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**WHAT CAN THE UNITED STATES LEARN FROM INDIA
TO COUNTER TERRORISM?**

by

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March 2004

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

Terrorism is the principal threat to global and national security in the post-11 September world. Facing terrorist threats at home and abroad, the United States has declared counterterrorism its top priority. As the United States embarks on its global counterterrorism campaign, it must draw on the experience of other countries. Specifically India, with an extensive history of counterterrorism efforts, can reveal important lessons applicable to America's endeavors. India offers three primary examples of counterterrorism strategies: Punjab, its northeast region, and Kashmir, from which four findings emerge. First, aggressive military operations are central to beating terrorism. Second, economic and social development programs, though not enough to end terrorism alone, are essential components of the larger national strategy. Third, terrorism cannot be stopped without international assistance. Terror networks export personnel, knowledge, weapons and money across international boundaries with growing frequency. This cannot be effectively stopped without a coordinated national and international effort. Fourth, to be successful, a counterterrorism strategy must engender the public's support for the government and promulgate a sense of public ownership to the conflict. By applying these lessons from the Indian case study, America's efforts to end terrorism both domestically and internationally will be significantly more productive.

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Naturally the errors in logic and presentation herein are mine alone.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is the principal threat to global and national security in the post-11 September world. The attacks on New York and Washington D.C. demonstrated that worldwide terrorist organizations are operating with increasing complexity, audacity and lethality. Terrorism is evolving into a significantly more menacing threat that uses technology to access financial reserves, disseminate instructions, and propagate its vitriol. Likewise, terrorist objectives have evolved from publicity ploys to deliberate attempts to inflict mass casualties.¹ Additionally, the possibility of a nuclear, biological or chemical attack has added a perilous new head to the terrorist hydra. The reality of this threat has prompted U.S. officials to declare counterterrorism the nation's top priority. The singularity of this mission is evident in the U.S. State Department's declaration that counterterrorism is America's number one strategic goal.²

International cooperation is key to accomplishing this goal. Without the support of friendly nations, U.S. efforts to mitigate terrorist threats are substantially impaired. The United Nations, recognizing the critical nature of international counterterrorism cooperation, specifically directed its members to "work together urgently to prevent and suppress terrorist acts...through increased cooperation and full implementation of the relevant international conventions relating to terrorism."³ By Washington's own admission, the United States must have help to win its war on terrorism. Testifying before the U.S. Congress, Assistant Secretary of State Christine Rocca emphasized the critical nature of counterterrorism cooperation when she declared, "Our relationships with South Asian states have been central to our successful prosecution of the war on terrorism. All have been fully supportive, and their support in this war has been, and will continue to be, absolutely crucial."⁴ This acute need of international cooperation has prompted the

¹ Charles W. Kegley, Jr., *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 2.

² U.S. State Department, "Strategic Goal 1: Counterterrorism" in *Department of State Performance Plan: 2004*; <http://www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/perfplan/2004/20462.htm>; accessed 2 February 2003.

³ United Nations, *Security Council Resolution 1373*, September 2001; <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/conflict/unre1373.htm>; accessed 2 February 2004.

⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of International Terrorism—2002: South Asia Overview* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002), 1.

United States to offer military, diplomatic, investigative and financial aid to over 170 countries participating in the global war on terrorism.⁵

However, for America to most effectively counter terrorism it must draw on the experience of other nations. Countries such as India have extensive counterterrorism knowledge that can greatly improve U.S. counterterrorism capabilities. In many instances America should adopt Indian counterterrorism strategies. At other times, India's missteps may help the United States avoid counter-productive plans and detrimental methods. Though both countries face unique problems, have different political structures, and draw upon diverse counterterrorism resources, the similarities are sufficient to allow for important lessons. Identifying and implementing these lessons will dramatically enhance America's domestic and international counterterrorism strategies.

B. BACKGROUND

India is a particularly useful counterterrorism case study. Unlike the United States, India has extensive experience with terrorism. Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, in an address to the U.S. Congress, declared, "No country has faced as ferocious an attack of terrorist violence as India has over the past two decades. Many of you here in Congress have in recent hearings recognized a stark fact: no region is a greater source of terrorism than our neighborhood."⁶

Additionally, as the world's largest multi-cultural democracy, India faces similar challenges in implementing its counterterrorism strategies as the United States—namely protecting civil liberties, the rule of law, and associated democratic characteristics while ensuring public security.

India has faced various forms of terrorism including religious, ethnic, ideological, secessionist, and externally motivated. Vajpayee characterized terrorist violence as an attempt "to unravel the territorial integrity of India [and] show that a multi-religious society cannot exist."⁷ New Delhi has also confronted separatists who use violence or the threat of violence in an attempt to gain sovereign territories. Separatist movements

⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Progress Report on the Global War on Terrorism* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003); <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/24087.htm>; accessed 2 February 2004.

⁶ Atal Vajpayee, "Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's Address to U.S. Congress," Washington, D.C., 14 Sep 2000, <http://www.usindiafriendship.net/statements/vision/vision.html>; accessed 2 February 2004.

⁷ *Ibid.*

encompass much of the violence in India's northeast and in Kashmir. For New Delhi these threats constitute direct challenges to India's unity, sovereignty and democracy. Additionally, political activists, such as the left-wing Naxalite movement, have repeatedly used terror attacks to advance their particular political ideologies.

These fountains of terrorism have produced rivers of violence, including bombings, hijackings, assassinations and hostage taking. The most significant terrorist attacks in India's recent past include the Mumbai bombings of 15 August 2003 in which two large bombs, hidden in taxis, exploded in the city's tourist and business districts. Fifty-two people were killed and 150 more wounded. Mumbai police accused the Pakistani Muslim militant group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba of conducting the attack.

On 27 February 2002, Muslim extremists set fire to a train carrying Hindu pilgrims returning from the Ayodhya area. 295 passengers were burned to death. The attack sparked horrific violence as Hindu-Muslim riots ravaged the state of Gujarat, killing over 2,000 people. The tragedy followed nearly ten years of tensions touched off by the destruction of the Ayodha Mosque by Hindu fanatics on 6 December 1992.

On 13 December 2001, five men attacked the Indian Parliament in New Delhi. Armed with guns, grenades and explosives, the suicide attackers waged a fifty-minute gun battle with security forces before they were killed. Fourteen people died from the attack that, occurring only three months after the 11 September attacks in America, sparked widespread international condemnation.

On 12 March 1993, a series of fifteen bombs exploded throughout Mumbai killing 317 people and wounding over 1000 others. Most sources cite Muslim terrorists as the perpetrators.

On 21 May 1991, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated during a campaign rally in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The attack followed New Delhi's attempt to use Indian Peacekeeping Forces in Sri Lanka to impose a cease-fire between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil separatists.

Over the last two decades, fourteen Indian commercial airliners have been hijacked.⁸ The most egregious example was Indian Air Flight 182, which exploded over

⁸ K. P. S. Gill, "Terrorism, Institutional Collapse and Emergency Response Protocols," in *Terror and Containment: Perspectives on India's Internal Security* ed. K. P. S. Gill (New Delhi: Gyan, 2001), 256.

the Atlantic Ocean on 22 June 1985 after departing Canada. Four Sikh militants were convicted in Canada. All 329 passengers and crew were killed.

On 31 October 1984, Sikh bodyguards assassinated then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The killing was in response to the Indian government's failed counterterrorism strategy in Punjab, namely the debacle at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, five months earlier. Her assassins were convicted and hanged in 1989.

1. Indian Cases

This thesis focuses on three cases of Indian counterterrorism efforts: Punjab, the northeastern states, and Kashmir. These cases are significant because they portray distinct characteristics of terrorism in India and demonstrate India's most successful, marginally successful, and least successful results respectively. This thesis does not cover every Indian terrorist group. However, examining the most significant terrorist organizations and New Delhi's responses can highlight similar challenges facing U.S. counterterrorism efforts both domestically and abroad.

Punjab serves as the first example of Indian counterterrorism. Terrorists in Punjab sought to secede from India and create a new and independent nation called "Khalistan." By manipulating particular aspects of the Sikh religion, Sikh terrorists began a virulent campaign of terror that quickly overflowed the state's borders. Counterterrorism efforts in Punjab clearly demonstrate the critical, and often disastrous results of inconsistent counterterrorism policies. Ultimately, the Indian government's experience in Punjab resulted in a hard-won victory as terrorism was virtually eliminated from the area. Lamentably, many of the lessons learned following the Punjab crisis were largely ignored by both political and military leaders in other counterterrorism venues throughout India—highlighting the crucial need to draw on successful experience countering future terrorist challenges.

Terrorism in India's northeast serves as the second case study. The region has the unenviable distinction as being India's longest counterterrorism battle, which is still continuing. Ethnic rivalries, economic inequalities, sub-nationalism, organized crime and clandestine foreign intervention are the key elements breeding terrorism in the region. The northeast as a whole is so removed from the rest of India, both geographically and

emotionally, that Indians in the rest of the country often characterize the northeast as a foreign land, often referred to by the central government as a “disturbed area” or a “special territory.” These barriers, both real and imagined, have stifled efforts to integrate the northeast into India proper and have fueled insurgent and terrorist motivations. The government’s vacillating counterterrorism plan in the region has yielded little success, though there are indications of improvement. Violence in most of the northeastern states has either remained steady or has declined in the last three years due primarily to improved counterterrorism strategies. However, a conclusive victory over terrorism in the northeast is anything but guaranteed.

Kashmir represents India’s least successful struggle against terrorism. This third case is unique in many ways. One cannot discount the role of religion in propagating strife in the area. Undeniably, many aspects of terrorism in Kashmir are directly linked to religious intolerance. However, the suggestion that the issue revolves wholly around conflicting faiths is overly simplistic and misses many of the more fundamental motivations for the pervasive violence. The residual effects of the 1947 Partition still hinder peace and security in the region. Additionally, the involvement of foreign terrorists and their sponsors (such as Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency) have encumbered the Indian government’s counterterrorism efforts. The situation in Kashmir demonstrates that effective counterterrorism measures include the whole spectrum of political, economic and military responses.

For each of these three cases, New Delhi has utilized a vast array of anti-terrorism methods ranging from engagement, concessions, political dialogue, disregard and military intervention. It has been waging its war on terrorism for many years, sometimes more successfully than others. For each success the Indian government has enjoyed against the militants, it has suffered the consequences of shortsighted policies and grave political missteps. If the United States is to be successful in its endeavors against terrorism worldwide, U.S. counterterrorism leaders must learn from India’s example by applying the effective when possible and avoiding the ineffective as needed. It must clearly assess the threats, analyze their critical weaknesses and leverage U.S. might—be it military, political, economic, judicial, investigative or social, against all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

2. America's Experience

Unlike India, the United States has enjoyed relative separation from terrorist events before 11 September 2001. Prior to that date, most of the significant terrorist attacks affecting America occurred away from the continental United States. Embassy bombings and the attack on the USS Cole marked the most serious examples of anti-U.S. terrorist attacks—all occurring overseas. Within the geographic national borders there were few major terrorist actions. Among the most notable was the 1994 pipe bomb explosion during the Summer Olympic games in Atlanta, Georgia. The following year a car bomb exploded in a basement of the World Trade Center. Later, Timothy McVeigh was arrested for his attack on the Oklahoma City Federal Building. However examples of terrorism in the United States, especially when compared to India, were relatively limited prior to the attacks on New York and Washington.

After 11 September 2001 much changed. In the words of President Bush, “Night fell on a different world.”⁹ The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington served as a powerful wake-up call to Americans everywhere. It was one of the largest, most complicated, most audacious and devastating terrorist attacks ever. No longer could Americans enjoy the luxury of insularity and geographical separation from threats. The enemy was within the gates. The U.S. Government scrambled to assuage fears and develop a coherent plan of action. In some regards, this was unexplored territory for America.

In its initial efforts to secure America's safety and bolster public confidence, the Bush administration made sweeping changes. It allocated tremendous financial resources to anti-terrorist initiative. It terminated certain organizations (such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service), created new ones (such as the Department of Homeland Security), and reorganized others (such as moving the U.S. Coast Guard from the Department of Transportation to the new Department of Homeland Security). And of course, the government turned to the military.

President Bush declared to the nation that a “global war on terrorism” had begun and shortly thereafter employed the U.S. armed forces against al-Qaeda and the Taliban

⁹ Kegley, *The New Global Terrorism*, 3.

in Afghanistan. On 20 September 2001, only nine days after the fall of the twin towers in New York City, President Bush demanded the capitulation of the Taliban when he declared:

These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate. Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”¹⁰

The six months following the 11 September attacks were dizzying times for the federal government as the United States set off on a largely uncharted course. The phrase “homeland security” was pervasive in political discourse, popular media and the American psyche. As military planes flew combat air patrols over the nation’s cities, Washington was resolute to prevent another attack on America. “Whatever the cost,” declared the President, “we will pay it.”¹¹

The United States, however, must contend with terrorist threats that far exceed the scope of homeland security. Terrorists, employing a plethora of both common and ingenious methods, routinely target American civilians and military forces abroad. U.S. involvement in Iraq has created a new front for the global war on terrorism prompting, to date, almost daily bombings, ambushes and assassinations.

Additionally, trends in international terrorism indicate that terrorist attacks are increasingly common. Since 1945, the world’s larger armies have spent more time fighting counter-insurgencies and anti-terrorist actions than in conventional “force-on-force” engagements.¹² Over the last thirty years terrorist attacks have increasingly involved suicide and are escalating in both tempo and location.¹³ The threat to American interests is becoming more acute as well. Usama bin Laden issued a fatwa in 1998, “to kill the Americans and their allies...in any country in which it is possible to do it.”¹⁴ As a

¹⁰ George W. Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” Washington, D.C., 20 September 2001; <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>; accessed 2 February 2004.

¹¹ George W. Bush, “The President’s State of the Union Address,” Washington, D.C., 29 January 2002; <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>; accessed 2 February 2004.

¹² Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study* (Boston: Little & Brown, 1976), 8.

¹³ Robert Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 3.

¹⁴ Usama bin Laden, “Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders: World Islamic Front Statement,” 23 February 1998; <http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/wif.html>; accessed 5 Jan 2003.

result, the need for developing a sound and effective counterterrorism plan is becoming even more acute.

C. PURPOSE AND FINDINGS

This thesis evaluates the prospects for improving U.S. counterterrorism efforts by examining the case study of India. India's experience in dealing with terrorists and insurgents may prove invaluable to those most closely involved in U.S. counterterrorism policy and implementation. The United States can learn many lessons on anti-terrorism, both positive and negative, by scrutinizing India's attempts to mitigate violence. In doing so, certain questions arise. What are India's most significant terrorist challenges? What are the motivations and objectives of terrorists in India? What has the Indian government done to combat terrorism and which of India's responses have been most effective? Why? What is the prognosis for India's counterterrorism plan? What are the major similarities and differences between the terrorist threats facing each respective country? What elements of Indian anti-terrorism efforts should the United States seek to implement or avoid?

This thesis makes four central arguments. First, aggressive military operations are essential to counterterrorism efforts. Efforts to forgo violence in lieu of a politically negotiated settlement rarely yield acceptable results. This conclusion contradicts those of counterterrorism theorists like Peter Sederberg, who suggest that political conciliation may be the most effective government response.¹⁵ Military forces must establish durable and effective ties to local security services that are the key to unraveling the complex knot of terrorist organizations. Cooperative counterterrorism efforts can dramatically reduce, if not eliminate, the presence of active terrorist cells. However, military force must be used in ways that avoid provoking more terrorism and engendering public sympathy for the terrorists' cause. Poorly planned, improperly implemented or overly harsh military actions can have devastating results that strengthen the terrorists' position and prolong the overall campaign.

¹⁵ Peter C. Sederberg, "Global Terrorism: Problems of Challenge and Response," in *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls* ed. Charles W. Kegley, Jr. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2003), 275.

Second, economic aid and social development programs are a key component to the overall counterterrorism strategy. As India's case reveals, these plans do not guarantee success, for peace cannot be purchased. However, an absence of social development programs, particularly in areas already experiencing terrorism, will virtually ensure increased violence.

Third, international assistance is vital to an effective counterterrorism strategy. This comprises much more than just direct security assistance. Judicial access to the terrorists' overseas supporters is usually unobtainable without the help of foreign governments. India's case demonstrates that stopping cross border flows of terrorists, weapons, and funding depends heavily on international cooperation.

Fourth, the general public must adopt the counterterrorism struggle as its own for terrorism to truly be defeated. No amount of police or military actions will ever suffice as long as the society feels that the suffering caused by terrorists is bearable. In India, terrorism has been eradicated when populations turned against the terrorists. In places where the government has failed to engender this feeling, violence persists. This final point has particular importance on U.S. operations in places like Iraq because terrorists have transitioned from exclusively targeting American military members to Iraqi citizens at large. These four findings are prevalent throughout India's counterterrorism efforts. However, many additional lessons can be drawn from each of India's specific encounters with terrorist violence and can serve as a touchstone for America's global counterterrorism strategy.

D. ORGANIZATION

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I presents the current anti-terrorism situation in India and the United States, provides a brief background, presents the thesis, its questions, major findings, and its organization. Chapter II examines terrorism and Sikh separatism in Punjab. The Punjab case is particularly relevant because, despite its exceedingly deadly nature—over 21,000 people killed by terrorists—it represents India's most successful counterterrorism effort.¹⁶ Chapter III analyzes terrorist movements and insurgency in India's northeast, focusing primarily on the states of Assam, Nagaland and

¹⁶ Vajpayee, "Address to U.S. Congress," 1.

Tripura. Though the situation in each state is slightly different, terrorism in the northeast as a whole has been moderately controlled in recent years. Chapter IV assesses counterterrorism efforts in Kashmir. Despite years of effort, United Nations intervention, and thousands of deaths, the Kashmir region remains India's most vexing counterterrorism problem. Chapter V concludes with a summary of India's most and least effective anti-terrorism measures, an outline of the key similarities and differences between the terrorism problem in the United States and India, and recommendations for U.S. counterterrorism policy makers.

II. SIKH SEPARATISM

A. INTRODUCTION

India's most successful counterterrorism campaign occurred against Sikh terrorists in Punjab. Violence began there in 1978 and ravaged the region for nearly twenty years. Driven by separatism and fueled by ethnic and religious fervor, the Sikh insurgency tested India's counterterrorism capabilities to the maximum. After numerous failed approaches, New Delhi ended the autonomy movement by balancing military force with peaceful engagement. Yet creating that strategy was a long and difficult process fraught with numerous failures and tragedies.

New Delhi's response to terrorism in Punjab was often painfully inconsistent. The government first characterized the problem as merely criminal in nature. This relegated the issue to a lower priority in New Delhi as lawmakers and political leaders pushed it behind other agendas, often undermining what little progress had been made in the fight against terrorism. Its slow response to rising discontent, its "hands-off" attitude vis-à-vis Punjab's state government, and its sporadic (though at times draconian) use of military force greatly impeded the Indian government's efforts to deal with terrorism in Punjab. By reacting too slowly, and then over-reacting with excessive, and often misdirected, force, New Delhi actually bolstered the terrorists' status and prolonged the ordeal. India tragically underestimated the widespread appeal of Sikh terrorism and was left with few effective countermeasures.

Punjab paid dearly for New Delhi's ineffective counterterrorism strategy. According to Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, in the twenty years that terrorism was most acute in the region, terrorists killed over 21,000 people in Punjab alone.¹⁷ Sikh terrorists targeted many senior political and law enforcement personnel. The most notable assassination occurred on 31 October 1984 when India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi died at the hands of Sikh assassins working as her bodyguards. The killing sparked horrific anti-Sikh violence in Delhi, Kanpur and other parts of the country. Sikh terrorists have also either hijacked or bombed numerous commercial passenger aircraft—the most

¹⁷ Atal Vajpayee, "Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's Address to U.S. Congress," Washington, D.C., 14 Sep 2000; <http://www.usindiafriendship.net/statements/vision/vision.html>; accessed 2 February 2004.

catastrophic example being Air India's flight 182 that exploded near the coast of Ireland on 23 June 1985. All 329 passengers perished.

As terrorism escalated in and around Punjab, the Indian government scrambled to improve its counterterrorism strategy. With fatalities increasing and economic and social costs on the rise, New Delhi began a series of radical course changes hoping to crack the counterterrorism code. However, these new policies often lacked precise planning and implementation, which further undermined public confidence and hampered inter-agency cooperation. A break came in the early 1990s when a series of factors combined to boost the government's counterterrorism fortunes. Following sweeping policy changes, violence sharply declined and a tenuous peace was restored to Punjab for the first time in decades.

The case of Punjab is significant to U.S. counterterrorism policy makers because it highlights New Delhi's best practices in the fight against terrorism. Many of these can be applied to certain U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Concurrently it illustrates the dangers of inconsistent, uncoordinated and half-hearted efforts. This chapter offers three key lessons applicable for U.S. policy leaders and military commanders. First, counterterrorism strategy must be clearly defined and consistently followed. By changing its position on terrorism and alternating its approach to the various terror organizations in Punjab, New Delhi severely limited its ability to counter their strategies and improve its own relationship with the general population. Once the Indian government clearly defined its goals and methods—and stuck to those definitions faithfully—its counterterrorism operations began to bear fruit.

Second, regional counterterrorism efforts like those in Punjab are only successful when spearheaded by an effective and highly motivated local security apparatus. Years of neglect and mismanagement transformed the Punjabi police into a hollow shell of a force that was ill-equipped, poorly trained, distrusted, and suffering very low morale. Significant changes dramatically improved the situation. New leaders energized the police force while better equipment and improved training helped turn the tide against the militants. Terrorist attacks against the police and their families that had previously demoralized the force, subsequently hardened its resolve and strengthened its cohesion.

The decline of terrorism in Punjab directly correlates to the dramatic improvements to the state's local security capabilities.

Third, military force must be applied with extreme care. During most of the counterterrorism effort in Punjab the Indian government vacillated between periods of either half-hearted and uncoordinated counterterrorist operations or extreme—and occasionally indiscriminant—violence. Heavy-handedness subjected New Delhi to scathing criticism by international human rights groups and created groundswells of anti-Delhi sentiment that ultimately prolonged the conflict. Terrorist organizations quickly exploited the situation to acquire greater funding, enhanced international legitimacy, and additional recruits. New Delhi's situation improved considerably when local, state, and federal security forces began to operate in a more coordinated and less oppressive fashion. A well-trained, well-equipped, and highly disciplined security apparatus can simultaneously eradicate terror cells and engender public confidence and support.

This chapter begins with a brief background on Sikhism, Sikh separatism, and the rise of the Sikh terrorist threat in India. It then presents India's early and later counterterrorism strategies, and demonstrates which modifications yielded the greatest results. It concludes with lessons applicable to U.S. forces and policy makers as they encounter similar terrorist threats and counterterrorism challenges.

B. BACKGROUND

1. Sikhism

Though Sikhs comprise just over two percent of India's population, they are India's third most prominent religious and ethnic group. Sikhs are encountered commonly throughout most of India but are concentrated in the northwest state of Punjab, the historical seat of Sikh religion and culture. As a result of perceived religious and political grievances, during the late 1970s Sikh hardliners began agitating for secession from India. They demanded a separate Sikh state located between India and Pakistan incorporating Punjab and some adjoining areas. They named this proposed state *Khalistan*.¹⁸ The demand for a separate Sikh homeland had support from a large section of Sikh diaspora living in the United States, Europe, and other countries.

¹⁸ The word "Khalsa" in Punjabi means "pure." "Khalistan," therefore, meant "The Land of the Pure."

Sikhism often has been characterized as a hybrid of Hinduism and Islam. There are shared elements among the three religions, yet Sikhism is much more than a religious amalgamation. Its theology, culture, and social structure have great bearing on Sikh separatism and terrorist attacks. It must be noted that Sikh terrorists, as is the case with most religious extremists, represent a very small minority of the greater Sikh community. While this thesis focuses on the extremist fringe, the vast majority of Sikhs worldwide are as appalled by terrorism as is the rest of the non-Sikh world. Though this thesis does not examine Sikh theology and doctrine, there are three social and cultural aspects of Sikhism that lend directly to militancy and terrorism: the *Panth* (or greater Sikh identity), historic grievances, and political activism. Understanding these key elements of Sikh tradition and history clarifies elements of modern Sikh militancy and terrorism.

2. The Panth

Sikhs worldwide view themselves as part of a large collective whole known as the Panth. This became particularly important after 1699. Anti-Sikh persecution by Muslim leaders was severe, leading the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, to establish a new ethos in the Sikh community of a saint-soldier. Sikhs, who were already renowned for their military prowess, began to internalize the concept of defending the greater Sikh community. The Panth is similar in scope to the Muslim concept of the *Umma* in that it is a strong communal bond based on religion that tightly binds all believers regardless of their physical location.¹⁹

In a modern context, the Panth serves as the foundation for vast overseas populations of Sikhs. Known colloquially as “outside Sikhs,” these groups are greatest in England, Canada, and the United States and are a major source of ideological and material support to Sikhs still living in Punjab.²⁰ The notion of the Panth under attack is a very evocative image for most Sikhs. This concept is crucial in that it has been

¹⁹ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 23-24.

²⁰ B. Singh, “Seminar on Khalistan Held in Punjab” Press Release by the Council of Khalistan, 18 December 2003, http://www.khalistan.com/PressReleasees/PR121803_Seminaron_Khalistan.htm; accessed 2 February 2004.

manipulated multiple times by Sikh terrorist leaders, who seek to enflame popular sentiment against occupying forces or dissenting political parties.

3. Grievances

Perceptions of anti-Sikh prejudice are deep-seated in Sikh communities. Both oral and written histories are rife with stories of anti-Sikh extermination campaigns dating back to at least 1606 with the martyrdom of the fifth guru, Arjun Dev. Later, the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, established the *Khalsa*, a militant social organization, for the purpose of defending the faith. Popular Sikh tradition relishes the role of militant defiance to external threats such as that posed by the Mughal rulers. Historical accuracies are less important than the inspirational effects these stories have on their listeners.

India's partition in 1947 gave rise to perhaps the most tangible example of modern Sikh resentment. At the time, great consideration was given to Hindus and Muslim communities in and around Punjab. The creation of a Muslim homeland in Pakistan prompted many religious and ethnic groups, including the Punjabi Sikhs, to call for greater autonomy or outright independence. However, the Sikhs felt excluded from the political process and viewed the partition as particularly unjust.²¹ Over two million Sikhs were driven from their fertile lands after these ended up on Pakistan's side of the newly drawn border. Sikhs also lost the prestige they had enjoyed under British rule and preferential recruitment into the armed forces.²²

Grievances grew during the 1960s as Sikhs began to feel that their religion and their social structure faced the subtle threat of absorption into Hinduism.²³ Though the two groups had long-standing cultural and historical ties that drew on centuries of interaction, there has commonly been a vocal section among Sikhs that viewed Hinduism as a threat. Khushwant Singh, a preeminent Sikh historian, wrote that, "If the present state of amalgamation continues, there is little doubt that before the century has run its

²¹ Yohna Alexander, *Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 304.

²² Ved Marwah, *Uncivil Wars: Pathology of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 1996), 153.

²³ Col. Raju G. C. Thomas, "Reflections on the Kashmir Problem" in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* (Boulder: Westview, 1992), 12.

course the Sikh religion will have become a branch of Hinduism and the Sikhs a part of the Hindu social system.”²⁴

4. Political Activism

Sikh violence and political activism have been inextricable intertwined in Punjab. The Sikhs’ chief political organization has been the Akali Dal party, which has fought since its founding to advance Sikhism both as a theology and as a social organization.²⁵ The Akali Dal’s primary objective is to counter threats to the Panth. From early in its existence the Akali Dal party represented an amalgamation of fervent religiosity and secular Sikh interests. This focus provided the Akali Dal with a very dynamic base of support among Sikhs. The party later began attracting military members and certain extremist organizations giving it its militant foundation. The Akali Dal then began a systematic effort to advance Sikh extremism, promoting the ideas of various militant leaders in an effort to weaken the influence of the Congress party. Their efforts soon spun out of control. Though there have been instances of Sikh terrorism not directly associated with the Akali Dal, the party has played the most significant role in Punjabi militant and insurgent ideology.

C. CONFLICT DYNAMICS

1. Primary Objectives

The primary objective of Sikh terrorism is the creation of an independent Sikh nation called Khalistan. According to some Sikh militants, Khalistan should be annexed from India much the same way that Pakistan was formed from the partition. Another goal, at least for the Akali Dal, was to increase its political influence both in Punjab and vis-à-vis New Delhi. During the late 1970s the Akali Dal had formed an uneasy coalition with the BJP and under the leadership of Prakash Singh Badal, maintained a tenuous hold on power in Punjab. The seeds of violence, nonetheless, had begun to take root.

²⁴ Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs Volume 2: 1839-1988* (Colombia: South Asia Books, 1999), 185.

²⁵ In Punjabi, *Akali Dal* means “The Followers of the Almighty.” The central role of fervent religiosity in the Akali Dal party has been widely documented.

Indira Gandhi's administration, however, imposed a state of emergency in Punjab and dismissed Badal's government for failing to stem rising pro-Khalistan sentiment.²⁶ This was a humiliating blow to the Akali Dal, which then capitalized on the incident. By portraying New Delhi's actions as evidence of New Delhi's anti-Sikh tendencies, many Sikhs were drawn to the increasingly radical ideas of the ousted Akali leadership. Badal and the Akali Dal began to more openly demonstrate their anti-Delhi and anti-Hindu leanings. The Akali leadership, frustrated at every turn, became bitter, opening the way for the extremists to take control of politics in Punjab.²⁷ As power began to slip away, the party became increasingly attractive to the more radical and violent Punjabis.

2. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale

The preeminent leader of the militant Sikh movement was Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Bhindranwale and the Akali Dal, though not originally associated, formed a very natural and dangerous union. Bhindranwale led a fundamentalist Sikh movement anxious to purify Sikhism from more liberal doctrinal interpretations. On 13 April 1978, Bhindranwale led a procession of his followers in a protest against a rival group. The event turned violent and ended only after Punjabi police fired into the melee, killing eighteen of Bhindranwale's followers.²⁸ This incident fueled a wave of resentment among Sikhs throughout Punjab that was particularly acute in the rural areas.

Two years later came Badal's dismissal followed by humiliating losses in local Assembly elections. This motivated Akali leaders to adopt more extreme and violent positions and the party raised a new slogan of the "Panth in danger." The Akali Dal began demanding increasing concessions from the government and agitating the public at every turn. Their demands culminated in a declaration of *Dharma Yudh*, or a religious war, against rival Punjabi politicians.²⁹

However, it was Bhindranwale who most radicalized the Sikh nationalist platform. By emphasizing the Sikhs' militant tradition, Bhindranwale justified his

²⁶ In India, a state of emergency is known as "President's Rule" which, when declared, gives the federal government wide power in administering state affairs, to include troop deployments and military operations. However, the out-right dismissal of the entire state government was widely criticized nationwide and particularly in Punjab.

²⁷ Marwah, *Uncivil Wars*, 159.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

movement's violence and openly declared that his primary objective was to "eliminate all the heretics" and others who opposed his demands.³⁰ The Akali Dal faced a hard reality. The party could either join Bhindranwale, who was rapidly becoming the only political force of consequence, or it could be relegated to complete insignificance. Not surprisingly, it united with Bhindranwale. This amounted to a major victory for Bhindranwale that gave him both meteoric popular support and the trappings of political legitimacy.

There were many distinct groups conducting attacks in Punjab. Though not all were directly associated with Bhindranwale, the vast majority were heavily influenced by his ideologies—if not his personal leadership. Some of the more significant terrorist organizations in Punjab include the Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), the All India Sikh Student's Federation (AISSF), the Bhindranwale Tiger Force of Khalistan (BTFK), the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), and the Babbar Khalsa (BK). Though all the terrorist groups in Punjab were violent and extremely dangerous, the BK was arguably the most deadly of them all. The majority of Punjab's terrorist groups lacked much sophistication in their attacks. Both their equipment and techniques were rudimentary at best. However, the BK was significantly more dangerous. Many of its members received weapons training in Pakistan and had practical experience from Afghanistan. For this reason, the Babbar Khalsa was able to employ sophisticated explosives and conduct very methodical attacks, making them the most feared of Punjab's terrorists.³¹

Terrorism in Punjab was at its worst from 1983 to 1993. Though Bhindranwale's supporters had resorted to violence prior to 1983, deaths that year spiked to seventy-three from only ten the year before. The sheer speed and force of the terrorist attacks caught most Punjabis, and the Indian government, by surprise and prompted many to call 1983 "The Year of the Armageddon."³² Yet the violence was only beginning.

Fatalities continued to escalate over the following six years and by 1989 civilian casualties numbered over 5,000.³³ State security forces were alarmingly ineffective at

³⁰ Ibid., 162.

³¹ K. P. S. Gill, *Terrorism and Containment: Perspectives on India's Internal Security* (New Delhi: Gyan, 2001), 48.

³² Chand Joshi, *Bhindranwale: Myth and Reality* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1984), 126.

³³ K. P. S. Gill, "Endgame in Punjab: 1988-1993" in *Faultlines* 1; <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume1/article3.htm>; accessed 28 November 2003.

countering the growing threat and were increasingly targeted for attack. Terrorists in Punjab focused primarily on political leaders and the poorly trained state police force that by 1988 was largely demoralized.

From 1990 to 1991 the situation took a dramatic turn for the worse. Nearly as many casualties were reported in those two years—5,058—as in the preceding twelve. Additionally, terrorist groups were gaining territory. Prior to 1990, most terrorist concentrations were only along the peripheral districts of Punjab. However, by the end of 1991, terrorists had gained free movement in over sixty-one percent of the state. Terrorist groups controlled vast swaths of the state and ruled the towns by posting religious decrees on signposts. Eggs, meat, and alcohol were strictly outlawed in the name of religious purity. News sources such as local papers were told what to publish—they rarely disobeyed.³⁴ Recruitment into the terrorist ranks was increasing rapidly and by 1992 it appeared that the terrorists were on the verge of winning. Throughout Punjab, there was an air of absolute certainty that the war against the Indian government was in its final stages and that Khalistan's establishment was imminent. Complete governments in exile were created in England and America, just waiting for their impending victory.³⁵ The situation was desperate and was rapidly spiraling out of control. The government's success was anything but guaranteed.

D. INDIA'S EARLY COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

India's counterterrorism strategy vis-à-vis Punjab can be divided into two distinct eras. The first encompassed the years 1978 to approximately 1992. These years were marked by vacillation, indecision, and horrific violence. After 1992, the Indian government's counterterrorism plan changed dramatically and began to reap success. The levels of violence fell precipitously and, though there were still sporadic attacks, the security situation in Punjab improved dramatically. Normalcy was finally restored. These two time periods reveal important operational and strategic counterterrorism lessons.

In the early years, New Delhi tried many different strategies to counter rising terrorism in Punjab. These efforts were largely schizophrenic, vacillating from various

³⁴ "Peace at Last In Punjab," *The Economist*, 22 May 1993, 45.

³⁵ Gill, "Endgame in Punjab: 1988-1993," 21.

extremes without direction or coordination. Not surprisingly the results were tragic. During this early period, New Delhi alternately tried three main tactics to deal with Sikh terrorism: ignoring it, negotiating with it, and violently suppressing it.

For many years, New Delhi, and by extension the Punjab state government, simply ignored the growing terrorist crisis or minimized its importance. For instance, though terrorist cadres were rapidly increasing during the early 1980s, neither the state nor the federal government increased its security forces in any significant way. In 1982, Bhindranwale made a very clever tactical decision. He relocated his headquarters into the Golden Temple complex at Amritsar, the holiest of all Sikh shrines and began stockpiling guns, ammunition, and explosives. The government took no action at all. On 24 April 1983, terrorists murdered the Deputy Inspector General of the Punjab police in front of hundreds of witnesses after he had concluded his prayers in the Golden Temple. The Punjab government again failed to act, having become “a prisoner of its own indecision.”³⁶ Later, newspaper articles were replete with reports of the storage of advanced weaponry in the Golden Temple. The militants, ecstatic over their growing arsenals, were unabashedly displaying them to the Indian and foreign media, yet again New Delhi failed to act.³⁷ The government’s indifference and political paralysis emboldened the terrorists and undermined public confidence.

New Delhi’s second tactic was to engage the hardliners in political dialogue. During these attempts it seemed as if the Indian government was myopically fixated on a political solution above all else. Yet despite numerous peace accords, political concessions, prisoner releases, economic incentives and diplomatic missions, terrorism continually escalated. After years of dismal failures New Delhi eventually abandoned the conventional view that a political solution was essential to ending terrorism.

The government finally turned to oppressive military operations. Unfortunately, the years of terrorist “victories” had so fractured the cohesion between the various local, state, and federal security forces, that most of these operations were failures before they even began. Often lacking adequate planning, equipment, and coordination, these missions failed to stop the terrorists while they increased public resentment, lowered

³⁶ Marwah, *Uncivil Wars*, 167.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

popular confidence in the government, and ultimately strengthened the terrorist's position vis-à-vis the general population.

1. Operation Bluestar

The most glaring example of uncoordinated and misdirected military force was the unmitigated failure of Operation Bluestar. In an effort to suppress the Punjab insurgency, Indira Gandhi directed the Indian army to capture or kill Bhindranwale and his supporters who were ensconced in the Golden Temple complex. Mrs. Gandhi was reluctant to choose a military force but, after being assured that it would be a brief and effective campaign, eventually assented.³⁸ The climax occurred on 5 June 1984 when Indian forces stormed the Golden Temple in Amritsar to dislodge militants garrisoned within the confines of the Sikh's holiest shrine. According to the operation's commander, Lt. General K. S. Brar of the Indian army, there were assumed to be 1,500 armed militants in the temple complex, of whom 500 were assumed to be well trained and highly motivated.³⁹

Prior to the arrival of the Indian military, insurgents had made significant preparations. Bhindranwale's chief advisor was a retired major general, Shahbeg Singh. Singh and Bhindranwale had spent months fortifying the surrounding areas. Armed militants overtook seventeen three- and four-story buildings surrounding the temple complex. These buildings were heavily fortified, provided good fields of fire, incorporated surveillance posts, and were stockpiled with light machine guns, automatic weapons, and vast quantities of ammunitions and explosives. Additionally, insurgents linked the various buildings with hidden tunnels and had armed them with extensive booby traps. These preparations allowed the militants to monitor activities in and around the temple with relative impunity.⁴⁰ To complicate the issue, Indian intelligence knew very few details of the militant fortifications within the temple complex and the

³⁸ Ibid., 172.

³⁹ Lt. Gen. K. S. Brar, *Operation Bluestar: The True Story* (New Delhi: UBSPD, 1993), 49-58.

⁴⁰ C. Christine Fair, "Military Operations in Urban Areas: The Indian Experience," *India Review* 2, no. 1 (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 64.

surrounding area. This lack of critical information, coupled with extensive preparations by the Sikh militants, greatly compounded the mission's difficulty.⁴¹

To support the operation the Indian army brought in six tanks, heavy artillery, four infantry fighting vehicles, and three armored personnel carriers.⁴² Yet despite initial army estimates that the temple would be cleared in a matter of hours, fighting still raged after three days. The Indian army suffered thirty-five percent casualties and, according to the Indian government's White Paper, 4,712 people were killed by the time it was over.⁴³ Among the dead were Bhindranwale and many of his staunchest supporters. The army action caused extensive damage to some prominent structures in the temple complex, including the Akal Takht and various Sikh museums and libraries.

The negative consequences of Operation Bluestar are difficult to overstate. Sikhs worldwide, and especially those living in and around Punjab, saw Bluestar as a direct attack on the Sikh religion. Bhindranwale, anticipating some sort of government reprisal to his commandeering of the Golden Temple, had distributed propaganda throughout Punjab warning of an impending attack on Sikhism. To many it seemed as if his prophecy—self-fulfilling as it was—had come true. The timing of Operation Bluestar added to its ignominy in that it coincided with the anniversary of Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom, a Sikh holy day that drew a larger number of pilgrims to the Golden Temple than usual. At least two army units comprised of Sikh troops (400 Sikh soldiers in Rajasthan and over 1,400 soldiers in Ramgarh, Bihar) revolted in protest.⁴⁴ Brigadier General R. C. Puri, the commandant of the Regimental Center in Bihar, was gunned down by his revolting Sikh soldiers.

⁴¹ In an effort to avoid inflaming public sentiments about the Sikh's sanctuary, security forces, prior to the operation, were prohibited from entering the temple. This self-imposed restraint, coupled with the militant's control within the temple, severely hindered intelligence collection on militant actions and fortifications.

⁴² Brar, *Operation Bluestar*, 30-31.

⁴³ Government of India, *White Paper on the Punjab Agitation—A Summary* (New Delhi, Government of India Press, 1984). See also Ved Marwah, *Uncivil Wars: Pathology of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 1996), 175; Verinder Grover, *Encyclopedia of International Terrorism* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 2002). Other reports offer significantly different numbers of fatalities. Murray Leaf estimates that only 1,000 people died in Operation Bluestar. See Murray J. Leaf, in "The Punjab Crisis" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 25, No. 5 (May, 1985), 475-498. Actual numbers of killed and missing are difficult if not impossible to obtain as estimates vary widely from the obviously underestimated (under 100 killed) to the obviously overstated (over 10,000).

⁴⁴ Vijay Karan, *War by Stealth: Terrorism in India* (New Delhi, Viking, 1997), 53.

The army followed up its efforts in Amritsar with another ill-advised and poorly conducted attempt to exterminate the militants. Known as Operation Wood Rose, the Indian army attempted to “mop up” remaining Bhindranwale supporters throughout the state and focused its efforts on Sikh religious centers.⁴⁵ The effort suffered from numerous flaws. First, an extraneous force was sent into unfamiliar territory to operate among a politically charged, and at times hostile, population. Second, the army was given great latitude in its use of force, which prompted, if not condoned, excesses. Third, military forces suffered from a critical lack of knowledge of the area and its people. According to K. P. S. Gill, the army operated blindly, arresting many innocent people who were in no way connected to terrorist or criminal activity.⁴⁶ Sikhs overwhelmingly saw the operation as further humiliation. Operation Wood Rose was as damaging to New Delhi as was Operation Bluestar. Instead of isolating the terrorists, these efforts ultimately united the Sikhs behind the secessionist forces.⁴⁷

Four months after the Bluestar and Wood Rose debacles, Sikh militants exacted revenge by assassinating then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Consequently, horrific anti-Sikh riots ravaged Delhi for three days with Indian police doing very little to stop it. Ved Marwah claims that over 3,000 Sikhs were burnt alive in Delhi alone.⁴⁸ Operation Bluestar and the November massacres were, according to Gill, “the two most significant victories for the cause of ‘Khalistan’...not won by the militants, but inflicted upon the nation by the government. These two events, in combination, gave a new lease of life to a movement which could easily have been contained in 1984 itself.”⁴⁹

Following the failure of its oppressive military strategy, the government under Rajiv Gandhi again opted for a negotiated political solution. Talks were held with various hard-line organizations including the Akali Dal and the AISSF, who at the time were the preeminent terrorist groups. New Delhi acquiesced to demands for a popular election

⁴⁵ Sikh religious centers are known as *Gurudwaras*. They are roughly analogous to Islamic *madrassas* in Pakistan or, in some aspects, to certain Christian seminaries. Army actions against the Gurudwaras, though not as directly offensive to Sikhs as the attack on the Golden Temple, were still an insufferable affront.

⁴⁶ Gill, “Endgame in Punjab: 1988-1993,” 30.

⁴⁷ Marwah, *Uncivil Wars*, 177.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 178. The Indian government’s report to Parliament in January 1985 stated that over 3,000 Sikhs had been killed in the countryside while an additional 2,416 were killed in Delhi. See Karan, *War by Stealth*, 53.

⁴⁹ K. P. S. Gill, *Punjab: The Knights of Falsehood* (New Delhi: Har-Anand, 1997), 95-97.

that, not surprisingly, the Akali Dal won easily. Other militant groups boycotted the elections.

Additional political concessions included the release of over 2,000 imprisoned terrorists as a show of “good faith.” Those released promptly resumed their terrorist tactics. In the three months following their release, nearly twice as many civilians and policemen were killed than in the entire twelve-month period preceding their liberty.⁵⁰ Astoundingly the government also agreed to return the Golden Temple to the Akali Dal, who subsequently surrendered it to the terrorists. Terrorist groups then rearmed the temple grounds, created the “Committee of the Golden Temple,” and issued a formal “Declaration of Khalistan” on 29 April 1986. New Delhi’s attempt at a political solution had failed as miserably as had Operation Bluestar.

E. INDIA’S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY REVOLUTION

After over a decade of escalating violence in Punjab, India’s counterterrorism strategy began to change in 1989 and was drastically altered by 1992. Indian political and military leaders learned from Amritsar that a new course was in order. Indian historians have suggested that the calamity of Operation Bluestar forced civilian and military leaders to reassess their handling of similar terrorist events.⁵¹ The first indication of that reassessment was Operation Black Thunder, which proved that with planning and coordination, terrorist threats can be eliminated.

1. Operation Black Thunder

Prior to 1989, the Indian government’s two-pronged strategy of trying to strike political deals while increasing pressure through targeted police actions had led nowhere. On 4 March 1988, New Delhi released forty high-profile terrorists who, upon being released, walked directly into the Golden Temple complex. Shortly thereafter, the terrorists began to stockpile weapons and prepare defensive positions in and around the shrine. All indications suggested a repeat of the Bhindranwale-Bluestar crisis.

⁵⁰ Gill, *Terrorism and Containment*, 32.

⁵¹ Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997), 127.

However, the Indian government was loath to repeat its Blue Star performance. For Operation Black Thunder, a detailed plan was established that coordinated the efforts of the military, elite forces, National Security Guard, and the Punjab police. An extensive communications network was established linking all parties to a tactical command post in Amritsar. Military leaders sealed the area and cut off electricity and water to the temple complex. The army stationed snipers at strategic points who fired at any movement within the temple. Rather than storming the temple, security forces used the strategy of wearing down the terrorists. After two weeks the perpetrators surrendered with minimal loss of life and very little damage to the Golden Temple complex. Unlike Blue Star, civilian leaders and security forces conducted Operation Black Thunder with great skill and efficacy.⁵² The complete ordeal was broadcast live to domestic and international media, thereby thwarting terrorist efforts to propagandize perceived military excesses and violations of the sanctity of the Golden Temple.

Despite its success with Operation Black Thunder, terrorist attacks intensified leading up to 1992. Politicians, local police and their families, and even teachers were commonly targeted. Additionally terrorists stepped up their random attacks on large civilian gatherings in order to sow panic and undermine popular confidence in the government. During this period the terrorists, especially the Babbar Khalsas, turned increasingly to improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which were often detonated by remote control. Car bombs and roadside explosions occurred with alarming frequency and lethality.

New Delhi took other important steps, many of them drastic, as part of its new counterterrorism strategy. But the greatest gains were realized by four key strategic modifications. Its first step was revitalizing the police force. Years of neglect, poor leadership and inexorable terrorist attacks had demoralized the Punjab Armed Police (PAP). In a bizarre incident in the town of Daheru, a PAP patrol encountered a small band of terrorists. Rather than pursue them, the PAP members dropped their weapons and fled. Punjabis often spoke of instances when the police summarily refused to leave their barricaded police stations. Their will to fight had been completely broken.⁵³

⁵² Fair, "Military Operations in Urban Areas," 67.

⁵³ Gill, *Punjab: The Knights of Falsehood*, 15.

The situation changed in 1989 when K. P. S. Gill was named the new Director General of the PAP and was given charge of counterterrorism operations in Punjab. Gill is credited with infusing a new sense of purpose and pride into the police organization. New police districts were created and over 26,000 new police officers were recruited.⁵⁴ Morale improved considerably with new welfare measures such as *ex-gratia* payments to the families of police officers killed in action. The police force responded quickly to the changes and the public's confidence began to gradually increase.

A second major change occurred by strengthening military and police cooperation. Previously there had been little if any coordination between the PAP, paramilitary forces and the Indian army. However, changes to the joint structure resulted in unified command centers, tactical operations headquarters and shared communications networks. Radio coverage was extended to every police outpost and the PAP linked its communications with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Border Security Force (BSF). All of these organizations were then networked into a unified command center. After 1992, great emphasis was placed on mutual support. Though the primary burden of counterterrorism operations fell on the PAP, army units could be requested quickly for backup. The army usually provided support by cordoning target areas allowing the PAP to effectively conduct counterterrorism sweeps and other associated "civic actions."⁵⁵

India's third strategic modification was the development of specialized counterterrorism training programs. The PAP and military units began incorporating new training plans that focused on hostage recovery, urban operations, building seizures, and other counterterrorism scenarios. This helped improve both their urban and rural operations and dramatically enhanced multi-service interoperability. Additionally, counterterrorism forces were given advanced weapons and personal protective equipment, which not only improved their fighting capability but also their morale. Bulletproof vehicles, light machine guns, two-inch mortars, hand grenades and self-loading rifles became standard issue for each police sub-unit.

⁵⁴ Marwah, *Uncivil Wars*, 218.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 217.

The fourth major change to India's counterterrorism strategy was to adopt a "no-negotiation" political approach. Great gains were made on the political front when New Delhi abandoned its efforts to negotiate with the disparate terrorist organizations. Previously as individual terrorist groups struck deals with the central government, others would increase their attacks and break down the accord. The Indian government also discovered that terrorist organizations repeatedly split and mutated into separate groups with unique demands. After New Delhi adopted a "no-negotiation" approach, more political energy was focused on the general population. This policy was not without critics who saw this a further evidence of New Delhi's belligerent disregard for human rights. However, as the security situation began to improve, the Indian government skillfully encouraged new political parties, free and fair elections and other requisite democratic processes. The public began to feel that needed changes could be attained through political activism and not through violence. In 1992, when an election for the state assembly was announced, terrorists threatened to kill anyone who voted. Voter turnout was a dismal twenty-two percent. Less than a year later, in January 1993, village council elections saw an astounding eighty-two percent voter participation rate.⁵⁶ The support base for the terrorist organizations rapidly began to crumble.

F. OUTCOME

Terrorism in Punjab, despite ravaging the state for over a decade, was eradicated by sound counterterrorism strategy and coordinated implementation. Senior terrorist leaders from nearly every major organization were either captured or killed. The effect this had on casualties was remarkable. In 1991, 2,591 civilians were killed by terrorist attacks. By 1992 the number dropped to 1,518. In 1993, civilian deaths plummeted to only forty-eight. Sporadic violence continued until 1995 but since then, few terrorist attacks of consequence have been reported. The years 2001 and 2002 saw only one and five terrorist related deaths respectively. India had won its war on terrorism in Punjab.

The Sikh separatist issue, however, has not completely disappeared. There are still proponents of an independent Khalistan. Many of the most vocal Khalistan leaders currently reside in England, Canada and the United States, and continue to press the

⁵⁶ "Peace at Last In Punjab," *The Economist*, 22 May 1993, 45.

Khalistan issue as much as possible. In November 2003 the Council of Khalistan, based in Washington, D.C., held a large, pro-Khalistan seminar. At the meeting, Darshan Singh, an influential university professor, declared unequivocally that, “If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh.”⁵⁷ The council then declared, “This is a step forward for the liberation of the Sikh nation. There is a new upsurge of support for the cause of Sikh freedom.”⁵⁸ The fact that the Khalistan idea remains a goal for some opens the possibility to future Sikh violence. This is, nonetheless, very unlikely. India’s improving counterterrorism strategy sets a powerful precedence for peace and stability in Punjab for the foreseeable future.

G. RELEVANCE FOR U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY

Though there are some key differences, the situation New Delhi faced in Punjab during the 1980s bears striking and important similarities with that facing U.S. forces involved in overseas operations like Iraq. For instance, in each example military forces that were culturally, linguistically, and religiously different than the terrorists and the local population were used, at least initially, to lead the counterterrorism effort. In Iraq these differences are much more pronounced but they were certainly a factor for the Indians in Punjab as well. Also, terrorist forces focused the bulk of their attacks on the police, local politicians and the general public. This characteristic is strikingly similar in both cases. Finally, both the U.S. and the Indian governments were directly responsible for the administration of the disturbed areas. For nearly seven years New Delhi managed Punjab under President’s Rule much like the Coalition Provisional Authority does Iraq. Though the size and scope of administering a state such as Punjab can barely compare with administering a foreign country, many of the challenges—*ergo* the solutions—are quite similar.

1. Counterterrorism Lessons for U.S. International Actions

India’s experience in Punjab has important implications for U.S. counterterrorism in foreign countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. First, U.S. administrators must redouble

⁵⁷ B. Singh, “Seminar on Khalistan Held in Punjab” Press Release by the Council of Khalistan, 18 December 2003; http://www.khalistan.com/PressReleasees/PR121803_Seminaron_Khalistan.htm.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

efforts to stimulate social, political, and economic development in these regions. In Punjab, Indian political and military leaders faced growing discontent due in part to general under-development. Punjabis felt that New Delhi had overlooked the establishment of infrastructure, industry, and a viable political body in their homeland.⁵⁹ Social and political discontent created an excellent environment for the growth of terrorism in Punjab.

This situation is similar to that in Iraq and Afghanistan. Failing or non-existent infrastructure, unreliable public services, and unemployment magnify latent anti-U.S. hostility and motivates anti-U.S. terrorism. New Delhi undertook various economic development packages that proved moderately successful in reducing terrorism in Punjab. India's experience in Punjab demonstrates that a robust economic development plan, while not guaranteeing success against terrorism, significantly helps reduce public discontent and robs terrorists of popular support.

India's economic and social development tactic, however, could have been much more successful than it was. The programs were commonly halted due to periods of increased terrorist violence and/or aggressive military responses. This sputtering effort stunted real progress and eroded public confidence in both the specific economic plans and in the government's sincerity itself. Also, allegations of corruption and poor planning at both the state and local levels limited the overall positive effect that New Delhi's efforts could have achieved.⁶⁰

The U.S. government must carefully execute economic aid packages. Corruption and inefficiencies hinder the program's goals by delaying construction plans, community development and other related activities. Additionally, public perceptions—true or false—of corruption may exasperate dissent and ultimately fuel more terrorism. Having an economic aid program will not guarantee peace. Yet a lack of an economic development plan in areas marred by terrorist violence virtually assures heightened public dissent and escalating terrorist attacks.

Second, the U.S. government must dedicate ample time and energy to reducing the significant ethnic and religious undertones of the conflict. In Punjab, New Delhi faced

⁵⁹ Karan, *War by Stealth*, 48-60.

⁶⁰ Rajat Ganguly, "Coping with Ethnic Insurgencies: View from New Delhi," in *Asia Quarterly* (January-March 2000), 3.

a situation that was marked by clear ethnic and religious divisions. Insurgent forces targeted those fault lines in an attempt to fracture the society. They nearly succeeded. However, by building on the long tradition of cultural interaction between Sikhs and Hindus, New Delhi was able to re-forge the broken communal links.

Likewise, Iraq is easily divided along ethnic and religious lines. Sunni and Shi'i communities have a long history of animosity in Iraq marked by the former regime's Sunni-dominated government, the Iran-Iraq war, and Shi'i uprisings throughout much of the country.⁶¹ There is a real possibility of anti-U.S. forces trying to exasperate those tensions. A civil war in Iraq over religion is perhaps the worst-case scenario for Coalition forces currently in country.

Third, American forces must be trained, equipped, and prepared to conduct counterterrorism operations in urban environments. Punjab demonstrated that the most difficult and costly counterterrorism battles are often waged in heavily populated areas. This is for three reasons. First, terrorists can count on greater "invisibility" in areas of high population density. Second, terrorist attacks, which usually aim to kill as many people as possible, are more effective—from the terrorist's point of view—in crowded urban centers. Third, security forces are often goaded into heavy-handed retaliations that may injure as many, if not more, people as the initial attack. Vijay Karan noted that inciting police retaliation was often the primary purpose of terrorist attacks in Punjab.⁶² Repressive or extreme army reactions often served the terrorist's purposes by promoting anti-government hostility and resentment. U.S. forces will continue to encounter this dilemma in Iraq and must prepare accordingly.

Fourth, terrorism in foreign countries will not be eliminated by military force alone. Despite advanced weaponry, intensive training, and state-of-the-art technology, an effective local security apparatus is essential to defeating terrorism. The Indian army captured or killed innumerable Sikh terrorists. At various times Indian military forces turned Punjab into a veritable occupied territory. Yet the violence did not cease.

⁶¹ Arab-Persian and Sunni-Shi'i rivalries and hostilities have been significant aspects of Iraq's history for centuries. In modern times, Shi'i uprisings occurred in the cities of Najaf, Karbala and Kufa in June 1979. These were violently suppressed as were similar demonstrations following the Gulf War in 1991. See John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 20; Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 554-555.

⁶² Karan, *War By Stealth*, 88-90.

However, once the local security establishment began to operate effectively, great gains were made against the terrorists.

Local security services must provide the majority of the counterterrorism effort. A demoralized police force that lacks the public's confidence actually facilitates terrorism in many ways. For instance, terrorist groups in Punjab intimidated the local police to such a degree that the criminals achieved great freedom of movement and action. Also, as public confidence in the police waned, informants were increasingly hard to find, making the identification and prosecution of the terrorists nearly impossible. However, as local police became more capable, terrorist groups could no longer act with such impunity. Foreign military troops—be they from New Delhi or New York—can never defeat terrorism without the help of the local police and their intimate knowledge of the area and its people.

Though local police are central to the counterterrorism effort, politicians and strategists must not view terrorism as merely a criminal problem. Though the rule of law and the respect of human rights must reign supreme, security forces at all levels must recognize that terrorism represents a threat to the very survival of the state that far exceeds common criminal activities. There must be an unwavering resolve to apprehend or eliminate the terrorists at every possible opportunity. Incrementally increasing pressure only guarantees a protracted struggle that affords terrorists time to adapt to government tactics, engender a popular perception as the “freedom fighter victim,” and export terrorist operations to new venues.

The central role of police and local security agencies does not mean that regular military forces have no role in counterterrorism operations. To the contrary, military troops have much to offer. In Punjab, security forces made their greatest advances when local police and Indian troops cooperated to draw on each other's respective strengths. For instance, India began a series of cordon-and-search operations in which the army would surround and seal-off an entire town—something the other security forces could not do effectively. The local and state police would then search target sites based on their knowledge of the citizenry and its unique situation—something the army could not do. These operations yielded tremendous success at capturing militants, seizing weapons, and increasing the pressure on the militants. Gill declared that by May 1989 the KLO, the

BTFK, and the Babbar Khalsa had all been reduced to a “negligible presence” adding further that, “Terrorism at this juncture could have been wiped out in the state of Punjab within another six months of sustained campaigning.”⁶³

Violent counterterrorism operations involving multiple security agencies often will be necessary. Operation Bluestar demonstrated that popular perceptions (e.g. that the Sikh Panth was indeed under a direct attack by Hindu forces) will polarize a society and provide tremendous political capital for the terrorist organizations. A direct U.S. assault on a mosque or Islamic holy site in Iraq *a la* Operation Bluestar is virtually inconceivable. However, other hard-hitting military actions, if not conducted with the utmost care, may produce similar results and would mark a serious, if not unrecoverable, deterioration of the United State’s position in the area.

For American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the difficulties of rebuilding (or in some instances building from scratch) an effective local police force are formidable. Organization, training, logistics, and manpower issues present difficult challenges that cannot be resolved quickly. U.S. troops have, to their credit, achieved many remarkable successes in their counterterrorism operations, such as the capture of Saddam Hussein and many of his senior advisors. However, real advances in stopping terrorist violence will only be made by Iraqi security forces working in concert with their coalition partners.

Fifth, the United States, and by extension the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), must not allow terrorist groups to participate in political negotiations in any form. India’s experience shows that there is rarely an end to peace talks with criminals. By doing so, terrorist organizations gain increased political legitimacy and can undermine the entire political process. Additionally, governments run the risk of actually spawning more terrorism once some groups gain political “victories” or government concessions through negotiations.⁶⁴ Simultaneously, democratic institutions and processes should be encouraged giving the public a political outlet other than terrorist violence.

⁶³ K. P. S. Gill, “Endgame in Punjab: 1988-1993,” 54.

⁶⁴ Alan Kuperman, “Transnational Causes of Genocide: How the West Inadvertently Exacerbates Ethnic Conflict After the Cold War,” Draft chapter for *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention* (13 December 2001), 1-37.

Finally, American counterterrorism strategy at the tactical and operational levels must continually focus on the general public's perception of the terrorist problem. This is much more than a "hearts and minds" campaign or a PSYOP mission. There must be a concerted effort by government forces to help the population internalize the terrorism fight and adopt it as their own. The watershed change in Punjabi counterterrorism occurred when the terrorists began targeting the families of security personnel. Police resolve was redoubled and the public's perception of the terrorist cause dramatically changed in the government's favor.

U.S. civil and military leaders in foreign counterterrorism campaigns must prepare methods to engage local populations and dissuade them from supporting insurgents. In both Punjab and Iraq the local population suffered devastating terrorist attacks that killed many more civilians than government forces. If Iraqi citizens, for example, determine that they are the primary victims of terrorism, violence will fall precipitously.

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III. INSURGENCY IN INDIA'S NORTHEAST

A. INTRODUCTION

India's northeast region has been marred by terrorist violence for more than fifty years. New Delhi has employed many different policies to counter terrorism in the northeast including economic incentives, military intervention, amnesty programs for "reformed" terrorists, and political concessions. Despite countless counterterrorism strategies, the area still harbors over 104 terrorist and/or militant organizations and accounts for roughly one-third of all terrorist attacks in the nation.⁶⁵

This chapter establishes that the principal motivation for terrorism in India's northeast is ethnic tension. Many of these groups feel culturally removed from the rest of India and consider New Delhi's rule over the area unjust and illegitimate. Demands for self-rule and sovereign territory are common among the region's ethnic groups and many of them have resorted to terror attacks in a bid for independence. New Delhi's efforts to expand its political or military influence into the northeast are usually met with stiff opposition. Ethnic tensions also result in fierce inter-ethnic conflicts. The countless ethnicities and sub-national divisions have reinforced deep-seated animosities between the disparate groups. Illegal immigration from neighboring countries has exasperated many of these tensions by changing the demographics and bringing disparate groups into closer contact. At stake is much more than ethnic pride. Groups fight over lands that are often rich in oil or agricultural potential. Likewise, violence results from deliberate attempts to increase political influence, economic bargaining power, or social prestige. Increasingly, rights to illicit activities such as narcotics and weapons trafficking mark the cause of the much of the violence as some of the terrorist groups shed their original "ethnic" motivations to assume a more mafia-like appearance.

This chapter also presents three key lessons for U.S. counterterrorism policy makers. First, economic stimulus plans, though important, will not end terrorism or ethnic strife in an area and may, if handled improperly, aggravate the problems. New Delhi has made large capital investments into the northeast. Some violent organizations, however,

⁶⁵ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Major Terrorist Groups Operating in India," in *India Assessment 2002*, 17 October 2003; <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/index.html>; accessed 5 December 2003.

view these plans as unfair aid to rival factions. Additionally, corruption siphons large amounts of money directly into the hands of militant organizations, facilitating weapons purchases, terrorist training efforts, and recruitment initiatives.

Second, the case of terrorism in India's northeast highlights the importance of effective border security. Terrorist organizations routinely exploit loose borders between India and neighboring countries by maintaining training and logistic centers beyond New Delhi's reach. Sections of these borders are under almost complete control of terrorist groups who maintain their own border checkpoints to extort money for their activities. This has two important implications. Operating support bases beyond India's territory significantly hinders New Delhi's counterterrorism efforts in the northeast. Terrorists can cross into the northeastern states, attack largely at will, and then retreat to relative safety across the international border. Additionally, the transit of insurgent and terrorist groups helps spread ethnic violence and widens the affected areas. This is most clearly seen in Nagaland. The Naga insurgency began in India but quickly spread across the border with Myanmar, spurring ethnic Nagas there to support the violent campaigns.

The transit of terrorism in the northeast highlights the third vital lesson for U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Without effective international cooperation, there will be little permanent progress in the war on terrorism. Reductions in terrorist violence in the northeast correlate directly with improvements in cross-border counterterrorism cooperation.

Numerous factors have debilitated India's counterterrorism efforts and perpetuated the conflicts. Demographic diversity, ethnic and religious tensions, pervasive under-development, misperceptions about New Delhi's interests, and ineffective democratic processes characterize most of the region and spawn continued violence. Nonetheless, there are recent signs of improvement. India has modified its strategy toward the region—modifications that have recently begun to bear fruit. While these improvements suggest that progress may be possible, absolute peace is still anything but guaranteed.

B. BACKGROUND

The northeast region consists of seven states: Meghalaya, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.



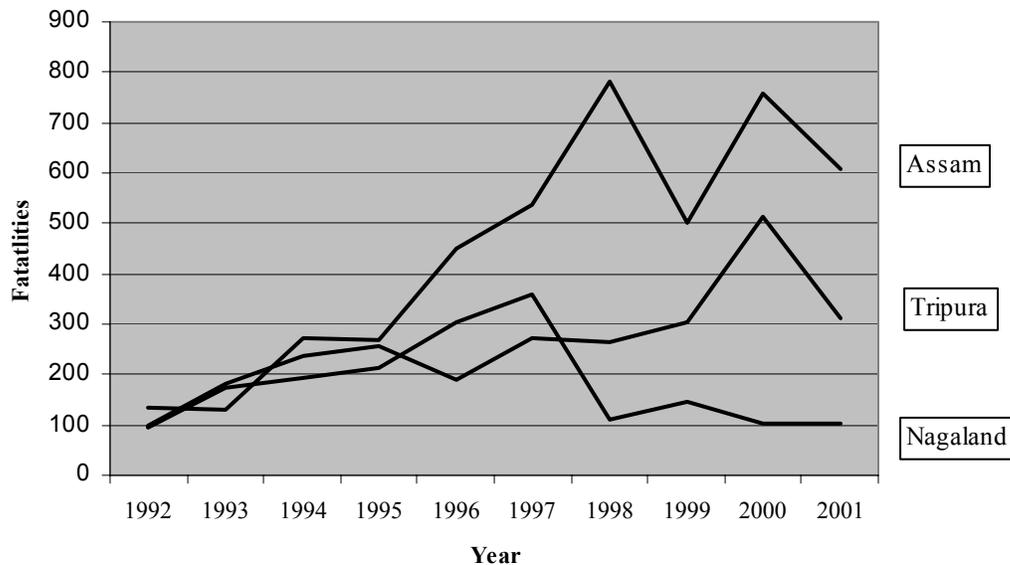
Each state is currently experiencing varying levels of terrorist and insurgent violence. However, terrorism is most severe in Nagaland, Assam and Tripura. These three states are excellent examples of terrorism in India because the most organized, experienced and active terrorist groups routinely operate there. Some of these terrorist movements, such as that for Naga independence, benefit from over fifty years of experience, making their efforts to organize, equip, and attack notably more effective. Figure 2 shows how this activity has produced, in the last decade, significant periods of escalating fatalities with only Nagaland demonstrating a noteworthy decline.⁶⁶

Further, terrorism in each state is unique—spurred on by different (and occasionally competing) factors that require distinct counterterrorism tactics. Ethnic separatism is the most prevalent motivation for terrorism in the northeast. Groups such as the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCM) actively strive for the creation of an independent Naga nation. Other groups, such as the All-Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) are motivated by ethnic and tribal rivalries. Socialist politics and religion are other significant

⁶⁶ Ajai Sahni, “Survey of Conflicts & Resolution in India’s Northeast,” in *Faultlines* 12; <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume12/article3.htm>; accessed 28 November 2003.

motivating forces. Finally, foreign intervention encourages many terrorist groups in India's northeast. In the 1990s, the Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) allegedly made contact with insurgent groups in the northeast.

Figure 2: Fatalities from Terrorism in Assam, Nagaland and Tripura



Confessional statements made by captured terrorists indicate that the ISI wanted the insurgent forces to open a second front of subversion in the northeast to compliment the one in Kashmir.⁶⁷ The ISI's links to Indian terrorism is further explored in subsequent chapters but the mere allegation of ISI activity in the northeast is enough to prompt some terrorist attacks. However, many groups have exchanged their social, political, religious, and ideological motivations for lucrative criminal activities such as drug trafficking, kidnappings for ransom, extortion, and weapons sales.

Despite the differences between terrorism in the three states, important commonalities bear noting. The region as a whole faces numerous collective challenges, such as ethnic diversity, economic instability and geographic limitations. Understanding how these common characteristics impact terrorism in the northeast is critical to developing a viable counterterrorism strategy.

⁶⁷ Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers in the Mist* (New Delhi: Viking, 1996), 73.

1. Ethnic Diversity

Northeast India is quite diverse, both ethnically and culturally. The plethora of religions, languages, and tribal identities separates populations more concretely than a state boundary could ever do. The Indian Constitution recognizes over 160 separate tribes in the area. However, according to a noted expert on terrorism in India's northeast, Ajai Sahni, this does not accurately reflect the real complexity of ethnic variance in the region, which consists of over 400 distinct tribal or sub-tribal groups.⁶⁸ Yet some inhabitants are not affiliated with any particular tribe. Tribal residents dominate in some states, such as in Manipur and Nagaland but constitute a significant minority in states such as Tripura and Assam.⁶⁹ This further complicates the ethnic equation in the region, exasperating the already-stressed ethnic divisions.

2. Economic Instability

Economic hardship is pervasive in India's northeast. Nagaland, Assam and Tripura are all below India's national per capita average. There is little industry, virtually no service sector and the rampant instability discourages external investments. There is, however, a great deal of money flowing into the northeast region. India's central government has allocated sizable grants administered by the Department of the North Eastern Region (DONER). Last year DONER operated on a \$122 million budget.⁷⁰ Additional funding comes from the North Eastern Council with its \$111 million budget. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have also sent money into the northeast. Recently the ADB approved a major development project for the area projected at \$444 million.⁷¹

But the influx of capital has not stopped the violence and in some instances, may be exasperating the problems of corruption, graft, and extortion. According to C. P.

⁶⁸ Ajai Sahni, "Survey of Conflicts & Resolution in India's Northeast," in *Faultlines* 12; <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume12/article3.htm>; accessed 28 November 2003.

⁶⁹ North East Development Finance Corporation Ltd., "General Information," (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 2002), 1. http://databank.nedfi.com/content.php?menu=1003&page_id=356; accessed 2 February 2004.

⁷⁰ For sake of parity, all financial figures have been converted to U.S. dollars and adjusted to reflect common exchange rates current as of 5 March 2004.

⁷¹ Bibhu Prasad Routray, "Neglected Northeast: Whose Responsibility?" in *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, article no. 1145 (15 September 2003): 1.

Thakur, the Minister of DONER, nearly ten percent of developmental funding goes directly to the coffers of the militants.⁷² Terrorism further depresses the region's stagnant economy. In the last two years, terrorist attacks have prevented the extension of railroads, burnt down bridges and targeted businesses and their leaders, greatly hindering the government's peace initiatives.

3. Geographic Challenges

Geography poses another challenge to stability in the area. India's northeast covers over 98,000 square miles and accounts for nearly forty million people. The region has, for centuries, been a key area for the exchange of people, goods and ideas from India's interior to both East Asia and Southeast Asia.⁷³ The creation of East Pakistan in 1947 proved to be a major blow to the northeast as it abruptly cut roads and railways that were sustaining local populations.⁷⁴ It also blocked access to the Chittagong port in the Bay of Bengal, which further isolated the seven states, and Tripura in particular. Partition nearly severed the northeast region from India if not for the Shiliguri Corridor (commonly referred to as the "Chicken's Neck"), a narrow strip of land that averages only fifteen miles wide. This has intensified feelings of geographic isolation and inflamed separatist sentiments in the region.

Border problems are another aspect of geographic challenges common in the region. The states are located between Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, creating over 2,000 miles of dense jungle borders to secure—a virtually impossible task. This permeability is most significant along the borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar, from whence much of India's illegal immigration springs. Approximately 20 million illegal Bangladeshis live in India, many having crossed the poorly delineated and loosely patrolled international border.⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Bureau of the Census (India), *Census Report—2001* (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 2001), 34.

⁷⁴ Pakistan was created at the time of India's independence in 1947 and originally consisted of two halves. Residents of East Pakistan, separated from the rest of the fledgling country by over 1,000 miles of Indian territory, often felt overlooked and unsupported. Islamabad lost the territory as a result of the 1971 war with India and the new nation of Bangladesh emerged.

⁷⁵ Anand Kumar, "Illegal Immigration in India's East: West Shows the Way," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, article no. 1124 (6 September 2003): 1.

The ease of transit from neighboring countries into India's northeast has dire implications for counterterrorism efforts. Various terrorist groups have established training camps and supply depots in nearby countries and exploit the easy border crossings. The highly publicized seizure of ammunition in Bogra, Bangladesh was a telling example. On 27 June 2003 Bangladeshi police seized over 160,000 rounds of Chinese rifle bullets and 700 lbs of RDX plastic explosive—the largest single ammunition seizure since the establishment of Bangladesh.⁷⁶ Initial reports suggest the weapons were to be smuggled across the border to Tripura to support terrorist operations there. Subsequent police raids have implicated members of the Jama'at-i Islami (JI) of Pakistan and the Jama'at-i Islami of Bangladesh (JIB). Long, loosely guarded borders make impeding transnational terrorism significantly harder in India's northeast.

The cases of Assam, Nagaland, and Tripura are vital to understanding terrorism in India's northeast. These examples show the most significant characteristics of the problem; its roots, its organizations, and its manifestations. This chapter presents each state's primary terrorist challenge, the Indian government's counterterrorism efforts, and how New Delhi's lackluster response to terrorism provides important lessons for U.S. counterterrorism policy makers.

C. ASSAM

1. Background

Assam is the most violence-stricken state in northeast India. Its central location creates shared borders with each of the other six states and internationally with Bangladesh and Bhutan. Additionally, Assam is the primary corridor that connects the northeastern region with the rest of India. The resulting flow of people and goods through Assam makes it vital to political, economic and military security for the entire area. It also makes Assam a prime target for terrorist strikes and related criminal activities.

2. Conflict Dynamics

Secessionist movements and ethnic rivalries are the two primary engines of terrorism and insurgency in Assam. Terror attacks began as an attempt to deter illegal

⁷⁶ Ibid.

immigration, which was radically changing the state's traditional demography. Amid rising discord, anti-immigration groups emerged and by 1979 were formally organized. That year, the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was founded and remains the most recognized and prolific terrorist organization in the state, if not the region.⁷⁷ At its pinnacle ULFA created pervasive terror throughout the state through increasingly violent attacks conducted with relative impunity. The preeminence of the ULFA to terrorism in the region must not be under stressed.

ULFA believes that Assam was historically independent from India. According to the group, even after India's independence in 1947, the territory of Assam remained geographically separate, having never been included in the country's original charter. ULFA contends that Assam should be independent and self-governing, being both geographically separate and ethnically distinct from India. New Delhi heightened local anxieties and anti-India sentiments when it loosened laws on the migration of foreigners to Assam. Predictably this led to a dramatic rise in immigration, both legal and illegal, from neighboring Bangladesh. According to the ULFA, this destroyed Assam's distinct ethnic character.⁷⁸ ULFA then adopted an extreme version of Maoist-Marxist socialism, which served as the ideological foundation for its terrorist attacks. As one ULFA publication explains, "to create an exploitation-free society our next step must be a national war of liberation...we have no alternative to armed revolution."⁷⁹ ULFA's vice-chairman Pradip Gogoi, further clarified his organization's objectives when he reiterated the group's demand for a "sovereign, socialist Assam" in which, "All indigenous people must stay, all others must leave."⁸⁰

ULFA remained closely allied to various socialist groups and anti-immigration parties throughout most of the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years, however, the state and federal governments have made advances on the issue of immigration.⁸¹ As a result, some

⁷⁷ "Assam" is the official modern spelling of the state. The state is also referred to as "Asom" by traditionalists. The traditional spelling evokes strong sentiments that are often exploited by "purists" seeking to foment historical pride and ethnic unity.

⁷⁸ Dinesh Kotwal, "Dynamics of Unending Violence in Assam" (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2000); www.idsa-india.org/an-jun1000.html; accessed 10 January 2004.

⁷⁹ B.G. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent* (London: Konark, 1997), 57.

⁸⁰ Seema Hussain, "Exclusive Interview, Pradip Gogoi, Jailed ULFA Vice-Chairman," *The Week News Magazine*, 20 July 2003; www.the-week.com/23jul20/events9.html; accessed 14 January 2004.

⁸¹ Despite improvements, many scholars, including author Anand Kumar, still criticize India's immigration policies vis-à-vis the northeast. Said Kumar, "India has adopted a knee-jerk reaction to tackle this problem

of ULFA's old political allies have since denounced the group, its leaders, and its tactics—isolating the group and enabling the capture of many prominent ULFA leaders, including Gogoi. Surprisingly, ULFA then adopted an even more “hard-line” ideology and a more ruthless *modus operandi*. ULFA's leadership continues its calls for the secession of Assam from India and turns increasingly to bombings, kidnappings and political assassinations to advance their cause.

Secessionism and ethnic conflicts are also key to the Bodo movement, Assam's second most significant source of terrorism. Bodos are one of the most prominent tribes in Assam and are very distinct culturally and ethnically from the Assamese. The animosity between the two groups is well documented. For this, many Bodos began demanding an independent Bodo nation to further their rights. Though many organizations claim to be the legitimate voice of the Bodo people, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) emerged as the most prominent in 1988.

Much like ULFA violence, Bodo violence in Assam reached its peak during the late 1980s. Though routinely eclipsed by ULFA and commonly relegated to “second place” among Assam's terrorist organizations, the NDFB has recently gained ground. In the last two years, the NDFB has acquired significant prominence and now captures an equal share of India's counterterrorism limelight.

Terrorist groups in Assam owe their survival to international connections. ULFA was the first group to set up training camps in Bhutan and reportedly has nearly 2,000 personnel encamped there.⁸² These facilities serve as training centers, weapons depots, planning facilities and operational headquarters for their terrorist attacks. Unlike Bangladesh, which vehemently denies that any terrorist training facilities exist in its territory, Bhutan openly admits that the camps exist. Though there is discrepancy over quantity (the Indian government believes that Bhutan harbors over thirty terrorist camps

of migration which has not helped its cause. It has only succeeded in raising tensions on its north-eastern borders between the paramilitary forces of the two countries.” See Anand Kumar, “Illegal Immigration in India's East: West Shows the Way,” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Article no. 1124, 6 Sep 2003, 1-2.

⁸² Praveen Kumar, “Indian Militants Sit Pretty in Bhutan.” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, article no. 1035 (11 August 2003): 1.

while the Bhutanese government maintains that there are only nine) both sides agree that they do in fact exist and that they pose a threat to peace and stability.⁸³

ULFA and the NDFB are only two of many terrorist groups operating in Assam. Other prominent groups include the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), the Gorkha Tiger Force (GTF), the Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO), the Bengali Tiger Force (BTF), and the People's United Liberation Front (PULF). Nearly all of the organizations are driven by secessionism, socialism, and/or ethnic tensions.

Trends indicate that terrorist violence in Assam is worsening. Over the last decade the state has experienced a dramatic increase in the quantity and lethality of terrorists strikes. ULFA and NDFB cadres are well trained, well armed, and consistently demonstrate their ability to carry out intricate operations far from their training and logistic centers with relative impunity. Despite a slight decline in terrorism fatalities over the last three years, Assam still averages nearly 40 deaths a month.⁸⁴ Barring a major breakthrough, terrorism will likely remain prominent in Assam for the foreseeable future.

D. TRIPURA

1. Background

Tripura is the smallest state in India's northeast. Its relatively small population (three million) in an area of 4,000 square miles makes it one of the least inhabited states in India.⁸⁵ Also, Tripura is nearly surrounded by Bangladesh—roughly eighty percent of its borders are international.⁸⁶ This has dramatically changed the state's ethnic and tribal concentrations.

Consequently, terrorism in Tripura is primarily based on nationalism. Tripura is home to many distinct tribes that, as in other parts of the region, differ widely from one another ethnically, linguistically, culturally and often religiously. Tripura's demographics changed more than any other northeastern state during and immediately following the creation of East Pakistan in 1947. Though exact figures are unavailable, conservative

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Assam Assessment 2003," November 2003; www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/assam/index.html; accessed 11 December 2003.

⁸⁵ Tripura State Government, *Know Tripura*, <http://tripura.nic.in/kt3.htm>; accessed 9 March 2004. See also www.mapsofindia.com/census2001/population/populationindia.htm

⁸⁶ Edward B. Espenshade, Jr., ed., *Goode's World Atlas*, 18th ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1993), 178.

estimates suggest that Tripura's tribal population, which at one time accounted for nearly all the state's population, dropped to only twenty-eight percent following the waves of immigration.⁸⁷

This dramatic change exasperated ethnic tensions, which by the late 1970s had reached a critical point. Various Tripura tribes united and secretly established the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), chartered to defend tribal rights and property from the encroaching non-tribal influence. The immigrant Bengali population responded by forming their own organization known as the *Amra Bangla* ("We are Bengalis") and the two camps were poised for conflict. Violence erupted in 1979 as ethnic riots prompted attacks and retaliations from both sides. Reports indicate that as many as 1,800 people were killed before peace was restored in late 1980.⁸⁸

Compounding the problem is the popular perception that the ruling Left Front is decidedly pro-Bengali and anti-Tripurese. The Left Front is often accused of encouraging illegal Bengali immigration. This allegation is one of the primary motivations for militancy in the State and is often exploited by the terrorist organizations.⁸⁹ This perception has multiple implications as it drives the Tripurese to expel immigrants who, in turn, seek to protect their own interests.

Despite its small size, Tripura consistently suffers a disproportionately high number of terrorist attacks and deaths. Though the years 2000-2002 saw modest declines, fatalities nearly doubled to 276 by 23 November 2003.⁹⁰ This data, when viewed against Tripura's small population, demonstrates the area's propensity for terrorist violence.

2. Conflict Dynamics

There are two principal terrorist groups in Tripura. The first and most significant is the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT). The NLFT was established on 12 March 1989 after its predecessor, the TNV, agreed with the government to disband. The NLFT has been particularly active during the last two years and is believed to have

⁸⁷ Ajai Sahni, "Survey of Conflicts & Resolution in India's Northeast," in *Faultlines* 12; www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume12/article3.htm; accessed 28 November 2003.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Praveen Kumar, "Militating Against Democracy in Tripura," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, article no. 965 (8 February 2003): 1.

⁹⁰ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Tripura Assessment 2003," November 2003; www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/tripura/index.html; accessed 28 November 2003.

approximately 825 members.⁹¹ However, the NLFT has splintered along ideological and strategic fault lines. One of the most significant divisions affecting the NLFT is religion. Hindu members side with their leader, Nayanbashi Jamatia, while Christians follow Biswamohan Debbarma. Neither of the resulting camps is significant enough on its own to become the preeminent voice of Tripura's insurgents, but the case demonstrates how organizations like the NLFT are often rife with social and political divisions.

Despite its divisions, the NLFT as a whole has remained a viable terrorist force. The group relies heavily on its ties to nearby countries such as Bangladesh and Myanmar for training and supplies. The NLFT has at least 25 training camps in Bangladesh and uses them to launch attacks into Tripura—retreating across the border once their missions are complete. Poor cooperation between Indian security forces and those in neighboring countries has handicapped counterterrorism efforts in Tripura. In 2002, the NLFT accounted for eighty percent of all terrorist fatalities statewide and their operations in 2003 remained equally as prolific.

Tripura's second major terrorist organization is the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF). Some NLFT members see the ATTF as competition and the two groups are often in direct conflict. Rivalry between the two groups contributes to feelings of “one-upsmanship” with the two groups often acting in succession in a perverse attempt to outdo their rival's latest attack. The ATTF seeks to expel immigrants (primarily Bangladeshis) who now comprise nearly thirty-three percent of the state's population.⁹² Like their rivals, the ATTF has heavily exploited international borders, establishing approximately twenty training camps in Bangladesh.

E. NAGALAND

1. Background

Nagaland represents India's longest and most enduring terrorist challenge. The Nagas are an indigenous population of approximately four million people that differ significantly from other Indians ethnically, religiously, linguistically and culturally. Nagas are concentrated primarily in Nagaland though nearly two million live in the

⁹¹ South Asian Terrorism Portal, “National Liberation Front of Tripura,” November 2003; www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/tripura/terrorist_outfits/nlft.html; accessed 11 December 2003.

⁹² Bureau of the Census (India), *Census Report—2001* (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 2001), 34.

neighboring states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur with another million living across the Myanmar border.

Seeking independence and sovereignty, the Nagas have used violence since the earliest days of British influence in the region. On 14 August 1947, one day prior to India's formal declaration of independence from England, the Naga National Council (NNC) declared its own independence from India. Under the leadership of Zapu Phizo a Naga government was created in exile and began mobilizing a Naga resistance. However, the situation was complicated by the fact that intra-tribal differences split the Naga population between those that favored and those that opposed integration with India's emerging central government. Persistent fractures along ethnic and political divides has characterized the Naga resistance ever since.

From 1952-1963 Indian security forces launched counter-insurgency operations against Naga rebels in which over 200,000 Nagas were reportedly killed.⁹³ In an attempt to placate the Naga insurgency, the Indian government signed the “Delhi Agreement” in 1963. This fiercely criticized accord granted statehood to Nagaland and offered major political and economic concessions to the Naga leaders. This lent legitimacy to the state government and helped marginalize the insurgents. Terrorist attacks, however, continued unabated despite various failed peace agreements and in 1967 the Indian government's Peace Mission to Nagaland was officially abandoned. Predictably, few positive developments resulted during these years.

In 1972 the NNC was outlawed under the Unlawful Activities Act of 1967 and New Delhi returned to its policy of aggressive military intervention. After three years, a tenuous peace was restored with the signing of the Shillong Accord. Yet many Nagas summarily rejected the accord and refused to surrender, forming instead a new insurgent movement called the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN). Founded by two charismatic leaders, Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah, the NSCN rapidly emerged as the preeminent terrorist force in Nagaland.

The NSCN continued the NNC's efforts to establish an independent Naga nation. In theory the nation, known as “Nagalim,” would unite the thirty-seven disparate Naga

⁹³ Rukmini Callimachi, “A Remote Land of Jungle, Jesus—and Religious War,” *Daily Herald* (New Delhi), 5 May 2003, <http://www.dailyherald.com/special/passagefromindia/nagalim.asp>; accessed 27 October 2003.

tribes into a greater Naga populace. Drawing heavily from Mao Zedong's violent socialism, the NSCN set about to liberate Nagas from the perceived social and economic oppression by non-Nagas. The primary targets of Naga violence were members of the Kuki tribe, who also resided in the region. Kukis naturally formed violent anti-Naga groups, but these paled in comparison to the NSCN. The NSCN benefited from the NNC's popular support and grew rapidly, extending its influence throughout most of the state of Nagaland and into Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. However, its widespread popularity was short-lived.

By 1980 popular support for the NSCN waned. Many people felt estranged from the exiled government and quickly tired of gunpoint taxation by guerrilla forces. In an effort to shore up popular support, Naga leaders proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of Nagaland, complete with a government, employees and a national military. However, as with many other terrorist groups, fissures and divisions plagued the NSCN. In 1988 the NSCN split over tribal, political and economic differences. The larger and more influential faction became known as the NSCN-IM after its leaders ("Isak-Muivah") while the rival faction became the NSCN-K for its founder S.S. Khaplang. Currently, both organizations continue a deep-seated animosity, often targeting each other in bitter internecine attacks.

Religion is an important aspect of the Naga independence movement. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Naga issue is its spiritual component. Though terrorism in Nagaland is not motivated by religious differences *per se* as is the case in other parts of India, the impact of religious discord on the issue is startling.

Unlike the rest of India, Nagaland is nearly ninety percent Christian. Christianity first came to the area in 1892 when Dr. E. W. Clark, a Baptist missionary, began to proselytize to the Nagas in nearby Manipur. He later translated sections of the New Testament into local tribal dialects and to this day is revered in Naga society.

Christianity spread rapidly. In 1972 the American evangelical preacher Billy Graham led a three-day spiritual revival in Nagaland to a crowd of over 500,000—more than half of the entire population at the time. According to the American Baptist Mission Center, Nagaland is now the most Baptist region of the world, and icons of this religiosity

abound. Plastic crosses are sold in nearly every gas station and "Praise the Lord" billboards dot the highways.

Religious distinctiveness is not lost on Nagaland's political and military leaders who emphasize the religious component of their complaint with Delhi. The NSCM-IM's Isak Swu consistently emphasizes God in his political speeches, beginning them with the phrase "praise the Lord." His speeches often sound more like evangelical Sunday sermons than political discourse. While addressing the Naga nation on its nineteenth Republic Day Swu said,

It is our sin alone that can defeat us, nothing else. It is, therefore, mandatory that we repent for our iniquities and go back to the Lord in humble submission. The Creator surely has a purpose for the Naga Nation. He wants us to live for Him and His Nagalim.⁹⁴

In other occasions Swu has incited popular sentiments by suggesting that Naga Christians were under attack by adherents of other faiths, specifying primarily Hindus and Muslims.⁹⁵ Religion wields great influence on the scope and direction of terrorism in Nagaland.

2. Conflict Dynamics

The Naga militancy has experienced significant changes in its scope and direction. At its inception the Naga resistance was a traditional guerrilla war with "hit-and-run" attacks on Indian military forces. As New Delhi increased military deployments to the area, the Naga resistance began to change its focus to mobilizing the civilian population. Additionally, Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) agency has actively sought to propagate terrorism in the northeast. However, modern militancy in Nagaland comes predominantly from internecine violence between the two NSCN factions. NSCN-IM controls the southern sections of the state while their rivals dominate in the north. The two factions now attack each other as much as they attack Indian forces—marking a dramatic shift from traditional "guerrilla" attacks to more indiscriminate acts of terrorism.

⁹⁴ Isak Chishi Swu, "Speech Delivered by Isak Chishi Swu on the 19th Republic Day, 21 March 1998 – Praise the Lord!" (*n.p.*, 21 March 1998); <http://www.anglefire.com/mo/Nagaland/Speech.html>; accessed 24 October 2003.

⁹⁵ Linguam Luithui and Frans Welman, "Chronology of Recent Events," <http://www.nagalim.nl/html/history/chronology.html>; accessed 24 October 2003.

Unquestionably the NSCN-IM is the most prominent terrorist organization in Nagaland. Both Muivah and Swu routinely espouse violence in the pursuit of “Greater Nagalim.” To the NSCN-IM, Nagalim encompasses all of present-day Nagaland and also consists of significant portions of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and even Myanmar. Calls for an independent Nagalim that encroaches on so many neighboring areas has prompted vociferous denouncements from nearly every other interested party.⁹⁶

In contrast, the NSCM-K has attempted to garnish popular support away from the NSCM-IM by endorsing Indian government demands to constrain Nagaland to its present-day borders. Some see this as a *de-facto* abandonment of the “Greater Nagalim” concept and Khaplang has been severely criticized as having been co-opted by New Delhi.

Violence in Nagaland is on the decline. For the last three years the state has averaged approximately one hundred terrorist deaths per year, which is down from 360 in 1997.⁹⁷ A very tenuous cease-fire agreement has lasted since 1998 despite terrorist attacks and state retaliations. However, on-going negotiations between the government and the various terrorist organizations have produced few tangible results.

F. INDIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Indian government has tried numerous political and military tactics to end the violence in the northeast. It has granted legal concessions, economic aid packages, political recognition and cease-fire deals to the various terrorist organizations. It has also used a variety of military and para-military options to wage its war on terrorism in the area. Neither tactic holds the definitive solution, as both are fraught with specific limitations and unintended consequences. All parties declare that the problems are

⁹⁶ Naga secessionists speaking of “Greater Nagalim” are referring to a sovereign Naga nation that encompasses much more territory than just the Indian state of Nagaland. “Greater Nagalim” includes significant portions of the neighboring states of Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and parts of western Bangladesh—all areas of Naga habitation. This idea is vehemently opposed by most of the other ethnic and political organizations in those areas and the mere term is very provocative. The concept is contentious for Nagas as well. Not all Naga secessionists endeavor for “Greater Nagalim,” striving instead for a new country based solely on the current state borders.

⁹⁷ Ajai Sahni, “Survey of Conflicts & Resolution in India’s Northeast,” in *Faultlines* 12; <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume12/article3.htm>; accessed 28 November 2003.

inherently political in nature and thus require political solutions. However, the military component to New Delhi's counterterrorism strategy is worth noting.

1. Military Response

Indian military and para-military forces have been actively pursuing terrorists in India's northeast for many years. Recent military intervention became most prevalent in 1990 with the deployment of regular Indian army troops to Assam. Following the escalating violence of the late 1980s, India's Union Minister of State and Home Affairs, Subodh Kant Sahay, said "The whole (Assam state government's) machinery was with the ULFA."⁹⁸ The worsening security situation prompted the Indian government to summarily dismiss the state's leadership on 27 November 1990, declare martial law, officially outlaw the ULFA, and commence a series of aggressive counterterrorist ventures with the most intensive named "Operation Bajrang" and "Operation Rhino."

Operations Bajrang and Rhino were massive military endeavors. In addition to local police and Indian army regulars, New Delhi drew on the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Assam Rifles, a paramilitary force controlled by New Delhi. Nearly 30,000 army personnel (of the second and twenty-first divisions) were reportedly utilized for Operation Bajrang and 40,000 (from the second, fourth, twenty-first, and fifty-seventh divisions) for Operation Rhino.⁹⁹ Additionally, the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Eastern Air Command flew tactical support sorties and reconnaissance missions and, according to the IAF, helped discover ULFA mass graves.¹⁰⁰

Tactically, Bajrang and Rhino were successes. Indian military forces destroyed the ULFA's headquarter in Lakhpathar and raided numerous ULFA safe houses. Saraipung, another ULFA camp capable of training 200 recruits, was overrun and

⁹⁸ Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers in the Mist: Tales of War and Peace from India's Northeast* (New Delhi: Viking, 1994), 190.

⁹⁹ Queen's University of Belfast School of Law, *Emergency Law Database*, <http://www.law.qub.ac.uk/humanrts/emergency/india/ind1.htm>; accessed 2 February 2004.

¹⁰⁰ Indian Air Force, "Operation Bajrang," http://www.indianairforce.nic.in/eac/indo_china.htm; accessed 3 February 2004.

dismantled.¹⁰¹ Though by one count only fifteen ULFA members were killed, nearly 7,000 were allegedly arrested.¹⁰² These numbers, of course, are somewhat suspect and not verifiable. However, the missions were certainly detrimental to the ULFA. As ULFA supporters were removed, the state saw a moderate decline in ULFA attacks, which gave Assam's newly sworn-in government of Hiteswar Saikia a vital boost.

However, strategically Operation Bajrang may have ultimately benefited the ULFA. The Indian military was unable to seal Assam's borders in conjunction with its prosecution of ULFA terrorists, which allowed many, including some of ULFA's most senior leaders to flee to neighboring Bhutan. This cut a new international facet into the military's fight against terrorist and immensely complicated India's counter-terrorist efforts in the area.

A major impediment to Indian military operations in the northeast was the abundance of disparate forces involved. At any particular time Indian army troops, paramilitary forces, special police units, regular law enforcement agencies and even armed civilians could be fighting insurgents. Quite expectedly, efforts were often frustrated by confusion, competition and even interference. To help remedy this problem, a loose and rather ineffective coalition was formed in 1991 consisting of military, paramilitary and police forces. The resulting Central Command Coordination Center embodied the first attempt to coordinate a multi-pronged attack on terrorists. Though sound in principle, the plan failed to overcome the inherent problems of multi-force cooperation and it was supplanted in 1997 by a second, more ambitious effort.

On 4 January 1997, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directed the creation of the Unified Headquarters under which all counterterrorist activities would be coordinated. The Indian Army assumed operational control under the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Army's IV Corps, which ultimately proved very controversial. Many dissident voices decried the move as the death of the democratically elected civilian government of the state. Only three weeks after its inception, a group of prominent residents publicly protested the new organization declaring that, "the

¹⁰¹ Madhu Gurung and Ramtanu Maitra, "Insurgent Groups in India's Northeast," in *Executive Intelligence Review*, 13 Oct 1995; http://www.larouche.com/other/1995/2241_ne_india_groups.html; accessed 2 February 2004.

¹⁰² *India Today*, 15 Jan 1992.

introduction of the Unified Command Structure when an elected government is in power would lead to a destruction of the democratic system in the state.”¹⁰³ Though those fears are not likely to materialize, they demonstrate popular perceptions of the injection of the central government in northeastern states. Additionally, placing the Indian Army in control was a demoralizing blow to the state police who greatly resented the Army’s prominence and authority.¹⁰⁴

Police infrastructure in the region lacked cohesion and direction, often compromising its ability to maintain law and order. Various internal studies identified the problem and recommended solutions.¹⁰⁵ In July 1978 the Indian government created a nucleus training initiative called the North East Police Academy (NEPA). NEPA’s creation was a watershed event in India’s counterterrorism program because it marked the first concerted effort to create an effective and coordinated security force in the region. However, the initiative remained relatively ineffective due to chronic under funding—operating on only \$62,000 a year from 1978 to 1986.

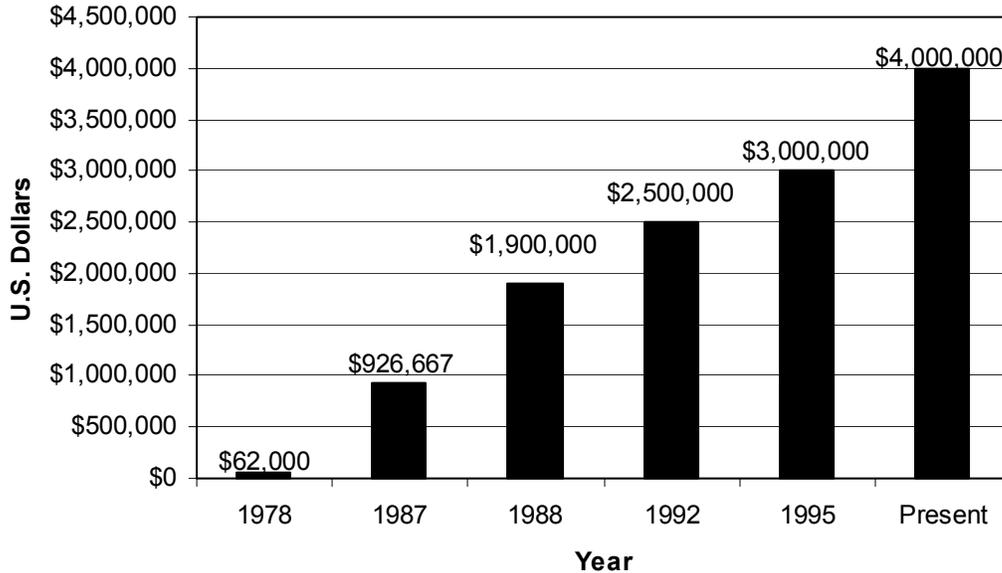
In 1987 New Delhi made significant changes to its approach to the NEPA, resulting in dramatic budget increases. Figure 3 charts the relative increase in NEPA funding.

¹⁰³ *Assam Tribune*, 22 January 1997.

¹⁰⁴ Ved Marwah, *Uncivil Wars: Pathology of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: Indus, 1996), 224-230.

¹⁰⁵ North East Police Academy, *North East Training Academy – Background Information*; <http://nepa.nic.in/main.html>; accessed 24 October 2003.

Figure 3: NEPA Funding Increases



That year, NEPA's funding skyrocketed to \$926,667, then \$1.9 million in 1988, \$2.5 million in 1992, \$3 million in 1995 and \$4 million today. Additionally, drastic changes to the training regime have increased emphasis on the judicious use of force, countering heavily armed opposition, conducting urban operations, and joint and inter-agency operations.¹⁰⁶

Consequently, cooperation between federal, state and even international units is on the rise. The previously mentioned ammunition seizure in Bangladesh resulted from detailed coordination involving state police, Indian border security forces, regular military units and close interaction with Bangladeshi police, who actually conducted the confiscation. Reports indicate the weapons confiscated in Bogra were being smuggled to support the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) and illustrate the cross-border nature of insurgency in the region.¹⁰⁷ The weapons seizure also demonstrates how well-armed these factions are and how counterterrorism cooperation at all levels—local, federal, and international—is becoming increasingly essential to successfully countering terrorist threats.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Anand Kumar, "Bogra Ammo Haul and Cross-Border Links of Northeast Terrorists," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, article no. 1098 (18 August 2003): 1.

Counterterrorist military operations in northeast India are an integral part of India's overall strategy. They have, at times, eliminated terrorist cadres either by killing or capturing them and have successfully begun the process of integrated, multi-agency actions. However, military force has occasionally been misapplied, resulting in heightened anti-government feelings and increased sympathy for the insurgents. India must, therefore delicately balance the needs for state security with full respect for human rights. It becomes evident, therefore, that military force alone will not solve the problem.

2. Political and Economic Response

New Delhi's political and economic response to terrorism in the northeast has been lackluster at best. Federal policies regarding insurgent organizations are bipolar—at once vilifying the terrorist groups as murderous criminals yet warmly receiving them at negotiation tables. The government's ineffective political plans have done as much to perpetuate terrorism as they have to end it. The Indian Administrative Service (IAS), in its study titled "Understanding Ethnic Unrest in Indian Periphery—1994," conceded that political parties are fuelling ethnic unrest in the northeast. The paper concluded that there are three key failures of India's political response to terrorism. First, politics in the northeast was dominated by the manipulation of ethnic symbols and emotions. Second, the federal government has frequently imposed martial law and has thus reinforced its "imperialist image." Third, political leaders have failed to establish emotional ties with the historically isolated population.¹⁰⁸ Terrorist groups have capitalized on these political shortcomings, greatly restricting counterterrorism progress in the region.

Ceasefire agreements have been one of the primary political tools employed by the Indian government in the region. The most successful example of this was the general ceasefire signed with the NSCN-IM in 1997. That agreement was initially to last one year and has been reestablished every year since.

However, many issues complicate ceasefire negotiations. First, there are no guarantees that a ceasefire agreement will end the violence. Nagaland saw decreases in civilian deaths following the 1997 ceasefire, but the state still averages approximately 25

¹⁰⁸ Indian Administrative Service, "Understanding Ethnic Unrest in Indian Periphery—1994" available from http://www.nipalahore.gov.pk/Research/Research-80th_ACPSM/Syndicate-Paper_India.pdf; accessed 12 December 2003.

civilians killed per year.¹⁰⁹ Terrorist organizations often use the hiatus of a ceasefire to re-arm and re-group their organization—breaking the peace at a time and place of their convenience and choosing.

A second problem with negotiated ceasefires is the plethora of parties involved. The Indian government currently must negotiate separate agreements with each disparate group. New Delhi finalized a set of new ceasefire regulations with the NSCN-IM on 13 January 2001 but was forced to sign a separate agreement with the NSCN-K in April of that same year.

Ceasefire agreements also have unintended consequences that are often very difficult to predict, much less control. It is widely accepted that terrorist organizations in India's Northeast use ceasefires as an opportunity to re-arm, re-finance and re-organize. Both the NSCN-IM and the NSCN-K have been very active, ceasefire notwithstanding, in extorting money from private citizens, government officials and commercial enterprises. According to news reports, Oil India Limited, Coal India Limited and India's Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) have all been targets of NSCN extortions during ceasefire times.¹¹⁰ Additionally, the cease-fire has failed to stop the flow of weapons to the NSCN-IM. When its Information and Publicity Wing office in Kohima was raided by government forces on 29 March 2001, stockpiles of new weapons, ammunition and extortion letters were confiscated.¹¹¹

Other unintended consequences abound. In June 2001 New Delhi attempted to capitalize on its previous gains by expanding the scope of its ceasefire with the NSCN-IM. Following successful negotiations in Bangkok, Indian officials extended an olive branch to all Nagas "without territorial limits." This was a significant and tangible concession on the part of the Indian government meant to prove Delhi's sincere interest in a negotiated peace. Violence erupted in a very unexpected fashion. Nagaland's neighboring states interpreted this concession as a step toward the establishment of "Greater Nagalim" which would infringe directly on their territorial integrity. Violent

¹⁰⁹ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Nagaland Assessment 2002," November 2002; www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/nagaland/index.html; accessed 11 December 2003.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

protests erupted in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and most tragically in Manipur where nineteen people were killed.

Delhi was trapped. NSCN-IM leaders promised to denounce the cease-fire and resume their terrorist attacks if the territorial limits were re-instated. However, the anti-Naga street violence was escalating out of control. On 8 July 2001, after only three weeks, the government rescinded its previous decree and reinstated the territorial limitations.¹¹² Fortunately the violence promised by the NSCN-IM never materialized. Nonetheless, it remains a potent example of the inherent problems of negotiated settlements and cease-fire accords.

The Indian government also used partisan methods by enticing terrorist members to leave their groups, denounce violence and re-join “mainstream” society. The most prevalent example of this was the concerted effort by the government to undermine the ULFA in Assam by paying for the surrender of ULFA cadres. The effort has generally been a very expensive failure.

New Delhi has also capitulated to terrorists to buy short-term gains. For instance, it has released prisoners to secure the freedom of hostages. Generally India has vacillated between divergent political strategies—sometimes adopting a “no-negotiation” posture while at other times meeting terrorist demands. In 1991, Hiteswar Saikia, then the chief minister of Assam, agreed to a hostage-for-prisoner swap with the ULFA. Eleven ULFA members were released to secure the freedom of fourteen hostages that had been taken two weeks prior. The newly liberated ULFA members were then given safe passage to Bangladesh with a mandate to convince ULFA leaders there to renounce violence. Instead of preaching peace, however, the liberated ULFA members issued a joint statement denouncing the state government and calling for new waves of terror throughout Assam.¹¹³

Despite failures such as this, the Indian government has not categorically denounced striking deals with terrorists. Instead it seeks to develop a political environment that allows it to either accept or reject terrorist negotiations at will. This, in principle, creates strategic ambiguity, allowing the government freedom of action while

¹¹² Ajai Sahni, “Nagaland: A Very Long War Ends?” *South Asian Intelligence Review* 1 (January 2003): 26.

¹¹³ Dinesh Kotwal, “Dynamics of Unending Violence in Assam,” *Strategic Analysis* 24 (June 2003): 3.

constantly casting doubt over the terrorists and hostage takers. In practice, however, this posture may actually promote terrorist actions in the hope that the government may strike a deal.

Finally, India's counterterrorism efforts in the northeast demonstrate the need for effective communication and coordination between agencies. The Indian army, paramilitary forces, state police and national intelligence services must establish clearly defined roles and must seek ways of improving cooperation and mutual support. Petty competition and inter-agency "turf wars" distract from the ultimate goal and greatly inhibit effective mission execution. According to Wasbir Hussain, there have been "innumerable instances" in the northeast when multiple forces have tried to claim credit for a counter-insurgency operation, creating "unhealthy competition that has been the hallmark of inter-force relations."¹¹⁴ As Indian forces can better coordinate their efforts, terrorist organizations will enjoy significantly less freedom of action and shrinking areas of control.

G. OUTCOME

Despite New Delhi's efforts, terrorist organizations thrive in the northeast. The combination of poverty, profound ethnic differences, extreme political camps, religious manipulation and geographical isolation helps perpetuate the belief among some that militancy is the best solution. Vijay Karan observed that, "So irresistible are the mercenary attractions that militancy is not infrequently taken up as a career, despite the risks involved and the high mortality rate of a terrorist."¹¹⁵ No amount of troop concentrations or political wrangling will end terrorism in the northeast for the foreseeable future. The struggle to improve the security situation in the area will be a very protracted one fraught with occasional setbacks and numerous challenges.

The security situation in the northeast has experienced limited improvement in the last three years. Since 2000, terrorism-related fatalities have either stabilized or declined in every state. This is due primarily on intensified counterterrorism operations and Indian

¹¹⁴ Wasbir Hussain, "Multi-force Operations in Counter Terrorism: A View from the Assam Theater," *Faultlines* 9; www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume9/Article2.html; accessed 2 February 2004.

¹¹⁵ Vijay Karan, *War by Stealth: Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: Viking, 1997), 144.

efforts to improve coordination between multiple security organizations. Raiding safe houses, arresting cadres, and interrogating leaders has helped uncover and eliminate important sources of financial support to the insurgents. Additionally, international cooperation with the governments of Nepal, Myanmar, and most significantly Bangladesh, has begun to bear fruit. The success of future anti-terrorism efforts will depend largely on these emerging ties. Political solutions to terrorism in the northeast still leave much to be desired. Yet as the economic and social situations improve, terrorist groups will begin to notice diminished popular support. Overall, India's counterterrorism gains have been relatively small but the potential remains for significant future improvements.

To date, Indian security concerns in the northeast are best characterized as a mix of military action and political negotiations with the insurgent organizations. Future success will depend on plugging the sources of weapons and cutting off insurgents' funds. Additionally, a strong legitimate economy must be engendered in the region, sustained by large-scale Indian and foreign investment. This will stifle the growth of the smuggling-oriented economy, lessen popular discontent and erode the terrorist's base of support.¹¹⁶

H. RELEVANCE FOR U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

The United States can draw many important lessons from India's counterterrorism efforts in its northeast. U.S. military forces have faced terrorist threats in foreign countries similar to those in northeast India. Social discontent, ethnic rivalries, political opposition, and religious extremism are significant characteristics in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leon. However, the current U.S. involvement that most closely resembles this case is Afghanistan. A comprehensive analysis of each country's particular details far exceeds the scope of this thesis. However, enough communalities exist to effectively draw important parallels. U.S. counterterrorism policy makers must bear in mind four key lessons.

¹¹⁶ Subir Bhaumik, "Insurgency in the North-East," *Aakrosh Magazine* 1; www.stratmag.com/Aakrosh/ac10104.html; accessed 7 June 2003; Ajai Sahni, "Survey of Conflicts & Resolution in India's Northeast," in *Faultlines* 12; www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume12/article3.htm; accessed 28 November 2003.

First, economic plans, though important, are insufficient to end a terrorist insurgency. Aid packages, money-for-weapons exchanges, capital infusions, and new infrastructure programs will never, alone, stop terrorist violence. Employment programs are the most likely of the economic tools to reduce or end terrorism in a region.

Second, border security is essential. Though no border can ever be impenetrable, porous, loosely guarded borders invite nefarious activities. Terrorists will continue to exploit illegal border crossings. For the United States this has two serious implications. American borders and ports of entry must be continually strengthened to stop illegal entries. Additionally, U.S. forces overseas, in situations like America's involvement in Iraq, must be capable of monitoring cross-border transit. Lax border security, as in India's northeast, allows (and can even promote) terrorism and insurgency.

Third, in an increasingly global society, effective counterterrorism can only be achieved with solid regional cooperation. For India, this means re-energizing Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar on counterterrorism cooperation. The United States must recognize that countries neighboring areas of U.S. involvement are an integral part of the counterterrorism and force protection strategy.

Fourth, security forces at all levels must have the requisite strength, coordination and intelligence necessary to operate as a cohesive counter-terrorist force. Domestically, U.S. federal and state law enforcement agencies must improve their joint operations capability and information handling. Externally, U.S. forces, like those in Iraq, must recognize that they will increasingly be called upon to function in law enforcement roles. This presents numerous challenges for forces trained primarily in traditional "force on force" military conflict. However, successful American counterterrorism efforts will require a greater amalgamation of U.S. military and civilian (be they American or foreign) law enforcement personnel.

IV. MILITANCY IN KASHMIR

A. INTRODUCTION

Violence in Kashmir is India's most serious internal security problem and illustrates the limitations of New Delhi's counterterrorism effort.¹¹⁷ According to Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, over 16,000 civilians have been killed in Kashmir since terrorism took hold in the late 1980s.¹¹⁸ The total number of casualties, however, is significantly higher. According to one account, terrorism killed over 36,000 people by the end of 2003.¹¹⁹ Though Kashmir has been wracked by violence for the last two decades, terrorism as it is understood today, is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The Indian government has tried various counterterrorism strategies to curtail the hostility and enhance regional stability. These efforts, however, have only been partially successful due to a variety of factors. Political vacillation, economic uncertainty, the rise of militant Muslim organizations, the infiltration of foreign backed insurgents, and widespread public distrust of the government due to perceived corruption and heavy-handedness have all eroded the foundation of New Delhi's efforts to bring peace to Kashmir.

This chapter presents a brief overview of the history and intricacies of the Kashmir problem. It then presents the rise of modern Kashmiri terrorism beginning in 1989, an overview of the major terrorists organizations involved, and Pakistan's links to terrorism in Kashmir. Finally, it outlines India's counterterrorism strategies vis-à-vis Kashmir from which it extracts four significant lessons applicable to U.S. counterterrorism efforts. First, international aid to the terrorist groups must be cut. Kashmiri terrorism, which began as an indigenous insurgency, became particularly deadly with the introduction of Pakistani-backed terrorist groups. New weapons, tactics and personnel changed the specter of terrorism in Kashmir, making the threat particularly

¹¹⁷ For purposes of this thesis subsequent references to Kashmir (e.g. "Kashmir," "the Kashmir conflict," "India's Kashmir policies," etc) refer collectively to both Jammu and Kashmir, and their respective districts on India's side of the Line of Control.

¹¹⁸ Atal Vajpayee, "Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's Address to U.S. Congress," Washington, D.C., 14 Sep 2000, www.usindiafriendship.net/statements/vision/vision.html; accessed 2 February 2004.

¹¹⁹ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Annual Casualties in Terrorist Violence: Kashmir 1988-2004," www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/data_sheets/annual_casualties.htm; accessed 13 February 2004.

lethal and resistant to New Delhi's counterterrorism efforts. Second, political efforts to appease terrorist organizations will never result in long-term stability or lasting peace. The intricate networks of terrorist organizations in Kashmir have proven exceptionally adept at splintering or regrouping. As the Indian government strikes deals with terrorist groups, others rise to prominence—often with progressively greater demands. Subsequent negotiations have made the government appear weak and indecisive, which is then exploited by the insurgent groups to undermine the public's confidence. Third, the government must attack terrorist groups from within. Oppressive military might and “force-on-force” engagements will not end terrorism. Efforts must be made to infiltrate terrorist organizations or exploit captured or surrendered members to unearth the roots of the movement. Years of killing individual cadre members did little to weaken terrorist organizations in Kashmir. India's greatest gains, however, have come by the removal of senior leaders directly responsible for organizing and motivating the violence. Finally, every action, both militarily and politically, must be focused on shifting the public's support away from the terrorists and toward the government. India's Kashmir experience demonstrates that counterterrorism should not be viewed as a war against terrorists but a battle for public support.

B. BACKGROUND—KASHMIR FROM 1947-1989

Kashmir is located on the northern tip of the Indian subcontinent and shares borders with China on the East, Russia on the North, and Pakistan and Afghanistan on the West. Kashmir's geography has made it a key strategic location that has been fought over for centuries. By the late nineteenth century, the Kashmir region was a central component of British efforts to defend their territory from a possible Russian invasion.¹²⁰ By the early twentieth century, Kashmir was incorporated into Britain's Defense of India Plan, which considered the region of “vital importance.”¹²¹ Presently, Kashmir's contested relationship between India and Pakistan, nuclear-armed rivals, and its links to numerous terrorist organizations demonstrate that its strategic value remains of equal or greater importance today.

¹²⁰ Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 13.

¹²¹ *Defense of India Policy Plan* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1963), 23.

In addition to Kashmir's strategic geography, the land is renowned for its abundant natural resources and vibrant bio-diversity. Surrounded by the magnificent Himalayan Mountains, over seventy percent of Kashmir is either mountainous or forested. However, the remaining thirty percent of its arable land is extraordinarily fertile. Abundant crops, that include rice, lettuce, cabbage, fruits, and nuts, give the state great agricultural potential.

Likewise, Kashmir is as rich culturally and religiously as it is in any other way. At its onset, the region was predominantly Sunni Muslim. Nonetheless, large Hindu and Buddhist sections were present as well, with the Hindus primarily in the plains and the Buddhists in the more mountainous northeast. Other religious and ethnic groups in the region included small groups of Shia Muslims, Sikhs, and certain nomadic groups such as the Bakarwals and Gujjars. Sir Owen Dixon, in his report to the United Nations, emphasized the amalgamated quality of the region when he described Kashmir as an "agglomeration" that transcended geography, demographics, or economics.¹²² The area's social and cultural diversity reflected Kashmir's strategic location along the land routes between South and Central Asia.¹²³

Despite its varied demographics, close cultural and religious interaction in Kashmir ultimately resulted in the emergence of a common Kashmiri language and culture. The Kashmiri language helped foment the idea of a shared cultural bond that transcended religions or ethnicities. This unique Kashmiri identity eventually became known as *Kashmiriyat* and established to many Kashmiris that a secular, non-Islamic cultural identity was possible.¹²⁴

India's partition severely impacted Kashmiri society. The India Independence Act of 1947 required British India's 562 princely states to either remain with India or unite with Pakistan. Autonomy, preferred by some in Kashmir, was not a viable option.¹²⁵

¹²² Sir Owen Dixon, "The Dixon Report" (New York: United Nations Secretariat, 1950), iii.

¹²³ Riyaz Punjabi, "Kashmir: The Bruised Identity," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* ed. Col. Raju G. C. Thomas (San Francisco: Westview, 1992), 149-151. See also M. Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of the Muslim Rights* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994).

¹²⁴ Ibid. See also T. N. Madan, *Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹²⁵ In the extreme political and social turmoil that directly preceded the partition, calls for autonomy were not uncommon. Many regions, including Kashmir, Punjab and the Northeast Regions, had proponents who made emotional arguments for various levels of independence. Most prominent politicians of the time, however, recognized that independence was unrealistic for a host of reasons. Jawaharlal Nehru declared,

Popular consent was to be the criteria for choosing which country to unite with. The decisions were, for the most part, easily made based on the respective religious and ethnic concentrations of the states.

However, the situation in Kashmir was more complex. Though a Hindu, Hari Singh, the reigning Maharaja, ruled a predominantly Muslim state. This was not necessarily uncommon or intrinsically problematic as various Indian states, such as Junagadh and Hyderabad, had leaders that were ethnically or religiously different from their population bases. However, Kashmir, being the largest of all the princely territories and bordering four other countries, was arguably the most significant.

Political violence in Kashmir escalated as the partition neared. Militant political cadres had been stoking the coals of discontent against the Maharaja for many years. Prevailing opinions chafed at his egregious taxation and his perceived insensitivity to the Muslim majority. Open rebellion began in 1947 when the Muslims of the Poonch region rose up against him, ostensibly to “liberate” their Muslim brothers. According to historian Alastair Lamb, however, the “Poonch Rebellion” was as much about plundering loot as it was about a jihad for liberation.¹²⁶ Regardless of its impetus, these early Kashmiri rebels encountered an oppressive military response.

The situation worsened as Muslim rebels from the neighboring Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) engulfed the state and advanced on Srinagar, the state’s capital. In desperation, the Maharaja deserted his capital and sought Indian intervention. Help came, but only after he signed the accession agreement. Indian forces hastened to the region. Compounding the problem was the perception—at least from Pakistan’s point of view—that Governor-General Louis Mountbatten was becoming increasingly biased to

“That path [independence] had little practical value.” See Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 594.

¹²⁶ Alastair Lamb, *Birth of a Tragedy, Kashmir 1947* (Hertsfordshire: Roxford Books, 1994). Lamb is criticized by some for his allegations that the Instrument of Accession may have never existed or may have never been signed. Said Lamb, “On the present evidence it is by no means clear that the Maharaja (of Kashmir) ever did sign an Instrument of Accession...The Instrument of Accession may never have existed.” He also claimed, “To judge from the White Paper (on Jammu and Kashmir issued by the Government of India in 1948) an Instrument of Accession may not have been signed by March 1948.” Many, such as authors A. S. Anand and Sumant Bannerjee, have reached diametrically opposed conclusions. Lamb’s analysis of events related to Kashmir remains somewhat controversial.

the Hindu point of view.¹²⁷ Though not the beginning of Muslim-Hindu violence, the creation of Pakistan and the subsequent accession of Kashmir to India were major components of the India-Pakistan dispute over the region.

The Kashmir problem was further complicated by a series of Indo-Pakistani conflicts. The two nations fought openly over Kashmir in 1947-8 and again in 1965. Both wars ended as stalemates. A third war in 1971, which resulted in a Pakistani defeat and its loss of East Pakistan, also included fighting over Kashmir. India's military supremacy, especially following the 1971 war, diminished Pakistan's hopes of taking Kashmir by force.¹²⁸

In addition to these stinging military setbacks, changes in Pakistani politics and society altered violence in Kashmir. Many of these changes began to crystallize during General Zia ul-Haq's administration, which began in 1977. Two factors were most significant. First, Pakistan became the conduit of overt and covert international military aid to Afghanistan. Afghani Mujaheddin began receiving arms and funding from the United States, China and various Arab nations during its ten-year resistance to Soviet occupation.¹²⁹ Many fighters, drawing on their experience in insurgency operations in Afghanistan, later moved their operations to Kashmir. Additionally, the Pakistani government's experience of training and controlling insurgents in Afghanistan during the 1980s provided ready experience for intervention in Kashmir in 1989.

The second major change to Pakistani society was the emergence of increasingly radical Islamic movements. Muslim extremists in Kashmir evolved from a tradition of active Islamic movements, founded on the Wahabi theology of some Pakistani religious seminaries. These forces encouraged the "overt politicization of Islam around symbolic ideas of a jihad or a purified religion stripped of non-Islamic culture."¹³⁰ These ideas came as a direct reflex from Pakistan's years under Ayub Khan, which were marked by

¹²⁷ Mushtaqur Rahman, *Divided Kashmir: Old Problems, New Opportunities for India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiri People* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 4.

¹²⁸ For an excellent review of both sides of the Indo-Pakistan wars see Gowher Rizvi, "India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Problem, 1947-1972" in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* ed. Col. Raju G. C. Thomas (San Francisco: Westview, 1992), 47-79.

¹²⁹ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 13.

¹³⁰ Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Pearl: A Victim of Pakistan's Grim Legacy," *Asia Times*, 26 February 2002.

staunch secularism and concerted efforts to purge Islam from the political process.¹³¹ Rising militancy in Pakistan later had concrete effects on conflict in Kashmir. These changes in Pakistani politics and society, and Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan were important antecedents of Kashmiri violence. However, 1989 marked the beginning of indigenous Kashmiri violence, sparked by internal political and social problems there.

C. MODERN KASHMIRI TERRORISM

1. *Azadi* and the Kashmiri Insurgency: 1989-1993

The explosion of violence that occurred in Kashmir in 1989 marked the beginning of the indigenous Kashmiri terrorist movement. The effort was focused on achieving *Azadi*, or independence for Kashmir. The sudden onset and virulent nature of the *Azadi* movement surprised both New Delhi and Islamabad.¹³² Considerable evidence indicates that Kashmiriyat, the secular ties that had previously bound the region's members, was unraveling. The rise of Islamic activism, driven in part by the perceived success of the Iranian revolution, was spurred on by the rapid spread of Muslim schools, called *madrassas*, throughout Kashmir. Kashmiris began to turn to these *madrassas* to counter what they saw as New Delhi's failure to provide alternatives. Coupled with rising unemployment and declining economic prosperity, acrid sentiments that New Delhi had neglected Kashmir spread quickly.¹³³

Much of Kashmir's internal terrorist challenge comes as a result of political frustration. Popular perception during most of the 1980s and 1990s was that both the state and federal governments had failed in their political responsibilities. New Delhi's responses did little to change this perception and, in many instances, intensified it. According to one study conducted by Brigadier Arjun Ray, religious fanaticism had little

¹³¹ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 148.

¹³² Calls for independence were not new in 1989. As early as 1948 Sheikh Abdullah, the first significant political force in Kashmir declared, "Accession to either side cannot bring peace. We want to live in friendship with both dominions. An independent Kashmir must be guaranteed not only by India and Pakistan but also by Britain, the United States and other members of the United Nations." See Marwah, *Uncivil Wars*, 39. However, the revival of the *Azadi* movement reached a critical mass in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and heralded the waves of violence that accompanied it.

¹³³ Vernon Hewitt, "An Area of Darkness, Still? The Political Evolution of Ethnic Identities in Jammu and Kashmir 1947-2001," in *Ethnonational Identities* ed. Steve Fenton and Stephen May (New York: Macmillan, 2002).

to do with the rise of terrorism in Kashmir. Instead, economic and political frustrations were cited as the most prevalent factors—at least in the beginning.¹³⁴ Compounding the political frustration was the pervasive feeling that lasting political reforms were untenable. This feeling of political disaffection has motivated many to pursue *Azadi*.¹³⁵ The Kashmiri public's calls for political reform went largely unheeded by the Indian government.

During the 1980s, the situation in Kashmir became increasingly tenuous, the Indian government intervened politically and militarily with increasing frequency. Various state administrations were dismissed, including that of Farooq Abdullah while others, such as Abdullah's successor G. M. Shah, were seen as New Delhi collaborators. Later, during Abdullah's re-election bid, allegations surfaced that the Indian government was manipulating the election, which further incited anti-Delhi sentiments. "Unable to express dissent in an institutional context, this new generation of Kashmiris resorted to violence."¹³⁶ As Kashmir's politics and economics ground to a halt, terrorist violence began in earnest, with many groups emerging almost simultaneously.

The most prominent terrorist group to emerge from the fray is the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). The JKLF began as secular, nationalistic movement and has a long history of armed struggle against Indian intervention. However, the JKLF has moved significantly toward Islamic activism. Some of its leaders even began calling for the establishment of *Nizam-i-Mustafa*, an Islamic government based on the Quran and the Sunna.¹³⁷ This renewed vigor has prompted JKLF members to kidnap and kill those representing secular or "un-Islamic" ideas like they did to the vice-chancellor of Kashmir University in April 1991. Recently the JKLF renounced terrorism and began to espouse peaceful political dialogue. It remains, however, one of the most influential forces in Kashmir and closely connected to other terrorist organizations.

¹³⁴ *India Today* (New Delhi), 11 December 1994.

¹³⁵ The term *azadi* is prevalent in Kashmiri political debates and is a powerful motivating social force, though there is no precise definition of the term. For some, *azadi* means complete independence from both Indian and Pakistan—the creation of a new Kashmiri nation. For others, it is the protection of Kashmiriyat, the unique Kashmiri culture, while others consider *azadi* to be the advancement of Islam and the creation of an Islamic state. See Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 184.

¹³⁶ Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Washington, D.C., Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997), 1.

¹³⁷ *Times of India*, New Delhi, 12 July 1990.

Two other terrorist groups, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), have become significant forces in Kashmir.¹³⁸ Jaish-e-Mohammad is a rapidly growing group that was founded by Maulana Masood Azhar. Prior to JeM's founding, Azhar was a prominent terrorist who had been incarcerated by India for his involvement with other insurgent groups. However, the Indian government released Azhar as a result of the hijack of an Indian Airlines airplane in 1999. Azhar established the JeM shortly thereafter.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba is arguably the most violent terrorist group in Kashmir and is characterized by its intense religious extremism.¹³⁹ LeT militants have become increasingly vociferous in their calls for *jihad* against the state and federal government, issuing a statement saying, "we are fighting against anti-Islamic forces...Western countries are anti-Islamic and America is the biggest enemy of Islam."¹⁴⁰ LeT then published a pamphlet titled "Why We are Waging Jihad" that specified its goal of restoring Islamic rule over all of India.¹⁴¹ This increasingly radical tone led Indian and western observers to conclude that the ideological impetus for religious extremism in Kashmir was indeed coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and "especially the *madrassas* which had trained the young students who had formed the Taliban in Afghanistan."¹⁴² LeT distinguishes itself from most Kashmiri terrorist groups by its ability to conduct attacks in other parts of India. In 2000, LeT operatives attacked the Red Fort in Delhi and attempted to assassinate Bal Thackeray, a hard-line Hindu politician based in Bombay. LeT was later implicated in the suicide attack on India's Parliament in December 2001.¹⁴³

Kashmiri terrorist groups have been remarkably adept at splintering into new factions. Some terrorist groups in Kashmir have become so fragmented that even

¹³⁸ Lashkar-e-Tayyiba is also known as the "Army of the Righteous" and is designated on the U.S. Terrorist Exclusion List (TEL) as of 5 December 2001. Groups included on the TEL are subject to additional immigration restrictions, financial asset seizures, and prosecution under the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and Public Law 107-56, "USA PATRIOT ACT." Further information can be obtained via the U.S. State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism—2002*, Appendix D.

¹³⁹ British Broadcast Corporation (BBC), "Who Are the Kashmir Militants," 19 February 2003. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1719612.stm; accessed 13 February 2004.

¹⁴⁰ Ved Marwah, *Uncivil Wars: Pathology of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: Indus, 1996), 145.

¹⁴¹ BBC, "Who Are the Kashmir Militants," 19 February 2003.

¹⁴² Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 201.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

resistance groups cannot keep them straight, much less the Indian government. For instance, in 1995, six foreign tourists were abducted. None of the major terrorist organizations took responsibility and for over two weeks Indian authorities and Kashmiri insurgents were equally baffled. On 17 July, a hand-written note indicated that a little-known group called Al-Faran was responsible and demanded the release of twenty-one militants in Indian custody. After one hostage was killed, even the more established insurgent and terrorist organizations denounced Al-Faran. The All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference (APHC), a political consolidation that often spoke on behalf of the terrorist groups, declared, “Who are these people who come into existence at a time when we are trying to gain support for our movement day and night? [We] do not believe that they are in anyway committed to the Kashmiris’ struggle.”¹⁴⁴ American hostage John Childs eventually escaped his captors and was rescued by a reconnaissance helicopter. The fate of the remaining four remains a mystery though their survival seems highly unlikely.¹⁴⁵

2. Foreign Influence in Kashmir: 1993-1999

By 1993, Pakistan’s influence on the Kashmiri violence became more apparent and evolved into a subversive “proxy war” with India lasting throughout the 1990s. Pakistan’s government had returned to civilian control in December 1988 when Benazir Bhutto took control of the country. During her administration, the military and the ISI assumed greater autonomy and, according to the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, often kept the civilian political institution in the dark.¹⁴⁶ Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) was particularly active coordinating the flow of weapons and personnel into Kashmir, as it had done so adeptly in Afghanistan. The ISI’s involvement in Kashmir, though vehemently denied by Pakistan, has been reported by numerous sources. In 1992, George K. Tanham, in a study prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense,

¹⁴⁴ Omar Farooq, interview given to Victoria Schofield, London, 9 November 1995.

¹⁴⁵ American hostage John Childs escaped from his captors on 8 July 1995. In debriefs with Indian and American authorities Childs indicated that the members of Al-Faran did not appear to be Kashmiri and spoke Urdu, one of Pakistan’s national language. Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao blamed Pakistan for the event though by August 1995 Al-Faran had issued a statement asserting that its members were “Kashmiri Muslims, not foreign agents.” See Anthony Spaeth, “Bargaining with Lives,” *Time*, 28 August 1995. <http://www.time.com/time/international/1995/950828/India.html>; accessed 18 March 2004.

¹⁴⁶ Masood Haider, “Army Kept PM in Dark”, *Dawn*, Karachi, 14 May 2002, 1.

reported, “Pakistanis continue to aid and abet the dissidents in Punjab and Kashmir,”¹⁴⁷ and the U.S. State Department’s *Patterns of Global Terrorism—1993* declared, “There are credible reports of support by the Government of Pakistan for Kashmiri militants.”¹⁴⁸

By 1993, ISI involvement in various terrorist groups had reached an all-time high. Groups such as Al Barq and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen were the main recipients of the ISI’s financial and weapons aid. Significant arms transfers included: fin-stabilized rockets, 60mm mortars, automatic grenade launchers, advanced communication gear, high-power sniper rifles with infrared scopes, and an assortment of explosives.¹⁴⁹ Kashmiri police, on the other hand were usually armed with pistols, obsolete .303 Enfield rifles, or bold-action 7.62mm rifles. Para-military and army forces fared better, and police units were eventually equipped with more modern equipment including self-loading rifles, light machine guns and bulletproof vests.¹⁵⁰ However, there was a significant disparity between terrorist weapons and local security forces for a number of years.

In the late 1990s, international terrorist connections with Kashmir became more relevant. Indications of Usama bin Ladin’s involvement in the training of Kashmiri terrorists became more credible during this time.¹⁵¹ Pakistani and Afghani terrorist groups such as Al Badr, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, and Harakat ul-Mujahideen became increasingly prolific in Kashmir with many indications of logistical, financial, and operational support between terrorist forces in Kashmir and those in Pakistan and Afghanistan. These connections were further uncovered after the United States attacked terrorist training camps located in Afghanistan in August 1998. According to the U.S. State Department, some of those killed were identified as Kashmiri terrorists, suggesting that Kashmiri terrorism was more closely linked to Pakistan and Afghanistan than previously thought.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay*, (Santa Monica, Ca: Rand Corporation, 1992), 4.

¹⁴⁸ U.S. State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism—1993* (Washington D.C., USGPO, 1993). 22.

¹⁴⁹ Marwah, *Uncivil Wars*, 134.

¹⁵⁰ K. P. S. Gill, “Technology, Terror and a Thoughtless State,” in *Terror and Containment: Perspectives on India’s Internal Security* ed. K. P. S. Gill and Ajai Sahni (New Delhi: Gyan, 2001), 186.

¹⁵¹ Isambard Wilkinson, “Pakistan Funds Islamic Terror,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, 16 May 1999.

¹⁵² U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Strike on Facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan,” 21 August 1998.

3. New Delhi's Response

India's primary response to Kashmiri terrorism during most of the 1990s was oppressive military force. The Indian government mobilized massive troop reserves that numbered roughly 300,000 security forces by 1995.¹⁵³ The focus of this was to root out the militants while severing their support from Pakistan. One of the most successful tactics employed during this time was the use of captured or surrendered militants. Individuals were employed clandestinely to identify other key personnel, hideouts, plans, and weapons caches.

New Delhi sought other conflict resolution methods as well. On the financial front, large investments in public services, infrastructure and social programs aimed to ease the economic burdens of the Kashmiris. Efforts such as job training programs generally failed to make noticeable changes in the social situation in the state. New Delhi blamed this on social instability resulting from the non-stop terrorist threats. Dissidents, conversely, blamed the Indian government for doing too little, too late and for generally ignoring the Kashmiri people and their problems.

However, these efforts slowly brought change. By late 1996, terrorism in Kashmir began to decline. Annual casualties from the preceding three years hovered near 3,000. However, by the end of 1996, totals had fallen to 2,372.¹⁵⁴ Though these gains were modest, they bolstered public support and police morale.

One of the most significant counterterrorism tactics to emerge during these years was the concerted use of former militants. Though Indian efforts to "reform" terrorists and integrate them into mainstream society proved largely unsuccessful, New Delhi began a concerted effort to utilize those that voluntarily changed side. The case of Muhammad Yousef Parray typifies this effort. Parray, known popularly as "Kuka," reportedly turned to militancy to avenge the death of his nephew, Manzoor Ahmed, who belonged to the terrorist group Iqwan-ul-Muslimeen. Kuka Parray later switched sides forming his own counter-insurgency group. Targeting primarily Jamat-i-Islami and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Parray emerged as a "Robin Hood" figure in Kashmir and turned his skyrocketing popularity into political victory in 1996 when he was elected to the Kashmir

¹⁵³ Scott Baldauf, "Insurgents Push Into Kashmir," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 October 2003.

¹⁵⁴ SATP, "Annual Casualties—Kashmir," South Asian Terrorism Portal; www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/data_sheets/annual_casualties.htm; accessed 13 February 2004.

local assembly. Parray worked closely with Indian security forces and was highly successful at encouraging other militants to renounce terrorism. Upon seeing the dramatic potential of this counterterrorism tactic, New Delhi began focusing on other ex-terrorists such as Javed Shah, Seta Guggar, and Sareer Khan.¹⁵⁵

In a bid to capitalize on the situation, New Delhi attempted to re-energize the political process by holding state elections that September. Surprisingly, the voter turnout was fifty-three percent. The National Conference (NC), led by Farooq Abdullah, won decidedly.¹⁵⁶

Following the 1996 elections, a pervasive optimism suggested that real progress was being made in Kashmir. There were little doubts that Kashmir's reconstruction would be difficult. However, having a newly elected local leader gave many Kashmiris hope and allowed other local politicians back into the political realm. The NC promised major democratic reforms, a swift end to the terrorist violence, and economic revitalization. Additionally, Abdullah energized local residents with promises that he would secure greater autonomy from New Delhi, rehabilitate the terrorists, punish those guilty of human rights violations, and eventually enable the Kashmiri Police to assume responsibility from the Indian army. Political and economic reforms became the central issues in the state's counterterrorism efforts.

Farooq Abdullah's performance in Kashmir left all parties unsatisfied. His government failed to fulfill most of its promises. Kashmiris began to chaff from his extended time away from the state and for failing to pursue those guilty of human rights violations. Terrorism resurged, prompting New Delhi to suspend both troop withdrawal and power transfer to the state. Widespread Kashmiri disillusionment in both the local and federal governments resulted.

The proxy war in Kashmir changed significantly in 1999. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee established a number of confidence-building measures meant to lower tensions over Kashmir. Indications

¹⁵⁵ Kuka Paray and Javed Shah were both killed in terrorist attacks in late 2003. Their killings were a serious setback for New Delhi as Indian security forces had been charged with their protection. Short-term efforts to recruit counter-insurgent commanders will likely suffer noticeable declines. See Amin Masoodi, "Kuka Parray's Killing—A Setback to the Peace Process," *IPCS Terrorism Project* (New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2003), 1.

¹⁵⁶ "Vote, Damn You," *Economist*, 14 September 1996, 39.

suggested that a groundbreaking agreement—to include major concessions by both sides—was being readied, which if implemented would have possibly led to the establishment of the Line of Control (LOC) as an international border.¹⁵⁷ However, major military developments in the Kargil region scuttled those initiatives.

4. The Kargil War and Its Impact on Kashmiri Terrorism

In the summer of 1999, Pakistan's Army Chief of Staff, General Pervez Musharraf, deployed regular army units and insurgent fighters into the Kargil region of Kashmir. Directly challenging Sharif, Musharraf's actions negated the progress made in the preceding months. Pakistani forces of its Northern Light Infantry (NLI), reinforced by members of both Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, surreptitiously prepared and occupied defensive positions in the Kargil area of Kashmir on the Indian side of the LOC. India, surprised by the large scale of the Pakistani infiltration, responded with a massive troop mobilization.

Fighting in Kargil escalated quickly. Initially the conflict consisted predominantly of skirmishes between smaller units. However, after three weeks the Indian Air Force (IAF) was tasked to assist the ground forces that had largely failed to make progress against well-defended positions occupied by Pakistani forces. The following month brought more escalations as the Indian Navy was deployed as a “show of force” factor off Pakistan's coast—moves that caused substantial concern in Islamabad.¹⁵⁸ By July, India had deployed over three divisions to the area and it seemed as if a full-scale war was imminent. International condemnation of Pakistan's actions was swift and the country was increasingly isolated from positive international attention. Urgent mediation by U.S. President Bill Clinton and General Anthony Zinni helped end the conflict by pressuring Pakistan to accept an unconditional troop withdraw.

The Kargil War had direct implications for terrorism in Kashmir. It illustrated the strong military-insurgent nexus existing in the Pakistan side of Kashmir and demonstrated the military's influence over Pakistan. Musharraf, after withdrawing his

¹⁵⁷ Rasheed Khalid, “India Had Agreed in Informal Talks Not to Call Kashmir Integral Part: Naik,” *The News*, 19 May 2002.

¹⁵⁸ Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar, “Beyond Kargil: Compilation of a Panel Discussion,” in *United Services Institution Journal* (New Delhi: USI, 1999), 333.

troops from Kashmir, turned toward Islamabad leading a rebellion that removed Sharif from power. The Kargil War and Musharraf's coup suggested to many in India that a negotiated settlement over Kashmir was unlikely, if not impossible.

Following the Kargil war, Kashmir saw a dramatic rise in the number of terror attacks. Specifically, suicide bombings became particularly prevalent. According to a former Indian intelligence expert, B. Raman, terrorist organizations in Kashmir made a concerted effort to import Usama bin-Laden's brand of suicide terrorism, which had been largely unknown prior to 1999.¹⁵⁹ Security forces were the most common targets as military and police infrastructures suffered a withering barrage of attacks.

5. Kashmiri Terrorism Post 11 September 2001

The attacks of 11 September 2001 dramatically changed the environment for terrorism in Kashmir. The combination of international condemnation and U.S. counter-terrorism operations forced India and Pakistan to reevaluate their operational and strategic situations vis-à-vis Kashmir. For Pakistan, the developments were both positive and negative. Pakistan's new relevance in America's global war on terrorism helped bolstered Musharraf's legitimacy and resulted in large political and economic concessions from Washington. New Delhi viewed this as a major step backward, especially in light of the concerted efforts to isolate the Musharraf regime following Kargil.

Another major event impacting Kashmiri terrorism was the 2002 crisis. India mobilized massive troop concentrations along the LOC in response to the suicide attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001. Pakistani forces followed suit and were rushed into combat readiness positions. Throughout the spring of 2002 it appeared that war was probable. On 5 June 2002 the U.S. State Department warned the 60,000 Americans by declaring, "Tensions have risen to serious levels and the risk of intensified military hostilities between India and Pakistan cannot be ruled out." The statement then stated, "American citizens in India are strongly urged to depart the country."¹⁶⁰ New

¹⁵⁹ B. Raman, "Kashmir and the Pro-bin Laden Terrorist Infrastructure in Pakistan," *South Asia Analysis Group*, (17 June 2002).

¹⁶⁰ Global Security, "2002 Kashmir Crisis," Global Security; <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/Kashmir-2002.html>; accessed 15 May 2004.

Delhi was adamant that Pakistan end infiltrations into Kashmir. Senior U.S. officials, including Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld both visited the region in an attempt to help defuse the situation. Despite Musharraf's refusal to unilaterally demobilize Pakistani troops from the LOC, by August 2002 Indian officials indicated that infiltrations, though still continuing, had declined noticeably.

The 2002 crisis was a crucial turning point for Pakistani-based terrorists. First, it demonstrated India's willingness to adopt an offensive military posture against Pakistan when challenged by Pakistani-backed terrorism. Second, the Parliament attack and the resulting military deployments prompted intense international pressure on Musharraf that may have driven him to denounce terrorist tactics in January 2002. Pakistan's ISI, which lost training camps in Afghanistan after 11 September 2001, was then ordered by Musharraf to close its Kashmir offices.¹⁶¹ Musharraf commenced a crackdown on terrorists and directed a wave of highly publicized arrests. Many militant organizations, including LeT and JeM, were outlawed.¹⁶² However, many in India doubted his sincerity since most of the arrested terrorists were pardoned and released shortly thereafter and the banned organizations quickly reorganized under different names.¹⁶³ Additionally, cross-border infiltrations, which declined during the months of February-April 2002, rose precipitously by mid-April and have continued largely unabated.¹⁶⁴ This development highlights that the military-terrorist relationship in the Pakistan-Kashmir region remains intact.

D. CURRENT INDIAN STRATEGY

The Indian government has tried numerous methods to end terrorist violence in Kashmir. The strategy most favored by hard-line BJP members in Delhi has been aggressive military operations. New Delhi has attempted to "stamp out" terrorism by force for nearly fifteen years. When Kashmiri separatists began their armed struggle in

¹⁶¹ Jim Hoagland, "Heading off Terrorism," *Washington Post*, 2 June 2002.

¹⁶² B. Muralidhar Reddy, "Musharraf Bans Lashkar, Jaish: Invites Vajpayee for Talks," *Hindu*, 13 January 2002.

¹⁶³ "Three More Outfits Put Under Ban: Offices' Sealing Ordered," *Dawn*, 21 November 2003.

¹⁶⁴ Surinder Rana, "Emerging Reconciliation Amidst Continuing Military Impasse," *Strategic Insight* (Monterey, Ca.: Center for Contemporary Conflict, 2002), 2.

1989, New Delhi deployed the Indian army and central security forces such as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBF), and the Border Security Force (BSF).¹⁶⁵ These organizations were given two main goals: the "direct liquidation of the insurgents and their support base *within* Kashmir and the elimination of support of all kinds, especially of the influx of armed insurgents, from sources *outside* the state."¹⁶⁶ Three tactics were used to accomplish these goals. First, "secure zones" were created and heavily patrolled. This essentially denied terrorists certain areas of operations. Second, security forces began systematically cordoning villages to conduct extensive searches. Finally, according to Robert Wirsing, New Delhi authorized the use of both "judicial and extrajudicial punishment" as a way to curb the violence.¹⁶⁷ This tactic prompted some international organizations to harshly criticize India on the basis of human rights violations.

The issue of human rights bears heavily on India's counterterrorism strategy in Kashmir. Much of the 1990s was marked by draconian reprisals to terrorist attacks that, according to many outside observers, were repressive and extreme. Lists of alleged heavy-handedness are long and graphic. International organizations such as Amnesty International and Asia Watch have stated that India has systematically violated international human rights law."¹⁶⁸ A 1996 report by Human Rights Watch concluded that both India and Pakistan were responsible for atrocities in Kashmir and that Indian security forces were prone to abusive tactics including summary executions, disappearances, torture and rape.¹⁶⁹ New Delhi has vehemently denied human rights violations by its forces. However, Indian legislation has undermined public confidence in New Delhi's ability to remain neutral. For example, the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Ordinance provides prosecutorial immunity for security forces engaged

¹⁶⁵ These organizations, along with various other para-military forces, are occasionally referred to collectively as the Central Police Organizations (CPOs).

¹⁶⁶ Robert G. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and its Resolution*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 147. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁶⁸ Asia Watch, *Human Rights in India, Kashmir Under Siege*, May 1991, 5.

¹⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch, *India's Secret Army in Kashmir: New Patterns of Abuse Emerge in the Conflict* (May 1996); <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/kashmir/1996/India-07.htm#TopOfPage>; accessed 12 March 2004.

in, “anything done or purported to be done in exercise of power conferred by this Act.”¹⁷⁰ True or not, popular perceptions, both in Kashmir and internationally, hold that Indian security forces have taken excessive liberties with their powers. Where true, human rights violations represent unnecessary suffering for the Kashmiri people and debilitate New Delhi’s efforts to engender public support.

Politically, India has waged a concerted effort to link Kashmiri violence with America’s global war on terrorism. This provides greater justification for a hard-line approach preferred by some in the BJP-led coalition government. Additionally, India seems determined to avoid international mediation in Kashmir—a position it has held for most of its existence. This is primarily due to two reasons. First, some would consider an internationally mediated solution a waste of India’s unquestioned military advantage, especially in light of the 1971 war. Second, Pakistan’s historical closeness to the United States casts doubt, from New Delhi’s point of view, that an international solution would go well for India. By marginalizing Pakistan and linking Kashmiri terrorism to U.S. counterterrorism efforts, India hopes to maintain its military and political leverage over Pakistan while denying Islamabad help from abroad.

There are indications, however, that India’s longstanding aversion to international involvement may be waning. India welcomed U.S. intervention during the Kargil conflict and again in 2002 following the terrorist attacks on Delhi’s Parliament building. Additionally, New Delhi has made increasing calls for international pressure on Pakistan to end cross-border infiltrations—a call that resonates more clearly on the international forum following the global denunciation of terrorism in the last few years. As more countries recognize the international nature of terrorist threats, Delhi likely recognizes an emerging opportunity to gather international support for its position without risking major political losses in Kashmir.

1. Violence Trends

Violence in Kashmir has fallen slightly since the high water mark set in 2001 but remains relatively high. Though fewer attacks are being conducted, they are generally

¹⁷⁰ Edward W. Desmond, “The Insurgency in Kashmir 1989-1991,” in *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1995, 15.

larger and more lethal than in years past. These attacks are generally better planned, more carefully executed, and employ more advanced weaponry. The attacks on the State Legislative Assembly in October 2001 and the attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 are two excellent examples.¹⁷¹

2. Major Indian Missteps in Kashmir

New Delhi has committed a variety of major missteps in implementing its counterterrorism strategy in Kashmir. Kashmiri discontent is due as much to India's counterterrorism shortcoming as it is to Pakistan's political and military intrusions. These events often unraveled the delicate threads of progress, prolonging the conflict and the suffering. Popular support for the government (be it in Srinagar or New Delhi) fell precipitously after these political and military wrong turns.

One of India's most damaging mistakes has been the dismissal of various state and local governments. This has usually resulted from periods of New Delhi's waning confidence in the state government's competence, loyalty and effectiveness. The 1984 dismissal of the Farooq Abdullah administration is a telling example. Abdullah had been popularly elected in 1977 with a great deal of public support. Kashmiris jokingly refer to Abdullah's election as "the only fair election in Kashmir."¹⁷² Following his removal, there was a tremendous groundswell of popular discontent that, according to scholars such as Ved Marwah, led directly to the establishment of terrorist networks a short time later. As New Delhi summarily dismissed various state governors and assemblies, and as each new state administration purged key personnel from its posts, public confidence tumbled. This practice has done tremendous damage to the government's credibility and effectiveness.¹⁷³

Another of New Delhi's least effective strategies was negotiating with the various terrorist groups. At various times both New Delhi and the Kashmiri state governments have attempted to strike deals with the terrorists. These attempts have typically come

¹⁷¹ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Jammu and Kashmir Assessment—Year 2002," www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/index.html; accessed 13 February 2004.

¹⁷² George Fernandez, "India's Policies in Kashmir: An Assessment and Discourse," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in Asia* ed. Col. Raju G. C. Thomas (San Francisco: Westview, 1992), 286.

¹⁷³ Yonah Alexander, *Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 314.

after periods of aggressive military and police counterterrorism efforts. Often negotiations have centered on cease-fire agreements or hostage-for-prisoner exchanges. Rarely have negotiations enhanced security in anyway though they have often served to discredit the government, legitimize insurgent organizations, and embolden terrorist attacks.¹⁷⁴

3. Peace Initiatives

In addition to aggressive military efforts, New Delhi has attempted peace initiatives to broker security in Kashmir. These initiatives have largely failed to reduce terrorism and increase public safety. The events of 2001, perhaps the most violent year in Kashmir's history, are indicative of this fact. On 27 November 2000, New Delhi announced a one-month ceasefire as a "good faith" gesture. However, none of the significant terrorist organizations agreed to the effort, which subsequently became a month-long cessation of counterterrorist operations, with terrorist attacks going unchecked. The Indian government renewed the cease-fire for three consecutive months until 23 May 2001. Though total fatalities during this period fell when compared to the previous six-month period, this was primarily due to a significant decline in the number of terrorists killed. Terrorist attacks and civilian casualties, on the other hand, increased notably during the ceasefire.¹⁷⁵ Current rapprochement efforts are structured heavily on ceasefire deals. However, some of the most significant Kashmiri ethnic groups, such as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, have declared that ceasefire agreements will not stop their struggle for Kashmiri independence. Saleem Hashmi, spokesman for Hizb-ul, said, "The ceasefire is between the two armies and is limited to the Line of Control. Our fight against the Indian forces will continue in Kashmir. [A] ceasefire is not the solution. The problem

¹⁷⁴ The kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed is a telling example. On 8 December 1989, JKLF members abducted her in Srinagar. The JKLF issued a statement demanding the release of five of its senior leaders to which state leaders rushed to accommodate. Sensing an opportunity, the JKLF began incrementally increasing their demands—each being met by increasingly malleable state authorities. The situation was complicated by the lack of a centralized negotiating structure in Kashmir. The terrorists conducted simultaneous discussions with six separate, uncoordinated negotiators. Local police and security forces were completely sidelined. Eventually, the five JKLF members were freed and Rubaiya was successfully recovered. Large crowds then assembled throughout Srinagar to celebrate the militants' new freedom. Activists seized control of the major thoroughfares throughout the city as the local administration watched powerlessly. Jubilant calls for "azadi" energized the crowds and shut down major sections of the capital.

¹⁷⁵ South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Jammu and Kashmir Assessment—Year 2002," www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/index.html; accessed 13 February 2004.

does not resolve until the Kashmir issue gets resolved.”¹⁷⁶ This shows the weakness of counterterrorism strategies that focus primarily on brokered deals or ceasefire agreements with terrorist organizations.

As reports indicate, most Kashmiris are tired of the violence. Simultaneously denouncing Pakistan’s proxy war, Islamabad’s territorial ambitions, and the long-standing conflict with Indian forces, Kashmiri citizens seem increasingly ready for peaceful negotiations. Kashmiri’s are becoming less tolerant of the militant Muslim groups, both indigenous and foreign, that used to draw support from the communities.¹⁷⁷ There are indications that the situation can improve. In February 2004 Indian and Pakistani diplomats met in Islamabad to discuss various peace proposals—all of which include Kashmir. This is significant because for terrorism to end in Kashmir, Pakistan must be involved. Indian officials likely feel that now is an opportune time to deal with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, thanks in part to the great pressure being placed upon him regarding terrorism in his country.

Three factors are converging on Musharraf simultaneously. First, the United States is pressuring Pakistan to end support to militancy in Kashmir as part of the global war on terror. Pakistan has responded by prosecuting the killers of journalist Daniel Pearl, fortifying the border with Afghanistan, and arresting various terrorist leaders. These actions have been denounced by some Pakistanis as traitorous and by some Indians as hollow. However, this suggests, in principle if not in practice, Islamabad’s improving disposition vis-à-vis reducing terrorism. Second, Pakistan faces the daunting task of repairing its international reputation following its nuclear technology scandal in which the country’s leading nuclear weapons expert admitted to illegally selling nuclear technology to Libya and Iran.¹⁷⁸ Third, insurgents within Pakistan have tried to

¹⁷⁶ Scott Baldauf and Owais Tohid, “Snow Snuffs Kashmir’s War Fires,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 December 2003.

¹⁷⁷ “Damning But True: A Breach in Pak’s Grand Delusion on J&K: UK Pollster Mori Confirms the Obvious,” *Financial Times* (Bombay), 1 June 2002.

¹⁷⁸ Pakistanis largely regard Abdul Qadeer Khan, the country’s head nuclear scientist, as a hero for being the “father” of their nuclear bomb. Throughout the late 1970s he pushed the successful development of Pakistan’s nuclear capable Ghauri I and Ghauri II missiles. During that time he was also investigated in the Netherlands for illegally transferring nuclear technology out of Amsterdam. In 1983 an Amsterdam court found him guilty of attempted espionage and sentenced him to four years in prison. In January 2004 he was dismissed from his position and placed on house arrest in Islamabad for selling nuclear secrets. He later made several emotional television appearances in which he admitted his actions and plead for forgiveness.

assassinate President Musharraf twice in the last six months. This demonstrates that Musharraf's hold on society may be more tenuous than previously imagined.

New Delhi has likely determined that the conditions for reduced Pakistani support to Kashmiri terrorism have never been better. India maintains its openness to a political solution with Pakistan but consistently demands that Pakistan's support of terrorism must end before constructive talks can begin. In an interview with CNN, India's Ambassador to the United States, Lalit Mansingh, declared, "You can't have dialogue and terrorism at the same time. We are saying that if you want to shake hands with us, put the gun away."¹⁷⁹ As local support for terrorist groups diminishes, New Delhi will find its counterterrorism efforts significantly more successful.

E. RELEVANCE FOR U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

The United States can apply four important lessons from India's counterterrorism efforts in Kashmir. These points are relevant to both America's domestic counterterrorism strategy and its overseas prosecution of the war on terror. First, international aid to the terrorist groups—ideological, material, financial, logistical etc.—must be severed. Isolation robs terrorist groups of the means and motivations to continue the struggle. Border security is a major component of this task. The movement of personnel, money, and weapons into regions of U.S. activity, such as Afghanistan, must be curtailed.

Additionally, financial resources that help sustain the terror campaign need to be identified and removed. Throughout most of South Asia and the Middle East, financial transactions often occur through unofficial channels such as the *hawala* network, making detection more difficult.¹⁸⁰ Islamic seminaries in Iraq and Afghanistan are active

Pakistani President Musharraf quickly pardoned him—an action criticized by many world leaders. See "Profile: Abdul Qadeer Khan" BBC, 20 February 2004; http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3343621.stml; accessed 18 March 2004.

¹⁷⁹ Cable News Network (CNN), "Interview with Lalit Mansingh." (5 January 2002). www.indianembassy.org/amb/cnn_jan_05_02.html; accessed 20 December 2003.

¹⁸⁰ The "hawala" system operates through an intricate network of moneylenders. Known as "hawaladars," these individuals transfer money without using standard physical or electronic banking methods. Receiving cash in one country, a hawaladar contacts an associate at the recipient's location and directs the cash distribution. This often occurs using paper notes or letters after a nominal fee has been deducted. Some estimates hold that the hawala network handles between U.S. \$2-\$5 billion annually in Afghanistan and

participants in this system, which facilitates illicit money transfers from international sources. Both India and Pakistan have taken dramatic steps to curtail hawala money transfers, which, according to Interpol, consist of over \$680 billion a year in India alone—nearly forty percent of India’s gross domestic product.¹⁸¹ In the United States, however, hawala remittances are only illegal in some U.S. jurisdictions with enforcement encumbered by a host of cultural, legal and economic complications. Investigators are often unaware of the significance of hawala transfers while U.S. laws stop short of summarily outlawing the practice. America’s efforts to stop terrorist funding initiatives, such as the establishment of the Foreign Terrorist Asset Tracking Center, should focus heavily on these parallel banking and money transfer systems while crafting solutions to the various hurdles currently hampering progress.

Second, policies of appeasement toward terrorist organizations will never yield long-term security and peace. Government agencies should not grant concession or capitulations to terrorist groups as this breeds further violence and progressively greater demands. Likewise, the government should internationalize its counterterrorism effort in much the same way the terrorists organizations seek to do. India’s reluctance to turn to international assistance casts doubts in the public’s mind about New Delhi’s sincerity in resolving the Kashmir issue. Greater gains were made, both internationally and in Kashmir, when the Indian government showed its willingness to turn to international mediation to resolve the Kargil war and the 2002 crisis. Likewise, U.S. counterterrorism efforts must resolutely avoid political appeasement while encouraging the international community to increase its counterterrorism cooperation. This is particularly relevant vis-à-vis Pakistan, where the United States should redouble its pressure on the military-run government. Washington should require General Musharraf make lasting improvements to Pakistan’s security situation instead of hollow, publicity-oriented “victories.” These changes may not soon take place since there are powerful domestic forces in Pakistan’s religious and political camps with vested interests in continued violence. Musharraf may

Pakistan, which exceeds the total foreign transfers through the national banking system. See International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military* (Brussels: ICG, 2002), 16.

¹⁸¹ Patrick M. Jost and Harjit Singh Sandhu, “The Hawala Alternative Remittance System and its Role in Money Laundering,” (Lyon: Interpol General Secretariat, 2000), 4. See also Scott Baldaulf, “The War On Terror’s Money; India’s Six-Month Investigation Offers Lessons On Fighting Underground Banking,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 July 2002, 1.

not have the popular support requisite to survive such an effort, literally or politically. However, if substantive improvements occur in Pakistan, anti-U.S. terrorism in Afghanistan and anti-Indian terrorism in Kashmir will decline dramatically.

Third, terrorist groups can only be broken from within. Years of troop deployments, forceful crackdowns and military engagements have failed to stop terrorism in Kashmir. Though there must be a military component to counterterrorism operations, terrorist groups will only cease with the elimination of their leadership. India's greatest gains in Kashmir have come as a result of using "insiders" to identify key personnel, discover attack plans, locate weapons caches, and identify clandestine terror cells. This has removed many prominent terrorists such as Ghazi Baba, the operations commander for Jaish-e-Muhammad, who was killed on 23 September 2002.

Finally, every action, both militarily and politically, must be focused on shifting the public's support away from the terrorists and toward the government. Government forces must reassess their perspective on counterterrorism and approach it not as a war against the terrorists, but as a battle to win popular support. Government efforts to win the public's confidence will increasingly erode the terrorist groups' popular support, forcing them to either abandon violence or escalate their attacks, thus risking further alienation from the citizenry. Once the public feels that it is in its own best interest to support the government, the terrorists loose. After that breakwater point, additional terrorist attacks further distance the perpetrators from the public, especially if common citizens are injured or killed. Each government action must be measured against the litmus test of popular perception.

Government forces will never enjoy the public's support unless it operates openly and transparently. This characteristic is important for many reasons. First, it enables the public to influence the government's operations. Second, it forces elected officials to deal more honestly with society. Perceptions of political corruption, human rights violations or judicial inconsistencies undermine the public's support and encourage dissent. The development of free and fair democratic institutions is critical in this regard.

Democracies have characteristics that make them particularly suited to counterterrorism. Governments that foster political activism and encourage systemic change provide their citizens with peaceful alternatives to insurgency. This lowers social

tensions and reduces the likelihood of anti-government or inter-ethnic attacks. Also, political systems that earn and maintain the public's confidence are much more likely to overcome a terrorist challenge. This creates a cycle of political and social change in which dissidents move away from violent revolution and look to new, more constructive methods of effecting social change. Arthur Schlesinger characterized this as a shift from "public purpose" to "private interest."¹⁸² In societies where the public's confidence in the government (not the particular individuals in charge *per se* but the governmental system as a whole), terrorist attacks are more likely to provoke an anti-terrorist "backlash."¹⁸³

Terrorism can be defeated. Well-conceived and well-executed political strategies, buttressed by effective—but not excessive—military force, can bring about the necessary social and political changes that will rob terrorists of their methods, means, and motivations to attack. Kashmir demonstrates that vacillating political strategies and heavy-handed military might weaken the government's status and emboldens that of the terrorists. U.S. political and military leaders must account for these considerations in implementing U.S. counterterrorism strategies around the world.

¹⁸² Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), chap. 2.

¹⁸³ Ted Robert Gurr, "Terrorism in Democracies: When It Occurs, Why It Fails," in *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls* ed. Charles W. Kegley, Jr. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 202-215.

V. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

1. Future Prospects

Terrorism is America's greatest security threat. Terrorist attacks may strike domestic targets or U.S. military personnel overseas. The United States' ability to prevent terrorism is a key component to its future economic and social strength, making its counterterrorism efforts as significant to strategic security in the twenty-first century as its nuclear arsenal was during the Cold War. America's future counterterrorism prospects are marked by two key considerations.

First, most indications suggest that terrorism is a growing threat. Terrorists may see successful attacks as "proof" that violence is a viable means of political or social influence. Following the 11 March 2004 terrorist attacks on Madrid's commuter trains, Spanish voters ousted long-time U.S. supporter José Maria Anzar, electing José Zapatero in his stead. Zapatero, highly critical of Spain's close ties to the United States, has indicated his intention to remove Spanish troops from Iraq and establish closer relations with France and Germany. The move is praised by many European leaders but according to some analysts, marks a significant moral victory for terrorist forces in which, "al-Qaeda appears to have succeeded in changing the government of one European country through terror."¹⁸⁴

Additionally, as global societies continue to interact, terrorist organizations will become increasingly well connected, expanding their influence and ability to link with other like-minded states, groups or individuals. The tools of terrorism, such as explosives, guns, money, logistics, clandestine communications—and the knowledge needed to employ these tools—are readily available. Most ominously, the specter of chemical, biological, or radiological attacks hangs heavily over the world. These factors, taken together, suggest that terrorism in the future is a virtual certainty and will likely involve increasingly lethal tactics, tools, and procedures.

¹⁸⁴ William Horsley, "Spain to Re-Join 'Old Europe'," BBC, 15 March 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3513898.stm>; accessed 25 March 2004.

Second, U.S. military deployments around the world incite anti-Americanism in certain regions and motivate further attacks. U.S. troop deployments to Saudi Arabia, for example, were an early motivating factor for al-Qaeda.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, as U.S. forces deploy to an increasing number of less-familiar locations—such as Uzbekistan, the southern Philippines, Eritrea, Cote d’Ivoire, and most recently Haiti—terrorists are presented with more venues from which to launch their strikes. Finally, U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have spurred a small, violent minority in those areas to resist stability-building measures at every turn. Global deployments and military operations are vital components to America’s overall security position and should continue when required. Their influence, however, on terrorist motivations and operations must be considered.

For this reason, U.S. counterterrorism policy makers should examine terrorism in other countries such as India. Key similarities between India and the United States make parallels between the two countries particularly useful. Both countries have working democracies based on fundamental civil liberties. Freedom of speech, religion, and the press are integral to their respective political organizations and are widely embraced by both societies. Additionally, both nations consist of diverse demographics with numerous sub-national groups. Ethnic minorities, marked by different languages, cultures and religious beliefs, are common in both societies. America faces further challenges in its dealings with different cultural, religious, and ethnic groups as it continues its efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. These locations suffer acute under-development, economic hardships, and pervasive misconceptions about Western ideologies, culture, and motives. Fissures between government forces and sub-national minorities have created groups bent on increased rights, autonomy or secession. There are important differences between the two cases. For instance, the United States does not face the same internal, anti-national terrorism that is common in some parts of India. Further, India’s external terrorist threat comes primarily from across its border with Pakistan, while the United States encounters international terrorism from many sources and in many locations. However, taken

¹⁸⁵ “U.S. Pulls Out of Saudi Arabia,” BBC, 29 April 2003; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2984547.stm; accessed 25 March 2004.

together, the challenges facing U.S. counterterrorism officials are strikingly similar to those the Indian government has dealt with previously.

B. FINDINGS

1. India's Most Successful Counterterrorism Lessons

India's experience provides U.S. counterterrorism policy makers many important lessons. New Delhi has faced terrorist and sectarian violence in three primary locations: Punjab, the northeast states, and Kashmir. Terrorism in these locations springs from ethnic, political, and religious motivations. Accordingly, India's responses have varied, ranging from capitulation to overbearing military force. In some instances, New Delhi's counterterrorism strategies have yielded resounding successes. Though terrorism has not been completely eradicated from India, India's policies have, at times, had a dramatic positive influence in curbing violence and promoting stability. India's counterterrorism strategy is marked by two "best practices" that highlight its most successful achievements.

First, India has, over time, developed military strategies that have paid rewarding dividends. This was most evident in the Punjab case and yielded dramatic improvements to New Delhi's overall counterterrorism capability there. Coordination between local, state, and federal agencies has been the most significant improvement to India's counterterrorism effort over the last twenty years. Creating joint headquarters, integrated communication systems, and common operating procedures has helped avoid some of the inherent difficulties of multi-agency operations—difficulties that have, in the past, plagued New Delhi's counterterrorism operations. The United States can make dramatic improvements in this regard. Domestically, information sharing between local and state police, border and immigration officials, national services such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the military remains beleaguered notwithstanding the post-11 September security initiatives.¹⁸⁶ Likewise, U.S. military forces abroad must improve

¹⁸⁶ National Commission on the Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Staff Statement Number 8: National Policy Coordination," (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 2004), 11; http://www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing8/staff_statement_8.pdf; accessed 25 March 2004.

information sharing and joint security operations with host-nation security forces.¹⁸⁷ In overseas situations like Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. troops, despite Herculean efforts, will never eradicate terrorism without substantial assistance from local security agencies.

This in no means suggests that military force has no role. As terrorism expert Paul Wilkinson notes, even those who advocate the exclusive use of civil police concede that regular military force is a legitimate option in counterterrorism operations.¹⁸⁸ As discussed in chapter II, India's counterterrorism efforts in Punjab yielded lasting progress when regular military forces and local security agencies coordinate their efforts. Additionally, as the Kashmir case illustrates, using former terrorist leaders can be highly effective at rooting out organizations and "winning over" insurgents. However, unless an effective and trustworthy police or paramilitary force is established, major improvements to the security situation will remain untenable. Improving local security forces and augmenting them at times with U.S. military force, will make terrorist attacks simultaneously harder to conduct and less effective in their results.

Second, New Delhi has made significant advances in its efforts to preserve and promote democratic institutions and processes. Nearly all of India's early attempts to supplant elections, remove elected officials and disband political parties resulted in increased public discontent and violence. India has, since the mid-1990s, done much to avoid these mistakes by encouraging political parties and respecting state elections—even when these do not necessarily coincide with the central government. New Delhi's efforts to develop viable political institutions, as discussed in chapter III, illustrate the critical nature of free and open politics. The United States must advance democratic institutions in Iraq and Afghanistan yet be prepared for outcomes that may, at times, contradict Washington's goals and aspirations.

Currently the debate in Baghdad over the structure and scope of direct elections is a telling example. The United States has done well thus far in respecting the ideas of important public figures such as Ayatollah al-Sistani, who wields remarkable sway over the country's Shi'a majority. Terrorism will wane as people acquire confidence in a free

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, "Staff Statement Number 6: The Military," (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 2004); http://www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing8/staff_statement_6.pdf; accessed 25 March 2004.

¹⁸⁸ Paul Wilkinson, "The Role of the Military in Combating Terrorism in a Democratic Society," in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (Autumn, 1996), (London: Frank Cass Publishing), 5.

and representative political system. This argument contradicts that of Jack Snyder, who suggests that the process of developing a democracy may actually engender conflict.¹⁸⁹ However, by establishing, respecting, and promoting non-violent political institutions, citizens begin to take ownership of social problems and their respective solutions. This must be viewed as a long-term process. Often referred to as the “consolidation phase” of democratization, the institutionalization of democracy is a perpetual struggle that requires tireless effort.¹⁹⁰

2. India’s Most Significant Counterterrorism Shortfalls

New Delhi has also committed a series of grave missteps that have hampered its ability to counter terrorism and perpetuated the root causes of the violence. Its experience teaches three key lessons.

First, governments must not attempt to placate terrorist organizations for short-term gains. India has tried, at various times, to grant wide political concessions to terrorists in all three of its most affected regions. Nearly every case resulted in a net loss for the government. Efforts to bargain hostage releases in Kashmir, for example, routinely resulted in the terrorist organizations gaining popular support, legitimacy, and political influence. Schemes such as prisoner releases, weapons buy-back programs, and “re-education” plans—at one time used extensively in India’s northeast—have been remarkable failures despite New Delhi’s claims to the contrary. Washington should forego these futile methods outright. In their stead should be a detailed system to address social grievances before they are adopted by a violent organization. If the United States can resolve these issues early, many terrorist groups will be left with no *raison d’etre*—devoid of a cause to champion and with little or no public support.

Second, the Indian government has suffered tremendous setbacks in its counterterrorism efforts due to a general lack of policy coherence. In Punjab, the northeast, and Kashmir, New Delhi’s policies have vacillated widely, sending mixed signals to the public and the terrorists. India’s on-again off-again approach to military and

¹⁸⁹ Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 15-43.

¹⁹⁰ See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

political solutions typifies what Vijendra Singh has labeled New Delhi's "exasperated, often clueless, style of governance."¹⁹¹ Terrorists in these areas have quickly capitalized on these inconsistencies, suing for peace and international intervention when it suits their needs and resorting to violence when it meets their goals. America, in conjunction with foreign governments and administration such as the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), must develop consistent and coherent counterterrorism strategies that encourage non-violence and punish terrorist attacks. Specifically, efforts to pursue terrorists must not cease despite political agreements or accords. Government efforts must resist the impetus to extend special considerations to unique ethnic groups or geographic regions. "Special autonomy" plans and unique ethnic privileges may provide short-term gains to political leaders, but usually prompt an unending series of further demands. As the former UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros Ghali, warned, "If every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation," adding that the answer is "to maintain the integrity of each while finding a balanced design for all."¹⁹²

Third, ill-equipped security and intelligence forces have consistently hampered India's counterterrorism efforts. Despite greater inter-agency cooperation, most of the local police and border security forces suffer from materiel deficiencies and personnel shortages. India's case, particularly with regards to Kashmir and the northeast, demonstrates that border security is central to curbing terrorism. Terrorist training and logistic camps in Bangladesh, and cross-border infiltrations in Kashmir are two glaring examples of this problem. Though the United States does not have to contend with exactly the same border problems, pervasive drug and immigrant smuggling across the U.S.-Mexican border certainly suggests that terrorist organizations could exploit that situation as has been done in India. The situation in Iraq is much the same. U.S. military forces in Iraq announced in early March 2004 a major "tactical shift" to re-double border security after the attacks during the Shi'a holy festival of Ashura.¹⁹³ Robust border security is one of the most essential means to limit terrorist's freedom of movement and enhance regional security.

¹⁹¹ Vijendra Singh Jafa, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: The Use and Abuse of Military Force," in *Terror and Containment: Perspectives on India's Internal Security* ed. K. P. S. Gill (New Delhi: Gyan, 2001), 243.

¹⁹² Balraj Puri, *Kashmir: Towards Insurgency* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993), 21.

¹⁹³ BBC, "U.S. to Boost Iraq Border Security," 4 March 2004.

Further, security forces must be well trained to handle the unique tactical considerations of counterterrorist operations. These efforts are often conducted in urban environments that require specialized planning and practice to conduct effectively. Counterterrorist operations may also employ unique equipment and non-standard tactics. Finally, forces at all levels must be as unrelenting in their defense of human rights as they are in their prosecution of the terrorists. Close and transparent monitoring will help ensure that future counterterrorism efforts do not inadvertently alienate local populations and fuel further discontent. Speaking in Imphal, Paul Wilkinson explained that counterterrorism efforts must be highly professional as, “Democracies cannot afford any dilution of the rule of law.”¹⁹⁴

3. Conclusion

For nearly fifty years, South Asia, and India in particular, were of only marginal importance to U.S. policy makers. The 11 September attacks and the U.S. military response, however, made the region paramount for American counterterrorism planners. The presence of Taliban remnants, al-Qaeda operatives, fervent anti-American and anti-national terrorism, pervasive violence in Kashmir, and the potential for nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan make the region exceedingly important for U.S. counterterrorism policy.¹⁹⁵

India is an excellent case study of counterterrorism operations. It has dealt for many years with terrorists, insurgencies, separatist movements, religious fanaticism and political firebrands who dispense violence to further their respective causes. In much the same way as the al-Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington, terrorism has struck deep into the national psyche of Indians. The toll of terrorism has been horrendous in India—topping 56,000 deaths in the last twenty years.¹⁹⁶

The United States has many vested interests in Indian counterterrorism and security. Economically, India is a major trade partner with America, with trade nearing

¹⁹⁴ Paul Wilkinson, *Matamgi Yakairol* (Imphal), 2 March 2000.

¹⁹⁵ Peter Lavoy, “Fighting Terrorism, Avoiding War: The Indo-Pakistani Situation,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, 27.

¹⁹⁶ Atal Vajpayee. “Prime Minister’s Address to the Nation.” 14 September 2001. www.satp.org; accessed 17 July 2003. 1.

\$18 billion in 2002.¹⁹⁷ Additionally, during the Bush administration there has been a significant push to engage India with military-to-military and law enforcement exchanges. For instance, U.S. Air Force intelligence personnel visited the Air Headquarters, Directorate of Intelligence for the first-ever Intelligence Cooperative Exchange (ICE) visit in September 2002.¹⁹⁸ In an attempt to foster cooperation and joint counterterrorism training, U.S. and Indian Special Forces participated in Exercise BALANCE IROQUOIS 2003. For three weeks the units trained at the Counter Insurgency Jungle Warfare School (CIJWS) in Mizoram, practicing advanced counter-insurgency actions such as deep infiltrations, hostage rescue and counterinsurgency marksmanship. Future joint training exercises are already planned—the next to be hosted by the United States on the island of Guam.¹⁹⁹ As counterterrorism in South Asia becomes increasingly pertinent to U.S. security, these joint training opportunities provide tactical, operational and strategic lessons for American counterterrorism professionals.

U.S. domestic and international counterterrorism efforts will benefit greatly from India's case study. There is no perfect response to terrorism, nor an insurmountable defense. Key steps, however, can be taken to mitigate risks and consequences. Improving border security, enhancing U.S. military cooperation with domestic and international law enforcement agencies, improving intelligence gathering capabilities, strengthening multinational counterterrorism cooperation, shunning futile counterterrorism gimmicks and adopting unwavering political strategies may induce some organizations to forgo violence and increase the consequences on those that don't. This will ultimately result in fewer terrorist attacks and greater security for American citizens and U.S. military forces.

¹⁹⁷ Indian Embassy, "India-US Trade Data for the First Ten Months of 2002," Washington D.C.: www.indianembassy.org; accessed 22 Sep 2003.

¹⁹⁸ Personal experience. New Delhi, 3-6 September 2002.

¹⁹⁹ Col Steve Sboto, "Balance Iroquois 2003-1: Indian-US Troops Train to Battle Terrorism," (New Delhi: U.S. Defense Attaché to India, 2003), 1.

ABBREVIATIONS

- A -

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMULFA	All-Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat [Freedom] Conference (Kashmir)
ATTF	All-Tripura Tiger Force

- B -

BK	Babbar Khalsa (Punjab)
BKI	Babbar Khalsa International (Punjab)
BLT	Bodo Liberation Tigers (Assam)
BSF	Border Security Force
BTC	Bodo Territorial Council (Assam)
BTFK	Bhindranwale Tiger Force of Khalistan (Punjab)

- C -

C3I	Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence
CCS	Indian Cabinet Committee on Security
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States)
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority (Iraq)
CPO	Central Police Organization
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force

- D -

DDDP	Directorate of Defence Policy and Planning (India)
DoD	Department of Defense (United States)
DONER	Department of North East Region (India)
DoS	Department of State (United States)
DPG	U.S.-India Defense Planning Group

- E -

ESG	U.S.-India Executive Steering Group
EU	European Union

- F -

- G -

GPRN	Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland
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- H -

HuM	Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
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- I -

IAF	Indian Air Force
IB	Intelligence Bureau (India)

IED Improvised Explosive Device
IGC Iraqi Governing Council
INS Immigration and Naturalization Service (United States)
ISI Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan)
IT Information Technology
ITBP Indo-Tibetan Border Police

- J -

J&K Jammu and Kashmir
JeM Jaish-e-Mohammad (Pakistan)
JI Jama'at-i Islami (Pakistan)
JIB Jama'at-i Islami of Bangladesh
JKLF Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front
JKP Jammu-Kashmir Police
JTG U.S.-India Joint Technical Group

- K -

KCF Khalistan Commando Force (Punjab)
KLF Khalistan Liberation Force (Punjab)
KLO Kamatapur Liberation Organization

- L -

LeT / (LT) Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (a.k.a.) Lashkar-e-Toiba,
LoC Line of Control

- M -

MCG Military Cooperation Group (U.S.-India)
MHA Ministry of Home Affairs (Indian Government)
MOU Memorandum of Understanding
MULFA Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam
MULTA Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam

- N -

NC National Conference (Kashmir)
NDFB National Democratic Front of Bodoland
NEC North East Council
NEPA North Eastern Police Academy
NLI Northern Light Infantry (Pakistan)
NNC Naga National Council
NSA National Security Agency (United States)
NSCN-K National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang
NSCN-IM National Socialist Council of Nagalim – Isak-Muivah
NSEERS National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (United States)
NWFP Northwest Frontier Province

- O -

- P -

P-5 Permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council
PAP Punjab Armed Police
PRC People's Republic of China

- Q -

- R -

RAW Research and Analysis Wing (India)

- S -

SATP South Asian Terrorism Portal
SOG Special Operations Group
SULFA Surrendered ULFA members (Assam)

- T -

TEL Terrorist Exclusion List (United States)

- U -

ULFA United Liberation Front of Asom
ULFSS United Liberation Front of the Seven Sisters
UN United Nations
UNCIP United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan
UNGA United Nations General Assembly
UNMOGIP United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNPO Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (the Hague)
UNSC United Nations Security Council

- V -

VISIT Visitor and Immigration Status Indication Technology System (United States)

- W -

WHO World Health Organization
WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction

- X -

- Y -

- Z -

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