i. Queries and Issues Regarding the Conceptualization of Religious Militancy. by Mr. Ibrahim Waheed, Director General (Arts and Culture), Ministry of Information, Male, The Republic of Maldives, raises some pertinent questions about the conceptualization of religious militancy. In examining the question whether religion itself advocates militancy or the followers of certain religious persuasions advocate militancy, Mr. Waheed compares available notes of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and other faiths. He endeavors to examine the plausibility of the factors like poverty, illiteracy, lack of education, political repression, racism and others of being the causes ascribed for the advent of religious militancy within a community.

* Abstracts of papers not included in the text.
ii. **From Jihad to Politics: The Nationalization of Bangladeshi Islamist Parties** by Mr. M. Jeremie Codron, Ph. D Candidate in Political Science, Centre for International Studies and Research, Paris, France, attempts to explain how Islamist parties, engaged in a *jihad* against Bengali nationalists in 1971, have finally accepted the national frame as a proper environment to work in. His paper also attempts to understand the stigmatization, which Islamists have gone through, and the legitimization they have tried to gain in order to reach power.

iii. **The Non-rational Idea of the Holy - Analysis of the Hindu Right in India** by Dr. Santishree Pandit, Senior Reader, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Pune, India, states that the present time has seen the extravagant and fantastic irrationalism of religious expression and practice but also its morbid form in this region of South Asia. The irrational is today a favourite theme of all who are too lazy to think or too ready to evade the arduous duty of clarifying their ideas and grounding their convictions on a basis of coherent thought. Many times it is in loggerheads with rational aspect of the Supreme reality. It is the feeling, which remains and the concept fails. There has been an attempt to reconstruct religion as well as its bases or sources of religion and we are all victims to it. For if there be any single domain of human experience that presents us with something unmistakably specific and
unique, peculiar to itself, assuredly it is that of religious experience. Dr. Pandit questions whether this experience has been the rallying ground for the rootlessness unleashed by modernity and globalization? Has this helped the people in the region identify with the known than the unknown?

Dr. Pandit further argues that to be rapt in worship is one thing; to be morally uplifted by the contemplation of a good deed is another; and it is not to their common features, but to those elements of emotional content peculiar to the first that one should have attention directed as precisely as possible. This is the feeling of dependence of absolute submission to the will of God. The attempt to semitize a pluralistic religion like Hinduism has led aberrations. This has led to the interpretations that are so different. Her paper analyses the interpretations as given by the Hindu Right.

iv. Terror as Worship: The Spiritual Manual of the Perpetrators of September 11, by Professor Dr. Hans G. Kippenberg, Fellow, Theory and History of Religions, The Max-Weber-Kolleg, University of Erfurt, Germany, attempts to explain that the document claimed to have been found with three of the four cells, responsible for the crimes of 9/11, is unique, since there is the lack of - except in this case - any information how Muslim perpetrators, that commit suicide, conceive of their action. Prof. Kippenberg argues that no explicit word in the manual about the US representing today's heathendom; its financial, military and
political centers, though this is assumed tacitly, as the action itself shows. Instead, the alleged manual explicitly prescribes recitations, prayers and rituals, by which each member of the four cells prepares for the *gazwa*, purifies his intention and anticipates in his mind the stages of the drama to come. Not an objective aim, but a subjective intention is at the center of the Manual, authenticity of which is doubted by Prof. Kippenberg himself. Prof. Kippenberg’s paper places this type of dubious legitimation of violence in the history of Islamic activism since the eighties of the 20th century.

v. ‘War on Terrorism’ and Its Geopolitical Fall Out on South Asia by Dr. Jean-Luc Racine, Senior CNRS Fellow, Centre for South Asian Studies, Paris, France addresses the consequences of the "war on terrorism" launched after 9/11 by the United States and its allies on various levels of the geopolitical regional and macro regional scenario. Attention is paid to the regional impact of "Operation Enduring Freedom" conducted in Afghanistan, the fall out of the "war on terror" on Pakistan’s regional policies in Afghanistan and in Kashmir, as well as on the internal front, where sectarian violence, the *Wana* operations, and attacks on foreigners and on General Musharraf himself have added a new dimension to the risk of instability. Attention is also given to the following:

- the ambiguity of political Islam in the new regional context, be it in Pakistan or in Bangladesh;
- the Indian regional policy in the context of the war on terrorism;
- the implications of the war on terrorism on radical movements which could be either politico-religious (the most hardliners of the Sangh Parivar in India) or non religious, but labelled as terrorist formations (the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, the LTTE in Sri Lanka).

At a larger level, the impact of the "war on terrorism" on South Asia is relocated in the global scenario, incorporating the US intervention in Iraq, the first extra-European intervention of NATO in Afghanistan, the Russian policy in Chechnya and the Chinese perceptions of the new regional developments. The paper suggests that the 9/11 fall out had a diversified impact on South Asia, the strongest one being obviously in Afghanistan and in Pakistan. It engineered also a change in the Kashmiri separatist movement, and offered an opportunity to New Delhi. It increased as well the role of the US in South Asia and in Central Asia. However, the extent of change and the US neo-conservative policy have not totally altered the legacy of old structural parameters, as testified by the current dialogue engaged by India and Pakistan, or the difficulty to stabilize Afghanistan.
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