

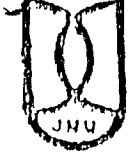
**RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM
IN
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS : A STUDY OF
THE ISLAMIC DISCOURSE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**Dissertation submitted to the
Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the award of
the degree of Master of Philosophy**

Aparna Pande

**CENTRE FOR
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, ORGANISATION
AND DISARMAMENT,
SCHOOL OF
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067**

1999



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067

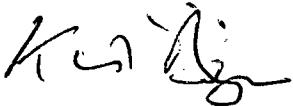
CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS,
ORGANIZATION AND DISARMAMENT

Dated: 12th May, 1999

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Certified that the dissertation entitled RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS : A STUDY OF THE ISLAMIC DISCOURSE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS submitted by APARNA PANDE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award for the Degree of Master of Philosophy is her original work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree to this University or any other University to the best of our knowledge.

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


for Dr. AMITABH MATTOO
[CHAIRPERSON]
Chairperson
Centre for International Politics,
Organization and Disarmament
School of International Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067


Dr. K.S. JAWATKAR
[SUPERVISOR]

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INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi, arguably the greatest Hindu of this century, over seventy years ago described religion thus, 'let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion, which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which even purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself'.

Religious zeal was not the sole scourge of European politics before 1648, nor has it suddenly reemerged after the cold war- for the simple fact is that it never went entirely away. The interplay of religion and politics has been, and remains, more complicated than conventional wisdom suggests. In some cases, apparent *religious* conflicts - from early modern times to the Northern Irish and Bosnian strifes of today - can be interpreted as familiar turf battles in which religious prejudice has played the role of a "force multiplier," inspiring greater zeal and sacrifice from the masses. By the same token, the origins and outcomes of apparent *political* conflicts - from the Crimean and Russo-Japanese wars to the recent war in Afghanistan - have been powerfully influenced by religion, with results that have astounded the world. It was Napoleon, after all, who recognised that "In war, the moral is to the material as three is to one."

Religion, like technology and politics, changes with time, and these changes are happening at a faster pace than ever before as we approach the Twentyfirst Century. But there are problems and obstacles. The chief problem is that religion is not global and so not fully in tune with today's circumstances. Another is that most major religions, are founded on tenets and beliefs that are seen as coming from an unchanging deity and these don't

lead the way to change. Finally, religion is a very sensitive subject for the individual and the community.

This "unchanging" nature of religion will continue to play a major role in International Politics. Many of the political moves of the Islamic world are based on religious beliefs. Factional strike in Lebanon, Ireland, Indonesia, Bosnia, Sudan and Israel is as often motivated by clashing religious viewpoints as much as by ethnicity or politics. There is little reason to think that this will change in the near future - in fact it may surge to new heights.

This surge in Religious Fundamentalism has crucial implications for both the Indian and the International scenario. The past few years have seen an increasing incidence of conflicts arising out of differing perceptions of religious identity in several parts of the globe and these conflicts have not just wreaked havoc locally, or grabbed media attention, or just had far-reaching impacts on the political scene internationally. They have highlighted the absence of a definite international strategy for handling them, whether it be the Bosnian Muslims versus Christian Serbs, Palestinian Muslims versus Israeli Jews or the Indian Hindus versus Muslims (a conflict overlapped by the Indo-Pak tensions).

Everyone talks about it, but hardly anyone thinks or does anything. I refer to the upsurge in awareness of religion's impact on international politics, a phenomenon almost as startling as the break up of the Soviet empire which faith-based movements did so much to promote. In Afghanistan, a ragtag mujaheddin defied the Red Army and proclaimed "Allah-O-Akbar" while their U.S. - supplied Stinger missiles knocked Soviet aircraft out of the sky. In Poland, Lech Walesa placed the Solidarity labour movement under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin and Pope John Paul II funneled clandestine support to the Polish resistance. In East Germany, Lutheran Churches sheltered dissidents and partly inspired the massive non-violent demonstration that brought down the Berlin wall. An Orthodox clergy and praying grandmothers stood guard around Boris Yeltsin and the patriots holed

up in Moscow's White House, devotedly imploring the soldiers in tanks to obey a higher law than that of the Communist coup makers. Religious leaders such as Desmond Tutu and repentant clergy in the Dutch Reformed Church likewise helped to dismantle apartheid in South Africa.

On the debit side of the ledger, Islamic fundamentalists played the decisive role in the installation of an anti-American theocratic republic in Iran, and continue to stoke the terrorism that frustrates the Arab-Israeli peace process. And, since the end of the cold war, religious zeal seems to express itself less often in peaceful struggles against tyrannical regimes than in violent assaults against peoples, most tragically in Bosnia and Algeria.

The awareness of religious identities as part of revivalist and fundamentalist identities started in the post-World War-II era when two major events took place. The first of these was the rise of the religiously fundamentalist and revivalist Zionist State of Israel and the other the support by the USA to the newly independent Arab States in the Middle East who were made to realise and rediscover their fundamentalist identity. In the cold War era a number of these religious fundamentalist States were supported by the US in its bid to thwart the influence of the USSR. The support of the US and its allies, the discovery of oil and the consequent wealth it brought to these States, as well as the stark reality of the hostile Jewish state of Israel, in their midst fuelled the growth of Islamic Fundamentalism. One should, however, remember that the intensity of this Islamic Fundamentalism varied from State to State.

Thus the Islamic fundamentalism of Libya had a militant, revolutionary and puritanical streak and as such was exported to other countries. That of Saudi Arabia was externally non-interventionist, though it did finance terrorist groups. Iran had two revolutions and the second one under Ayatollah Khomeini had a Universalist Expansionist streak. There were differences in the movements in Iraq, Algeria, Indonesia, Morocco and other Islamic states.

The breakdown of the USSR led to the rise of several Islamic regimes in Central Asia as well as to the break-up of Yugoslavia in Europe.

The spread of Religious Fundamentalism took a new turn with the onset of the Nuclear Weapons Age in the 1960s-70s during the height of the Cold War era. In this period a number of allies of both the super powers acquired Nuclear Weapons technology and Nuclear Weapons in return for the help they gave them. The real problem arose in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Cold War ended and the USSR broke up into smaller states. Many of these 'Satellite' states had Nuclear Weapons capability and a number of them were dominated by Religious Fundamentalist ruling elite, which made them a 'liability' for world peace. Nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and deterrence were thus sought to be used to keep these states under check.

The connection between Religious Fundamentalism and Nuclear Deterrence is that the Religious fundamentalist doctrine does not accept the doctrine of Nuclear Non-Proliferation. The fact that the Revivalist Religious Fundamentalist Zionist State of Israel had nuclear weapons meant that these weapons would also automatically be the legitimate aspiration of the Arab States. The logic was that if you do not have the "bomb" you cannot hold your own against the "enemy" or "the Kafir" and thus, there was an immense need to 'acquire' or 'manufacture' a bomb.

It is well accepted that the "implications" of Religious Fundamentalism are relevant not just to diplomacy and politics, but that they also permeate many issues in all pluralistic societies of Asia and Africa. These issues range from environmental issues (like which trees and animals are sacred to whom) to women's issues (concerning their education, career and marriage). Religious Fundamentalism also largely determines which direction national economic policy takes i.e. whether there will be interdependent globalisation of the economy or will it be economic autarky related to the indigenous economic philosophies of self-reliance or Xenophobia.

The rise of Religious Fundamentalism also implies that those who believe in turning back to the glorious past - the Revivalists - will have a greater say in the determination of both domestic and foreign policies and this will often lead to conflicts in the determination of these policies. The logic of "Revivalism" also entails "Revanchism" - a desire to take revenge against enemies of the past - and this too is reflected in domestic and foreign policies. Can one be a revivalist in domestic politics and a conservationist in foreign politics?

Religious Revivalism and fundamentalism are strongly related to a position of strength and militancy, which can affect Foreign Policy. This can be seen in the case of India and Pakistan where the Pakistan Muslim League, which is in power in Pakistan, has put forth the view of an Islamic state based on the Shariat. Both countries have recently exercised their Nuclear options (through Nuclear blasts in May). There will be pressures on both sides towards aggressive posturing and increasing patronage to subversive pseudo-wars and militancy in the border areas and in Kashmir.

Revivalist ideology has a strong perception of the "other" - "we and the others", "the Kafir" - and a going back to the glorious past of "power", "shakti"! There will also be a quest for solidarity and support. In the sub-continent, India's geo-political circumstances are such that it is surrounded by religion driven governments - Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and even Nepal. Can India remain indifferent in this sea of Religious Revivalism and Fundamentalism?

HYPOTHESES

The two basic hypotheses that this work plans to deal with are –

1. Whether the rise of Religious Fundamentalism leads to an aggressive militaristic stance in Foreign Policy and if so, whether this in turn leads to a more rigid stance in negotiations and treaties?

2. Whether this trend has ultimately had an effect on the Domestic Policy which too turns Religious Fundamentalist and Militaristic?

Everyone talks about it and foreign policy analysts grant that faith-based political action seems more influential in world affairs today than at any time since the Enlightenment, yet there are very few works or articles dealing with the Rise of Religious Fundamentalism.

This is specially so in the sub-continent. Most of the works written are either on specific topical issues like communalism, the Ayodhya issue or on specific riots and the majority of the works are written by historians from the historical point-of-view. Very rarely has anyone seen this topic from the view of a scholar of International Politics or on its impact on Foreign Policy.

In 1991, an issue of the *Daedalus* devoted an entire journal to "Religion and Politics" and also a book "Religion: Missing Dimension". There have been articles by Muslim scholars, both Pakistani and Middle Eastern ones, on Islamic fundamentalism, but these deal mainly with Middle East specifics of Arab Muslims versus Israeli Jews. Not many have spoken of the sub-continental problems of India and Pakistan.

Thus, the literature which exists is very sketchy and does not deal with the problem which I propose to address or the viewpoint I intend to take.

With this brief introduction I now turn to my thesis on - RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN INTERNATIONAL POLTICS : A STUDY OF THE ISLAMIC DISCOURSE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

CHAPTER TWO

Rise of religious revivalism and fundamentalism in the twentieth century (with special focus on the last fifty years especially in the sub-continent)

Religion and international politics met at the end of the nineteenth century when Christian science and Darwinism clashed over the evolution of mankind. At the end of the nineteenth century science was the religion of modern minded persons. People were challenging life according to science, hence there was no place for religious fundamentalism. The first half of the twentieth century saw the spread of Communism to various countries of the world. Communism considered religion to be the opium of the masses and thus there was no place for the illogical reasonings of religion. The first half of this century also saw the zenith of colonialism. One should also try to understand the complex relationship between Religious identity, Revivalism, Fundamentalism, Separatism and Communalism. During the anti-colonial struggle it was natural to go back to the past but this often led to a distortion of history. It could have lead to a synthesis but it as well also raked up old wounds as one went back to an ancient past which was not only separate for both the religions (whether it be Hinduism and Islam or Islam and Christianity) but also invoked memories of wars fought and prices paid. This Revivalism and Revanchism often led to the feelings of a separate religious identity. This in turn helped the rise of communalization of politics and the demands for a separate homeland. These elements however did not make an exit once partition took place but often continued even post-Independence. Thus in these decolonized multi-plural, multi-religious societies there was a conflict between Tradition and Modernity, between Revivalism and Obscurantism and all these placed immense pressures on the domestic milieu of the countries.

An important point to keep in mind is the fact that colonialism was associated with certain aspects, like the imposition of a modern mode of life on the people which took them away from their ancient religious roots. The period of decolonization, thus, witnessed a surge of anti-colonial movements

which laid a lot of emphasis on a revival of the ancient glory and a deep-rooted desire to, once again, let religion rule society. An equally important point is that there is a need for humans to have a belief system. During the colonial period Christianity coincided with the victors image and thus in a number of colonized countries what we witnessed in the late 19th and early 20th century was a rise of a number of religious fundamentalist groups who harked back to a religious past - whether it was the Boxer Movement in China or the Mahdawi Movement in Islam. This is also very evident if we look at the nationalist writings of that period in the Indian sub-continent which in trying to remove the falsities of British works on Indian history tried to trace the roots of Indian nationalism and the sense of unity to the ancient past. In doing this they ended up giving it a Religious fundamentalist look, especially since they only dealt with the ancient Hindu past- where the "enemies" were only Muslims. This was exacerbated both by the beliefs of certain ideologues and by the rise of certain movements.

Islam saw a sea change in the post-colonial era, especially during the past quarter of a century. Jihad culture- and above all jihad mythology- was increasingly turned inward toward fellow Muslims and, in the process, it became a conservative myth. In terms of preserving the internal political order, it was becoming a revolutionary one.

This process was spearheaded by a plethora of 'radical' or 'fundamentalist' Islamic movements, but its impact on behaviour was much broader than its vanguard sourcing implies. Its influence reached far beyond a fringe of zealots for the simple reason that it evolved out of a changing socio-political context that affected all social strata in Islamic societies. This new context was the product of many factors. First and foremost among them was the fading away over time of a cluster of attitudes brought to the fore during virtually a century of anti-colonialist struggle. These attitudes focused on foreign enemies and tended to externalize guilt and responsibility for all the problems of indigenous societies. A second factor was the rise of a mature

and sometimes brave local intelligentsia whose members, though of different ideological hues, shared a more candid perception of their own societies and showed a readiness to raise formerly taboo topics (such as native-bred tyranny). And last but not least, the flagrant failure of the suprastate movements (above all Pan-Arabism) to achieve rapid modernisation, an end to politico-economic dependence on the former colonizers, broad economic well-being, renewed military might, and enhanced influence in world politics, have encouraged a search for alternatives.

A groundswell of Islamic fundamentalism - another inward-looking force- seems to be achieving cultural hegemony from Afghanistan all the way to Morocco. The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism came as a response to the same problems, but not only were its contents and *modus operandi* different, it differed also- and perhaps above all - in its *locus operandi*. While state elite operated at the level of the state itself, Islamic fundamentalism proceeded from the traditionalist and the semi or superficially secularised segments of modern society. It was, in a way, a phenomenon of civil society striking back at the state and at its gospel of modernity. At its very core was a transmogrified concept of jihad.

The success of fundamentalist Islam was due not merely to its intellectual and myth-making attraction. It possessed undeniable communication skills, adroitly manipulating a bedrock political language with deep historical and plebeian resonances with the instruments of modern media- audio-video tape cassette, the fax machine, satellite television, pirate radio, and the Internet. It thereby circumvented the state's monopoly on television and gave civil society, hitherto mute or muzzled, a new voice. Indeed, it was in the reinvigoration of civil society- which had suffered attrition and later destruction at the hands of the regimes of the past century- that fundamentalist Islam had drawn much of its staying power. In a way it is civil society, such as it is in the Muslim world. It has created free spaces (private mosques, professional organizations, trade unions, clinics, savings and loan

associations, Islamic banks, schools) that provide fundamentalism with an ever-flowing reservoir of new recruits and opportunities for expansion. Its success in the sphere of voluntary organizations is not something to be sneered at. Such organizations tend to be rare in the world of Islam today (one per fifty thousand inhabitants, compared to one per thousand in Europe and one per three thousand in East Asia).

All this is not to say that fundamentalist Islam's success was due essentially to communication, economics, and organization. Vision was crucial, too. The state, no longer in possession of an uplifting ideal such as Pan-Arabism, had made too many compromises with the uses of Islamic lingo and laws to be credible. Moreover, it was perceived as being too elitist and remote. The fundamentalists, on the other hand, had a message that was clear, simple, and grounded in a popular Islamic discourse about identity and social justice that had informed these societies for centuries, and that had never really been eradicated by this century's modernisers. That message was that modernist moral depravity was the source of all social ills, and the fundamentalists skillfully played on a combination of private frustration (unemployment, poor housing, steep dowries which impede marriage) and public ones (crime, higher rates of celibacy, sexual harassment in the congested public transportation) to make their point. The sole solution, they said was, the application of *shari'a*.

There is a tradition of discourse in Islam but it was during the period of the first four Rashidun Khalifas when the '*umma*' or 'Muslim Community' was very small in number and limited to the areas around Mecca and Medina. As the area under the Khalifas grew in size it was not possible to have 'discourse' or '*millat*' by consulting all members of the community - so the right to make a decision was vested in the Khalifa. The Khalifa came from amongst them and thus his views represented a consensus. However, in a number of Islamic countries the heads of government are totalitarian dictators who cover their actions under an Islamic cloak. This misuse of Islam is also made by many

fundamentalist, revivalist and militant organizations all over the world who believe in 'jihad' to achieve their goal of establishing 'pure' Islam in as many countries as possible. A number of these nations have nuclear weapons capability but their dictators should not be allowed to decide whether or not they should use these Weapons of Mass Destruction. These states vary in terms of size, ethnicity and forms of government but very often use religion as a means of coming together. Pakistan is one such nuclear weapons capable state which uses Islam as a weapon in its diplomatic relations by emphasizing in its diplomatic relations that it is an Islamic nation being threatened by a nuclear weapons capable Hindu India.

Contemporary populist and politicised Islam has created a charged atmosphere facilitating the acceptance of the anti-modern, anti-women creed of these Islamic fundamentalist groups, based on a highly distorted interpretation of the compassionate and egalitarian teachings of Islam. The violence they practice has its roots in the militant 19th-century movements like those of the Mahdis in Sudan and Wahabis in Saudi Arabia. The promise of a sweeping change held out by these groups also attracts insecure, isolated youth, haunted by a feeling of insignificance and worthlessness born of poverty, unemployment and oppressive anonymity. The youth also has a feeling that by the possession of some potent doctrine, an infallible leader or access to new techniques they have access to an irresistible source of power and the Islamic fundamentalist organisations proclaim the inevitability of the final triumph of their religion, have charismatic leaders, and, in terrorism, a seemingly potent technique of capturing power. The backwardness of the world's Muslim majority countries is well known. Thus the consequent mass production of youth vulnerable to the appeal of the totalitarian fundamentalist organisations virtually ensures a regular flow of recruits. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the principle sources of funds for Islamic fundamentalists everywhere. Discontent born of a serious and worsening economic crisis has swelled the ranks of militant Islamic fundamentalists in countries like Pakistan.

Some writers¹ believe that Islam, because of its origins in Arabia, makes "imperial demands" on its scattered devotees. They point out that a convert's worldview alters, his holy places are in the Arab lands and he has to turn away from everything that is his – and thus the disturbance for civil societies is immense. It is sometimes said that tolerance is the virtue of people who do not believe in anything. When it is believed that on your religion hangs the fate of your immortal soul, the Inquisition follows easily; when it is believed that religion is a breezy consumer preference, religious tolerance flourishes easily. At a time when religion is a reference and piety a form of eccentricity suggesting fanaticism, the above saying needs revision: tolerance is not just the virtue of people who do not believe in anything; tolerance extends only to people who don't believe in anything.

A modern state cannot be structured, as some of the West Asian countries have belatedly discovered, on the indivisibility of religion and state. In the Middle East too the rise of Islamic fanaticism, revivalism and fundamentalism was a result of the same socio-economic problems as elsewhere which the Islamic fundamentalists seized and took advantage of.

This is evident all over the world as seen in Europe- the Bosnian Muslims versus the Orthodox Serbs, the Christian Armenians versus the Muslim Azeris, in Middle East - the Israeli Jews versus the Palestinian Muslims, and Hindus versus Muslims in Pakistan and India. According to SP Huntington, Islam has 'bloody borders'. In 1993 in an article and a couple of years later in a book S.P. Huntington² argued that the nation state is no longer the primary unit of international relations. He also said that competition and conflict will not disappear but will have to be worked out at another level chiefly among the larger units known as cultures or civilisations. There are, however, only three (out of the eight civilisations he lists) real contenders in Huntington's advertised 'Clash of Civilisations' -- the first is the West (the Euro-American culture), the second is the Confucian culture and the third,

Islam. The past 25 years have seen a huge growth in what people call Islamic fundamentalism -- a large number of people have tried to rediscover their identity and turned back to the Koran. One can call it a 'revival' or a 'resurgence' or a return to one's roots. What is happening in the Muslim world today -- a revolt against its own decay and humiliation -- has taken the form of a return to the roots of Muslim religion. This religious revival may prove to be no deeper and no longer lasting than the Christian revival in Victorian England. But, while it lasts, Islam's revivalists will try to justify almost everything they say about politics and economies by quoting from the Koran and the stories of Muhammed's life ; and those who argue with them had better be able to counter-quote.

Islam's revivalist movement was born in Egypt in the 1990s. A deep-rooted religious revival, fortified by economic and social strains, is what has given the Islamic revivalist fundamentalist organizations, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Jihad, their base.

A populist ferment is surging across Islam, from Yugoslavia and Morocco in the West to Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines in the East. Fragmented in form, cohesive in ideology, this Islamic revivalism has been reflected in the 1978-79 Iranian revolution, the occupation of the Great Mosque in Mecca in Saudi Arabia in November 1979, the ongoing civil war in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, the assassination of President Anwar el-Sadat in Egypt in October 1981, and violent resistance in Lebanon through 1983 and 1984.

Often described as 'Islamic fundamentalism,' this popular force cuts across geographical boundaries, transcending political ideologies and national regimes. Radical governments such as in Algeria and Syria, and traditional monarchical regimes such as in Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia have witnessed a growing Islamic political activism. Scattered incidents in Soviet Central Asia, the home of an estimated 60 million Muslims, as well as the

Muslim guerrilla war of resistance against the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan demonstrate that communist systems are no more immune to the challenge of this Populist Islam than are the pro-Western conservative states in the region.

The fundamental impulse for resurgent Islam comes from the grassroots of society. Hence the designation 'Populist.' It is a force generated by the mass citizenry, those referred to as the downtrodden and the deprived. Sweeping upward from the angry, alienated and frustrated, Populist Islam has now penetrated the middle classes. It is called *al-islam al-Sha'bi*, and it directly confronts the various ruling elites in the Muslim world, the Islam of Sadat, of the Al-Saud family of Saudi Arabia, and of Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq and Gaafar Nimeiri of Pakistan and Sudan. These leaders represent *al-Islam al-Rasmi*, or Establishment of Islam, which seeks to preserve the political *status quo*.

As far as the foreign policy impact of fundamentalist Islam is concerned, one has first to distinguish between countries where Islamists are in power and those where they are in opposition. The most important case among the former, by virtue of both geostrategic location and sheer size, is obviously Iran. Perhaps the revolution's worst failure (apart from the huge waste of human life in the Iran-Iraq war) was one which preceded Khomeini's death: the failure to export the Iranian revolution to the rest of the Islamic world.

Khomeini had always viewed his revolution as all-Islamic, transcending the Sunni-Shi'a historical divergences, directed against the common enemy: namely, the twin forces of modernity and secularisation and their nominally Muslim admirers, the "Westoxicated" (*gharbzada* in Persian; *mustaghribun* in Arabic). Hopes for such a Pan-Islamic revolution were high in Tehran at the beginning of the 1980s. This led to mounting fears among Arab rulers, which took on obsessive proportions after the attack on the Great Mosque in Mecca

in 1979, the surge of terrorist acts in the Gulf in 1980-82, and the activities of Hizbullah in Lebanon (from 1982-83). All these were, however, countries with sizeable Shi'a minorities (only in Iran do the Shi'a constitute a majority). And even in these countries the attempt to inspire revolution ended dismally because of state repression: the massacre of the cadres of the *Da'wa* movement in Iraq by Saddam Hussein during the spring and summer of 1980s; the dismantling of Shi'a networks in the Gulf when harsh sentences were meted out (in the summer of 1989, for instance, sixteen Kuwaiti Shi'a were executed in Saudi Arabia for Khomeinist subversion). Only in Lebanon, where the state had, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist, did Hizbullah flourish, and that is explained in large part by the fact that it had roots in Lebanese society, enjoying a broad base of support as well as substantial autonomy.

Yet Khomeini's more glaring failure was his inability to penetrate Sunni countries, in many of which fundamentalist Muslim movements were a powerful opposition force but none of which was suffused with Khomeinist ideas. All these movements applauded the Iranian revolution in 1979, but even then virtually none were tempted to follow in the footsteps of what was deemed to be the particular Iranian (Shi'a) march toward an Islamic revolution. Moreover, these movements soon found many faults in the Iranian regime (notably, the practice of torture) and most did not back it in its war against Iraq.

Three major Sunni fundamentalist movements rest at the core of Populist Islam: the most extreme is the *al-Salafi* (traditional/ancestral) movement; slightly less dogmatic is *al-islah* (reform) fundamentalism; and even more accommodating to traditional fundamentalism are the new *al-Ikhwān* (Muslim Brotherhood) groups.

There is considerable disagreement about what precisely constitutes "Islamic fundamentalism." At one time or another the label "fundamentalist" has been attached to groups as diverse as Hamas in Israel/Palestine;

Hizbullah in Lebanon; the Refah (Welfare) Party in Turkey; the Al-Nahda Party in Tunisia; the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria; the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria; and the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan. Yet there is no unitary Islamic fundamentalism any more than there is a unitary Christian fundamentalism. In the Middle East, fundamentalism ranges from pietist organizations to revolutionary groups committed to the violent overthrow of what they perceive to be un-Islamic regimes.

While there is no monolithic Islam- and no monolithic fundamentalist movement- there is an ongoing struggle in the Islamic world. On one side are largely secular governments; on the other, there are individuals and groups who believe that politics and religion are one and who reject the secular Western division between the state and religion. As some Islamic scholars have observed, for fundamentalists, Islam is understood as *din* (a religion), *dunya* (a way of life), and *dawla* (a state). Fundamentalists call for a return to an earlier, supposedly more pure Islam. They want to replace a secular, civil law with the *sharia* (Islamic law), and they view the modern state system in the Islamic world as an illegitimate and immoral division of the *umma* (the community of believers). Fundamentalists share this basic ideology, but different groups adopt varying strategies to realize their vision.

Like communism, Islamic fundamentalism is an ideology. Where communism rejected capitalist rules of engagement in international affairs, Islamic fundamentalism rejects the notion that the state is an inviolable unit. In theory, the *umma* is one unit. All Muslims, regardless of sect, constitute the *umma*; hence, division among the believers is a degenerate state of affairs.

Prior to the 1979 Iranian revolution and the accession of the government of Umar al-Bashir and al-Turabi in Sudan in 1989, neither Iran nor Sudan would have considered events in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, or Malaysia to be foreign policy concepts. Ideologically, then, the policies that Iran or Sudan pursue toward the Muslim world are not foreign but rather are aimed at reconstituting the *umma*. No matter that this *umma* was never

politically unified as a self-conscious nation stretching from Morocco to Indonesia, the ideal of fundamentalist policy is that the Muslim community is unitary.

Fundamentalist foreign policy has several discernible characteristics: an embrace of the unity of the *umma*; a refusal to respect the sovereignty of secular states within the *umma*; a rejection of Western hegemony within the Muslim world; and an animus toward Zionism as the most glaring local manifestation of the Western state system that artificially divides the *umma*.

Though anchored in a religious creed, fundamentalist Islam is a radical utopian movement closer in spirit to other such movements (communism, fascism) than to traditional religion. By nature anti-democratic and aggressive, anti-semitic and anti-Western, it has great plans. Outside their own movement, fundamentalists see every existing political system in the Muslim world as deeply compromised, corrupt, and mendacious.

To build a new Muslim society, fundamentalists proclaim their intent to do whatever they must; they openly flaunt an extremist sensibility. "There are no such terms as compromise and surrender in the Islamic cultural lexicon," a Hamas spokesman declares. If that means destruction and death for the enemies of true Islam, so be it. Hizbullah's spiritual leader, Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, concurs: "As Islamists we seek to revive the Islamic inclination by any means possible."

Seeing Islam as the basis of a political system touching every aspect of life, fundamentalists are totalitarian. Whatever the problem, "Islam is the solution." Fundamentalist Islam is also aggressive. Like other revolutionaries, very soon after taking power fundamentalists try to expand at the expense of their neighbours.

Fundamentalists are responding to what they see as a centuries-long conspiracy by the West to destroy Islam. Inspired by a Crusader-style hatred

of Islam and an imperialist greed for Muslim resources, the West has for centuries tried to neutralise Islamic influence. It has done so by luring Muslims away from Islam through both its vulgar culture (blue jeans, hamburgers, television shows, rock music) and its somewhat higher culture (fashion clothes, French cuisine, universities, classical music).

Islam is an ancient faith and capacious civilization; fundamentalist Islam is a narrow, aggressive twentieth-century ideological movement. Whatever one chooses to call the phenomenon- extremist Islam, fundamentalist Islam, militant Islam, political Islam, radical Islam, Islamism, Islamic revival- it is the problem, not Islam as such.

Islamic fundamentalism is fed by resentment about official corruption, uneven economic development, and political oppression. It is in this way like Communism, from which fundamentalist Islam borrowed quite a lot, even as the ayatollahs tried to stamp it out. In former colonies, Communism and Islamic fundamentalism are also expressions of militant nationalism. Khomeini, like the Communists, ranted against "liberals," corrupt capitalists, and Western imperialism, or "world arrogance."

A thousand years of Muslim presence in India was largely an interaction between a young, virile religion, sometimes almost tribal in its simplicity, and an ancient civilisation. The result was the flowering of culture to which Hindu and Muslims both contributed. In his cultural orientation the Indian Muslim was, therefore, completely different from his Arabic brethren. His language, food, dress, music, architecture and, above all his poetry, all had the stamp of a synthesis forged in the civilisational crucible of Hindustan. When religion is brought into politics the extremist platform is always the most attractive. When British departure from India was imminent, there evolved among the Indian Muslims a religious political platform, a theory that Hindu and Muslims in India constituted two nations and this two-nation theory became Pakistan's justification for itself: we are what we are because we could not live with them, the Hindus.

Islam turned out to be a weak adhesive to keep nations together- in 1971, Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation -- the Bengali sentiment proving to be stronger than the Islamic bond. This collapse of the two-nation theory unnerved the authors of Pakistan. If the theory that Hindus and Muslims are two nations can no longer stand scrutiny then what is the basis of the Pakistani state when there are so many more Muslims in India? Continuous confrontation with India over Kashmir is therefore both a tactic and a strategy, a holding operation and an opportunity to churn out of the madarasas an Arabised Muslim, culturally severed from South Asia. Helping them in this project is Saudi Arabia from the 1970s. It is Saudi finance that goes into the mushrooming madarasas which are the nurseries for the eventual graduation of Islamic militants in the kind of camps bombed by the Americans. With hatred of India as its only policy, this nation, unless checked in its tracks, is destined to be the arch militant, fundamentalist state in possession of a nuclear arsenal.

It is important to remember that Muslim rituals, symbols and institutions remained intact despite India's partition and the inter-community rift that followed it. No doubt some of Islam's manifestations kindle memories of temple destruction and forcible conversions, nurture ill-will, and - as in the case of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, the Shahi Idgah at Mathura and the Gyan Vapi mosque in Varanasi - ignite the flames of violence. Yet the spread and variety of Muslim religious sites and their co-existence with Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Christian religious places of worship provide living testimony to the fusion of ideas and beliefs and "the transmission of cultural effects and impulses". No doubt stray and orchestrated instances of religious frenzy, stirred by religious revivalist and manipulated by vested interests, including power-hungry politicians, cause friction, deepen prejudices and lead to the symbolic representation of Muslims as the "alien". Still, the "clash of civilisations" theory or the supposed historic enmities dating back to the early Arab or Turkish conquests is refuted by the weight of historical and contemporary evidence.

An inspiring legitimization of the more mundane expressions of peaceful co-existence comes daily in the sounds of Shahnai (reeded, clarinet-like instrument) mingling in the *arti* of Hindu temples in Banaras, including that of the most sacred Vishvanath temple; or in some villages near Ajmer, close to the shrine of the Chishti saint Muinuddin Chishti, where Muslims celebrate the Hindu festival, Diwali, with a full-fledged Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) *puja*.

Islam in India, past and present, unfolds a bewildering diversity of Muslim communities. No statistical data are required to establish their location in multiple streams of thought and interactions with them. Their histories, along with social habits, cultural traits and occupational patterns, vary from class to class, from place to place, and from region to region. They speak numerous dialects and languages and observe wide-ranging regional customs and local rites despite the intervention of the Islamists.

Who, then, is a Muslim? What, if any, specific identity is associated with the Muslims generally and with India's Muslims in particular? Is it divinely ordained or related to features that have always been characteristic of the so-called *Islamic* governments and societies? How important is the community's own self-image which is subtly moulded by a combination of "internal" factors and external interventions? Is it the outcome of colonial images, of treating Muslims as an undifferentiated religious and political category? Finally, to what extent has the post-colonial state, too, viewed Muslims as a religious collectivity, who are also presumed to represent a separate political entity? ----

Maula Bakhsh, a peasant, lives in Tamil nadu and speaks Tamil. In Andhra Pradesh he speaks Telugu. In Bengal his language is Bengali. Do we think of such a Muslim for whom I have invented the name Maula Bakhsh? Jinnah, Khaliqzaman, Maulana Azad, the Aga Khan, MC.Chagla and the Raja of Mahmudabad... were Muslims. So was Hakku, the elderly grandmother of our locality. She was a weaver. She prayed five times a day.


She was so deeply moved by one of Gandhi's speeches that after Allah and his Prophet, she would repeat the name of Mahatma. At the age of 70 she did not want her body to be wrapped and then buried in a foreign cloth. So when people discuss India's Muslims I wonder who are they talking about. Maula Bakhsh? Jinnah and Co.? Or Hakku?³

According to some scholars, in the fundamentalist Hindu construction of the Hindu nation, the underlying proposition is that of a mystical unity, and a fundamental, automatic, unquestioned (and unquestionable?) commitment to its preservation. This argument is however fundamentally ahistorical, nationalisms everywhere have been long and deeply contested, 'communities' and 'nations' do not arrive ready-made, springing from the womb of the earth fully-formed, natural and unalterable. It also needs to be stressed that nationalist discourse and with it what is called communal discourse in India is always political and both are the handiwork of a specific age and a specific class which needs to be situated in a particular historical location.

According to the Hindu fundamentalist definition "A Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharat Varsha, from the Indus to the Sea, as his Father-land as well as his Holy-land, that is the cradle land of his religion."⁴ For them Hindutva is not a word but a history - Hinduism is only a derivative, a fraction, a part of Hindutva. Hindutva embraces all departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race. The essentials of a Hindu fundamentalist are a common motherland, common blood, common culture, common mother-tongue and common laws and rites.

Dwelling on the issue of 'Hinduism', 'Hindu' and 'Hindutva' the Supreme Court equates Hinduism with Hindutva. In its judgement the apex Court asserted: "The words Hinduism or Hindutva are not necessarily to be understood and construed narrowly" and said that the term 'Hindutva' or 'Hinduism' *per se* in the abstract" cannot "be assumed to mean and be equated with narrow fundamentalist Hindu religious bigotry." *In truth,*

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Hinduism cannot be equated with Hindutva by any stretch of language. Hinduism is ancient, noble and tolerant. Hindutva is modern, sordid and a recognised form of "narrow fundamentalist Hindu religious bigotry." Millions of devout Hindus reject Hindutva. The discursive power of Hindu Fundamentalism does not spring exclusively from single texts or even a chain of them as from the swift creation of a popular network of certain tropes. Themes, structures of apprehension and reform, at the heart of which functions a single mobile trope to provide the necessary ideological orientation. This produces a format of immense potency and amazing flexibility, for it constantly accretes new meanings, whole traditions to itself producing from its formative moment a web of thought that ranges from stereotypes to statistical and sociological analysis.

We often draw our conclusions about a community from our experience in urban areas. No wonder, communalism tends to be an urban phenomenon. The major communal riots occurred in urban areas though in the late Eighties they spread to rural areas. In the urban areas, separate political identities carry more weight than in rural areas. If we keep the bewildering diversity of our country in view, the national mainstream will appear to be a theoretical construct rather than a reality out there. The example of Indonesia is of a similar nature. The Muslims of all regions there do not have the same culture. For example, a Sanskritised culture is found in Java but not in Sumatra as Java was under Hindu kings during the medieval period. In Indonesia, too, there is a great deal of religio-cultural diversity among the Muslims. In Bali, where the Hindus are in a majority, the Muslims feel threatened as do the Pandits in Kashmir.

According to some scholars romantic nostalgia about Muslim glory can only be interpreted as an inferiority complex, aptly described in a Persian saying: *pidrum sultan bood*, my father was a king. Instead of recognising their own massive shortcomings, fundamentalist Muslims in Pakistan keep harping on their past glory, without contemplating the causes of five hundred years of humiliation. Associating with the past, instead of the present and the future, is

a sign of a decadent and demoralised nation. More Muslims have been killed by Muslims in Pakistan than by Hindus in India... And the number of Muslims being oppressed and exploited in Pakistan (is) at least as large as those opposed and exploited by Hindus in India - perhaps more.⁵

In a recent article, a Pakistani writer pointed out that all variants of contemporary 'fundamentalism' reduce complex religious systems and civilisations to one or another version of modern fashion. They are concerned with power, not with the soul, with the mobilisation of people for political purposes rather than with sharing or alleviating their sufferings and aspirations.⁶

Some writers draw a parallel between the fundamentalists in India and Pakistan. If one disregards the boundaries of nation-states of India and Pakistan and examines the macro trends in the entire region, it becomes obvious that despite different political systems and seemingly different circumstances, similar types of religious fundamentalist groups have emerged in India and Pakistan... there is something common in the emergence of these religious groups irrespective of their country or province, or their stated goals. The answers may be found in the evolution of the political economy of the region in the last 50 years.

A new and more dangerous element has grown and apparently taken some roots. Calling themselves Islamic radicals and working for a few years under the banner of Millat Parliament, a group of Muslims belonging to the Jamaat-e-Islami parivar, have decided to launch a Muslim political party to strive for an "unfinished Islamic agenda" to establish *khilafat* (Caliphate) or Islamic rule in India. This bunch of moronic obscurantists has released a Muslim Manifesto which regards the last 50 years as "lost years" for the Muslims.

If all this is not provocative enough for the majority community, it refers to them as *Kuffar* (infidels) and *Mushrekeen* (religious deviants). It virtually

issues a *fatwa* to Muslims telling them that it is completely *haram* (prohibited) for them to join any political party which does not share the Islamic agenda of *Khilafat* or works for the establishment of a secular society. It is incumbent on all Muslims, it says, that they sever all links with the existing non-Muslim political groups as these are "in open violation of Koranic dictates".

It is ironic that even while Islamic fundamentalists were celebrating the *fatwa* against *Vande mataram* and insisting that for all good Muslims the nation must remain subordinate to Islam, the punky but spunky young generation should have voted AR Rehman as this year's Channel V's "Viewers' Choice" award. The irony is made sweeter by the fact that Rehman bagged an overwhelming four million votes and, when asked to sing a couple of lines at the Channel V award ceremony, did not hesitate to publicly lend his voice to "*Vande Matram.....Maa tujhe salaaam!*"

The Hindu-Muslim relations are not merely governed by the religious factor alone but, more often, by political and economic developments. The political contour is determined by the social changes brought about by economic development and technological progress which in turn decides the pattern of behaviour and political perceptions. And these perceptions ultimately determine the shape of the relationship between Hindus and Muslims in society. Thus it is the process of economic development, social change and political perceptions which are far more important than the religious factor in determining intercommunal relationships.

One of the major events which marked Hindu-Muslim relations in the post-partition era was the Shah Bano case in which there was a long-drawn out verdict in favour of the conservative Muslim clergy. A number of Hindu fundamentalist organizations felt that the Government was appeasing the Muslims. The Government then appeased the Hindus by throwing open the doors of the Babri mosque to the Hindus for worship on 1st February, 1986.

This 'balancing act' had a very adverse effect on Hindu-Muslim relations in the country. The Hindu fundamentalists led by the fundamentalist organizations like the VHP and the RSS now began to demand the construction of a Ramjanmabhumi Mandir on the site of the Babri mosque. In order to broaden the movement the VHP, RSS and the right-wing nationalist party the BJP devised a clever move. They organized the worshipping and consecration of bricks in every village and taking them out in processions. These bricks were to be subsequently sent to Ayodhya for the construction of the temple. Basically it was a clever political move. A large number of Hindus were politically mobilized. But it communalised the whole situation and Hindus and Muslims came dangerously close to confrontation. The processions were organized in October-November 1989 just on the eve of the general elections in the last week of November 1989. It is no wonder that many major riots broke out in Indore (October 1989), Kota (September 1989), Bhagalpur (October 1989), etc., in which hundreds of innocent Muslims were killed.

Modern industrial societies are becoming increasingly multi-religious in structure thanks to the rapid means of transport and internationalization of commerce and industry. There was a time when European society was mono-religious. But from the beginning of the twentieth century it tended to become multi-religious due to the migration of people from colonial to the metropolitan countries in search of better prospects. After the Second World War, this trend grew very fast with rapid industrialization. Today hardly any European society can boast of being uni-religious. With the emergence of mutli-religious societies, racial and communal tensions are growing in these countries.

It is important to note that religious revivalism and fundamentalism are modern phenomena and are a product of the colonial society. The seeds were sown after the failure of the Revolt of 1857. At that time Hindus and Muslims made common cause to throw the British out and united under Bahadurshah Zafar, the last Mughal ruler. The revolt was crushed and the

feudal structure of society was replaced by the colonial system. It is this shift in social structure that brought about the genesis of communalism, religious revivalism and fundamentalism since these are not feudal phenomena but are the products of colonial society.

However, it does not mean that complete responsibility of the genesis of communalism goes to the 'divide and rule' policy of the British. It is as much a structural as a political problem. In the political sense it was the divide and rule policy of the British which generated it, and in the structural sense it was generated by the limited capacity of the colonial economy to grow but also by keen competition for jobs and political positions and sinecures between the two major communities of India, i.e. Hindus and Muslims.

A feudal structure of society does not generate much competition between different communities either in the sphere of economy or in that of polity. Nor is there any competition for public offices in that society. Public appointments are based on rewards for loyalty to the ruling dynasty, rather than on competition. Also, there is no political competition in a feudal society as the ruler more often comes to power by force than by contesting elections. The colonial society established by the British in India ushered in restricted democratic competition as well as competition for jobs. In an ideal situation the competition would be between individuals but in a backward society like India there was little competition on merit between individuals and instead competition took place more on the basis of community thus giving rise to communal tensions. Unless all the communities acquire education in the real modern sense in equal measure (i.e. acquire equal merit in the search for jobs as well as elected posts) democratic competitiveness would continue to generate powerful hostility between these castes and communities.

The Indian National Movement, though secular, had a religious revivalist tinge. The Indian National Congress relied a lot on Hindu symbols and traditions for its legitimization and many of its stalwarts were closely

identified with Hindu revivalist tendencies. The attempt of Swami Vivekanand to bring Hinduism to the same level as the other religions of the world left behind a legacy of an aggressive Hinduism which was taken to an extreme level by Fundamentalist Movements - like the Arya Samaj, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and others - who encouraged conversions to Hinduism through Movements like Shuddhi and Sangathan. Another aspect of this can be seen in the use of religious symbolism by the Congress extremists, like Tilak when he began the Ganesh Pujas and Shivaji Festivals ostensibly to wake up the Indian youth but it inadvertently also led to the growth of Hindu Fundamentalism.

Clear thinking on this topic has been hindered by the development in the twentieth century of two opposite stereotypes - the view of the Pakistani historians of a two nation theory and the Indian nationalist historian's counter-myth of a golden age of perfect amity broken solely by British divide and rule. Both assume a kind of nation-wide integration and unity almost impossible prior to the development of communications.

However, the argument that Hindus and Muslims were organised along communal lines and were in a state of perpetual conflict and confrontation exaggerates the role of divisive forces in Indian society and ignores the more powerful cohesive and unifying elements. Also to treat Hindus and Muslims as monolithic communities is misleading as they were divided at various levels.

During the revolt of 1857 a remarkable sense of Hindu-Muslim unity had been observed. In the 1880's however, Sir S.A. Khan put forth the view that Hindus and Muslims were two different communities and the only protection for Muslims was British rule. The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the subsequent Swadeshi Movement marked the rise of political religious extremism and revivalism along with the involvement of the masses in politics. However, the real serious development was the rapid growth of Muslim separatism due to the British propaganda that the new province would have

given more jobs to Muslims. There was a rash of riots in Eastern Bengal - the economic grievances of the poor Muslim peasants v/s the rich Hindu Zamindars was given a communal colour.

The entry of mass politics also led to the entry of the Fundamentalists in politics. In 1906 was founded the All India Muslim League whose main demand was separate electorates for Muslims and safeguards in Government jobs. A number of these demands were fulfilled by the 1909 Reform Act. 1915 saw the rise of Hindu fundamentalism when the Hindu Mahasabha was founded. However, both the League and the Congress had grievances and this brought them closer resulting in the Lucknow Pact of 1916, which, however, by recognising separate electorates formally recognised communal politics. In Hindu-Muslim unity giant steps were taken during the war period, but riots too continued. Hindu Revivalism and Pan-Islamism oscillated between lower class discontent, communal frenzy and anti-imperialist politics, according to the writings on that period.

This period also saw the rise of Gandhian politics. Gandhi placed a lot of importance on his relations with the Muslim leaders as he realised the need to find the solution to the Mohammedan question in order to realize the Swaraj. The Muslim response to the Rowlatt Satyagraha laid the ground for the wide-spread Muslim response to the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement in 1919-22 which showed that this was the response of the new generation of Nationalist Muslims.

*"Shaikji tumko mubarak rum-o-reh, hum to kehte hai ke Gandhiji ki jai."*⁷

However, the exploiting of religious sentiments for political purposes can be dangerous as became evident in the repercussions of the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat Movements launched in 1919 by Gandhi. By 1922 differences arose between the *ulema* and Gandhi over the involvement of the Hindus in the Khilafat Movement and the 1921 anti-Hindu Moplah uprising in the Malabar region. The withdrawal of the Movement by Gandhi in 1922 led

to further tensions between Hindus and Muslims and there was another spate of riots in the 1920s. This proved that a number of groups with divergent and conflicting aims had been held together not because they had a common cause but because it suited their interests for the time being.

The question to be answered is why this collapse took place. The roots of this struggle lay in the 1909 and 1919 reforms which had fostered the spirit of political exclusivism through the granting of separate electorates. These reforms were operated in a period when, while education was widespread, there were economic stagnation, declining revenues and intense middle-class competition. Thus Hindus and Muslims fought for the same jobs, posts and opportunities. This was helped further by the rise of Hindu Revivalism in the form of the Arya Samaj, the Hindu Maha Sabha and the Shuddhi and Sanghathan Movements. These were countered among the Muslims by the Tanzim and Tabligh Movements, which worked for communal consciousness and conversions.

The ideology of Muslim Fundamentalism and Revivalism did not flow out of the objective differences between Hindu and Muslims but out of the uses which were made of those differences through a conscious process of symbol selection. Thus, it was the threat of becoming backward, not backwardness itself, that made the Muslims organize themselves separately from the Hindus.

The Revivalist, Fundamentalist and Communal pot was kept boiling by disputes over music before mosques, over cow-protection and over the routes of religious processions. Other reasons, were, the process of conversion and reconversion and the constant flow of polemical literature designed to heighten and offend religious sensibilities. Historians have rightly stressed that the cow-protection movement and the Urdu-Nagri controversy encouraged a sense of "oneness" among the Hindus and also tended to divide 'Hindus' from all 'Non-Hindus'. In 1925, a significant development was

the foundation of the Hindu Revivalist Organization - The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh by Hedgewar.

In 1927 after the Simon Commission was refused entry by the Indian leaders there was an All Party Conference in which Pt. Moti Lal Nehru, et al, were asked to prepare a report. The Muslim League under Mohd. Jinnah put forth the famous "Fourteen Point" formula asking for separate electorates and one-third of the seats in the Central Legislature for Muslims. The refusal to accept these demands has often been cited as one of the reasons for partition and the onus is put at the doors of the INC and the Hindu fundamentalists.

However, others point out that if the separate electorates had been given up and these demands formulated by the fundamentalist Muslim leaders accepted, it would have eroded the very basis of vivisection of India. The Motilal Nehru report, which took these demands into account but did not accept them all, was a watershed in the history of the creation of Pakistan. Then a series of developments took place, right from the implementation of the Act of 1935 to the controversial Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, which ultimately sealed the fate of the unity of India. It would thus be seen that no religious issue was involved in all these controversies. One can easily conclude that Pakistan was the creation of secular interests rather than of any religious concept of a theocratic state or a concept of *millat* (nation) or Muslim *umma* (followers). Prominent theologians and freedom fighters like Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and Maulana Azad had understood this well and that is why they never accepted the demand for Pakistan. Islam was used only as an instrument as Hinduism was used by the Hindu revivalists.

In the 1930s, Religious Fundamentalism took on an ugly turn with it acquiring a popular base. This was because the parties, like the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha failed to do well in the 1937 elections while the Congress did exceedingly well and thus these parties realised that the only way they could survive was if they turned to mass-based politics and their success was shown in the fact that in the 1946 elections the Muslim

League won 36% of the Muslim seats. Islamic Revivalism in Punjab grew because of the support of the traditional rural elite, i.e. the Pirzada class, the Biraderi communities and the Sadja-Nashins - and the Muslim League won this class over to its side. In the 1937 elections, the League had done very badly but in the 1946 elections it had the Pirs issuing *fatwas* in favour of the League and thus the success of the League shows how much more successful traditional, social and religious networks are in mobilizing political support.

Muslim fundamentalism as an organised political force had been quite a strong force in Hyderabad. Since the 1930s, socio-economic causes were not the only reasons for the religious riots but rather were now closely intertwined with political factors. It was the extension of revivalist and fundamentalist politics to the new social spaces and the lower classes among the Muslims and the Hindus that gave Muslim and Hindu fundamentalisms their social bases. The notion of self-help and standing on their feet without looking to the government became an enduring feature of Muslim organisations and made them successful by filling up the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the state from its expected roles. The reasons for the rise of Religious Fundamentalism were two - politicisation and proselytization - which were done by the Hindu Mahasabha, the All India State-Peoples Conference, the INC, The League and the Khaksar Party.

During the Second World War period the Pak slogan began catching on. For the Muslims of Punjab and Bengal, Pakistan symbolised the end of the Hindu Zamindar and the Hindu Bania exploitation. It also meant that a large part of the Muslim intelligentsia that was not able to get jobs because of the competition with the Hindus now had their road open. The support for Muslim separatism came both from the old Muslim zamindars and the new intelligentsia and the business class. In 1944, Gandhi tried to hold talks with Jinnah on the basis of the "Rajgopalachari Formula". But Jinnah refused to accept a "moth-eaten Pakistan".

The change of Government in Britain brought the Labour Party to power. The Cabinet Mission Plan denied the League any Pakistan because it would lead to the problem of accommodating the Hindus living in these areas. The League refused to accept this plan and instead on August 1, 1946 called for a 'direct action day' to achieve Pakistan and thus the country witnessed large-scale riots which compelled the Congress to accept the partition of India.

The word 'communal' in the Indian context perceives Indian society as constituted of a number of religious communities. Communalism, in the Indian sense, therefore, is a consciousness which draws on a supported religious identity and uses this as the basis for an ideology. It then demands political allegiance to a religious community and supports a political action designed to further the interests of that community. Such an ideology, though of recent origin, uses history to justify its presence.

¹ Naipaul, V.S. – Among the Believers

² Huntington, S.P. – Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order (1995)

³ Hasan, Mushirul – Legacy of a Divided Nation : India's Muslims since Independence (1999)

⁴ Savarkar, V.D. – Hindutva : Who is a Hindu?

⁵ Aziz, K.K. – The Murder of History in Pakistan

⁶ Basri, Ahmed – 'Dawn', January 31, 1999

⁷ Hasan, Mushirul – Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885-1930

CHAPTER THREE

Terrorism in Kashmir and Punjab, the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi issue and the Bombay bomb blasts

Differences between Hindus and Muslims have dominated public life in India for about the last hundred years. Artificially contrived at the start and drawing strength from divergence of social habit, these differences have widened to grow into the phenomenon of communalism, unknown almost everywhere else in the world. A few Indians genuinely felt that their religion was under threat; many more used their religious commitment to battle for jobs, secure political concessions or strengthen their reactionary interests. So widely did the virus spread in the penultimate years of the Raj in India that, despite the efforts of staunch nationalists in the modern sense, freedom came to India along with the partition of the country. The areas where Muslims formed a majority of the population and wished to secede were thrown together to form the new State of Pakistan.

Even after the creation of Pakistan, the Hindu-Muslim confrontation did not finally end, as was expected by many. It has continued in independent India and has been joined by an unlikely third form of Fundamentalism, Revivalism and Separatism - Sikh Fundamentalism.

The aim of this chapter is to look at four case studies of Terrorism in Kashmir, Terrorism in Punjab, the Babri-Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi issue and the Bombay bomb blasts in the backdrop of a few landmark events which have occurred from 1947 till today. These landmark events are - the 1965 Indo-Pak war over Kashmir, the 1971 Indo-Pak war over the liberation of Bangladesh, the 1984 Golden Temple episode, the 1986 Shah Bano case and 1995 Charar-e-Sharif episode.

The section will trace the reasons which led to conflicts in each of the four case studies, the major events, the support and succour provided by both

neighbouring countries and other fundamentalist and revivalist organizations worldwide. It will also touch upon the human rights issues.

Sectarianism, fanaticism, religious assertion or fundamentalism, by whatever name we may call it, is not a purely religious phenomenon. It is as much social, political and economic in nature as it is religious. If a community is politically and economically on the ascendant, it would tend to be liberal and less assertive of its religious beliefs. However, if a community is faced with hostile circumstances and threats to its existence, it tends to assert its religious zeal to strengthen its defences. The rise of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh fundamentalism in recent years must be seen in this perspective.

Hindu fundamentalism particularly has shown a great deal of aggressiveness in the last few years. It began with the incident of the conversion of a few Dalits (low-caste Hindus) to Islam in the early eighties in Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu and culminated in the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi controversy recently. What was the cause of the aggressive assertion of religion by the Hindus? One can very well argue that Hinduism is not only a liberal, much less rigid and non-doctrinaire religion but that Hindus are better off both politically as well as economically. Why should then there be such a manifestation of fanaticism on their part?

It is true Hinduism is more liberal, less rigid and non-doctrinaire. But this is the scriptural view of Hinduism. Hindu behaviour is not necessarily governed by the scriptural view of religion; instead it is governed by the realities of life and one's own interest. In other words it is interests, and not ideals, which govern human behaviour. Secondly, it is true that Hindus, specially the upper and middle class, are better off both politically and economically; but, of late, they feel threatened by 'aggressive minorities' and have developed, because of aggressive propaganda, a sense of encirclement and of being besieged. Here it should also be remembered that it is the perception of reality rather than reality itself which is more important as far as human behaviour is concerned.

A number of developments since the early eighties have reinforced this Hindu fundamentalist perception of challenge to its social and political hegemony. The first major challenge was, as pointed out earlier, from the conversion of Dalits to Islam.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the RSS and other Hindu fundamentalist organizations decided to meet this challenge by asserting Hinduism. It should also be borne in mind that this challenge from Dalits came at a time when the oil revolution in the Arab world had brought about an assertion of Islamic fundamentalism. It was being rumoured that petro-dollars were flowing to finance Muslim organizations with a view to making Muslims political challengers to the Hindus.

Also, for various reasons to be discussed later, the Punjab problem assumed menacing proportions around 1983. The Sikhs who were historically not considered different from the Hindus, began to assert their separate identity and even to object to being bracketed with the Hindus in the Constitution. Thus, Sikh religious assertion created another major challenge to the Hindus. Sikhism was seen to be so much an integral part of Hinduism that any assertion of separatism on the part of the Sikhs was no less than a traumatic experience for the Hindus. Here also it was perceived as not merely losing a friend but providing an ally to the Muslims. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale once told a BBC correspondent that the Sikhs should join hands with the Muslims and together challenge Hindu hegemony.

The Shah Bano movement in 1986-87 also had an adverse impact on the Hindu mind. Muslims aggressively opposed and rejected the Supreme Court judgement in the case of maintenance claimed by Shah Bano of Indore beyond the period of *iddah* (the three-month period after a divorce during which a divorcee is entitled to claim for maintenance, according to the Muslim law). The Muslims kept agitating until the Government agreed to nullify the court judgement by enacting a separate law for Muslim women. This was seen as a complete negation of secularism by the Hindus and their perception

that only Hindus are secular and that minorities are revivalist, obscurantist and fundamental got reinforced.

Terrorism in Kashmir

Let us now take up the case study of Terrorism in Kashmir.

Today we were unlucky. But remember, we have only to be lucky once. You have to be lucky always.

IRA to British PM Thatcher

Terrorism is in essence politics by violence. It is twice flawed -- it destroys innocent people and it is self-destructive. Terrorist violence is politically motivated but its logical base (in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab) is built around religious fundamentalism. By twisting the historical facts, terrorist ideologies develop a rhetoric of their own which is heard by their sympathizers with hope and reverence. Fired by religious fervour, they provide fertile ground for recruiting young men and women to attack the allegedly decayed political and moral order of the so termed hedonistic exploitative societies.

Fanatic terrorist leaders hold sway over the people, who are helpless before these avaricious and immoral "politicians", who can go to any length to hold on to power. In the parlance of the religious fanatic, "Spilling the blood of the infidel has God's blessings". In Punjab and in Jammu & Kashmir terrorism was the outcome of the people's anger against the ruling political elite. Religious fundamentalism provided the ideological framework and justification for the heinous acts of terrorism. The orations in the 'gurudwaras' in Punjab and the mosques in Jammu & Kashmir have played the most crucial role in mobilising the people behind the terrorists, e.g. in Kashmir the militants closed down cinemas, ordered the women to wear 'burqas', and shut down the liquor shops - but no one protested. The secessionist nature of some of the terrorist movements in India is, according to many analysts, due to the failure of our

political structure to assure these agitating groups of people that their individual identity is an essential part of the Indian ethos.

Kashmir came to India in 1947. It is special to Pakistan because it symbolises what is often described as "the unfinished business of Partition" whereas it is special to India because it is seen as the most important proof of Indian secularism. The fact that Muslim Kashmir chose secular India over the Muslim homeland, "the land of the pure" that Mohammed Jinnah carved out of the subcontinent to protect Muslim interests, was in Indian eyes a powerful vindication of Indian secularism. It also negated Pakistan's *raison d'être*.

The Kashmir Valley forms the smallest segment of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is this tiny territory which constitutes the Kashmir problem. This valley has a distinct culture, language and customs that have remained distinct over the centuries on account of the high mountains that cocoon it. It had Hindu rulers till the 1400s. Islam came to Kashmir through Sufism in the fourteenth century. The princely state was established by Gulab Singh, a Dogra chieftain in the nineteenth century, who was sold the Kashmir Valley by the British in 1846. By the 1920's, however, largely thanks to the growth of Muslim associations interested in educational reforms, many young Muslims went to study outside the state. For example, Sheikh Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg and G.M. Sadiq. By the 1930's, a full-scale movement against the Maharaja began in Kashmir. In 1934, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was founded by Sheikh Abdullah and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah to fight against Dogra rule. However, the Mirwaiz and the Sheikh soon parted ways and in 1939 the Sheikh founded the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. This became a political party which dealt with many secular issues. The Sheikh's secularism put him off the idea of merging Kashmir with an Islamic Pakistan. The Pakistanis believe that the Boundary Commission's decision to include Gurdaspur (the main road to enter Kashmir in India) in India was a biased one.

At the time of Independence and Partition of the so-called British India in 1947 into India and Pakistan, there were nearly 500 princely states in India that were given the option either to remain in India or merge with Pakistan or remain independent. All princely states, except Jammu & Kashmir, were merged in India. But in 1948 Tribals aided by Pakistan Razakars invaded Jammu & Kashmir. The aim of the attack was to compel Kashmir valley to accede to Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the then ruler of Jammu & Kashmir, sought the help of the Indian Government. To this end the Diwan of Jammu & Kashmir state came to meet Pandit Nehru on October 26, 1948 with instrument of accession, and further negotiation. When Nehru refused to entertain the Diwan he threatened to go to Pakistan to negotiate with Mr. Jinnah. Pandit Nehru reluctantly agreed, on the intervention of Sheikh Abdullah, to accede to the request of Jammu & Kashmir state. This was followed by the Indian troops being flown in and landed at Srinagar airport. Indian troops cleared the Airport and fought and pushed back the Paki forces from 2/3 of Jammu & Kashmir.

India thought it fit to appeal to UNO for intervention in January, 1949. The UNO passed a resolution directing –

- a) Both India and Pakistan to have cease fire.
- b) Vacation of aggression by the Pakistani forces.
- c) On vacation of aggression, plebiscite was to be carried out under the observation of UNO.

In the meantime, Jammu & Kashmir state was given a special status under Article 370 of the Constitution of India, whereby Jammu & Kashmir state could implement its own Constitution framed by its own Constituent Assembly on all subjects except Defence, Foreign Affairs and Finance.

The Delhi Agreement between Pt. Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah in 1952, abolished hereditary rulership; vested the residuary powers in the state; and emphasized the continuance of special citizenship rights for the 'state.

subjects'; the flying of a separate flag of the state with the national flag also finding a supremely distinct place; and, subject to certain restrictions and limitations, extension of provisions of the Indian Constitution in respect of fundamental rights and Emergency powers of the President and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. In 1975, there was an accord between Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah - the Kashmir Accord - and in 1986, there was an accord between Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah - but these failed to bring about long lasting peace.

By 1953 however, Sheikh Abdullah, was already considered a traitor and dismissed from Government on grounds of treason against the country. What was very easily forgotten was that Sheikh Abdullah, a Muslim, had brought Kashmir into India, whereas a Hindu ruler had wanted it to be a separate country. For 18 long years, during which India and Pakistan fought three wars, Sheikh Abdullah was kept in prison. This is something which the Kashmiris find very hard to forget-that a democratically elected leader was kept in prison only because the Government in Delhi thought it fit to do so in its own interest and wisdom.

Over the years one of the chief grievances of the Kashmiris was the human rights issue - Kashmiris felt hurt that the national press was insensitive to the hurts of the Kashmiri Muslims and only noticed the plight of the Kashmiri Hindus. They argued that Nehru had promised plebiscite but not gone ahead with it. Also, they objected to his taking the matter to the United Nations in the first place if he was not going to do what the UN said in its resolutions.

The Hindu Sikh riots in 1984 had a massive impact on Kashmiris. According to some analysts when Kashmir faces a choice between a democratic secular India and an Islamic military Pakistan it will always choose India. It is only when it faces a choice between a repressive communal India and an Islamic Pakistan that Islam becomes a factor.

By 1989, successive failures of democratically elected Governments, rampant corruption and a government indifferent to peoples' problems led to the growth of fundamentalist organizations like the Jamaat-e-Islami. Slowly over the years police atrocities increased and popularity of the militants correspondingly further increased. The Islamization of Kashmir's Hinduified Islam slowly took place. Pubs, parlours and cinemas and other manifestations of non-Islamic culture were banned. The increased militancy led the Government to hand over the Valley to the army and para-military forces whose atrocities only led Kashmir further towards a state of civil war.

Among the militant organizations in Kashmir were the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) of Sheikh, Majid and Mir and the People's League of Shabbir Shah. The JKLF demanded a plebiscite in the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and if the people voted against independence and chose to stay with either India and Pakistan they would accept it; on the other hand the Jamaat-e-Islami and Hizbul Mujahideen asserted there is no possibility of Kashmir staying with India. In 1991 the "Azadi" movement had slowed down into a lull and the centre should have taken advantage of this to negotiate with the militants but this did not happen and by 1992 the Movement caught renewed vigour.

In 1993 the law and order situation worsened and militancy increased. The Hazratbal Shrine siege gave an impetus to the militancy movement as the people started believing that the Government was against their religion. In 1995 there occurred the tragedy of the Charar-e-Sharif siege where the Pakistani-trained militants were responsible for the fire that destroyed the monument but the militants blamed the Government and the latter's credibility was so low that the people believed them.

According to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,¹ the dictates of reason, the compulsions of geography and the influence of international forces require India and Pakistan to live in peace. India wants to retain Kashmir to negate the two-nation theory and hence Pakistan should also continue her struggle

for the right of self-determination of this 'subject people' Pakistan is 'incomplete' without Jammu and Kashmir, both territorially and ideologically. Pakistan cannot agree to bilateral disarmament of nuclear weapons because India is in possession of Jammu and Kashmir and this disarmament would only mean India's victory. Thus, as Bhutto says, eternal enemies do not exist but eternal interests do and Kashmir is one such eternal interest of Pakistan which it can never give up.²

According to social scientists any state on the periphery of the country, linguistically and culturally different from other states, and religiously different from other states constitutes a problem state. Also the people in the peripheral states complain that they have been left out in the process of development. The Kashmir problem has two dimensions, the religious and the ethnic (Kashmiriat). Pakistani subversion alone does not explain why religion has become a divisive force in Kashmir: the infiltration of fundamentalist teachers in Government schools and the indoctrination of students in Jamaat-e-Islami-run madaras are also to blame. Religion became a divisive force also because of frequent communal riots in India and the emergence of Hindu chauvinism in a big way. The massacre of Sikhs in 1984 accentuated doubts among Kashmiri Muslims about the durability of India's secularism. Hence, it was indeed a folly for the Indian Government to have ever permitted the exodus of Hindu Pandits from the valley. The migration of the Pandits was an assault on the concept of a secular, composite Kashmir and, by extension, a secular, composite India. A fact that many analysts and writers forget is that the Kashmiri Muslims of the Valley have more in common with the Kashmiri Hindus and not with the P.O.K. Muslims who are more Pakistani and Punjabi by culture and do not even speak the Kashmiri language.

On the Kashmir issue the Indian perception is that the hidden understanding at the Simla Conference post 1965 war was that Kashmir issue would be forgotten and the Line of Actual Control would become the de facto

border. However, Pakistani Prime Minister Z.A.Bhutto had insisted then that future problems (especially Kashmir) would be discussed bilaterally and not at international forums.

The broad framework of India's foreign policy suggests:

- 1) Pakistan should vacate the one-third part of Kashmir occupied by it as they are the aggressors, we are the aggrieved.
- 2) We have conducted several elections in our part of Kashmir so no plebiscite is considered necessary. Only POK will require a plebiscite whenever the aggression is vacated.
- 3) For the purpose of complete integration of state to India full authority has been given to the state for removing special status under Article 370 of Indian Constitution. This Article has created a controversy. One shade of opinion is that the people will not voluntarily surrender their special status for getting the privileges attached to it, so Article 370 should be removed thereby eliminating the obstruction to full integration of the people. Another shade of opinion is that Article 370 should not be removed unless people themselves express their will.

A significant fall-out of Pokhran-II was that what Pakistan & pro-Azad Kashmir strategists could not achieve in 50 years has been achieved by these tests, i.e. the internationalisation of the Kashmir issue or opening up of the Kashmir issue to international intervention. The Joint Communique of the P-5 of UN Security Council on June 4, 1998 marked the body's first major engagement with Kashmir in decades. Para 5 of the communique described Kashmir as being the "root cause of the tension" between India and Pakistan - a semantic construction that rejects the core position of India's diplomacy. Jammu & Kashmir is now a subject of international consideration. Home Minister Advani on May 18 made explicit a linkage between the Pokhran tests and India's strategic position. The Minister argued that India's "decisive step to become a nuclear weapons state brought about a qualitative new stage in India - Pakistan relations, particularly in finding a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem". He also said that nuclear weapons might be used to

address Pakistan's offensive in Jammu & Kashmir. Pakistan retorted by six tests and said that these marked the beginning of a nuclear race. Before the tests many countries were willing to accept that Pakistan had been abetting and supporting terrorism and were sympathetic to the Indian cause. The world community accepted it as a bilateral issue. The need was for India to de-link Kashmir from the nuclear issue and start a bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. A beginning was made by the 'bus diplomacy' – the Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee travelled by bus to the Wagah border and met the Pak Premier Nawaz Sharif for the Lahore Summit in February, 1999.

Terrorism in Punjab

Let us now take a look at terrorism in Punjab. Sikhs have a grievance since partition when some two and a half million Sikhs were forced to flee from Pakistan. Despite the many social and religious links between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab there has always been a conservative and orthodox section among the Sikhs who considered Hinduism as a threat to the very survival of the Sikh religion. Militancy in Punjab is, however, closely linked with the politics of the state. The Akali Dal has been fighting openly for political power by espousing the cause of the Sikh religion. For them, there can be no separation between the Sikh religion and Sikh politics. Militancy was institutionalised in the Sikh religion by the sixth guru Guru Hargobind, who started the practice of wearing two swords, representing spiritual and temporal authority.

— In the 1870s the Singh Sabha Movement was launched to restore purity to Sikhism. In 1921 the Akali Movement was started and the Akali Dal established and in 1925 the SGPC was set up. The Akali Dal controlled the SGPC from the beginning. The Akalis were opposed to the idea of Pakistan and they put forth the idea of Azad Punjab as a province of the Indian Union, with such proportions of Sikh, Hindu and Muslim populations that no single religious community would lord over the others. The problem of Sikh

separation was not solved by the Pt. Nehru-Master Tara Singh pact in 1955. From 1947 to 1966, when the new boundaries of Punjab were drawn after its division, Sikhs were only 33% of the population of the state. The Sikhs dominated the rural areas, while the Hindus dominated the urban areas. In 1966, a demand was made to give the Sikhs a majority over the Hindus by demanding a separate Punjabi Suba. The agitation for a linguistic state resulted in the merger of PEPSU with East Punjab. In 1971 Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were created from the existing Punjabi Suba which led to an increase in the percentage of Sikhs in Punjab to 60.2%.

The pursuit of power was leading Sikh politics to extremism, which as time passed degenerated into terrorism. The 1973 Anandpur Sahib Resolution represented this - the Sikhs were described as a separate 'quam'. Political and economic insecurity, as a result of the increasing unemployment of the educated Sikh youth created an explosive situation, which was fully exploited by the extremist elements. The Green Revolution led to agricultural prosperity but also brought in labourers from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This factor increased the fear of the Sikhs that they would again become a minority in their own state.

The Government at Delhi in order to break the hold of the Akali Dal decided to use a popular Sikh priest Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale- a fiery priest who spoke on Sikh Fundamentalism. By 1983 he had moved on to the evils of the Hindu race. Terrorism in Punjab started on Baisakhi Day, 13th April, 1978, after a clash between the Nirankaris and the followers of Bhindrawale - the Akhand Kirtani Jatha in Amritsar. This event led to the Akalis and Bhindrawale becoming allies. During the World Sikh Convention in 1981, the Akali Dal held morchas in order to give the agitation a communal colour, e.g. ban on the sale of cigarettes, liquor and meat near the Golden Temple.

Both the Congress and the Akali Dal had discredited themselves in the eyes of the masses whereas Bhindrawale was a new face, spoke their language, lived like them and thus became a hero. Pakistani support became more overt only after 1984. In 1981 Bhindrawale was arrested but released within one month unconditionally and thus became a martyr, a saint and a hero. 'Hit-lists' were made of possible persons to be assassinated. Hindus fled Punjab, the Nirankari Gurus and other enemies of the panth were assassinated.

The Central Government made a costly mistake in 1983 in Punjab (as it did in 1990 in Jammu & Kashmir) when it dismissed a democratically elected government and thus played into the hands of the terrorists -- a popularly elected government is one of the biggest hurdles for terrorists and this was very conveniently removed by the Central Government.

The Operation Blue Star, 1984 launched by the Central Government was considered as an assault on the Sikh religion. It was a short-sighted, ill-planned and ill-executed operation which only resulted in alienating the Sikh community. The Operation Bluestar was ill-timed because it coincided with the Anniversary of Guru Arjun Dev who had built the Temple. The anti-Sikh riots of 1984 after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Delhi only increased the sense of humiliation and increased the demand for a separate state of Khalistan. The 1985 accord between Rajiv Gandhi and Akali Sant Longowal was a failure because the latter was very shortly afterwards assassinated by the terrorists.

Politics apart, had the Government shown even a little sensitivity in its dealings with the Sikh community, militancy would perhaps never have taken hold of the state. The assault on the Golden Temple, the most sacred symbol of Sikh identity, in the course of Operation Blue Star was indeed an awesome mistake. If Blue Star was mounted on Guru Arjun Dev's Gurupurab, can the Sikhs be faulted for thinking that it was deliberately so timed to afford the security forces an opportunity to indulge in a bit of massacre of the civilian

population, since the day would attract a larger than normal number of pilgrims? So deeply traumatized were the Sikhs that for the first time in post-Independence India, there was a virtual revolt in the Indian Army.

Had the government acted speedily and effectively to stop the killing of the Sikhs and the looting of their property, especially in Delhi, terrorism could have taken a back seat in Punjab almost immediately. The guilt of Mrs Indira Gandhi's death would have weighed far too heavily on the valiant community. Apart from the massacre, the subsequent stonewalling in taking action against the guilty only aggravated Sikh anger. This continues to be a sore point with the Sikh community even today. By 1990 the terrorist activities had increased and so had the number of explosions and bombs in different parts of the country leading to the deaths of hundreds of innocent people. Under pressure from the militants the Akalis boycotted the elections in 1992 and the Congress came to power with Beant Singh at the helm. He tried to justify the victory by containing the militancy and was almost successful but later he too was assassinated. The return of peace and constitutional politics brought the Akalis to power in 1997.

Though religion may at least overtly seem to be the prime motivating factor for the emergence of terrorism in both Punjab and Kashmir, the two movements are quite dissimilar. In Punjab, the heart of the Sikh population was never in militancy, despite the drum-beats of Sikh fundamentalists, and despite the provocations of Blue Star and the carnage of Sikhs that followed the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. Even the ethnic cleansing of Hindus was half-hearted. On the other hand, the containment of terrorism in Punjab, which seems to be bringing the Sikhs back to the Indian mainstream, could well mean that India's eternal secular ethos is reasserting itself. After all, the bonds- ethnic, linguistic, cultural, lineal and even religious - between the Sikhs and the Hindus were obviously far too strong to totally snap on account of a temporary aberration. Sikhism was born out of Hinduism, and emerged as an entity for the protection of the Hindu community, though it was also but a

blend of Islam and Hinduism, of Sufi practices of Indian Islam and the Bhakti cult of Hinduism. It indeed devolves to the great credit and large-heartedness of the Sikh community that it eventually refused to succumb to the fanatical edge of the militant campaign or to subversive Pakistani blandishments.

It was the Sikh more than other Indians who took on the problem of terrorism in Punjab frontally and prevailed over it. In the final analysis, more than Sikh separatism, it was the communalization of politics, a consequence of the gross competition for political power, that led to militancy in Punjab, with the Akalis going overboard on the separatist slogan, the BJP reacting to it in its own sectarian way and the Congress trying to counter it by projecting its own one-up style of Sikh fundamentalism.

Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi Issue

Turning to the Babri-Masjid-Ramjanambhumi issue one notices that certain Hindu fundamentalist groups have alleged that this mosque had been built in the sixteenth century after destroying a Hindu temple standing on the site of the birth of Rama - one of the avatars of Lord Vishnu of the Hindu pantheon. These groups were able to fulfil their desires when they destroyed large parts of the mosque on December 6, 1992. The tragic results were widespread - Hindu-Muslim riots all over the country and the terrorist blasts in Bombay.

The identification of present-day Ayodhya with Ramjanmabhumi is a matter of faith and not of evidence. There is again no conclusive proof that the mosque, built at the time of Babur, was on a temple site or that a temple had been destroyed to build it. Visitors to Ayodhya, such as Tieffenthaler in the late eighteenth century, have recorded a rather garbled version of a local story that either Babur or Aurangzeb destroyed a temple and constructed a mosque on its site and that this temple had been at the birth place of Rama - incidentally, one among many with claims to have been located at his birth place. But, it was only in the nineteenth century that British officials and

writers began to give wide circulation and lend authority to the story that on Babur's orders a temple had been destroyed and a mosque built on that site. This fitted in with the British understanding of India. The British tended to break up the Indian population in terms of community and analysed Indian society as a plural one of different peoples who needed special outlets in political life. These 'imagined religious communities', in Romila Thapar's phrase, were also seen as basically hostile to each other; and the assumption that in Ayodhya a temple had been destroyed and replaced by a mosque was of a piece with this hypothesis. That Muslim rulers in India often acted on non-religious grounds and, like all rulers everywhere, were primarily interested in the maintenance of their political power, was ignored.

It is quite evident that no temple-mosque controversy was known in Ayodhya till the nineteenth century. Local stories were put into circulation and claims were raised over the places of worship in Ayodhya. The British played a significant role in strengthening the claim by providing the local stories with a historical basis.

In 1528 the Babri Masjid was built by Mir Baqi, a nobleman of Babur's court. In 1855 there was a Hindu-Muslim conflict as a consequence of an attempt by Muslims under the leadership of Shah Gulam Hussain to oust the Hindu Bairagis from the Hanumangarhi temple on the grounds that the temple had supplanted the mosque. The Muslims were defeated. The dispute however was not over the Babri Masjid. In 1857 soon after the Revolt, the Mahant of Hanumangarhi took over a part of the Babri Masjid compound and constructed a *chabutra*. In 1859 the British Government erected a fence to separate the places of worship of the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindus were to enter from the East and the Muslims from the North.

On the night of December 22-23, 1949, an idol of Rama was installed by some Hindu fanatics inside the mosque. The Government proclaimed the premises as a disputed area and locked the gates. On April 24, 1950 the District Collector of Faizabad filed a statement in court that the property in suit

had been in use as a mosque and not as a temple. On March 3, 1951 the Civil Judge ordered that the idols should remain. The High Court confirmed this order on April 26, 1955.

In 1984 to create national awareness in support of the liberation of the Janmabhumi the VHP organized a *rath-yatra* of Sri Rama Janaki Virajman on a motorized chariot from Bihar on 25 September, 1984 to scheduled to reach Ayodhya on 6 October, 1984. But Indira Gandhi's assassination later that month lead to a suspension of the *yatra*. In 1986 the District Judge, Faizabad, ordered the opening of the locks to the Hindus for worship. The Muslim community was not allowed to offer any prayers. The Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) was formed. This was followed by a country-wide Muslim 'mourning'. In 1989 the Shilanyas was held at Ayodhya and the foundation of the temple was laid the next day. The plinth was dug 192 feet away from the mosque. In 1990 in the Shilanyas procession and the *kar seva* on 30 October performed amidst tight security, several people were killed and injured in the police action. The BJP and the VHP decide to resume the *kar seva* on 6 December, 1990.

Hindu fundamentalism had tasted blood in 1990 but it was not yet satiated. An Ekta Yatra took place to Srinagar on Republic Day 1992. It was called an Odyssey of Unity but it was more an odyssey of discord, further alienating the Kashmiris and leading to more Hindu-Muslim riots, more deaths, and further fragmentation of the Indian mosaic. Where was the need for such a theatrical act? Kashmir was anyhow in India's physical possession. The BJP would have served the country better had it devoted itself to winning the hearts and minds of the Kashmiris.

Then came the final denouement of the Babri drama- the destruction of the mosque by a frenzied mob in December 1992. Predictably, communal riots and bloodshed followed. With the Ayodhya euphoria waning, Hindu fundamentalists seemed to have at one stage formulated a twofold strategy of

whipping up communal frenzy simultaneously at the national and state levels. At the national level, the targets were the Gyan Vapi mosque at Varanasi and the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Idgah at Mathura, both of which are to be eventually converted into temples. The first salvo was fired in Varanasi on the occasion of Mahashivratri in February 1995, quite clearly to start a movement that the Hindu fanatics hoped would have built up full force by the next parliamentary elections. At the state level, disputes of relatively local relevance were being communalized, like the hoisting of the national flag in Hubli, the closure of an abattoir near Hyderabad, and making an issue of a so-called bhojshala, or school of learning, in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh.

No other issue since India's Independence has generated such violent passions, led to such widespread riots, gripped the people with panic, fear and anger, and threatened to destroy the democratic, secular consensus envisaged by the architects of the Indian Constitution. This was not all. For the first time, religious zealots, bolstered by politically articulate groups, found both a cause and an opportunity to create a bond of fraternal unity among their divided and stratified constituency. In the Shilanyas ceremonies, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, backed by the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, founded a unifying symbol and a cementing bond which had, for centuries, eluded Hindu reformists and preachers. Through flamboyant demonstrations of religious worship and through mindless retaliatory acts, these groups have clearly succeeded in stoking the fires of communal unrest.

On the other side of the spectrum, members of the BMAC, acquired much political legitimacy and support. Some of its members, having tasted success over the Shah Bano case, began to make strident claims on behalf of their community. They reached out to the Muslim population, aired their long-standing grievances and extracted concessions from political parties on the eve of the 1989 general elections and their aftermath. Given their capacity to mobilize Muslim opinion, especially in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, it was neither possible nor expedient to ignore the powerful Imam of the Shahi Jama Masjid

in Delhi or the renowned head of the prestigious Nadwat-al-ulama, a theological seminary at Lucknow. They represented a Muslim consensus which had been achieved only once in the history of Indian Islam, i.e., during the Khilafat movement in the early 1920s.

Bombay Bomb Blasts

Connected closely to this is the case study of the Bombay bomb-blasts. The sixth of December, 1992, was a day India had never bargained for, nor expected. It was a perverse kind of day that went against the time-honoured Indian ethos of tolerance. A mob of crazed Hindu fanatics, incited by a cynical, power-hungry leadership, brought down an old and harmless structure called the Babri Masjid. Much of India has hung its head in shame since then.

Expectedly, riots between Hindus and Muslims followed. Over 2,000 persons lost their lives, thousands were rendered homeless and penurious. In neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh, Hindus and their temple were targeted by angry Muslim mobs. The Hindu fanatics did not know that their act had sent a shiver of excitement in the chambers of the ISI in Pakistan. They would have doubtless celebrated the extraordinary opportunity of the occasion. Their think-tank got cracking and very soon conceived a Grand Plan. It was ambitious and diabolical, aimed at the disintegration of India, via the path of Muslim terrorism. Punjab, Kashmir and the North-East were after all lesser threats. Muslim terrorism could as well sweep entire India. Afghanistan could indeed be replicated.

The ISI swung into action within a few days. The first man they sent for was Toufique Siddique Jaliawala, the doyen of Karachi's underworld and a leader among smugglers. Toufique got on to the job with great despatch. He had no doubts at all as to who should be the Indian facilitators: Dawood Ibrahim, Tiger Memon and Mohammed Ahmed Dosas, Bombay's top smuggler kings, and his kindred souls. The first landing of arms took place off

the Maharashtra coast on 9 January, 1993, a mere thirty-three days after the Babri Masjid demolition. Two more consignments of arms and ammunition came in February. The entire cargo was transported to Bombay and concealed in the garage of Memon's home in the Al Hussaini building in Mahim.

The sun rose over Bombay on 12 March like any other and soon Bombay, India's commercial capital with a population of ten million people, bustled with activity not knowing what lay in store. The first bomb explosion took place at 1.20 in the afternoon in the teeming Bombay Stock Exchange, killing eighty-four persons and injuring 217. Barely forty-five minutes later, there were two more explosions, one near the office of the militant Hindu organization, the Shiv Sena, killing eight more persons and injuring seventy-one. Then came the deadliest of them all, at Century Bazar in Prabhadevi, killing 113 and injuring 227. Bombay reeled with horror and panic, wondering where the next explosion would take place, not knowing where to seek safety. More blasts followed with clockwork frequency, in the Air India Office, in three top hotels, in a cinema hall, at Bombay airport. Surcease came by about 4.00 p.m. after bomb blasts had taken place at twelve different sites over a space of just two and a half hours, leaving 257 dead and 713 injured. In keeping with the ISI instructions, hand grenades were also lobbed, but only at two places, killing three and injuring six. Bombay was literally shell-shocked.

The Grand Plan of the ISI had been executed, though in a modified way and only till as long as the blasts lasted. There was no Hindu backlash; hardly any Hindu-Muslim clashes followed. The ISI had not reckoned with the Indian syncretic spirit. Muslim terrorism failed to take off. Pakistan's ambitious proxy war against India lay aborted. Only, so many innocent lives had been senselessly lost.

If fundamentalist Muslim terrorism does emerge as a major force in the coming years, and current trends do not entirely rule it out, the blame will lie not so much on the Muslims who take to it, or on the Pakistani Inter-Services

Intelligence Directorate but on Hindu fundamentalism. Had there been communal peace in India, had riots among the two communities not been regularly instigated, the danger of Muslim terrorism would not have existed. It is in fact this communal disharmony that has also disenchanted Kashmiri Muslims with India and aggravated the process of alienation. Nor will it help in the normalization of relations between India and Pakistan and India and Bangladesh. The greater the Hindu-Muslim divide in India, the greater will be the divide between India and its two Muslim neighbours. Acts of Hindu fundamentalism post the 1992 Ayodhya issue have played no small role in turning Bangladesh against India and pushing it towards fundamentalism. By playing up communal issues it will only be playing the game that the ISI and Muslim fundamentalists want it to play in the country. The cost of such a strategy to the country would be two bloody and tragic. The Hindu fundamentalist is grievously mistaken if he thinks that a highly pluralistic country like India can be emotionally and physically held together on the plank of Hindutva. Even the more flaming characteristics of Islam could not keep Bangladesh in Pakistan.

While religion may spawn a separatist movement, the emergence of Bangladesh has dramatically exploded the myth that it can be made the basis of viable nationhood if ethnically, linguistically or for any other reason, there is little common ground between groups of people following the same religion. Pakistan as it exists today is also far from emotionally united, its various sub-identities always asserting themselves. The Mohajirs (the Muslims who migrated from India) want a reasonable place in the Pakistani sun and the Sindhis resent Punjabi domination and Mohajir infiltration in their lands. Nor are the Baluchis or Pathans happy, or even the Afghan refugees who have constant friction with the local populace. Alongside is the eternal stand-off between the Shias and the Sunnis.

A look at the studies in general brings forth the view that in most cases terrorism, separatism, fundamentalism and militancy were allowed to increase

because of an indifferent bureaucracy concerned with turf wars and with no time for long-term planning, because accords which were basically sound were allowed to sour for lack of follow-up action, because democracy was not allowed to follow its due course and democratically elected governments were dismissed at will by the Centre, because the law-enforcement agencies were in want of resources and because the politicians were ready to sacrifice the national interest in pursuit of power as dismal and disheartening a picture as could ever be painted.

¹ Bhutto, Z.A. – The Myth of Independence 91969, O.U.P)

² op.cit.

CHAPTER FOUR

Coping With Fundamentalism: Diplomatic Strategies In The Subcontinent

The rise of Fundamentalism and Communalism in the last decade or so, both globally and in the context of India, has posed problems for Indian Foreign Policy. The phenomena of Revivalism and Fundamentalism at the global level have taken on a new look in the last decade because of a number of reasons. Firstly, the decline of the Soviet Union and of Communism in the early 1990s led to the dismemberment of this supra-national empire and the creation of a large number of ethnically and religiously different states. The pertinent point to note here is that a large number of them are Islamic states and this has made them susceptible to Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.

Next, during the Cold War period the US and its allies armed and backed a large number of Islamic militant and fundamentalist organizations as well as supported the rise to power of Islamic or Christian parties in countries all over the world especially in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has left the US to deal with a Frankenstein monster of its own making as is evident from the crises in the Balkans, the Gulf region and Afghanistan.

In the background of all this the aim of Indian foreign policy is how to deal with Islamic fundamentalism at the global level as well as in its own neighbourhood. This chapter will first trace the evolution of Indian foreign policy and the Pakistani foreign policy and then the strategies being used and to be used by India to deal with the problem of Fundamentalism.

"Since Israel continues to possess nuclear weapons, we, the Muslims, must cooperate to produce an atomic bomb, regardless of U.N. efforts to prevent proliferation."

Sayed Ayatollah Mohajerani, then Iranian vice president, addressing an Islamic conference in Tehran in 1992.

Be it the agony of a large population in Muslim Algeria or the sufferances of the bomb victims in Kenya and Tanzania-again the Muslims-or the traumatic experiences of the God-fearing Pushtoons and others groaning under the heavy boots of the Taliban - their shared victimhood necessitates an understanding of the psyche, objectives and aims of those who are called the 'fundamentalists'. While assessing these callous activists, it is important to appreciate that such an outlook is not confined to one belief or religion-as became evident from a recent exhaustive study in a US Foundation, covering a vast canvas.

The study also said "...in the tumult of India, half a world away, hundreds of Muslims and Hindus died during the riots when a sacred mosque was destroyed." The scholastic team believes that such riots, or be it "the rescue protest and picketing of the abortion clinics, both are tied to fundamentalism, one of the world's fastest-growing religious movements". All such movements-despite their internal differences, "want to change society and they believe (that) they and they alone have the answer". Even while all these zealots 'emphasise non-violence they can always find an escape hatch: "a statement in a holy book, a teaching of a guru (that may say) that the faith itself is under moral attack". And when they do so, they frequently make headlines 'to cause excitement and encourage irrationality". The examples are several: "Radical religious Zionists who have pushed for (territorial) expansion; Islamic groups in Egypt, whose disciples are convicted (some were recently executed) of trying to topple the government". Some in the US blame a blind Mullah, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rehman, for his preachings that may have caused the World Trade Centre explosions. The administration thought it expedient to find fault in his immigration visa application that resulted in his expulsion from the US.

The study sees a lot of motivational resemblances between these activities and those of the "VHP, the cultural arm of a Hindu nationalist party, tied to the destruction of Muslim mosques and riots". The study points out

that fundamentalism is "one of the world's two fastest growing religious movements-the other is Pentecostalism-that thrive in turbulent times... in the midst of upheaval. When the regular regime can't fulfil their promises, fundamentalisms have great opportunities... they make promises and they fill the void". As often seen, the fundamentalists are "very, very savvy politically... they are shrewd observers and imitators of secular politicians". Even when their messages are obscurantist and outdated, "they think modern communications and technology are perfectly fine to be manipulated for the glory of (their) God".

It is important to differentiate between the fundamentalists and the religious cults. "A cult usually arises around one charismatic figure or family... and the cultists tend to be apocalyptic (and say) we are in crisis, we are the chosen and the end is coming." But the "fundamentalists are not focused on tomorrow as the end of the world, they want to rebuilt society in the image of a sacred nation or a homeland". Even while "the fundamentalists may not share a religious doctrine, they (all) seek to create a world that fits one profile: it is patriarchal and anti-feminist, so God is always male and the man in the family is the ultimate authority; it is anti-pluralistic, anti-liberal." The fundamentalists of all hues "need scapegoats: an opposition; a foil; personification of a force coming on all the time, so they are fighting against a world operated on rational principles whether this is market economy, human rights or a government that accepts the separation of religion and politics". The fundamentalists are always "averse to any compromise" since "(they believe that) if we give up anything, we'll lose everything... so (for them) there are no negotiations".

What has the future in store? The study predicts that "the fundamentalists" hardline attitude will shake the world in upcoming decades. They are going to rip up governments. They will win some governments. They will change some constitutions. There will be a lot of turmoil." Such prospects are already horrifying even the conservative regimes.

It must be understood that traditionalism is not a synonym of fundamentalism, "since the zealots not only denounce nationalisms but (also) demand that above all (even) the Saudi government should renounce all contacts with the world of ideas". Some time back an editorial in the *Middle East International* said: "The Saudi royals see this as a threat; not only to their own position but to all hopes that the Arab and (the rest of the) Muslim world will ever be able to match the power and achievements of the West." An Islamic scholar has noted, and pertinently so that 'the crisis we live in is a vicious struggle between individuals, organised groups and Arab regimes over the answers to fateful questions that deal with 'who we are', 'are we Muslims', 'are we Arab nationalists', or 'are we all of this, or part of it?'

This, in no way, implies that any consensus has emerged but two important issues are drawing a great deal of attention. One, of course, being the relationship of the Arab regimes with the West (described as evil) that brings in the issue of religion and culture. And two, whether the pluralistic Western values are an attack against the religion? A learned professor of theology in Jeddah University thus argued: "the notion that a majority should rule and the notion of the political party are all Western notions." Though the study could not address itself to the emergence of the Taliban that came later and the social order they seek to protect, it would be of interest if the scholars could give attention to this and their activities that spilling outside Afghanistan.

The Taliban in Afghanistan have been violent and fanatical. Their nastiness has frightened Iran into marching 70,000 of their armed forces backed by armour, artillery and some elements of the air force. The number could soon rise to 200,000. The Uzbeks and the Tajiks too seem fed up with all this violence and dislike Pakistanis and Afghans coveting Central Asian oil and gas reserves. Pakistan has tried to establish primacy in the region, without minding the strain put on its own resources. The Russian Federation and India entertain serious misgivings about these developments.

There has been some brouhaha about the American missile attack on the Bin Laden-Taliban-Pakistani camps in Afghanistan which were and are training multinational Jihads, anxious to attain instantaneous martyrdom. Some Pakistani Harkat-ul-Ansar terrorists lost their lives. Pakistan was puzzled why friendly American missiles should have killed their personnel and strayed into their country.

The complexity of the Pak-Afghan-Islam situation has forced Nawaz Sharif to worry about his own security. And he is now inclined to use Islam as his shield. However, Pakistan seems unable to understand that the fire of terrorism it has lit and fanned not only in Jammu & Kashmir but also in Central Asia, Egypt, Algeria and Philippines, may burn out its own country. Pakistan's addiction to terrorism worries the US but it refuses to recognise the connection between the activities of Pakistan state and the turmoil in the region.

The US has also been tolerant about Pakistan's Taliban proteges. The world at large recognises Taliban's genocidal actions in respect of the Shias of the Hazara region. They have been destructive in respect of the museums and monuments belonging to the non-Islamic as well as Islamic period of Afghan history. The victims have been the Hadda Museum, the Bamiyan caves and Babar's tomb in Jalalabad -- desecrated, damaged or destroyed.

In recent months, the Taliban have been brutal with all UN personnel and aid agencies in Afghanistan, not caring for the humanitarian and economic assistance coming to them. They have even looted the premises of the European Union and the UN in Kabul. Hence the UN decision to suspend all but life saving assistance. The UN's efforts to stop the country from fracturing further have attracted the ire not only of the Taliban, but also Pakistan.

They have both been arrogant and hostile to the three special representatives to Kabul, sent by the UN Secretary-General, Dr. Mahmoud

Mestiri, former foreign minister of Tunisia; Dr. Norbard Holl of Germany; and Laldidar Brahimi, former foreign minister of Algeria, felt forced to report that unless Pakistan could be persuaded to cease its direct interference and supply of arms and personnel to Taliban, peace cannot return to the country. But the permanent members of the Security Council, especially the US and China, have refused to do anything about this.

The internal coherence amongst the Taliban is breaking down due to competition amongst their civilians and security personnel vying for postings to the lucrative border areas, from where transit trade and smuggling are regulated. Their earlier code of austerity and honesty is by now forgotten, and Taliban elite has become soft and money grabbing. The UN is ineffective and the OIC indifferent. And therefore the Taliban and their Pakistani masters have been able to block the movement of the Mujahideen groups and the Northern alliance towards the negotiating table.

During the last 200 years, non-Pushtoon groups (Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras) and the various Pushtoon groups (Shinwaris, Kharotis, Durranis, Shivwanis) were able to co-exist, and structure a distinctly Afghan identity. That identity appears fractured now. The mutual trust between the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras on one hand and the Pushtoos on the other has evaporated. The Pushtoos now consider themselves the only Afghans, and not just the major group in a broader Afghan society. The Pushtoon feels that he is the victor and can now proceed to become supreme on either side of the Durand line.

The Taliban have thrown out UN personnel, as well as humanitarian aid workers of various NGOs. All these events have been ignored by the western media and governments. No comment, no criticism either against the Taliban, or their guardians and backers in Pakistan. Could it be that the West is mesmerised by the prospect of the eventual economic profits that could flow from the UNOCAL's gas and oil pipeline venture?

Pakistan had trained, financed and equipped the Taliban militia. They seem to be wondering now if they can handle the Frankenstein. The Taliban may depend on Pakistan for back-up military support, but the former are beginning to assert their autonomous status, especially on their own oil. Occasionally, Pakistan has to rap them on the knuckles, when they become too noisy against Pakistan itself. The Pushtoon-Sunni, Devbandi-Wahabi Taliban appeared austere and incorruptible in the beginning. This no longer is the case. They have learnt fast from their Pakistani military trainers and are not content with remaining a subaltern force.

In earlier days, the Americans encouraged Pakistan to create the Taliban force, and Saudis to bank-roll it. After the bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, the US launched missile attacks on their strong-hold within Afghanistan. The Taliban appear to be standing firm behind Osama bin Laden, the Saudi born oligarch, who the Americans alleged had planned and organised attacks against US assets, properties and personnel at various locations around the world.

It is still early and one cannot calculate or forecast how events will move. But one must also take into account the Pushtoon greed for money. Often, in the past, greed has overtaken their allegiance to their own peculiar code of honour demanding that all hosts be faithful to all guests. The Taliban, between 1993 and now, have been encouraged by their Pakistani handlers to use Saudi money to win many of their 'military' victories in Afghanistan against local adversaries. Both Herat and Mazare Sharif are good examples of the effectiveness of silver bullets.

Just as in the eighties, Pakistani Army generals dreamt of building an informal but essential confederation of Afghanistan and Pakistan, forging their cherished strategic depth against India, the Afghan Pushtoons have been dreaming of an autonomous and supreme Pushtoonistan. The Shia-Sunni divide too has been rendered bitter and more difficult to heal. The brutal and deliberate genocide against the Hazaras has been ignored by the rest of the

world. This situation, the Iranians feel, forces them to correct them by violent incursions into Afghanistan.

The situation reminds one of the Pushtoon poet, Khushal Khan Khattak, who had written almost 150 years ago:

*The Afghans are far superior to the Moghuls at the sword
Were but the Afghans, in intellect, a little discreet,
If the several tribes would but support each other,
Kings would have to bow and prostrate before them!*

A dramatic development took place in Pakistani politics with the announcement by its Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif after the nuclear blasts and the economic sanctions by the world community that his Government was proposing a Constitutional amendment to make Islam the country's supreme law. He, however, also told Parliament that the religious freedom of the non-Muslim minorities would not be affected. He said the 15th Amendment would establish the predominance of the Quran and the sunnah (i.e., the Prophet's saying and practices). The Bill was rushed through Parliament amid Opposition protests.

Pakistan is facing an acute financial and political crisis after exploding nuclear devices in May. Its economy is on the verge of a breakdown. Another crisis was created by the United States' missile attack on Afghanistan and Sudan. One of the missiles fell near the Pakistan-Afghan border, infuriating the leaders of religious parties. Sharif, like his predecessors, is trying to overcome the political crisis generated by the nuclear explosions and missile attacks by resorting to Islam. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto imposed prohibition, declared Friday as holiday and banned gambling dens when he faced an acute political crisis in the last days of his regime. The President of Pakistan, Rafiq Tarar, who is a member of the ultra-conservative Tablighi Jamat, has also contributed towards making Islam the supreme law.

It is unclear what laws will be imposed in the name of Islam. The emphasis, it is said, will be on the Qazi courts and interest-free banking. The

Pakistan Government has still not spelt out what the move to make the Islamic law supreme means. Some officials, however, maintained that at least there would be three certainties. The Qazi (Islamic) courts will be established, *salat* (Islamic prayer) committees revived and a time-frame announced for the introduction of interest-free banking. This Islamic package has been prepared under the supervision of Mr. Tarar.

Under the present law, all *hudud* (Islamic punishment) cases will be referred by the Government to the Qazi courts. This is being termed as another attempt by the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Government to resurrect its special courts for a speedy trial. *Salat* committees set up during the Zia regime will now be revived. There is nothing new about interest-free banking as many such banks have already been established. As for their success, there are contradictory views. Many economists and bankers are of the view that these banks have created complex problems.

It is quite obvious that Mr. Sharif is making political use of Islam to save his Government. But what is important for India is to examine the deeper consequences of this step. A modern nation state must be run on secular principles. Making religion a state law will cause unmanageable damage. Pakistan has gone through a severe socio-political crisis since Zia Islamised politics. Religion is a general moral guide for individuals as well as for communities and an inward spiritual experience. It should never be used for political ends. The whole history of Muslim societies is a witness to this. Politicisation of Islam has caused a lot of bloodshed.

Moreover, the use of Islam in politics always gives rise to the worst kind of sectarianism. Various sects of Islam vie with one another to usurp power. The sectarian conflict in society has claimed hundreds of lives since Zia Islamised the polity. The Shia-Sunni conflict and killings which were quite rare earlier became a routine. Not only the domestic but the international factors also worsened the scenario. The Saudis supported the Sunnis and the Iranians supported the Shias and sent them funds.

Besides, the Sunnis are further sub-divided in several sects: Deobandis, Bareilvis, Ahle Hadis and others. The mutual conflict among these sub-sects is equally acute. Zia had made it obligatory for Pakistani Muslims to pay zakat and the Government began to deduct zakat directly from bank accounts. It put crores of rupees in the hands of the Government leading to corruption in distributing it. It was decided to give the zakat to madrasas apart from the poor and needy. The elected zakat committees were asked to distribute the money. Many committees and their chairmen were elected, it is alleged, by rigging the election. These committees were used to distribute funds for political support. Many madrasas came into existence and politicians gave their "nod" to such corrupt practices for winning political favour.

In deducting zakat sectarian conflicts emerged as the Shia leaders refused to allow a Sunni Government to deduct zakat from their bank accounts. It led to a political crisis and Zia exempted the Shias from the compulsory deduction of zakat. Thereupon many Sunnis who resented such deduction began to declare themselves Shias. Thus, whenever religion or religious laws are sought to be imposed such problems emerge. Again, whenever the religious law is sought to be made supreme the question arises which religious law will be imposed. Neither the Shias nor the Sunnis agree on any one interpretation of law. There are several schools of law in Sunni Islam itself. Though in Pakistan the majority of the Sunnis follow the Hanafi law, there are the Ahle Hadis and Ahle-Quran though they are in a minority. They do not agree with the Hanafis in many vital aspects of law. The Shias who are supposedly 20 per cent of the population have their own law. The Bohras and Khojas, both belonging to the Shia Ismaili sects, have their own interpretation. Thus, Islamisation leads to the negation of pluralism which is the essence of democracy.

The question of the minority rights also assumes graver proportions. Under the Zia regime, separate electorates were introduced for the minorities

such as Hindus, Christians and Parsis though they did not want them. There is no such provision in the shariat law that there should be separate electorates as such a problem never arose in ancient days. Yet, the regime insisted on introducing separate electorates. The blasphemy law was also introduced under the Zia regime causing great resentment among Christians.

The Ahmadi Muslims have been declared non-Muslims under the Islamic law and are jailed even if they recite the holy *kalima* of Islam or even if they write it in their mosques. They are not even allowed to describe their place of worship as a mosque.

Also, women suffer greatly under the conservative Islamic regimes as the orthodox interpretation of the Quran leads to a deprivation of their rights. The *Hudud Laws* as enforced in Pakistan are quite unfair to women. Several cases of punishing women for adultery while letting off men have been pointed out by the women's organisations. It is quite unlikely that the Talibanic laws such as banning women from education will be enforced in Pakistan and Sharif himself has clarified the position. But it is certain that women will have to struggle hard even to maintain their present status, let alone improve it. Sharif has described Pakistan as a modern Islamic state but one wonders whether it is slipping into medieval ages under the compulsion of politics and under the increasing influence of the orthodox ulema

Pakistan's Foreign Policy is based on realistic world situations. Pakistan became a member of SEATO and CENTO set up by Western countries so as to encircle the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War period. Pakistan provided military bases for western countries against Russia and in turn was able to garner sufficient amount of economic and military assistance. India was the main rival and had to be shown as an inferior nation. Pakistan built up relations with China in post-1962 and ceded Kashmir's territory in Gilgit to China to provide direct linking of Tibet to Sinkiang provinces of China. There is cooperation between Pakistan and China in the military and nuclear fields.

Till the 1990s, a moderate Muslim nation, this country has slowly seen the spread of fundamentalist organizations and of training camps where extremists are taught military skills being put to use by many who have joined the Taliban student-army in Afghanistan. We observe a broad shift in the country from pro-western feelings to intolerant, anti-western thought. In the past, apart from a handful of anti-imperialists, most Pakistanis were pro-western. Islam and communism do not go together, so when the Cold War divided the world, Pakistan knew which side it was on. Anyway, generous American economic and military aid helped bolster it against its number one enemy, India. Then in 1990, after the Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan, America cut off aid in protest at Pakistan's nuclear programme. Since then Pakistani attitudes to West have changed- and these new feelings blended very easily with the anti-Western brand of Islam that swept Iran in the 1970s and has since then spread to the Middle East and North Africa. Growing worries about Islam in the West only strengthen these new attitudes in Pakistan. When SP Huntington writes of the forthcoming 'Clash of Civilisations' between Islam and the West; and the NATO describes Islamic fundamentalism as "at least as dangerous as communism was"; and when the world over voices urge the need to establish "a coherent strategy for fighting Islamic totalitarianism" -- Islamic Fundamentalists feel justified in their hostility to the West and proud of the fear that their religious identity instills.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy is predicated on the premise that it has to deal with a 'Hindu' neighbour which wants to dismember it and therefore before this happens Pakistan would like to do the same to India, i.e. help dismember it, get back Kashmir and promote Islamic fundamentalist activities in various parts of the subcontinent.

I say what Cato said to the Romans. 'Carthage must be destroyed.' If India thinks it is going to subjugate Pakistan then we will say, 'Carthage must be destroyed.' We shall tell our children and they will tell their children.

Z.A.Bhutto

The Islamic state of Pakistan was created on the basis of the two-nation theory and therefore its basis is Islam and it has to prove to the rest of the world that it is an Islamic state, follows an Islamic foreign policy and is part of the Islamic brotherhood of nations. Pakistan had therefore supported the US against the Soviet aided regime in Afghanistan and later on with the help of Saudi and other Gulf finance set up schools and trained Islamic fundamentalist, obscurantist and revivalist Mujahideen guerillas - the Taliban - to fight the war in Afghanistan.

The benefit of an Afghanistan which sides with Pakistan will be immense as it will not only have an ally against India to complain against atrocities on Indian Muslims but it will also be able to provide an export outlet for the Central Asian oil-rich states and thus increase Pakistan's importance for the West and the Gulf countries.

This is another reason why Pakistan has always tried to counter Indian security measures by calling them the measures of 'Hindu' India against 'Islamic' Pakistan, e.g. the 'Hindu' bomb versus 'Islamic' bomb. A former Pak Premier wrote in his memoirs that if India built a nuclear bomb then Pakistanis would eat grass and even go hungry but will build their own bomb.

*It is ironic that the Soviet bomb is not called the communist bomb, and the U.S. bomb is not called the Christian bomb. India has nuclear reactors but no one calls it the Hindu bomb, or Israel's the Jewish bomb. Why must they call Pakistan's bomb, supposing we have it, an Islamic bomb?... it is our right to obtain the technology.*¹

Keeping such jingoistic sentiments aside the aim of Indian diplomacy should be to keep at bay the rise of religious fundamentalism and revivalism in the country so as not to give others a chance to point fingers at us and also keep up our old relations with the Islamic countries of the Gulf and Central Asia. Also we should participate at all international meets to deal with the menace of fundamentalism both globally and in our region to help reduce the communalization of our regional environment.

Foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which are peculiar to a democracy; they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those in what it is deficient.

Alexis de Tocqueville

The achievement of the national interest, using the right means as far as possible, and in the context of world cooperation, are central to India's Foreign Policy. The three main objectives and two additional ones (of (Nehruvian) Foreign Policy -- preservation of India's territorial integrity and freedom of policy; promotion of International peace; economic development of India; achievement of the freedom of dependent people and the elimination of racial discrimination; and protection of the interests of the people of Indian origin. The means adopted are -- Non-alignment; Temper of Peace; and Friendship with all countries

India's Foreign Policy in its essentials remained the same though there was better realization of the role of power, some flexibility in policy, a realization of the need for pragmatism and a greater emphasis on economic cooperation. It considers the reliance on armaments, alliances, balance of power and war for the solution of international conflicts unsuitable to a Nuclear Age. But on two counts, a better appreciation of role of power - in maintaining international peace, and defending the territorial integrity of North-South-is noticeable.

Pt. Nehru had a profound and overriding role in formulating, administering and articulating the country's foreign policy. He laid down the tenets of foreign policy before Independence. He also laid down the tenets of the Nuclear Age -- at that time it was a stroke of genius. Other elements of Nehruvian foreign policy were rapid decolonization, a constant striving for peace, a determined fight against apartheid and an Asian resurgence. This framework endured for over four decades.

Under Prime Minister Shastri (1965) - War with Pakistan, the Ceasefire and the Tashkent Declaration were the landmark decisions. Under Indira Gandhi's approach to Foreign Policy and Domestic Policy was practical rather than philosophical. She had a better understanding of power and its uses. She was a "Cold-blooded practitioner of real politik" (H.Kissinger). The liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 was a landmark as was her generosity to Pakistan post-71 war. In 1968, Indira Gandhi offered unconditional talks with China (after 1962) and sent an Ambassador in 1977.

In Rajiv Gandhi's time India had a better balance in relations with Soviet Union, United States of America and China. The Indo-Sri Lanka accord which asked for an Indian Peace Keeping Force to be sent to help Sri Lanka fight the LTTE was signed. With Nepal, however, there was a clash of wills and relations deteriorated for some time. With United Kingdom the Prime Minister took on Prime Minister Thatcher over apartheid and sanctions against South Africa. He also helped set up the Asia Fund and the G-15.

During Prime Minister Rao's regime the economic crisis of 1991 led to financial help from IMF and World bank and the need for a market-related economy and liberalization. Relations with United States improved though there were differences over the NPT, CTBT and the MTCR. Also the US asked Russia not to give India the cryogenic engines it needed for its space programme.

As Prime Minister I.K.Gujral made Indian security and national interests the prime focus of his policy. He rejected the CTBT. India also lost to Japan in the competition for the for Non-Permanent seat in UN. The 'Gujral Doctrine' was one of the landmarks of this period. Let us take a quick look at this doctrine. Gujral Doctrine did not mean that India would give in on all her national interests. Neither did it mean reciprocity on an item-to-item basis but in an overall context of relationship. India desired goodwill from her neighbours but it could not be termed a policy of appeasement; rather the neighbours should not allow their territories to be misused.

The essence of the policy towards foreign countries was to enable India to play a greater role at the International level because the Gujral Doctrine reportedly recognized the political realism that unless India was relieved of its commitments to the problems of South-Asia it could not play an effective role at the International level. Earlier policies had made India a 'Big-Brother' and its neighbours viewed it with mistrust and suspicion... it could not go beyond its regional outlook.

The critique of this Doctrine is that it would require South Asia to be freed of the external intervention by outside countries in the domestic affairs of each country. Pakistan is so used (for 5 decades) to dependence on foreign powers for maintaining a balance with India on Kashmir that it may not be in its national interest to abandon its foreign patrons. The Pakistan Army establishment may take a negative view of liberalism. India's ability to win Pakistan over through the Gujral Doctrine is limited because it depends on Prime Minister Sharif's ability to carry the Army and the traditionally anti-Indian forces with him in a new South Asia Policy. For Pakistan, however, Central Asia (including Afghanistan) is strategically and economically more important than South Asia. Thus the Gujral Doctrine lost its litmus test in Pakistan. Also Central Asia, Gulf, Iran were outside the Gujral Doctrine. On the other hand, vigorous high-level diplomatic initiatives with these areas may bring investment as well as weaken Pakistan's external support.

The present government under Prime Minister Vajpayee has a number of landmarks to its credit. It gave the go-ahead signal in May 1998 for the testing of the nuclear bombs which for some time did lead to a deterioration in Indo-Pak relations to a degree where people started to speak of a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent. However, the 'bus' ride which the Indian Premier took from Delhi to the Wagah Border and the subsequent Lahore Summit in February 1999 did help ease relations. The new Government did not stick to the Gujral doctrine but did agree that there was a need to get rid of

the 'Big Brother' syndrome in order to improve relations with the smaller neighbours. Though there was no flare up of religious fundamentalism at the foreign policy level, at the level of domestic politics incidents of religious fundamentalism became evident. Whether it was the protest by the Hindu fundamentalists for the need to liberate the Baba Budanagiri shrine in Karnataka or the incidents of attacks on Christian converts in the tribal regions of Gujarat and Orissa.

These incidents though not important on their own did lead policy analysts, both foreign and Indian, to believe that the reason for the increase in these religious conflicts was the rise of aggressive Hindu fundamentalism under the patronage of the present government in power at the Centre. Thus there is a need for India and its government to prevent the spread of such incidents of fundamentalism because it is only when majority fundamentalism keeps a control on itself that minority fundamentalism will not get a chance to grow. There is also a great need for India to improve its ties with its immediate neighbours which can only be done if it keeps fundamentalism in check. Otherwise the environment will be vitiated to a degree where it will not be possible to prevent the spread of this religious fundamentalism amongst all the religious minorities in the subcontinent.

A look at some of the strategies India can follow is now in order.

The region focussed on is South Asia which includes Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives. The South Asian Security Problematic consists of 5 broad areas of conflict:-

- a) A set of territorial disputes on the agenda, e.g. Indo-Pak - Kashmir, Sirsi, Wular Barrage; Indo-Bangla - New Moore Islands.
- b) The Indo-Pak Conventional and Nuclear Arms Race - which consists of "Mutual Watchfulness" and "Matching Purchases".

- c) Pattern of 'Ethnic Subnationalism' which spills over national boundaries, e.g. Kashmir, MQM, Khalistan, ULFA, Chakmas, Bodos, etc.
- d) Migration and Refugees - which cause instability in the new country.
- e) Disputes over the sharing of ecological or environmental resources, especially shared rivers and Himalayan resources, e.g. Indo-Pak, Indo-Nepal, Indo-Bangladesh.

According to foreign policy analysts, India must follow a couple of measures in order to improve the situation. First, India can try to promote 'Cooperative Security'. Second, try to stick to the main principles of the 'Gujral Doctrine' because it has helped take India out of South Asia into the Asia-Pacific Region. If we are able to convince the Asia-Pacific that we are a responsible power and are friends with our small neighbours, then it makes India more respectable. These are some of the ways that will take India out of its isolation. "Track-Two" Diplomacy is also needed and there is a need to build up "Social Capital" and trust amongst the people of this region.

Some scholars believe that Pakistan would lose its 'visibility' if it did not remain a 'rogue' state and moved for dialogue with India on security, strategic issues, economic and other issues. However, one should remember the spatial location of Pakistan makes it important. This is a country which in any other continent would have been a big power but next to big countries like India and China it looks very small. However, as Pakistan normalises its relationship with India, its civil society and domestic politics will also stabilise.

There are different theories held in the South Asian region concerning the causes of regional peace and war. For many Indians the region's instability has been caused by the intervention of outsiders, especially the US. The Pakistanis emphasise that regional conflict is based upon fundamental religious differences. For many Americans Moscow's intervention in Afghanistan and its influence on India was a major source of conflict. Now an older theory - that regional poverty is a root cause of conflict - has resurfaced,

joined by assertions that the spread of advanced weapons and the absence of democracy are causes of conflict. There are also structural explanations: that a dominant India 'has' to threaten its small neighbours. Finally, a cultural explanation is offered by some who have a difficult time understanding the region's baffling combination of political disorder, endemic poverty, and elite pride.

A point to note here is that Indo-Pak relations are typically cited as one of the most conflictual and war prone. Yet if we look at Indo-Pak relations since 1947, by 1960 every quarrel (except Kashmir) had been solved and despite two wars, and the threat of nuclear proliferation, the two sides have attempted to form various forms of cooperation - no war/friendship and cooperation treaties, membership in SAARC, bilateral summit and confidence-building measures (CBMs).

A number of recent works suggest that not nationalistic or ethnic solidarity but 'the ruler's imperative' was the basis for Pakistan's decision to attack India in 1965 as was India's decision to coerce Sri Lanka in 1986-87. Individual leaders made decisions about foreign policy cloaked in the national interest but primarily to advance personal interests.

India and Pakistan exploded nuclear devices (5 and 6 respectively) in May, 1998 and said that the basic reason was national security and the need for missiles and a weaponised nuclear programme. According to many countries in the West and in our neighbourhood this would lead to an arms race and also increase the chances of a war in the near future.

According to the official viewpoint, India's nuclear tests have established that India has proven capability for weaponised nuclear programme. They also provide valuable database which is useful in design of nuclear weapons of different yields for different applications and for different delivery systems. Also, these tests will carry Indian scientists towards a

sound computer simulation capability which may be supported by sub-critical experiments, if necessary.

The Government of India is concerned about the nuclear environment in India's neighbourhood. These tests provide reassurance to the people of India that their national security interests are paramount and will be promoted and protected. India remains committed to a speedy process of nuclear disarmament leading to total global elimination of nuclear weapons.

According to some analysts the whole Indian disarmament policy in the 1950s-1960s, was about setting forth a series of proposals which would try to bring the two powers together on the issue of nuclear weapons in a world where things could go wrong and war was always a possibility. What is interesting about this period is the flexibility Nehru adopts in forewording these disarmament proposals, suggesting that problems could be sorted out both bilaterally and multilaterally as long as the process of talks and negotiations do not stop. It showed an open-endedness and flexibility of Indian diplomacy of the 1950s and 1960s. Balance of power is not simply matching force for force in some straightforward sense. The Asian security system cannot be achieved by going nuclear in the way India has done recently. Nuclear weapons can deter each other, but accidents can happen, misperceptions occur, miscommunications occur and nuclear deterrence can break down.

According to other analysts, there is no guarantee of how a nation's intentions will alter in the future. To guard against such eventualities, it is important that India should be a major component of this balance of power system in Asia. The rationale for India going nuclear is to restore the balance of power in Asia because today's currency of power is nuclear capability-it's not something we approve of or like but it is a harsh reality. If this was not done there would have been an imbalance. One can look at the nuclear blasts negatively, which is conventional wisdom, the proliferation theology point of view. The other way is looking at positively, namely that this provides an Asian balance of power. The whole purpose of India going nuclear is to

ensure that the nuclear order is racist, colonial and hegemonic. Deterrence is in a sense terrorism, it is immoral and therefore one should try to do away with nuclear deterrence. But the fact remains that deterrence has always been practised in history. The reality is that but for nuclear deterrence, there would have been a third world war. Whether it works or not is neither provable nor unprovable. Pakistan has had nuclear weapons since 1987, they are deliverable and weaponised. We have had the nuclear deterrence since 1990 and it is deliverable and weaponised. It is not a question of why we have it : the world has it, the Chinese have it, it is part of the power projection. India represents one sixth of humanity and should therefore play a role in the global affairs that would do justice to this section of humanity.

The 'security dominant characteristic' as well as the desire for "parity with India" or even for "superiority" over India in "military power" are the guiding principles of Pakistan's Foreign Policy. The Pak calls for South Asia zone of peace, mutual renunciation of nuclear weapons and mutual inspections of each other's nuclear installations are examples of Pak's quest for parity with India. The talks of Islamic Bomb vs. Hindu Bomb speaks of a psychologically deep confrontation.

¹ Bhutto, Z.A. – If I Am Assassinated (O.U.P.)

CONCLUSIONS

Religious zeal was not the sole scourge of European politics before 1648, nor has it suddenly re-emerged after the cold-war – for the simple fact is that it never entirely went away. The interplay of religion and politics has been, and remains, more complicated than conventional wisdom suggests.

Modern industrial societies are becoming increasingly multi-religious in structure thanks to the rapid means of transport and internationalization of commerce and industry. There was a time when European society was mono-religious. But from the beginning of the twentieth century it tended to become multi-religious due to the migration of people from colonial to the metropolitan countries in search of better prospects. After the Second World War, this trend grew very fast with rapid industrialization. Today hardly any European society can boast of being uni-religious. With the emergence of multi-religious societies, racial and communal tensions are growing in these countries. It is important to note that religious revivalism and fundamentalism are modern phenomena and are a product of the colonial society.

A feudal structure of society does not generate much competition between different communities either in the sphere of economy or in that of polity. Nor is there any competition for public offices in that society. Public appointments are based on rewards for loyalty to the ruling dynasty, rather than on competition. Also, there is no political competition in feudal society as the ruler more often comes to power by force than by contesting elections. The colonial society established by the British in India ushered in restricted democratic competition as well as competition for jobs. In an ideal situation the competition would be between individuals but in a backward society like India there was little competition on merit between individuals and instead competition took place more on the basis of community thus giving rise to communal tensions. Unless all the communities acquire education in the real

modern sense in equal measure (i.e. acquire merit in the search for jobs as well as elected posts) democratic competitiveness would continue to generate powerful hostility between these castes and communities.

This is evident all over the world as seen in Europe – the Bosnian Muslims versus the Orthodox Serbs, the Christian Armenians versus the Muslim Azeris; in the Middle East – the Israeli Jews versus the Palestinian Muslims; and Hindus versus Muslims in Pakistan and India. According to S.P. Huntington, Islam has 'bloody borders'. In 1993 in an article and a couple of years later in a book S.P. Huntington argued that the nation state is no longer the primary unit of international relations. He also said that competition and conflict will not disappear but will have to be worked out at another level chiefly among the larger units known as cultures or civilizations.

A populist ferment is surging across Islam, from Yugoslavia and Morocco on the West to Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines on the East. Fragmented in form, cohesive in ideology, this Islamic reassertion has been reflected in the 1978-79 Iranian revolution, the occupation of the Great Mosque in Mecca in Saudi Arabia in November 1979, the four-year war in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, the assassination of President Anwar el-Sadat in Egypt in October 1981, and violent resistance in Lebanon through 1983 and 1984.

Often described as 'Islamic fundamentalism', this popular force cuts across geographical boundaries, transcending political ideologies and national regimes. Radical governments such as in Algeria and Syria, and traditional monarchical regimes such as in Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia have witnessed a growing Islamic political activism. Scattered incidents in Soviet Central Asia, the home of an estimated 60 million Muslims, as well as the Muslim guerrilla war of resistance against the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan demonstrate that communist systems are no more immune to the challenge of this Populist Islam than are the pro-Western conservative states in the region.

There is considerable disagreement about what precisely constitutes “Islamic fundamentalism”. At one time or another the label “fundamentalist” has been attached to groups as diverse as Hamas in Israel/Palestine; Hizbollah in Lebanon; the Refah (Welfare) Party in Turkey; the Al-Nahda Party in Tunisia; the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria; the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria; and the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan. Yet there is no unitary Islamic fundamentalism any more than there is a unitary Christian fundamentalism. In the Middle East, fundamentalism ranges from pietist organizations to revolutionary groups committed to the violent overthrow of what they perceive to be un-Islamic regimes. Fundamentalist foreign policy has several discernible characteristics: an embrace of the unity of the *umma*; a refusal to respect the sovereignty of secular states within the *umma*; a rejection of Western hegemony within the Muslim world; and an animus toward Zionism as the most glaring local manifestation of the Western state system that artificially divides the *umma*.

A thousand years of Muslim presence in India was largely an interaction between a young, virile religion, sometimes almost tribal in its simplicity, and an ancient civilization. The result was the flowering of culture to which Hindu and Muslims both contributed. In his cultural orientation the Indian Muslim was, therefore, completely different from, his Arabic brethren. His language, food, dress, music, architecture and, above all his poetry, all had the stamp of a synthesis forged in the civilizational crucible of Hindustan. When religion is brought into politics the extremist platform is always the most attractive. When British departure from India was imminent, there evolved among the Indian Muslims a religious political platform, a theory that Hindu and Muslims in India constituted two nations and this two-nation theory became Pakistan’s justification for itself: we are what we are because we could not live with them, the Hindus.

Differences between Hindus and Muslims have dominated public life in India for about the last hundred years. Artificially contrived at the start and drawing strength from divergence of social habit, these differences have widened to grow with the phenomenon of communalism, unknown almost everywhere else in the world. A few Indians genuinely felt that their religion was under threat; many more used their religious commitment to battle for jobs, secure political concessions or strengthen their reactionary interests. So widely did the virus spread in the penultimate years of the Raj in India that, despite the efforts of staunch nationalists in the modern sense, freedom came to India along with the Partition of the country. The areas where Muslims formed a majority of the population and wished to secede were thrown together to form the new State of Pakistan.

Sectarianism, fanaticism, religious assertion or fundamentalism, by whatever we may call it, is not a purely religious phenomenon either. It is as much political, social and economic as religious in nature. If a community is politically and economically on the ascendant, it would tend to be liberal and less assertive of its religious beliefs. However, if a community is faced with hostile circumstances and threats to its existence, it tends to assert its religious zeal to strengthen its defences. The rise of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh fundamentalism in recent years must be seen in this perspective.

Kashmir is special to Pakistan because it symbolises what is often described as 'the unfinished business of Partition' whereas it is special to India because it is seen as the most important proof of Indian secularism. According to social scientists any state on the periphery of the country, linguistically and culturally different from other states, and religiously different from other states constitutes a problem state. Also the people in the peripheral states complain that they have been left out in the process of development. The Kashmir problem has two dimensions, the religious and the ethnic (Kashmiriat). Pakistani subversion alone does not explain why religion has become a divisive force in Kashmir: the infiltration of

fundamentalist teachers in Government schools and the indoctrination of students in Jamaat-e-Islami run madrasas are also to blame. Religion became a divisive force because of frequent communal riots in India and the emergence of Hindu chauvinism in a big way.

Militancy in Punjab is closely linked with the politics of the state. The Akali Dal has been fighting openly for political power by espousing the cause of the Sikh religion. For them, there can be no separation between the Sikh religion and Sikh politics. The pursuit of power was leading Sikh politics to extremism, which as time passed degenerated into terrorism. The 1973 Anandpur Sahib Resolution represented this – the Sikhs were described as a separate 'qaum'. Political and economic insecurity, as a result of the increasing unemployment of the educated Sikh youth created an explosive situation, which was fully exploited by the extremist elements.

Though religion may at least overtly seem to be the prime motivating factor for the emergence of terrorism in both Punjab and Kashmir, the two movements are quite dissimilar. In Punjab, the heart of the Sikh population was never in militancy, despite the drum-beats of Sikh fundamentalists, and despite the provocations of Blue Star and the carnage of Sikhs that followed the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi.

Turning to the Babri-Masjid Ramjanambhumi issue one notices that certain Hindu fundamentalist groups have alleged that this mosque had been built in the sixteenth century after destroying a Hindu temple standing on the site of the birth of Rama – one of the avatars of Lord Vishnu (of the Hindu pantheon). These groups were able to fulfil their desires when they destroyed large parts of the mosque on December 6, 1992. The results were widespread – Hindu-Muslim riots all over the country and the terrorist blasts in Bombay.

If radical Muslim terrorism does emerge as a major force in the coming years, and current trends do not entirely rule it out, the blame will lie not so

much on the Muslims who take to it, or on the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate but on Hindu fundamentalism. Had there been communal peace in India, had riots among the two communities not been regularly instigated, the danger of Muslim terrorism would not have existed. It is in fact this communal disharmony that has also disenchanted Kashmiri Muslims with India and aggravated the process of alienation. Nor will it help in the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan and India and Bangladesh. The greater the Hindu-Muslim divide in India, the greater will be the divide between India and its two Muslim neighbours.

While religion may spawn a separatist movement, the emergence of Bangladesh has dramatically exploded the myth that it can be made the basis of viable nationhood if ethnically, linguistically or for any other reason, there is little common ground between groups of people following the same religion. Pakistan as it exists today is also far from emotionally united - its various sub-identities always asserting themselves. The Mohajirs (the Muslims who migrated from India) want a reasonable place in the Pakistani sun and the Sindhis resent Punjabi domination and Mohajir infiltration in their lands. Nor are the Baluchis or Pathans happy, or even the Afghan refugees who have constant friction with the local populace. Alongside is the eternal stand-off between the Shias and the Sunnis.

The rise of Fundamentalism and Communalism in the last decade or so, both globally and in the context of India, has posed problems for Indian Foreign Policy. The achievement of the national interest, using the right means as far as possible, and in the context of world cooperation, are central India's Foreign Policy. The three main objectives and two additional ones (of Nehruvian) Foreign Policy – preservation of India's territorial integrity and freedom of policy; promotion of international peace; economic development of India; achievement of the freedom of dependent people and the elimination of racial discrimination; and protection of the interests of the people of Indian

origin. The means adopted are – Non-alignment; Temper of Peace; and Friendship with all countries.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy is based on realistic world situations, Pakistan became a member of SEATO and CENTO set up by Western countries so as to encircle the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War period. Pakistan provided military bases for western countries against Russia and in turn was able to garner sufficient amount of economic and military assistance.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy is predicted on the premise that it has to deal with a 'Hindu' neighbour which wants to dismember it and therefore before this happens Pakistan would like to do the same to India, i.e. help dismember it, get back Kashmir and promote Islamic fundamentalist activities in various parts of the sub-continent. Keeping such jingoistic sentiments aside the aim of Indian diplomacy should be to keep at bay the rise of religious fundamentalism and revivalism in the country so as not to give others a chance to point fingers at us and also keep up our old relations with the Islamic countries of the Gulf and Central Asia. Also we should participate at all international meets to deal with the menace of fundamentalism both globally and in our region to help reduce the communalization of our regional environment.

It needs also to be noted that howsoever hard Pakistan may try, whether Muslim terrorism will strike roots in India and become as a problem more menacing than any faced in Punjab and Kashmir, will depend to a very large extent on majority fundamentalism. The blame will not lie on the Muslims of India because they have clearly not shown any interest in it for close to fifty years. Even today, only the criminal element among them has been purchased and instigated by Pakistan. The Indian Muslim has also not been carried away by the tide of fundamentalism that is today sweeping much of the Islamic world. Nor did he contribute any worthwhile number of majahideens to the jihads in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya. He has not

really taken part in the ongoing militancy in Kashmir either. A few radical or separatist voices here and there do not represent the entire community.

Peace and friendship in the region will also hinge on the ability and will of the South Asian nations to contain religious fanaticism. If there are no communal riots in India and if Hindu chauvinism is quarantined, if Muslim places of worship are not attacked or demolished, there will be that much less reason for Pakistan and Bangladesh to be worked up about India. Fundamentalism in India has acted as a strong stimulus to fundamentalism in Pakistan and Bangladesh and vice versa. The more Pakistan and Bangladesh get radicalized, the more threatened will India become. A fanatical regime in Pakistan will be more inclined to defy both reason and world pressure and target India with greater determination. In the madness of fanaticism, who can guarantee that no one will use the nuclear option?

With both communism and the Soviet bloc now out of the reckoning, the world seems to be in the process of change, debating excitedly over possible new equations, even looking for new adversaries, not just among nations but among peoples, races and religions. Many Western analysts have started perceiving the geopolitical scenario as an emerging conflict between the North and the South, between what Prof. Robert Keohane of Harvard describes as the Zone of Peace, represented by the Western countries, and the Zone of Conflict, consisting of the South. The Zone of Peace, he argues, is threatened by 'terrorism, unwanted migration, proliferation of nuclear weapons and ecological damage' posed by the zone of Conflict. It is also perceived as an economic conflict between the haves of the North and the have-nots of the South, between the 'poor and disorganized nations against rich, organized nations'.

Arguing that the Cold War strategic concept of 'Mutually Assured Destruction' (MAD) should give way to 'Certain Destruction' in order to terminate any adventurist action by the terrorist states of the South, a number of analysts voice acute apprehension of the possible role of the expatriate

population from the South in the northern countries, warning that 'small, highly deadly units of terrorists' camouflaged among the immigrant populations from the South can play havoc with the northern nations. Unlike the Northerners, who are more concerned about 'material happiness', the Southerners, with some dismay, are 'prepared to die for their beliefs'. An American political analyst similarly warns that religious fanatics would be the first to use weapons of mass destruction because 'if God's telling you to do it, anything goes'. Samuel Huntington¹ speaks of European xenophobia and racism as a result becoming increasingly open, especially in Italy, France and Germany, with political reactions and violence against Arab and Turkish migrants becoming more widespread. The situation is the same in England with the Browns from the subcontinent being subjected to 'Paki-bashing' and with the migrant Blacks becoming victims of racist treatment. Nor for the matter are things different in the US, where too White hate groups and militias have emerged to threaten the non-Whites, even as the influx of Cubans, Haitians and others continues into that country.

As a consequence, the North, or rather the West, in contrast to its earlier ways of exploiting the South and using it as a pawn in the Cold War games, has of late started perhaps to recoil from it. This new hands-off attitude was conspicuously demonstrated in both Bosnia and Rwanda, despite the very high toll of human lives in these countries. But, as they also say, the conscience of the North stirs only for the Whites or where it has a deep economic vested interest.

Huntington may be partly correct in saying that 'the dominating source of conflict will be cultural', because, despite all the migrations, the West has now lost its old aura and is no longer the role model for the Rest.

Several Western thinkers, however, fear not the entire South but that South represented by the growing spectre of Islamic fundamentalism and its sponsors in what are called the 'rogue' countries of Libya, Syria, the Sudan, Iran and Iraq. Today, the West perceives Islamic terrorism to be as great a

threat as communism was fifty years ago. The NATO secretary-general Willy Claes and chief of the British MI5 Stella Remington have called fundamental Islam the geopolitical menace of the future.

Afghanistan has already gone the way of the other terrorist states and it may be a matter of time before Algeria and Egypt, where xenophobia, especially against the Westerners, has acquired a murderous hue, also succumb, rendering the whole of Muslim North Africa, West Asia, the Gulf and even the new republics of Central Asia vulnerable to Islamic fundamentalism. Even Turkey, which has so far preferred a geopolitical and geoeconomic nexus with Europe rather than West Asia, is now being swept by fundamentalism. As a result, it seems torn between its hitherto artificial identification with White Christian Europe and- as is being currently argued- its natural place, even in strategic terms, among the Islamic nations.

The build-up of Muslim angst is being manipulated by the fundamentalists into a backlash which may well lead to the 'clash of civilisations' feared by Prof. Samuel Huntington. Others have warned that the West's 'next confrontation is definitely going to be with the Muslim world. "It is in the sweep of Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin."²

The fault, however, does not really lie with religion or Islam. The fault lies with those who have created conditions for the rise of Muslim anguish, which the fundamentalists have so successfully exploited in their own quest for power, specially in Iran. After all, fanaticism does not arise from religious bigotry alone. It can as well arise from ideology. Is there a choice between the communism of the Soviet Union, the fascism of Hitler's Germany and the theocracy of Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran? The threat endangering the West is not a war with the Islamic nations but with theocratic and fundamentalist forces within the Islamic nations. The threat endangering the West is not a conventional war with such forces but the war that has become fashionable today, the war that is low in cost and risk, the same terrible war which the US

taught the Islamic fundamentalists so well in Afghanistan. It is this awesome threat that everyone is in fact dreading, and this includes the US, Europe, Russia, India, et al.

A highly revealing report entitled *the New Islamist International*, released in February 1993 by a task force on terrorism and unconventional warfare constituted under the auspices of the Republican Party's House Research Committee, has warned, on the basis of several years of research, about the threat of an oncoming Islamic Jihad against the 'Judeo-Christian World Order', being mounted by Iran and conducted via Sudan. The Jihad seems to be translating the vision of Ayatollah Khomeini of an ecumenical 'all-Islamic revolution' uniting the Shias and the Sunnis.

A paradox of today's world is that in this age and time, as we approach the twenty-first century, religion has re-emerged as a major force, dividing people of even common ethnic stock, and making people immune to reason and sanity. This is true not just in India but in much of the world. Even twenty years ago, no terrorist movement in the world seemed to be rooted in religion. Today, they come in various denominational hues, from White supremacists to radical Jews, from Hindutva fanatics to Buddhist zealots. Why single out the Muslims alone. Religious terrorists are distinguished by their zeal to wipe out the enemy altogether. Bosnia is but a recent example.

No system of government is indeed perfect. After the demise first of monarchy and oligarchy and now communism, it is the turn of democracy to be on the firing line. Democracy seems so gross and devoid of morals. It seems as degenerate and vulgar as today's Western culture. In comparison, theocracy seems so irresistibly incorruptible and selfless. That seems to be the emerging perception in many parts of the Third World.

India's diversity is still its crown, thorns and all; it is its strength, and also its weakness. A country of subcontinental size, fate has designed it asymmetrically, with a vast Hindu majority but with a Muslim population

second only to that of Indonesia, and with large populations of Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Jains, apart from several sects and creeds, languages and races. In this cacophonous diversity, each identity seeks security, and each aspiration seeks greater utterance. As not all aspirations can be satisfied, some have naturally erupted in violent forms. As such, democratic and plural India will have to live with the problem. Only the degree will vary and on that degree will hinge the Indian nationhood.

And yet, there is a broad commonality called the Indian identity. India's pluralism is an integral whole, whose dominant logic is confrontation, separation and conflict but slow and painful development of syncretic pattern of co-existence. Pluralism is not necessarily fissiparous, dichotomous, and divisive. It could turn out to be a condition of toleration, accommodation and mutual appreciation.

¹ Huntington, S.P. – Clash of Civilizations And The Remaking of the World Order 1997)

² Akbar, M.J. – "West and the Rest". Foreign Affairs, Vol.50, No.1, pp.101-102.

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