The South Asian subcontinent achieved independence from a colonial power without resorting to large-scale organised violence in their liberation struggles. The attainment of independent statehood, however, was accompanied by the partition of the subcontinent, the consequences of which were violence perpetrated by Hindus and Muslims against each other. There was relative absence of violence for the first two decades after independence. Though there was instability, regional dissidence, communal riots, etc, all throughout, these manifestations of grievances did not pose a serious threat to either the state structure or the ruling classes. By the late-sixties, however, the whole subcontinent was engulfed by waves of violence, threatening both the states and the regimes.

Every decade since the 1960s has witnessed the enlargement of the areas of conflict. Concomitant to this has been an increasing use of violence in the articulation of demands, political bargaining, and territorial secession and even to capture state power. Increasingly, armed struggle has become a dominant mode of political action. In some cases, guerrilla warfare is the mode of armed struggle, but at the same time terrorism constitutes an important part of their tactics. Gradually, violence and terrorism has become a part of everyday life and civil society of all the states in the subcontinent. This trend has been the primary cause for the increasing insecurity of the individual and citizens in South Asia.

The inability of most of these groups to achieve their objectives through armed struggles has resulted in their increasing recourse to terrorist acts like killing civilians, kidnappings, hostage taking, hijackings, and attacks on commercial targets. There has been an increase in assassinations of leading personalities and attacks against commercial targets. In Sri Lanka, insurgent groups have exterminated an entire level of political leadership at various levels due to targeted killings. A wave of sectarian killings by hit-and-run gunmen as well as bomb-blasts has
pervaded almost all provinces in Pakistan. Terrorism by secessionist movements in India's northeast and Kashmir continues and by left-wing extremists continue unabated in central India and also pose a serious challenge in Nepal. Due to these developments, the South Asian states are increasingly faced with high levels of political violence in the form of terrorism by organised groups as well as sporadic incidents of terrorism. A lot of civilian lives have been lost in the ensuing violence and incidents of terrorism.

Till the 1990s, the number of groups and their ability to engage in terrorism was limited. Acts of terrorism itself and their intensity and lethality were also limited in scale. However, since the 1990s there has been a significant change in this pattern. The number of groups that have resorted to terrorism now has increased, and their ability to resort to terrorism has been enhanced. Acts of terrorism have become more widespread and their lethality has also increased in terms of the number of civilian and security personnel casualties and the high levels of physical destruction that they can cause. This pattern has emerged due to certain socio-economic, geo-political and strategic factors.

Before examining the causes of violence and terrorism in South Asia, it would be pertinent to lay out the patterns of conflict and the way violence has been manifested in them.

3.1 ETHNIC/TRIBAL OR PRIMORDIAL VIOLENCE

The major manifestations of violence and terrorism in the context of South Asia have been an outcome of ethnic or tribal movements which have taken arms to achieve their objectives of secession or greater autonomy. And as such ethnic/tribal and primordial violence can be further sub-divided into secessionist and separatist violence. In this section we briefly discuss the rise, growth and present status of secessionist movements in Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Assam, Manipur, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir in India, the Baluch Movement in Pakistan and the Tamil Ethnic insurgency in Sri Lanka.

3.1.1 Ethnic/Tribal and Secessionist Violence

A high intensity of ethnic violence in South Asia is due to secessionist goals or movements. India, the largest state in the region, is confronted with the largest number of secessionist movements.
Northeast India

The north-eastern region of India, now comprising seven states, has been the location for a large number of insurgencies. This region has been one of the most conflict-prone regions in a country with a long history of conflicts. The patterns of these conflicts are varied, and their nature and causes are very complex. They range from outright demands for secession and autonomist movements, and movements against foreigners and immigrants, as well as intra-tribal feuds and inter-state conflicts. Various factors such as ethnic heterogeneity, linguistic diversity, demographic changes, historical and geo-political developments, lack of economic growth and infrastructural development, have given sustenance to insurgencies in this region. Invariably, all these conflicts have been accompanied with an excessive use of violence in articulation of demands and in mobilisation of forces. It is estimated that more than 50,000 people may have died in the accompanying violence in the northeast.

An insurgency led by the Naga people was the first to erupt in the early years of independence. Over a period of time, particularly since the 1970s, the entire northeast has been confronted with different forms of violence, guerrilla warfare and terrorism. Out of the seven states, at least four are faced with full-grown insurgencies. Nagaland, Assam, Tripura and Manipur are faced with insurgencies by one or more groups. Moreover, the other states are also faced with some form of violence caused by small and splintered groups. There is a Meitei insurgency in the Imphal valley, Naga-Kuki fratricidal feuds in the hills of Manipur, and spill over violence in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. One of the special characteristics of the region is the proliferation of a number of insurgent and militant groups that have taken to arms. It is difficult to keep track of all the groups as some die out or become inactive and new ones emerge. Even in those states that confront full-grown insurgencies, they are not led by one single group, but at times by numerous groups with differing objectives.

To understand this mosaic of insurgencies in India’s northeast, one needs to know the groups that exist or have faded away. In the state of Nagaland, there are three main militant groups—the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN, led by Isak-Muivah), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN, led by Khaplang) and the Naga National Council (NNC, led by Adino). In Assam, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), which launched an armed revolution for an Independent Assam, is the main group besides several others.
The Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) is a group operating in lower Assam. It was established in June 1996 with the objective of creating a separate Bodoland. The National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), formerly known as the Bodo Security Force (BdSF), also stands for a separate Bodoland. The Dima Halim Daoga (DHD) was formed in 1993 by the Dimasas to achieve a separate Dimaland. The Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO) was formed by the Koch-Rajbongshi tribes in 1995 to form a separate Kamtapur state comprising six districts of north Bengal and four districts of adjoining Assam. The Karbi National Volunteers (KNV) represents the Karbi tribes and aim to form a separate state of Karbi Anglong. The Rabha National Security Force (RNSF) represents the Rabha tribe and aims to form a separate Rabhaland. Assam has as many as 34 insurgent groups operating in the state. Among the newly emerging ones are large numbers of Muslim organisations, such as the Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA). The United National Liberation Front (UNLF) of the Meitei tribe is the most important militant group operating in Manipur along with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangliepak (PREPAK) who are fighting for an independent Manipur. Further, the Kukis—a migrant community in Manipur who came and settled in Manipur in the 18th century from Myanmar—have been demanding a separate homeland in Manipur. They have four groups—the Kuki National Army (KNA), Kuki Independence Army (KIA), Kuki National Front (KNF) and the Kuki Defence Front (KDF). Most of these groups play defensive roles against attacks from the NSCN (I-M). There are around twenty militant groups in Tripura of which the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), the Tripura Liberation Organisation Front (TLOF) and the United Bengalis Liberation Front (UBLF) are the most important armed groups. In Meghalaya, two militant groups—the Achi’k Liberation Matgrik Army (ALMA) and the Hynniewtrep Volunteer Council (HVC)—are engaged in violence.

Despite these large numbers of groups and a pervading atmosphere of violence what has to be kept in mind is that all militant activities in the region do not fall into the pattern of an insurgency. Most of the so-called insurgencies in the northeast are not really so. While some groups do have clear political objectives of secessionism or separatism, most do not. The dynamics of the major insurgencies in the region have further spawned a large number of militant organisations. Here we
discuss only the major insurgencies in the northeast that have had a political impact.

**Insurgency in Nagaland**

The Nagas were the first to initiate an armed insurgency in 1956. The Nagas had petitioned the British in 1926 so that Naga sovereignty should be restored when they withdrew from India. The Nagas, led by the Naga Nationalist Council (NNC), declared independence a day before India gained its independence. By 1950, Angami Zapu Phizo had assumed the Presidency of the NNC and resolved to establish a sovereign Naga state. They boycotted the general elections in 1952 and launched a violent independence struggle under the leadership of Phizo. An underground Naga Federal Government (NFG) was formed the same year which started raising an army and collecting taxes. In April 1956, the Indian army moved into the state to tackle the insurgency, only to be entangled in one of the longest and fiercest counter-insurgency operations.

Phizo withdrew to East Pakistan and shifted later to London in 1960. The so-called “Delhi Agreement” between a section of the Naga leadership and the government of India led to the formation of the state of Nagaland on 1 December 1963. However, these were perceived by the NNC as measures to divide the Naga people. The government of India banned the NNC in 1972. Massive counterinsurgency measures brought the situation under relative control, forcing the militants to the negotiating table. After prolonged negotiations, the Shillong Accord was signed between the government and a section of the NNC and NFG on 11 November 1975. Under the terms of the Accord, the NNC-NFG accepted the Indian Constitution and agreed to surrender arms. But the agreement failed to bring peace to Nagaland as it was seen as an agreement signed by only a section of the Naga rebels in their personal capacities and not as representatives of the NNC. This resulted in a vertical split in the underground movement. The Accord was not accepted by Phizo (who was in exile in England at that time) and the General Secretary of NNC, Thuengaling Muivah.

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1 The Naga leadership has maintained that the Nagas were not an Indian or sub-continental community. They were probably of Mongoloid origin. See, N.K. Das, *Ethnic Identity, Ethnicity and Social Stratification in North-East India*, New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1989, pp. 243-45.

Along with other leaders such as Isak Chisi Swu and S.S. Khaplang, in 1980 Muivah set up a breakaway faction on Burmese soil, called the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). Owing to differences over the response to the peace process initiated by the government in 1986, a section led by the Burmese Naga leader Khaplang broke away to form NSCN (K). The two factions of the NSCN had been banned since 1991. The NSCN, led by Muivah and Isak Swu, has become the basis for all other insurgencies in the northeast. The 1990s were marked by bloody internecine feuds between the NSCN (I-M) and the NSCN (K) factions.

Since August 1997, a ceasefire between the government of India and the NSCN (I-M) has come into force, which was later, joined by the NSCN (K) faction on 28 April 2001. The cease-fire first came into force for only three months and but was then routinely extended every three months. From 1998, the period was extended to six more months. From August 2000, it has been extended on a yearly basis. According to an agreement on 14 June 2001, the government of India extended the Naga cease-fire beyond Nagaland to other parts of the northeast to fulfil NSCN (I-M)'s demand to extend the cease-fire to Naga inhabited areas in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. This led to widespread protest and violence. In Manipur, protestors burnt down the Chief Minister's office and the state assembly. In widespread rioting 18 people lost their lives. However, subsequently the cease-fire extension outside Nagaland was withdrawn on 27 July 2001. Both sides have subsequently extended the ceasefire and it remains in force at the time of writing in July 2006.

Several rounds of talks have been held between the government of India's emissaries and NSCN (I-M)'s leaders T. Muivah and Isak Swu outside India. India's previous Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao, H.D. Deve Gowda and I.K Gujral have also met and held talks with Naga leadership in foreign locations such as Bangkok, Zurich, Geneva, Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur. Even former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee met them twice in Paris in 1998 and in Osaka, Japan in 2001. Although a ceasefire has been in force since 1997, the NSCN (I-M)'s tax

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3 Ibid., pp. 109-10.
4 This split was also along clan lines.
5 The greater Nagaland concept includes a large part of the territory of the three neighbouring states. These are the districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills besides parts of Sibsagar, Jorhat and Golaghat in Assam, the districts of Tirap and Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh and the districts of Senapati, Tamenglong, Ukhrul and Chandel in Manipur.
Manif estations of Violence and Terrorism

collection activities still continue. The NSCN (I-M) still engaged security forces and is believed to have been involved in some ambushes. However, since January 2003, the peace process has taken a dramatic turn. The ban on the NSCN (I-M) was lifted and the two Naga leaders Isak Swu and T. Muivah who have been in self-imposed exile outside India came to New Delhi to hold talks with the top Indian leadership. They met the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister but the meetings did not bring about any dramatic breakthrough. However, both sides agreed to maintain a peaceful atmosphere. The Naga leaders declared an end to the insurgency in Nagaland and promised to stop the campaign against the security forces. The NSCN (I-M) climbed down from its core demands of absolute sovereignty. Their demand now includes a special federal relationship between New Delhi and the future Naga state. But they have stuck to their demand for a separate homeland for the Naga people, which include Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

The Mizo Insurgency

The insurgency in Mizoram was caused by other reasons. The Mizo National Front (MNF), which was the spearhead of the insurgency, was formed out of the Mizo Famine Front (MFF) in 1959 by L.C Laldenga with independence as its goal. Laldenga declared that the Mizos constituted a separate nation from the plains people, with a political right to self-determination. The MNF formed a Mizo National Army (MNA) to fight the Indian forces. In 1966, Laldenga launched “Operation Jericho” in which his guerrillas overran Aizawl and captured the treasury, radio station and the police station. Indian forces took almost a week to recapture these areas. Laldenga escaped to East Pakistan and then fled to Pakistan in 1971. He agreed to talks in 1975, which culminated in the signing of an accord with Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi in 1986. Laldenga agreed to recognize Indian constitution, surrender arms and join the mainstream. Subsequently, he became the

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7 On 29 November 1999, an attempt was made on the life of Nagaland’s former Chief Minister S.C. Jamir. The NSCN (I-M), however, denied its involvement in the incident. On 31 July 2000, the NSCN (I-M) ambushed an Indian army convoy in Manipur and killed four soldiers.
8 Das, op. cit., p. 268.
9 Hazarika, op. cit., p. 113.
Chief Minister of Mizoram in 1987. With that move, the Mizo insurgency died down. The MNF, which started as an insurgent group, has been integrated into the Indian political mainstream and is part of the democratic process.

**Insurgency in Tripura**

The genesis of insurgency in Tripura lies in the massive influx of settlers from Bangladesh and other parts of India, thus, upsetting the socio-economic pattern in the state and increasing pressure on land. This has resulted in a sharp decline in the tribal population of the state, and large areas of cultivable land have been given to refugees.\(^\text{10}\) It was basically the disturbance in the demographic equilibrium, land alienation supplemented by economic exploitation, and a strong tribal identity that led to the emergence of the secessionist insurgencies in Tripura. One of the first groups that was to emerge was the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS) in June 1967. Its main objective was to secure the creation of an autonomous tribal district council and restoration of tribal lands. Bejoy Hrangkhal split from the TUJS to form the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) in December 1978 to fight for an independent tribal Tripura state. The violence unleashed by the TNV primarily targeted Bengali settlers. Selective killings of non-tribals were designed to trigger an exodus. The TNV faded from public view for some time and was revived only in 1982. It matured into a mobile and effective guerrilla force in 1984 and 1985 and reached its peak by the end of 1987. However, the TNV realised that independence was an impractical objective. In August 1988, the TNV reached an agreement with the Tripura government, which had provisions to facilitate the restoration of tribal lands.

There is widespread feeling that the agreement with the TNV has not been implemented. It was hoped that the agreement signed with the TNV in 1988 would end the violence in Tripura, but sporadic violence keeps erupting. New militant organisations have surfaced. Today there are over 30 militant organisations in Tripura with differing objectives and espousing a variety of ideological positions. The main ones are the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), which were proscribed in April 1997. The NLFT was formed in March 1989. Its objective is to establish an independent Tripura state through an armed struggle. The ATTF was founded in

\(^\text{10}\) These refugees were part of the Bengali Hindu population that migrated to Tripura from the then East Pakistan at the time of partition.
July 1990 by a group of former TNV members. The outfit’s objectives are restoration of tribal lands; removal of names of immigrants who entered Tripura after 1956 from the electoral roll; and expulsion of all Bengali—speaking immigrant settlers who entered Tripura after 1956. Neither of the two groups has shown much inclination to enter into a dialogue with the government. The NLFT does not want to negotiate within the framework of the Indian constitution and has indicated that it might enter into a conditional dialogue if the question of sovereignty is also on the agenda.

The government has continued its efforts for a negotiated settlement. However, these two groups have clearly shown less ideological commitment. Their main motivation seems to be to make quick money by extortion, kidnapping and highway robberies. The Tripura government’s writ does not run in parts of the state where these outlawed tribal outfits have managed to make deep inroads. Incidents of violence are a common occurrence and the NLFT leaves no opportunity to terrorise the non-tribal population. A Bengali militant group, the United Bengalis Liberation Front (UBLF) has come into being since October 1999. This group responds with reprisal attacks to the violence unleashed by the NLFT.

The ULFA Insurgency in Assam

The violent insurgency in Assam has been led by the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), formed in April 1979 at Sibsagar. The founders were Arabind Rajkhowa (Chairman), Golap Barua alias Anup Chetia (General Secretary), Pradip Gogoi (Vice-Chairman) and Paresh Barua (head of the armed wing). It is essentially an offshoot of the Assam agitation led by the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and has fought against migrants and Indian rule. Since India’s partition in 1947, a continuous flow of illegal immigrants from East Pakistan and Bangladesh has disturbed the local demography. Popular sentiments against the foreigners led to a mass movement seeking the detection of illegal immigrants, their deletion from the voter’s list and their deportation to Bangladesh. The movement was led by the AASU. This

12 For instance, in the run-up to the assembly elections in Tripura in March 2003, the NLFT killed 11 supporters of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). In May 2003, coordinated attacks by the NLFT and the ATTF claimed the lives of 32 non-tribals. “A Terror Campaign”, *Frontline*, 6 June 2003, p. 50.
movement ended in 1985 with the signing of the Assam Accord and the subsequent installation of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government in Assam. However, they were able to do little to expel or disenfranchise illegal aliens. The AGP government's perceived inefficacy on the issue, its general non-performance and allegations of corruption rapidly eroded the regional party's appeal.

The ULFA, which was almost dormant until 1985, viewed the non-implementation of the Assam Accord as another evidence of the central government's apathy in protecting the interests of the Assamese. The ULFA claimed "the mass movements of the past and especially the illegal elections of 1983 prove beyond dispute that there is no so-called moderate road available to the people of Assam." The founders of ULFA had hoped that a just society where the administration would be more responsive to the needs of the people would be ushered in after the student's agitation. But these expectations were belied.

During the first term of the AGP government from 1986 to 1990, the ULFA enjoyed virtually free reign to spread its subversive agenda. The AGP was not able to resist the growth of the ULFA militancy. Its response was half-hearted because it shared a common ideological space with the ULFA. The ULFA, which was by then fairly well-equipped with trained cadres and weapons, unleashed a reign of terror in a spate of selective assassinations, extortions and armed violence. By 1990, the ULFA was at the peak of its power. It ran a parallel government in the state and had a highly effective system of levying taxes, and organized community work, at times by coercing people. It built a sizeable armed organisation with sophisticated weapons by extorting huge amounts of funds from local businesses.

Seeing a clear threat posed by the rise of the ULFA, the central government at New Delhi intervened, dismissed the state government and ordered a military crackdown on the ULFA. Presidential rule was imposed in Assam and a military operation, called Operation Bajrang, was launched on 27 November 1990 to flush out the ULFA militants. This lasted until 20 April 1991. The operation was not very successful.

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15 The ULFA was successful in carrying out these activities because of its widespread support among villagers, the urban middle class and Assamese students at that time. Hazarika, op. cit., p. 175.
A subsequent operation, called Operation Rhino, from 14 September 1991 to 4 January 1992, was able to immobilise ULFA by early 1992. It was temporarily suspended on the prospects of talks between the ULFA and the government. By then ULFA was faction-ridden and a section of the leadership decided to hold talks with the government. This resulted in a split in the organisation. From 1992 to 1994 a large number of cadres surrendered and sought rehabilitation. While some of its cadres have been rehabilitated, its hardcore members have managed to take shelter in Bangladesh. Since then the insurgency has ebbed and flowed. On several occasions the ULFA leadership has issued statements expressing their desire to hold peace talks with the central government. In January 2003, soon after the meeting of the Naga leaders with the Indian Prime Minister, the ULFA is believed to have said that it is keenly watching the outcome of the ongoing peace talks and that it might be inclined to join the talks if a settlement came about with the Nagas.16

Since the mid-1990s, there has been erosion in the popular support of the organisation. In December 2003, the ULFA suffered serious setbacks because of military operations by the Bhutanese army against the group’s hideouts in Bhutan. But its top leadership remains and through its networks in Bangladesh it still operates effectively. There have been some efforts at peace talks. In October 2005, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh held talks with representatives of ULFA in New Delhi but no details were given out. In April 2006, the Indian PM ruled out any possibility of having any discussion on the issue of sovereignty of Assam with the ULFA.

**Insurgency in Manipur**

The beginning of secessionism in Manipur can be traced to the time when Maharaja Bodhchandra Singh of Manipur signed the instrument of accession on 11 August 1947. Two years later, on 15 October 1949 the state was merged with India, but it became a separate state in the Indian union only in 1972. Many Manipuris believe that the Maharaja was pressurised to sign the merger with India under duress, but that he also got a fat privy purse. The left nationalists in Manipur organised to fight for an Independent Manipur, but the movement remained dormant for some time. In November 1964, a group called the United

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National Liberation Front (UNLF) of Manipur was formed under the leadership of Arambam Somorendra Singh to achieve national self-determination. They believed that Manipur had been crippled by neglect and had no cultural ties with the rest of the country and, therefore, wanted independence for Manipur. Links were established with Naga and Mizo insurgents but soon differences surfaced within the UNLF over the tactics to be followed: while one group favoured ideological preparation of the masses, the other wanted to intensify the struggle. One leader, N. Bisheshwar Singh split, and formed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1978. Manipur also witnessed a number of Meitei underground organisations with similar objectives in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) led by R. K. Tulachandra in 1977, and the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) in 1980. Most of these groups adhere to the position that Manipur was not merged with India in 1949 but was annexed. In a massive counter-insurgency operation in 1980-81, the PLA was badly beaten and Bisheshwar was arrested. He contested elections from behind bars in 1985 and was subsequently released when he denounced violence. He was assassinated on 10 August 1994. Since the 1990s the PLA has regrouped and again started an armed struggle. Together with the UNLF the PLA has formed a political front, called the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF).

Insurgency in Punjab

The origin of the problem can be traced to the colonial days when some Sikh organisations made a representation before the Cripps Mission for an independent Sikh state. The demand was, however, dropped as the Indian National Congress was able to take the Shrimoni Akali Dal (SAD), a Sikh theocratic party advocating a separate Sikh state, along with it in the nation-building process. But SAD's inability to secure power in competitive electoral politics since independence resulted in the demand for a Punjabi Suba—a Sikh majority state within the Indian Union. Even after the division of the state in 1966 into Punjab and Haryana SAD could not get a guarantee to political power, the party changed course to appeal increasingly to Sikh religious sentiments.

The roots of the ethnic violence can be traced to a moderate movement for greater autonomy spearheaded by SAD under the Anandpur Sahib resolution of 1973. This resolution called for the devolution of power to the states and the implementation of a proper federal structure in
which the power of the central government would be restricted to such items as defence, foreign policy, currency and communications. Over a period of time, from greater autonomy for Punjab within the Indian constitutional framework, the demand shifted to the creation of Khalistan, a Sikh theocratic state. SAD increasingly stiffened its stand and acquired a militant posture.

SAD emerged as the dominant party in the 1977 assembly and general elections by entering into an alliance with the Janata party and Communist Party of India (Marxist). The Congress, which had been frustrating and check-mating the SAD in the race for power by its counter-politics, used Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a militant and communally inclined Sikh leader to undermine the moderate Akali leadership. In 1978, an organisation called the Dal Khalsa was formed under the leadership of Bhindranwale. The Dal Khalsa along with a student organisation called the All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), were believed to be behind large-scale violence against Hindus, which started by the end of 1983. By this time, the Sikhs' demand for autonomy had taken secessionist overtones and a violent form. The Anandpur Sahib resolution also talked of Sikh nationhood and the armed militants and some Akali groups interpreted this as justification for an independent state of Khalistan. Bhindranwale's followers acquired sophisticated weapons from abroad and launched a violent campaign.

Finally in June 1984, the central government launched a military operation called Operation Bluestar to flush out militants from the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, where Bhindranwale and his Sikh extremists had sought sanctuary and turned it into a veritable operational headquarters. Bhindranwale was killed in the operations but terrorism continued unabated in Punjab. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her own Sikh bodyguards in October 1984 to avenge Operation Bluestar. This was followed by anti-Sikh riots in different parts of the country, further fuelling violence in Punjab. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi attempted a political solution to militancy and secessionism in Punjab through negotiations. He signed an accord with Sant Harcharan Singh Longowal—who represented a moderate faction of the SAD in August 1985 to resolve some of the outstanding issues. Following the accord, the Longowal faction of the SAD was able to form a government.

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17 For a detailed analysis about how Bhindranwale was promoted to keep the Akali Dal in check and also used in the internal rivalries within the Congress Party, see, Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991, pp. 167-219.
in Punjab under the leadership of Surjit Singh Barnala. However, there were problems in the implementation of the accord due to the lack of sincerity by the Congress government at the Centre. The accord failed as Longowal was assassinated by Khalistan terrorists soon after, and in the end it failed to end violence in the state.\textsuperscript{18}

The violence and terrorism in Punjab was highly sectarian, brutal and indiscriminate. Till 1982, terrorists struck at selective targets. Their targets included members of the police and administration, media persons writing against them, members of other sects of Sikhism, prominent Sikhs critical of their brutal methods and anti-national activities. They did not engage in mass-killings till the first half of 1983. From then on, highly communal and selective mass public executions were carried out to spread mass terror and create a communal divide in the well-integrated Hindu-Sikh communities. The terrorism spread beyond Punjab to other parts of India, more specifically to Delhi, involving both mass killings of innocents as well as the selective assassination of political leaders and eminent personalities opposed to the brutal violence.

For a long time the government was not able to restart the political process in Punjab. The terrorists managed to entrench themselves in the Golden temple again. An operation called Operation Black Thunder undertaken by the Punjab police and paramilitary forces in May 1988 succeeded in flushing out the terrorists from the Golden temple. The government managed to restore the political process in March 1992 and thereafter by strong counter-insurgency measures was able to contain the terrorism by early 1993. After almost a decade there have been some signs of revival and reorganisation by terrorist groups in Punjab. The Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) is believed to have been behind serial bomb blasts in two Cinema halls in New Delhi on 22 May 2005 resulting in the death of one and injuries to 60 civilians. The investigations into the bomb blasts led to the arrest of several BKI operatives including a top leader—Jagtar Singh Hawara.\textsuperscript{19}


Insurgency in Kashmir

The explosion of violence in Kashmir in December 1989 was not sudden. The problem in Kashmir goes back to the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), a Hindu king ruling an overwhelmingly Muslim population, took his time to decide on the accession to India or Pakistan. Pakistan, taking advantage of the indecision of Maharaja Hari Singh, laid its claim on the state on the ground of its demographic composition and sent in tribal raiders, who almost reached Srinagar. It was then the Maharaja hastily decided to accede to India. The Indian army was then flown in, and it pushed back the invaders. The local population led by Sheikh Abdullah and volunteers of his National Conference helped the Indian Army. However, the issue in the meantime was taken to the UNO and a ceasefire was imposed, leaving a large area under Pakistani occupation. This virtual division of the state between India and Pakistan made Kashmir into a disputed territory and resulted in divided loyalties in the valley.

After Kashmir's accession to India, it was given a special status under Article 370 of the Indian constitution. The determination of Sheikh Abdullah, the popular leader of the National Conference (NC), was instrumental in an understanding being reached on the issue of Kashmir's accession to India, despite existent aspirations for a separate state at that time. But his imprisonment in 1953, and later his demise in 1982, completely changed the political course in Kashmir.

Over a period of time, New Delhi progressively curtailed the powers and scope of Article 370—which gives J&K substantial autonomy—by extending most of the provisions of the Indian constitution to that state. Successive Congress governments in New Delhi have been inclined to go along with a diluted Article 370, as long as the state governments in J&K were loyal to the Indian Union and did not question the legitimacy of its accession to India. Often the centre adopted both fair and foul methods to this end, including the rigging of elections, dismissal of duly elected governments, and appointing state governors of its own choice, even against the wishes of the state government. These lapses on the part of the central leadership, along with corruption and dismal employment prospects for the Kashmiri youth, led to their growing alienation and disenchantment with the policies of New Delhi.

It was against this background that PM Rajiv Gandhi and Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah arrived at an electoral agreement in 1986, whereby an alliance of the NC and the Congress-I was formed to fight
the 1987 elections. This agreement was instrumental in discrediting Farooq Abdullah in the eyes of the Kashmiris. Further, allegations of rigging of the 1987 elections is believed to be the turning point because for the first time, a newly constituted Muslim United Front (MUF), an umbrella organisation of several fundamentalist groups and parties, had made a serious bid to capture power through the popular vote. The election was not only rigged before the eyes of the MUF polling agents, they were even harassed and beaten. Having lost faith in the democratic political process, the disgruntled elements soon took to the path of militancy. Later, it was found by the intelligence agencies that quite a few of the militants included the young men who were guarding ballot boxes for the MUF candidates during the 1987 elections.

Following the installation of the NC government, violent protests over the issue of unemployment and power shortages took place throughout 1988-89. The bureaucrats and political leaders had misappropriated central government assistance for the development of the state. The failure of the state government to create employment opportunities severely affected the unemployed and the underemployed among the newly educated youths. Due to lack of satisfactory life chances and political opportunities to express their dissatisfactions, and the corrupt behaviour of the state politicians, the Kashmiri youths took up arms.

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20 Within the valley, the Congress and the National Conference were totally discredited. In all probability, elections were rigged to prevent the MUF from demonstrating its strength. See, Paul Brass, The Politics of India Since Independence, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 221. On the other hand, it is suggested that notwithstanding its mobilisation and consolidation in ranks, MUF could not win more than five seats and consequently it alleged mass rigging by the alliance. The allegations were so forceful that it managed to convince the public at large that the alliance had resorted to rigging. See, Riyaz Punjabi, “Kashmir: The Bruised Identity”, in Raju G. C. Thomas (ed.), Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia, Boulder: Westview Press, 1992, p. 148. But everyone agrees that this election was the turning point in the rise of militancy in the valley.

21 Anuradha Dutt, “Can Jagmohan Save Kashmir”, Illustrated Weekly of India, 4-10 February 1990, p. 15.

22 Shekhar Gupta, “Kashmir Valley: Militant Siege”, India Today, 31 January 1990, p. 28. Some researchers have also confirmed this fact on the basis of their field studies. Ashutosh Varshney writes, “Some of those candidates (MUF candidates who were beaten up) crossed the ever porous Indo-Pak border and joined the extremist groups. The leadership of the insurgency two years later would come from some of these contestants.” He adds, “Some have become area commanders of the various militant groups. Their names are widely known but for reasons of safety can not be revealed....” See his article, “Three Compromised Nationalisms: Why Kashmir Has Been a Problem”, in Raju Thomas, op. cit., pp. 220 and 233.

23 The former Governor of Kashmir, Jagmohan, believes that it was due to these factors that “fundamentalists, pro-Pakistan elements and terrorists”, aided and abetted by Pakistan, came to hold sway over the minds of Kashmiris. See, Jagmohan, My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1991, pp. 13 and 112.
By end-1989 and early 1990, the militants were dominant in the valley and the politicians were getting marginalised. The Kashmiri militants came into limelight through the kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of the then Union Home Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, himself a Kashmiri Muslim, in December 1989 by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). Prime Minister V.P. Singh gave in to the JKLF's demands for the release of five militants. The victory of the militants was widely celebrated in the valley. The National Front government at the Centre sent Jagmohan as the Governor to bring the deteriorating situation under control. Farooq Abdullah resigned in protest and President's rule was imposed. This unleashed a wave of militant violence in the valley and the government responded with strong retaliatory measures by deploying para-military forces.

Until 1993-94, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Tehrik-ul-Mujahideen, Al Fatah Force, Jammu Kashmir People's League and the JKLF were the main groups. By 1994-1996, the experience of the security forces allowed them to develop better counter insurgency tactics. During this period counter-insurgents, who had switched loyalties towards India were successful in countering pro-Pakistan terrorists. From the 1996 onwards, violence picked up and in this phase over 60 per cent of the militants were foreigners including volunteers from Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Algeria. The important groups during this period were the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). The JeM was established in Pakistan in March 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar shortly after he was released by the Indian government for hijacking hostages. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, which had dominated the insurgency in the valley till the mid-1990s before it, was sidelined by the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed. From July 1999 onwards till the Kargil conflict, a new phase of suicide attacks was noticed. Between July 1999 and November 2002, 338 people were killed and 432 injured due to suicide attacks. The first attack took place on 13 July 1999. In it 6 BSF personnel were killed in Bandipore. The targets of suicide attacks have been the 15 Corps Headquarters, the Special Operations Group headquarters, the Police control room, the J&K Legislative Assembly Complex, Srinagar airport and various other places.

There have been increased momentums in the Kashmir insurgency after 11 September 2001 following the attacks on the US mainland. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in November 2001 said that foreign militants had
no role in Kashmir and that the Kashmir movement was an indigenous movement and that foreign outfits were helpers and would have to work under the local leadership. While this tone sounded conciliatory, there have also been differences between the terrorist groups. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen accused the Pakistan militant groups of having some terrorist elements in their organisations and called on them to take action against them.24

On 13 December 2001, when Pakistan-based terrorists attacked the Indian parliament, India and Pakistan almost went to war. India put Pakistan on notice to rein in support to cross-border terrorism or face the consequences of a war. India demanded that Pakistan end infiltration permanently, shut down all terrorist training camps and infrastructure, and cut off financial aid to terrorists. After India’s mobilisation in end-December, signals began emanating from Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the ruler of Pakistan, that he might relent. Early January 2002, there were reports that he had ordered the ISI to withdraw support from the terrorist groups fighting in Kashmir. Gen. Musharraf ordered the shutdown of the wing in the ISI that dealt exclusively with the armed groups that Pakistan had backed in Kashmir.

In pursuance of Musharraf’s telecast announcement of January 12, 2002, Lt. Gen. Moinuddin Haider, Pakistan’s Interior Minister, issued a notification on January 15, 2002, formally banning the following five organisations under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997:25 the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), the Tehreek-i-Jaffria Pakistan (TJP) and the Tehreek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi (TNSM). Three months after Gen. Musharraf announced a crackdown on terrorist groups and on the Madrassas that were breeding them, there were signs of softening. The members of the terrorist organisations that had been banned had begun to reorganize under new names.

By the end of April, the crackdown had either completely waned or terrorist groups had devised ways of carrying on business as usual. Some observers believed that they still operated in the same way that they used to do; it was just that they were less visible. Some reports revealed how the JeM and the LeT had adapted to the ban. The JeM Bookstore was now called the Reformatory Library. Their

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25 This was enacted by the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, and under which Sharif himself was prosecuted and jailed by Musharraf after capturing power.
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magazine called Jaish-e-Mohammed was now titled al-Islah (Reform). The LeT was renamed as Jamaat-ud Dawa (Party of Preachers) and their magazine Jihad was retitled as Ghazwa (Battle).26

In October 2002, elections to the J&K State assembly were held. The election was one of the most violent in history. In the 1996 elections no candidates were killed. But in the 2002 elections, two prominent men were killed—Law Minister Mushtaq Ahmed Lone and the NC candidate from the Lolab constituency. Attempts were also made on the life of the Tourism Minister Sakina Ittoo. The All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), a grouping of several secessionist political parties, boycotted the elections. One of the important leaders of the APHC, Abdul Ghani Lone, was assassinated in Srinagar on 21 May 2002 as he was suspected to be keen to participate in the electoral process. The elections nevertheless took place and a new government was installed. India demobilised from the borders on the pretext of successful holding elections in Kashmir.

Since January 2004, a peace process has been initiated between India and Pakistan. Several rounds of talk have been held and several confidence-building measures have been put in to place. APHC was also brought into the dialogue process and the government of India held several rounds of talk with them. However, there has been no ceasefire with the secessionist groups or the Pakistani-based terrorist outfits. Infiltration in J&K continues despite Gen. Musharraf’s promise to clamp down on violent secessionist groups. The HM has said that it will continue its armed struggle. Occasional violence and the killing of innocent civilians by terrorist groups continue. In a series of explosions in market areas in New Delhi on 29 October 2005, suspected to be carried out by the LeT, 62 people were killed and 155 injured. Possibly to disrupt the fledgling peace process, the LeT in two separate incidents massacred 35 Hindu villagers in the districts of Doda and Udhampur in J&K on 1 May 2006.

The Baluch Insurgency

The Baluch tribes revolted against the Pakistan state when their country was forcibly incorporated on 27 March 1948.27 Though the

movement in Baluchistan had died down after the initial armed revolt, resistance continued from significant pockets. Throughout the 1960s the Baluch Mountains were the scene of considerable guerrilla activity. In 1967-68, Bugti guerrillas and the Pakistan army engaged in a series of bloody skirmishes. In May 1968, Nawab Akbar Bugti was sentenced to death under the Defence of Pakistan Rules. Although Bugti was later pardoned, around 200 Baluch leaders were kept imprisoned in Quetta, Kalat and Karachi on rebellion charges, between 1962 and 1969.

The Baluch tribal leaders were unable to forge unity to assert provincial autonomy for a long period. Baluch nationalism, however, later found expression through the National Awami Party (NAP), formed in 1957 under the leadership of Wali Khan. It was pledged to the principle of provincial autonomy. In the elections of 1970, the NAP along with the Jamaat-Ulema-i-Islami (JUI) scored an impressive victory and formed a NAP-JUI coalition government. Two Baluch nationalists, Mir Ghaus Bizenjo and Ataullah Khan Mengal, were being installed as Governor and Chief Minister respectively. The provincial government's demand for a greater share in the national resources of the province and allocation of industries led to friction with the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP)-dominated centre. Consequently, the provincial government was dissolved in 1973, the NAP leaders arrested, and the party banned for anti-national activities.

When the NAP was banned and its leadership was in jail, the militant sections got an upper hand. Led by the Baluch People’s Liberation Front (BPLF) and Baluch Students Organisation (BSO) at a later stage, they carried out an insurgency for the next four years, from 1973-77. The BPLF, after its formation in 1976, declared liberation of all nationalities in Pakistan as its prime objective. Subsequently, it stressed the creation of an independent Baluchistan. By 1980, it was demanding a ‘Greater Baluchistan’, comprising the areas in Iran and Afghanistan inhabited by the Baluchis.

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28 The insecurity engendered by the events of 1971 led to Pakistan’s dismemberment were at the heart of the events that followed. Ibid., p. 143.


30 Harrison, Ibid., pp. 72-87.
Since the 1980s, Baluch separatism toned down its demands for greater provincial autonomy. This was partly due to the realisation that success over a far superior Pakistan army through guerrilla struggle in Baluchistan was a remote possibility. The tiny population of about five per cent of Pakistan is not large and well-equipped to succeed against a huge modern army. The subdued nature of the Baluch movement is also due to certain external and internal developments. The Afghan crisis and the toppling of the Shah of Iran enhanced the geo-political significance of Baluchistan. The refugee influx due to the Afghan crisis has also had a severe impact on Baluchistan. The province has the highest number of refugees, mostly push tuns, which has altered the ethnic balance in the Province. During the 1990s, the support for an independent Baluchistan was further eroded by the demands of the Pathans settled there for the division of Baluchistan along ethnic lines.

In the 1980s and the 1990s, the armed struggle became subdued as the Baluch nationalists were co-opted into the power structure and many shared power in the province. Since the military coup in 1999, which brought Gen. Pervez Musharraf to power, the nationalists have gradually been excluded from political power in the province. A coalition government of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and a six-party alliance of religious parties called the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) are now ruling the province. In September 2003, the Baluch nationalists got together in an alliance called the Baluch Ittehad (Baluch Alliance) mainly in opposition to the setting up of military garrisons and to the launching of mega projects on Baluch soil. The nationalists have been against the proposed mega-projects in the province, which they believe would reduce them to a minority in their own province. Baluchis have a strong feeling that they have been denied their rights for over 56 years.

Since the setting up of the alliance, there have been simmering tensions between the federal government and the nationalists in Baluchistan. There were some 1600 incidents of rocket-firing and 140 bomb blasts in 2003. The province witnessed large-scale violence in 2004. A series of rocket attacks on gas-pipelines and skirmishes between the locals and law enforcement agencies were reported. These incidents were being attributed to a new organisation called the Baluch Liberation Army (BLA). There was speculation that the BLA was built around the core of the BSO. The BLA claimed responsibility for an attack on soldiers of the Pakistan army in August 2004. Violence flared

up after January 2005 when a Baluch lady doctor working for Pakistan Petroleum Limited was raped allegedly by army men, including an officer holding the rank of Captain. This was considered as an affront to Baluch honour. Instead of instituting an impartial enquiry into the incident, Gen. Musharraf took a hard line stance. A few days later the BLA started targeting army positions and other commercial installations.

The government rushed in additional troops and also announced the setting up of new and permanent military bases in Baluchistan. The tribal chiefs have been opposed to the setting up of military cantonments and mega-projects in Baluchistan. Their argument has been that development and modernisation in Baluchistan has not benefited Baluchis. On the contrary, they have been deprived of their rights in the name of development and modernisation. Baluch grievances continue to revolve around the issue of development and royalties for natural resources. Despite being the largest supplier of gas to the country, Baluchistan is paid royalties for gas that is far less than what is paid to the other provinces. The Baluchis are also concerned that the development of the Gwadar port—a mega-project—will eventually lead to large-scale migration from other provinces, adding to the large number of outsiders already present in the province. The Baluch fear that they will not only become minorities in their own land but will also lose their land to outsiders.

The Baluch are also strongly opposed to the setting up of cantonments in Kohlu, Sui and Gwadar as these are not needed for any defence requirements but could be used to suppress Baluch opposition. The Baluch demands are that there should be an increase in the payment of royalties, suspension of the construction of the Gwadar project, the stoppage of the influx of Punjabis and other non-Baluch into the province and the abandonment of the plans to build more cantonments in Baluchistan. Gen. Musharraf’s regime does not seem to be keen on a political dialogue and is determined to go ahead with the Gwadar project and also the projects to build the cantonments. The federal government has avoided resolving the problems of Baluchistan and has instead resorted to army operations against the nationalists.³²

**Ethnic Insurgency in Sri Lanka**

The origins of ethnic violence in Sri Lanka may be traced to the historical perceptions of the Sinhala and Tamil communities *vis-à-vis*

³² "Baluchistan Up in Arms Again", *Herald*, vol. 35, No. 8, August 2004, p. 49.
each other. The conflict got exacerbated after independence due to the state's intransigence in accommodating Tamil aspirations. Government policies over the issues of language, land colonisation, standardisation policy leading to inadequate access for Tamils to university admissions and consequent shrinking in employment prospects, constitutional guarantees to Buddhism and preservation of the unitary constitution in 1972, created a feeling of alienation among Tamils. By the mid-1970s, the demands for affirmative discrimination and autonomy had taken the form of a demand for secession, due to the reluctance of the state to concede to the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils. While the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), a moderate Tamil party, was demanding a separate state and using parliamentary methods towards achieving this objective, the militant groups took up arms for this cause. It was the failure of the moderate Tamil leadership to get concessions from the Sinhala leadership and the clandestine support and backing they received from India in the initial years that the Tamil militants were able to occupy the political space in the ethnic conflict from the late 1970s till today. Armed skirmishes between the militant groups and the security forces continued till 1983, when it flared up due to the killing of 13 soldiers in the north by the LTTE. This was followed by the ethnic riots of July 1983, which only strengthened the resolve of the militants.

The United National Party (UNP) did initiate some steps to evolve a consensus on a solution acceptable to all groups, but it did not make much headway. In 1984, at an All Parties Conference, a consensus on the principle of devolution emerged, but there was no common understanding about the form and substance of devolution. By this time the militants had started operating from Indian soil. With the help of India's mediatory efforts, the government evolved a set of proposals for Provincial Councils in December 1986, which was rejected by the Tamil militants. The LTTE threatened to take over the civil administration in the north-east on 1 January 1987. Subsequently, Indian mediation between the militants and President J.R Jayewardene's government in Colombo resulted in the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord on 28 July 1987, which stipulated the acceptance of Provincial Councils and specified that the Tamil militants would have to lay down arms to an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). Though most of the

militant groups laid down their arms, the LTTE was not willing to either give up their arms or their secessionist goal and soon rejected the accord. In October 1987, the LTTE and IPKF came into direct confrontation over the issue of the capture of seventeen LTTE cadres by the Sri Lankan army and their subsequent death by committing suicide. The confrontation between the LTTE and the IPKF continued till March 1990, when the latter was withdrawn by the Indian government in response to President Premadasa's demand. The LTTE and the Premadasa government resumed negotiations but once again, the talks broke down.

There was renewed hope with the coming to power of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in August 1994. She announced a devolution package in August 1995. Though the devolution package proposed a fair amount of autonomy to the Tamils, it was not acceptable to the LTTE. The peace talks broke down one more and in renewed fighting the Sri Lankan army regained control of Jaffna peninsula. In 1999 and 2000, the LTTE in surprise attacks recaptured much of it, although the Sri Lankan army remained in control of Jaffna town. By the end of 2001, a new government headed by UNP's Ranil Wicremasinghe came to power. The LTTE declared a unilateral ceasefire in December and the new government responded positively and a Norway-sponsored ceasefire agreement was signed between them in February 2002. The ceasefire holds and six sessions of talks have been held with the mediation of Norway in a number of venues outside Sri Lanka. During the first round of talks in September 2002 in Thailand, the LTTE dropped the demand for a separate state. It is still a party to the Oslo declaration of 25 November 2002, which provides for a final solution based on federalism, recognising the right of the Tamil people for internal self-determination. But the LTTE walked out of the ongoing talks in April 2003 on the demand for an “Interim Self Governing Authority.” Though the ceasefire still holds, it has seen innumerable breaches. In April 2006, there was marked escalation in violence before scheduled talks in Geneva. On 25 April 2006, a suicide attack on Sri Lankan Army Commander Sarath Fonseka and simultaneous attacks on Sri Lankan naval crafts was met by retaliatory air strikes by the Sri Lankan Air Force. These developments, for the moment, have completely foreclosed the possibility of talks in the near future.
3.1.2 Ethnic/Tribal and Separatist Violence

Apart from the secessionist movements, separatist movements that have limited or greater autonomy demands as their goals have also been responsible for high levels of violence in South Asia. In this section we briefly discuss the rise, growth and present status of the separatist movement controlled by the Muhajirs in Pakistan and the Bodos in Assam in India.

The Muhajirs

The Muhajirs had formed the backbone in the struggle for the creation of Pakistan and had traditionally supported the Jamaat-i-Islami after the decline of the Muslim League. The emergence of an organisation to represent Muhajir interests came about in a leadership vacuum after the Jamaat had closely aligned with the ruling establishment dominated by Punjabis and Pathans during Gen. Zia-ul-Haq's period.

The origins of the Muhajir Quami Mahaj (MQM) can be traced to a student organisation called the All Pakistan Muhajir Student Organisation (APMSO) formed in June 1978 by some lower middle class Muhajir student activists. One of the main demands of the APMSO was for a revision of a federal quota, which had seriously restricted the job prospects of urban Sindhis, i.e. primarily Muhajirs. In 1984, General Zia banned student organisations because of which the APMSO had to take a new appearance. Altaf Hussain founded the MQM out of this Muhajir student movement in March 1984.

The rise and growth of the MQM has taken place in an atmosphere of ethnic riots and violence. Organisationally the party remained small till severe ethnic rioting took place in 1985-86. The first Muhajir-Pathan riot took place in May 1985 following a minivan accident in which a Muhajir girl was killed. In the second instance, in November-December 1986 Muhajirs were targeted by Pathans following a raid by the army on Sohrab Goth to smash a heroin processing and distribution centre allegedly run by the Pathans. The rioting which followed spread to Hyderabad as well. These incidents were instrumental in the rise of the popularity of the MQM.

In early 1987, Altaf Hussain issued a charter of resolutions. It is believed that it was here that he introduced the idea that the Muhajirs be treated as a fifth nationality. The MQM first tested its electoral strength in the local body elections in 1987 in Karachi and Hyderabad.
and won majorities. In November 1988, in the general elections the MQM won 13 seats in the National Assembly and 24 in the Provincial out of 100, dominating all the Urban Sindh seats. Since then the MQM has followed a strategy of helping minority parties to form governments in return for concessions. After the 1988 elections, the MQM reached an agreement with the PPP to help it form the government and signed a declaration with it. This understanding was short-lived. In October 1989 the MQM abrogated the accord. Relations between the Sindhis and Muhajirs deteriorated. In 1990, hundreds of people were killed in clashes between the students wing of the MQM and the PPP. In the October 1990 general elections, the MQM came to an understanding with the IJI and following a seat sharing arrangement dominated the urban areas. In the Provincial Assembly it won 28 seats and in the National Assembly 15. By 1991, the MQM had established a virtual monopoly over representation of the Urdu-speaking community in urban Sindh.

The understanding with the IJI also did not last long. In June 1992, the army launched what is known as Operation Cleanup ostensibly against dacoits and criminal elements in rural Sindh but the targets included the MQM. This led to a prolonged confrontation in which urban guerrilla warfare was fought in the streets and lanes of Karachi. The military operation ended their parliamentary phase and the MQM parted ways with the IJI in June 1992. A split within the MQM was engineered in 1992. Another group claiming to be the real MQM came into existence. It was called the MQM (Haqiqi). Since then severe armed clashes have taken place between these two groups.

In 1993, the MQM boycotted the national elections but in the Provincial Assembly it won 26 seats. In the February 1997 elections it repeated its performance in urban Sindh, and won 12 seats in the National Assembly and 28 seats in the Provincial Assembly. It reached a secret agreement with the PML(N) to form a coalition government. The MQM, after the assumption of power by a military regime in 1999 has developed working relationship with the establishment. In the National and Provincial Assembly elections held in October 2002, the

34 The operation lasted till November 1994.
35 For excerpts from the secret agreement, see “Wheels within Deals”, Herald, vol. 28, no. 3, March 1997, p. 42. Some of the demands of the MQM were investigating into extra-judicial killings, compensations, withdrawal of the rangers, a census by December 1997, upward revision of urban Sindh's federal quota from 7.5 to 11.5 per cent and repatriation of stranded Biharis from Bangladesh.
MQM performed much below expectation and got only 13 seats in the national assembly. But it was instrumental in helping the PML(Q) form a government at the national level. Despite having a larger number of seats than the PML(Q) in the Sindh Provincial Assembly, it helped the PML(Q) to form the government.

The Bodo Insurgency in Assam

The Bodos are a relatively small but aggressive tribal group numbering about 700,000. It is the largest of the plains tribes of Assam and aspires to distinguish themselves from Assamese sub-nationalism. They demanded greater recognition of their culture and language and a separate homeland to be carved out of the Bodo-dominated districts of Assam on the north bank of the Brahmaputra River. The Bodo insurgency was a fall-out of the Assam Accord. It was a reaction to the disregard for Bodo grievances by the Centre and the AGP government. The AGP did nothing to implement a clause in the Assam Accord, stating that all those illegally occupying tribal lands would be evicted. Thus Bodo militancy was a result of Assamese chauvinism and alienation of Bodo lands by Muslims and Santhal migrants.

Until 1987, the Bodos were content to demand an autonomous council. In November 1988, they called for a separate state of Bodoland. Mass mobilisation for a Bodoland led by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) had begun in 1987. An accord in February 1993 granting the Bodos an autonomous council with limited political and administrative autonomy fell far short of their expectations. The ABSU announced a unilateral suspension of armed hostilities against security forces in July 1999, which paved the way for the establishment of a Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC). However, the Accord failed to meet the aspirations over the issue of demarcation of the boundary of the Council. The militant factions within the movement seized the initiative. One section rejected the Accord and formed the BLTF in 1996 and the BDSF—which later became the NDFB—transformed the movement into a violent insurgency. Their strategy is to oust the non-

36 The main problem in implementing the Bodo accord lies with 400 odd villages located along the Indo-Bhutan border. Although they are Bodo-dominated, these villages are not contiguous, which creates problems in the demarcation of the jurisdiction of the BAC. The union home ministry is also not in favour of this due to security reasons. The Bodos are also not happy with the financial commitments made to the BAC. See “Assam: Signs of a Tigerhunt”, Outlook, 26 February 1997, p. 20.

37 The BdSF had come into existence in 1989.
Bodos from areas they perceive as their homeland. There were indications that the BLTF may have been willing to settle for a Bodo Territorial Council with a fresh demarcation of the BAC areas. The BLTF entered a cease-fire agreement on 29 March 2000 and in February 2003 signed an agreement with the Indian government, which granted an autonomous council to the Bodos called the Bodoland Territorial Council. The NDFB also signed a ceasefire agreement in May 2005 and agreed to suspend its two-decade old violent operations.

3.2 RELIGIOUS/COMMUNAL AND SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

Religious violence is a significant aspect of everyday life in South Asia. It takes place not only between the two majority religious communities in South Asia—the Hindus and the Muslims—but also between the sects within Islam. While India is confronted with the phenomena of communal violence, Pakistan is faced with the problem of sectarian violence. Hindu communal violence has expressed itself in the form of riots and Muslim extremist violence has expressed itself in the form of sporadic acts of terrorism. In this section we discuss Hindu communal violence and Muslim extremist violence in India and rise and growth of sectarian violence in Pakistan.

3.2.1 Hindu Communal Violence in India

The endemic communal or Hindu-Muslim violence in India is a legacy of the divide and rule policy of the British. British colonial rule left its bitter legacy in the form of a perpetual communal divide between the Hindus and Muslims.

Most communal violence takes place in northern India. Historically, this is the region in which the struggle for power between the Hindu rulers and Muslim invaders took place, leaving bitter memories behind. It was also in this region that the battle for the division of the country was fought. The Muslim elite in this region was politically very conscious and fought for its share of political power. When no understanding on the issue could be reached, the division of the country between the Muslim majority areas in the north and east and Hindu majority areas in the rest of the country became inevitable. The division was accompanied by considerable violence. A million people were killed during the partition.

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Partition riots continued up to 1948. Occasional outbursts of communal frenzy continued till 1950. The 1950s were relatively quiet and not many riots were reported during this period.

The first major communal outburst in post partition India occurred in 1961 in Jabalpur. The cause was a very flimsy one. Many Muslims were killed in this riot and they were terrorised by the armed police. The rioting was so severe that Prime Minister Jawaharalal Nehru took the initiative to set up the National Integration Council to promote emotional integration in the country and to bring about some measure of accommodation between Hindus and Muslims. The Jabalpur riots were only the beginning of a new phase of communal confrontation. After Jabalpur, a chain of riots broke out in Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Aligarh and other towns. The immediate cause was the Hindu refugees coming from the area that was East Pakistan. A large number of Muslims were killed in these riots. These riots continued till 1965 when war broke out with Pakistan.39

The embittered relations between the Hindus and Muslims in post-partition India was partly due to the fact that even though the Muslim masses had not taken the initiative in the formation of Pakistan, all Muslims in India were seen as guilty by communal Hindus and any attempt on the part of the Muslims to form associations to better their lot was seen as another attempt at partition. The Muslims had mature and secular leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Zakir Hussain in the early years of independence for guidance. But after the passing away of these leaders, the Muslims were left leaderless. The emergence of a new breed of aggressive leaders in the later years did not help matters.

The rise of Hindu nationalist sentiments engineered by the RSS and the Jana Sangh communalised politics. The communalisation of politics became a feature since the late sixties and was responsible for a number of riots since then. The RSS engineered riots in 1969 in Gujarat to counter the growing popularity of the Congress under Mrs. Gandhi. The Jana Sangh fomented strong anti-Muslim sentiments in the country. A resolution was passed demanding the Indianisation of the Muslims, thereby implying that Muslims in India were aliens and had not adapted to Indian culture. Also, a large number of Hindus resented the fact that the Muslims were not prepared to accept any change in

their personal law. When some people demanded a uniform civil code, Muslims formed the Muslim Personal Law Board to protect their Shariah law. This was formed in the 1960s and the government had to assure Muslims that it had no intention of interfering with the enactment of same Muslim personal law. Some Hindus construed this as appeasement of Muslims.40

One of the worst riots took place in Bhiwandi-Jalgaon in 1970 in which more than 400 persons died. However, the rest of the decade was relatively peaceful. In the 30 year period between 1955 and 1985, the first nine years witnessed less than a hundred communal riots each; the highest figure of 92 occurred in 1961. In 1964, staggering number 1,070 riots had taken place. In the next 20 years, the annual number of riots varied from the minimum of 144 in 1967 to the maximum of 525 in 1985. The highest number of persons was killed in 1964—1,919. Between 1954 and 1985, 2,290 Hindu-Muslim riots occurred taking the life of 2,750 people and injuring 17,791.41

During the 1980s, few developments further communalised the environment and created grounds for the growth of the Hindu right. These were the Shah Bano case and the Babri Masjid movement. In the Shah Bano case the Supreme Court had given a decision in favour of a old Muslim woman for maintenance by her husband after divorce in accordance with section 125 of the CrPC. But the Congress government was under tremendous pressure from the Muslim leadership and ultimately gave in to the demands, exempting Muslims from the provisions of this particular law. The government enacted the Muslim Women (protection of Rights on Divorce) Law, which exempted Muslims from the application of section 125 of the CrPC. This episode made Hindus hostile towards the Muslim leadership.42

In the Babri Masjid case, a Mosque closed for more than four decades was thrown open for Hindus to worship Lord Ram, whose idol had been installed inside the Mosque during the partition riot of 1948. Since the late eighties through the nineties, the emergence of militant Hindutva as a political wave further aggravated the communal situation and they intensified the Ram Janambhoomi movement. They claimed that the Babri Masjid was actually the birthplace of Ram and that in the 4th Century AD Vikramaditya had constructed a temple

40 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
42 Engineer, op. cit., p. 39.
commemorating Ram’s birth. According to them this temple was demolished by Babur and in its place a Mosque was built, which was subsequently known as the Babri Masjid. During the course of this controversy, communal riots erupted in UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan and Gujarat. In December 1992, the RSS, VHP and the Bajrang Dal demolished the Babri Masjid. This was followed by extensive rioting. Bombay was the worst affected.

In 2002, widespread riots broke out in the state of Gujarat. The riots continued for a fairly long time. The inability of the state government to control the riots suggested the complicity of the ruling BJP government in the riots. The riots started from a place called Godhra where a train bogie full of Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya was burnt by a mob of Muslims. This infuriated mobs of Hindus to attack Muslims and destroy their property. The damage to lives and property was extensive.

3.2.2 Muslim Extremist Violence in India

Recent trends show a mushrooming of Islamic fundamentalist organisations and a spurt in Muslim extremist violence in not only the Hindi heartland but also in the far-reaching regions of India from Assam to Tamil Nadu to Kerala. In a state like Assam in the recent past at least half a dozen such organizations have emerged, including the Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA), Muslim Volunteer Force, Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam and the Muslim Liberation Front of Assam.44

Minority Muslim extremist violence has found expression in many disillusioned Muslim youths who have been attracted by the ideology espoused by these groups that have been shaped in response to the feeling of persecution in the wake of belligerent Hindutva outbursts in the last decade. The worrying aspect of Muslim extremist violence is its spread throughout the country, particularly in the southern states where communal violence was not frequent unlike the north. Local factors, lack of credible leadership, and frustration among the Muslim youth left out of the Gulf job boom have made some of them easy prey, particularly through ideological colouring and financial incentives offered by those who foment violence.

The most prominent group that has been under the scanner in the last few years is the Student’s Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). SIMI

43 Engineer, op. cit., p.40.
44 “Spurt in Fundamentalist Activities Worries Assam”, Hindu, 4 March 1997.
was founded on 25 April 1977 at the Aligarh Muslim University as a radical student outfit with a mission to revive Islam in India and transform the entire country into an Islamic state. Since its inception, SIMI has adopted a hardline militant posture on various issues of concern to the Muslim community. Initially, it was a purely student organisation, but by the 1990s, it was hijacked by extremist elements of Indian Muslim society. After the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, SIMI was able to increase its influence amongst Muslim in different cities in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The organisation is fairly spread out across the country.

SIMI believes that despite its strengths and weaknesses as a youth organisation, it could play a catalytic role in the affairs of the Ummah. It is opposed to secularism, nationalism and western-style democracy. The group's goal remains the overthrow of the Indian government and initiation of a world-wide Jihad. It is also suspected to have ties with various terrorist groups and Pakistani organisations. It is the only Muslim organisation that has taken the stand that Kashmir is not an integral part of India and that Muslims need to raise their voices against human rights violations in the valley. The Jamaat-i-Islami leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani attended a SIMI convention in 1997. It is believed that a large number of SIMI members have also joined the Islamic Chhattra Shivir, an organisation based in Bangladesh.45

The SIMI was banned following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US. SIMI's pro-Taliban stance and the glorification of Osama bin Laden prompted the government to impose a ban. The Home Ministry's notification declared the SIMI an unlawful association on the grounds that it glorified pan-Islamic fundamentalism and exhorted Muslims for Jihad. In a nation-wide crackdown on the SIMI in September 2001, more than 362 activists were arrested from the states of Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.46 Presently, it has gone completely underground and little is known about its membership strength, though it is believed to have around 20,000 members.47

It has been linked to many terrorist incidents in India in the past few years. Despite the ban, its subversive activities have continued. It

47 “Terror Module”, *Outlook*, op. cit.
is suspected of being behind a series of bombings in Mumbai including a major bomb exploded in a bus in Ghatkopar on 28 July 2003. On 5 July 2005, suspected SIMI operatives staged an attack on the disputed Ramjanambhoomi Temple complex at Ayodhya. On 28 July 2005, they allegedly played a role in the bombing on board the Shramjeevi Express train that killed 12 passengers and injured at least 12. Earlier it had carried out an explosion on the Sabarmati Express near Faizabad on 15 August 2000, resulting in the death of 9 persons and injuries to many others. Along with the LeT, it is believed to have conducted the blasts on a bus in Mumbai on 2 December 2002.

Religious fundamentalists groups have come up in Tamil Nadu and Kerala as well. There have been growing incidences of violence and seizures of explosives in both states. In February 1998, in almost a repeat of the Mumbai bomb blasts, there were a series of 27 bomb blasts within six hours in Coimbatore. It resulted in the death of 46 people. The bombs, which looked like crude country devices, were in reality, sophisticated explosives with timers and auto-explosion mechanisms. Eight suspects were arrested who were believed to be members of the banned Al-Ummah fundamentalist group. Earlier, a bomb blast wrecked the RSS building in Chennai in August 1993. Al-Umma has been in the news for quite some time now—for its alleged attacks on Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Munnani targets. Its activists were rounded up by the police on suspicion of complicity in a spate of killings of RSS cadres in 1996. The organisation buckled under the crackdown and was virtually dismantled. The bulk of its workers regrouped under the National Democratic Front (NDF) and continued to pursue their militant objectives.

3.2.3 Sectarian Violence in Pakistan

The phenomena of sectarian violence in Pakistan started in the 1980s as a reaction to Gen. Zia-ul-Haq’s drive to consolidate power through the politics of Islamisation. Sectarianism has extended beyond sporadic clashes between Sunnis and Shias over doctrinal issues and has become a form of the politics of identity. Over a period of time, it has changed in character and has transformed from religious schism into political

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49 “Terror Module”, Outlook, op. cit.
conflict. Domestic and regional developments have radicalised this conflict and made it violent.

The rise in sectarian violence in Pakistan has its roots in the intensification of regional conflict after the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the beginning of the Afghan war in 1980 and Pakistan's failure to contain the impact of these developments in its domestic politics. The Iranian revolution had an impact on the balance of power between the Shias and the State and the Sunnis in Pakistan. The revolution set in motion, first, a power struggle between the Pakistani State and its Shia community and later triggered a broader competition for power between the Shias and Sunnis. These struggles for domination coincided with competition for influence in Pakistan between Saudi Arabia and Iraq on the one hand and Iran on the other. The confluence of these struggles for power mobilised and radicalised sectarian identities. The Iranian revolution changed the character of sectarian politics in Pakistan. The ideological force of the revolution, combined with the fact that the first successful Islamic revolution had been carried out by the Shias, emboldened the Shia community and politicised its identity. The Iranians were eager to export their revolution to Pakistan. The Iranian leadership was unhappy with Gen. Zia who had closely allied Pakistan with the US since the Soviet intrusion in Afghanistan in 1980 Iran had severe differences with Gen. Zia's regime.

Gen. Zia had started a drive to Islamise Pakistan, and sought to transform government institutions, legal codes and policy-making apparatuses in accordance with Islamic teachings. Gen. Zia's Islamic initiatives, set in motion in 1979, claimed to manifest a universal Islamic vision, but in reality was based on narrow Sunni interpretations of Islamic theology and law and was therefore unacceptable to the Shias who buoyed with pride from the Iranian revolution resorted to their own religious interpretations. Gen. Zia's Islamisation drive allowed theologians and right wing parties to be key players in the maintenance of martial law. Gen. Zia attempted to implement the Sunni Hanifi code of ethics. The Shias subscribe to the Jafaria code had resisted this move. The Shias made their opposition known when Gen. Zia sought to implement the Sunni laws of inheritance and Zakat (obligatory Islamic alms tax). Throughout 1979-80, Shia leaders mobilised their followers in opposition to the Zakat Ordinance and other Sunni laws that the state intended to implement. Under pressure, the Zia regime capitulated, granting Shias exemption from all those aspects of the Islamisation package that contravened Shia laws.
Gen. Zia’s capitulation to Shia demands was seen by his Sunni Islamist allies as nothing short of constricting their envisioned Islamic state and diluting the impact of Islamisation. Shia protests had in effect reduced Gen. Zia’s Islamisation to Sunnification, undermining the universal Islamic claims of the entire process. Sunni Islamists were not prepared to accept separate but equal status for Sunnis and Shias. They asserted that Sunnism was Islam. Shiasm could not enjoy a status equal to that of Sunnism. Shiasm could at best be accepted as a minority religious doctrine and Shias in a Sunni state would have to live according to the norms and laws of the state. By refusing to submit to Sunni law, Shias were outside the pale of Islam. Shia assertiveness was construed as proof of that community’s disloyalty to Pakistan and its Islamic ideology and more important as a threat to Islamisation. Thus, Shiasm, gradually, had become a problem in the desired Islamic project.

The Zia regime started to invest in strengthening Sunni institutions. In particular, it poured money into existing Sunni Madrassas and established new ones. Pakistan became a proxy battlefield between Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. Religious parties radicalised by foreign influences started receiving foreign funds. “Mosques and deeni Madrassas (religious schools) with sectarian affiliations were built everywhere, often on state lands, and a new kind of maulvi, the ‘donor funded maulvi’, appeared, moving around in Pajeros with armed bodyguards. Religious scholars started travelling to Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. Their influence on the local administration was tremendous.”

Curriculum reforms in the Madrassas allowed their graduates to enter the modern sectors of the economy and join government service. The government believed that the expansion of the role of the Madrassas in national education would entrench Sunni identity in the public arena, just as Madrassa graduates would help reinforce the Sunni presence in government institutions. Furthermore, Madrassas and their students were viewed as important to the government’s efforts to contain Shia activism. The policies set in motion by the Zia regime thus helped entrench Sunni Islamism in Pakistan.


The state used the Madrassas to strengthen Sunnism, particularly in areas where the threat was perceived to be greatest. Much of this effort was undertaken by Pakistan’s military, and the ISI. The military’s involvement in sectarianism grew over time as Sunni militancy developed organisational links to the Islamist resistance in the Afghanistan war. Sectarianism became relevant to the military’s domestic political agenda after the return of democracy to Pakistan in 1988. Throughout the 1980s, the military governors of Punjab and NWFP helped the ISI organise militant Sunni groups in their respective provinces to contend with the Shia problem. In 1988, the central government permitted marauding bands of Sunni activists to raid the town of Gilgit—the centre of the Northern Areas of Pakistan—killing some 150 Shias, and burning shops and houses in the process.53

The onset of the Afghan war further strengthened Saudi Arabia’s commitment to its Sunni clients in Pakistan. In fact, the funding that Saudi Arabia provided Afghan fighters also subsidised militant Sunni organisations in Pakistan, often through the intermediary of the Pakistan’s military and the ISI. The war that dragged on between 1979 and 1989 not only flooded Pakistan with weapons but also embedded militancy in the country’s Islamism. It also spawned several militant Islamist groups with international connections.54 Funds came from the CIA, anti-Iran Arab states, and private donors and led to the widening of the gulf between Sunnis and the Shias. The Afghan Jihad gave them easy access to arms and training and brought them into contact with radicalised Arab volunteers.

As a consequence, sectarian violence in Pakistan exploded over the course of the past two and half decades. Shia leaders who felt threatened by Gen. Zia’s policy of Sunni Islamisation created a movement to assert their separate religious identity, protect their rights, and prevent the Sunni majority and the government from imposing an interpretation of the shariah contrary to fiqh-e-jaafria. The Shia Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqh-Jaafria Pakistan (TNFJ)55 was formed in 1979 and its militant offshoot Sipah-e-Muhammad (SM) formed in 1991. Shia radicalisation caused a great deal of apprehension in Pakistan. After the creation of the TNFJ, the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) was created in 1984 by Haq Nawaz Jhanvi with a virulent anti-Shia programme. Other allied Sunni groups

53 Nasr, op. cit., p. 91.
54 Nasr, op. cit., p. 92.
55 TNFJ changed its name to Tehrik-e-Fiqh-e-Jaafria Pakistan (TJP) in 1993.
the Tehreek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi (TNSM) was established in 1994, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi in 1990 and the Lashkar-e-Taiba were formed in 1997-98. Some of these groups also split and new breakaway factions emerged. These groups have been engaged in a violent campaign to safeguard the interests of their respective communities. Assassinations, machine-guns attacks on mosques and explosions have claimed a large number of lives. One incident, a five-day war involving mortars, rocket-launchers and anti-aircraft missiles in Pachinar, a small town in NWFP in 1996, alone claimed hundreds of lives. Four belts where sectarian consciousness have taken deep roots in Pakistan are in Karachi and Hyderabad in the Sindh province, Parachinar district in the NWFP, Gilgit and Baltistan in the Northern Areas and the Multan-Jhang-Mianwali-Faisalabad belt in Punjab. Baluchistan has also not been left out. On 4 July 2003, in an attack on a Shiite Mosque in Quetta, 53 people were killed and another 57 injured. This was the first sectarian attack in Quetta. Between 1989 and 2005, some 1,828 people were killed and 4,351 were injured in sectarian attacks.

Sectarian conflicts acquired a new dimension from 1988 onwards after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The assassination of Allama Hussaini, the creator of the TNFJ in August 1988, was a turning point. It was the first of a long series of sectarian killings. Till 1995, killings were confined to leaders and activists of both sects. Subsequently, symbols of state authority, government functionaries, police officers and judges were targeted. A change was seen in 1997 with indiscriminate gunfire on ordinary citizens who were not involved in sectarian activity and whose only fault was to be Sunni or Shia, and tit-for-tat-killings targeting doctors, lawyers and traders.

The governments in power have pretended for a long time that sectarian organisations were a strictly local problem, which could be dealt with at any time by arresting a few dozen extremists. Political parties have kept quiet about the sectarian issue. Successive governments have routinely compromised with sectarian groups, who feel immune because they fight in Kashmir. After announcing its intention of regulating the operations and funding of deeni Madrassas in December 1988, the government decided to go slow because it was afraid of the reaction of religious parties and organisations. Similarly,

57 See Institute for Conflict Management website. URL: http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect_killing.htm
after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Gen. Musharraf had vowed to reform the Madrassas, regulate their funding, and bring about changes in the curriculum, but has failed to do so.

3.3 REVOLUTIONARY OR IDEOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

The three major anti-systemic movements in South Asia—the Naxalites in India and Nepal and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in Sri Lanka—apart from their ideological persuasions also had strong underlying economic causes. The Naxalite insurgency was a result of disadvantageous land tenure policies, which had affected the peasantry seriously and land alienation among the tribals. The JVP insurgency in Sri Lanka can be explained in terms of relative deprivation—as a revolution of rising expectations. The sense of deprivation and grievances of the youth, unemployed and underemployed was mobilized against the Sri Lankan state. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal also has similar economic underpinnings.

3.3.1 The Ultra-Left Naxalite Insurgency in India

The Naxalite insurgency began in May 1967 with a peasant revolt in Naxalbari, West Bengal. The revolt was led by local Communist cadres, who subsequently broke away or were expelled from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 1969. These communists who came together to form the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) under the leadership of Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal, were dissatisfied with the CPI(M). They believed that the CPI(M) had lost its revolutionary fervour and had aligned with bourgeois forces while adopting the line of parliamentary struggle.

Ideologically, the CPI(ML) believed that the Chinese model of guerrilla warfare and liberated zones would work in India as well. Their concept of armed struggle was primarily based on the premise that as soon as they could organise and start an armed struggle, the people of India would rise up in revolt. This was to be done by the annihilation of the class enemy. The primary objective of the annihilation campaign was to smash the feudal authority in the villages and to replace it with the authority of the peasants. The annihilation strategy was applied in Calcutta in July 1970. But by adopting this tactic, the movement lost

its support among the peasants and acted more like an urban terrorist movement by concentrating on annihilating police, moneylenders, businessmen and political enemies in the CPI(M). Subsequently, the annihilation theory raised a controversy within the organisation on the question of the same tactics being applied to all parts of India. This debate led to a split in the organisation in the summer of 1971. A breakaway group, led by Ashim Chatterjee, favoured a return to mass struggles to distribute land and crops, and to fight police and paramilitary forces in the countryside.

Though the Naxalbari uprising was crushed by mid-1969, groups of Naxalites were organised in at least eight Indian states. But since Charu Mazumdar’s death in July 1972, the movement faced a series of splits. At present, there are at least forty Naxalite factions. Among these, the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) in Bihar and the People’s War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh still adhere to the concept of annihilation of class enemies though they have combined armed struggle with mass front activities as well. The PWG was founded around 1975 by Kondapalli Seetharamaih who was influenced by the Chinese Cultural Revolution and who believed in the concept of annihilation of class enemies. The organisation was banned on 21 May 1992, which resulted in a spate of surrenders. Power struggles within the organisation led to the expulsion of the founder, Seetharamaih on grounds of anti-party behaviour in June 1992. Later, Seetharamaih was arrested on 20 March 1993. But the organisation seems to be as strong as it was before under a new leadership. In its initial years it was able to attract intellectuals and students but now its cadres are drawn mainly from the ranks of the socially abused and the economically deprived. The bulk of the recruits comprise of school drop-outs from peasant families or daily wage earners. For some of these boys joining the Naxalites is a means of upward mobility.

The Naxalite movement, which was in a state of disarray in the seventies and early eighties, is once again showing signs of vibrancy. Since the mid-1980s, the Naxalites have shown signs of revival. A union Home Ministry document acknowledges that the Naxalite "movement has shown distinct signs of revival from the mid-Eighties" and has "spread to wider areas" in recent times. The states primarily affected are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. "Of these Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are the centre-stage of extremist activity, accounting for over 80 per cent of the violence."62 According to the Home Ministry there exists an inter-connected Naxalite belt in Central India comprising of the above states and Tamil Nadu. Naxalite activity has expanded from 55 districts in 9 states in November 2003 to 156 districts in 13 states in September 2004.63 The PWG and MCC, along with the Maoists in Nepal, have been attempting to form a Compact Revolutionary Group and to carve out a zone from Nepal through Bihar to the Dandakaranya region of Andhra Pradesh. It is believed that since the 1980s in Andhra Pradesh only 10,000 and in other parts of the country another 10,000 people may have died due to Naxalite violence. One of the high profile attacks carried out by the Naxalites was on the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, N. Chandrababu Naidu, in October 2003. Luckily, he survived.

In a vast country like India, with different socio-economic structures prevailing in different parts, the reasons for the growth of these groups varies from one region to the other, where different groups have their own pockets of influence. In Andhra Pradesh, a backward state, there are various reasons like declining rates of school enrolment, increasing rates of school drop-outs, rising illiteracy among women, and declining personal incomes for the self-employed poor in the unorganised sector, which constitutes about fifty per cent of the backward population in Andhra Pradesh, comprising of artisans, handloom weavers, toddy tappers and fishermen. The PWG has chosen to speak in the idiom of the poor in the unorganised sector and has acquired a strong measure of acceptance.

Among all the Naxalite groups, the PWG operational areas have the largest reach—stretching from Andhra Pradesh to Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In Andhra Pradesh it has considerable

63 Ajai Sahni, "Bad Medicine for a Red Epidemic", South Asia Intelligence Review, vol. 3 No. 12, 4 October 2004. URL: http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/3_12.htm
support in the Telengana districts of Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Adilabad and Warangal; and the North Coastal district of East Godavari. In Orissa it operates in the two Southern districts of Ganjam and Koraput and in Madhya Pradesh, in the Bastar region. In Maharashtra, it is active in the Vidarbha districts of Bhandara and Yavatmal, and the Marathwada districts of Nanded, Gadricholi and Chandrapur.64

The PWG's main plank of mobilization has been to focus on the special problem of the tribals in the Dandakaranya forest regions in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Alienation of tribal land, which takes place through notification of tribal agricultural land as reserve forest, is a primary cause of tribal support for Naxalites. As a social group the tribals have been the most affected by the development programmes of the state—which is exploitative as far as the tribals are concerned. The capitalist development model does not take into consideration the specific socio-economic needs of the tribals and the nature of the process is such that it only causes deprivation. The tribals have not been absorbed into the modern sectors of the economy and have faced disruption of their social life and culture in most parts of the country.65 Their economic exploitation is further compounded by unbridled social oppression and state brutality at the hands of the dominant groups of non-tribals who man the local power structures.

The PWGs main demands and mobilisation centres on tribal autonomy and land reform. Though land reforms have been carried out in some measure in Andhra Pradesh since 1972, a lot remains to be said regarding the manner in which this has been done. Landowners have made use of the judiciary in staying the land ceiling laws, thus enabling landowners to defeat its purpose through benami transfers. In their pursuit of a more equitable land redistribution, the PWG has taken over land and distributed it among landless labourers of its choice through the judgements of its 'people's courts'. These land-grab campaigns threaten the power structure in the rural areas. Consequently, landlords have become increasingly repressive.66 However, problems do remain and some of the land distributed remains fallow, as they are not tilled for fear of police repression.

The causes for the sustenance of the Naxalites in Bihar are different from Andhra Pradesh. Their influence in Bihar is due to feudal social oppression as well as modern forms of exploitation devised by landlords, contractors and businessmen.67 The violence unleashed by the landlords through their private armies68 has allowed space for the mobilisation of the peasants, low castes and landless harijans by the Naxalites. Under these conditions, the MCC in Bihar is engaged in an underground arms struggle. In both these states exploitation and a sense of alienation are acute. The failure of the Indian state in bringing about any real transformation in the countryside is one of the primary root causes. Even after many years the failure in the issue of land redistribution and tackling poverty are important factors in the sustenance of the movements.

Although the PWG and the MCC have made significant inroads in their pockets of influence, what is retarding them is a lack of consensus on issues and strategy with the other ultra left groups to come under a common platform. That coordination with the other groups is a necessity to launch a common struggle has been felt but that the differences that exist between them has much to do with their past is also acknowledged. The PWG and the MCC, by end-2004 had merged together to become the Communist party of India (Maoist). However, differences still exist, and while the PWG is willing to negotiate with some state governments and has had negotiations with the Andhra Pradesh government,69 the MCC still backs armed struggle.

In 2002, three rounds of talks had been held at the behest of the then N. Chandrababu Naidu government. The talks did not make any substantive progress. In 2004, the Andhra Pradesh government lifted the ban on the PW and invited its leaders for negotiations. Talks began in October 2004. But the PW withdrew from the talks soon after one round of talks on the grounds that the government had not ceased its security operations against them.

68 Landlords have formed private armies mostly along caste lines and a few under individual leadership. Some of these are the Brahmarishi Sena, Sunlight Sena, Bhumi Sena, Lorik Sena, Satyendra Sena and the like. See, "Behind the Killings in Bihar: A Report on Patna, Gaya, and Singhbhum", People's Union for Democratic Rights, pp. 29 and 45-47.
3.3.2 The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna Insurgency in Sri Lanka

The JVP emerged as a movement due to the socio-economic crisis of the 1960s and in opposition to the parliamentarism and political weakness of the established left parties. It originated as a result of a split in the pro-Chinese Communist party of Sri Lanka. As the established left parties were absorbed completely in the parliamentary process and power sharing, their appeal as revolutionary parties to the radical youth waned. The dissatisfaction with the traditional left was due to various reasons. Significant among them were the fact that their support base was limited only to the urban working class and the peasantry was largely neglected by the left parties. Rohana Wijeweera, founder-leader of the JVP, was able to take a sizeable section of the youth with him when he left the Communist party.

In April 1971, in a swift attempt to take over the state apparatus, it launched an insurrection. The government of Ms. Srimavo Bandaranaike was, however, able to suppress this attempt with considerable support from external sources, including India. The JVP was proscribed and most of the insurgents incarcerated. With the change of government in 1977, the new President J.R Jayewardene of the UNP offered amnesty to most of the insurgents, including its chief Wijeweera. In 1977, Wijeweera gave an assurance to the President that they would function within the parliamentary framework. He also declared that the JVP would not use violence in its future course of actions. In 1983, following anti-Tamil riots, the JVP was again proscribed on trumped-up charges of complicity in the riots. Soon there were stray and sporadic acts of subversion. After the signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord in 1987 these were to become more widespread and organised. The strategy then seems to have changed from the earlier one and protracted guerrilla warfare was waged for almost two years. With the capture and elimination of Wijeweera and some of the other leaders, the efforts of the JVP came to a standstill. This was a period that saw unprecedented levels of violence, resulting in numerous killings and destruction.

3.3.3 The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

The Maoist insurgency suddenly burst on the scene in Nepal in February 1996. It has by now taken toll of some 13,000 lives and led to

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many more casualties. The insurgency has affected almost all the seventy-five districts of the country. By December 2000, the Maoists had even set up their own people's government. They have engaged in minor development works, set up people's courts, undertaken social policing and has also been levying some form of taxes on households and business establishments. The numbers of the casualties and deaths have swelled since November 2001 when an open confrontation broke out between the Maoists and the Royal Nepal Army (RNA). They were declared a terrorist organisation in November 2001 following the declaration of a state of emergency. Since 29 January 2003, a ceasefire exists between the government and the Maoists. The talks have not made much headway. In order to tackle the Maoists, King Gyanendra has continuously undermined democracy in Nepal. On 4 October 2002, he dismissed the elected parliament and assumed executive powers. On 1 February 2005, he imposed emergency and justified it on the grounds of failure of the government to deal with the Maoists. The Maoists reached an understanding with a seven-party pro-democracy alliance on the basis that no political activists would be harmed. In April 2006, hundreds of people took to the streets across Nepal to demand an end to King Gyanendra's rule. Eventually, King Gyanendra relented and restored parliament. The parliament, now under a new government, is exploring ways and means of curbing the monarch's power. The debate on whether Nepal should continue as a constitutional monarchy or become a republic still continues. The Maoists still demand elections to a Constituent Assembly, which will draft a new constitution and decide on the future role of the monarchy in Nepal.

The roots of the Maoists in Nepal can be traced to the Communist movement in Nepal. After a number of splits in the Communist Party in Nepal, several groups had emerged by the early 1970s that nurtured visions of an armed struggle. The present leaders Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also known as Prachanda, and Baburam Bhattarai were a product of this school. Following the restoration of democracy as a result of the 1990s people's movement, several left parties got together to form the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre) with Prachanda as its General Secretary. They floated a political wing called the United People's Front of Nepal (UPFN) and took part in the ensuing elections. The party

emerged as the third largest group after the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist). “The Unity centre held its first conference a year later in which the proposal for a ‘protracted armed struggle on the route to a new democratic revolution’ was discussed and accepted. It was also decided that the Unity Centre would go underground although, in practice it remained semi-underground.”74 By 1994, the CPN (Unity Centre) split into two. One of the groups was led by Prachanda. In March 1995, the faction led by Prachanda held its third plenum during which they foreswore elections and decided to take up arms. That faction of the Unity Centre was also renamed Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). It also adopted a “plan for the historical initiation of the people’s war” which stated that the protracted people’s war was to be based on a strategy of encircling the cities from the countryside according to specificities of Nepal. The party was committed to the theory of people’s war as developed by Mao.75

Since the first general elections in 1991, the left parties have been repressed by the Nepali Congress whenever it was in power, particularly in the district’s of Rolpa, Rukum and Dang. An operation code-named Romeo to “win hearts and minds” of the people, was actually ruthlessly executed. Most people in Kathmandu and elsewhere remained unaware of the extent of state repression. The police operations thoroughly alienated the local population of Rolpa. This outright suppression had a deep impact and eventually contributed to the Maoist uprising. In mid-1998, again in an operation code-named Kilo Sierra 2, the Nepal police undertook an operation in 18 districts where the Maoists had some support for over a year. The police action was brutal and killed a large number of Maoists and their supporters.

Initially, the UPFN made an eight-point demand in February 1992, which was enlarged to 14 points within a month. While formally launching the movement in February 1996, the Maoists presented to the Nepali Congress-led coalition government of Sher Bahadur Deuba a charter of 40 demands. This charter covers three areas, i.e., demands related to nationalism, welfare of the people, and the basic living conditions of the people. The demands related to nationalism are mostly concerned with Nepal’s relations with India. The Maoists seek the abrogation of the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty and the Mahakali Treaty of 1996 on sharing of water and introduction of work

74 Thapa, op. cit., p. 7.
75 Thapa, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
permits for Indian workers in Nepal. They want Gurkha recruitment in foreign armies to stop.

In the area of domestic governance closely related to the people's welfare, they have demanded for a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution for removal of the Monarchy and the special rights and privileges of the king and the royal family. They want the Royal Nepal Army to be placed under people's control and Nepal to be declared a secular state. On the economic side, they have demanded that land should go to the cultivator; there should be right to work, minimum wages for the industrial, agricultural and service sector workers, free education. Villages should be provided with roads, drinking water and electricity. The major demands of the Maoists are to make Nepal a Republic and establish an interim government to hold elections to a Constituent Assembly. They had given the government a deadline of fourteen days, but started the violent uprising four days before their deadline was supposed to expire on 17 February 1996.

The Maoists admit to having direct links with the PWG and the MCC in India. It is part of an association of ten Maoist parties in South Asia called the Co-ordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCCOMPOSA). The objective of this organisation is to unify and co-ordinate the activities of Maoist parties and organisations in South Asia. The CCOMPOSA also aims at establishing a 'Compact Revolutionary Zone' that will link Nepal to parts of India in Bihar, Jharkhand and stretch up to Andhra Pradesh to connect the areas under the influence of the PWG.

The almost ten years of violence and counter-violence between the Maoists and the government forces have been bloody and brutal. This has been much more so since the Maoists took on the army in November 2001. While the Maoists complain about the indiscriminate nature of the violence unleashed by the RNA, no less has been the criticism of the bloody nature of the killings by the Maoists themselves. There has been an utter disregard of human rights. Innocent victims on both sides have suffered. It has been alleged that the government has also encouraged violence by anti-Maoist vigilantes.

77 It was reported that a villager was beheaded and eight peasant's legs were crushed by a log for not obeying Maoists warnings not to plough the fields of upper class landowners. See report "Suspected Maoists behead Villager in Nepal", Hindustan Times, 23 June 2004.