

**THE INDIAN STATE AND THE SECURITIZING OF
INSURGENCIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
THE DISCOURSES ON THE KHALISTAN AND
NAXALITE MOVEMENTS**

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SHAMUEL THARU



Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament
School of International Studies

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Delhi 110067

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **THE INDIAN STATE AND THE SECURITIZING OF INSURGENCIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DISCOURSES ON THE KHALISTAN AND NAXALITE MOVEMENTS** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is my own work and has not been previously submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.


SHAMUEL THARU

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



Professor VARUN SAHNI
(Chairperson)

CIPOD Chairperson
Centre for International Politics,
Organization & Disarmament
School of International Studies
J.N.U., New Delhi



Professor VARUN SAHNI
(Supervisor)

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Chapter One

Introduction

At a time when there has been a marked increase in the violent promotion of democracy and liberalism across the world, the first decade of the twenty-first century has also seen a huge increase in nation-states' propensity to undermine democratic values and institutions in, paradoxically, the name of democracy itself. In every continent, states are legislating for further curbs on democratic rights. National security is being used as a blanket term to cover up the states confusion as to how to react to the challenges, political, economic and military, that they face today. In democratic states, the nature of democratic practice is of immense concern to philosophers and citizens alike. Concerns with the state's increasing subversion of democratic practice needs to be investigated, *ipso facto*.

International relations theory is marked by a distinct lack of operationalisable research tools, especially relating to domestic politics. Securitization, as conceptualized by Ole Wæver, is one of the exceptions. It provides us with the foundations for a functional and useful tool with which to investigate legitimizing processes in democratic societies especially relating to matters concerning security.

Securitization has been occurring since there have been governments. At the height of the third wave of democratization, however, it takes on a much more crucial role in our understanding of state behaviour.

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the securitizing discourse of the Indian State does not vary significantly across vastly different contexts. If this holds true, it would call for a re-evaluation of both securitization's conceptual categories and its operationalization in order to enable increased explanatory nuance. This dissertation shall show that this similarity of discourses across varied context is a reflection of a singular purpose which, contrary to Wæver's conception, is *not* a reaction to existential threats.

The dissertation analyses the securitizing discourses of the Indian state *vis-à-vis* internal conflicts. It shall attempt to examine the public responses to the main kinds of insurgencies namely, those seeking secession (ethnic nationalist movements) and

revolutionary insurgents. The cases of the Punjab “crisis”, and the Naxalites respectively will provide the area of study. This study is based on the fact that although considerable academic work has been done on each of these insurgencies, no work so far has attempted to unpack the Indian State’s response to them using securitization as the conceptual lens.

I would like to clarify at the onset that this is not a study of the Indian state per se. The Indian State and these two cases are used due to familiarity of contexts and accessibility of material given the limited scope of this project. This work is an attempt to operationalise the concept of securitization within the discipline of International Relations.

What does operationalise indicate?

It is productive to do so for three reasons. Firstly, it enables a comparison of how the State constructs each kind of threat. Secondly, and following from the first, it sheds light on the use of different kinds of emergency powers depending on how the threat is constructed. Being a democratic polity, it is essential for the public to possess an understanding of these modes of supersession of democratic practice. Thirdly, it is a means of testing the explanatory efficacy of the concept of securitization. A comparison with literature that has not used the securitization lens to explain the State’s response to these insurgencies would lead to preliminary conclusions as to whether the use of securitization’s rhetorical tools provide explanatory depth to the process or not.

Theoretical Debates Surrounding Securitization

It is important firstly to map the existing literature on the concept of securitization and its critiques. It is impossible to do so without explaining the context of the concept’s formulation. The late 1990s was witness to a crucial moment in the debate that had been triggered within the discipline of Security Studies following the fall of the Berlin Wall. The debate was between the Narrowers and the Wideners of the concept of security. The Narrowers, mostly neo-realists and neo-classical realists, supported the idea that the concept of security be restricted to military threats of aggression against the nation-state that required military responses. The Wideners, comprising a mix of liberal institutionalists, postmodernists, constructivists, social feminists and ecological socialists,

argued that a narrow concept of security was neither desirable nor, in the post-cold war era, effective. They argued for a widening of the concept to incorporate issues which they saw as affecting the security of individuals, communities and states. Barry Buzan and collaborators have effectively demarcated these concerns into five sectors (military, political, economic, societal and environmental) (Buzan *et al* 1998: 27).

For most of the 1980s and 1990s both sides of the debate seemed to be talking at cross purposes. The Narrowers claimed that military conflict could not be wished away and any attempt at widening the concept of security would only serve to dilute its intellectual coherence and applicability. The Wideners on the other hand, made moral arguments to support their case, but were unable to provide a concrete framework from which to counter the Narrowers argument. They were also unable to actualize their concerns regarding the absence of crucial areas in the security (and therefore policy) debates.

This changed in 1998 with the publication of *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Buzan *et al* 1998) by the "Copenhagen School". Although most of the book is a compilation of previous work done by the Wideners, it served the important purpose of bringing Ole Wæver's concept of securitization into the international public debate.¹

The concept was a break from the realist understanding that the anarchic structure of the international system forced states to remain fundamentally concerned about military threats, as there was no overarching authority to ensure the protection of their interests and especially their security. This led to the conclusion that states must help themselves and that the most effective means of such help was the possession and augmentation of military capabilities.

The concept of securitization also provided the much-needed stepping stone, that the wideners required between a strong moral foundation and a non-normative methodology necessary to translate the wideners concerns into an effective research project that could affect policy. Other than his neorealist critics, with whom Wæver is at epistemological loggerheads with, most of the other critiques of his work have actually expanded and added further methodological strength and explanatory nuance to the concept of securitization. For the most part however, Wæver's concept has fallen prey to the inter-

¹ Wæver actually developed this concept in Wæver (1995).

school attrition that characterizes the field of International Relations (IR) study today, as shall be seen below.

Wæver's concept of securitization was based on the idea that areas or subjects of concern possess a location identity along a continuum that moved from non-politicized (or un-politicized or de-politicized) to politicized to securitized. He uses Buzan's ideas that the concept of security opens itself out into a referent object (like the state) which is portrayed as being under existential threat by a group, which demands or decides (*via* a speech act) that emergency measures must be taken to combat this threat (Buzan *et al* 1998: 26). This group must be invested in the trappings of authority sufficient to make an evaluation of threats by those who are expected to respond to the threat and subject themselves to emergency moves.

Not clear!

Wæver suggests that it would be profitable to investigate the manner in which a particular referent object is securitized by particular groups. It is worth our while to examine his formulation in detail:

The conditions for a successful speech-act fall into two categories: (1) the internal, linguistic grammatical – to follow the rules of the act (or as Austin argues, accepted conventional procedures must exist, and the act has to be executed according to these procedures), and (2) the external, contextual and social – to hold a position from which the act can be made (or in Austin's words: 'The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure') (Buzan *et al* 1998: 32).

The speech act approach to security requires a distinction among three types of units involved in security analysis (Buzan *et al* 1998: 36).

1. Referent objects: Things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival,
2. Securitizing actors: Actors who securitize issues by declaring a referent object existentially threatened; and
3. Functional actors: Actors who affect the dynamics of a sector. Without being the referent object or the securitizing actor, this is an actor that significantly influences decisions taken in the field.

Approaching security as a speech act, Wæver and the Copenhagen School hold that the specificity of security as a field of political activity can be maintained "without either

narrowing its meaning or its application by either analytical fiat or existing convention, or broadening it beyond recognition or substantive delineation” (Williams 2003: 528).

Wæver has explicitly declared that his understanding of security is “constructivist all the way down”(Buzan and Wæver 1997: 244). And this influence is explicit in his work. However, before one embarks on a critique of the concept it is worthwhile to consider political realism’s impact (especially Carl Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau) on Wæver’s formulation of securitization.²

Schmitt opined that whether issues are viewed as political or treated as non-political (treated instead as economic or religious, for example) cannot be determined by the nature of the issues themselves. What makes an issue political is the particularly tense relationship that actors feel towards it. The political, as he puts it, is the most intense and extreme antagonism and every antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the most extreme point – the friend-enemy grouping (Williams 2003: 516).³ The similarities with Wæver’s work are obvious. Also Schmitt’s thinking about the political, as related to his decisionist theory of sovereignty, is important in relation to the theory of securitization. For Schmitt, “Sovereign is he who decides upon the exception” (Williams 2003: 519).⁴ The precise details of an emergency cannot be anticipated, nor can one spell out what may take place in such a case. Especially when it is truly a matter of emergency and of how it is to be eliminated. It is these very intellectual underpinnings that attract the most criticism as shall be seen below.

The neorealist criticism of the concept of securitization is based on the perception that states (and therefore actors, audiences and speech acts) have very little choice in the way they behave (respond to and perceive issues such as security). This makes the corollary to securitization, that is, desecuritization difficult to accept. For although Wæver (1995: 51-2) himself draws on the Clausewitzian notion of absolute war when seeking a prototype

² Michael Williams and Jef Hysmans make well argued cases in support of Schmitt’s influences on Hans Morgenthau and E. H. Carr. See Williams (2003) and Hysmans (1998).

³ It must be noted that there is a key ambiguity here, for while Schmitt often presented the concept of the political as simply objective it has often been argued that his vision of it is actually underpinned by a vitalistic commitment to violence and enmity as essential to the preservation of a “full” human” life in opposition to the neutralization and de-politicization of liberal modernity. See (Williams, 2003: 517). The similarities between this reading of Schmitt and Buzan, Wæver and Wilde’s explicit agreement with Schmitt’s underlying “drive” are curious. See Buzan *et al* (1998: 26).

⁴ The similarities here with Jean Baudrillard are interesting see foot note no. 10.

for the existential threat, by severing the causality of behaviour from the structure of the international system (anarchy) and linking it in the first level of analysis (with actors and their actions) he makes a methodological error.

Wæver's defense of this is unconvincing. As he puts it, "the goal is to retain the specific quality characterizing security problems: urgency; state power; claiming legitimate use of extraordinary means; a threat seen as potentially undercutting sovereignty, thereby preventing the political 'we' from dealing with any other questions" (Wæver 1995: 53). Implicit in the language is the standoff between neorealists and himself.⁵ Neorealists would still contend that the threat to the existence of the state is primary and structural (Waltz 1979: 79-106).

Another neo-realist, Olav Knudsen (2001) completely shakes the foundations of Wæver's argument. Knudsen argues that a key aspect of the securitizing idea is to create awareness of the (allegedly) arbitrary nature of threats, to stimulate the thought that the foundation of policy is not given by nature but chosen by politicians and decision makers, who have an interest in defining it in just that way. That interest is heavily embodied not just in each country's military establishment, but also in the power and influence flowing from the military's privileged position with respect to the network of decision makers and politicians serving the establishment (Knudsen 2001: 359). Hence, according to Knudsen's reading of Wæver, securitization gave a name to the process, hitherto vaguely perceived, of raising security issues above politics and making them something one would never question. Knudsen believes that this argument is convincing only as far as its description of the military establishment and decision makers goes, but that its heyday is gone. "It is a cold war phenomenon, and things just aren't the same anymore. In the post-Cold war period, agenda setting has become much easier to influence than the securitization approach assumes. This change cannot be credited to the concept; the change in security politics was already occurring in defense ministries and parliaments before the concept was first launched. Indeed, securitization is more appropriate to the security politics of the Cold war years than to the post-Cold war period" (Knudsen 2001: 360).

⁵ Words like "prevent", "we", threat is "seen" etc.

In a different context, the point was clearly made by Keshava
2 Nye in their case for
transnationalism / complex
interdependence.

Knudsen also displays reservation about the easy manner in which Wæver (and indeed most of the Copenhagen School) relegate the “real”-ness of threats to insignificance. Knudsen sees them as perceiving threats as coming mainly from the actors own fears or from what happens when the fears of individuals turn into paranoid political action. Knudsen sees the emphasis on the subjective as being a misleading conception of threat as it discounts an independent existence for whatever is perceived a threat. In his words: “Granted, political life is often marked by misperceptions, mistakes, pure imaginations, ghost or mirages, but such phenomena do not occur simultaneously⁶ to large numbers of politicians and hardly most of the time. Threats have to be dealt with *both in terms of perceptions and in terms of the phenomena which are perceived to be threatening.*” (Knudsen 2001: 359 emphasis added).

Knudsen also makes an interesting methodological criticism of Wæver.⁷ He claims securitization is an ambitious concept because in Copenhagen usage it refers to two things at once. “On the one hand it refers to the act (or process) of removing an issue from and raising it above politics, taking it out of the limelight. On the other hand it points to the act of (or process) of taking an issue out of obscurity or neglect and placing it on the political agenda” (Knudsen 2001: 361).

However, neorealism has not been the only site of criticism. Constructivists themselves have criticized the concept claiming that it is too enmeshed in its desire for non-normativeness and that this leads to a risk that the concept can be used to justify anything.⁸ (Migration restrictions in the European Union, for example.)

This argument is developed by Bill McSweeney, who argues that the way in which “societal security”⁹ is developed with respect to the concept of securitization ends up

⁶ Knudsen is himself susceptible to the accusation of overlooking the vast literature on the consensual nature of power. See Pasqino (1991). See also Said (1978).

⁷ Knudsen’s critique of Wæver is not restricted to these three points. He also points out that the intellectual disregard for the security dilemma, the theoretical aversion to “state-centricism” and the shift in security studies from politics as it is to politics as it should be, is another of the difficulties he has with Wæver’s position. It is interesting to note, as will be seen below, that the critical theorists accuse Wæver of exactly the opposite, i.e. of a lack of sensitivity to the way in which politics ought to be saying that Wæver’s approach is too non-normative.

⁸ See Hysmans (1998). Much of the literature that critiques this aspect of Wæver’s concept draws on the Schmittian parallels.

⁹ Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde define the societal sector as that which privileges identity as the referent object. (Buzan *et al* 1998:27).

reifying and objectifying society and identity in ways that are analytically untenable and politically dangerous (McSweeney 1999: 72). By defining society in terms of identity, McSweeney argues that the concept of societal security effectively defines society as having a single identity. This involves a “sociological distortion in which the fluidity and multiplicity of social identities are obscured, along with the process of negotiation and accommodation through which they operate” (McSweeney 1999: 73).

Wæver (1995: 66) justifies his approach thus:

Such an approach implies that we have to take serious concerns about identity, but have also to study the specific and often problematic affects of their being framed as security issues. We have also to look at the possibilities of handling some of these problems in non-security terms, that is, take on the problems but leave them unsecuritized. This latter approach recognizes that social processes are already underway whereby societies have begun to thematize themselves as security agents that are under threat. This process of social construction can be studied, and the security quality of the phenomena understood without thereby actually legitimizing it.

McSweeney also challenges the privileging of the speech act in the understanding of security. He argues that from the perspective of securitization theory, economic well being is not a security issue unless it is placed within categories (and successful speech acts) of existential threat. The fact that economic deprivation is a severe threat to life does not mean that it is capable of being effectively cast as a security issue (McSweeney 1999: 72). Wæver’s response is to say that McSweeney argument actually strengthens his case and uses arguments such as the Rwandan genocide to illustrate the point. However, he seems to miss the focus of McSweeney’s critique.¹⁰

Similarly, postmodernists and critical theorists also have their fair share of arguments with Wæver. Richard Wyn Jones (1999: 109)¹¹ highlights a significant weakness in Wæver approach. He sees Wæver’s understanding of the speech act itself as problematic. He interprets Wæver as regarding the concept of security as fixed, that is, that the implications of calling an issue a security problem cannot be challenged. Only the objects which are securitized are open to contestation in Wæver’s approach (Jones 1999: 110).

¹⁰ See Baudrillard (2002). Although not responding directly to Wæver, Baudrillard puts forth the argument that it is only the survival of the nation/state that can evince the collected action predicted by Wæver. Further he states that such action is highly contingent and cannot be theorized.

¹¹ Wyn Jones criticizes Wæver’s state-centrism. Wæver’s interest was in how states securitize issues. He viewed the grammar of security as inherently statist. Although in Buzan et al. (1999), Wæver has decoupled the speech act from state centrism, Wyn Jones believes his criticism still holds. See also Jones (1999: Chapter 6) for an interesting response to Knudsen’s criticism of the disdain for state centrism.

This, Wyn Jones suggests, points to the notion that threats must therefore be dealt with in a unilateral, militarized zero-sum action” (Jones 1999: 110). Wyn Jones concludes that this ignores the fact that when the label security is attached to particular issues, it generates validity claims that are open to redemption or refutation through argumentation.¹²

As has been seen above, most of the thinkers who have engaged with the concept of securitization seem to talking at cross-purposes. Even Buzan and Wæver’s response to their critics is far from satisfactory as they simply reiterate their stand. This lack of systematic study is largely due to the interschool debate in which most new concepts are stuck.

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As the study of IR has not matured into a science yet, each of the competing schools work with their own paradigms. This results in similar events being read differently and a lack of a shared understanding of how the world works. In such a situation, it is not sufficient to discard securitization as it does not fit into the preeminent paradigm of realist thought. On the other hand, it is important to recognize that Wæver himself is working from within a particular paradigm and that structurally limits his ability to see the world. These gaps in the securitization paradigm are best brought to the open through practical application of the concept as, at the theoretical level, contending images with very little common ground forestall any resolution and productive critique.

A Brief Problematization of The Cases

The Punjab Crisis

The Punjab “crisis” that lead to the demand for the separate state of Khalistan, has been interpreted in many ways. Some scholars, mostly Marxist, interpret it as springing from the unequal distribution of the benefits of the green revolution and the rise to power of Sikh *jats*.¹³ Others, mostly scholars sympathetic to the Akali view and the radical Akali,

¹² Wyn Jones underpins this with the theoretical support of Habermas’ “universal pragmatics” which suggest that every speech act is open to the three validity claims of truth, normative rightness and expressive sincerity.

¹³ See Surjeet (1985) and Gill and Singhal (1984).

see it as the culmination an historical struggle for a Sikh homeland.¹⁴ Others contest this view claiming that the Sikh metacommentary was only linked to territoriality when the idea of Pakistan seemed poised to actualize itself (Oberoi 1987).

There are those who see it as a Pakistani plot to divide the Sikhs and the Hindus (Madhok 1985). Others see it as an intended consequence of the Central government's (lead by Indira Gandhi) strategy of marginalizing the "moderates" by not cracking down on the radical Akalis (Tully and Jacob 1995). Still others dismiss the division of Sikhs into moderate radicals, terrorist and parliamentarian as obscuring the real issue namely, mis-governance (Kohli 1990).

Preliminary reading suggests that there is an element of truth in all these claims, but causality is always difficult to establish. However to quote Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde in the context of the securitizing of the environment, "Critical for the political agenda is not whether specific threats... are real or speculative, but whether their presumed urgency can be construed as a political issue" (Buzan *et al* 1998: 27). There can be no doubt that all the actors involved were convinced of this urgency.

The state response has been a mixture of excessive use of force and vacillating attempts to strengthen democratic structures. There is no doubt that the state has at its disposal many avenues from which it sets forth often vastly different discourses. However, the following "official" view gives us a sense of what the state's position was.

The essence of the problem in the Punjab was not the demands put forth by the Akali Dal ... but the maturing of a secessionist and anti-national movement. The Akali Dal allowed the leadership of the agitation to pass out of their hands (into the hands of the secessionists and the terrorists)...

The terrorists escalated their violence. With each passing day the situation worsened. The subversive activities of the groups inside the Golden temple had assumed menacing proportions in the context of India's security. The influence of external forces, with deep-rooted interest in the disintegration of India, was becoming evident. The Government was convinced that this challenge to the security, unity and integrity of the country could not be met by normal law and order agencies at the disposal of the State. It was in these circumstances that the decision was taken to call in the army (Government of India 1984: 3).

This is a classic case of the manner in which the state privileges a certain discourse in order to effect an overriding of due process of law. The available literature on the subject

¹⁴ See Pettigrew (1984) and Akbar (1985).

is devoid of any comprehensive analysis of how the state securitized the issue except for tactical statements by the top cops Julio Ribeiro (“bullets for bullets”) or KPS Gill (“Its open season on terrorists”), that hogged the limelight and completely obscured how the state was legitimizing its actions.

In addition to testing the efficacy of the concept of securitizing, an analysis of the State’s discourse in relation to the Punjab “crisis” shall not only provide insights into what the state’s legitimizing strategies are, but also suggest the state’s anxieties with its polity.

The Naxal issue

Like the Punjab “crisis” a variety of explanations have been advanced to explain the Naxal issue. Many – perhaps most – analyses of the Naxalite conflict in India focus on motivations as the conflict’s cause. Many contend the conflict is caused by attempts to end injustices, deprivations, and oppression suffered by *adivasis*, dalits, and other traditionally discriminated groups. Others counter that the conflict may have started for these reasons, but continued because Naxalites are quasi-mafias selfishly motivated by money and individual benefits derived from the conflict.

The Naxalites themselves see their actions as the creative application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoist thought to Indian conditions which calls for the overthrow of the capitalist state through people’s war. The state however sees them as a security problem. Considering that Naxalism is today active in 125 districts with some 18,000 armed cadres this is not surprising as it is arguably the largest single armed group in the country (Committee of Concerned Citizens 2002). There has however, been an explicit acknowledgement that some of the Naxals’ demands are legitimate with repeated parleys suggesting common ground. The Naxals have also been a milch cow for the state’s ruling elites who promise talks when an election approaches further emphasizing the perceived legitimacy of their demands (Kannabiran 2004: xi). This acknowledgement of legitimacy has however, spurred little action on the part of the State. A brief glance at the official discourse supports this claim.

The Government attaches high priority to containing the menace of left wing extremist violence by a double pronged strategy of strict law enforcement along with special

development initiatives in the affected areas. The Central Government has asked the State Governments to take purposive well-coordinated and integrated actions which should include intensification of developmental activities, rapid improvement of roads and communications, implementation of land reforms etc... Special forces are being raised in the affected areas and will be given training in jungle warfare, commando operation, handling of explosives, use of sniffer dogs etc...(Government of India 1990: 86-89)

The above paragraph as been found unchanged in every *Annual Report* by the Ministry of Home Affairs since 1989 under the heading Left Wing Extremism. Only the number of causalities and the extent of the Naxal operations change in each report. This lack of developments on the two pronged strategy betrays the extent of the Government's nature of "high priority" attributed to the issue.

The Naxal issue is particularly complicated because the centre has not explicitly taken over control of the operations, even though the vast majority of forces (over 80 per cent combating the Naxalites are paramilitary forces under the control of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs suggesting that the Centre could decide policy should it wish to. As in the case with Punjab when it was not under President's Rule, this would mean an examination of both the discourse of the Centre and of the State Governments. While a survey of the related literature has revealed much work on the criticism of government policy and sporadic references to official discourse, no comprehensive work on the matter exists.

Both the cases are considerably different, in terms of the demographic composition of cadre, geographical location (a tense national border further complicating one issue), duration, professed ideology, irredentist potential and level of involvement of the Central Government. It would be assumed, therefore, that securitizing discourse of the Indian State in response to each of these challenges would be markedly different. The following hypothesis is forwarded: The securitizing discourse of the Indian state remains the same irrespective of the type of insurgent movement that it is confronted with.

Research Method and Sources

This dissertation will primary engage in an analysis of the discourse of the Indian State regarding the two cases. This will involve archival research of statements to the press by

various sections of the Government, official Government releases and Parliamentary and Legislative Assembly debates, all of which are well archived and accessible. It would also rely on secondary commentary on the media in conflict situations.

Evaluating the explanatory value of securitization would require a detailed survey of existing literature on each of the cases and a comparative approach would be used to compare the conclusions drawn from this and those reached through the discourse analysis. As the case study approach is being used to support the hypothesis, conclusive conclusions cannot be drawn. All conclusions will only strengthen or weaken the hypothesis and not validate it.

Outline of the Dissertation

The first chapter has tried to map the theoretical territory from which securitization arises and the limitations faced in its implementation. The second chapter will briefly trace the discursive and political histories of the exceptional, arriving at two main conclusions.

- a) executive license for extraordinary powers regarding security issues already exist under normal Indian legislation and,
- b) it is possible to show that securitization, at least in so far as it is practiced by the Indian State in these two cases, is not a response to existential threats.

These conclusions shall then form the context of Chapters Three and Four. Given that securitization is seemingly redundant, what then do we see during the purported “emergencies”? Using the methodological tools provided by Wæver, these Chapters unpack the two sequences of events in a narrative form. Chapter Five conclude this dissertation with an analysis of the disjuncture between what Wæver suggests we should expect in terms of signs of the exceptional and the evidence that emerges in the case studies in this dissertation.

Chapter Two

Contextualizing the Exceptional

In order to operationalise the concept of securitization, it is important to delineate the limits of each of its components. Wæver has done this effectively with the five major components, as mentioned in the previous chapter. However, underlining all these, is the concept of the emergency, which Wæver takes to be a self-explanatory phenomenon.

The main purpose of this Chapter is to problematise the idea of the “emergency” itself. The concept of the emergency can be problematised from various sites such as human rights abuse, democratic failure, bureaucratization and political short-sightedness. It is possible to conclude however, that critiquing the idea of “emergency” through the metatropes of time serves both to provide a framework through which to contextualize the above mentioned sites of criticism and to question the fundamental foundations of the concept itself. In other words, this Chapter shall seek to undermine the defining claim of the emergency: That of temporality.

This shall be attempted in two sections. Firstly, this chapter will undertake through a historical analysis of emergency legislation in India to illustrate the continuous existence of such legislation. Secondly, the analysis which follows will break down emergency legislation into its constituent executive licenses to show how all such license is, in fact, incorporated into “normal” legislative precedent.

Legal grounding of the exceptional – “security” and “emergency”

There is a problematic involved in deciding the practical implications of any ethics when confronted with concrete situations, whether they are ordinary or extraordinary. It is, in fact, that problematic – of the regular versus the ordinary – that has given rise to certain familiar elements of international law in general, and humanitarian law in particular.

The history of international humanitarian law, beginning with the Hague conventions, and continuing with the Geneva conventions and their attendant protocols *et al*, is well-known. Humanitarian law and covenants of war are there to regulate irregular times –

times of war, times of strife, times of conflict, times with lack of *security*, times of *emergency*. Humanitarian law takes into consideration, not as an aside or as an afterthought, but as its constitutive rationale, exactly those situations and those events which might entice us to waive ethical demands; which might bring us to that oft-quoted monstrosity: “all’s fair in war”.

Not all is fair in war, not everything is permissible in war. Constraints on human behaviour are just as relevant, in fact, perhaps more so, in times of war as in “regular” peace times. Emergency and security situations do indeed present rulers, soldiers, armies, organizations, sovereigns and others with dilemmas that may seem “different” in a sense from encounters that take place in ordinary circumstances.

Precisely for that reason it has been deemed necessary to formulate clearly and explicitly the dos and don’ts of wartime and emergency times. International law takes it upon itself to specify the (legal) workings of such situations; humanitarian law is even more bounded, dealing with more specific situations in the workings of wartime.

Together, then, semantics and law serve as theoretical background to the perusal of some “exceptional” terms at work – “emergency” and “security” in point. The use of such terms in such a manner is to be viewed with concern, to say the least, and there are some paradigmatic cases, one of which shall be presented below, where they play pivotal roles. “Emergency” is the most obvious, and perhaps the easiest to discharge. Emergency laws exist, explicitly and intentionally, to treat emergency situations.

A legal system should, of itself, be able to countenance the vagaries of emergency; but barring the general, *a priori*, formulations of emergency laws within an established and running system there is also the possibility of proclaiming an official, legal “emergency situation” with its rules, regulations, provisions and laws. Next in line is “security”. Security is the safety blanket surrounding the actions of actors that deliberately choose to be so blanketed. Under cover of that term, the deliberations of courts, the operations of armed forces, the policies of governing authorities, and, of course, the machinations of “security forces”, enjoy a breadth of activity that is exempt from both regular legal procedure and the basic ethical foundations that support it. There is, undoubtedly, an affinity between the concepts of emergency and security, with emergency being the

stated situational bedding for security measures and security functioning as a safeguard for, against, and during emergencies.

A paradigmatic case is India, where history in the twentieth century illustrates our semantic/legal point through the instatement of an official “emergency situation”. This was the option adopted by several colonial regimes in times of uprisings; in particular, it was the option adopted by the British authorities during the period of British rule.

Instatement of an emergency situation with far-reaching action for the authorities was the British solution for what was perceived by the British as an irregular situation that could only be thus controlled. Whether this was just, fair, ethical, efficient, or practical is not germane to our discussion. That this legal framework was then adopted, for various reasons, by the Indian authorities, and that it has continued to be maintained until this very day (over fifty-eight years), is the real monstrosity, rather than the emergency itself, of the discussion. The use of “emergency” in labelling a situation as an emergency situation, the acceptance of this label by both legislative and judicial authorities (that it is accepted by the executive is not to be wondered at), and the acquiescence of the general populace to such a label of their (regular) life, is our object of investigation. If “emergency” is a special situation, if it is to serve as a pointer to irregularity, if it is to provide exceptional resources for the maintenance of a semblance of regularity, how can a fifty-eight year duration of emergency be explained or countenanced? Our suggestion will be that it cannot; or that if it can, this is only because its natural semantics have been perverted. Furthermore, this perversion has been intentionally, cynically and rhetorically performed.

How does “security risk” enter the fray? One could, perhaps, entertain a lukewarm hypothesis: that in areas not ruled by law or by civilian regulation, i.e., in military contexts, “security” might be a winning card, but that it is precisely the court-system, not to mention the legislative authorities, that can ensure that security is measured against other weights – for example, and most importantly, human rights – that can then prevail. It is here, however, that attention must be called to the (almost) single-minded workings of the Indian judicial system itself, which (almost) always decides on the side of security.

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Given a set of inputs and considerations, it is the element of security which (almost) always trumps. In its deliberations over the past fifty-eight years the Indian Supreme Court has consistently, though not always unanimously and barring an exceptional verdict here and there, upheld the security angle of any discussion. Security has always been the one consideration which seems to stump the judges, denying them the open deliberation and reflection which is expected in and demanded of any court of law. True, in “quiet” times, in hopeful times, in optimistic times, there seem to be more balanced verdicts, with security receiving more stringent examination as to the force of its argument. But in more fearful times, in times of greater conflict, in times of alleged emergency, security seems to be the be-all and end-all of deliberation – including, sadly, judicial deliberation. So security and emergency are not unrelated: terms of exceptional use have become a linchpin for the description of a state’s existential condition. Consequently, people’s inalienable human rights are routinely, blatantly, and indifferently violated by the authorities – all in the name of “security”, in times of “emergency”. These two terms are always trump cards.

A Brief History of Anti-terrorist Legislation in India

The pre-history of repressive legislation in India is a very complex one and remains largely unexplored; we can do little more than hint at it. To the British must go the dubious distinction of having introduced preventive detention in India as early as 1793. The East India Company Act of that year authorized the “governor of Fort William” and other officers he thought fit to “secur[e] and detain in custody any person or persons suspected of carrying on . . . any illicit correspondence dangerous to the peace or safety of any of the British settlement or possession in India . . .” (Kumar 1991: 3). The Company in Bengal subsequently enacted the Bengal State Prisoner’s Regulation, which was to have a long life as “Regulation III of 1818”. An extra-constitutional ordinance, opposed to all the fundamental liberties which the colonial state would later pretend to be bound by, Regulation III provided for the indefinite confinement, for “reasons of State”, of individuals against whom there was not “sufficient ground to institute any judicial proceeding” (Kumar 1991: 4). For the next hundred years, Regulation III was to remain

the supreme weapon available to the government in its war against political violence, and its removal from the law books was to remain an insistent demand by Indian nationalists in the early part of the twentieth century.

For more explicit anti-terrorist legislation going beyond preventive detention, we have to turn to the events of the twentieth century. Action by armed revolutionaries, characterized as “extremists and “terrorists”, with supposed links abroad inspired new and more draconian legislation between 1905-1914, and the advent of World War I served as a pretext for strengthening the forces of the state, of course in the name of “national security”. In 1908, the government passed the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act and the Explosives Substances Act, and shortly thereafter the Indian Press Act, the Criminal Tribes Act, and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act.¹ Although these pieces of legislation have not been etched into what could be called the pre-history of anti-terrorist legislation, the purported intent was to prevent “terrorists” from calling public meetings, publishing material inciting the people to revolt, disseminating revolutionary literature, and so forth. In actual fact, as numerous studies have shown, the legislation was of such wide scope as to render suspect all political activity that was even mildly critical of the British Government of India, and it put an effective end to whatever freedom of expression the Indian press had been allowed. The exclusion from India of men harbouring evil designs towards the Government of India, “suspects” in the official vocabulary, was accomplished by the Foreigners Ordinance of 1914, which restricted the entry of foreigners into India. The “foreign hand” theory, which is invoked with notorious monotony by the Indian state to the present day to account for the rise of secessionist and communal movements, owes its origins partially to this ordinance. Meanwhile, the Ingress into India Ordinance (1914) allowed the government to indefinitely detain and compulsorily domicile suspects, while the Defence of India Act (1915) allowed suspects to be tried by special tribunals sitting *in camera* whose decisions were not subject to appeal. Regulation III also continued to be available for the indefinite detention of suspects.

¹ For a detailed list of such legislation see Kannabiran (2003).

As the Defence of India Act was to expire six months after the conclusion of the Great War, as the First World War was known, a new set of emergency measures for the detention and containment of “terrorists” to meet what was termed the “continuing threat” were planned by the Government of India. These measures were incorporated within the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, known to Indians as the Rowlatt Act after the name of the chairman of the committee that recommended the institution of this legislation. The government could not have known that the Rowlatt Act would become the occasion for the most widespread movement of opposition to British rule since the Mutiny of 1857 and indeed the springboard from which the movement for independence would be launched until India was to become irretrievably lost to the British. The Rowlatt Act provided for the trial of seditious crime by benches of three judges; the accused were not to have the benefit of either preliminary commitment proceedings or the right of appeal, and the rules under which evidence could be obtained and used were relaxed. Other preventive measures included detention without the levying of charges and searches without warrants. As the Rowlatt committee noted in its report, “punishment or acquittal should be speedy both in order to secure the moral effect which punishment should produce and also to prevent the prolongation of the excitement which the proceedings may set up.” (Government of India 1918: 201).

The history of anti-terrorist legislation in colonial India by no means ends with the Rowlatt Act, but such of it as is here narrated suggests that much in the present legislation had already been anticipated. With the attainment of independence, there were heated debates in the constituent assembly about whether preventive detention ought to be retained, or whether this was a measure that could not be maintained with adequate justification as the country was now no longer under the tutelage of a colonial power.

Finally however, only the right to freedom of movement, residence, occupation and acquiring property was incorporated into Clause 9 of Article 19² and was guaranteed. All the others were subject to general public order and morality.

² The Constitution of India provides for the Right to Freedom as a Fundamental Right under Part III, Article 19. All Clauses mentioned hereon refer to this article.

This early bias towards a security state is exemplified in Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar's letter to B. N. Rau on 4 April 1947. Ayyar noted:

The most recent happenings in different parts of India have convinced me, more than ever, that all fundamental rights must be subject to public order, security and safety though such a provision may, to some extent neutralize the effect of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed under the constitution (Rao 1968:143).

Dissent was expressed against such a high security framework for the operation of the internal security apparatus in the country. K. T. Shah opined that he was not in favour of subordinating the rights to public order and morality. However, his reasons for such a view was that this expression was "vague and implied different things in different cultures", especially in view of "the diversity of India" (Rao 1968:155, 157). He was not critical of the emphasis on law and order on grounds that it entailed a highly security-conscious state machinery but due to a lack of clear exposition of the conditions in which such provisions in the constitution could be operationalised.

Finally Clauses 9-14 were recast as Clause 10 and read as follows:

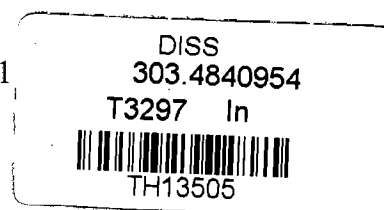
There shall be liberty for the exercise of the following rights, subject to public order and morality, or to the exercise of grave emergency declared to be such, by government of the Union or the unit concerned whereby the security of the union or the units as the case may be is threatened... Provisions may be made by law to impose such reasonable restrictions as may be necessary in public interest (Rao 1968:213).

With independence had come partition, and not only had extraordinary legislation -- such as the Punjab Disturbed Areas Act, Bihar Maintenance of Public Order Act, Bombay Public Safety Act, and Madras Suppression of Disturbance Act, all enacted in 1947-48 -- been required to deal with the problem of communalism, but also with "anti-social elements" who under the cover of religion had found the perfect pretext to settle old scores and commit mayhem. These were the reasons most commonly cited for the retention, both in the Constitution of India (Art. 22), and in the form of a Preventive

Detention Act (1950), of preventive detention. No doubt too the colonial legacy could not be abandoned in its entirety in the first flush of freedom.

Part XVIII of the Constitution permits the state to suspend various civil liberties and the application of certain federal principles during presidentially proclaimed states of emergency. The constitution provides for three categories of emergencies: a threat by "war or external aggression" or by "internal disturbances"; a "failure of constitutional machinery" in the country or in a state; and a threat to the financial security or credit of the nation or a part of it. Under the first two categories, the Fundamental Rights, with the exception of protection of life and personal liberty, may be suspended, and federal principles may be rendered inoperative. A proclamation of a state of emergency lapses after two months if not approved by both houses of Parliament. The president can issue a proclamation dissolving a state government if it can be determined, upon receipt of a report from a governor, that circumstances prevent the government of that state from maintaining law and order according to the constitution. This action establishes what is known as President's Rule because under such a proclamation the president can assume any or all functions of the state government; transfer the powers of the state legislature to Parliament; or take other measures necessary to achieve the objectives of the proclamation, including suspension, in whole or in part, of the constitution. A proclamation of President's Rule cannot interfere with the exercise of authority by the state's high court. Once approved, President's Rule normally lasts for six months, but it may be extended up to one year if Parliament approves.

President's Rule has been imposed frequently, and its use is often politically motivated. During the terms of prime ministers Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri, from 1947 to 1966, it was imposed ten times. Under Indira Gandhi's two tenures as prime minister (1966-77 and 1980-84), President's Rule was imposed forty-one times. Despite Indira Gandhi's frequent use of President's Rule, she was in office longer (187 months) than any other prime minister except Nehru (201 months). Other prime ministers have also been frequent users: Morarji Desai (eleven times in twenty-eight months), Chaudhury Charan Singh (five times in less than six months), Rajiv Gandhi (eight times in sixty-one months), Vishwanath Pratap Singh (two times in eleven months), Chandra Shekhar (four times in seven months), and P.V. Narasimha Rao (nine times in forty-two months).



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State of emergency proclamations have been issued three times since independence. The first was in 1962 during the border war with China. Another was declared in 1971 when India went to war against Pakistan over the independence of East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh. In 1975 the third Emergency was imposed in response to an alleged threat by 'internal disturbances' stemming from the political opposition to Indira Gandhi.

The Indian state has authoritarian powers in addition to the Constitution's provisions for proclamations of Emergency Rule and President's Rule. The Preventive Detention Act was passed in 1950 and remained in force until 1970. Shortly after the start of the Emergency in 1962, the government enacted the Defence of India Act. This legislation created the Defence of India Rules, which allow for preventive detention of individuals who have acted or who are likely to act in a manner detrimental to public order and national security. The Defence of India Rules were reimposed during the 1971 war with Pakistan; they remained in effect after the end of the war and were invoked for a variety of uses not intended by their framers, such as the arrests made during a nationwide railroad strike in 1974.

The Indian state, however, has not been content with merely retaining the colonial infrastructure of repression, and indeed the years since the 1980s have witnessed a flurry of legislation that, in many respects, is nothing short of being frightful. Terrorism in the Punjab, not all of it associated with the demand for a separate homeland for the Sikhs, has taken a toll of over 15,000 lives since 1980, and likewise there has been very heavy loss of life in Kashmir, where militants are contesting India's claim to Kashmir. Nor are these the only states where anti-terrorist legislation has been put into effect; large parts of the entire north-east are described by the government as being rife with insurrectionist activity, and Assam, Nagaland, and Mizoram have all initiated legislation endowing the government with wide-ranging powers.³ Whatever the precise causal relationship of such legislation to the advent of terrorism, and whatever the role of Pakistan, as India claims, in fomenting political and social unrest in the Punjab and Kashmir, it is quite clear that some of India's extraordinarily repressive legislation was initiated well before insurrectionary terrorism was to make its mark. A case in point is the West Bengal

³ See Haksar (1992).

(Prevention of Violent Activities) Act of 1970, which was inspired by the ambition to crush the Naxalite revolt, a movement of armed revolutionaries who sought the amelioration of socio-economic inequities through the use of violence, although one could point with even greater justification to the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (1971), a piece of legislation originating in the atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hatred between India and Pakistan that was to lead to war between the two countries in 1971.

The Maintenance of Internal Security Act promulgated in 1971 also provided for preventive detention. During the 1975-77 Emergency, the Act was amended to allow the government to arrest individuals without specifying charges. The government arrested tens of thousands of opposition politicians under the Defence of India Rules and the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, including most of the leaders of the future Janata Party government. Shortly after the Janata government came to power in 1977, Parliament passed the Forty-fourth Amendment, which revised the domestic circumstances cited in Article 352 as justifying an emergency from "internal disturbance" to "armed rebellion". During Janata rule, Parliament also repealed the Defence of India Rules and the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. However, after the Congress (I) returned to power in 1980, Parliament passed the National Security Act authorising security forces to arrest individuals without warrant for suspicion of action that subverts national security, public order, and essential economic services. The Essential Services Maintenance Act of 1981 permits the government to prohibit strikes and lockouts in sixteen economic sectors providing critical goods and services. The Fifty-ninth Amendment, passed in 1988, restored "internal disturbance" in place of "armed rebellion" as just cause for the proclamation of an emergency.

As one might expect, it is the secessionist movements of recent years that have occasioned the most forcible legislative response from the state. Nothing conveys better the extent of anti-terrorist legislation in India than a mere, and by no means complete, enumeration of the acts passed with the consent of the Indian Parliament over the course of the last fifteen years: Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (1978); Assam Preventive Detention Act (1980); National Security Act (1980, amended 1984 and 1987); Essential Services Maintenance Act (1981); Anti-Hijacking Act (1982); Armed Forces (Punjab and

Chandigarh) Special Powers Act (1983); Punjab Disturbed Areas Act (1983); Chandigarh Disturbed Areas Act (1983); Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Civil Aviation Act (1982); Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Act (1984); National Security (Second Amendment) Ordinance (1984); Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (1985, amended 1987); National Security Guard Act (1986); Criminal Courts and Security Guard Courts Rules (1987); Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Rules (1986, amended 1987); Special Protection Group Act (1988); and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (2002). The United Progressive Alliance government has repeal POTA as part of a commitment under the Common Minimum Programme. Rather than making do with “existing laws”, as promised in the CMP, the government has strengthened them. For, it grafted the bulk of POTA provisions into a 37-year-old law called the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).⁴ Although the intent of certain legislation is quite self-evident, as in the case of the Anti-Hijacking Act, which stipulates the penalties attached to the hijacking of aircraft, it is not clear what has been gained by the profusion of new legislation. Certain powers, such as those of preventive detention, search and arrest without warrant, and restriction of the movement of suspects, have long been available to the state,⁵ while the provision under the new laws for “speedy trials”, were it to be open to unhampered judicial scrutiny, would be found to abrogate fundamental constitutional rights. What are the consequences for a democratic polity of such legislation and what are the abuses to which such legislation must necessarily lend itself? Such abuses have been so widely documented by civil rights groups, the Peoples’ Union for Civil Liberties and the Peoples’ Union for Democratic Rights among them, and other international bodies -- Amnesty International and Asia Watch, to name two -- that their detailed enumeration is no longer necessary.⁶ However, an analytical understanding

⁴ This puts in perspective the joint sitting of Parliament that had to be specially convened in 2002 — for the third time ever — to pass POTA. The National Democratic Alliance government had to resort to that extraordinary option because the Congress party and its present-day allies then professed to have a fundamental objection to “the black law”. They were not prepared to enter into any debate on whether any amendments would make POTA acceptable to them. In retrospect, that was just posturing. Because, minus a few controversial provisions, the UPA government has now embraced that much maligned law, although under a different name.

⁵ An amendment to the 1973 Criminal Procedure Code allowed arrest and search without warrant.

⁶ See Amnesty International, India (1991).

of the issues at stake has, it appears, largely evaded us, and it is to these larger questions that we shall now turn briefly.

- *The purportedly temporary nature of anti-terrorist legislation is a fiction.*

Anti-terrorist legislation, as I hope has reasonably been shown, is more easily put in place than removed. The Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), which was passed by the Indian Parliament on the grounds that it gave the government enhanced powers to deal with threats posed to national security owing to strained relations between India and Pakistan, remained on the law books until 1978, nearly seven years after the termination of the war with Pakistan. Moreover, by the 39th Amendment to the Constitution of India, MISA was placed in the 9th Schedule to the Constitution, thereby making it totally immune from any judicial review on the ground that it contravened the Fundamental Rights which are guaranteed by the Constitution. The history of MISA illustrates a second caveat that democracies should perhaps take heed of if they are not to be thrown in greater peril than the peril from which draconian legislation is presumed to rescue them.

- *Legislation is designed with one intent in mind, and is often used to serve an altogether different end, and nowhere is this more true than of anti-terrorist legislation or other like legislation secured in the name of "national security".*

Thus MISA, far from curbing terrorist activity, and making India safe from its real and imagined foes, became the central piece in Indira Gandhi's single-minded agenda to stifle all dissent, howsoever legitimate, against her authoritarian rule. MISA made India wholly unsafe, not for her purported enemies, but for Mrs. Gandhi's critics, as the two-year period of the emergency between 1975 and 1977, which saw the suspension of fundamental constitutional rights, was to show so dramatically and painfully.

All laws are subject to abuse, but laws intended to be employed against terrorists are notoriously susceptible of manipulation by functionaries of the state, be they army personnel, policemen, bureaucrats, or jail wardens. As the usual safeguards are put in abeyance, there is less effort to ensure that procedures are in compliance with the law, and immunity from judicial scrutiny encourages functionaries of the state to use anti-terrorist legislation to initiate personal vendettas. The problems, however, are much more

serious than this. Consider, for example, the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act of 1985, otherwise known as TADA. Although the Indian Government indubitably faces violent opposition by armed militants advocating separatism, TADA has been used in areas such as Gujarat, which are not threatened by secessionist or terrorist movements, to crush legitimate, usually non-violent, political activity among students and workers. The largest number of arrests under TADA have been made, not in the Punjab or Assam, but in Gujarat.⁷ Similarly the elite Central Industrial Security Force, which was created and empowered by special legislation to protect major industrial undertakings from terrorist or otherwise violent attacks, has often been employed to suppress trade union activity. The sheer illegitimacy, and not mere abuse, of this legislation is suggested by the fact that only 434 of the 52,998 people detained under TADA by the end of 1992 were convicted. If this 0.81 per cent conviction rate constitutes a severe indictment of TADA and the Indian state, what are we to think of the 0.37 per cent conviction rate for TADA detenu in the Punjab, which at one time the Indian government was apt to characterise as lost to terrorism? (Ram 1993: 9).

The rhetoric of “terrorism”

This brings us to the question of how the state manages to legitimise such excesses and what the philosophical implications of such a legitimisation are? Behind the concepts of emergency and security, and these days giving the reason to their rhyme, is “terrorism”. Usually, almost consensually, terrorism elicits a general consensus as to its absolute negative standing in the ethical and political arena. There might be debates concerning the explanation – if not the justification – of terrorism; there may be discussions concerning its reasons and causes; there could be different estimates of its efficacy; there are ruminations about its perpetrators and victims. But with no relation to the intricacies of its attempted definition, the term itself garners rhetorical usage that overrides any definition of choice.⁸

⁷ See PUDR (1989).

⁸ The corpus of relevant texts for the definition of terrorism is immensely wide. Beyond the institutional definitions (in, e.g., the League of National Convention (1937), the “Rules of War” in the Geneva Conventions, or lately the novel “definitions” by the U.S. State Department), some

Perhaps it is ethics and law that should be entrusted with the analysis of the term “terrorism”. Legal and ethical analysis, however, do not preclude or detain ordinary language.

Ordinary usage has adopted the following precept: Killing by the other side is continuously termed terrorism and fighters on the other side are invariably terrorists; therefore, not only is killing by our side and by our fighters always justified and always well-explained, but any action undertaken by our side is excusable.

Thus, the use of the term “terrorism” by the authorities, and on their heels by the media, has become the epitome of abuse.⁹ Not only is this a powerful use of words, it is abuse – since terrorism indeed strikes terror into the heart of the listener. Fear, panic, and terror in the general ambience of a place and a populace then permit atrocities – violations of human rights, sometimes even to the tune of war-crimes – to be committed in the name of security, in times of emergency, in reaction to “terrorism”. Fear, pure and unadulterated, is achieved via this new rhetorical device that has become a catchword of the twenty-first century. We have seen terrorism defined in legal terms; analysed by military experts; discussed in academic forums and symposiums; presented in books, movies, and documentaries in the finest of details. But it is the further step that has now been taken, the use of a word, “terrorism”, as an icon striking fear into listeners’ hearts that has distanced any and all *rational* discourse over the war against terrorism. The “War against Terrorism”, local or global but viscerally identified, needs no rationality.

Rational discussion can address a multitude of subjects that are involved in this issue: the ability of one group to rule over another (and the inability of the other to negate such rule), the justness (or lack thereof) of colonialism and land appropriation, the fairness (or lack thereof) of political subjugation, the balance of power (or lack thereof) between state armies and underground guerrilla fighters, the wisdom (or lack thereof) in revenge and counter-revenge, the profit and loss of apartheid regimes, the impossibility of separation between warring parties, and, of course, the question of human rights. The shrill voice of

paradigmatic formulations can be found in Walzer (1977), Coady (1985), Lacqueur (1987), Borradori, (2003), Honderich (2003).

⁹ See Major (1987).

rhetoric, using and abusing the semantic icon of terrorism, wins the emotional war and, in doing that, wins the (ir-)rational war as well. Reason, logic and rationality seem to be losing the day to emotion all over the world of politics.

Given the many “terrorisms” one encounters in the contemporary global context, it is essential to engage with the question of the ethical norms that are to be discovered, exposed, analysed and implemented in addressing them, with the very explicit purpose of locating guidelines for daily, routine decisions and actions. It is precisely this conventional dichotomy – between exceptionalism, on the one hand, and routine, on the other – that must be questioned to undermine the accepted view that there is something exceptional about such situations that provides background for a special attitude to terrorism.

Conclusion

Before we move to an examination of the cases, let me briefly summarise the main conclusion of the above argument. This conclusion can be formulated best in terms of a

meanin problematique. If we are to accept that executive license, which functionally in a democracy like India means legislation and ordinances, already exists, constantly, *viz-a-viz* anti-terrorism laws, the objective of securitization shifts. According to Wæver, securitization occurs in order to gain legal sanction for what would in “normal” circumstances be termed, “illegal”. If we accept the hypothesis that there is no need for the Indian State, as a securitizing actor, to seek such license, then we are faced with challenge of trying to expand securitization goals into newer arenas.

Securitization, as a theoretical tool, has been unable to respond to nuances such as internal political considerations. States possess an inertia, that allows governments to ignore national security concerns for more immediate gains, such as retention of political power.

Does this take away from securitization, or does it do exactly what securitization predicts, that is, that a bogey is created under the name of national security, to put in place a whole set of measures that would not have otherwise be possible.

In the case of Khalistan, this would seem to be true at least on the surface. It was an open secret that Bhindranwale was funded and promoted by the Congress as a balance against the rising Akali hold over the Sikh identity and therefore its votes.

Securitization must also not be seen ahistorically. The historicity of any sequence of events plays a large role in a post-facto analysis of the securitization process. In the Punjab case for instance, the same securitizing actors were supporting Bhindranwale in the beginning and then began to see him as a security threat. Timing also plays an important role here.

It is important to see the entire process as one of political contingency and not of national security. From a national security perspective there are many points of intervention where the matter could have been solved effectively with minimal use of force and minimal social backlash.¹⁰ In fact it could even be argued that Operation Blue Star was more of a national security risk that letting Bhindranwale go free.

Added to this is the complication of the Centre-State relations that prevailed at the time.

The Congress at the Centre was seen as the protector of the Hindu nation, both in local Punjabi Hindu discourse and in its own self image. This fundamentally undermined its ability to project itself as a party that represented Sikh interest, which is what the Akalis were doing. It therefore was essential that a negative strategy, as opposed to a positive one aimed at creating legitimacy within the Sikh vote bank, had to be pursued. This would essentially have to entail a discrediting of the Akalis.

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Thus it can be assumed that securitization is not “concerned” with security, but is in fact using security as a garb. If it could be proved, deductively, that such is the case, at least in the cases which have been studied, then this could have serious ramifications for the debate between the Narrowers and the Wideners. For if, contra the Narrowers’ claim, securitizing actors are themselves in fact “diluting” the scope of the word security, by divesting it of its single most defining characteristic: that of the existential threat, and using it in more “mundane ways”, then it poses serious problems for Narrowers who

¹⁰ On more than one occasion top military officials have stated the June 1984 was not the best time to have intervened. Lieutenant General K Sundarji, the then Western Army Commander was of the opinion that Bhindranwale should have been taken when he was in residence in Guru Nanak Niwas in February 1984. (Indian Express 1984). Similarly K S Brar (1993:158) said: “An ideal opportunity was missed at the time of DIG Atwal’s murder just outside the Golden Temple”.

claim that military conflict could not be wished away and any attempt at widening the concept of security would only serve to dilute its intellectual coherence and applicability.

Chapter Three

State Responses to the Punjab “Crisis”

In order to attempt the tests that are required of this case study, it is important to begin with an overview of the situation. As it is impossible to understand the movement without taking into account historical factors of Sikh responses to challenges and their idea of societal cohesion, a brief account of Sikh history is also due. Given these contexts, it will be possible to develop a working idea of the situation that lead up to the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. The events that followed the declaration need to be contextualised in two ways, firstly, to map the political situation that followed and, secondly, to catalogue the development of the terrorist movement. This shall be followed by a descriptive analysis of the state responses to the terrorist threat and its repercussion on matters political in Punjab. This shall provide us with the context from which to draw conclusions as to the purpose of securitization as was the goal set out for this chapter.

Contextualising the Punjab “crisis”

India is home to approximately 16 million Sikhs. Sikhs constitute a majority in the Punjab (61 per cent, with most of the rest Hindu), but just under 2 per cent of India’s total population. What is now referred to as Punjab has shrunk in size since independence in 1947, not least since India lost almost 66 per cent of the state to Pakistan at partition. In the colonial period, Sikhs constituted only 14 per cent of Punjab’s population. Punjab today consists of 5,033,000 hectares and has a population of just over 20 million (70 per cent rural, 30 per cent urban) (Weiss 2002).

The Punjab region was under Hindu rule for centuries, then under Islamic dominance for five hundred years. Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1779-1839) then established a short-lived Sikh empire.

Sikh political power collapsed on 29 March 1849, when the British conquered Punjab after two Anglo-Sikh wars (Weiss 2002: 2). During the colonial era, the population of Punjab was plural, with a Muslim majority in the west, a Hindu majority in the east, and

Sikhs prevalent in the centre. Under colonial rule, Punjabis were favourite military recruits and Sikhs were heavily over-represented in the armed forces (comprising around one-third of the force by World War I). Both Muslim and Sikh peasants benefited from a network of canals developed in western Punjab, and Punjabi peasants in particular enjoyed a protective patron-client relationship with British administrators (Tatla 1999:16).

Independence in 1947 and the partition of Pakistan from India brought a massive reorganisation of Punjab's territorial boundaries. Nine years later, Patiala as well as Punjab and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) was incorporated into Punjab (Oberoi 1987: 30). These borders shifted again in September 1966, with the Punjab State Reorganization Bill. The southern, Hindi-speaking plain districts formed the new state of Haryana; the northern, Hindi-speaking hill districts merged with neighbouring Himachal Pradesh; and the remaining Punjabi-speaking areas formed the new state of Punjab. Those who invoke Khalistan as a Sikh homeland tend not to be specific about which incarnation of Punjab they refer (Oberoi 1987: 30).

7 Sikhs differ in religion, but not in language, from other ethnic groups in northern India. However, even the Punjabi language is now closely identified with Sikhs, as wider use of Punjabi has declined since the spread of schools and colleges under colonial rule. The community has "succeeded in acquiring a high degree of internal social and political cohesion and subjective self-awareness," as well as political significance within the Indian state (Deol 2000:2). Sikhs have no history of antagonism with Hindus (and Sikhism originally derived from Hinduism in the late medieval period); relations with Muslims have been less placid. Sikhs were generally loyal in a political sense toward India until 1984, despite their strong sense of constituting a separate community with its own history, language, religion, and territory. This duality became generally problematic only after the central government attacked the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Sikhs' holiest shrine, in June 1984 (Tatla, 1999:11).

Secession and the roots of the Khalistan Movement

This section aims at showing that the roots of the Khalistan movement are not based in a history of secession as claimed by the securitizing Indian State. Time and again Sikhs and those who spoke for them have asserted their allegiance and belonging to the Indian State and British colonial state before that. This lays the ground for the argument that is developed in the sections that follow.

Pre-colonial and colonial period

Sikhs trace their ancestry to ten Gurus. The first was Nanak (1469-1539); the last was Gobind Singh, who founded the Khalsa Panth (Society of the Pure) at the turn of the eighteenth century. The value system of Khalsa is egalitarian, with collective and spiritual authority vested in the holy book, Guru Granth (compiled by another of the ten Gurus, Arjun). Sikh identity is based more on history, myths, and Punjab-based memories than on an abstract creed. The religious tradition of the Khalsa Panth, “subsumes social, cultural, political and territorial identities” (Tatla, 1999: 14). Territory has not been key to Sikh identity until recently, though it first became an issue at the time of independence, when the British showed a willingness to let Hindus and Muslims divide up Punjab and granted statehood along religious lines.

By the late nineteenth century, both Hindu and Sikh elites had embarked upon competing religious revivals, making communal lines sharper and more antagonistic. The Arya Samaj movement developed among urban Hindus in northern India and the Singh Sabha movement (1870-1919) among Sikhs. The former was not overtly political – focusing largely on linking Hindu religious values with modern life – but it spread anti-Sikh propaganda in the late 1880s and later formed the basis for radical Hindu parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Singh Sabha (the most important of a series of similar groups) focused on weeding out remnants of Hinduism from Sikhism. Young, educated Sikhs found themselves disillusioned with the Arya Samaj (which at first had seemed compatible with Sikhism) and wanted to re-evaluate Sikh identity. The movement took up issues such as mass education, reform of social customs, women’s rights, economic development, and theology, partly through the establishment of educational institutions

and newspapers. Despite differences of opinion about specific issues among Sikh reformers, their main thrust “was about clear demarcation of Sikh communal boundaries and the defence of the Sikh religion from attacks by other religions” (Deol 2000: 73). The question of Sikh identity had become a controversial legal and public issue by 1880s, especially in light of challenges to the Sikh faith by the Arya Samaj. In the meantime, new, vernacular print media (for instance, using the Gumukhi script in Punjabi printing presses) further elaborated group consciousness and ethnic boundaries.

Part of the aim of Sikh reformists was to retain control of religious practices and institutions. The Akali Dal was formed in 1914 to take over control of Sikh shrines. Since the 1920s, the Akali Dal has presented itself as sole representative of the Khalsa Panth, arguing that the religious and political interests of Sikhs are inseparable, that one’s identity as Sikh transcends all other identities, and that Sikhs’ loyalty to the central state must be contingent upon the state’s recognition of the community as a collective group with historic “theopolitical status”.

A period of non-violent noncooperation against colonial authorities by Sikhs peaked with the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre of 13 April 1919, when troops opened fire on a peaceful gathering. The incident prompted a restructuring of the management of the Golden Temple. Tensions between Akali activists seeking control of Sikh shrines and local government resulted in recurring conflicts and culminated in a massacre at the Nankana shrine. These struggles put strains on the generally amicable Anglo-Sikh relationship and helped consolidate the relationship between Akalis and Indian nationalists. Concerned with the escalating controversy over control of Sikh shrines, the colonial government instituted the Sikh Gurudwaras and Shrines Act of 1925, which conceded management and control of all Sikh religious institutions to the community (Telford 1992: 973).

The government handed over management of Sikh gurdwaras (temples) and shrines to the Akali-controlled Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC), formed in December 1920 by orthodox Sikhs. The SGPC holds regular elections which are almost always won by the Akali Dal. The SGPC controls significant material, institutional, human, and moral resources. Akalis’ ties with the politically-important SGPC has allowed them to help shape Sikh identity through intermediate institutions, historic

shrines, schools, and missions, including the promulgation of Sikh heroes, honorifics, holidays, symbols, and so forth rather than Indian “national” ones. The Akali Dal thus emerged as an important political party with the 1925 Act (Telford 1992: 973-4).

Like the Akali Dal, the SGPC has tried to represent itself as working for all Punjabis rather than just Sikhs (i.e., it has assumed a more political than just a religious stance). Shared language, traditions, and culture have resulted in strong bonds between Sikhs and a large number Punjabi Hindus despite communalism. After the 1925 Act, however, “The primary political objective of the Akali Dal was to safeguard Sikh religious liberty by maintaining and promoting separately the political existence of the Sikhs and securing greater political leverage for Sikhs” (Deol 2000: 82). As a dispersed group and permanent minority in Punjab, and one with strong historical, cultural, and even religious ties with Hindus, the Sikhs did not demand a separate state initially, but focused on questions of representation. Separate electorates for Sikhs were granted in 1921. The Akali Dal also urged Sikhs to participate in the nationalist movement. Nationalist fervour was never predominant in Punjab, despite some revolutionary groups, mostly because of preferential British policies and the fact that the Unionist Party of Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu rural leaders formed the local government (Weiss 2002: 9). This phase was undermined by Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s assertion of the aim to create a separate Muslim state. Sikhs were caught between Muslims’ vision of an Islamic state and the Congress Party’s Hindu-dominated India. Sikhs demanded a Free Punjab, not as a separate Sikh state, but as province in which no single community could dominate; the population would be 40 percent each Hindu and Muslim and 20 percent Sikh. The British deemed such a state impractical and Indian leaders rejected the plan. Then, in March 1946, declaring Sikhs a nation, the Akali Dal adopted a resolution calling for a Sikh state to protect Sikh economic, religious, and cultural rights. Akali leaders gave up these demands only upon promises from Congress leaders that Sikhs would have special status in independent India (See Deol 2000: 82-3 and Tatla 1999: 18-20).

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Partition and the internal migration it sparked (there had been approximately two million Sikhs on each side of the new border) left the Sikhs concentrated in a more compact geographical area rather than a small, dispersed minority. As such, Sikhs could better protect their language, culture, and religious traditions. Partition ultimately changed the

Sikh claim on the Punjab as homeland and holyland from an “imaginative vision into a realistic project” (Tatla 1999:22). The Akali Dal continued to press for a unified Punjabi-speaking state after independence.

Upon independence, India adopted a federal constitutional structure. The Congress Party government scrapped the colonial system of weighting representation for minorities and reservation of seats, except for scheduled tribes and castes, and ruled out the principle of self determination for regions and nationalities for fear of territorial disintegration. It was the language issue that most endangered Indian unity at the time of independence. The controversy was primarily between Hindi and Urdu, with M. K. Gandhi’s suggestion of Hindustani as the national language narrowly defeated in a 1946 vote. To resolve the linguistic issue, all major regional languages were granted status in India’s constitution. However, Hindi, the language of the north Indian Hindu majority, is India’s official language, with English coexisting for official purposes. Moreover, a massive reorganization of states in the 1950s-60s aligned territorial boundaries with linguistic ones. Punjabi, Sindhi, and Urdu were the only three major languages not considered for statehood in this reorganization. This omission spurred the Akali Dal’s first major agitational movement, which began in August 1950.

Sikh nationalism in the postcolonial period

1950s – 1970s

The Sikhs changed from a religious congregation in the sixteenth century, to an ethnic community in the eighteenth century, to a nation in the late twentieth century. Language became a symbol of group identity for Sikhs and central organizing issue for the Akali Dal. The party argued for the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state, presented as a linguistic issue. Deol (2000: 94, 98) claims,

However, the fundamental issue was not so much a linguistic one as a question of the rights and claims of a minority community.... Thus, the language controversy became a symptom of a deeper quest for recognition and power by a minority community in a multi-ethnic state. ... The main driving force of the Punjabi *suba* [province] movement was that the Sikh leadership saw a separate political status for the Sikhs as being essential for preserving an independent Sikh entity.

At the time, Sikhs comprised 35 per cent and Hindus 61 per cent of Punjab's population, leaving Sikhs worried about their survival as a separate entity and their political leverage. The aggressive campaigns of the Arya Samaj in favour of Hindi and against Punjabi among Hindus in Punjab exacerbated the situation.

In 1952, with India's first general elections, the Akali Dal issued a memorandum pressing for the establishment of a culturally congruent Punjabi-speaking *suba*. Since the drive for a Punjabi province was articulated largely through Sikh religious organisations, religious motivations were important. However, the basis of the state was supposed to be linguistic. The States Reorganisation Commission (formed in 1953) rejected the memorandum because it did not recognise Punjabi as significantly different from Hindi and because the movement lacked the general support of people in the region. Sikhs were more upset by the former justification – the rejection of a separate status for the language – than of their demand for a state (Deol 2000: 95).

The rejection of Akali demands prompted the party to launch the Punjabi Suba Slogan Agitation of 1955. The campaign used political demonstrations and nonviolent tactics. Over 26,000 Sikhs were arrested in these campaigns (Deol 2000: 96). After a series of compromises with the central government in 1960-61, including the merger of the heavily-Sikh PEPSU into Punjab, and a change of party leadership (from Master Tara Singh to Sant Fateh Singh) in 1962, the Akali Dal launched its second campaign for a Punjabi-speaking state. The latter campaign shifted from a demand for a state with a 56 per cent Sikh majority to a secular demand for a Punjab based on language and culture, without regard for the population percentage of Sikhs. This secular strategy was to placate the Indian government, which remained suspicious of religious demands after partition. Nonetheless, in 1965, the party adopted a resolution calling Punjab the homeland of Sikhs and India their motherland (Telford 1992: 970).

The central government eventually agreed to the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966, after the death of Prime Minister Jawarhalal Nehru, who had consistently rejected the Akalis' demand as communal. The reorganisation created a Punjabi *suba* in reward for Sikhs' efforts in the Indo-Pakistan War that had broken out the previous year. With the September 1966 Punjab State Reorganisation Bill, for the first time, Sikhs formed the

majority of the population of Punjab (54 per cent Sikh and 44 per cent Hindu). The Hindi-speaking south broke off to form the state of Haryana, and the Hindi-speaking northern region merged with neighbouring Himachal Pradesh.

The Akali Dal insisted upon the need for Sikh political unity if the religion were to survive (Deol 2000: 98). Nonetheless, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Akali Dal could not form a government on its own (though it formed coalition governments from 1967 onward) as its electoral base was too narrow. Sikhs were divided among the Akali Dal, Congress, and small communist parties due to caste and other cleavages. So, for example, in 1977, the Akali Dal formed a coalition government with the Janata Party. The Akalis had to present themselves as comparatively moderate and secular, since too nationalistic a stance would bring down their government in Punjab, and because they could not too aggressively attack a central government also dominated by the Janata Party (Telford 1992: 971-3).

Moreover, between 1967 and 1980, as the Congress-led central government “changed decisively from the Nehruvian policy of accommodation to an active manipulation of provincial governments,” three Akali coalition governments were dismissed by the centre, even as the Akali Dal sought more concessions for provincial powers (Tatla 1999: 22-24). For instance, Emergency Rule was instituted for nineteen months beginning in June 1975 in consequence of legal challenges to Indira Gandhi’s re-election in 1971 – although the imposition was justified as being to halt corruption and cope with economic problems. The vulnerable position of party moderates gave space for more nationalistic Akalis. Tatla explains, “Akali leaders’ changing perception, from religious nationalism to ‘Punjab nationalism’, was as much to do with changes of leadership from urbanite Sikhs as with socioeconomic changes in the Punjab.” This was particularly the case when combined with the incorporation of more Sikhs from the lower classes or economic sectors, which “demanded a more liberal vision than a traditional religious nationalism” (Tatla 1999: 24-5).

The Anandpur Sahib Resolution drafted in October 1973 showed the shift among Akalis as the party tried to appease its Sikh constituency. The resolution outlines the guiding policies and programmes of the Akali Dal. The core political demand of the resolution is

“to preserve and keep alive the concept of distinct and independent identity of the Panth and to create an environment in which national sentiments and aspirations of the Sikh Panth will find full expression, satisfaction and growth.” (as quoted in Tatla 1999: 27).

It also called for the transfer of Chandigarh, a union territory, to Punjab as the state's capital – promised by the central government in 1970 – and demanded that the central government establish a more favourable allocation of river waters used for irrigation. A particular concern was the shared distribution of water from the Beas and Sutlej rivers with neighbouring Haryana.¹ The Akali Dal further demanded changes involving greater symbolic recognition of Sikhism. These demands included the recognition of Amritsar, the site of the Sikhs' Golden Temple, as a holy city; exemption from anti-hijacking regulations to enable Sikhs flying on Indian airlines to wear their *kirpan* (ceremonial sabre); and the passage of the All-India Gurudwara Act to place the management of all gurudwaras in the country under a single administration (Weiss 2002: 14).

Although controversial, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was endorsed by a significant number of Sikh intelligentsia, servicemen, and politicians. The Akali Dal denied that the resolution envisaged an autonomous Sikh state of Khalistan, but just a system under which Sikhs could live without interference in their religious way of life (Deol 2000: 101-2). The Resolution's demands were actively pursued, however, only as Hindu-Sikh and Centre-Punjab relations deteriorated in the early 1980s.

1980s – 1990s

Faced with declining provincial power under the centralising government of Indira Gandhi, Akalis mobilised the Sikh peasantry in a major campaign for greater state autonomy in 1980. The initiative centred around a combination of economic, cultural, constitutional, and religious demands. Between August 1980 and September 1981, the Akali Dal held seven peaceful agitations. The party decided in February 1981 to strive for the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. The resultant Dharam Yudh Morcha of 1981-84 presented four key demands: recasting the Indian constitution to

¹ It is ironic that today Punjab refuses to share the water from the same rivers with Haryana.

increase states' autonomy, the return of Chandigarh to Punjab, state control over river waters, and an all-India Gurudwaras Act.

“However, its major concern was a radical renegotiation of powers for the centre and the states, and an explicit recognition of India as a multinational state” (Tatla 1999:27). In September 1981, as the SGPC adopted the slogan, “Sikhs are a nation,” the Akalis submitted a list of forty-five demands to the central government. The demands reflected the Anandpur Sahib Resolution’s core objectives along with two new ones: halting the reallocation of river water from Punjab to non-riparian states and a reduction in government control over hydroelectric installations; and recognition of Sikh personal law. These demands were reduced to fifteen as negotiations began in late 1981 (Weiss 2002: 16).

The Akali Dal’s adoption of more narrow demands like the constitutional recognition of Sikhs as separate “nation” and declaration of Amritsar as a “holy city” followed the raising of the Khalistan slogan by non-Akali Sikhs in 1981 and a sudden decline in Sikh-Hindu relations after the murder of Punjabi Hindu press baron Lala Jagat Narain in 1981. The mainstream Akali leadership still preferred negotiation to confrontation, if only to retain the support of key Sikh industrialists, businessmen, professionals, and landowners who could not afford to cut themselves adrift from India through attachment to a regional separatist movement, but was not entirely “moderate” given the more radically separatist preferences of some factions in the party and the persistence of confrontation between the Akali Dal and the Indian state (Major 1987: 46-48).

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Political conditions following the Resolution and the growth of the Terrorist movement

The central government responded to the rising Sikh movement with a campaign of manipulation and repression, justifying their actions in terms of saving India from dissolution. Moreover, the Congress party wanted to break up the Akali Dal because of its success as an opposition party and alliance with the Janata Party upon Congress’s defeat in 1977, to end Akali domination of SGPC, and because the Akali Dal was opposed to the extension of police power (Deol 2000: 103-4). The Congress Party took

steps to foment disunity among Sikhs and took punitive and repressive measures against movement leaders, affecting – and radicalising – Sikhs as a community in the process.

It was in this context that the Congress (I) found it advantageous to encourage Sikh fundamentalism. Giani Zail Singh, who was the Congress (I) chief minister in Punjab from 1972 to 1977 and minister of home affairs in the central government from 1980 to 1982, developed links with the fiery Sikh militant Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in 1979. By encouraging Bhindranwale, the Congress (I) hoped to reap advantage from sowing division in the already fractious Akali Dal.

However, Bhindranwale soon became an outspoken critic of Congress. Though he probably accepted some financial support from Congress in the 1979 SGPC elections, Bhindranwale exploited first the Congress, then the Akali Dal, in his effort to overcome the hegemony of the Akali Dal. He aimed to rejuvenate Sikhism, promoting orthodoxy and austere living, and to establish himself as a leader of the Sikh *panth*.

He came to the fore especially for his attacks against the Congress-linked Nirankaris, who had already been declared enemies of the *panth* in 1973 by priests of Golden Temple because of doctrinal differences. In 1978, Bhindranwale precipitated a violent confrontation with the Nirankaris. After he gave a stirring sermon at the Golden Temple, his followers marched out and clashed with a Nirankari procession in Amritsar. This incident marked the beginning of the radicalisation of Sikh politics. Within three years, Bhindranwale had become one of the most popular Sikh leaders in Punjab (See Telford 1992: 974-6 and Deol 2000: 104). Bhindranwale developed a mass base among the emerging underclass of educated Jat Sikh youths, mostly from Amritsar and Gurdaspur, ~~produced by the green revolution~~. He allied with the All-India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF), a group which drew most of its support from poorer to middle-income Sikhs (not all of them students). The Akali Dal, in contrast, was comprised mostly of more middle class and urban or prosperous farmers, primarily from the Malwa region. While Punjab was wealthy overall, the benefits of the green revolution were spread unevenly. In addition, at the time of partition, Pakistan inherited the core industrial sector of the Punjab region and there had been little industrial development in the state since then.

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Most militants were youths from farming families in areas that did less well, such as the Majha region (Telford 1992: 969-81).

The AISSF had been formed in 1943 by the Akali Dal to bring the Sikh intelligentsia closer to the party. The organisation was intimately involved with Akali politics, fighting for an independent Sikh state at partition, then for a Punjabi suba. The AISSF has always been on the militant end of the Akali spectrum. However, the AISSF was in disarray by the early 1970s. The AISSF became hugely popular when under the presidency of Amrik Singh and with the help of Bhindranwale, it started touting the repression and victimisation of Sikhs.

clear indication that secession was not being an of the radical side.

The AISSF echoed Bhindranwale's ambiguous stance on Khalistan (neither for nor against secession). By May 1981, the group had nearly 300,000 members and links with important militant Sikh groups in Punjab and outside India, despite being banned (Major 1987: 49-51). The AISSF was mostly concerned with insults to the Panth and questions of Sikh identity. The revival of the AISSF and popularity of Bhindranwale put pressure on the Akali Dal (Telford 1992: 982-5). As of the early 1980s, the vernacular press in the Punjab was active from both sides in fomenting the religious divide between Hindus and Sikhs. The assassination of newspaper baron and Arya Samaj leader Lala Jagat Narain in September 1981 sparked off incidents of mob violence. The government charged Bhindranwale with the assassination. Meanwhile, acts such as arson by the police drew sympathy from a broad array of Sikhs (Deol 2000: 104-5). Under Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, the Akali Dal formed an uneasy, mutually exploitative coalition with Bhindranwale and launched a campaign of demonstrations and passive resistance against the central government in August 1982. Over 30,000 volunteers were arrested in two and a half months, though the government eventually released all of them as a conciliatory gesture.

In late 1982, the Akali Dal announced that it would hold peaceful demonstrations in Delhi during the Asian Games. Government harassment to prevent their doing so (including against prominent ex-servicemen) further antagonised Sikhs (Deol 2000: 106). Despite the resumption of negotiations, no settlement was found, not least because of

divisions among Sikhs supportive of the more hawkish Bhindranwale or the more moderate and ready-to-compromise Akali leadership (Deol 2000: 105).

The violence escalated in Punjab, with bank bombings, railroad station burnings, the killing of politicians, the desecration of religious places, and more. Bhindranwale was generally considered to be the main organiser of a terrorist campaign that caused the random killing of several hundred Hindus. After an attack on a bus carrying Hindu passengers, fearing mass unrest, the Indian government dissolved the Punjab legislative assembly in October 1983, placing the state under President's Rule. However, the violence and agitation continued (Deol 2000: 106).

The Akali Dal launched a mass non-cooperation campaign in June 1984, preventing the movement of food grain out of Punjab and stopping payment of land revenues and water rates to the government. In response, the government sealed Punjab's borders and imposed censorship; set a curfew at Amritsar; and cordoned off the Golden Temple at the time of the anniversary of the martyrdom of its founder, Guru Arjun Singh, when an estimated 10,000 pilgrims were there (Weiss 2002: 21).

Bhindranwale, who had made himself a target for retribution, had set up his headquarters in the Golden Temple. In doing so, he effectively dared the authorities to violate the temple to capture him.

On 4 June 1984, in an operation codenamed *Bluestar*, 2,000 army troops moved in to arrest Akali leaders inside the temple. This action incited thousands of Sikh peasants to converge upon Amritsar. The military dispersed the crowds and launched a full-scale attack on the Temple, taking control of it. In the process, an estimated 5,000 civilians, including Bhindranwale, and 700 army men were killed. Other reports offer much lower figures for deaths. Leaf (1985: 494), for instance, says as many as 1,000 were killed, instead of the 5,000 civilians indicated by Deol (2000). The field commander of the Operation Major General Brar puts the figures at about 400 (both army and civilian) (See Brar 1993). The army also attacked forty other gurdwaras where Sikh activists were allegedly hiding. The temple sustained substantial damage in the attack, including to manuscripts and other artefacts. In the wake of the attack, "The entire Sikh community was outraged, not so much by the death of Bhindranwale but by the all-out assault on

their premier shrine by the Indian army” (Deol 2000: 108). A number of Sikh troops deserted the military and tried to march toward Amritsar, several Sikhs resigned from Parliament or other government posts, and Sikh intellectuals returned government-given honours in protest. The government rebuilt the shrine, but their doing so was popularly seen as the government’s again taking control and attempting to humiliate the Sikhs. In the following months, the government conducted Operation Woodrose, arresting and sometimes torturing or killing thousands of Sikhs, including all prominent Akali leaders, and instituting ordinances for detention without trial, extraordinary rules for evidence, and so on.

Most of the AISSF’s rank and file went underground, though a number of leaders were arrested or killed. Also, a large number of rural Sikh youths crossed the border into Pakistan. The state was sealed off with additional troops, martial law was declared, complete press censorship was established, and the Golden Temple was occupied militarily. Leaf suggests that this disproportionate, inappropriate response just “served as evidence of what [Bhindranwale] was trying to prove: Indira Gandhi’s government’s hostility to Sikhs and shift away from basic democratic procedures and toward autocracy” (Leaf 1985: 494).

The Indian government explained its own perspective in the July 1984 *White Paper on the Punjab Agitation* (Government of India 1984). The report pinned the agitations in Punjab since 1981 on the Akali Dal. The government labelled the movement communal, extremist, and inhumanely brutal; said it engaged in secessionist and anti-national activities; and claimed it involved criminals, smugglers, and anti-social elements who took advantage of situation for their own ends. According to the report, secessionists and terrorists had been stockpiling weapons in the Golden Temple and other gurudwaras, while secessionist and anti-national groups supported by foreign organisations seeking India’s disintegration were attempting to drive a wedge between Hindus and Sikhs. The Akali Dal, explained the government, had surrendered leadership of the movement to terrorists who were not willing to negotiate reasonably with government. For its part, the government had met consistently with the Akali Dal over the demands in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution since 1981. The government had made concessions, agreed to further study (for instance, on the river water issue), or explained how current system was

adequate (for instance, regarding the holy status of Amritsar or the teaching of Punjabi in schools). The Akali Dal did not unequivocally denounce the killings, arson, and looting or misuse of shrines for weapons accumulation that came along with expressions of communal separatism. Between the Akali Dal's tolerance of militancy and violence and the support for Khalistan (even via violence) from abroad, the situation had become incendiary by 1984. The army was called in to control terrorist, extremist, and communal violence, including by attacking the military-trained terrorists in the Golden Temple, who refused to lay down their arms and surrender. The report explained that the army found weapons, ammunition, explosives, and arms manufacturing capabilities on temple grounds. Hence, concluded the report, "The action which the Government has had to take in Punjab was neither against the Sikhs nor the Sikh religion; it was against terrorism and insurgency" (Government of India 1984: 26).

On 31 October 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two Punjabi Sikh guards from her own security force, in retaliation for the attack on the Golden Temple. Anti-Sikh riots promptly broke out in several parts of India. Around 10,000 Sikhs were murdered and 50,000 were rendered refugees in Delhi, while a huge amount Sikh property was looted or burned (Weiss 2002: 25). Again, Leaf (1985: 495), offers a significantly lower figure of more than 1,500 Sikhs killed. Media and human rights organisations' reports implicated politicians and other authorities in coordinating or facilitating the attacks, but the government refused to order an official inquiry into the riots.

This reluctance further enraged Sikhs: "The actions of the government dramatically compounded the alienation felt by the Sikhs and gave ample credence to the widespread belief of an official conspiracy against the Sikhs" (Deol 2000: 109). As Leaf describes, almost all Western press interviews of victims "expressed disillusionment, a sense of betrayal, and sadness. Many said they no longer considered India their country; they would rather live anywhere else" (Leaf 1985: 495). At the same time, even progressive voices in India remained largely ambivalent regarding the attacks against the community, as Sikhs had been happy ("distributing sweets") upon Indira Gandhi's death, and because of "the recognition that in the face of India's unspeakable poverty the Sikhs have been, in fact, a privileged community in economic terms," while some were religious "fundamentalists" (Mahmood 1996: 141). Punjab remained largely isolated from the

outside world from June 1984 through July 1985 by rigid press censorship and the presence of an army of occupation. Journalistic sensationalism and a dearth of unbiased information meant news from the period tended to be highly distorted and labels (“moderate,” “extremist,” “fundamentalist,” “terrorist,” “secessionist”) carelessly applied (Major 1987).

The Akali Dal and SGPC threatened further agitation if the government did not release a number of detained leaders and institute an inquiry into the pogroms of November 1984. A group of Akali leaders were released in March 1985 and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was reinstated as head of the party. In May 1985, the Akali Dal demanded a government apology and official inquiry into the riots, the withdrawal of draconian judicial and anti-terrorist measures then in force, the release of additional detainees, and more, but still insisted that the party did not want a separate Sikh Khalistan (Weiss 2002: 26). The government, headed by Rajiv Gandhi since December 1984, invited Longowal for secret negotiations. The result was the Rajiv-Longowal Accord of July 1985. The agreement did not directly concede any Akali demands, but referred several issues to committees for further study. Some Akali leaders called the accord a sell-out. Indeed, as Rajiv Gandhi’s political position became more tenuous, the government failed to implement the accord as planned, undermining the Akali Dal’s authority. The AISSF, too, denounced the Rajiv-Longowal Accord as inadequate, arguing that it ignored issues like the treatment of Sikh army deserters, the plight of thousands of Sikh youths in detention, the abuse of powers given to police and military under “Black Laws,” and the question of punishing the instigators of the November 1984 riots. Division within the Akali Dal led to the formation of a rival United Akali Dal, led by Baba Joginder Singh (Bhindranwale’s father). The AISSF forged strong links with the United Akali Dal. Together, the two groups campaigned for a boycott of the September 1985 Punjab elections, then concentrated on building up opposition to the Akali Dal-led regime that won in a clearly communally-divided race (Major 1987: 49-51). Unrest continued amid the flow of 20-30,000 Sikh refugees into Punjab from other parts of the country and the assassination of Longowal in August 1985 (Deol 2000: 111).² In May 1986, the central

² After Longowal’s assassination, the traditional Akali Dal was resurrected under the leadership of Parkash Singh Badal as Akali Dal (B). It kept much control over the SGPC resources. Then, in December

government again took control of Punjab in light of continuing acrimony between the Sikh government and its Sikh opponents.

Tatla explains that the central government's policies exacerbated the situation, as they "defined a limited demand for regional autonomy as 'secessionist', and dismantled the means to pacify an ethnic community's 'public humiliation' by dismissing a popularly elected Akali government in May 1987" (Tatla 1999: 29). Overall, despite the extent of violence and distorted rhetoric, "genuine commitment to the creation of a separate Sikh state is still rare within the Punjabi Sikh community; it is, in fact, strongest among overseas Sikhs" (Major 1987:57-8).

As Kohli describes, "once mobilized, Sikh militants very quickly gained political advantage over moderate Sikh leaders" (Kohli 1997: 337). He suggests the move toward secession was primarily a political ploy for most moderate Akalis, but once the discourse had shifted in that direction, any efforts moderates made to work with the central government just undermined their leadership: "normal politics made the moderates look like opportunists not worthy of a leadership mantle" (Kohli 1997: 337). As a militancy and repression cycle first set in, Indira Gandhi refused to compromise in 1982-84 on non-secession "bread and butter" issues like control over river waters, agricultural subsidies, and Chandigarh, as she did not want to seem to be appeasing minorities. That recalcitrance weakened Sikh moderates and privileged militancy.

When in 1985, Rajiv Gandhi offered some compromises as well as elections in Punjab that year, the level of violence dropped. However, when Rajiv Gandhi found himself unable to implement those compromises, Akali moderates were again undermined and the militancy/repression cycle returned (Kohli 1997: 337-8).

A guerrilla force, the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), developed among Sikhs motivated by Bhindranwale and his messages, or else antagonised by Operations Bluestar and Woodrose. Sikh village youths in particular were driven to terrorist acts by the army and police force's misuse of power. Most were motivated by a sense of injustice and

1990, former police official Simranjit Singh Mann united all major factions of the Akali Dal (albeit not for very long) in the Shiromani (United) Akali Dal. The party's political goal was self-determination for Sikhs. It tried to raise support on an international level and was also in direct contact with guerrillas, but was not very successful in gain in mass support. The government saw the Shiromani Akali Dal as militant and incarcerated, harassed, or killed many of its workers (Deol 2000:115).

inequality, although the religious context and presumed moral imperative to restore social and economic justice, was seen to validate armed resistance. The strength of the guerrilla groups (which got arms via Pakistan and Afghanistan) surged in 1987-88, although these efforts were uncoordinated at first. Among the “terrorists” were a large number of former Naxalites, suggesting some continuity – though it is unclear how much – between the radical youth struggles of the early 1970s and Sikh terrorism of the early 1980s. It was those with trade union experience who initiated attempts to resurrect the guerrilla movement after most movement leaders were killed or driven underground in 1984. Some informal gangs of smugglers and criminals also joined forces with Sikh militants to take advantage of the unsettled situation.

From 1987 on, the central government set its security forces loose in Punjab, granting them extraordinary discretionary powers in combating Sikh militants. The government was more concerned with suppressing militancy via brute force and counter-insurgency than with remedying the underlying causes of the conflict. Extrajudicial killings, torture, anonymous arrests, and more were prevalent, along with another assault on the Golden Temple (Operation Blackthunder, in May 1988). Indian paramilitary forces eventually eliminated most of the Sikh activists involved. In the meantime, civilians were squeezed between warring security forces and militants. By 1991, civilian casualties accounted for nearly three-fourths of all killings. Amid the situation of general lawlessness, any who could abandoned their land and migrated to the cities (See Major 1987: 55-6); Deol 2000: 112-14).

The guerrilla movement (comprised of around twenty militant organizations in Punjab) was fractured by rifts over policies and tactics, plus struggling to find sufficient resources and recruits, by 1988 and increasingly so by the early 1990s. The question of whether to raise social reform issues during the period of armed struggle or to hold off on these was especially divisive. Moreover, given the nature of the movement and high casualty rate, there was a constant need to recruit new guerrillas but no time for ideological or disciplinary training. The necessarily decentralised organisational structure of the guerrilla organizations and weakness of prevailing institutional structures aggravated the situation. Importantly, too, the guerrillas had lost ideological credibility and their support base among much of the Sikh community by 1991-92.

Initially, the movement had received a sympathetic response from the Sikh professional classes, even if these individuals would not themselves risk reprisals or endanger their institutional ties to the government by engaging in overt political protest. As the movement's methods became more violent, however (attacking Hindus on a train, assassinating candidates for office, etc.), that support waned, especially since the government fostered rifts among Sikh political factions through incarceration or harassment (Deol 2000: 112-5). Although a core of militants remained committed to Khalistan, by the early 1990s, the ideological coherence and moral purpose of the movement had faded with the escalation of violence and the poor economy a decade of instability had wrought (Telford 1992: 986).

Approximately 15,000 Sikhs died before the state gained the upper hand in 1992. The popular outcry against human rights abuses (especially from among the Sikh Diaspora) led the government to appoint a National Human Rights Commission in September 1993 as well as to hold a farcical election (boycotted by all the major parties) in February 1992 to bring back "democracy." In those polls, Congress formed the state government with a mere 8 per cent of the popular vote. The Chief Minister was then killed in August 1995 by a suicide bomber (Deol 2000: 116-7). The Akalis were allowed back into the political field in 1995 and an Akali Dal/BJP coalition came to power with the February 1997 elections. In the end, the Indian state proved strong enough to retain control, even if just through brute force in containing or repressing Sikh militants until waning popular support and flagging recruitment rates caused the militancy of 1980s to dwindle (Kohli 1997: 337-8). Tatla (1999: 30) concludes, "The *real politick* of resources bargaining and distribution has returned, the Indian state has 'managed' another ethnic conflict and the aggrieved group has returned to normal politics by sharing power for the state government."

Responses from the state

The actions of the Indian state clearly influenced the course of the Khalistan movement, reshaping Sikh identity and radicalising what otherwise may have been a far more benign initiative. First, the Congress Party's acceptance during the colonial era of the principle

What is the essential basis for such a claim?

of linguistic states helped fuse territoriality and Sikh ethnicity. When the new government then refused to carve out a Punjabi-speaking state – seeing demands for a Punjabi *suba* as a Sikh communal ploy, wary of the security threat implied by having such a state on the border with Pakistan, and fearing that caving in would sour relations between Sikhs and Hindus – the issue became more incendiary. The struggle to attain the Punjabi *suba* that was finally realised in 1966 forged a nexus between Punjab and Sikh consciousness, such that Sikhs evolved into an “ethnoterritorial community” (Oberoi 1987: 31-40).

this is contradicted somewhat by your previous version where you document the idea of territoriality.

Moreover, “modern institutions, such as the state and census reports, reinforced the fusion of linguistic and communal identities.” Hindi became tied to Hindus and Punjabi to Sikhs, with popular mass media such as the vernacular press compounding these impacts (Deol 2000: 101).³ Sikhs’ feelings of marginalisation are understandable inasmuch as the post-colonial Indian state is an “ethnocracy” that has privileged dominant Hindus both through their disproportionate recruitment into civil, military, and government elites and by using Hindu cultural attributes and values to define the national ideology, history, language, religion, and moral values. India’s institutions, constitution, laws, and power arrangements empower the dominant ethnic group.

In fact, the postcolonial state has dismantled rules and safeguards for fair representation of minorities that were established under British rule in favour of universal franchise and constitutional centralism (both of which disadvantage minorities and regional nationalisms). At the same time, the rise of Hindu nationalist parties (especially the BJP) has helped to forge a new, more unified Hindu identity (although this project remains incomplete) and added anxiety for religious minorities. These trends could mean greater homogenisation rather than maintenance of a pluralist vision of the nation-state, further alienating Sikhs and other minorities (Tatla 1999: 34-39).

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Kohli (1997) highlights the significance of the degree of institutionalisation of the Indian polity over time in how minority claims have been handled. In the 1950s, India was relatively well institutionalised as a polity. Congress was firmly in control and the civil service and armed forces were professional and highly centralised. Nehru could thus be

³ See also the census as a mode of nation building and the creation of nationalism in Anderson (1983).

relatively accommodating of opposition and of demands for self-determination; he was secure enough that granting concessions showed magnanimity rather than threatened his position.

Some of these political institutions weakened over time, such that, "... if the 1950s were a decade of relatively effective institutions, the 1960s are best thought of as a decade of transition during which the nationalist legacy declined, political competition and challenges to the hegemony of the Congress Party increased, and a new type of political system – a more populist system – with non-institutional methods of securing electoral majorities was created by Indira Gandhi" (Kohli 1997: 331-2).

Indira Gandhi was more suspicious of challenges than Nehru had been, and re-centralized power. Political institutions weakened further in the 1970s and 1980s, especially as "personalistic leaders damaged the institutions that constrained their discretionary powers" (Kohli 1997: 331-2).

Congress was largely destroyed as an institution; the police, civil service, and armed forces grew less professionalised and more political; Parliament lost efficacy; and the judiciary became less autonomous. The disintegration of the Congress Party in the late 1970s led to the manipulation of regional elites and appeals to dominant Hindu voters to save the "nation in danger" and to avoid allowing in a "foreign hand" or dealing with "agitators and extremists." Still, Rajiv Gandhi (especially in the first two years of his tenure) and Narasimha Rao were both more flexible than Indira Gandhi had been (Kohli 1997: 331-2). It was largely the uncompromising stance of the centralising state that spurred the metamorphosis from seeking devolution of powers to seeking sovereign statehood. Tatla (1999: 34) asserts,

✓ | The struggle for a Sikh state arose as a direct result of the Indian state's action at the Golden Temple. ... Given the Sikhs' religious tradition of tolerance and the Akali Dal's experience of coalition politics, a yearning for statehood could find accommodation in a federalized Indian polity.⁴

Particularly with regard to significant economic issues, "Punjabis have been consistently frustrated by impositions of the central government. There is no real claim on the part of the central government that its measures are in the interest of Punjab; Punjabis

⁴ He is contradicted by many, most prominently, Brar (1993).

furthermore cannot even see how they are in the interest of India as a whole” (Leaf 1985: 490-1).

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Since the late 1970s, Punjabis have identified the problem of an anti-farmer/rural bias in the structure of the government. Most important mainstream Punjabi (Sikh and otherwise) groups and parties have proposed the solution of “federalism,” and “not based on ‘Sikh fundamentalism,’ ‘separatism,’ or any sort of terrorist ideology” (Leaf 1985: 491). As Sikh demands went unmet or even unacknowledged as legitimate, as described above, particularly in the 1980s, the population became progressively more disenfranchised and more centrist politicians were silenced in favour of voices from the fringes (Leaf 1985: 491). Most dangerously, Indira Gandhi used her access to national and international media “to consistently describe the opposition as religious fanatics who advocated secession and separatism motivated by ‘communalism’ and ‘regionalism.’” She referred more often to extremists’ than to moderates’ actions and statements to substantiate this characterisation, until:

In the end it became self-fulfilling prophecy. It had the logical effect of magnifying the extremists and discouraging the moderates, even through they never actually ceased to try to present their case. It had the political effect of tapping the well of prejudice that is available wherever there are religious and ethnic differences and of gaining widespread acceptance in India and the world for the idea that the conflict was indeed communal and religious – that the anger of the Punjabis was irrational and antinational and that tolerating it would be tantamount to allowing India to drop back into the eighteenth century. Punjabis in their turn were aware of this misrepresentation of their concerns and its acceptance, and it only increased their frustration and anger as well as their willingness to tolerate and not to root out extremists like Bhindranwale (Leaf 1985: 490-1).

Continuing strife drove a wedge in Punjab between rural Sikhs and urban Hindus and between the two major parties involved (Akali Dal and Jan Sangh). Most clearly, Operations Bluestar and Woodrose “far from curbing extremist activity... fomented considerable alienation among a broad cross-section of the Sikh population” (Deol 2000: 111). The anti-Sikh riots that followed and the government’s failure to curb or investigate the violence provided fertile ground for Sikh separatism to develop, including the variety represented by guerrilla groups (See Jain-Agarwal Report 1993 and Nanavati Report 2005).

Analysing the Indian State's responses

Until the last moment in early June 1984, the centre was not speaking in terms of threat, foreign hand or any of the terms that would suggest a securitization of the issue was going to occur. In fact almost the opposite was occurring. With wide spread killings of Nirankaris and Hindus, even top ranking police officials, there was sufficient cause for the government to take matters into its own hands without even the need to securitize it. The government was actually desecuritizing the issue, constantly speaking of political solutions (albeit half-heartedly) and respecting religious sentiments. This strategic free rein that was given to Bhindranwale by the Central Government shall be commented on below.

The entire discourse was based on the assumption that the Akalis were in charge of the movement, they were the legitimate articulators of Sikh interests, and that the centre, while periodically undermining the Akalis commitment to a settlement on land and water issues, considered the entire process to be well entrenched in the political domain (as opposed to requiring acceleration into the security domain).

It is almost overnight that the move was made and the rhetoric changed from recognising and accepting that the Akalis were in control, to giving executive agency to Bhindranwale and branding the entire movement as terrorist and "out-of control".⁵ Post-facto statements from Indira Gandhi saying that all disobedience movements eventually fall into the control of extremists who then sideline the "moderates" suddenly begin to appear almost daily. A rewriting of near history occurred and the Akalis were portrayed as the moderates who had no control and hence no legitimacy.⁶ The same did not apply for the government who also had no control but which maintained its legitimacy.

It is possible to elaborate this stand with excerpts from an interview with K.S Brar in 2004.

Why did the army go in just after Guru Arjan's martyrdom day, when the number of devotees is much higher?

⁵ Up until 2 June 1984 Indira Gandhi was speaking of talks with the Akalis to end the *morcha*.

⁶ Until now the Akalis were seen as radicals seeking paths contrary to the unity of the Indian nation. Statements from Congress negotiators and especially Hindu Jats such as Devi Lal abound with such claims. This was more so after the drafting of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution in October 1973.

just about three or four days to carry out the operation. We had some sort of information that Khalistan was going to be declared any moment. You try and figure out that one fine day, Bhindranwale declares Khalistan and hoists the Khalistan flag...

The Khalistani currency had already been distributed; Pakistan was pumping in money, they wanted a strong part of India, which is Punjab, to secede and for India to disintegrate. Can you imagine if one fine day Khalistan has been declared, what would have happened? Pakistan would have recognised Khalistan and crossed the borders to support Khalistan, like we did in Bangladesh. The Punjab police might have crossed over to support Bhindranwale... (Diwanji 2004).

There is a mild contradiction here. The force of conviction with which Brar speaks of the certainty of Pakistani intervention is lacking in his earlier work:

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no
category
of his point*

I cannot comment with knowledgeable authority on some of the other stories that were floating around at the time (1984). One of these was that there were indications that Pakistani agents had given some sort of assurance to Bhindranwale that if he were to boldly declare the birth of Khalistan and capture power in Punjab, outside forces would come to his help. (Brar 1993:65).⁷

This ambiguity regarding the actors or *agent provocateurs* can be found not only with regard to the foreign hand theory. Even the manner in which the Government and the media referred to the various internal actors in Punjab, points towards an intentional confusing of categories, the validity of which shall be discussed below.

Often the misuse of labels involves nothing more than journalistic license: the practice of employing, for dramatic effect, labels whose validity in specific situations remains unproven. For example in early 1986, the *Tribune* carried a report under the title "Extremist dies in police custody". Yet the report itself was of a man described only as an "alleged extremist" (*Tribune* 1986a). Two weeks later, another *Tribune* headline announced "Two shot dead by terrorists". Yet the report itself refers to a shooting involving persons described only as "suspected terrorists" (*Tribune* 1986b).

Without going into the problems of defining the differences between an extremist and a terrorist or for that matter between the two and moderates, the above examples provide an illustration of the matter at hand.⁸ It is possible to attribute these unsubstantiated reports to simple journalistic license. However, the free use of such license in itself points to the easy manner with which such labels were used and popularly accepted.

*It is
difficult to agree
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was doing here*

⁷ The official stand is more contradictory than this. See p 11 above.

⁸ For a detailed debate regarding the use of such titles as moderate, secessionist, terrorist, extremist etc see Major (1987).

As has been mentioned earlier, a large majority of the non-Sikh Indian population, including those normally considered to be progressive, tended to show an readiness to collapse the political into the securitized. In other words, the use of titles such as terrorist and extremist and moderate to refer intermittently to almost all the parties (factions) of the Sikh movement shows an acceptance of the governments attempt at securitizing the issue.

For example, in May 1984, the Governor of Punjab while explaining that the Government of India could take peace initiatives only with political elements said: "Extremists and terrorists by no stretch of imagination are political forces. They are a pure law and order menace and have to be dealt with accordingly" (Hindustan Times 1985). Coming in the context of the discursive ambiguity regarding who is a political element and who is a law and order menace, such statements invariably abdicate the Government of all responsibility to try to desecuritize the issue.

It can be argued however, that the Government did not need to desecuritize the issue. There can be no doubt that the Punjab "crisis" was a success story of Indian Anti-terrorism policy. Although anti-terrorism had become the major thrust of the Centre's policy after May 1987, it was only in mid-1992 that the security forces achieved an impressive breakthrough. Nevertheless, the policy has been pursued in what Ribeiro called a form of "bullets for bullets", which lead to a number of changes. The security apparatus in Punjab, particularly in the Punjab Police, was reorganised.⁹ In addition to the Central Reserve Police Force, the Border Security Force and the regular use of the Army, the Punjab Police was strengthened with the creation of new senior posts and mass recruitments at the constable and special constable levels. Anti terrorist legislation -- the National Security Act (1980), The Punjab Disturbed Areas Ordinance (1983), Terrorist Areas (Special Courts) Act (1984) and the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (1985) -- was rigorously enforced with official approval of a "shoot to kill" policy when known offenders were apprehended. Moreover, counterinsurgency was given a high priority with the employment of irregular hit squads intended to infiltrate

⁹ The Punjab Police increased its personnel from about 20,000 in the early 1980s to approximately 60,000 in early 1992, and expenditures went from Rs 200 million in 1981 to approximately Rs 7 billion in 1993. (Tribune 1993).

and liquidate terrorist organisations. The political backing for anti-terrorism began to waver with the November 1989 election of the National Front Government at the Centre and eight Radical Sikh Members of Parliament (MPs) from Punjab out of the State's 13 Lok Sabha constituencies. While V.P. Singh's National Front Government sought to introduce more accountability into the operation of the security forces, its successor led by Chandrashekar opened a dialogue with the militants that eventually culminated in the agreement to hold Punjab Legislative Assembly elections in June 1991. During this period, it is argued, the morale of the security forces plummeted as some of the former terrorists prepared to capture power through the ballot box in a contest that was boycotted by the Congress (I). Thus the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the massacre of 76 passengers on two trains, and the election of a Congress government at the Centre in June 1991, provided a set of circumstances that lead to the reinforcement of political will and commitment to anti-terrorism.

In the autumn of 1991, several measures were taken to "pacify" Punjab. K.P.S. Gill, the former chief of police who had ruthlessly prosecuted the anti-terrorist campaign, was reinstated. Simultaneously, nine more divisions of the Indian Army were moved to the state to contain militancy.¹⁰ The Army's deployment at its peak in February 1992 during the Punjab Legislative Assembly (PLA) elections blanketed the state with security, for in addition to the 120,000 army personnel, it could call on 53,000 Punjab Police, 28,000 Home Guards, 10,000 special police, and over 70,000 paramilitary personnel. Unlike previous deployments, in Operation Rakshak II launched in November 1991, the Army took a back stage role by providing support to the police and administration to re-establish the authority of the state. This was done by freeing the police from routine duties to undertake more offensive actions and by sealing the Indo-Pakistan border.

Further support for the policy came with the Congress victory in the February 1992 Punjab Legislative Assembly Elections, which were boycotted by the main stream Sikh political parties. As the *raison d'être* of the new administration was to combat militancy,

¹⁰ After 1984, the Army was deployed in Punjab in Operation Rakshak I (May 1990) during which its role was to seal the borders with Pakistan and aid the police with anti-terrorist operations. In May 1991, the Army was ordered to withdraw from the border districts. In Operation Rakshak II (November 1991 onwards) the I, II and VI Corps were used to form a security cordon throughout the state prior to the holding of the 1992 elections.

it gave a free hand to security forces to systematically plan for five years to rid Punjab of militancy. Gill bolstered the police by further recruitment; incentives were offered leading to the elimination of suspected terrorists, and police tactics were re-evaluated. Massacres by terrorists were countered by massacres by the security forces, and the new mood of determination was aptly stated by Gill who declared "open season on terrorists" (Biswas 1992).

The first results of aggressive anti-terrorism became evident in the middle of 1992, when several leading figures of militant organisations were killed. Thereafter, despite efforts of the militants to regroup and target families of the police, the security forces gained the upper hand. This turnabout was marked by a number of well publicised "surrender ceremonies" of terrorists and the killing of Gurbachan Singh Manochahal, the leader of the Bhindranwale Tiger Force in February 1993. With the latter's death, most top ranking militants had been eliminated and their organisations rapidly disintegrated.

Aggressive anti-terrorism, however, was not without its limitations. For one, though the policy's effectiveness against leading militants was quite marked, it lacked subtlety in dealing with the militants' support structures. One set of figures available suggests that the casualty rate between 1984 and 1994 was 60.8 per cent terrorist, 31 per cent civilian, and 8.2 per cent security forces (Nair 1994). Thus, the main victims of violence in Punjab were not the security forces but civilians and terrorists.

Methods may have been employed for sound reasons – to instil fear and discourage further recruitment by militants – but the outcome suggests a blunderbuss approach. Concern at such "effectiveness" was expressed even by sections of the Army (Mukerjee 1991). More significantly, however, the cost of counter-insurgency in Punjab since 1984 has been estimated at around Rs 60 billion, a figure that excludes hidden costs and army expenditures. This, even at a conservative estimate, is more than what would have been required to agree to all of the original Akali demands.

This is a summary claim - for you could have seen the shift in reading at the time of the Punjab...

If we are to agree that securitizing the issue and approaching it from an anti-terrorist perspective was not particularly an effective solution, it opens the analysis to other purposes of securitization.

The Purpose of Securitization

What was the purpose of securitization? What ends did it serve? It is possible to speculate that troubles in Punjab were carefully orchestrated, representing a form of stage-managed disorder. Such conspiratorial explanations would be difficult to entertain if it were not for the strange congruence of events before and after 1984 and the fact that this view is strongly held by the main political force in the state – the Akalis.

Whereas most serious analysts agree that the role of Pakistan and the Sikh Diaspora in supporting the militant insurgency was a contributing factor to the troubles, few have ever doubted the Indian State's capacity to impose its authority in the province. Unlike other peripheral states of the Indian Union, Punjab hardly constitutes ideal territory for guerrilla warfare. Moreover, previous examples of insurgency (Babbar Akalis, Communists, Naxalites) in the state, before and after 1947, provide ready case studies of the failure of what has been called revolts of the blood. What was different about the militants' campaign for Khalistan was that elements within the central government actively supported the secessionists, only to put them to sword later. The Machiavellian manoeuvres of Indira Gandhi and the events leading up to Operation Blue Star in 1984 have been well documented (Joshi 1993: 20), and even if the militants led by Bhindranwale developed a "relative autonomy" of their own, they could not avoid the final reckoning.

The policy of infiltration and using militant organisations by elements of the centre and the security forces did not end with the Rajiv-Longowal accord. Evidence now emerging on the "secret war" against terrorism points conclusively to the direct involvement of sections of the security and counter-insurgency agencies in the setting up, control and actions of certain militant organisations (See Tully and Jacob 1985).¹¹ This involvement cannot be dismissed purely in terms of the "necessary requirements of counter-insurgency"; the exact extent of the influence might never be know. But what is certain is that those who were in a position to provide some answers – militant leaders – have been killed with ruthless efficiency.

¹¹ See Tully and Jacob (1985).

This is too serious a point to be left to speculation - your analysis once again lacks direct evidence and insight.

The “managed disorder” explanation is further supported by circumstantial evidence, as little systematic research has thus far been undertaken into various “operations” and strategic acts of “terror”. Many of the security operations (e.g. Operation Black Thunder) were, stage-managed or deliberately limited in nature (Operation Rakshak I).¹² More crucially perhaps the analysis of who benefited some of the acts of timely terror – for example shortly before each successive renewal of President’s Rule, postponement of the June 1991 elections, the Akali’s boycott of the 1992 Assembly elections – has hardly started. Any such assessment would have to evaluate a number of inconsistencies, not least of which would be between the militants’ goal of building a peoples’ movement and the use of terror as a strategy. Although formally the Congress Party has been the main proponent of anti-terrorism, its pursuit of this policy has fortuitously coincided with the resurrection of its political fortunes in Punjab.

The case for managed disorder also highlights a parallel example: Assam. Assam, it is suggested, was the forerunner of the “Punjab model”, and interestingly, many of the leading administrative and security personnel were transferred from Assam to Punjab.¹³ More significantly, interviews with leading “moderate” Akalis indicate their dismay that the 10 per cent government – a reference to the Congress (I) victory in the very light voter turn out in the 1992 PLA elections – were able to so effectively and quickly deal with the militant threat (Pettigrew 1995: 87). The militants, they contended, were either paper tigers or Congress agents whose actions directly or indirectly benefited only one party.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped the context from which it becomes possible to sieve through both the State discourses and the discourses of the Khalistan militants in order to analyse the situation.

¹² This point is forcefully made in Pettigrew (1995: Chapter 3). For confessions of a former Black Cat Commando, see Brahmachari (1994).

¹³ For a detailed account of the Indian government’s attempt to split the militants unity, see Singh (1995: Chapter 5).

In the first section, an overview of the history of the Sikhs was presented in order to show that while it is possible to write a secessionist history, the facts point in the direction the mainstream of the Sikh community never actually harboured secessionist ideas, at least until 1984. It also provides a context for the demands of the Sikhs and a platform from which we can assess both the state responses and the growth of terrorism.

The second section has provided a brief description of the state responses to terrorism and the growth of the terrorist organisations. The purpose was to show the sudden rift that occurred with modes of political articulation before and after the late 1970s.

This allowed us to lay the ground for the third section which analysed state responses to terrorism and assessed both the process and its efficacy. This section, leaves doubts as to the efficacy of deploying anti-terrorism as the mainstay of state policy and allows us the space from which to ask why a benefit maximizing state would pursue a seemingly expensive, dangerous and ineffective policy.

The fourth section provides some answers to the above questions. These answers undermine the security aspect of the entire process at a fundamental level and support the tentative conclusions of Chapter Two.

Chapter Four

State Responses to the Naxalite Insurgency

In order to attempt the tests that are required of this case study, it is important to begin with an overview of the ground realities of the areas where Naxalites prevail. The Chapter shall therefore be organised as follows. The third section shall trace the development of the Naxalite groups, their splits and mergers and make reference to their basic ideology. Given these contexts, it will be possible to develop a working idea of the situation that lead up to the merger forming the CPI (Maoist). The events that followed the merger need to be contextualised in two ways; firstly, to map the political situation that followed and secondly, to catalogue the development of Naxalite activity. This shall be followed by a descriptive analysis of the state responses to the movement and its repercussion on matters political, especially in Andhra Pradesh. This will provide us with the context from which to draw conclusions as to the purpose of securitization which is the goal set out for this chapter.

Must
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Why are you beginning
with Indian tribes?

Contextualising the Naxalite “Threat”

Most Indian tribes are concentrated in heavily forested areas that combine inaccessibility with limited political or economic significance.¹ Historically, the economy of most tribes was subsistence agriculture or hunting and gathering. Tribal members traded with outsiders for the few necessities they lacked, such as salt and iron. A few local Hindu craftsmen provides such items as cooking utensils. The twentieth century, however, has seen far-reaching changes in the relationship between tribals in India and the larger society and, by extension, traditional tribal economies. Improved transportation and communications have brought ever deeper intrusions into tribal lands; merchants and a variety of government policies have involved tribal peoples more thoroughly in the cash economy, although by no means on the most favourable terms. Large areas fell into the

¹ Except where mentioned other this brief overview was compiled largely from Haimendorf (1982).

hands of non-tribals around 1900, when many regions were opened by the government to homestead-style settlement. Immigrants received free land in return for cultivating it. Tribal people, too, could apply for land titles, although even title to the portion of land they happened to be planting that season could not guarantee their ability to continue swidden cultivation. More important, the notion of permanent, individual ownership of land was foreign to most tribals. Land, if seen in terms of ownership at all, was viewed as a communal resource, free to whoever needed it. By the time tribals accepted the necessity of obtaining formal land titles, they had lost the opportunity to lay claim to lands that might rightfully have been considered theirs. Generally, tribals were severely disadvantaged in dealing with government officials who granted land titles. Albeit belatedly, the colonial regime realised the necessity of protecting the tribals of India from the predations of outsiders and prohibited the sale of tribal lands. Although an important loophole in the form of land leases was left open, tribes made some gains in the mid-twentieth century. Despite considerable obstruction by local police and land officials, who were slow to delineate tribal holdings and slower still to offer police protection, some land was returned to tribal peoples.

In the 1970s, the gains tribal peoples had made in earlier decades were eroded in many regions, especially in central India. Migration into tribal lands increased dramatically, and the deadly combination of constabulary and revenue officers uninterested in tribal welfare and sophisticated non-tribals willing and able to bribe local officials was sufficient to deprive many tribals of their landholdings. The means of subverting protective legislation were legion: local officials could be persuaded to ignore land acquisition by non-tribal people, alter land registry records, lease plots of land for short periods and then simply refuse to relinquish them, or induce tribal members to become indebted and attach their lands. Whatever the means, the result was that many tribal members became landless labourers in the 1960s and 1970s, and regions that a few years earlier had been the exclusive domain of tribes had an increasingly heterogeneous population. Unlike previous eras in which tribal people were shunted into more remote forests, by the 1960s relatively little unoccupied land was available. Government efforts to evict non-tribal members from illegal occupation have proceeded slowly; when evictions occur at all, those ejected are usually members of poor, lower castes families.

On average only 25 to 33 percent of the tribal families in such villages had managed to keep even a portion of their holdings in Andhra Pradesh (AP). Outsiders had paid about 5 per cent of the market value of the lands they took (Government of India 2001a).

The final blow for some tribes has come when non-tribals, through political jockeying, managed to gain legal tribal status, that is, to be listed as a Scheduled Tribe. The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh effectively lost their only advantage in trying to protect their lands when the Banjaras, a group that had been settling in Gond territory, were classified as a Scheduled Tribe in 1977. Their newly acquired tribal status made the Banjaras eligible to acquire Gond land "legally" and to compete with Gonds for reserved political seats, places in education institutions, and other benefits. The Banjaras are not scheduled in neighbouring Maharashtra, resulting in an influx of Banjara emigrants from that state into Andhra Pradesh in search of better opportunities (Government of India 2001a).

Government policies on forest reserves have affected tribal peoples profoundly. Wherever the state has chosen to exploit forests, it has seriously undermined the tribes' way of life (Poffenberger and McGean 1996: 56-86). Government efforts to reserve forests have precipitated armed resistance on the part of the tribal peoples involved. Intensive exploitation of forests has often meant allowing outsiders to cut large areas of trees (while the original tribal inhabitants were restricted from cutting), and ultimately replacing mixed forests capable of sustaining tribal life with single-product plantations. Where forests are reserved, non-tribals have proved far more sophisticated than their forest counterparts at bribing the necessary local officials to secure effective (if extralegal) use of forestlands. The system of bribing local officials charged with enforcing the reserves is so well established that the rates of bribery are reasonably fixed (by the number of ploughs a farmer uses or the amount of grain harvested) (Poffenberger and McGean 1996: 45-9). Tribal people often end up doing unpaid work for Hindus simply because a caste Hindu, who has paid the requisite bribe, can at least ensure a tribal member that he or she will not be evicted from forestlands.

Extending the system of primary education into tribal areas and reserving places for tribal children in middle and high schools and higher education institutions are central to government policy, but efforts to improve a tribe's educational status have had mixed

results. Recruitment of qualified teachers and determination of the appropriate language of instruction also remain troublesome. Commission after commission on the “language question” has called for instruction, at least at the primary level, in the students' native tongue. In some regions, tribal children entering school must begin by learning the official regional language, often one completely unrelated to their tribal tongue (Government of India 2001b).

Given these bleak conditions, and combined with the inaccessible nature of their habitat, tribal areas make excellent bases for Naxalite operations.

A Brief History of the Revolutionary Left in India

In order to understand “left-wing extremism” in India, we need to look at the evolution of communism in India. Even before independence, a section of leaders argued that communism and socialism are ideally suited for Indian society, which is divided along religion, caste, and ethnic lines. They argued that it was the only way to emancipate the vast number of poor people in India and create a classless and just society. This led to the creation of the Communist Party of India (CPI).

Formed on 26 December 1925, the Communist Party of India is one of the oldest political parties in the country. Before independence, because of a ban on all communist activities by British authorities, the communists were not able to build a strong nationwide organisation. However, two campaigns led by communists immediately before and after independence are worth noting. One was the “Tebhaga movement”, led by peasants' front of CPI “Kisan Sabha” in 1946. It was fought to increase the crop share of peasants from half to two-thirds, thereby reducing the share of feudal landlord to one-third. Another campaign was against the brutal repression of peasants by feudal landlords during the regime of Nizam of Hyderabad in the Telangana region. Although these two movements were not very successful, they helped the communists to gain a strong hold in socially and economically-backward areas.

The first major crisis among the Indian communists came during the Sino-Soviet split and the 1962 Sino-Indian war. A large group of pro-China communists backed the

Chinese version of the events and blamed India as the aggressor. The pro-Chinese faction agreed with China that the Soviet Union was following “Revisionism” and “Socialist Imperialism” and “Sectarianism”. This led to a split in the communist party into CPI (pro-Soviet) and CPI (M) (pro-Chinese) branches. While the Communist parties were struggling on ideological issues, a young communist leader by the name of Charu Majumdar was busy preparing his own plans to usher a “revolution” in India. Charu Majumdar (1918-1972), son of a freedom fighter, was born in Siliguri, Darjeeling Dist. He took part in the “Tebhaga movement”, which gave him experience in organizing armed rebellion. He was deeply influenced by Mao Zedong and wanted to emulate the Chinese revolution in India. During the years 1965-1967, he wrote a series of eight articles arguing that the situation in India was ripe for armed rebellion. His documents formed the basis for Naxalism and were called the “Historic eight documents” (Maxists.org undated). During the mid-1960s, Mazumdar argued that the time was ripe to launch the revolution; the Government of India was struggling due to the 1962 and 1965 wars, and the economic situation in the country was very bad.

Naxalbari is a small village in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. During the spring of 1967, the landless peasants, supported by hard line communists like Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal forcibly occupied the lands belonging to their “class enemies”. The clashes were brutal. The Communist government in power at that time was embarrassed by the behaviour of its own cadre and put down the uprising ruthlessly. The left government dismissed the uprising as “Left Adventurism”, whereas hardliners called the left government’s policy as a “betrayal of Marxist ideology”. Even though the “Naxalbari uprising” was a failure, it marked the beginning of violent left wing extremist movement in India, and the terms “Naxalism” and “Naxalite” were born (CPI ML undated).

In 1967, the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR - initially called AICCCR of CPI (M) but later changed to simply AICCCR) was formed by Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal. On 22 April 1969 (coinciding with Lenin’s birthday), the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) was formed by AICCCR with Charu Majumdar as Secretary of the Central Organizing Committee. The AICCCR dissolved itself.

During 1969-72, fierce battles raged between CPI-ML and Government authorities resulting in large-scale violence and bloodshed. This went on until July 1972, when Calcutta police arrested Charu Majumdar. He died in Lal Bazar police station on 28 July 1972. His death was a body blow to the Naxalites across the country. With his death, the central authority of Naxalism collapsed. From then on Naxalite groups went through a series of splits and a few mergers. There were many instances of splinter groups targeting each other's cadre. The centre of gravity of Naxalism shifted from West Bengal to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

How ever, instead of looking at every single split and merger², a focus on three "groups" and their splits/mergers is useful. They can be loosely termed as "Charu Majumdar group", "Maoist Communist Centre" and "Peoples War Group". Most of the Naxalite groups in India can be traced back to the first group.

In 1968 itself, Andhra Pradesh group led by Nagi Reddy, D.V Rao and Pulla Reddy was expelled due to differences with Charu Majumdar. In 1971, Satyanarain Singh revolted against Charu Majumdar's "Annihilation" policy and started his own CPI (ML) which is called CPI (ML) Satyanarain Singh Group (SNS). During Bangladesh liberation war, Ashim Chatterjee and Santosh Rana also left CPI (ML) due to Charu Majumdar's opposition to the Indian Government's position (Samanta 1984: 107).

After the death of Charu Majumdar in 1972, Mahadev Mukharjee and B.N. Sharma assumed the leadership of CPI (ML). But the unity did not last long as Mahadev Mukharjee expelled Sharma. Another split in Mahadev Mukharjee camp came when CPI (ML) split between pro-Lin Biao and anti-Lin Biao groups (Samanta 1984: 109).

In 1974, the pro-Mao, Pro-Charu Majumdar, anti-Lin Biao faction of the CPI (ML) was reorganised by Subrata Dutta alias Jauhar and renamed CPI (ML) Liberation or Liberation. This faction emerged as the strongest of all Naxal outfits and claimed to be

² There have been several splits among Left-wing extremist groups since the first split of 1972. These factions and their successors use the generic name Communist Party of India—Marxist-Leninist, the name of the parent party, as a prefix to the name of their group. These groups include Communist Party of United States of India (CPUSI), Towards New Democracy, Red Flag, People's Resistance (Praja Pratighatana), Resistance, and the like. On a national scale, the scope of their activities is narrow and their influence is limited to isolated pockets in the country. However, in their areas of operation, they wield considerable influence and their violence evokes fear.

rightful successor of Charu Majumdar's CPI (ML). Vinod Mishra was elected as General Secretary of liberation in 1975 after Jauhar was killed in a police encounter. He led liberation for 23 years.

Vinod Mishra (1947-1998) took his first steps towards the ultra-leftist movement during the mid-1960s when he was studying mechanical engineering at Regional Engineering College Durgapur (CPI (ML) undated(b)). While Mahadev Mukharjee and Sharma were busy splitting CPI (ML) in 1974, Vinod Mishra recognised the need to reconstruct the Naxalite organisation afresh. This made him join hands with Subrata Dutta (Jauhar) and create CPI (ML) Liberation. Although he claimed to follow the Charu Majumdar line, he was the first Naxal leader to recognise the futility of armed rebellion against the Indian Government. Without explicitly renouncing the methods of Charu Majumdar, he started a "rectification movement" which was aimed at rectifying the shortcomings and lapses in the armed rebellion. As a part of this new line of thinking, Liberation joined the mass mobilisation and jumped into electoral politics in 1982 through a front organisation called the Indian Peoples' Front (IPF). The IPF was envisioned as a nationwide alternative to the Congress party. In the year 1989, IPF won a seat in parliamentary elections and the first Naxalite member entered the Indian Parliament. Although Liberation justified this significant departure from the Charu Majumdar line, critics have pointed out that CPI (ML) Liberation has completed the full circle of coming back to the CPI/CPM line. Even after the death of Vinod Mishra, CPI (ML) Liberation still continues to be a peaceful organisation.

In Bihar, left-wing extremism is closely linked to caste differences, land-related disputes and labour exploitation. Being an agrarian economy, the disputes regarding distribution of lands, minimum wages and working conditions were contentious issues between largely upper caste landlords and the landless lower caste poor. Some of the landless poor drifted towards left-wing extremism to fight against oppression.

In 1969, the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) was formed by Kanhai Chatterjee and Amulya Sen. Although they supported the Charu Majumdar led-CPI (ML), they did not join it. This group mainly consisted of lower caste and landless people and was extremely savage in executing landlords. The landlords belonging to the upper/middle caste saw this

group as a threat to their dominance and raised private militias. Gangs like Ranvir Sena (SATP 2002) ruthlessly massacred Naxalites and those who were suspected to be Naxalite sympathisers. Unlike CPI (ML) which went through a series of splits, MCC remained intact. It merged with the Revolutionary Communist Centre, India (Maoist) to form Maoist Communist Centre (India) or MCC (I) in 2003. Again in September 2004 MCC (I) merged with Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War to form Communist Party of India (Maoist) or CPI (Maoist) and emerged as the most powerful Naxalite group in the country.

In 1968, due to the differences with Charu Majumdar, the Andhra Pradesh revolutionaries led by T. Nagi Reddy, D.V. Rao and Pulla Reddy were booted out of AICCCR. The splits that plagued CPI (ML) did not spare the Andhra Group either. In 1971, Pulla Reddy separated from T. Nagi Reddy and D.V. Rao and formed his own party. Pulla Reddy later joined hands with Satya Narain Singh (CPI [ML] SNS group). That unity did not last long and they parted ways again.

Meanwhile, after the death of T. Nagi Reddy, D.V. Rao became the leader of Andhra group. During the early 1970's most of the Naxalite activity was concentrated around Srikakulam district. The government forces successfully neutralised their influence by killing the top leaders like Appalasuri, Adibhatla Kailasam, etc. One of the biggest advantages of Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh is their ability to gather support among teachers, writers and civil liberties groups. These groups have successfully provided the needed justification for violence perpetrated by Naxals by highlighting the failures of Government and pointing out the excesses of police forces. A large number of movies, sympathetic to the cause of Naxalites are produced in Andhra Pradesh even today. The basic theme of the movies is always the same. The feudal landlords and Government collude with each other and perpetrate atrocities against innocent people and the hero turns into a Naxalite to punish the bad guys. It is interesting to note that every single top hero in the last 25 years has acted in at least one such movie. In the late 1970s, Kondapalli Seetharamayya successfully rebuilt the Naxal movement, which had lost its steam due to the police actions. At one time as many as 74 dalams or guerrilla groups operated in the Naxal strongholds. From Srikakulam area, the Naxals successfully shifted their base to Telangana region, especially Adilabad, Karimnagar and Warangal. Unlike

which
Naxalites?

the Charu Majumdar line, the Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh were not averse to the mass line. However, by the early 1990s the government had slowly regained an upper hand over the Naxals. In September 2004, the Peoples War merged with MCC (I) to form CPI (Maoist).³

Refer about sentence 11

Nature of the threat

In order to analyse the discourse of the state it is important to map the nature of the threat. According to Buzan *et al* (1998: 24) all threats possess inherent facilitating factors. These factors increase or decrease the possibility of a successful securitization, but only as intervening variables. These factors can be assessed in real terms but cannot independently determine the fate of securitization.

According to a Union Home Ministry report, 53 districts in nine States in India are affected by the “menace of Left-wing extremist violence” as in 2003 (Government of India 2003). On an examination of reports in the English language media, evidently, there is an expansion in the presence of the Naxalites in different parts of the country. This is especially true of the PWG and the MCC. The latter has gained a presence in parts of north Jharkhand, western areas of West Bengal bordering Bihar, and northern Orissa. The activities of the PWG have been on the rise in Chhattisgarh, and in many areas in southern and northern Orissa, southern West Bengal, and in Andhra Pradesh – in the areas on the fringes of Nallamala forests, and in Palanadu in Guntur and in north coastal regions. Further, media reports indicate that the PWG is gradually entering into parts of Karnataka on the borders with Andhra Pradesh. Not only this, some radical elements, or Naxalites, who are believed to be linked to Andhra Pradesh-based cadres of the PWG,

³ The merger occurred on August 11, 1998, following four years of talks between the two groups. Speaking on the merger, later in an interview, PWG general secretary Muppala Lakshmana Rao ‘Ganapathy’ said: “...the unification will definitely have a positive military impact in the long run. In the short-run, the PW have gained in experience. Between the old PW and the PU, we have vast experience in conducting class struggles. This has now been pooled together. We will gain a lot from these. The unification will also see a combined military leadership and more military camps.” On another occasion, the now-defunct Party Unity’s general secretary, Naveen Prasad, who is now a central committee member of the PWG, speaking on the significance of the merger said, “This is the most significant incident in the CPI-ML history after the martyrdom of Charu Mazumdar.” Prasad added, “It was the desire of the rank and file that there should be a unified leadership so that the revolution can be quickened.” See The Rediff Interview (1998) and Sreedharan (1998).

had been arrested while another was killed by the police in Tamil Nadu, in November 2002.⁴ Further, Left-wing extremists have a presence in the lobe-like area in south-southeast Uttar Pradesh, which lies in close physical proximity to areas in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar. Although the intensity and scale of Naxalite activity varies from State to State, certain broad patterns are, nevertheless, discernible.

Firstly, apart from their traditional strongholds, the PWG and the MCC have been expanding and consolidating their influence in certain new areas such as Chhattisgarh, northern and southern districts, as well as parts of western Orissa, western districts of West Bengal, and parts of Northern Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh and eastern as well as southern Jharkhand.

Secondly, the border areas of Naxalite-affected States have become more vulnerable in the recent past. Taking advantage of the lack of a proper coordination among law-enforcement agencies of different states, Naxalite groups commit crimes in one State and find safe haven in the neighbouring ones. For instance, the Jharkhand-Orissa border, Andhra Pradesh-Orissa border, Andhra Pradesh-Chhattisgarh-Maharashtra border, Orissa-Chhattisgarh border and Bihar-Uttar Pradesh border have witnessed such a phenomenon. interesting!

Thirdly, with Pakistan's external intelligence agency, the Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), becoming increasingly active along the Bihar-Nepal border and the growing use of Nepalese territory by the ISI for anti-India activities, there are apprehensions that the ISI may also incorporate Left-wing extremist groups in its 'grand strategy' of destabilising India.⁵

Fourthly, Naxalite groups have been making concerted efforts to militarise their cadres through formation of special guerrilla squads, extend their activities over larger areas of

⁴ In operations spread over a week the Q Branch police of Tamil Nadu unearthed this group. At the time, Tamil Nadu State Director General of Police B P Nailwal said that there were indications of the Naxalites' links with the PWG, and added that there were no firm conclusions of the same. The killing and surrender had been reported at Uthangkarai, in Dharmapuri district, and one report said they belonged to the Radical Youth League (RYL). Dharmapuri has had a history of Left-wing extremism and has been a safe hiding place for Andhra Pradesh-based Naxalites, because of its proximity. According to a Tamil Nadu police officer, "... Dharmapuri has attracted extremists and [N]axalites, with their leader, Charu Mazumdar, himself addressing a gathering there as early as in April 1970." See The Hindu (2002b).

⁵ This has been denied by Ganapathy. However, it still remains a future possibility. See The Rediff Interview (1998).

the countries. Special Action Teams to target specific individuals have now been transformed into Permanent Action Teams.

Finally, there is growing evidence of criminalisation of Naxal groups. In a number of cases, particularly in the State of Bihar, it has been noted that the squad members at the ground level disregard the directives of the higher units. Cadres, who have very little education and lack proper indoctrination, are more involved with local issues that are against the core Naxalite ideology.

Of all the Left-wing extremist groups, the PWG has the largest presence, in different parts of the country. At the present, the rebels claim that they have established seven guerrilla zones of domination: Four in Andhra Pradesh, where the group was originally founded on 22 April 1980, one in Bihar, one in parts of the Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh border, and the other in the Dandakaranya forest in central India (Farooq 2002). Further, the PWG has a State Committee to oversee its activities in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Haryana and Punjab. In 2003, The MCC has acquired a new presence in Punjab after a little-known Naxalite group, the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India – RCCI (M), merged with it (Revolutionary Worker 2003).

The rebels indulge in killings – of security force personnel, political leaders and civilians who they brand as police informers. They undertake abductions for ransom or for securing freedom to their jailed colleagues, and interfere in democratic processes. Further, they behave like modern day Robin Hoods – hold kangaroo courts, dispensing quick justice, threaten corrupt government officials and rich landlords as well as political leaders who act against the interests of the people. At the same time, they organise peasants and tribals against traders and the government. To finance their activities, the Naxalites ‘accept contributions’ and also extort vast amounts from businesses, political leaders, corrupt government officials, rich landlords and professionals, in other words from anyone who has ill-gotten wealth.

The activities of the Naxalites are in pursuance of their declared objective of seizing political power, through the power of their gun. In the process, they have widened their

horizon and have established linkages with fraternal groups abroad, as well as with terrorist groups operating in India.

Activities of the Naxalite groups

Political assassinations

Routinely, the Naxalites have killed political leaders belonging to various levels and have, on occasion, apologised terming the killing a mistake. For instance, the PWG Naxalites had shot dead a former Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Assembly, Duddilla Sripada Rao,⁶ and a serving Legislator of the same Legislature, who belonged to the tribal community, Ragya Nayak.⁷ Subsequently, they had apologised for their mindless act⁸. Such indefensible violence had brought them disrepute and had put in doubt their credibility because both Rao and Nayak were reportedly known for their selflessness and strong commitment towards their constituents. The PWG rebels have proved more than once that they would not desist from revenge killings. Their most daring act, as yet, was the failed assassination attempt on 1 October 2003, in which they sought to kill the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Nara Chandrababu Naidu. In a well-planned operation, the PWG Naxalites triggered a series of landmine explosions causing injuries to Naidu, besides a Minister and two other Legislators.⁹ Naidu had a miraculous escape. However, on another occasion, his Cabinet colleague was not as lucky. The Naxalites, in a similar and meticulously executed operation, planted a landmine at Ghatkesar, a suburb of Hyderabad, and killed Minister for Panchayat Raj A. Madhava Reddy.¹⁰ As Home Minister earlier, Reddy had ordered a crackdown on the rebels. In a

⁶ Rao represented the Manthani constituency in Karimnagar district, Andhra Pradesh. He was killed on 13 April 1999 by a group of PWG men in the forests in his constituency near Annaram village. See *The Hindu* (1999a).

⁷ Nayak, a tribal leader, was shot dead on 29 December 2001 at a village fair in Maddi Madugu, a Naxalite stronghold and an interior forest village in Mahaboob Nagar district, Andhra Pradesh. In the Assembly Nayak represented the Devarakonda constituency. See *The Hindu* (2001a).

⁸ In a statement issued later, the PWG said killing Nayak was a case of mistaken identity. See BBC (2002).

⁹ See *The Hindu*, (2003c) and Ramana, (2003c).

¹⁰ Reddy's vehicle was blown up on 7 March, 2000. See *The Hindu*, (2000a). An obituary under the title "'Home' was his heart and soul", at the time in *The Hindu*, said: "He served as convener of the Inter-State Anti-Naxalite Committee formed with officials from Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, to tackle the Naxalite problem. As Home Minister he went on record time and again vehemently condemning [N]axalites when they indulged in violence *The Hindu*, (2000b).

botched up abduction attempt, a few years earlier, the same Naxalites, shot an industrialist and liquor baron, Magunta Subbirami Reddy, who was at the time of his killing in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, a serving Member of Parliament.¹¹

Abductions

The Naxalites abduction attempts had on some other occasions brought them rich dividends. On 27 December 1987,¹² they had boldly abducted a group of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers in the forest area in East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, and set them free in exchange for their colleagues detained at the Central Prison in Rajahmundry, a few days later. It is said that the primary objective of the operation was to secure the release of a prominent Naxalite leader, Kranti Ranaveer. On another occasion, they had abducted, in broad daylight from Hyderabad, a young leader of the Congress party, Sudhir Kumar, whose father P. Shiva Shankar had earlier been a Minister in the Union Government.¹³

These abductions are not limited to political leaders alone. Security force personnel as well as businessmen, too, have been abducted on several occasions. For instance, the Naxalites abducted four constables in Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh, from the Ankapalle police station, for the first time in the plain areas of north coastal Andhra, on 23 August 2002. On the same night, the Naxalites attacked the nearby Chodavaram police station, too. In the Ankapalle attack, the PWG looted weapons and had taken five policemen hostage, of whom one was subsequently killed; while the remaining four were released, a few days later (Ramana 2003a). On another occasion, in the same State, in Guntur district, two policemen of the Dachepalli police station were abducted from Takkellapadu village, on 19 December 2002 and were set free in exchange for 13 jailed Naxalite sympathisers (The Hindu 2002c). In another incident, on 2 April 2003, a large

¹¹ See Rediff.com (2006). During the discussion, while defending the Naxalites and condemning Reddy, Rao had this to say of the incident: "Firstly, it was a misfire. They wanted to kidnap him to free their comrades languishing in jail under TADA for more than 4 years. So it was a mistake in military operations".

¹² See SATP (2005). One among those abducted at the time was S. R. Sankaran, who is presently the Convener of the Committee of Concerned Citizens, a private initiative that has been working since 1997 to bring a dialogue between the PWG Naxalites and the Andhra Pradesh Government.

¹³ The Hindu (1991). Kumar, who was for some time a Member of the Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Assembly (MLA), was abducted on May 11, 1991, from his residence in Himayat Nagar, in Hyderabad.

group of 20 to 30 PWG Naxalites forced out four policemen, including a sub-inspector, from a stationary bus near Katamraju tanda, in Peddaraveedu village, on the fringes of the Nallamala forests, in Prakasam district, also in AP.¹⁴ All four were later set free.

The Naxalite groups continue to abduct businessmen because it is lucrative. The amounts they earn by ransom varies with the paying capacity of the concerned person or his family. The Karimnagar district committee secretary of the Janasakthi Naxalites, Ranadheer, led the abduction of a rich contractor, Marthanda Rao, who is related to a Union Minister of State,¹⁵ and set him free after holding him captive for a few days. The amount that changed hands in exchange for the safety and freedom of Marthanda Rao, a subject of dispute, was allegedly several million rupees.¹⁶ The Naxalite leader, later on, surrendered to the police. Such unscrupulous elements have, thus, turned the Maoist revolution into a lucrative industry.

Extortion

The amounts the Naxalite groups earn through extortion are enormous. In Andhra Pradesh alone the PWG, according to one rough estimate, earns seven hundred million rupees annually; the PWG is active in nine States in India.¹⁷ Furthermore, there are 19 Left-wing extremist groups operating in Andhra Pradesh. Another report held that the

¹⁴ See The Hindu, (2003a). During the incident, the rebels snatched the service revolver of the sub-inspector. The incident itself was in retaliation to the killing a few days earlier of Polam Sudarshan Reddy "Rama Krishna" "RK", in the Lakhimpur forests in Adilabad district. "RK" was a member of the PWG's flagship North Telengana Special Guerrilla Zone.

¹⁵ Rao was abducted on October 26, 2001 from his ancestral house in Korem village, Karimnagar district, Andhra Pradesh, by the Janasakthi Naxalites. See The Hindu (2001b). He was set free on November 2. See The Hindu, (2001d)

¹⁶ At the time of the abduction, the Naxalites claimed that their intention was not to extract a ransom, but the redistribution of their hostage's land among the landless poor. The leader of the abductors, Ranadheer, in a press said, on October 29, 2001, "We have kidnapped... Rao, who is a contractor and a landlord, demanding that he distribute his 100-acre land in Korem village to the landless poor in the village. See The Hindu (2001c). Later on, the Janasakthi's official spokesperson, M. V. Prasad admitted they had received five million rupees as ransom and claimed that he was not aware if Ranadheer had extorted from Rao's family 10 or 20 million rupees. On the other hand, Ranadheer claimed that he had remitted all money that he had extorted. Also, Ranadheer said he passed on to the state committee, annually, a sum of rupees 10 to 15 million. Prasad said such claims were baseless and, in turn, alleged that Ranadheer never furnished any accounts. However, Prasad confessed his cadres often extort money from businesses to purchase arms from smugglers. See The Hindu (2002a).

¹⁷ One journalist, however, said in his report that the amount runs to the tune of five to 10 million dollars, which on conversion stands roughly at 480 million rupees. See Farooq (2002).

MCC earns one billion rupees annually in Bihar alone. Extortion appears to be the primary motto of existence for the lesser known Naxalite groups. During the season in which *tendu* leaf is plucked, all these groups move to the areas where the leaf is grown and plucked and implement strong arm methods to extort money from the contractors.¹⁸ At times, those who refused to pay-up had to pay for it with their lives. Angered, generally, at the activities and methods of the PWG, one senior police officer commented, while speaking to the media, that “the Naxalites have no ideology as claimed by some of their leaders. On the contrary, the PWG is a group of self-serving individuals”. He went on to describe them as a bunch of criminals.¹⁹

The extremists have an organised method of financing their activities. They threaten the *tendu* leaf contractors and earn money. On the other hand, they organise the labourers employed in the collection of *tendu*, fight for their wages and accept contributions from them in the name of party funds. In Orissa, the PWG Naxalites organise workers employed in timber felling and accept from each of them a daily contribution of rupees five. Further one paper mill in Andhra Pradesh pays an annual amount of 60 million rupees to the Naxalites (Mohapatra 2001: 34). In Warangal district, another industry allegedly pays an annual amount of 10 million rupees to one Naxalite group.

The amounts that are extorted from the people are used in various ways. A miniscule proportion, roughly an estimated five per cent, of the annual earnings of the PWG goes into financing development activities in their pocket of influence. These could be in the form of laying roads, or running mobile hospitals in remote parts of the country.

Disruption of Democratic working

Feeding upon grievances – real or perceived – the people have against the state, the Naxalites enter into an area and gradually entrench themselves. The task of the Naxalites is made easy because of the absence of the structures of civil governance in the remote areas of the country. Once they gain more than a toe hold in an area, the Naxalites seek to

¹⁸ The flip side of this story is that one of the main reasons for Naxalite support is that they prevent the forest officials from collecting unofficial taxes from the tribals during the *tendu* leaf plucking season.

¹⁹ See Times of India (2001b). The Superintendent of Police who made this comment was Nalin Prabhat, the serving police chief of Warangal district

eject the rudimentary structures of civil governance in existence in those areas to attain and retain unquestioned sway and hold over them.

Ultimately, the rebels seek to declare as many areas as possible “liberated”. In Naxalite parlance, a “liberated area” or “zone” is one in which the state is running for cover while they are in a dominant position. In a guerrilla zone, the rebels and the state are said to be on an equal footing, while in a base area the state is in a dominant position (Reddy 2001).

In the process of ejecting and paralysing the structures of civil governance, the rebels warn elected people’s representatives at the village and taluk level as well as leaders of political parties, especially those belonging to the ruling party, to resign from their positions or face violent death. In the past, many have obliged the Naxalites; those who did not were killed. For instance, on 1 July 2003, several elected leaders – Mandal Praja Parishad Members of Mamillapalli, Taduru and Upparapalli, all in Mahabubnagar district – resigned from their posts (Times of India 2003a). Furthermore, organisation leaders of Amrabad and Linagala mandals of the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) quit their party membership complying with a PWG directive. On another occasion, Naxalites in Anantapur district, to mark their anger and disapproval of the police allegedly killing a cadre and two of their staunch supporters in a fake encounter, directed, on 7 October 2003, through a statement, all political leaders from the village level upwards to Members of Parliament belonging to the district to quit their posts or face retribution through violent death (Times of India 2003b). In the wake of the encounter, one Legislator, Paritala Ravindra, in a statement accused the police of having picked up the two youth from their homes and shot them dead (Times of India 2003b).

External Linkages

The Naxalites have fraternal ties among themselves in India and with other groups in some other parts of the world. Broadly, these could be classified as internal, regional and extra-regional. The internal ties are more in terms of defining regions of activities, where by through a range of informal understandings the various Naxalite groups have divided the turf among themselves.

It is the external linkages that are, indeed, worrying for more than one reason. The Maoist insurgents of Nepal, who have been waging a people's war since 1996 and whose chief demand is turning the Kingdom of Nepal into a Republic, have been making a relentless effort to bring closer the PWG and the MCC. A further consolidation of these ties would, thus, strengthen the Left-wing extremist movement in India and emerge as a grave threat to India's internal security.

Furthermore, the Nepalese insurgents and a few other India-based Left-wing extremist groups are members a broad front known as the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA). At a meeting in 2001, 11 extreme Left-wing groups belonging to India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka announced the formation of CCOMPOSA (CCOMPOSA 2001). The objective of founding CCOMPOSA is to "coordinate and consolidate the unity among Maoist parties and organisations in South Asia" as well as to "Lend mutual assistance and exchange experiences and deepen bilateral and multilateral relations amongst Maoist forces in the sub-continent" (CCOMPOSA 2001). The insurgents are working with a well-thought out strategy of unifying the Left-wing extremist groups in the region. They have achieved some success in that direction. For instance, between the inaugural meeting and the second annual meeting held in the year 2002, another Maoist outfit of Bangladesh joined hands with CCOMPOSA and was formally admitted into the grouping at the second annual meeting. Further, the Nepalese insurgents have played a significant and crucial role in the emergence of another Maoist party in the sub-continent, the Communist Party of Bhutan – Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (Ramana 2003b).

Besides, the Nepalese Maoists and the PWG are working towards forming what is known as a revolutionary corridor (RC) stretching between Nepal and extending deep into India, to end somewhere in the Dandakaranya forests in central India (See Jha 2004 and Jha 2003). Some analysts have suggested that the corridor might actually stretch further south. Indian official sources, too, have not ruled out the idea. Through creating a corridor, the Indian and Nepalese insurgents hope to build a Compact Revolutionary Zone (CRZ) in a vast swath of land and work towards gaining unquestioned sway over the area. The RC would help the insurgent groups in more ways than one. First, it would facilitate the easy movement of arms across the sub-continent. Second, it would help in

safely re-locating rebel cadres in distant areas in the wake of the security forces intensifying their operations against the guerrillas in an area. Three, the increased, concentrated and continuous presence of insurgents along the length of the corridor would facilitate an expansion of rebel presence into new areas and add to the instability in existing as well as fresh regions in the sub-continent, and especially in India. One well-known authority, however, notes that the threat need not be unduly exaggerated. To quote him at length:

The possibility of the Maoists [of Nepal] using these groups for procuring arms and other logistics support in their activities exists and has certainly been harnessed, and this a cause of security concern for India as the arms may flow to Indian groups through these channels as well. However, the extent of security threat posed by this to India should not be unduly exaggerated to rationalise India's hostility towards the Maoists (Muni 2003: 65).

Some of the Indian Left-wing extremist groups have established broad fraternal linkages with a *mélange* of groups operating outside South Asia and Asia. For instance, the Janasakthi Naxalites presented a paper at the annual International Communism Seminar, in Belgium, that was organised by the Workers Party of Belgium (WPB).²⁰ Besides, the Janasakthi delegate at the seminar signed on his group's behalf a memorandum condemning the Nepalese government for its tough action against the insurgents.

At the 2001 Congress of the PWG, held somewhere in the forests in Chhattisgarh State, in an area known as Abuz Mund, a WPB representative was among the fraternal delegates. Furthermore, at the same conference the Communist Party of Turkey and the Maoists of Nepal, too, were represented.

The extent to which these linkages have helped the Indian extremists is not clear. However, in one instance the police in Andhra Pradesh seized a huge cache of ammunition of foreign make. In Warangal district, Andhra Pradesh, the police recovered several thousand rounds of ammunition with Czech markings from a *Janasakthi* dump (Times of India 2004).

Further information is scanty. Hence, it is difficult to arrive at definite conclusions if extra-regional linkages have become a regular and reliable source of weapons supply to Indian Naxalite groups. However, more significant is the transfer of weapons technology

²⁰ The Seminar was held in early September 2002 and was attended by 42 groups ranging across South America to South East Asia.

as also a sharing of ideology and indoctrination capacities. In the aftermath of the recent assassination attempt on the AP Chief Minister and the focus on landmines as a cheap and lethal form of weapon, Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani said that the PWG has links with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and had received expertise in using improvised explosive devices (IED) from the Sri Lankan outfit (The Hindu 2003d).

Another political leader from Andhra Pradesh held a similar position some years ago, while speaking in Parliament. Bandaru Dattatreya, Union Minister of State for Railways, said in the Lok Sabha on 10 December 1991 that the PWG had acquired 60 AK-47s and 20 sten guns from the LTTE (Government of India 1991).²¹ In December 2002, two videocassettes of the LTTE's training modules were recovered from a PWG arms dump in Visakhapatnam district.²² Further, reports in late-December 2002 indicated that the PWG and the LTTE had some months earlier struck an arms deal, but the pricing had yet to be finalized (Times of India 2004).

Alluding to such links when questioned about LTTE instructors conducting training camps for PWG squads, PWG leader Ganapathy said during an interview in 1998, "They were not LTTE. They were ex-LTTE. What happened was that these people came to India after leaving their organisation and formed communist groups. The PW had relations with these groups. As part of that, they held training camps for us" (The Rediff Interview 1998). Ganapathy added, "We have had no relations with the LTTE till now. But we are not against having relations with them. We will certainly have links with them if an opportunity arises; we feel that such a relation would be conducive to the revolutionary movement." (The Rediff Interview 1998)

State responses

In order to tackle the growing threat of Left Wing extremism, the Union Government in co-ordination with state governments follows a multi-pronged strategy. The government

²¹ He was quoting the then Home Minister of Andhra Pradesh as having said so on the floor of the State Legislature on 20 August, 1991.

²² See Times of India (2001a). These were recovered, according to the news report, in Nelamaaliga village, in the Kannavara-Eetarobbalu forests, Gudem Kotta Veedhi mandal.

strategy is elaborated in the *Annual Report* published by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. It says:

The central Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to tackle the problem of Naxalism which includes modernization and strengthening of state police forces, better training to police personnel, special task forces for intelligence based coordinated anti Naxalite operations, focused attention on developmental aspect and gearing up of the public grievances redressal system and encouraging local resistance groups at grass roots level (Government of India 2004)

Administrative Responses

On 15 April 2005, addressing the conference of chief ministers on “Internal security and Law and Order”, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh categorically stated, “There could be no political compromise with terror” (Kumar 2005). In the same conference, the Union Home minister Shivraj Patil announced that the centre is willing to provide "aerial support" and "armoured vehicles" to state governments to supplement their efforts and resources against extremism (Kumar 2005). Interestingly, for the first time, the Defense Minister, Pranab Mukharjee also participated in the conference, which makes sense because there is a strong nexus between internal extremists and enemies of India across the border.

However, an expected nation-wide ban against Maoists was not imposed. Instead, a committee headed by Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil and comprising of nine Chief Ministers of Naxal affected states was constituted to co-ordinate and evolve a common strategy to tackle extremism, instead of the ban that the police was asking for (The Hindu 2005a).

There has been talk about equipping police forces working in Maoist infested areas with INSAS rifles. No further information is available regarding this news. Apart from setting up elite special security forces like “Grey Hounds” in AP, the Central government is also providing special training to the police forces to tackle the Maoists effectively. The Central Government would reimburse certain expenses incurred by the states during anti-Naxal operations this process. The government of Andhra Pradesh is planning to hire helicopters for surveillance of the movements of Naxal groups. The central government would provide the money for this (The Hindu 2005a).

To enable the nine badly-affected States to undertake more effective anti-Naxalite action, the Ministry of Home Affairs has been administering the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme. Under the scheme, during the year 2004-05, Rs. 109.852 million have been provided to the state governments. This money would be spent among other things on expenses incurred on bullet-proofing of vehicles, procurement of semi-automatic and automatic weapons, equipping vehicles with latest communication devices and reimbursement on expenditure incurred on raising the Indian Reserve (IR) battalion (Government of India 2004).

Police Responses

A policy of extermination of individuals is being pursued with scant regard to due process. Any one reading the stereotyped reports of encounters in daily newspapers cannot fail to discern that there is something very sinister about these regular reports which have become part of the common lore. There is little doubt that most of the encounters are no other than custodial and targeted killings. During the last decade, more than 1,500 persons were killed in police encounters (Committee of Concerned Citizens 2002). An all time record of 275 was reached in 1998, the highest number in the decade. During the year 1999, more than 229 persons have been killed in the encounters (Committee of Concerned Citizens 2002).²³

The Salva Judum

'Salva Judum', which means "Peace Campaign" in Halbi and "Collective Hunting" in the Santhali language was claimed to be a peace movement to save tribals from the evils of Naxalism. However, the Naxals ridiculed it as the group hunting of innocent tribals supporting the people's movement. Salva Judum has a three-prong approach where firstly, the Naxal-hit tribals are marched to state run-camps, while the women and children are left behind. Secondly, the Salva Judum activists, accompanied by the police,

²³ Veeranna, the Secretary of Communist Party of United States of India (ML) Dalit Bahujan Shramashakthi was followed and picked up in the broad daylight from Secunderabad and was announced as being killed a forest area of Karimnagar district along with 10 others.

march in to the enemy (Naxal) stronghold, they conduct public meetings, and distribute pamphlets.

More importantly, they hunt for the Sangham members who are then asked to surrender or hand themselves over to the police. Thirdly, the government appoints Special Police Officers (SPOs) among the Salva Judum activists, who are entrusted, and armed, to protect the camps as well as accompany the march. The SPOs are allowed to run check gates and conduct raids.

At the moment, however, though the campaign stands suspended. According to the Chhattisgarh Home Minister Ramvihar Netam, the movement had only been suspended, not wound up and will restart with a "vengeance" (New Kerala 2006). Contrary to popular belief Salva Judum is not an officially launched government anti-Naxal programme. Konda Madhukarrao, a little known schoolmaster from Kutru, in the Bijapur Police district of South Bastar, first initiated the call for a public campaign against atrocities committed by Naxals. However, it took an organised form under the leadership of Sri Mahendra Karma, the leader of the Opposition in Chhattisgarh and soon the state government decided to provide patronage to the programme. On 25 August 2005, the State government announced that it had set up a Committee headed by Chief Secretary A.K. Vijayvargiya to provide direct support to the Salva Judum in the form of logistics, arms and funding SAIR (2005).

As of 4 March 2006, the Salva Judum campaign has organised 128 rallies and 42 meetings. Similarly, a total of 45,958 Adivasi villagers from 644 villages in 6 blocks of Dantewada district have come under Salva Judum programme (Asian Centre for Human Rights 2006). However, the campaign has taken a heavy toll on the local tribal people. On 27 February 2006, Ram Vihar Netam, informed the State Legislative Assembly that between June 2005 and 31 January 2006 the Communist Party of India (Maoist) killed 95 villagers who were involved in the Salva Judum (New Kerala 2006).

What started off as a genuine anti-Naxal movement has rather, exposed tribals to more violence and made them refugees in their own land. Salva Judum has exposed the hapless tribals to repeated rounds of violence by the Maoists, and has displaced, according to

various estimates, anything up to 40,000 tribals who are now huddled in ill-equipped government relief camps in the worst conceivable conditions (Sahni 2006).

There are several civil society and human rights groups who also allege that large-scale human rights violations have been committed by the Salva Judum activists.

Tribals fed up with the decades old Naxal violence saw the Salva Judum, when it started, as a new beginning. Since it was the first-ever tribal resistance against the Naxal movement both the ruling party, and the opposition party of the state, promoted it equally. It gave the state a much-needed opportunity to win over the alienated tribals. However, due to the government's ill thought out strategy, it backfired. Earlier the Government of India tried similar schemes to combat insurgencies in Punjab and Kashmir, recruiting locals to act as policemen, or defend villages in more secure areas. However, in the case of the Salva Judum, "the police, the administration, and the politicians are all hoping that the Salva Judum will do what they themselves could not: Break the backbone of the local Naxalite movement" (Zaidi 2005).

Peace Talks

The peace talks ended in Andhra Pradesh after nearly ten months of a purported truce, with just one unsuccessful round of talks between the Naxalites and the State Government on 15 October 2004. Finally, on 4 April 2005, emissaries of the Naxalite groups in Hyderabad announced their decision to pull out of the process. Addressing a Press Conference, Kalyan Rao, Gaddar and Varavara Rao, whom the Communist Party of India - Maoist had nominated, and Chandranna, the CPI-ML-Janashakthi representative, accused the Andhra Pradesh Government of executing "fake encounters" and of carrying out combing operations, and stated that the atmosphere was no longer conducive for peace talks (Kumar 2005). On 17 January, 2005, Ramakrishna and Amar, state secretaries of the CPI-Maoist and Janashakthi respectively, had already declared they were no longer keen to continue with the talks.

On 16 June 2004, the Congress Party-led Andhra Pradesh Government had declared a ceasefire with the declared intention to end bloodshed and reach common ground with

the extremists, who were depicted as “homegrown boys”, “prodigal sons” and “our own people”. There was every indication throughout this truce period that the extremists continued to work to bolster their strength *vis-à-vis* the state, while the state committed tactical hara-kiri.

Fatalities in Naxalite violence totalled 88 [42 civilians, 3 security force (SF) and 43 Naxalites] as against where 280 in 2003; 191 in 2002, and 311 in 2001. The first three months of 2005, however, have already seen 116 deaths (50 civilians, 11 security forces and 55 Naxalites); a trend that has remained unabated till date. There have been 27 encounters reported between security forces and Naxalites in this period alone, with incidents involving Naxalites reported from 19 out of the State's 23 districts. All 23 districts in the State have, for some time now, been affected by Naxalite activity (Cherian 2005).

Naxalite consolidation through the period of the talks has been confirmed by official quarters. In March 2005, Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Swaranjit Sen stated that the hardcore fighting strength of the Naxalites in the State was an estimated 700; through the ceasefire, it grew to between 1,100 and 1,200 (Sahni and Cherian 2005). In addition to cadre augmentation, the CPI-Maoist has been judiciously altering its political and military structure to streamline its functioning.

Having succeeded in reclaiming domination over several areas in Telengana districts during the peace time, the Maoists are now putting in place a comprehensive plan to make Telengana the beacon of revolutionary movement again. Plans are also afoot to galvanise the otherwise dormant militant network in Telengana in addition to the formation of front organisations to mobilise women, students, coal miners and the peasantry. On the military side, the Maoists have already formed at least eight Local Guerrilla Squads (LGSs) in the five North Telangana districts, which had earlier been wound up as part of a tactical withdrawal of forces in view of a severe crackdown by the police (Reddy 2005).

This consolidation of the Maoists forces at the expense of the government was most evident in the Nallamala forests in Andhra Pradesh. On 3 February 2005, about 2,000 elite Greyhound commandos cordoned off a CPI-Maoist hideout and zeroed in on “state

secretary” Ramakrishna and a number of other leaders and cadre, but refrained from opening fire as Home Minister Jana Reddy ordered the troops to “exercise restraint”. Ramakrishna was subsequently allowed to escape the dragnet (Reddy 2005). Ironically, the State Government has now ordered major operations in the Nallamala forest to “flush out” Ramakrishna, and a major exercise is currently ongoing.

Development initiatives

The State has been pouring money into Naxal affected areas for over thirty years now. Development has formed the other prong of the government’s multi pronged strategy to combat the Naxalites.

A representative picture of government development activities is provide by the Backward Districts Initiative (BDI). Almost 55 Naxalite affected districts have been covered under the BDI scheme, which provides Rs. 150 million per district per year for three years starting from 2003-04, to “fill in the critical gaps in physical and social infrastructure”. The total amount under the BDI Scheme comes to Rs. 24.8 billion. In addition, for 55 Naxal-affected districts additional funds amounting to Rs 375 million per year have been given for construction of roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) (Jaiswal 2004).

The problem however, is not that of roads or infrastructure. Conflicts in forests always revolve around the question of who owns the forest. In India the Forest Department is the legal owner of forests, while the tribal forest dwellers claim traditional ownership over it. There are 500 million people in India who depend on forests for their survival. On the other hand, Indian forest laws, mostly framed by the British in the early nineteenth century, restrict people from sourcing their livelihood.

In this crisis, Naxalites distribute forest lands to the tribals for cultivation, turning the forests into a battlefield. Despite the state governments’ massive police operations, the Naxalites’ areas of influence continue to spread. In the contiguous forests of AP, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand, people trust the “parallel governments” more than their elected governments. In between the warring two, people frustrated by years of

government curbs on accessing their forests give in to the Naxalites, even though they do not believe in Naxal ideology.

It is not that the government is unaware of these emerging conflicts in forest areas and their linkages to illogical forest laws. In April 2000, the Union Home Ministry in a meeting of Naxalite affected states debated the possible causes of the spread of Naxalite movements and found forest laws to be the most convincing reason for conflicts.

Naxalite affected states urged amendment of forest laws to suit people's needs. "Whenever governance fails the Naxalites step in," says Anadi Sahu, a former member of the Home Ministry's Parliamentary Standing Committee (As quoted in Mahapatra 2005: 44).

The Forest Conservation Act (FCA) makes forests soulless islands. Under the Act, the State governments have to secure permission from the Union government before using forestland. Chhattisgarh, facing its worst drought, cannot renovate traditional ponds for water conservation inside forests. "However, Naxalites construct ponds (talabs) in forest areas and gain the confidence of people," says Ramchandra Singh Deo, former finance minister of Chhattisgarh (Mahapatra 2005: 45). The Act is so powerful that the Kerala forest department refused to listen to Chief Minister A. K. Antony and give land to landless tribal families, which resulted in the recent violent conflicts in the State (Mahapatra 2005:45). The affected states are demanding amendments to the FCA. In the last year, at least seven Naxalite affected states have written to the Union Home Ministry demanding FCA amendments to curb the spread of Naxalites. But the ministry mandarins are helpless: the Environment Ministry, the nodal authority for the FCA, has refused to entertain any such demands.

Surrender and Rehabilitation

A critical dimension in addressing the Naxalites is the Government's policy of encouraging surrenders by Naxalites and rehabilitating them. In Andhra Pradesh, a surrendering cadre are given a sum of Rs 5,000 at the time of the surrender and

subsequently is eligible to receive an amount of Rs 500,000 to pursue an avocation of his or her choice and, thus, lead a peaceful life.

However, on many occasions, the policy has been tardily implemented and has been mired in bureaucratic red tape. In fact, in Bihar, the Chief Secretary, K.A.H. Subramanian, admitted that the surrender and rehabilitation policy of the State Government "did not produce the desired results" (Committee of Concerned Citizens 2002). According to Subramanian, most of the surrendered Naxalites were yet to receive the rehabilitation money allocated for them. Although Rs 46 million were earmarked specially for the purpose. In the face of such delay the Government had ordered a policy review (Committee of Concerned Citizens 2002). As a result, some of those who had surrendered returned to the fold of the Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh. The Government's enormous delay in disbursing the promised amount, thus, strengthens the surrendered Naxalites' perception that the state does not serve its people and that they are justified in joining the revolutionaries' fold, to wage an armed insurrection and usher in a New Democratic Revolution.

Another aspect is that some of the surrendered Naxalites, subsequently, became habitual criminals (Committee of Concerned Citizens 2002). Some of them had flocked to Hyderabad and entered the lucrative real estate business initially as strongmen who forced defaulters to cough up the money they owed to real estate businessmen. Gradually, they realised that the turn-over in the business was high and therefore set shop of their own. Ultimately, they graduated into the land Mafia, made and broke deals and went on to kill one another.

Kattula Sammaiah is a well known surrendered Naxalite who had indulged in several crimes in Hyderabad and later died on board a flight in a freak fire accident, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Nayimuddin was another surrendered Naxalite who took to crime subsequent to his surrender. He was in the jail when a fellow surrendered Naxalite, Eedanna, molested his sister. Nayimuddin appealed to the Naxalite leaders to render justice and punish Eedanna. However, as the Naxalite leadership took no notice of Eedanna's misdemeanour, Nayimuddin, his brother Alimuddin and an associate killed Eedanna. In a recent incident, Sammi Reddy, another surrendered Naxalite, was abducted from

Hyderabad, on 18 July 2003, while he was on his way to attend court in connection with a criminal offence, allegedly by business rivals and later his dead body was recovered from a village tank in far away Krishna district, on July 25 (The Hindu 2003b).

Analyzing the State's responses

Addressing a public meeting in Hyderabad, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi made a special reference to the extremist problem in the state and said violence would not solve any problem.

Without peace, there is no development. It has become painfully obvious that we cannot look at Naxal violence, particularly in isolation from issues connected with tribal welfare. This needs to be looked at more humanely and more urgently than has been the case so far. I am in favour of a time-bound campaign for resolving all land-related disputes and updating land records. The issues of Naxalite violence in the heart of the country and of insurgency in the North East are serious. We have to better understand and come to grips with the deeper socio-economic factors at work. The functioning of the police and security forces had to be improved simultaneously. Channels of dialogue have to be kept open while asserting that wanton killings of innocent men, women and children cannot be condoned. (Tribune 2004).

After analysing hundreds of reports, statements, official releases, and parliamentary debates, only one conclusion can be drawn. Sonia Gandhi's above statements embody the official line. There is recognition that development needs to take place, and there is a clear stand that violence will not be condoned. Since the early 1980s this has been the stand of the official India, be it police officers or politicians.

The discourse vacillates between what could be called a hard-line and a soft line. The BJP president, L.K. Advani, remains highly critical of the negotiations held by the State Government with Naxalites, saying no Government worth the name could hold talks with militant outfits that refused to lay down weapons (The Hindu 2004a). An even more hard-line view is that of K.P.S. Gill, currently Security advisor to the Chhattisgarh Government, who has been appointed to pursue a completely militarised strategy to combat the Naxalites.

His views are being reflected in the police top brass. "They're (Naxalites) absolutely ruthless killers," Additional Chief Secretary (Home), B.K.S. Ray, said. "I've never seen this kind of brutality in my life before, the way they strike and kill Salwa Judum members. They're hacked to death, heads severed from bodies." Roy said the Naxalite

movement's numbers were growing in Chhattisgarh, where the state last year set up a school to train police in jungle warfare and counterinsurgency tactics. "A thousand commandos are already ready for operations," Roy said. "We want a big striking force."²⁴

In tune with K.P.S. Gill's appointment, the government of Chhattisgarh announced a range of benefits for the police personnel in an effort to boost their morale. Incentives for police officers included a 50 per cent increase in salary, Rs 1 million insurance cover for each commando, Rs 500,000 as Gratuity, Rs 100,000 as Benevolent Fund and an employment for a family member in case of death (Shashikumar 2006). On the other hand last year, the Union Home Ministry prepared an elaborate blue print of massive operations against the CPI (Maoist) in Chhattisgarh. "The Centre will rush an estimated sixty companies of paramilitary forces who have been pressed into election duties in four states. The idea is to start the operation in May and finish it before the monsoon sets in since then the forces cannot carry out operations in the dense jungles of Dantewada, the worst affected region in Chhattisgarh." (Hindustan Times 2005). As per the Home Ministry statistics, the Ministry sanctioned Rs. 20 million for Security Related Expenditure (SRE) during the year 2005-06. For the same period it has also released Rs. 50 million as advance under the head of SREs (Government of India 2006). On April 12, the Chhattisgarh Government clamped a ban on the CPI (Maoist) and five other organisations under the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005 (SATP 2006).

For the first time recently, the Army has also initiated a discourse that would probably lead to its intervention in the Naxal issue. In a radical departure from the past, the Indian Army at its Commanders Conference on 6-7 April 2005, discussed the threat of Naxalism for the very first time. The Army Chief, General Joginder Jaswant Singh, asserted, "Any indication of something not going well in the country concerns us directly. We will try to nip the evil in the bud" (Times of India 2005). He added further that the Army was likely to extend support to the police and paramilitary forces in countering Naxalite violence.

²⁴ Quoted in (Lancaster 2006).

The Purpose of Securitization

With the Army beginning to speak of coming in to combat what is largely seen as a thinly spread-out tribal rebellion it is important to investigate the purpose of securitization.

The Naxalite movement, said to be active in 125 districts in 12 states, with an estimated armed cadre of about 18,000, is not a law and order problem to be dealt with by the failed strategy of strong police action by state governments. The Union Home Ministry (MHA), both as the central government's nodal agency on law and order and main policy instrument on social conflicts, has an underestimated but key role to play. Independent studies by MHA in the past were useful in understanding the nature and causes of major social tensions, advising state governments and in providing them operational support as required. In 1969, coinciding with the emergence of the Naxalite movement, the Research and Policy (R&P) Division of MHA, produced a pioneering study on the "Causes and Nature of Current Agrarian Unrest", warning that the "green revolution" could turn into a "red revolution" if appropriate land reform measures were not taken to ensure social justice (Research and Policy Division 1969).

The study was discussed in Parliament and the press and state governments were urged to implement land reform measures expeditiously. The study found that the new technocratic approach to the development of the rural economy, based as it was on an outmoded agrarian structure, was geared to the goal of productivity but with secondary regard for social concerns, leading to a situation in which "elements of disparity, instability and unrest are becoming conspicuous with the possibility of increase in tensions" (Research and Policy Division 1969: 12). It noted the administrative obstacles to the implementation of agrarian reforms: lack of qualifications and integrity necessary for the administration of tenancy reforms on the part of civil servants, who were also overburdened with other responsibilities; insufficient coordination between the state agency for land reforms and the agriculture and cooperative departments; lack of correct and updated land records; weak budgetary support; illiteracy and ignorance on the part of tenants; dual role of landlords as moneylenders; heterogeneous interests of the village population; and the gulf in social status separating tenants from landlords, which influenced the administrative and judicial authorities handling land disputes.

The R&P division carried out similar studies on agrarian unrest in the subsequent period as well. It would thus be short-sighted to suggest that since “public order” is a state subject under the Constitution, the state governments must be left free to handle such problems with no role, other than a coordinative one, for MHA. The ministry happens to control the largest number of centralised paramilitary forces, mostly deployed in localised conflict management in the states; it is powerful enough to virtually dictate policy to state governments on law and order matters.²⁵

In Andhra Pradesh, where the movement is strong, the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) has graphically brought out the ongoing situation of state violence, the Naxalite response and its own sustained efforts to bring about an atmosphere of peace conducive to the conduct of talks between the two sides.²⁶ It notes that over the last three decades of the movement’s existence in the state, weapons have gained in prominence and pushed politics to the background. As a result, the basic problems of people have been obscured, leading to the death of a large number of innocents primarily belonging to the weaker sections. These problems are food security; a package of land reforms; creation of adequate employment opportunities; and the elimination of social discrimination.

The committee traces the social turmoil to patterns of socio-economic relations, deep disorders in the body politic and structural violence built into the social system by inequality, exploitation and lack of freedom and democratic space. The previous Andhra government viewed the Naxalite movement as a law and order problem and ignored the fact that it is essentially an expression of the people’s aspiration to a life of dignity and self-respect. This led to physical liquidation of people in so-called “encounters”; repression and harassment of people by illegal detention; torture and false cases; suppression of democratic activities; unlawful behaviour towards democratic organisations; and encouragement of vigilante groups. The political leadership of the state has shifted its burden to the police, encouraging them to indulge in “encounters”,

²⁵ This seems to be what it is doing. Following the failure of talks with the Naxalites, the Union Home Ministry has taken the initiative to coordinate anti-Naxalite operations. A 30 July 2005 meeting of the chief ministers and the directors general of police from the nine Naxalite-impacted states agreed to set up a task force to launch joint operations. A policy of “zero tolerance” towards the Maoists was announced. The Tamil Nadu government had already banned the Maoist Party on 12 July, and the Karnataka government had also earlier launched joint operations with the Andhra police.

²⁶ See various documents of the Committee at www.pucl.org.

which are nothing but custodial and targeted killings. The extinguishing of human life and the right to life by the government itself constitutes violation of the provisions of the Constitution, which require the state to protect life and liberty.

The thrust of the Naxalite movement, on the other hand, has become “military” action rather than people’s action for social transformation. The policy of individual annihilation followed by it is as flawed as the government policy of trying to liquidate activists and leaders in the hope of decimating the movement. The movement today connotes a confrontation between the police and the Naxalites, each with its own agenda of violence.

The democratic space has shrunk fast.

The situation in states affected by Naxalite activity is qualitatively different from that in other states such as Jammu and Kashmir or the north-eastern states. It would be simplistic to club all these states together under the category of “terrorist-affected”, as some have done, with a call for strong police action. Such action, as noted, has signally failed in the past with no serious effort to study the specific causes of particular discontent in each conflict-affected state.

Further, Naxalite violence must be juxtaposed with the increasing violence against the rural poor and the failure or incapacity of the administrative machinery to implement effectively the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules 1995, as brought out in a recent comprehensive study by the National Human Rights Commission (Anand 2004). Even as conflicts grow in the post-globalisation scenario, the institutional mechanism for independent policy analysis, available in the R&P division of MHA (which often differed from the reports provided to the ministry by intelligence agencies) was wound up by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. This has resulted in the ministry’s increasingly uncritical dependence on centralised paramilitary police and intelligence mechanisms, which may be useful for firefighting purposes but not for long-term policy analysis.

Given that the government had at its behest sufficient resources for a comprehensive strategy to tackle the Naxal movement, how does one explain the fact that it was not used? Ironically it is from L.K. Advani that we take the clue. “Simply because the

Congress took the support of the Naxalites in the Assembly elections, it gave an assurance to them. In fulfilment of that assurance the Government had endangered the internal security of the country” (The Hindu 2004a).

The connivance between political parties and the Maoists, although not a new phenomenon, is worrisome. In some cases, especially during election time, political parties come to a tacit agreement with the Maoists. Accordingly, the Maoists target the candidates of opposite party thereby making it easy for a political party to win elections. After coming to power, the party will ensure that the police forces “go slow” against Maoists. In some other cases individual politicians use Maoists to kill their political opponents by paying them money. In order to stop political parties from giving large-scale concessions to Maoists, a nation wide strategy should be created so that political parties cannot arbitrarily remove or impose a ban on Maoists.

On conditions of anonymity, one senior police official accepted the fact in an interview, but declined to name some such leaders. These leaders could belong to various levels. The Naxalites and the political leaders take advantage of another and hence maintain linkages. As the Advocates Committee on Naxalite Terrorism noted, it is, thus, the politicians’ lust for power that contributes to the continued presence of the Naxalites (Advocates’ Committee on Naxalite Terrorism in Andhra Pradesh, 1999: 21).²⁷ In one instance, the local Member of the Legislative Assembly, in Warangal district, Andhra Pradesh, went and paid “homage” to a slain Naxalite leader, Polam Sudarshan Reddy ‘Rama Krishna’ ‘RK’. The MLA’s husband had links with the slain rebel leader, as media reports claimed, and both had helped one another in various ways. RK was a member of the North Telengana Special Zone Committee, the Committee that oversees the PWG’s activities in its flagship guerrilla zone and which it showcases to the world as its greatest success (Advocates’ Committee on Naxalite Terrorism in Andhra Pradesh 1999:23).

In another instance, a group of village-level leaders were held by the police, in late 2001, for helping the Naxalites in their plot to blow up the Kataram police station, in

²⁷ The Committee was formed by an order of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, “to delve into the Naxalite problem from various stipulated angles and submit its report and recommendations” (Advocates’ Committee on Naxalite Terrorism in Andhra Pradesh 1999: iii).

Karimnagar district (Ramana 2003d). The Naxalite plot intended to blow up the police station ahead of its inaugural in February 2002. Kataram is a model police station specially built to withstand an armed attack and is said to be among the largest police stations in Asia. The arrested political leaders befriended the local police and visited the police station repeatedly. In the process, they had memorised the architecture of the police station and passed on the information to the Naxalites.

In yet another incident, a local level leader was arrested for assisting the PWG rebels. The leader, Nanam Rajareddy, who represents Mallapur Zilla Praja Parishad Territorial Constituency in Karimnagar Zilla Praja Parishad, was held on 18 September 2003 night. Reportedly, his links with the rebels were 15 years old. He had, in the past, provided shelter to the Karimnagar district committee secretary of the PWG, Nelakonda Rajitha 'Padma', and other leaders and cadres. He was further involved in arranging logistics for the Naxalites, including clothing, medicine and explosives. In the past, he had reportedly used the Naxalites against his rivals. The links between the Naxalites and political leaders are, thus, active. The Naxalites, of course, make deals. The political leaders maintain association with the Naxalites as much for their physical security as for their professional survival.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped the context from which it becomes possible to sieve through both the State discourses and the discourses of the Naxalites in order to analyse the situation. The first section has shown that fertile ground for the rise of Naxalites has been wide spread, for despite the fact that they have been splits and mergers and dozens of groups operating, the Naxalites have constantly found spaces from where to establish themselves and at times consolidate their power. Given these conditions which serve as prima facie basis for public legitimacy of the Naxalites, the second section establishes deviance from the "party line" that helped undermine local legitimacy for the Naxalites. This is juxtaposed with the third section that analyses the states responses to the Naxalites, both discursive and on the ground, and assesses both the process and its efficacy. This section leaves doubts as to the efficacy of deploying anti-terrorism as the

mainstay of state policy and allows us the space from which to ask why a benefit maximizing state should pursue a seemingly long-drawn, expensive, dangerous and ineffective policy.

The common people whose cause the Naxalites claim to represent confront day-to-day livelihood issues – of making a living out of agriculture and forestry, of finding water for their fields, access to affordable credit, market for their produce, and ways and means to access education and health. Such ground-level issues do not seem to figure prominently in the Maoists' formulation of political strategy any more. Many of these activities which concretely help the poor are dismissed with terms such as “reformism”, “welfare work” or even “NGO action”. The idea that cultural and educational work forms an integral part of revolutionary strategy, together with political and military tasks, seems to have been relegated to the background for the past few decades.

This has provided the window of opportunity that was lost when the government did not heed the advice such as that provided by the R&P division and address the core issues that the Naxalite movement brought to the fore. The continuation of a militarized response which only helps strengthen the Naxalites and justifies their pursuit of armed struggle, has shown that there are benefits (other than strategic ones) gained by continuation of such a policy.

This brings us to the fourth section which provides some answers to the above questions by trying to unpack the purpose of securitization. These answers undermine the security aspect of the entire process at a fundamental level and support the tentative conclusions of Chapter Two.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

National security must not be idealised. It works to silence opposition and has given power holders many opportunities to exploit “threats” for domestic purposes, to claim a right to handle something with less democratic control and constraint. Basically, security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics. Ideally, politics should be able to unfold according to routine procedures without this extraordinary elevation of specific threats to a pre-political immediacy. Although in the abstract desecuritization is the ideal, in specific situations one can chose securitization – only one should not believe this is an innocent reflection of the issue being a security threat, it is always a political choice to securitize or to accept an attempt at securitization.

Therefore, securitization, like politicisation, has to be understood as an essentially inter-subjective process. It is not easy to judge the securitization of an issue against some measure of whether that issue is “really” a threat; doing so would demand an objective measure of security that no theory of security has yet provided.

In any case, it is neither politically nor analytically helpful to try to define “real security” outside the world of politics and to teach the actors to understand the term correctly. “Such rationalist universalism will easily be ‘right’ on its own terms, but it will be of very little help in political analysis. It is more relevant to grasp the processes and dynamics of securitization, because if one knows who can do security on what issue and under what conditions, it will sometime be possible to manoeuvre the interaction among actors and thereby curb security dilemmas.” (Buzan *et al* 1998: 29).

What then is a successful securitization? To quote Buzan *et al* (1998: 25), “(i)f by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization”. Further, “Securitization is not fulfilled only by the breaking of rules (which can take many forms), nor solely by existential threats (which can lead to nothing), but by cases of existential threats that legitimize the breaking of rules”.

Substantiating the hypothesis

As stated in Chapter One, this dissertation advances the hypothesis that the securitizing discourse of the Indian state is the same irrespective of the type of insurgent movement that it is confronted with.

In order to prove the hypothesis it is necessary to establish two sets of observations. Firstly, that the Naxalite and Khalistan movements were, in fact, varied contexts which would demand different responses from the state. Secondly, that the responses of the state were, in fact, similar.

Varied Nature of the Naxal and Khalistan movements.

It is possible to compare the two movements along the following lines. This comparison shall occur on the basis of the facilitating factors

- What was the area of operation of the two movements?

The Khalistan movement was restricted to the Punjab state with sporadic incidents in Delhi. The Naxal movement, on the other hand, is spread over seven states (official reports claim 55 districts to be Naxal-affected and independent sources claim the figure is much higher at 125 districts).

- What was the strength of the movements (in physical numbers and equipment)?

It has been difficult to calculate the exact number of armed cadre that support the Khalistan movement. Human rights groups put the number of insurgents killed at about 3,500 in the decade that followed Operation Blue Star. At a rough estimate, the total number of armed recruits to the movement would have been around 5000. When compared to the estimated strength of 18,000 armed cadre, combined with a yearly fatality rate of approximately 250, the Naxalite movement is at least four times larger than the Khalistan movement. In terms of access to equipment, both sides possessed approximately the same class of weaponry (rarely has anything more advanced than an assault rifle been captured).

- What was the nature of the threat?

The Khalistan movement was concerned only with the Punjab. The Naxalite movement has sworn to overthrow the Indian State. This can be further articulated into sub contexts:

1. Did the proximity to a sensitive border determine the response?

With the Khalistan movement much of the official discourse was concerned with Punjab declaring independence and Pakistan moving in to protect its “independence”. As has been shown in Chapter Four, the Naxalites’ international links though existent, are not the primary concern.

2. What were the targets?

The Khalistan movement was not known to disrupt communication lines, attack police stations, and blow up electrical sub-stations. Rarely were attacks on infrastructure carried out. The Naxalites however, aim to disrupt all normal functioning of the State machinery.

3. What was the nature of their demands?

Although both movements can be said to have largely developmental demands, the nature of development envisaged by both is quite different. The Khalistan movement did not have any major differences with the Indian State on the nature of development, it was mainly concerned with a particular section (the Sikhs) being allowed to administer themselves. Paradoxically, this was not provided for in the Indian Constitution. The Naxalites on the other hand, have rarely if at all, made any demands that cannot be found in the Directive Principles of State Policy. However, they are fundamentally at loggerheads with the manner in which the State formulates development.

4. What sort of support/sympathy did they receive from the international community, local media, intelligentsia etc?

The international support for the Khalistan movement was considerable. This has come both in terms of governments actively condemning the Indian government for its stand on the issue and the Sikh Diaspora forming a major monetary source for the movement. Although the Naxalites are Maoist in ideology, they have been unable to receive much help from China as such. The international community

has not been able to support its cause politically or financially to any great extent and other than Communist congresses, Naxalites do not find political space outside India. The Indian State was able to clamp down on the local media in Punjab due to the territorially limited nature of the movement. Even otherwise the militants did not receive much support from either the Akali controlled media or the Nirankari-controlled press. The Naxalites on the other hand have had much support among the local media. Much the intelligentsia fired by revolutionary zeal in their youth, currently hold positions of influence in various research journals, think tanks and media organisations. They are also active in many professions, most especially law. There is a large component of Indian civil society that sympathises with the Naxal cause (although this is dwindling rapidly).

Given these differences it is possible to maintain that the two insurgencies are considerably different, both in terms of the threats they posed to the Indian State and the possible variety of ways in which the State could respond to the challenge both discursively and on the ground.

Similarity of responses

However, as suggested in the hypothesis in Chapter One, the Indian state responded to both these insurgencies in a similar manner. It is possible to compare the similarities over six parameters.

- Rejecting use of force and emphasising the State's monopoly over such use. In both cases, the State has been quick to use terms such as extremists and terrorists. In both cases, while refusing to accept the legitimacy of the militants themselves, officials have admitted to the legitimacy of their demands. Talks have sporadically marked the trajectory of both movements, and intransigence has marked the State's position in both cases.
- The State in both cases has attempted to undermine the commitment, character, and social location of the insurgents. The point is not whether the allegations of extortion, rape and coercion were true or not but that they were given precedence

over other discourses. (It must be understood that the state still believed it maintained sovereignty over the insurgents and was technically sworn to protect their interests.)

3) The state has in both cases encouraged groups with similar goals to infiltrate and undermine the insurgents. This had occurred in the Khalistan movement. Likewise petty criminals to masquerade as Naxalites and commit petty crimes.

4) The state has also armed local populations and created vigilante groups to undermine the legitimacy of the insurgents in both cases.

5) In both cases the foreign hand theory has been deployed, exploiting the threat potential to the integrity of the state to the maximum. Clear attempts were made through out operations in Punjab to move the nature of the threat from a local law and order problem to an external security issue. In the Naxal case, the formation of the red corridor compromising the territorial integrity of the state has been used to shift the discourse of Naxalites from being a “law and order problem” to being the foremost internal security threat.¹

6) In the Khalistan case, the Army was called in quite early but it is only recently that the Army has shown signs that it will be deployed to combat Naxalism. The use of the Army is a strong discursive move that asserts the level of the perceived threat.

Implication of the Hypothesis

What we are asserting that the securitizing discourses of the Indian state are the same irrespective of the sort of challenge it faces. It is important to note, *pāce* Wæver, that the point is not whether the challenge is real or not. What matters is how it is constructed by the state.

¹ “It is no more a law and order problem but poses a threat to internal security as is evident from their declaration of Compact Revolutionary Zone or red corridor from Nepal to Tamil Nadu,” said the Standing Committee on Home Affairs in its report tabled in Parliament. See NDTV.com (2006). Even according to official Home Ministry reports Naxalite activity was only reported in two police stations (single incidents in both cases) in Tamil Nadu hardly enough to form a corridor through the state. The validity of the reports also come into question as it is timed with the release of the idea of the red corridor, that immediately percolates the national press.

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In both cases the lynch pin of urgency has been the foreign hand, the immediate threat to the Indian state territorially. In both cases, however, it has been shown that while many other facilitating factors have existed that could be seen as legitimising a securitization publicly, it is on the basis of the external threat that securitization actually occurs.

Superficially, this supports the Wæverian argument that a threat has to be constructed existentially in order to enact a successful securitization. However, a deeper analysis of both the political contexts and the state discourses shows otherwise.

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In both cases, the concept of securitization is working with a problem. This is because in neither of the cases is there cause or proof of an existential threat. Still further, there is an ambiguity in the official discourses regarding this. To use Wæver's criterion, the securitization is not successful on these lines as the public does not "buy" the existential nature of the threat.² However, all the other trapping of a successful securitization are in play, that is the state is able to break rules it would otherwise be governed by. If this is the case then the main defining character of securitization, that of the existential threat, becomes open to re-evaluation.

This is mainly because of how Buzan *et al* (1998) conceptualise the state. Firstly, the state is implicitly assumed as being a liberal democratic state. Even within this, the state is assumed as having to seek legitimacy from various quarters. The fundamental assumption of Wæver's argument is that securitization is successful only when legitimised through various avenues.

The success of the securitization of both cases (in Wæver's criterion) is not in doubt. What is being questioned is whether or not this success can be extrapolated to substantiate the assumption that this success was preceded by a legitimisation based on an existential challenge.

In both cases, the state is not required to make wide spread defence of its use of methods. Legitimation is not simply via the speech act. As shown in Chapter Two, in a liberal

² In the Punjab, most of India recognized that the matter was a religious issue or at best a state issue. Neither the intelligentsia nor the public at large "bought" the Government's argument that the Khalistan movement posed an existential threat to the state. Similarly in the Naxalite case, while the public and the intelligentsia is convince that the Naxalites are a menace, there is no conviction that they pose any kind of an existential threat to the state. Similarly in the Naxalite issue, there is a vacillating official discourse regarding the urgency of the threat and the measures that should be used.

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democratic polity, laws already exist which legitimise the state's emergency actions. Secondly, given the nature of modern civil and criminal law, the state is both the prosecutor and the defendant. In other words, the state provides the evidence, as it is the only agent legitimised to do so. Therefore, there can be no contending, for example, a claim by the police that someone shot in an encounter did not actually commit a murder or arson ten years ago.

This points to a larger problem in politics today, that of bureaucratisation and the monopoly of truth with the state and its institutions. Forensic institutes are funded and run by the state, police conduct lie detector tests, under various laws in the country statements given in a police station are admissible evidence, and so on. Given these conditions, the state can continue to perform what could be called a successful securitization, without having to justify it.

In these conditions, what could be called post-political conditions, the requirement of securitization (its applicability so to speak) ceases or at least diminishes. The creation and application of security then shifts from the speech acts of the state, to the various nodes in which the state subverts the democratic process.

This subtlety is lacking in Wæver's approach. It is based largely on an utopian idea of the liberal state which is not in function anywhere in the world. The state has become self-legitimizing, no longer requiring to convince as it already has the mechanism that set down the criteria for conviction. Given the nature of the discourse that the state has already set up, showing incredulity to its policies is no longer possible.

Another implication of the analysis carried out in this dissertation can be used to intervene in the debate between the Narrowers and the Wideners within the discipline of security studies. Narrowers claim that security should be limited to military issues, the use of force or the threat thereof. A difficult case, then, would be to examine a situation that was overtly military, i.e. a strong case for the Narrowers, and show that securitization is occurring for purposes that are eschewed from the military reasons. If this is shown to be the case it would make a strong argument for the wideners as it adds weight to the claim that the states anxieties are not only incited by concerns military.

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On the other hand it would also problematise the category of the “military” itself. When we speak of security in a militarised fashion, it is automatically assumed that the military nature of a threat is a constant, like truth. However, if we are to assume that the military quotient of a particular situation is variable, in other words that threats or concerns that are not military are formulated, performed or represented in a manner that camouflage their non-military status. If this is the case then, categories of security and military would have to be re-evaluated, possibly widened, to incorporate a vast variety of intervening variables.

* Demonstrating that the Indian state responds to different threats in a similar manner allows us to draw this conclusion. The hypothesis serves to show that the state uses a standard, militarised discourse to respond to threats, seditions, insurgencies, that are not in themselves posited as military ones. In doing so, it constructs these non-military threats as military threats, providing empirical proof that a strong case exists for the wideners.

Conclusion

This dissertation has shown that while superficially Wæver’s concept of securitization and its application can be used to reflect state practice, it falls short in stated objective, “to grasp the processes and dynamics of securitization, because if one knows who can do security on what issue and under what conditions, it will sometime be possible to manoeuvre the interaction among actors and thereby curb security dilemmas” (Buzan et al 1998: 29).

As an analysis of the data gathered has shown, securitization or the license to bend or break democratic rules, does not require a public legitimization. The State has, over time, incorporated into the legal system a whole array of legislation and ordinances that prolong exceptional powers indefinitely. In such a situation, the valency of the legitimising speech act is lost.

If this was the case in strong cases, such as the Khalistan and Naxalite movements where strong facilitating factors existed, it is possible to conclude that more silent

securitizations are occurring constantly, and [?]it securitization does not provide us with the tools with which to address these cases.

In order to do so, the definition of security would have to widened and a basic framework of the modes in which the state “normally” subverts democratic process and unpoliticizes issues would have to be mapped. This is beyond the scope of this dissertation but if attempted would prove a useful reworking of the concept of security and its performance.

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