rail lines and improved communications to Nepal border and the likelihood of an oil pipeline and railway line to Kathmandu in the next five to seven years — Beijing could be in a position to ease the squeeze in Terai if not replace India as the primary source of goods. Besides the enhanced challenge from China likely to be incentivised by the new Prime Minister, KP Oli-led Left Alliance Government, ideologically ill-disposed to India and the Madhesis, the priority for New Delhi would be to restore relations with the people of Nepal. Posted by Indian Strategic Studies

Ashok K Mehta is a retired Lt General of the Indian Army. He writes extensively on defence matters and anchors Defence Watch on Doordarshan

Lesson for India – stop interfering in the internal matters of neighbouring states, respect their sovereignty and don't try to play big brother. Intimidation and harassing neighbouring states will create hatred among the people of these nations and surely that shall be dangerous for peace and for India's own sovereignty. Editor

Sikh militancy: Khalistan leaders glorified

Gautaman Bhaskaran

Cinema has, since time immemorial, been used as a political weapon. Hitler and Mussolini had movies made to propagate fascism, and the Venice Film Festival, the oldest such event in the world which started in 1932, served as an effective mouthpiece for these two dictators. In India, the Dravidian political parties actually came under the limelight in the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu through the power of the moving medium. Writers and actors were part of many, many Tamil movies that spread the Dravidian ideology. And one of the Dravidian parties, All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), is now ruling in the state.

Indian army assault on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, June 1984

While the Dravidian parties never used cinema to further unlawful political orientation, hardline Sikh groups — who in the 1980s demanded Khalistan, a separate “nation” for the community within the northern Indian state of Punjab — have begun to incite masses through films.

The Khalistan movement, spearheaded by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was finally crushed by the government in a ruthless army-led Operation Blue Star in 1984. Many Sikhs — even those who had not been in favour of Khalistan — were unhappy because the security forces had marched into the community’s most holy shrine, Golden Temple, in Amritsar (Punjab). The government had no choice but to send its troops into the Golden Temple, because the militants were holed up there, and had converted the place into some kind of fortress.

In what seems like a wily move, some movie makers are now making cinema that glorifies erstwhile Khalistan leaders. The films also appear to be attempting to radicalize a younger generation of Sikhs.

The latest movie to kick up dust is *The Mastermind Jinda Sukha*. It was to have hit theatres on September 11, but the Central Board of Film Certification, which had given the film public screening rights, suddenly banned it.

The movie glorifies two Khalistan extremists, Harjinder Singh Jinda and Sukhdev Singh Sukha — who murdered army general Arun Vaidya in 1986. He had commanded Operation Blue Star. Jinda and Sukha were also guilty of other high-profile assassinations.

Regrettably, *The Mastermind Jinda Sukha* does not look at these killers as terrorists, but as martyrs “who had fought for their community.”

There have been six other films that lauded Khalistan rebels, some of whom have been responsible for the murder of India’s former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and ex-chief minister of Punjab Beant Singh.

Gaddar (2015) was based on the life of Ajit Singh Sandhu, a top cop in Punjab who shot innocent people under the pretext of fighting terror. Quom De Heere (2014) commended Satwant Singh, Beant Singh and Kehar Singh — Indira Gandhi’s assassins. These are but two examples. These movies have been banned. Sukhdev Singh Sukha and Harjinder Singh Jinda

What is even more worrying is that these films have been funded by radical Sikh organisations outside India. They feel that these movies are “educative” and place the Khalistan movement in the right perspective. Sukhjinder Singh Shera, who directed *The Mastermind Jinda Sukha*, decried in a recent interview that his work did not by any means glorify terrorism. “The Central Board wants to throttle the Punjabi voice. The community has been suffering for 30 years,” he added.

As much as one has been advocating doing away with movie censorship — and having it replaced with a rating system of the kind seen in the USA and UK — films like *The Mastermind Jinda Sukha* force one to pause and ponder. In a country as diverse as India with extremely radical views, censorship may be the only answer to check cinema that fuels rebellious thoughts and ideas.

Gautaman Bhaskaran is an author, commentator and movie critic, who has worked with The Statesman in Kolkata and 'The Hindu' in Chennai for 35 year

The Naxalite Insurgency in India

Kristian A Kennedy

16 of India's 28 states – mostly in the east and the centre – are affected by insurgency to a greater or lesser degree. It is an often ignored fact that 66.6% of Indian landmass is not in Indian control where the writ of the state is shaky and in places negligible or nonexistent. There may be as many as 150,000 militiamen and full-time fighters in total and India's Prime Minister had described them as the single biggest threat to the country's security. Indian government had launched the much touted Operation Green Hunt, but it failed miserably. Maoists also stress that they are fighting to protect the rights of India's most oppressed communities, the Adivasis or tribal people, and Dalits, or untouchables, whose land and resources have often been taken by Indian and international corporations. The rebels cover a vast area.

Introduction

While many western observers would point to violent secessionism in Kashmir as the direst threat to Indian national security, the government of India has identified the Maoist-inspired as its most significant security challenge. A vast swath of India, from West Bengal in the northeast to Andhra Pradesh in the south, has come under the influence of the Naxalites. In recent years the Indian government has stepped-up its counter-insurgency initiatives in an attempt to contain and rollback the movement's influence. In fact, New Delhi has even redeployed security forces from Kashmir to central and eastern India in response to this development.

Who are the Naxalites?

Taking its name from the 1967 peasant revolt in the West Bengal village of Naxalbari, the Naxalites movement is a left-wing guerrilla force that is seeking to overthrow the Indian government. Since the time of the Naxalbari revolt the movement has taken on various forms and its support has fluctuated from one decade to the next. It's most recent manifestation is the result of a 2004 decision by two Maoist groupings, the People's War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre, to join forces to form the Communist Party of India

(Maoist). This post-2004 incarnation of the Naxalites insurgency has been one of the most sustained -and perhaps the most lethal.

While India's other communist parties participate in electoral politics, the CPI (M) follows Mao's dictum that power flows from the barrel of a gun. The CPI (M) has declared, and government officials have acknowledged, that the Naxalites are conducting an insurgency in accordance with Mao's "protracted people's war" strategy. The Naxalites view Indian society through the lens of Mao's theory of the developing world's rural poor as a pivotal revolutionary force in the class struggle. They have sought to build support among the region's lower castes, Adivasis (tribal groups), and other sectors of the peasantry by establishing insurgent strongholds ("liberated zones") in districts where government authority is weak. The Party's cadres expand their influence outwards from these bases, and in doing so, they broaden their popular base through political mobilization. The targets of the Naxal class struggle are the region's upper castes, "feudal" landlords, commercial interests, and the security forces.

India's Maoist Redux

Naxalism presents a seeming paradox: the country with the second highest growth rates of the major economies finds itself in the throes of a largely agrarian rebellion inspired by an ideology that has lost its lustre in much of the world. In 2006 India's Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, pronounced Naxalism to be "the single biggest internal security challenge" India has ever faced.

Why have the Naxalites come to loom so large as a security challenge? First, a large area of the country has fallen under varying degrees of CPI (M) influence. According to one estimate, approximately 40% of India's territory is under some form of Maoist influence. Just as the Maoist Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path") of Peru emerged in the poor, mostly indigenous city of Ayacucho and spread outward to other areas of the Andean sierra, so the Naxalites centre-of-gravity is an area of the country that comprises several of India's most underdeveloped states -- a "Red Corridor" that includes Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa. Although establishing concrete numbers of supporters is a challenge, the Research and Analysis Wing, India's intelligence service, estimates that CPI (M) armed cadres number about 20,000. Tenuous government control, the destruction of public infrastructure, the sabotage of

industrial interests, and ambushes of state security forces all pose a significant challenge to internal stability in areas of eastern and central India. A study published this month counted the Maoist insurgency as an obstacle in the way of India's emergence as a world power.

Government Responses

In November 2009 the Indian government announced a plan to bolster the anti-Naxalites efforts of affected states with a national counter-insurgency strategy. The strategy, which the Indian prime minister characterized as an approach that will "walk on two legs," combines a campaign to hold and clear Naxal strongholds with development projects to address what Singh acknowledged as "the sense of deprivation and alienation" in the region. Known unofficially as Operation "Green Hunt," New Delhi forecasts that the campaign to re-assert government authority and win back the support of affected sectors of the population in the Red Corridor will take two years.

The spread of violence has spurred the growth of non-state anti-Naxal groupings. The most notable among them is the Salwa Judum in the state of Chhattisgarh. Like the Naxalites, these groups seek to recruit from the state's tribal groups, leaving civilians caught between competing groups on the left and the right. State officials in Chhattisgarh have actively supported the use of the Salwa Judum to counter the Naxalites, an approach that is not without controversy and as a result has generated criticism from India's Supreme Court and the central government in Delhi.

Foreign Support

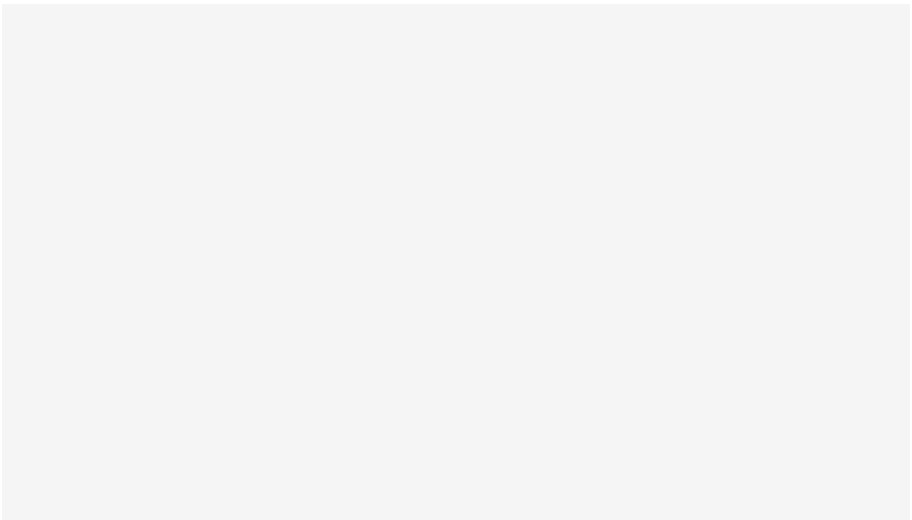
It is difficult to establish the degree and scope of external involvement in the Naxalites insurgency. Nepalese and Filipino Maoist outfits have long been suspected of providing rhetorical and material support to the CPI (M). Following central government claims of possible arms transfers from Nepal, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) publicly admitted to having ties with the CPI (M) but did not detail its involvement. Similarly, Indian and Filipino intelligence services allege that the Communist Party of the Philippines, a faction that is waging its own guerrilla war in that country, has established links with the Naxalites. New Delhi also contends that it has evidence that remnants

of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam are providing training to CPI (M) cadres in India.

Looking forward

New Delhi confronts a major challenge in the Red Corridor. Working in conjunction with the governments of affected states, the central government faces the task of winning hearts and minds in geographically isolated and economically dislocated regions of the country. Naxalites continue to mobilize the masses, escalate their class war, and broaden the Maoist footprint on the subcontinent. While the chances of a Naxalites complete seizure of power at the moment is rather uncertain but for sure this insurgency is hard to defeat.

Kristian A Kennedy is a researcher, analyst and a writer. He has written for Geopolitical monitor.



The Root of India-Pakistan Conflicts

Reply to Rajiv Malhotra by Malik

Rajiv Malhotra wrote a detailed article on this subject. His basic argument was that contrary to a common perception that Kashmir is the root cause of Indo –Pakistan conflict had tried to demonstrate that the ‘Kashmir issue’ is itself the result of a deeper root cause, which is a clash of two worldviews: pluralism versus exclusivism.

Mr Malik has negated the central theme of Rajiv Malhotra presented counter arguments. He believes that Islam was intolerant of polytheism and idol worship, and Hinduism was highly intolerant of anyone who was not a Hindu of one of the higher castes. But for the influence and chance presence of the Sufis, this would have resulted in far more bloodshed than actually occurred in the resultant wars and clashes. However that be, the seeds of partition were laid in this mutual intolerance way before the movement for partition was even thought about.

I am in substantial agreement with much that you say in your essay, but I am at variance with you on your foundational argument. I do not believe that beyond pure theory any of the old world religions, or new world secular ideologies, except paganism, was pluralistic. All of them without exception were exclusivist to one degree or the other. To begin with, they may well have been considerably tolerant, but with the onset of orthodoxy and its development, they all developed a distinct adversarial attitude to the Outsider, the Other.

All religions follow a general trend of development which is common to them all. The original founder or sage or prophet in all cases seems to have been moved primarily by socio-economic causes, followed by theological imperatives. But as soon as the founder passes away, three things seem to happen. The original dynamism of the movement progressively gives way to ossification and orthodoxy; the priesthood gives religion a corporate form; and emphasis increasingly starts shifting from humanitarian dictates of the religion to the emphasis on the theological.

This latter shift takes place, because the priest wants to monopolize religious power and he must draw the legitimacy of his position to interpret the commandments of the deity from theology. Secondly it does him little good if

he keeps emphasizing the humanitarian aspects or obligations of the belief system. These are so basic and easy to understand that even a lay person needs no scholarship to comprehend them. And if a lay person understands them the priest is not needed. Thus, for the priest to justify his position, he needs to create space where he can deploy his superior knowledge. This he can only do in the world of the arcane and the abstruse. And this space lies in the realm of theology. And the more the emphasis shifts from the humanitarian aspect of religion, to the theological, emphasis also shifts from righteous action to correctness of belief. From the practical to the theoretical. We start propitiating God who needs nothing from us, and ignoring fellow human beings who need everything from us. Eventually religion becomes a tool of power for both the priest and the king, and humanity lies forlorn and forgotten, except in its role as cannon fodder and a play thing of the powerful. And ever thicker walls of orthodoxy are thrown up to make the position of the priest unassailable.

As this happens, religion changes from a blessing for humanity, to a curse. When this point is reached, religion also becomes an alibi for every manner of sin which it specifically prohibits. Its practitioners subconsciously start believing that having performed acts of worship they have done their duty on to God, and that they are thereafter free to deal with humanity as they deem fit. Without this subconscious thinking it is impossible to reconcile worship and prayers with theft plunder cheating and double dealing by the very "pious" in society. I think this is partly the reason the people in the west are different, and at a human plane, more moral. Their theological beliefs are a private matter for them, and are of little concern to their neighbours. Thus a westerner cannot make a career or reputation out of "piety". To be in the good graces of others he must live by a code which lays stress on his civic duties as a member of the community, and it is on this basis that he is judged. He gets no marks for attending church on Sundays.

This shift of emphasis from the humanitarian to the theological with power being progressively accumulated by the priesthood is easily seen in the history of religions. And the shift itself is protected by orthodoxy, so that any challenger of it would have to suffer the charge of heresy with good chances of winding up at the stake.

In Islam you can see it very early on when caliphs became kings. This being totally contrary to the spirit of Islam, the kings needed support of the religious

establishment. Thus we see the rise to power of the "court" scholars and the prayer leaders, and they virtually take the place of priesthood, despite the fact that the concept of priesthood is absent in Islam. It is the view of some that the emergence and the initial motivation of the Fuqaa, who founded Islamic jurisprudence, was to limit the power of the Caliph/ kings and restrict them within the ambit of the law. However very soon the fruit of their labours itself became a part of the orthodoxy. Various Sufi orders were the next to warn the rulers against their transgressions. And by the time Sufi orders were tamed and hounded out, human welfare went to the bottom of the priorities for the rulers, and all intellectual energy was sucked out of the study of sciences, and diverted to the vapid pursuit of determining how a true Muslim ought to believe. This was quite the opportune time for the Mongols to strike, and but for the injection of new blood in the shape of the Ottomans, the curtain would have fallen on the Islamic civilization much earlier than it eventually did.

Christianity too lived by the humanitarian message of Christ only for the time that this was a persecuted sect. However as soon as Constantine decided that he needed a new religion to unify his empire, and he empowered the priesthood, orthodoxy started to gain strength at the cost of the humanitarian teachings of Christ. And by the time of the Inquisition and the crusades, humanitarian concerns lost out utterly to theological orthodoxy.

You see the same drift in Judaism. Even when the Old Testament was completed, the priesthood was strong enough to declare that the oral law, of which they were the sole custodians, overrode the Torah which was open to the lay persons to read. And as various biblical prophets railed against the many transgressions of the priests, against both God and his people, many of them were run out of their homes or killed. And during the time of the Babylonian captivity we see the emergence of the Talmud and Rabbinic Judaism. One of the first edicts of the Rabbis was to declare that there will be no more prophets, those problem creators for the old priesthood. And then the Rabbis declared that a Jew, who was disobedient to the command of a rabbi, could be sentenced to death. This was orthodoxy turned into lethality.

As far as Hinduism is concerned, its beginnings lie so deep in the past that they cannot be uncovered to even a pretense of accuracy. However it may be true to say that the part its priesthood has played in moulding it into what it is today, is more thorough going than that played by the priesthood of any other religion.

This can be seen in how the caste system which once must have been a purely societal construct having nothing to do with the sacred] has been elevated to an inextricable part of Hinduism, so as to totally mangle the religion and to invest it with one of the great crimes against humanity. *By justifying it through the agency of Karma, the untouchables, a majority of the population, have been put in a hermetically sealed box, from which they can find no escape except through rebirth [i.e. Karma].* And this ensures that their children cannot escape from it either. *This makes inequality a foundation of Hinduism, which is beyond reform, because emancipating these miserable millions would be to deny reincarnation. And this being a central pillar of Hinduism, such denial would be tantamount to bringing down Hinduism itself.* The aim of the Brahmins, by fixing the position of the untouchables at the very bottom of society and making it immovable, was to make their own position at the very top, impregnable. It is because of this that no rebellion against Brahmanism--not Buddhism, not the Bhagtia movement, not Sikhism, has been able to succeed. And Mahatma Gandhi could not succeed because he just could not allow himself to go the whole hog. Doing so would have needed to dismantle the caste system as a whole, and dismantling it would have required the dismantling of Hinduism. And for going just half way there, he had to be shot! There can be no more eloquent commentary on the viciousness of the caste system, not of its strength, nor of its impregnability.

But this drift seems to be common in all religions-- of the priesthood monopolizing and elevating theology at the expense of emphasizing the humanitarian aspects of religion, thus hollowing out its spirit, and making it a doctrine which will look askance at the one who does not believe "correctly", as well as the outsider. This is how; I believe religions ceased being a blessing for mankind. They removed universal brotherhood and tolerance from their teachings which was the very kernel of this blessing.

The central unspoken assumption of your essay is that Hinduism was pluralistic, that Islam was exclusivist, and therefore partition became inevitable. Because this cannot stand, so the rest of your argument must fall. Any system of belief which makes hermetically sealed partitions within itself cannot be tolerant of the outsider. And Hinduism has always seen the outsider as unclean and to be kept at a distance. This does not allow for accommodation or tolerance. So in this sense Hinduism was little different from other religions.

With your central assumption being negated, an adjustment needs to be made to your central argument. My reading of history is that when Islam came to India, two intolerant forces came face to face. Islam was highly intolerant of polytheism and idol worship, and Hinduism was highly intolerant of anyone who was not a Hindu or one of the higher castes. But for the influence and chance presence of the Sufis, this would have resulted in far more bloodshed than actually occurred in the resultant wars and clashes. However that be, the seeds of partition were laid in this mutual intolerance way before the movement for partition was even thought about.

On the issue of the demand of partition by the majority of the Muslims of India, I believe that there were some genuinely invested in the 2-nation theory. But I think the real motivator for this demand was the fear of post-independence dominance of the Hindus over the Muslims--a dictatorship of a permanent majority over a minority which was weak judged by any index of development. This fear was justified and is borne out by the progressive deterioration of the lot of Muslims left in India. For India to remain united, certain constitutional guarantees were the least that were required to ease the fears of the Muslims. And these were given in the Lucknow Pact. It is my contention that but for the repudiation of this Pact by the Congress, there would have been no movement for the partition of India, and if there was, it would have been inconsequential. But at this point this can only be contra factual argument.

The fact though is that the partition of India did take place and both the Congress and the Muslim League were in agreement with the principles which undergirded it. The Indian stance on the issue of Kashmir violates these principles, and has become an issue for both India and Pakistan that has robbed both our peoples of their days in the sun. And unfortunately these days have not yet ended, and more of the same lies in our future. And the creator of this problem is India, no matter how the leads up of events leading to the partition of India are read.

. It is better to teach no history than to teach history for the purposes of propaganda and brain washing. But what is difficult for me to understand is why India should endeavor to miseducate its future generations. *The specific instances I am referring to is the Hindutva inspired attempt to reconstruct the Aryan invasion; the propagation of the myth that India was always a united country; and the suggestions that it was the foreign invaders who had a lot to*

do with relegation of Indian women to a low status in society, and also that it was because of the invaders that the caste system was degraded to its present level of unacceptability.

Similarly, no one in Pakistan can cover up much of what they are doing in the name of religion vis a vis other Muslims or minorities and those who dare to believe differently within the larger pale of majority religion. And though I believe that India's constitution is way more inclusive than Pakistan's, but the *prejudice against minorities and frequent communal killings in India suggest that the thinking of majority Hindus is not in accord with the ideals of its constitution, which gives further strength to the 2-nation theory.* And where India takes a negative lead over Pakistan is the fact that there has been at least one massacre of Muslims which was inspired and egged on by a provincial government. And now with the extreme right wing in India calling for a re - conversion to Hinduism of all those who were not "foreigners" and who converted from Hinduism to other faiths cannot be justified.

Where India does have one vital advantage over Pakistan, I feel, is in its public intellectuals, who are proportionately in significantly larger numbers in India, and most of these seem to be very mindful of their integrity. If Indian history is not to be recast according to Hindutva dictates, and if Hinduism is to be prevented from occupying huge swathes of public space in India, it will be because of Indian public intellectuals who are willing to stand up for what they believe in irrespective of the consequences.

Mr Malik is free lance brilliant analyst based in the United States. He has an outstanding grasp of South Asia.

Pakistan's stand corroborated

Malik Muhammad Ashraf

The Afghan rulers need to understand that Pakistan had probably the biggest stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan and would be the last country to even entertain the thought of destabilizing it.

The US finally seems to have accepted the Pakistani claims that the operation Zarb-e-Azb was an indiscriminate effort against the terrorist outfits. The US top commander in Afghanistan, General John F Campbell in a written testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee said “Senior Pakistani military officers have repeatedly declared that they can no longer discriminate between ‘good and bad’ terrorists.

They appear to be taking meaningful actions to back up their words”. This corroboration coming from a US commander leading the military campaign in Afghanistan is indeed a major plus in boosting Pakistan’s credibility in the eyes of the international community. It also strongly negates Afghanistan’s perception of Pakistan having to do anything with the escalation in military confrontation within Afghanistan.

General Campbell also made a pertinent point in regards to indispensability of Pakistan in regards to peace in Afghanistan. Noting that considerable obstacles existed between Pakistan and Afghanistan which were likely to persist past 2016, he felt that the common threat of violent extremism could still serve as a catalyst to improve cooperation between the two countries. According to him before nudging reconciliation with Taliban, rapprochement between Pakistan and Afghanistan has to occur first and the fight against terrorism and terrorist outfits needed concerted Pak-Afghan efforts. What he said more or less conforms to the Pakistani view on resolving the conflict. Pakistan, it may be pertinent to mention, regards the Taliban offensive against the Afghan government as an act of terrorism and it was unequivocally stated by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during his visit to Afghanistan when the Taliban had announced to launch it.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his address to UN also emphasized the desirability of this cooperation and reiterated Pakistan’s resolve and commitment in facilitating rapprochement between Taliban and the Afghan

government undeterred by the set back that it has received due to developments in the wake of revelation of Mullah Omar's death and intensification of fighting in the country. It is indeed an irrefutable reality that Afghanistan and Pakistan both need each other to establish peace and beating back the threat posed by terrorism and religious extremism.

In my view US can and must try to remove misunderstanding between Pakistan and Afghanistan by convincing the Afghan government about non-discriminatory actions against terrorist by Pakistan and non-involvement of the latter in what was going on in Afghanistan at present. The US and NATO must also put pressure on India to refrain RAW from sponsoring across the border attacks, like the Badabher (an air force base) episode. Simultaneously, Pakistan must also re-establish interaction with Afghanistan at the highest level to remove the haze that has cast its evil shadow on the hard-orchestrated bonhomie between the two countries, in the wake of the recent developments.

The General in his submission to the Armed Service Committee also called for a review of the envisaged plan of draw-down of US troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2016, which seems to have gone awry in the wake of the Taliban capture of Kunduz and attacks in Badakhshan province. He urged the US administration to consider boosting its military presence in Afghanistan after 2016 if it intended to repel resurgence of Taliban. He maintained that the tenuous security situation might require a reversal of the drawdown. German foreign minister Ursula Von der Leyen also hinted about this possibility in Brussels on the eve of the meeting of NATO defence ministers saying "I will appeal today that we do not organize the withdrawal from Afghanistan according to a rigid timetable but we analyze the situation. The developments in Kunduz show that we have to walk on the way we have walked together with Afghans". The NATO meeting, reportedly, has also given a nod for review of the draw-down policy and remaining engaged in Afghanistan beyond 2016.

The Kunduz episode has indeed exposed the vulnerabilities of the Afghan government and the ability of the Afghan security forces to withstand the Taliban onslaught. The recapture of Kunduz could not have been possible without the help of NATO forces and airstrikes by US war planes. It indicates that the situation on the ground is not conducive to the withdrawal of the US forces, as it might undo the entire effort to bring stability to

Afghanistan besides frittering away more than US\$ 100 billion in international aid that Afghanistan has received during well over a decade. But the dilemma is that the decision by US to extend the date of drawdown and stay on in Afghanistan might escalate the military confrontation in Afghanistan in view of the avowed position of the Taliban not to enter into negotiations with the Afghan government until the foreign forces left the country.

The other option of intra-Afghan dialogue after the departure of foreign troops also seems fraught with dangers. Pulling out of US troops without having resolved the conflict has the potential of pushing Afghanistan into factional fighting of the yester years; a scenario which might not only scuttle chances of peace at a foreseeable future but could also destabilize the entire region. Therefore under the prevailing circumstances there is a need to work on two parallel tracks.

One is to keep the Taliban at bay through presence of US troops in Afghanistan beyond 2016 and bolster the capability of the Afghan forces and the other is to facilitate the engagement of the two sides in a dialogue with the help of Pakistan and the regional powers like China for an Afghan-led and Afghan owned solution to the decades old confrontation in the country. Pakistan's role admittedly is of pivotal importance in this regard. The negotiated solution with the help of Pakistan and China and also supported by US has the advantage of ensuring durability through the guarantees that they could provide for both sides sticking to the agreements reached between the two sides.

The Afghan rulers need to understand that Pakistan had probably the biggest stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan and would be the last country to even entertain the thought of destabilizing it. Stability and peace in Afghanistan means peace and stability in Pakistan. Both the countries have suffered tremendously at the hands of the terrorists and do have a strong common cause in this regard. The scourge of terrorism and other lurking dangers make it absolutely imperative for the two countries to forge impregnable unity against these threats.

Malik Muhammad Ashraf is a senior journalist, columnist and writes for leading English dailies including The News and The Nation.

Insurgencies in India

Paul Staniland

India is often hailed as a triumph of democracy in a poor, multi ethnic society. This success must be qualified by the armed challenges to the Indian state that have regularly erupted and endured during its modern history.

India's future holds more internal conflict. The Naxalite challenge poses a serious threat to the state's reach in large areas of the interior. Though this insurgency will never seize state power it will nevertheless be able to disrupt normal economic and political life for millions of Indian citizens and drain the resources of the state. There is a risk that inept state responses will play into the hands of the Naxalites and contribute to the endurance of the conflict. India's Northeast remains militarily volatile and politically unsettled, particularly Manipur and Nagaland. The Kashmir issue will haunt Delhi until it summons the political will to change how it governs the state. India's dramatic growth and democratic survival are remarkable and worthy of attention, but rebellion and coercion constitute politics in worrisomely large swathes of the country

Insurgencies in India have been motivated by religious, ethno linguistic and leftist ideologies, reflecting the heterogeneity of the peoples ruled by the Indian state. Separatist conflicts in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura have turned many of India's border regions into war zones for years and even decades. Maoist insurgents in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh operated and continue to operate in vast interior areas of the country. Insurgency and counterinsurgency has taken an extraordinary cost in human suffering, economic costs, and social dislocation. Internal conflict is an integral, if often under studied, part of India's political experience

North East

Northeast India's Northeast is a collection of seven states wedged between Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and China. Though the region includes only about 4% of the Indian population, it is strategically important, includes

remarkable linguistic and religious diversity, and has become a site of enduring violence and conflict (as well as some changes towards peace and diminishing violence). At independence in 1947, the region consisted of the state of Assam, the princely states of Manipur and Tripura, and the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). Manipur and Tripura became Union Territories in 1949 and then states in 1972. NEFA was part of Assam until becoming a Union Territory in 1972 and a state in 1987 as Arunachal Pradesh. Other states 4 would emerge from Assam: Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in 1973, and Mizoram in 1987. Some of the areas of the original Assam state and its various successors have had autonomy or been substantially controlled by New Delhi. These political reorganizations over time reflect the mobilization and tensions within the Northeast, which are often intertwined. Insurgencies have occurred in contemporary Nagaland, Assam, Mizoram, Manipur, and Tripura, involving dozens of armed groups with complicated links to external states, illicit economies, and electoral politics (Lacina 2009). India's management of its northeastern frontier has combined violence and bargaining, and has been largely ignored in mainstream politics. The Northeast is important for strategic reasons but lacks the emotional resonance and publicity of the Kashmir and Punjab crises, and thus sees different political dynamics than in these conflicts. The conflicts in the region are extraordinarily complex,

The experience of the Northeast reflects the difficulties of managing extraordinary diversity in areas with comparatively weak historical links to contemporary India, an international context that allows and encourages violence, and a lack of sustained political interest from the Centre. Large swathes of the region have been turned over to the security forces and local politicians to run as they see fit, reducing accountability or oversight from the central government and press. The deep political and organizational divisions within linguistic, religious, and tribal groups in the Northeast has allowed the Indian state to play games of divide-and-rule but has undermined lasting political settlements. 6 The major success story is Mizoram, where a political bargain was struck. Militancy has been contained but not eliminated in Tripura and Assam, a tacit deal exists between the state and insurgents in Nagaland, and significant violence endures in Manipur. This variation reveals both the different types of insurgencies that exist – from highly cohesive in Mizoram to massively fragmented in Manipur – and the diverse types of Indian government response, ranging from intense repression to co-optation and bargaining. The Northeast faces serious economic and social problems alongside the challenges

of militancy and political disaffection, and it is likely to continue being an area of instability and local crisis for the foreseeable future.

Maoist Mobilization

A very different type of insurgency has become a major force in a swath of India stretching from West Bengal into northern Andhra Pradesh. Rather than the separatist militancy described above, India's Maoist Naxalite guerrillas seek to capture power in India and transform it into a communist state. This movement originated in West Bengal in the late 1960s amid the tumult of leftist mobilization and feuding during that period. After being suppressed, Naxalite organizers took to interior jungles and forests and maintained their war at a much lower level. Since the early 2000s, another surge of Naxalite activity has become hugely important in much of eastern India. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has called the Naxalites the largest internal security threat to India. The major centre state issue in this context has been coordination of counterinsurgency efforts across different states, each with its own capabilities and political interests.

The First Wave

The 1960s were a time of ferment and dissension within the Indian left. Debates over the Sino Soviet split and internal rivalries encouraged fragmentation and competition, particularly among West Bengal's students and intellectuals. A movement aiming to equalize land holdings turned violent in 1967 (in the village of Naxalbari, giving its name to the movement). This led to a mix of confrontation and collusion between the CPM and radicals, even as the CPM was in alliance with the Congress Party in the state. Members of the splinter CPI-Marxist-Leninist (ML) mobilized in West Bengal and in certain areas of Andhra Pradesh. Political competition between parties in West Bengal intersected with the Centre's fears of the state spiraling out of control. The Naxalites took advantage of this political space to launch an intense escalation of violence (Kohli 1990, Chapter 10)

Conflict occurred in rural areas as a somewhat disorganized guerrilla movement, and also in Calcutta in the form of bombings and assassinations. Intellectuals and students were heavily involved in both kinds of violence. Two bouts of President's Rule were imposed amidst this chaos, followed by a Congress government that intensely repressed the Naxalites from 1972-77. A

state government backed by the Centre proved capable of beating back the Naxal challenge. The movement was deeply internally divided which made it easier for counterinsurgency to succeed.

Naxalite cadres gave up the fight, were killed or arrested, or fled into the jungles. West Bengal transitioned to CPM rule in 1977, marking a decisive shift into the institutionalization of non-violent leftist power in the state.

Naxalism Revitalized.

Despite the defeat of the Naxalites in West Bengal, the movement did not die off. Committed organizers retreated into poorly or ungoverned areas of eastern and central India, including Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and what are now the states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. These areas historically lacked significant state presence and were not the focus of political interest or strategic importance. This context provided a permissive environment for mobilization. These organizers failed to create the mass uprising they aspired to, but their persistence during decades of marginality kept the movement afloat. A number of distinct organizations operated during the 1980s and 1990s and were often involved in fratricidal feuding.

Naxalites were able to involve themselves in caste and tribal mobilization, allying with the components of Indian society most repressed and victimized (Jaoul 2009). This proved a clever strategic move and gave activists access to communities that might otherwise be difficult. They were particularly linked to violent caste wars in Bihar in the 1990s (Nimbran 1992). Consolidation of the movement occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the merger of several leading Naxalite blocs. The movement remained fragmented but has clearly become more able to coordinate attacks and logistics. Naxal mobilization also occurred in areas with natural resources that were becoming increasingly valuable to large corporations. This set the scene for clashes over the use of tribal lands. Violence began to rise in particular in Andhra Pradesh, which responded with a reasonably effective reform of the police. West Bengal also faced a resurgence of Naxal mobilization in opposition to the part in state of the CPM. Brutal violence has erupted in clashes between the CPM and the Naxalites in the state.

Even more problematic was the growth of Naxalism in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. These states are much poorer and less administratively capable

than Andhra Pradesh and they have faced deep problems in responding to the Naxalite challenge. Chief Ministers of these states have argued that they require more support from the Centre, which in turn suspects the chief ministers of inefficiency, corruption, and lack of political will. These tensions (which also include conflicts between neighboring states) have undermined the coherence of the response. The federal system is important not just in explaining why conflicts erupt but can also shape the government response to rebellions.¹¹

As attacks mounted in the second half of the 2000s, MHA forces become increasingly drawn into counterinsurgency and security operations. They have suffered serious losses in the face of a Naxalite movement that has taken advantage of weak state presence, byzantine political maneuverings at the state level, inaccessible terrain, and tribal discontent to prepare for a pitched war. Government responses have ranged from apathy to support for pro

-state militias to sweeps of affected areas. Though there has been much discussion of development and good governance as a cure to the Naxal challenge, neither the central nor local government response has suggested much ability to implement this ambitious agenda. Similarly, massive expansion and training efforts have been put into motion to improve the security forces but their progress has been seriously uneven thus far. The Naxalite crisis in India is the result of radical ideologies finding space to mobilize amidst marginalized populations far from state power or presence. Finding ways of bringing the state to these areas without engaging in full-scale repression will be difficult given the realities of local governance in India's interior.

Punjab

The roots of Sikh militancy in the Punjab are tightly intertwined with electoral and coalitional politics both in Punjab and in India more broadly. Sikhs were badly affected by Partition in 1947, being driven in large numbers from the Pakistani Punjab amidst intense violence. Sikhs found themselves a tiny minority in the new India. Ethno-linguistic reorganization led to the split of Haryana from Punjab, which created a Sikh majority in Punjab. The two states shared (and continue to share) Chandigarh as their capital city. Punjab was the home of a major, if often divided, Sikh political party, the Akali Dal, The Akali Dal would become a prominent opponent of Indira Gandhi during and after the Emergency, creating endemic state-centre tensions. The Green Revolution triggered economic growth in Punjab even as political instability grew in the

1970s. The Akalis were part of the coalition that opposed Indira Gandhi and that briefly supplanted her after the Emergency.

Conflict between the Akalis and Indira came to a head in the early 1980s. Indira returned to power and tried to re-centralize power in Delhi. The confrontation between the two involved Indira dismissing state governments in Punjab and the Congress Party supporting a militant Sikh preacher, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, as a way of splitting the Sikh vote. In turn, the Akalis mounted a campaign of contentious politics and rhetorical escalation to counterbalance Indira's political maneuverings. The status of the capital, of water crucial for farming, and of language policy was also mobilized as issues of discontent with the Centre (Kohli 1990, Chapter 12). Violence escalated from 1980 to 1984 as the state machinery began to break down, militant mobilization increased, and various attempts at cutting a deal failed. The Sikh militants received some limited support from Pakistan and extensive support from the Diaspora as they pursued the goal of an independent Khalistan. The militants drew heavily from the Jat Sikh community and networks linked to Sikh gurdwaras.

Finally in 1984 the Centre decided to crack down on the militancy it had helped to create in Punjab. Bhindranwale and other militants had taken shelter in the Golden Temple in Amritsar, a Sikh holy site. The Army went into the Golden Temple in force in June 1984 in Operation Blue Star (Tully and Jacob 1985). The damage to the holy site incurred in this operation triggered outrage among many Sikhs, who saw it as a repressive case of government overreach signaling malign intentions toward the Sikh minority.

The aftermath of Blue Star was disastrous. Militant mobilization surged in Punjab. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards in October 1984, which in turn led to Congress Party-backed anti-Sikh riots in Delhi. Rajiv Gandhi attempted to bargain with Akali Dal leaders, but the fragmentation of the Akalis and pressures within the Congress Party undermined these efforts. Punjab became the site of deadly guerrilla warfare, with numerous Sikh armed groups facing off against the Punjab police and central military and paramilitary forces (Dhillon 2006). Civilians died in significant numbers, though not nearly at the level of Kashmir.

Conclusions and Implications

Insurgency and counterinsurgency in India have affected the lives of millions of people. Government responses to militancy have ranged from political deal making to sustained repression. Some of these responses challenge an understanding of India as a liberal democracy. Torture, human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, and forced population displacement have all been used, often with legal impunity. Insurgent violence has also regularly been horrific. Significant swathes of India have been ravaged by brutal warfare since independence, even though many of these conflicts barely register in studies of Indian politics and in the popular imaginary. Yet other responses challenge our assumptions about the state's pursuit of a monopoly of violence. India's government has sometimes simply ignored insurgent mobilization, cut tacit deals with militants, and directly bargained with them outside of the electoral process. This heterogeneity in reaction to insurgency, across groups and conflicts, and over time, is quite remarkable. It hints at the complexity of insurgency as a political phenomenon: different rebellions threaten different interests and worldviews, and thus attract varying responses. The ultimate success of these policies has been mixed, with success in Punjab and Mizoram, but enduring instability in J&K and other areas of the Northeast.

India's future holds more internal conflict. The Naxalite challenge poses a serious threat to the state's reach in large areas of the interior. Though this insurgency will never seize state power it will nevertheless be able to disrupt normal economic and political life for millions of Indian citizens and drain the resources of the state. There is a risk that inept state responses will play into the hands of the Naxalites and contribute to the endurance of the conflict. India's Northeast remains militarily volatile and politically unsettled, particularly Manipur and Nagaland. The Kashmir issue will haunt Delhi until it summons the political will to change how it governs the state. India's dramatic growth and democratic survival are remarkable and worthy of attention, but rebellion and coercion constitute politics in worrisomely large swathes of the country.

This an abridged version of a paper written by Paul Staniland in 'Routledge Handbook of Indian Politics' (2012).

A Disaster in Waiting in the Himalayas

Jehangir Khattak

A senior Pakistani official recently issued a largely ignored statement about the environmental impact of status quo between the armies of Pakistan and India on the world's highest battleground, the *Siachen Glacier*. Some military check posts on both sides here are as high as 21,000 feet above sea level.

Presence of Indian forces on Siachen Glacier, is harmful to the environment, said Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on National Security and Foreign Affairs. "Pakistan is facing a water shortage and Indian forces are damaging one of the largest sources of water to Pakistan on a regular basis," state-run Radio Pakistan quoted Aziz as saying. He referred to the large-scale disposal of garbage and sewage by thousands of Indian soldiers that, he said, was detrimental to the glacier.

Aziz's statement may or may not be political but deserves more attention in both the countries for Siachen, also called Third Pole in the scientific community, is one of the largest sources of freshwater for the two sides.

Located near Karakoram Pass, the 76 kilometre (47.2 miles) long glacier of over two trillion cubic feet of ice is considered the second largest in the world outside the Polar region. It is claimed by both India and Pakistan. Geographically it is an unmarked snowy Himalayan wilderness near the two countries border with china. It receives about ten meters of snow each year. Its melting ice is the main source of the Nubra River in Indian controlled Ladakh, which drains into the Shyok River. The Shyok in turn joins the Indus River, which serves as a lifeline for Pakistan. The Indus Basin is the 12th largest basin in the world. The geographic layout of the area is such that it slopes towards the south and southwest. Therefore speedy melting of the Siachen Glacier increases the chances of flooding the Indus Basin and causing destructive snow avalanches on both sides of *Saltoro Ridge*.

The glacier saw militarization in 1984 when Indian army sneaked into the area and occupied strategic heights, claiming the glacier to be part of its territory. It sparked a response from Pakistan, which sent its forces and reclaimed some of

the area during intermittent heavy fighting spanning over almost two decades. But India still controls much of the glacier.

The three-decade long military engagement has produced few results for either side. The stalemate since 2003, when the two sides agreed to a ceasefire, has pitched the two armies less against each other and more against the nature. The two sides have lost more men to nature than the combat itself. Environmentalist on both sides have for long warned that global warming and the conflict are speeding up the melting of glaciers in the region, causing massive floods and depleting their largest fresh water resources.

Troops on both sides have played irrevocable havoc with the region's biodiversity, ecology and hydrology, says Arshad H. Abbasi, former director of the Planning Commission of Pakistan and now advisor to the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, a policy-oriented, research institute based in Islamabad. He says the glacier has reduced dramatically during the last 25 years and is retreating three dimensionally, thinning vertically at an alarming rate, as well as retreating horizontally, at approximately more than 100 meters per year.

In an opinion article in a leading Pakistani daily in April 2012, Abbasi referred to different studies conducted by independent groups that confirmed the shrinking Siachen, rising temperatures in Leh, Srinagar and other parts of Indian administered Kashmir and dipping temperatures in the Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan on the other side of the glacier, which till recently was part of Pakistan administered Kashmir. Not just that, the mass of major glaciers in Gilgit-Baltistan, like the 62-kilometer (40 miles) long Baltoro Glacier is also increasing.

“All these results clearly demonstrate that the glaciers in the Karakorum are behaving differently, except for the Siachen. The reports with legitimate data confirm that Siachen is melting simply because of army presence. Whosoever claims it is because of global warming, let them conduct an independent audit by a panel of credible glaciologist for the International Court of Justice so that the responsibility of 32 years-long adventure can be fixed, which has caused colossal human, financial and environmental loss. Civil societies of both the countries, and world community at large, ought to take this case to demilitarize the third polar cap of the planet.”

The region's changing weather patterns are blamed for many recent natural calamities such as the death of 140 Pakistani soldiers on April 7, 2012, when an avalanche hit an army camp at Gayari near Siachen and the 2010 floods that devastated much of Pakistan. The floods, worst in a century, killed over 2000 people, marooned over one-fifth of the country and damaged the country's tattering economy to the tune of tens of billions of dollars. India too has seen unusual weather patterns in recent years. But the two countries are still not convinced that military conflicts harm delicate environmental balances and are against their national interests.

The two countries are also less prepared to meet the climate change related disasters. Pakistan in particular has done little to modernize its water management, stop human encroachment on its waterways and build new reservoirs to conserve water, especially flood water. It might have escaped much of the destruction during 2010 floods, if it had more water storage capacity and less human encroachment in natural waterways. The country is on the verge of officially becoming water deficient and could see massive water shortages within the next two decades.

Pakistan's federal or provincial legislatures have so far done little to preserve the waterways. Controlling human encroachment on scenic waterways has never been popular in Pakistan. It may not thus be forthcoming in the foreseeable future for it's not politically popular.

Pakistan has built no large reservoir in the past four decades, since the completion of Tarbela Dam in 1974, largely because of lack of political will and consensus. It has one of the worst water storage capacities in the world — at pathetic nine percent against India's 33 percent. Limited storage capacity, few major water reservoirs in the pipeline and an old and crumbling water management infrastructure put Pakistan at greater risk of a disaster in case of an unusual weather activity. Any increase in floods will wash away topsoil, increase desertification, decrease food production and push the economy further into tailspin.

Pakistan and India don't have much time to save one of their greatest freshwater resources. Both have to better prepare for the their emerging common enemy by conserving water, improving their water management and ending humanly-induced climate change by demilitarizing the Siachen Glacier.

Sartaj Aziz has a point, which deserves more serious approach from both sides before it is too late.

Jehangir Khattak is a Co-Director, Center for Community and Ethnic Media, Graduate School of Journalism, City University of New York.

ModiFail Silicon Valley Protester Assaulted

Pieter Friedrich

Passionate crowds of protesters greeted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with loud slogans and a sea of placards upon his arrival at San Jose's SAP Center for a stage-managed Silicon Valley "community reception." The posters, chants, and surprise banner drop challenged the Modi PR team's attempts to whitewash the controversial politician's record. The protest was the culmination of a month-long campaign to educate Silicon Valley leaders and elected officials about Modi's troubling human rights record.

Protesters enacted a "die in" to dramatize the attacks against Muslims, Christians, Dalits, women, Sikhs, Kashmiris and other communities that are occurring with increasing frequency under the Modi administration. As in India, Modi die-hards threatened and attacked protesters, including Dalit and LGBTQ Indians, leaving them shaken

While peacefully protesting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, September 27 in San Jose, CA based on his orchestration of genocide of minorities, criminalization of religious liberty, and other human rights violations, I was assaulted twice.

I was not injured. But I was repeatedly pushed and shoved and touched against my will and as I repeatedly and loudly stated: "Do not touch me. You are assaulting me. Stop touching me."

The first time I was assaulted, my signs were stolen.

Modi spoke in the SAP Center across the street from a public park. A giant screen was set up on the park green to project his speech and the hours of entertainment beforehand. About 6pm, while it was still light, I walked into the park as probably a couple hundred Modi supporters sat watching the screen. Standing behind them while they sat watching the screen, I silently and peacefully stood there holding two signs — one said "Modi committed genocide" and the other "ModiFail."

A man run up behind me and grabbed the signs out of my hands. I turned around, saw him crumple them up, approached him, pointed and shouted: “Thief, thief, thief. This man assaulted me. This man stole my signs.” He then threw them on the ground and I picked them up, threw them in a trash can, walked out of the park and told an officer as I passed: “I was just assaulted.”

I went to get more signs (corrugated plastic this time) and returned, but the police had formed a ring around the park and were denying people access. I engaged with the police repeatedly, pled with them to Google Modi, told them Modi committed genocide against minorities and told them that his police officers massacred thousands of Muslims and Christians.

Someone told me that police were under orders not to speak to protesters. I spoke to one officer, asking loudly so that others could hear: “Is that true? Were you ordered not to speak to us? Did you take a vow of silence?” The man remained mute. I said: “That’s sad. Don’t you have free speech? If I had to give up my free speech in exchange for a paycheck, I would find another job.”

I then spoke to several other police officers and protesters, stating:

“You’re free to support genocide in America but not to protest it? Is this free speech? Regulated speech is not free speech. This is a public park. Don’t we have a right to be here? We want peace. We are here because we are protesting violence. The Modi supporters are initiating violence. *A foreign politician who committed genocide gets celebrated by the city but American citizens protesting it are banned from a public park.*”

I also repeatedly said to police officers: *“Please, listen to your conscience. Modi is a murderer. Google him. In the name of Jesus Christ, listen to your conscience. I can feel you are ashamed.”*

In the photo attached, you will see Modi on the big screen. The police line gave way and allowed us in - strangely - right before he took stage inside center across the street. Police several times told me and other protesters that they were there to reduce tension and prevent incidents. But nobody bought that argument.

A police lieutenant finally came down the line and, not far from me, told a sergeant they were going to allow us to “make our point.”

It was very odd timing when the police line finally gave way because it was dark by then, there were hundreds more Modi supporters, and they welcomed him with religious fervor as he came on screen — rising from a seated position on the grass and raising their hands and screaming his name.

But I walked in, with others. I walked down the sidewalk to stand directly in front of the screen so the crowd could see my new signs — one said “Atrocity Nation: #End Caste Apartheid Now” and one said “Crimes of Modi: Forcible Conversions of Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs | 2002 Massacre of Muslims” on one side and “Modi Believes in Violence Not Development” on the other side.

That was when I was assaulted for the second time.

I was in front of the screen in the park when Modi started speaking. A very large, probably 300lb man muscled up on me. He began touching me and shoving me. I told him: “Do not touch me!” He responded: “What are you going to do about it?” I said: “I want peace.” He shoved me again; again I told him not to touch me. “You are assaulting me,” I said.

“I will break you,” he threatened me. Then someone grabbed one of my two signs (the “Crimes of Modi” sign) and I walked around behind the projector, came back to the other side, gathered with protesters, and when I saw my sign was dropped on the ground in front of the projector I dodged in to retrieve it.

Then I stood and watched the crowd, many of whom tried to stare me down. I spoke to several, especially after the silence when they would applaud Modi. “Please do not applaud a mass murderer,” I said. The protester chanted “No Justice, No Peace” on portable loudspeaker just feet from the hundreds of Modi supporters who sat bedazzled by Modi. “Shame on Modi,” we also chanted.

“Modi is not God, Modi is below God,” I implored the crowd. Many people in the arena seemed uncertain, which is good because I am certain that what I was saying was true. A lot of the supporters seated nearby did not applaud when others did and they kept glancing at the line of protesters.

The police lieutenant moved down the line in-between the protesters and the Modi supporters. He came up to me, put his hands on me, and told me to move. I asked: “Where do you want me to go.” He said: “Move back two feet, you can’t block their view.” I said: “Yes, sir.” He pushed me back and I stepped back without resisting.

There were thousands of protesters present from a wide, wide, wide range of communities — myself, a Christian, as well as Sikhs, Muslims, Tamils, Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Kashmiris, Dalits, and God only knows who else. The protest was active for hours (from about 4pm - 8pm) and still going when I left. All the violence I saw was initiated by Modi supporters and I heard multiple reports of female protesters being grabbed, threatened, and intimidated.

***Pieter Friedrich** is a US-based writer, editor, and activist with a focus on world religions and history, political and religious liberty, and human rights. He is on the board of several groups, including Organization for Minorities of India.*

Researchers: Freedom From Corruption Is 'Human Right

Jeffrey Young

International law does not currently regard an act of official corruption as the violation of a human right. But as recent steps by Chinese leaders, political shifts in India, the EuroMaidan in Ukraine, and the Arab Spring all reflect, an international consensus is emerging that corruption is a pervasive and pernicious social problem, structural obstacle to economic growth and threat to global security

Many countries have laws criminalizing corruption by government officials. But two researchers associated with a leading Washington research institution go beyond that, saying that freedom from corruption should be a basic human right.

In a position paper published by The Brookings Institution, University of Richmond law professor Andrew Spalding and Center for Business Ethics and Corporate Governance co-founder Matthew Murray "argue for acknowledging freedom from official corruption as a fundamental and inalienable human right." Spalding told VOA "There has been talk about the relationship between corruption and human rights for some time. But we think corruption is more fundamental than that. Freedom from official corruption is more fundamental than many of the other rights we talk about today – and it's more universal. And we want to call the world's attention to the fact that corruption is one of the most basic human rights violations – and we should treat it that way."

Spalding rejects the view that corruption has to be accepted as an inherent human failing. "These arguments, that it is somehow 'wired' into our system, have been used to rationalize human rights abuses as well," he said. "Our argument is: Let's not start from this premise that this is part of human nature. The same arguments have been used to justify and rationalize slavery, torture [and] other systemic problems we've had through history."

Arab Spring

For example, co-author Murray said, the Arab Spring began in Tunisia with the self-immolation of a fruit and vegetable vendor who had been extorted one too many times, usually by local police.

"It happened at a time when enough people had reached enough of a sort of disillusionment and frustration with official corruption – even petty [petit] corruption – that they decided they wanted new governments," he said.

In rising up against corrupt governments, Spalding said those taking part in the Arab Spring, as well as in the Maidan uprising in Kyiv against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, reflected principles set forth by English philosopher John Locke more than 300 years ago.

"Locke said that freedom is something that can only exist in civil society," Spalding said. "Where we don't have a government that functions that way, where government is making decisions based on personal interest, not on the public good; where it is making decisions arbitrarily, [and] not based on the rule of law, there is no freedom."

And that's why there must be zero tolerance against corruption, Murray said. "In essence, you cannot condone government behaviour in any form which amounts to theft, whether it's in the form of a rigged public tender for building a new airport, or, whether it's being extorted for petty cash if you're running a fruit and vegetable stand in the middle of Tunisia," he said.

"It doesn't matter what form of activity, [or] what form the official corruption takes," Murray said. "There should be an absolute ban on it – and it should start with an affirmative statement of the individual's right to honest public service, to be able to develop and accumulate capital, [and to] protect their private property. We believe this is a universal principle."

Education

One way to help fight corruption is through education of workers, Murray said.

"You have to take certain minimum steps, and you have to improve civil servant pay, you have to educate civil servants about what a conflict of interest really is, [and] what it looks like," he said. "You have to create codes of conduct that in effect establish higher professional standards on a voluntary basis."

Still, there not one way to fight against corruption, Spalding said.

"Corruption is a problem identified across cultures, across times, across government systems," he said. "Corruption is a universal problem.... There's no 'silver bullet' to it. But we can address it, and we can reduce it in exactly the same way that we have succeeded in reducing other forms of crime."

Reframing corruption as a rights violation sends an unequivocal message to both the victims of official corruption and the perpetrators: that corruption is neither cultural nor human nature; that the state might violate that right but cannot take it away; and that the vigorous enforcement of anti-corruption measures is not only possible, but essential.

Jeffrey Young came to the "Corruption" beat after years of doing news analysis, primarily on global strategic issues

The Geopolitics of American Global Decline: US versus China

Alfred W McCoy

This is an abridged article due to space restrictions. The original was published by TomDispatch and also cross posted by Huff Post. McCoy has provided an exceptional article in a genuinely global framework.

For even the greatest of empires, geography is often destiny. You wouldn't know it in Washington, though. America's political, national security and foreign policy elites continue to ignore the basics of geopolitics that have shaped the fate of world empires for the past 500 years. Consequently, they have missed the significance of the rapid global changes in Eurasia that are in the process of undermining the grand strategy for world dominion that Washington has pursued these past seven decades.

With Washington's anointed seers strikingly obtuse on the subject of geopolitical power, perhaps it's time to get back to basics. That means returning to the foundational text of modern geopolitics, which remains an indispensable guide even though it was published in an obscure British geography journal well over a century ago.

Mackinder argued that the future of global power lay not, as most British then imagined, in controlling the global sea lanes, but in controlling a vast land mass he called "Euro-Asia." By turning the globe away from America to place central Asia at the planet's epicenter, and then tilting the Earth's axis northward just a bit beyond Mercator's equatorial projection, Mackinder redrew and thus reconceptualised the world map.

His new map showed Africa, Asia, and Europe not as three separate continents, but as a unitary land mass, a veritable "world island." Its broad, deep "heartland" -- 4,000 miles from the Persian Gulf to the Siberian Sea -- was so enormous that it could only be controlled from its "rim lands" in Eastern Europe or what he called its maritime "marginal" in the surrounding seas.

Yet the "heartland" of this vast landmass, a "pivot area" stretching from the Persian Gulf to China's Yangtze River, remained nothing less than the

Archimedean fulcrum for future world power. “Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island,” went Mackinder’s later summary of the situation. “Who rules the World-Island commands the world.” Beyond the vast mass of that world island, this made up nearly 60% of the Earth’s land area, laid a less consequential hemisphere covered with broad oceans and a few outlying “smaller islands?” He meant, of course, Australia and the Americas.

Pressed by his learned listeners to consider other facts or factors, including “air as a means of locomotion,” Mackinder responded: “My aim is not to predict a great future for this or that country, but to make a geographical formula into which you could fit any political balance.” Instead of specific events, Mackinder was reaching for a general theory about the causal connection between geography and global power. “The future of the world,” he insisted, “depends on the maintenance of [a] balance of power” between sea powers such as Britain or Japan operating from the maritime marginal and “the expansive internal forces” within the Euro-Asian heartland they were intent on containing.

Yet, for the next 110 years, Sir Halford Mackinder’s words would offer a prism of exceptional precision when it came to understanding the often obscure geopolitics driving the world’s major conflicts -- two world wars, a Cold War, America’s Asian wars (Korea and Vietnam), two Persian Gulf wars, and even the endless pacification of Afghanistan. The question today is: How can Sir Halford help us understand not only centuries past, but the half-century still to come?

By 1955, the U.S. also had a global network of 450 military bases in 36 countries aimed, in large part, at containing the Sino-Soviet bloc behind an Iron Curtain that coincided to a surprising degree with Mackinder’s “rimlands” around the Eurasian landmass. By the Cold War’s end in 1990, the encirclement of communist China and Russia required 700 overseas bases, an air force of 1,763 jet fighters, a vast nuclear arsenal, more than 1,000 ballistic missiles, and a navy of 600 ships, including 15 nuclear carrier battle groups -- all linked by the world’s only global system of communications satellites.

It was in this context that Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter, unleashed his strategy for the defeat of the Soviet Union with a sheer geopolitical agility still little understood even today. In 1979, Brzezinski, a *déclassé* Polish aristocrat uniquely attuned to his native continent’s geopolitical realities, persuaded Carter to launch Operation Cyclone

with massive funding that reached \$500 million annually by the late 1980s. Its goal: to mobilize Muslim militants to attack the Soviet Union's soft Central Asian underbelly and drive a wedge of radical Islam deep into the Soviet heartland. It was to simultaneously inflict a demoralizing defeat on the Red Army in Afghanistan and cut Eastern Europe's "rimland" free from Moscow's orbit. "We didn't push the Russians to intervene [in Afghanistan]," Brzezinski said in 1998, explaining his geopolitical masterstroke in this Cold War edition of the Great Game, "but we knowingly increased the probability that they would... That secret operation was an excellent idea. Its effect was to draw the Russians into the Afghan trap."

Yet even America's stunning victory in the Cold War with the implosion of the Soviet Union would not transform the geopolitical fundamentals of the world island. As a result, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Washington's first foreign foray in the new era would involve an attempt to re-establish its dominant position in the Persian Gulf, using Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait as a pretext.

China's Strategy

Washington's moves, in other words, represent something old, even if on a previously unimaginable scale. But the rise of China as the world's largest economy, inconceivable a century ago, represents something new and so threatens to overturn the maritime geopolitics that have shaped world power for the past 400 years. Instead of focusing purely on building a blue-water navy like the British or a global aerospace armada akin to America's, China is reaching deep within the world island in an attempt to thoroughly reshape the geopolitical fundamentals of global power. It is using a subtle strategy that has so far eluded Washington's power elites.

After decades of quiet preparation, Beijing has recently begun revealing its grand strategy for global power, move by careful move. Its two-step plan is designed to build a transcontinental infrastructure for the economic integration of the world island from within, while mobilizing military forces to surgically slice through Washington's encircling containment.

The initial step has involved a breathtaking project to put in place an infrastructure for the continent's economic integration. By laying down an elaborate and enormously expensive network of high-speed, high-volume

railroads as well as oil and natural gas pipelines across the vast breadth of Eurasia, China may realize Mackinder's vision in a new way. For the first time in history, the rapid transcontinental movement of critical cargo -- oil, minerals, and manufactured goods -- will be possible on a massive scale, thereby potentially unifying that vast landmass into a single economic zone stretching 6,500 miles from Shanghai to Madrid. In this way, the leadership in Beijing hopes to shift the locus of geopolitical power away from the maritime periphery and deep into the continent's heartland.

While such a geopolitical logic has eluded Washington, it's been well understood in Beijing. Indeed, in the last decade China has launched the world's largest burst of infrastructure investment, already a trillion dollars and counting, since Washington started the U.S. Interstate Highway System back in the 1950s. The numbers for the rails and pipelines it's been building are mind numbing. Between 2007 and 2014, China criss-crossed its countryside with 9,000 miles of new high-speed rail, more than the rest of the world combined. The system now carries 2.5 million passengers daily at top speeds of 240 miles per hour. By the time the system is complete in 2030, it will have added up to 16,000 miles of high-speed track at a cost of \$300 billion, linking all of China's major cities.

Simultaneously, China's leadership began collaborating with surrounding states on a massive project to integrate the country's national rail network into a transcontinental grid. Starting in 2008, the Germans and Russians joined with the Chinese in launching the "Eurasian Land Bridge." Two east-west routes, the old Trans-Siberian in the north and a new southern route along the ancient Silk Road through Kazakhstan are meant to bind all of Eurasia together. On the quicker southern route, containers of high-value manufactured goods, computers, and auto parts started travelling 6,700 miles from Leipzig, Germany, to Chongqing, China, in just 20 days, about half the 35 days such goods now take via ship.

In 2013, Deutsche Bahn AG (German Rail) began preparing a third route between Hamburg and Zhengzhou that has now cut travel time to just 15 days, while Kazakh Rail opened a Chongqing-Duisburg link with similar times. In October 2014, China announced plans for the construction of the world's longest high-speed rail line at a cost of \$230 billion. According to plans, trains will traverse the 4,300 miles between Beijing and Moscow in just two days.

In addition, China is building two spur lines running southwest and due south toward the world island's maritime "marginal." In April, President Xi Jinping signed an agreement with Pakistan to spend \$46 billion on a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Highway, rail links, and pipelines will stretch nearly 2,000 miles from Kashgar in Xinjiang, China's westernmost province, to a joint port facility at Gwadar, Pakistan, opened back in 2007. China has invested more than \$200 billion in the building of this strategic port at Gwadar on the Arabian Sea, just 370 miles from the Persian Gulf. Starting in 2011, China also began extending its rail lines through Laos into Southeast Asia at an initial cost of \$6.2 billion. In the end, a high-speed line is expected to take passengers and goods on a trip of just 10 hours from Kunming to Singapore.

CNPC opened a Sino-Myanmar pipeline in 2013 to carry both Middle Eastern oil and Burmese natural gas 1,500 miles from the Bay of Bengal to China's remote south-western region. In May 2014, the company signed a \$400 billion, 30-year deal with the privatized Russian energy giant Gazprom to deliver 38 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually by 2018 via a still-to-be-completed northern network of pipelines across Siberia and into Manchuria.

Though massive, these projects are just part of an ongoing construction boom that, over the past five years, has woven a cat's cradle of oil and gas lines across Central Asia and south into Iran and Pakistan. The result will soon be an integrated inland energy infrastructure, including Russia's own vast network of pipelines, extending across the whole of Eurasia, from the Atlantic to the South China Sea.

Finally, Beijing has only recently revealed a deftly designed strategy for neutralizing the military forces Washington has arrayed around the continent's perimeter. In April, President Xi Jinping announced construction of that massive road-rail-pipeline corridor direct from western China to its new port at Gwadar, Pakistan, creating the logistics for future naval deployments in the energy-rich Arabian Sea.

At the same time, Beijing is developing plans to challenge Washington's dominion over space and cyberspace. It expects, for instance, to complete its own global satellite system by 2020, offering the first challenge to Washington's dominion over space since the U.S. launched its system of 26 defense communication satellites back in 1967. Simultaneously, Beijing is building a formidable capacity for cyber warfare.

In a decade or two, should the need arise, China will be ready to surgically slice through Washington's continental encirclement at a few strategic points without having to confront the full global might of the U.S. military, potentially rendering the vast American armada of carriers, cruisers, drones, fighters, and submarines redundant.

Lacking the geopolitical vision of Mackinder and his generation of British imperialists, America's current leadership has failed to grasp the significance of a radical global change underway inside the Eurasian land mass. If China succeeds in linking its rising industries to the vast natural resources of the Eurasian heartland, then quite possibly, as Sir Halford Mackinder predicted on that cold London night in 1904, "the empire of the world would be in sight."

Alfred W. McCoy, a TomDispatch regular, holds the Harrington Chair in History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the editor of Endless Empire: Spain's Retreat, Europe's Eclipse, America's Decline and the author of Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State, among other works.

Indian Government, Modi and RSS

Siddharth Varadarajan

What makes the axis between the government and the RSS so problematic is not just its extra-constitutionality but the sheer incompatibility of the RSS and its ideology with a democratic, inclusive polity and society.

A bizarre political spectacle took place in Delhi this week that no amount of sophistry can square with the principles of a modern democratic republic.

A ‘cultural’ organisation known as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh held a conclave for which it summoned top ministers of the Narendra Modi government to present themselves and provide an account of the official work they have been doing over the past 15 months. Among those who turned up was the Prime Minister himself, as well as the Defence Minister and the Home Minister.

This axis between the government and the RSS is unhealthy for the obvious reason that it represents a classic case of what con artists call ‘bait and switch’.

Millions of men and women, especially the young, voted in 2014 for Modi and his promises of development and not for a shadowy, all-male, all-Hindu organisation that has never presented itself for election in the 90-odd years it has been in existence. Modi asked for votes in the name of *vikas* and not in the name of Hindutva, but the RSS clearly has a lot more on its mind.

Voters are entitled to ask who these secretive little men are who appear to be wielding so much clout from behind the scenes. What is the extent of their hold over the government? What is the nature of the remote control they clasp so firmly in their hands? What is the agenda they want the government to pursue?

During the Manmohan Singh period, the Bharatiya Janata Party went to town over the “extra-constitutional” authority Congress president Sonia Gandhi wielded in the United Progressive Alliance government. They attacked her hand-picked team of associates – the National Advisory Council – for involving itself in matters of policy. The NAC was at least established through an executive order. Where does the RSS draw its sanction from? The September

3-4 forum is arguably the most visible association between the government and the Sangh Parivar we have seen to date but we know from the functioning of various ministers and ministries that RSS functionaries are “consulted” on an almost continuous basis.

What makes this axis especially problematic is not just its extra-constitutionality but the sheer incompatibility of the RSS and its ideology with a democratic, inclusive polity and society.

Consider the following, for example. The RSS organ, *Organiser*, carries an article this week on the census and religion by Pravin Togadia, the working president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The article is vicious and poisonous – even by the toxic standards of the *Organiser*. Togadia indulges in the usual fear-mongering about Hindus going extinct if urgent steps are not taken to curb the growth of the Muslim population in India. (That this is utter rubbish has been well demonstrated here, here and here.) Among the steps he proposes to fight this so-called ‘population jihad’ is to ban Muslims from having more than two children:

“[The government] must also implement the two-child norm irrespective of the political pressures. Rather than subsidising each birth of a Muslim kid, it is must that after two children, there has to be the strictest curb. Perhaps a punishable criminal offence and stopping the ration, jobs, and educational facilities will streamline the population facilitation towards better development.”

What Togadia is advocating through the pages of the RSS newspaper – the imposition of “measures intended to prevent births within [a national, ethnical, racial or religious] group” – is nothing less than an act of genocide as per Article 2(c) of the Genocide Convention, to which India is a signatory.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his senior ministers flock to an event organised by the RSS – an organisation that publishes articles advocating genocide of a section of the Indian people – what does this tell us about their own political wisdom and moral compass? Can one think of a single example from a modern democracy in which elected leaders will allow themselves to be seen in the company of a ‘cultural’ organisation that publishes and promotes such incendiary filth?

Is the Prime Minister not embarrassed to associate himself with such an organisation? Or does he accept the RSS division of Indians into ‘Bharatiya Religionists’ – i.e. Hindus, Sikhs, Jain and Buddhists – on the one side, and Muslims and Christians on the other, and share the fears the Sangh clearly has that Hindus will soon be reduced to a minority?

We know that in his earlier avatar, Modi was not averse to a bit of a demographic scaremongering himself.

Back in 2002, in the run up to the Gujarat assembly elections that year, Modi, as Chief Minister went to the temple town of Becharaji in Mehsana district for a rally. In his speech, he made fun of Muslims living in relief camps – they were there, ironically, as a result of the communal violence he failed to prevent – and made a crude, inflammatory reference to Muslim men having four wives and producing 25 children:

“When we allocate funds for Becharaji, [the Congress] do not like it. And if we bring Narmada waters in the month of Shravan, then too they say they dislike it. So what should we do? Do we go and run relief camps? Should we open child-producing centres?

“We want to firmly implement family planning. *Hum paanch, humare pachees* (We five, our 25) (laughs). Who will benefit from this development? Is family planning not necessary in Gujarat? Where does religion come in its way? Where does community come in its way?

“The population is rising in Gujarat, money isn’t reaching the poor? What’s the reason? They make a beeline; fix cycle punctures (Audience laughs).”

This speech was delivered on September 9, 2002. When reports appeared in Delhi and the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) asked the Gujarat government for a transcript, it was told that there was no record. However, an upright police officer by the name of RB Sreekumar, who was ADGP (Intelligence) at the time, obtained a transcript and sent it on to the NCM. He paid for his ‘disloyalty’ with a transfer; later, false cases were foisted upon him. In a curious coincidence, the Gujarat High Court on Friday cleared the decks for Sreekumar’s prosecution by the Gujarat government on charges that

include, you guessed it, leaking sensitive information! But that's a story for another day.

Since every saint has a past and every sinner a future, the electorate in 2014 made a tactical decision to ignore whatever Modi did or did not do in 2002. But that wilful act of mass amnesia was underwritten by an implicit social contract – give us economic growth and jobs, and do not let India be dragged back to the divisiveness and violence of the previous decade. That is why the election campaign Modi fought, with minor exceptions here and there, stuck closely to the rhetoric of development. The RSS agenda and mentality – which people recognise as a recipe for violence – was kept tightly under wraps. As soon as the results were out, of course, the Sangh Parivar emerged out of the woodwork. Since then, it has been doing its best to sow divisions under one pretext or the other – love jihad, conversions, *ghar wapsi*, the beef ban, and now 'population jihad'.

The Prime Minister hates to talk about the past and who can fault him for that. But if he makes the mistake of allowing his government to be freighted with the agenda of the RSS, he will drag not only himself and his government down but the country too – into the quicksand of bigotry, division and strife.

Siddharth Varadarajan is an Indian American journalist, editor, and academic. He is the former editor of The Hindu, one of India's leading English language newspapers

Refugees Don't Cause Fascism Timmermann – You Do

Dan Glazebrook

Europe needs to fascisise its policies, because if it doesn't - fascism will grow. This was the message from Frans Timmerman, Vice-President of the European Commission following last week's fraught negotiations over the so-called refugee crisis. "We have to patrol our borders better", he told reporters on Thursday. "If we're not able to tackle this issue, if we're not able to find sustainable solutions, you will see a surge of the extreme right across the European continent."

Sustainable solutions are, of course, available, and always have been; namely 1) stop destabilizing Africa and the Middle East: which means, precisely, stop arming sectarian insurgencies (Syria, Libya and Somalia), stop sabotaging diplomatic solutions by insisting on one side's surrender as a precondition to talks ('Assad must go') and stop forcing vulnerable economies to adopt regressive neoliberal policies which impoverish small producers ('structural adjustment programmes') and 'free trade areas'); and 2) implement the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, and give refuge to all those fleeing persecution and war. If tiny Lebanon - with its population of 4.5 million and a GDP of less than one third of one percent of that of the EU - can take in 1.5million refugees, one would have thought the EU – more populous and wealthier than any country on the planet – could manage a few hundred thousand.

But this is not what Timmerman is talking about. Having failed to reach consensus on taking in even a token fraction of the refugees arriving on Europe's shores, the talk is now of a more or less formal acceptance of the 'Hungarian solution' – razor wire fences surrounding fortress Europe. "After weeks of condemnation over the border fence," noted the Daily Telegraph last week, "EU officials now appear to concede that [Hungarian Prime Minister] Viktor Orban has a point".

Using the spectre of the far right to justify the wholesale adoption of their policies is nothing new, with elections across Europe increasingly resembling 'racist auctions': each party trying to outbid the others in their hostility to migrants, and always on the grounds that, if they do not, the far right will reap

the benefits. 'We will ban their benefits for two years' announced the Labour party manifesto before this year's election in the UK, 'Well we will ban them for FOUR years' rebuffed the Conservatives - neither divulging that the proportion of migrants actually on benefits is barely 1/20, compared to 2/3 of all British families.

Besides, Timmerman is profoundly wrong. Refugees do not cause the growth of the far-right any more than Jews 'caused' Nazism. In *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Robert Paxton argues that fascism rests on "popular feelings about master races, their unjust lot and their rightful predominance over inferior people." More precisely, he describes it as a mass emotional response to national humiliation and decline which blames internal enemies for weakening the nation's power. This humiliation is usually caused by military defeat and a decline in global status and power, and is accompanied by economic upheaval for previously privileged sections of the 'masses', who resent being pushed into the ranks of the proletariat, and seek to restore their previous position.

This was obviously the situation in 1930s Germany and Italy. Italy, although on the winning side of World War One at that war's conclusion, was denied the fruits of victory it had been promised by its allies – an outcome blamed by the nascent fascist movement on the socialists and communists who had weakened the nation sufficiently to make it ripe for bullying by the other 'Great Powers'. At the same time, it was suffering from economic crisis and unemployment – especially amongst former soldiers – again blamed on 'communist disruption'. Germany was in a similar position, forced by its vanquishers to sign a humiliating peace treaty, and was by the 1930s suffering some of the highest levels of unemployment in Europe. Both calamities were blamed on 'Jewish Bolsheviks' who had, the Nazis claimed, stabbed the army in the back with their 'unnecessary' surrender at Versailles, and then subsequently wrecked the country's economy with their control of both high finance and the trade unions.

The key in both cases was that fascism tapped into an emotional pride that could not accept that national decline was simply the result of the nation's relative weakness. There had to be another explanation – an enemy within that had weakened the nation by diluting its inherent strength. National strength could, following this logic, be rejuvenated so long as the internal enemy was extinguished. This is the core of fascism. And very similar objective conditions

to those that facilitated the growth of fascism in Germany and Italy in the 1930s are also present across Europe today.

Europe today – having spent five hundred years building up a self-aggrandising mythology of itself as the font of civilization and all that is good in the world – is now in the throes of a multi-pronged crisis, at once political, economic, military and ideological. On the political level, the rise of the BRICS countries, and especially China, is threatening the world's domination by Europe and the European settler states (the US, Australia and Canada), and this threat is increasingly manifest in every global institution – from the IMF to the World Bank and the UN. On the economic level, global capitalism is still in the throes of the crisis whose latest phase began in 2007-8; with the result that long term mass unemployment is now a permanent and growing feature of every European country at the same time as the welfare safety net for the jobless is being ever more viciously slashed away. And whilst the military defeat of Britain and some of its European allies in Afghanistan and Iraq is hardly the same level of trauma as defeat in world war, it is worth noting that the main fascist street movement in Britain today, the English Defence League, has its roots precisely in the rituals around returning soldiers from Afghanistan.

The result is that the masses of Western Europe – who have, since at least 1945, enjoyed a highly privileged position amongst the global working class – are now seeing their economic privileges evaporating, their nations' power being challenged across the globe, and their armies being forced into unseemly retreats everywhere they venture.

All of this is the inexorable unfolding of global capitalism – whose development compels the whole world to simultaneously adopt its techniques (resulting in national competition and the rise of new global powers), lower its costs, cut its workforce - and thereby also cut the demand that underpins the whole system. This ultimately is what caused the dislocations both in the 1930s and today.

Not to the fascist, though. For the fascist, national decline must be caused by the presence of the enemy within – a 'foreign body' infecting the national purity which, if regained, will again restore the nation to its rightfully privileged global status. A scapegoat is essential to fascist ideology.

But this scapegoat has to be very precisely chosen. It must at once symbolize the new powers deemed to be usurping the chosen people's rightful place in the global hierarchy, but simultaneously be vulnerable enough to be the target of attacks at home. For Hitler, the Jew met both these criteria, representing the powerful external 'Soviet threat' (of 'Jewish Bolshevism') whilst being a group easy to persecute on home soil. Likewise, the scapegoat must represent the middle class fear of expropriation from both 'above' and 'below' - once again, for Hitler, the Jew worked perfectly, symbolizing the threat to small businesses represented by big business and banking and by communism – for, in Nazi mythology, the Jew controlled both.

In today's Europe, the Muslim plays precisely the role played by the Jew in the 1930s. The Muslim fills the ranks of the despised poor in Europe's inner cities – always on the verge of rebellion and political radicalism, the 'Jewish Bolshevik' of his day – but is also the 'Arab tycoon' – buying up London, pricing out ordinary folks, and manipulating oil prices. The Muslim is the internal enemy, weakening the national spirit from within, whilst also representing the rising powers abroad.

This is the fascist worldview. The objective conditions for its acceptance are relative national decline; economic crisis, poverty and unemployment; and military defeat. The subjective conditions are hundreds of years of ideological brainwashing that Europe is the font of civilization, uniquely innovative and progressive, destined to dominate the world and entitled to permanently privileged living standards. Refugees are not responsible for any of these conditions, Mr Timmerman. But you, and your entire political class, have exacerbated all of them.

Dan Glazebrook is author of Divide and Ruin: The West's Imperial Strategy in an Age of Crisis. He is a political writer and journalist. He writes regularly on international relations and the use of state violence in British domestic and foreign policy

Terrorism's saffron fault line

Latha Jishnu

COLOURS have strong associations and tend to be coded in our psyche. They are linked, sometimes inexorably, to our politics, culture and social biases. The way we respond to people, events and situations is prompted by the colour coding embedded in us, however subtly these triggers might work. Often our responses symbolise rank prejudice.

Right-wing demagogue Bal Thackeray who founded the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, a party known for its lumpen politics and close association with the BJP, used to profess a fanatical hatred of all things green because he claimed the colour represented “them”, the way he usually referred to Pakistan. At one time Thackeray even ordered his minions to stop the renovation of a suburban railway station in Mumbai because it was being painted green!

Once he also criticised his BJP ally for having a green and saffron party flag; Shiv Sena, he boasted, had only saffron in its flag as a truly Hindu party. Saffron, or Kesariya, one of the defining colours of the Indian flag, was chosen after much debate to denote “renunciation or disinterestedness”. But given its recent history of being identified with Hindu resurgence, it is unlikely that many Indians can tell the difference.

India can hardly rail against Pakistan given its own lackluster record in countering saffron terror.

Saffron now carries the indelible imprint of BJP's aggressive brand of religious-political chauvinism, particularly in the wake of the 2002 communal carnage in Gujarat when sword-wielding killers sported saffron headbands, stoles and pennants. It has thus become the default term for anything to do with Hindu supremacist politics and actions although the BJP has vigorously denounced this usage, especially in relation to terrorism.

In 2010, Congress Home Minister P. Chidambaram described the series of blasts set off by fanatical Hindu outfits in Malegaon, Ajmer Sharif, at Hyderabad's Mecca Masjid and on the Samjhota Express as "saffron terror". Initially, investigators had assumed these blasts were the handiwork of jihadists and had arrested several Muslim men until the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) headed by a conscientious officer named Hemant Karkare stumbled, rather fortuitously, on the truth.

Karkare found the terrorist network consisted of Hindus who fitted a certain saffron profile: cadres from the RSS, the ideological fount of the BJP, ex-army officers and followers of V. D. Savarkar, the controversial leader of the Hindu Mahasbaha. Karkare, unfortunately, was killed by a more lethal set of terrorists who unleashed the horrific Mumbai attack, allegedly masterminded by Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi.

But Karkare, although he met with hostility from senior BJP leaders, pursued the cases of saffron terror starting with the Malegaon blasts. As a precaution he got Rohini Salian, a public prosecutor with a formidable reputation for fairness and integrity, as special prosecutor to handle these cases.

It is Salian's recent revelation that has let the cat out of the bag. Salian told the Indian Express that she had come under pressure from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), the nodal agency handling terrorism, to go soft on the Malegaon blast case soon after Modi came to power in Delhi in May 2014. Salian's stunning disclosure that the NIA had told her she should not try to get favourable verdicts for the state against the accused could not have come at a worse time. It coincided with a setback in late June for India at the UN Security Council when China blocked India's demand for action against Pakistan for releasing Lakhvi from jail.

Diplomatic commentators have noted that India is hardly in a position to rail against its neighbour's lukewarm response to the Lakhvi case given its own lackluster record on pursuing cases of saffron terror. What Salian's interview has done is to focus the spotlight on how many such cases are being undermined. For instance, in the case of the blasts at the Ajmer dargah in 2007 which killed three people and injured 17, all key witnesses have retracted their statements recorded before the ATS and a judicial magistrate. This occurred in June 2014 within weeks of the BJP being sworn in. In the Mecca Masjid blasts,

the accused have been given bail but the NIA has not challenged this, allegedly at the behest of the government.

So brazen is the BJP about protecting its own that Randhir Singh, a key prosecution witness in the Ajmer case who turned hostile recently, has been made agriculture minister in the BJP government in Jharkhand — a classic example of how saffron will be the undoing of democratic values.

India has suffered grievously from terrorist acts, and Modi has made the global fight against terrorism a key plank of his foreign policy — just recently he was beating this drum in the five Central Asian states that he visited and in the Russian city of Ufa. However, a marked disinclination to pursue, nay, protect, terrorists of a certain stripe would destroy the credibility India enjoys. You cannot afford to throw stones if you live in a glass house.

There is also the larger issue of strategic concerns that the current regime ignores as it jousts with its familiar demons. Modi has made the Chinese action at the UN a public issue, presumably to play to his domestic gallery. First, there was a missive to Chinese President Xi from Delhi to tell him how hurt the Indian people were, and then it was raised on the sidelines of the SCO and BRICS summits in Ufa. This has only betrayed India's gauche handling of the issue at a time when the situation in Afghanistan is of paramount concern for the big powers. It is doubtful if China alone among the veto-holding members had blocked India's move against Pakistan since it is well known that none of the permanent members of the Security Council would have wanted action against Pakistan at this juncture.

The Chinese have politely but firmly told India how it should handle terrorism. Hinting that the kind of grandstanding that Modi has been indulging in was not productive, Beijing has suggested the issue should be discussed in the India-China joint mechanism on terrorism. It also emphasised that its stand was based on "facts" and in the spirit of "objectiveness and fairness".

Can India make the same claim? To fight terrorism it should be colour blind.

Latha Jishnu is Senior Editor, Down To Earth

Scholar Casts New Light on Hindu-Muslim relations

Marguerite Rigoglioso

Stanford Scholar Audrey Truschke research paints a far different picture than common perceptions, which assume that the Muslim presence has always been hostile to Indian languages, religions and culture. A leading scholar of South Asian cultural and intellectual history, Truschke argues that this more divisive interpretation actually developed during the colonial period from 1757 to 1947.

The British benefited from pitting Hindus and Muslims against one another and portrayed themselves as neutral saviours who could keep ancient religious conflicts at bay," she says. "While colonialism ended in the 1940s, the modern Hindu right has found tremendous political value in continuing to proclaim and create endemic Hindu-Muslim conflict.

Mughal artwork depicts Emperor Akbar presiding over discussions in the Hall of Religious Debate, ca. 1600. Stanford Scholar Audrey Truschke says her research shows that much of the current religious conflict in India has been fuelled by ideological assumptions about the Mughal period rather than an accurate rendering of the subcontinent's history.

In recent years, as tensions between Hindus and Muslims have mounted, India's government has been accused of instigating or condoning numerous acts of violence against Muslims.

Popular thought in India holds that the origin of this conflict goes back centuries to medieval times, when Muslims expanded into the Indian subcontinent.

According to Audrey Truschke, a Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Religious Studies, however, much of the current religious conflict in India has been fuelled by ideological assumptions about that period rather than an accurate rendering of the subcontinent's history.

In her new book, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming), Truschke says that the heyday of

Muslim rule in India from the 16th to 18th centuries was, in fact, one of "tremendous cross-cultural respect and fertilization," not religious or cultural conflict.

In her study of Sanskrit and Persian accounts of life under the powerful Islamic dominion known as the Mughal Empire, she provides the first detailed account of India's religious intellectuals during this period.

Her research paints a far different picture than common perceptions, which assume that the Muslim presence has always been hostile to Indian languages, religions and culture. A leading scholar of South Asian cultural and intellectual history, Truschke argues that this more divisive interpretation actually developed during the colonial period from 1757 to 1947.

"The British benefited from pitting Hindus and Muslims against one another and portrayed themselves as neutral saviours who could keep ancient religious conflicts at bay," she says. *"While colonialism ended in the 1940s, the modern Hindu right has found tremendous political value in continuing to proclaim and create endemic Hindu-Muslim conflict."*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party has been criticized for being anti-Muslim. Modi was chief minister of Gujarat state, where in 2002 Hindu mobs killed more than 1,000 Muslims; he was widely blamed for failing to stem the violence. As a result, the United States denied Modi a visa for more than a decade until 2014 when it became clear that Modi would be India's next prime minister.

Truschke argues that the ideology underpinning such violence – one that Modi himself openly embraces – erroneously "erases Mughal history and writes religious conflict into Indian history where there was none, thereby fuelling and justifying modern religious intolerance."

Her work shows that the Muslim impulse in India was not aimed at dominating Indian culture or Hinduism. She hopes her findings "will provide a solid historiographical basis for intervention in modern, political rewritings of the Indian past."

Correcting the record

Truschke, one of the few living scholars with competence in both Sanskrit and Persian, is the first scholar to study texts from both languages in exploring the courtly life of the Mughals. The Mughals ruled a great swath of the Indian subcontinent from the early 16th to the mid-18th centuries, building great monuments like the Taj Mahal.

Over several months in Pakistan and 10 months in India, Truschke travelled to more than two dozen archives in search of manuscripts. She was able to analyze the Mughal elite's diverse interactions with Sanskrit intellectuals in a way not previously done.

She has accessed, for example, six histories that follow Jain monks at the Mughal court as they accompanied Mughal kings on expeditions, engaged in philosophical and religious debates, and lived under the empire's rule. These works collectively run to several thousand pages, and none have been translated into English.

Truschke found that high-level contact between learned Muslims and Hindus was marked by collaborative encounters across linguistic and religious lines.

She said her research overturns the assumption that the Mughals were hostile to traditional Indian literature or knowledge systems. In fact, her findings reveal how Mughals supported and engaged with Indian thinkers and ideas.

Early modern-era Muslims were in fact "deeply interested in traditional Indian learning, which is largely housed in Sanskrit," says Truschke, who is teaching religion courses at Stanford through 2016 in association with her fellowship.

Hybrid political identity

Truschke's book focuses on histories and poetry detailing interactions among Mughal elites and intellectuals of the Brahmin (Hindu) and Jain religious groups, particularly during the height of Mughal power from 1560 through 1650.

As Truschke discovered, the Mughal courts in fact sought to engage with Indian culture. They created Persian translations of Sanskrit works, especially those they perceived as histories, such as the two great Sanskrit epics.

For their part, upper-caste Hindus known as Brahmins and members of the Jain tradition – one of India's most ancient religions – became influential members of the Mughal court, composed Sanskrit works for Mughal readers and wrote about their imperial experiences.

"The Mughals held onto power in part through force, just like any other empire," Truschke acknowledges, "but you have to be careful about attributing that aggression to religious motivations." The empire her research uncovers was not intent on turning India into an Islamic state.

"The Mughal elite poured immense energy into drawing Sanskrit thinkers to their courts, adopting and adapting Sanskrit-based practices, translating dozens of Sanskrit texts into Persian and composing Persian accounts of Indian philosophy."

Such study of Hindu histories, philosophies and religious stories helped the Persian-speaking imperialists forge a new hybrid political identity, she asserts.

Truschke is working on her next book, a study of Sanskrit histories of Islamic dynasties in India more broadly.

Indian history, especially during Islamic rule, she says, is very much alive and debated today. Moreover, a deliberate misreading of this past "undergirds the actions of the modern Indian nation-state," she asserts.

And at a time of conflict between the Indian state and its Muslim population, Truschke says, "It's invaluable to have a more informed understanding of that history and the deep mutual interest of early modern Hindus and Muslims in one another's traditions."

Scholar Audrey Truschke says we should not make the error of attributing Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's lack of interest in Sanskrit to his alleged bigotry

*In an email interview, Audrey Truschke, Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University, shares with **Anuradha Raman** the experiences of writing her book, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court*, to be published in February 2016, and argues forcefully in favour of acknowledging diversity in India.*

The present Bharatiya Janata Party government believes Mughals are not part of India's history. Your book is about how Sanskrit, sought to be made mainstream by the government, flourished under the Mughals. How do we reconcile the two?

We don't reconcile the two perspectives. Rather, we ask two key questions. One, who is on firmer historical ground in their claims? Two, what are the political reasons for the BJP wanting to erase the Mughals (or at least most of the Mughals) from India's past? The bulk of my work concerns the honest excavation of history. The Mughals are a significant part of Indian history, and Sanskrit is a significant part of the story of the Mughal Empire. Those facts may be inconvenient for the BJP and others, but as a historian I do not temper my investigation of the past in deference to present-day concerns. However, I realise that history matters in the present, perhaps especially in modern South Asia. One present-day implication of my work is to point up the flimsy basis of the BJP's version of India's past.

In an ironical way, as the present government fights to push Sanskrit into mainstream discourse, your work concentrates on the Mughals, whom the BJP dislikes, and their engagement with Sanskrit.

The BJP only wants a certain version of Sanskrit in the mainstream. They no doubt love Kalidasa, but I cannot imagine the BJP endorsing students to read the Sanskrit accounts of the Mughals written by Jains in the 16th and 17th centuries. India has a great treasure in its Sanskrit tradition, but that treasure is not only classical poetry and the Indian epics, but also the immense diversity of Sanskrit literature.

Who were the Mughal rulers under whom there was active exchange of Sanskrit and Persian ideas, in your account?

Sanskrit flourished in the royal Mughal court primarily under three emperors: Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan. However, we should not make the error of attributing Aurangzeb's lack of interest in Sanskrit to his alleged bigotry. Aurangzeb is a severely misunderstood historical figure who has suffered perhaps more than any of the other Mughal rulers from present-day biases. There are two main reasons why Sanskrit ceased to be a major part of Mughal imperial life during Aurangzeb's rule. One, during the 17th century, Sanskrit was slowly giving way to Hindi. This was a wider literary shift in the subcontinent, and even under Shah Jahan we begin to see imperial attention directed towards Hindi-language intellectuals at the expense of Sanskrit. Aurangzeb's reign simply happen to coincide with the waning of Sanskrit and the rise of literary Hindi.

Second, as most Indians know, Aurangzeb beat out Dara Shikoh for the Mughal throne. Dara Shikoh had been engaged in a series of cross-cultural exchanges involving Sanskrit during the 1640s and 1650s. Thus, from Aurangzeb's perspective, breaking Mughal ties with the Sanskrit cultural world was a way to distinguish his idioms of rule from those of the previous heir apparent. In short, Aurangzeb decided to move away from what little remained of the Mughal interest in Sanskrit as a political decision, rather than as a cultural or religious judgment.

As a side note, let me clarify that while Akbar inaugurated Mughal engagements with Sanskrit, he did so for slightly different reasons than many people think. Akbar's reputation is that he was open-minded and tolerant, almost a protosecular figure. This can be a misleading characterisation. Akbar was interested in Sanskrit for its political valence in his empire, not as some personal religious quest. Akbar also had no qualms about harshly judging perspectives that he viewed as beyond the pale. A good example is that he questioned Jain thinkers about whether they were monotheists because to be otherwise would mean being evicted from the Mughal court (Jains assured him that they believed in God).

What was the interaction between the Mughal elites and Brahmin Hindus and Jain religious groups like?

Brahmans, for example, assisted with Mughal translations of Sanskrit texts into Persian. The method was that Brahmans would read the Sanskrit text, verbally translate it into Hindi (their shared language with the Mughals), and then the Mughals would write down the translation in Persian. Jains and Brahmans alike assisted the Mughals with astrology. Brahmans cast Sanskrit-based horoscopes for the Mughal royal family. On at least one occasion, Jains performed a ceremony to counteract an astrological curse on Jahangir's newborn daughter. My forthcoming book, *Culture of Encounters*, devotes an entire chapter to reconstructing the social history of links between Mughal elites and Brahmans/Jains.

You argue that the ideology underpinning violence — such as what took place in the 2002 pogrom, in which more than 1,000 Muslims died, or the current intolerance towards them — erases Mughal history and writes religious conflicts into Indian history where there was none, thereby justifying modern religious intolerance. Is it correct to then deduce that there was no religious conflict in the court of the Mughals?

No. First, there was plenty of violence in Mughal India. Violence and conflict are enduring features of the human experience and I would never suggest otherwise. Even under Akbar, violence was commonplace. A far trickier question, however, is, how much Mughal-led violence was religious-based or motivated by religious conflicts? Generally, the Mughals acted violently towards political foes (whether they were Rajput, Muslim, Hindu, or otherwise was irrelevant). It is very difficult for many modern people to accept that violence in pre-modern India was rarely religiously motivated. In this sense, pre-colonial India looked very different than pre-modern Europe, for example. But we lack historical evidence that the Mughals attacked religious foes. On the contrary, some scholars have even suggested that modern “Western” ideas about religious toleration were, in part, inspired by what early European travellers witnessed in the Mughal Empire.

That said, there were limited instances when the Mughals persecuted specific individuals over religious differences. A good example is that Akbar sent a few of the Muslim *ulema* on hajj to Mecca, which meant that they were effectively exiled from the court. Some of these *ulema* were murdered on their way out of India.

Is there a problem with a Marxist interpretation of history as is being argued now by the BJP government?

Marxist history is limiting, in my opinion. This strain of thought tends to emphasise social class and economic factors in determining historical trajectories. Modern historians have a much wider range of approaches at their disposal that better situate us to understand other aspects of the past.

Mughal history is such a contentious part of history in the Hindu nationalist imagination. How do you propose to shed light, and create space for a scholarly engagement with the period? It also comes at a time when there is a wave of revisionism in India.

My approach is that of a historian. I seek primary sources from numerous languages and archives, read deeply in secondary scholarship, and attempt to reconstruct the most accurate vision of pre-colonial India possible. My work has plenty of present-day implications, but those come secondary and explicitly after the serious historical work. This approach is unappealing to many in modern India (and across the world). It is painstaking, requires specialist knowledge, can be slow, and often leads to nuanced conclusions. But there are also plenty of people, non-academics, who view what is going on in modern India with scepticism. For those who want it, my work offers a historically sound foundation for challenging modern political efforts to revise the past.

What are the dangers of rewriting history?

So far as the dangers of rewriting history and subscribing to narrow interpretations of specific texts, there are many risks. One is that we risk rising intolerance going forward, something already witnessed on both popular and elite levels in 21st century India. Another risk is that we cheapen the past. India has a glorious history and one of the richest literary inheritances of any place on earth — it would be unfortunate to constrict our minds to the point where we can no longer appreciate these treasures.

You argue that “a more divisive interpretation of the relationship between the Mughals and Hindus actually developed during the colonial period from 1757 to 1947”, a legacy that the present Modi government appears to

have inherited. But while the British positioned themselves as neutral saviours, who will emerge as the neutral saviours now?

In the BJP vision, I believe that the new saviour is the BJP itself and affiliated Hindu nationalist groups that will restore India to its proper, true nature as a land for Hindus. This is an appealing ideology for many people, which is part of what makes it so dangerous. I maintain that India's greatness is found in its astonishing diversity, not some invented, anachronistic, monolithic Hindu past. Part of the sad irony of the BJP's emphasis on rewriting Indian history is precisely that India has a deep and compelling history, which so many seem intent to ignore

India Planned military strikes on Pakistan Nuclear Installation-CIA Report

Indian Express and Times of India

The first woman prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi, considered a military strike on Pakistan's nuclear installations to prevent it from acquiring weapons capabilities, a declassified CIA document has claimed.

Indian Express. The consideration to strike Pakistan's nukes was being made when the US was in an advanced stage of providing its F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, according to a document titled India's Reaction to Nuclear Developments in Pakistan' and dated September 8, 1981.

"In the extreme case, if Indian concerns increase over the next two or three months, we believe the conditions could be ripe for a decision by Prime Minister Gandhi to instigate a military confrontation with Pakistan, primarily to provide a framework for destroying Pakistan's nuclear facilities," the report claimed.

An edited version of the 12-page document which was published on CIA's website in June this year states that the then Indian government led by Gandhi in 1981 was concerned about the progress made by Pakistan on its nuclear weapons programme and believed that Islamabad was steps away from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

According to the report, as Pakistan was in an advanced stage of producing plutonium and highly enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons, Gandhi evidently responded to the threat by authorising Indian nuclear test preparations.

"In February (1981), excavation was begun in the Thar desert to permit the underground explosion of an Indian test device on short notice," the CIA said, adding that in May, preparations had been completed by India for a 40-kiloton nuclear test.

“Evidently, the Indian Government calculated that a Pakistani nuclear explosion per se would not constitute a national security threat, and that the damage to India’s image of pre-eminence in the region could be minimised by a resumption of the peaceful nuclear explosive (PNE) programme,” the report added.

However, at the time the report was published, the CIA said Gandhi had not taken any such decision in that regard. “Our best estimate, however, is that India will follow a wait and see strategy.”

Further, it said, “Prime Minister Gandhi probably has not made a decision to exercise a military option against Pakistan. In the extreme case, if India’s concern about deliveries of F-16s to Pakistan increases before the optimum time for exercising the military option (in October or November according to one report), the conditions could be ripe for Prime Minister Gandhi to carry out the contingency strike plan.”

Times of India carried a report quoting a CIA document declassified in June 2015 stating that former PM Indira Gandhi may have considered destroying Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme when she returned to office in 1980. In a strange twist of irony, the person who was responsible for stalling India's plan to bomb Pakistan's nuclear weapons facilities in 1983 was none other than the father of the Indian nuclear bomb, Raja Ramanna. Ramanna himself had confirmed this to TOI on two occasions in private conversations after his retirement as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1987. He passed away in Mumbai on September 24, 2004.

TOI had carried a report on Tuesday, quoting a CIA document declassified in June, stating that former PM Indira Gandhi may have considered destroying Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme when she returned to office in 1980. Though Ramanna had declined to go into specifics, he had recalled to TOI that in 1983, when he was in Vienna to attend an International Atomic Energy Agency meet, he was "warned" by ex-chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission Munir Ahmed Khan that if India hit its nuclear facilities, Pakistan would launch a retaliatory strike at BARC, Trombay, in Mumbai, the heart of India's nuclear weapons programme. Ramanna immediately informed Indira about the dangerous consequences of bombing Pakistan's nuclear establishment and the operation was stopped.

The story goes that when Khan was attending the IAEA meet, he received a classified coded message about India's plans through the Pakistani ex-ambassador to Vienna, Abdul Sattar. That night, Khan invited Ramanna for dinner at the Imperial Hotel and the two arch rivals talked for a while. Then the moment arrived when Khan decided to say why he had suddenly called for the dinner meeting: it was not to exchange pleasantries but to deliver a stiff warning about the retaliatory strike on BARC.

Whether Ramanna knew of this plan earlier remains unclear. But the first thing he did on his arrival from Vienna was to rush to Indira. He conveyed to her Khan's warning and succeeded in making her scrap the idea altogether. In the book 'Nuclear Deception' by Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, it is stated that India's plan was code-named 'Osiris Contingency', after the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear weapons plant at Osiris, 18 miles south of Baghdad, in 1981. According to the book, ex-IAF chief Debug Singh was to have commanded the Pakistani operation and had ordered a Jaguar squadron to practice low-level flying with 2,000-pound bombs - a squadron had been kept on standby at the Jamnagar air force base to carry out the attack at a moment's notice.

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A Decisive Shift In The Power Balance Has Occurred

Paul Craig Roberts

Russian airstrikes in Syria against Islamist anti-government forces heightened the danger of Washington's four-and-a-half-year war for regime-change triggering a clash between the world's two biggest nuclear powers.

US policy in Syria was already mired in crisis prior to Russia's airstrikes. More than a year of bombing had failed to weaken ISIS' control over vast swaths of Syrian territory

The world is beginning to realize that a sea change in world affairs occurred on September 28 when President Putin of Russia stated in his UN speech that Russia can no longer tolerate Washington's vicious, stupid, and failed policies that have unleashed chaos, which is engulfing the Middle East and now Europe. Two days later, Russia took over the military situation in Syria and began the destruction of the Islamic State forces.

Perhaps among Obama's advisors there are a few who are not drowning in hubris and can understand this sea change. Sputnik news reports that some high-level security advisors to Obama have advised him to withdraw US military forces from Syria and give up his plan to overthrow Assad. They advised Obama to cooperate with Russia in order to stop the refugee flow that is overwhelming Washington's vassals in Europe. The influx of unwanted peoples is making Europeans aware of the high cost of enabling US foreign policy. Advisors have told Obama that the idiocy of the neoconservatives' policies threaten Washington's empire in Europe.

Several commentators, such as Mike Whitney and Stephen Lendman, have concluded, correctly, that there is nothing that Washington can do about Russian actions against the Islamic State. The neoconservatives' plan for a UN no-fly zone over Syria in order to push out the Russians is a pipedream. No such resolution will come out of the UN. Indeed, the Russians have already established a de facto no-fly zone.

Putin, without issuing any verbal threats or engaging in any name-calling, has decisively shifted the power balance, and the world knows it.

Washington's response consists of name-calling, bluster and more lies, some of which is echoed by some of Washington's ever more doubtful vassals. The only effect is to demonstrate Washington's impotence.

If Obama has any sense, he will dismiss from his government the neoconservative morons who have squandered Washington's power, and he will focus instead on holding on to Europe by working with Russia to destroy, rather than to sponsor, the terrorism in the Middle East that is overwhelming Europe with refugees.

If Obama cannot admit a mistake, the United States will continue to lose credibility and prestige around the world.

Dr. Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy and associate editor of the Wall Street Journal. He was columnist for Business Week, Scripps Howard News Service, and Creators Syndicate. He has had many university appointments. His internet columns have attracted a worldwide following. Roberts' latest books are The Failure of Laissez Faire Capitalism and Economic Dissolution of the West and How America Was Lost.