# The State and the Limits of Counter-Terrorism:
## The Case of Pakistan and Sri Lanka

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**Islamabad**

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# Preface

This is the fourth monograph that the Council of Social Sciences, Pakistan, (COSS) has issued since its establishment. In selecting a manuscript for reprinting as monograph COSS has set up a number of criteria. The manuscript must meet the academic standards, which COSS advocates for upgrading the level of social sciences in Pakistan such as interdisciplinary orientation, interpretation of data within a well-articulated theoretical framework, and its relevance for understanding a national or an international problem**.** It should add new knowledge in the area, which it studies and set a model of high quality research for social scientists.

The selected article by Dr. Rubina Saigol, 'The State and Limits of Counter Terrorism: The Case of Pakistan and Sri Lanka', was originally published in *Understanding Terrorism in South Asia: Beyond Statist Discourse*.[1] The article eminently meets the above stated criteria. The use of comparative approach for studying terrorism in two countries, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, enhances its value and generates new insights about terrorism.

The author of the monograph Dr. Rubina Saigol is currently Director of ActionAid, Islamabad. She is well known researcher who has written on diverse subjects including education, women's issues, violence and human rights. Her books 'Knowledge and Identity', 'Qaumiat, Taleem Aur Shanakht', and 'Symbolic Violence' deal specifically with education. Besides writing several books she has

[1] Imtiaz Ahmed (ed.), *Understanding Terrorism in South Asia: Beyond Statist Discourse* (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Manohar, New Delhi, India, 2006).

also to her credit several chapters that she has contributed to edited books. Some of her work has been translated into Urdu.

We are grateful to Dr. Saigol as well as Dr. Riffat Hussain Director of Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo for giving us permission to reprint the article in our monograph series.

Dr. Inayatullah
President, Council of Social Sciences, Pakistan
November 1, 2006

# The State and the Limits of Counter-Terrorism: The Case of Pakistan and Sri Lanka

**Rubina Saigol**

## 1. Understanding Terrorism

### 1.1 The Social Scientist's Dilemma in Understanding Terrorism

Any attempt to understand terrorism must necessarily examine its myriad manifestations, multiple dynamics and causes, and complex consequences. Analyses based on singular visions, either from the perspective of global hegemony or from the peripheries of subjugation and oppression, miss the deeply intertwined nature of the different forms of terrorism. Understandings that focus on a monolithic perspective of state terrorism, fail to make the vital connection of state terrorisms with transnational and sub-national forms of non-state terrorism. On the other hand, analyses focused entirely on the terrorism by non-state actors, tend to be blind to the various ways in which states encourage, promote or incite terrorism within their own boundaries and across national borders. The dyadic pattern of state and non-state terror, and the mutually reinforcing relation between them, are central aspects of terror that need to be understood if a holistic picture of the phenomenon is to be constructed.

In order to grasp the new, globally hegemonic, discourse of terrorism, it is important to develop a working definition of the term 'terrorism', which seems to have a vast array of often conflicting and contradictory meanings. The term is so deeply enmeshed in geo-strategic and geo-economic global politics that it eludes the kind of definition that social science requires for understanding any object of inquiry. As a result of the widespread confusion, it has become commonplace to argue that 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. Whether one views an action as resistance, freedom struggle or terror, has come to depend on one's location and the position from which one examines the issue.

Since different actors are located and positioned differently in an unequal world, a multiplicity of interested perspectives is bound to arise.

Social science, on the other hand, is expected to reflect a certain degree of objectivity and critical detachment from the object of inquiry. In other words, it is not expected to associate itself with any one position. It is difficult, if not sometimes impossible, for social science to either completely detach itself or become entirely objective, without losing a measure of ethical consideration. Located as it is in the activities, interests, conflicts and positions of human actors in complex interactions with one another, social science must yield to a degree of moral and ethical underpinning. In other words, responsible social science must be able to highlight right and wrong in a situation, despite the calls upon it to provide independent, objective, rational and detached analyses. Combining moral judgment with critical detachment and objectivity may be a Herculean task, nevertheless the social scientist is located uncomfortably between the world of science and moral philosophy, and cannot completely shun one in favour of the other. A modest attempt is made in this paper to critically understand state and non-state terrorism and their inter-linkages in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, without losing a sense of moral judgment or objectivity. The success or failure of this attempt can be assessed only by readers.

### 1.2 The Current Discourse on Terror and its Limits

The most striking feature of the current discourse on terrorism is that despite a massive proliferation of articles and papers on the subject a clear, comprehensive, inclusive and fruitful definition fails to emerge. In seems curious to speak about a subject without knowing what one is talking about, yet this is what is done almost daily in newspapers and articles. The late Pakistani academic and activist Eqbal Ahmad examined at least twenty US documents on terrorism and found that not once was terrorism defined. He came to the conclusion that this was deliberate as the policy was inconsistent and the application selective.[2] Definitions tend to be restrictive and confining when the political imperative is to have the flexibility of including or excluding any action within a term such as ‘terrorism’. Additionally, definitions impose the moral necessity to be applied evenly across the board to all actions that fit within their parameters. As the actions of the US have been highly selective in the response to terrorism (targeting certain countries and overlooking others for the same or worse actions), it suits the imperial purpose to intentionally keep the notion vague. The deliberately chosen

[2] Cited in Rohini Hensman, ‘The only alternative to global terror’, in Ammu Joseph & Sharma, Kalpana (eds.), *Terror, Counter-Terror: Women Speak Out* (Kali Press, New Delhi, 2003), p. 23.

vagueness, and the consequent inconsistent application of the term, has direct implications for countries like Pakistan where terrorism results from a combination of global and internal factors. This point will be made clearer in the section on Pakistan.

A second prominent feature of the current dominant discourse on terrorism is that it is remarkably a-historical, even in its explanations of central causes. The overwhelming concern seems to be the terrorism that exists today, particularly since September 11, 2001, its effects and the measures to counter it. There is virtually no recognition in this discourse, that the present is the product of the past. When stripped of history, any phenomenon, including terrorism, seems to look 'natural' or as arising from 'inherent evil', 'backwardness', and 'barbarianism', lack of civilization, rationality or modernity. This kind of essentialism is clearly evident in the statements emanating from the White House since September 2001 in phrases such as 'Axis of Evil', 'barbaric attacks' and so on.

Like the reluctance to define, the inability to situate events in history is also not entirely accidental. The fear of the past reflects the 'skeletons in the closet' syndrome. There is a discernible fear that a journey down the lane of collective memory will make it impossible to argue that people commit terrorist acts because they are 'inherently evil, they hate freedom and love terror'. Digging out skeletons from the closet of repressed memories will mean confronting collective terror unleashed in the past upon those who were less powerful. This fear is clearly evident in the writing of Georg Witschel who argues that contemporary terrorism has very few leading principles, 'for example, the hate against America, against Israel, or against countries and governments supporting them'.[3] This remarkable example of a-historical thinking essentialises hate, and uses it as a category of explanation without explaining the hate itself – its source, reasons, origin or basis. A psychological category (and that too a problematic one) is used as explanation for phenomena that have a history and a basis in the political economy of West Asia. A trip down the lane of collective memory would have forced Witschel to confront the reality of occupation of Palestinian land and the incessant terror unleashed upon

[3] Georg Witschel, 'Global Terrorism: Trends and Response', in Sridhar K. Khatri & Kueck, Gert W., *Terrorism in South Asia: Impact on Development and Democratic Process* (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, 2003), p. 22.

Palestine by Israel with America's help. Witschel continues to turn his eyes away from history in his criticism of the Organization of Islamic Countries' insistence that peoples' struggles against colonialism, imperialism, aggression, occupation and hegemony, should be exempted from a definition of terrorism, as, in his opinion, this would be too dangerous.[4] This kind of argument implies that acts of occupation, imperialism and aggression are not terrorist, a highly untenable position. Such arguments become the main justifications for conquest, occupation and aggression by powerful states against weaker states.

Similar forms of justificatory arguments are evident in P. R. Chari's assertions that there exists a phobia against Israel, the US and India in 'the Muslim world', and that there is, therefore, a legal basis for the pre-emptive strikes against Iraq.[5] The failure to find any significant sources of threat or WMDs in Iraq, give the lie to Chari's claims, his invocation of the psychological concept of 'phobia' notwithstanding. Chari's fear of history and its propensity to bring up causes is evident in his contention that the *consequences* of international terrorism are more important and one should not 'indulge in fruitless semantics about its *causes*'.[6] By blocking a reference to causes, an exploration of prior terrorism that may have led to the current one, can be avoided. Explanations of terrorism by resorting to notions of 'evil', 'wicked', or 'phobic' lead one into tautological thinking: 'they committed the act *because* they are evil; they are evil *because* they committed the act'. Explanations devoid of history, and based on psychological essentialisms, fail to serve as explanations at all.

A large part of the intellectual confusion in thinking about terrorism comes from the questionable assumption that only states can be victims of terrorism, while terrorists can only be non-state actors. Witschel argues that the UN Security Council has recognized 'the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense in accordance with the charter, *if*

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[4] Ibid., p. 28.

[5] P. R. Chari, 'Combating Terrorism: Devising Cooperative Countermeasures', in Sridhar K. Khatri & Kueck, Gert W., *Terrorism in South Asia: Impact on Development and Democratic Process* (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, 2003), pp. 427-47.

[6] P. R. Chari. 'Post-11 September Global Developments: An Indian Perspective', in Dipankar Banerjee & Kueck, Gert W., *South Asia and the War on Terrorism: Analysing the Implications of 11 September* (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, New Delhi, 2003), pp. 51-64.

*a state is the victim of a terrorist attack*'.[7] This contention creates a serious contradiction in Witschel's argument since aggression, occupation and colonization are always constitutive of terrorist attacks without which they cannot be accomplished. For example, the shock and awe operation to which Iraq was subjected was clearly meant to terrorize and create fear. According to Witschel's own argument, Iraq should have the inherent right of collective self-defense. Yet, the actions of resistance fighters are continually described as terrorist by the occupying powers and the global media.

This brings me to the third significant feature of the current dominant discourse on terrorism, namely that the state is presented as the victim and non-state actors as perpetrators. In presenting the state as victim of terrorism, values of good are attributed to states and the perpetrators represent all that is 'evil', 'wicked' or 'cowardly'. The latter words are often used for non-state actors irrespective of whether they are resistance fighters or terrorists. The assumption that states represent good and terrorists evil, is not only questionable but hopelessly naïve, as so often terror resides in the very structure of modern nation states that seek to homogenize diverse identities into a monolithic one. A number of writers fall into the trap of attributing terrorism only to non-state actors. For example, Akmal Hussain considers it to be violence designed to induce fear by an individual or group against other groups within the same state or non-combatant citizens of other states.[8] The state is also absolved of responsibility by P. R. Chari who believes the 'international system' to be a victim of terrorism by religious extremists who should be dealt with by force of arms.[9]

When the state and non-state actors are both found to be implicated in terrorism, the distinction between a soldier and a terrorist also seems to disappear. Soldiers, like terrorists, are trained to kill or die for some cause assumed to be greater than the self.[10] The distinction between the

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[7] Georg Witschel, 'Global Terrorism: Trends…', *op.cit.*, p. 27.

[8] Akmal Hussain, 'Terrorism, Development and Democracy: The Case of Pakistan', in Sridhar K. Khatri & Kueck, Gert W., *Terrorism in South Asia: Impact on Development and Democratic Process* (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, 2003), p. 123.

[9] P. R. Chari, 'Post-11 September Global Developments: An Indian Perspective', in Dipankar Banerjee & Kueck, Gert W., *South Asia and the War…*, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

[10] For example, Ammu Joseph and Kalpana Sharma refer to Barbara and Rosa Ehrenreich's work to argue that 'terrorists could be motivated by the

soldier and suicide bomber collapses, as the actions of the one are hardly distinguishable from the other. If terrorism can be defined as a willful, pre-meditated attack that leads to the death or injury of innocent civilians and damage to property, war and terrorism become indistinguishable. Civilians die as much during war as in a terrorist attack, even though in the former case the death is explained away as mere 'collateral damage'. Damage to property and infrastructure can and does occur in both forms of violence. War can be as illegal, unprovoked or baseless as a senseless terrorist attack, and this was amply demonstrated by the invasion of Iraq in 2003, declared illegal even by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in a BBC interview. Wars waged by states, and violence carried out by non-state actors, are both claimed to be for some higher ideal or justified cause. The only factor that seems to distinguish soldiers from terrorists is that the state has monopoly over legitimised violence. Once the state's monopoly and right to violence is challenged and the state's own legitimacy, or that of its actions and motivations, questioned, the soldier and terrorist seem to merge. Social scientists have so far failed to grapple with this issue, as terrorism has not been defined in a manner that is acceptable to all. For an acceptable definition to evolve, the state needs to be problematised as a social category.

The fourth significant feature of the existing work on terrorism is the attribution of terrorism to 'religious extremists' and/or the singling out of religious belief as the prime motivation for terrorist attacks. This is discernible in the work of Georg Witschel and P.R. Chari. Witschel argues that 'more and more religiously motivated terrorism has superseded other forms – or rather motivations – of terrorism'.[11] Chari contends that 'religion has supplanted politics as the main principle animating terrorist groups'.[12] Chari then goes on to single out Muslims as the main source of terrorism.[13] Apart from the fact that this discourse

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same sense of duty, honour and sacrifice as soldiers in a war. After all, both sets of men are moved by a love of country or cause that pushes them to kill others, or to die'. Ammu Joseph & Kalpana Sharma (eds.), *Terror, Counter-Terror: Women Speak Out*, 'Introduction', 2003, p. xvii.

[11] Georg Witschel, 'Global Terrorism: Trends…', *op.cit.*, p. 21.

[12] P. R. Chari, 'Combating Terrorism: Devising…', *op.cit.*, p. 431.

[13] Attributing terrorism mainly to religion, and within this category to Muslims, Chari writes: 'religion has supplanted politics as the main principle animating terrorist groups, exemplified by the Muslims outfits operating in the Middle East'. A little later in the same paper he writes: 'Religion does remain, however, a powerful subsidiary motive inspiring

is patently racist,[14] it is also clearly untrue and more so in the context of modern South Asia. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka and the Maoists in Nepal are motivated by various considerations that are secular in nature. Struggles against occupation and colonization, such as those of the Palestinians, come to be couched in religious terms by both sides, but are essentially struggles against the violent occupation of lands through terrorist means. By attributing terrorism primarily to what is problematically called 'Islamic fundamentalism' is to overlook the state terrorism unleashed upon the Palestinians by Israel and against Muslims in Gujarat and Kashmir by the Indian state. The latest example of terrorism committed by followers of a religion other than Islam is the violence against Iraq committed against all international norms and values.[15]

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terrorists in the Muslim world, since its fundamental elements derive sustenance from political Islam'. See P. R. Chari's 'Combating Terrorism: Devising…', *op.cit.*, pp. 431-432. In the last para on p. 432, Chari attributes some validity to Samuel's Huntington's dubious and discredited thesis of the clash of civilizations. On page 435 of the same paper, Chari argues that the US has a legal basis for its attack on Iraq as it was assembling weapons of mass destruction, a fantasy widely known to be incorrect. Chari uses the argument to justify an attack by India on Pakistan. On page 445, Chari argues that a phobia exists in the Muslim world against the US and Israel and recently India has been added to this list. The discourse is patently racist not only because of what it says about entire religious communities, but also because of what it does not say. For example, Chari fails to mention US terrorism against a number of other states, Israeli occupation of and terrorism against the Palestinians and the Indian pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. The US, Israel and India are presented as victims and Muslims are terrorists without showing the reverse side of the picture. Additionally, entire communities and their faith are held responsible for terror without any fine distinctions. Such essentialism can only be explained as racist and a clear case in which intellectual discourse seems to follow rather than interrogate the hegemonic discourse on terrorism.

[14] For some interesting reflections on how war and imperialism are essentially racist in character, see Rohini Hensman, 'The only alternative to global…', *op.cit.*, p. 53. Hensman explains how no European country which was involved in the second world war was subjected to nuclear weapons as was Japan and napalm and Agent Orange were used in Vietnam. The guinea pigs for the experimentation of deadly weapons were invariably Asians. More recently, cluster bombs and nuclear tipped bunker busters were used on an Asian Muslim country (Iraq).

[15] The fact that the US and UK's illegal invasion of Iraq is widely perceived as a terrorist attack is evident from the statements emanating from the

Four important points must be made here: one, that religion is not the only, or even the most vital motivation for terrorism, as there are struggles that are based on separatist and nationalist agendas or against occupation and class injustice; secondly, where religion is a dimension of the conflict, it is not any one particular religion that is implicated, rather followers of all religions are capable of violence. Third, even in cases where religion may come to seem the main motive, the real struggle may be over land, occupation or resources, with religion purely as a means of mobilization. Fourth, and this is where racism and prejudice play a major role, social scientists and thinkers attribute differing and opposing motivations as explanations in different situations reflecting similar phenomena. For example, the extermination of six million Jews in the Second World War is not attributed to 'Christian fundamentalism', or 'Protestant terrorism' or any such essentialist category. Historical, political, economic and secular motivations are used to explain the holocaust, even though the followers of one particular religion exterminated those belonging to another. On the other hand, in the case where the followers of Islam commit a terrorist act, it is invariably attributed to religious motivation, and the explanations offered overlook historical, economic and political causes such as occupation of their lands. This failure of social science is similar to the manner in which Washington describes all violent actions against itself as terrorism, and all violent and genocidal actions committed by itself or its allies as self-defense.[16] Interestingly, this is where the discourse of George Bush mirrors that of Osama bin Laden – both claim to fight for freedom, against terrorism, for a just cause and against evil! Their vocabularies are so similar that statements by the two are virtually interchangeable.[17] Social scientists need to detach themselves from both,

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Islamic Scholars Conference in Jakarta in which several scholars described it as terrorism, and Indonesia's Vice President accused US President George W. Bush of having no conscience and blasted the US-led war in Iraq as terrorism to all mankind. *The News,* February 26, 2004.

[16] Rohini Hensman, 'The only alternative to global…', *op.cit.,* p. 24. Hensman explains how the US and terrorist groups shift their definitions of terrorism based on who is the victim and who is the perpetrator.

[17] See Rosalind P. Petchesky, 'Phantom towers: feminist reflections on the battle between global capitalism, and fundamentalist terrorism', in Ammu Joseph & Sharma, Kalpana (eds.), *Terror, Counter-Terror…*, *op.cit.,* p. 53. Petchesky critiques the language of cosmic 'good' vs 'evil' and the apocalyptic rhetoric that echoed between Bush and bin Laden. She argues

that is, violence committed for sacred or secular reasons, if terror is to be understood in all its complexity and varying manifestations. Responsible social scientists need to explain rather than fall into the very categories being used to construct a particular view of terrorism.

A major failing of the discourse on terrorism is that attempts have been made to understand it without reference to the notion of conflict, so central to social science. Terrorism is an effect and a method by which conflict is addressed by any party. It is not *the* conflict itself. Modern societies are torn by a number of conflicts, which can occur singly or together with an overlap between them. For example, conflicts occur on the basis of class, caste, gender, sect, religion or linguistic identities. All societies, and particularly those in South Asia, are vertically and horizontally divided along these axes. Conflicts may cut across class and religion or gender and religion and at times one identity may supersede another. The state is expected to be neutral with regard to categories of social differentiation, however it is often difficult for the state to be impartial or neutral for various reasons, which will become clearer in later sections of this paper. The state is required to mediate social conflict but often fails because of its own lack of neutrality.

The conflict may be between the state and a sub-national group, the state or a religious sect or group, or between two social groups each representing a different religion, sect or ethnic origin. Such conflicts can take on transnational characteristics when the identity is shared with groups or states across national borders.[18] Terrorism is one among several means that the state or the sub- or transnational group uses to achieve its aims. It defies explanation without reference to conflict. It needs to be clarified that the notion of conflict is not being used here in a negative sense, as conflict is necessary for social change. However, conflicts can, and often do, take violent forms, which have come to be labelled 'terrorism'. Any effort to grasp the motivations, causes or dynamics of terrorism, are fruitless without understanding the underlying conflict over the distribution of resources, services and power among groups within and across states.

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that the pseudo-Islamic and the pseudo-Christian, the Jihad and the crusade, both lie.

[18] See Inayatullah, 'The Process of Development of Ethnicity and Ethnonationalism: A Theoretical Analysis', in *Pakistan Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 2, July-December 2000.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand terrorism without referring to the power differentials between peoples, governments, groups and states. Apart from the vast differences in the capacity of states to kill and inflict material damage, there is unequal access to the means and methods of the production of 'truth'. The knowledge industry and the media play a pivotal role in the manufacture of 'truth' about who is a terrorist and who is not. Corporate global media toes the line of rich and powerful states, which are also strongly dominated by corporate interests. The inconsistent and selective application of criteria for the naming of terrorists and terrorist states is undertaken daily by the media. The power to define, re-define, not define and shift the criteria for defining, rests with the powerful states and their massive 'truth industry'. The power to make and un-make meaning, to remember and to forget, to tell and not to tell is the ultimate form of power deployed in the construction of the regime of truth. The monopoly over this kind of power by the powerful states and their media, has obfuscated the issue of terrorism rather than contributing to its understanding. Intellectual discourse seems to have *followed* rather than *interrogated* the dominant notions of terrorism peddled by the media. The counter discourse in alternative media has not been able to effectively contest the mainstream notions of terrorism since the terms of the debate are set by the global knowledge regime.

The result has been a dichotomous understanding of terrorism wherein *either* states *or* non-state actors are terrorist, *either* the government *or* a sub-national group is terrorist, *either* the imperial powers *or* transnational movements challenging them are terrorist. Depending on one's location in the world and vantage point, terrorism is attributed to either one or the other side. What gets obliterated in this binary setting of the debate is that terrorism forms a continuum from the global to state to sub-state levels. No state or sub-national group is permanently terrorist, while any state, group or transnational movement can resort to terrorist methods in a given situation and under certain conditions. In other words, when, how and why a certain movement, state, group or imperial power commits terrorist attacks is contingent upon a number of historical factors. The latter may include resistance against prolonged occupation with no relief in sight, a prior terrorist attack, resentment against a subordinate social status, persistent maltreatment by state powers, perceived or real injustice, loss of privilege, threat perception or unequal access to state resources in comparison with another social group. The global, national, local and transnational factors may interact

to produce a particular terrorist act or movement. Terrorism, therefore, cannot be apprehended within the confining dichotomy of either/or.

It is against the backdrop of historical, global, national, sub-national and transnational forces that the specific case of Pakistan can be understood. The complexity of the situation in Pakistan, and its various forms of terrorism, cannot be grasped without situating the issue in the context of historical, global geo-strategic and geo-economic power politics. From the discussion above, a working definition of terrorism can be derived for the purposes of this paper: any loss of civilian life, bodily injury or damage to property that occurs as a result of conflict between two states, two groups, a state and sub-national group, or a transnational movement and nation-states, constitutes an act of terrorism. It is assumed that all such acts are deliberate and pre-meditated, as there is no such thing as an accident whenever a planned attack takes place. This definition includes acts of colonization, conquest and occupation. However, it excludes the different forms of terrorism being currently discussed, for example, the economic terrorism of globalisation, eco-terrorism against the environment or cyber terrorism. Although the latter forms do constitute terrorism, they do not fall within the scope of this paper. The definition provided here includes action by individual members of a group or state if the action is designed to further group goals, but it does not include individual acts of murder or damage to property that are based on personal enmity or individual motives, as the latter actions would constitute a crime. The working definition devised for this paper forms the conceptual framework within which the case of Pakistan is examined.

## 2. The Case of Pakistan: Trapped in History and Geography

Pakistan as a state is both the victim and perpetrator of terrorism. However, the victims and perpetrators differ by class, religion, region and access to power. For example, the victims often include ordinary citizens, religious or sectarian minorities, peasants or workers. On the other hand, the perpetrators include members of the classes and of groups, which wield power – the military, police, political parties, militant organizations, secret agencies, bureaucrats, landlords and capitalists. At times, the perpetrators also become victims, for example the killing of members of the police force by MQM militants in Karachi, the attacks on the life of President Pervez Musharraf, or the murder of leaders of militant outfits such as the murder of the Sipah-e-Sahaba leader, Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi. Similarly, victims of political or

state terrorism can become perpetrators as in the case of the fighters in Balochistan in the decade of the 1970s, or MQM activists in the 1990s. The interactive relationship between state and non-state actors sometimes dissolves the distinction between victim and perpetrator.

Terrorism in Pakistan is deeply linked to conflicts that reside at the core of its origin, structure and geographical location. There appear to be four fundamental sources of terrorism in Pakistan: 1) Pakistan's origin in the foundational myth of the two-nation theory; 2) Pakistan's failure to evolve a viable federal structure, given the regional diversity at its origin; 3) communalisation of the state, and 4) Pakistan's location at the nexus between South and Central Asia, that is, its proximity to Afghanistan often considered the gateway to Central Asia. Pakistan is thus trapped in its own history, geography and the resulting problems of structure of the state. Although the four sources of conflict and terrorism in Pakistan are intertwined in a number of ways, they need to be discussed separately for purposes of conceptual clarity.

### 2.1 The Founding Myth of Pakistan

The foundational myth of Pakistan is the two-nation theory, which posits Muslims and Hindus as two mutually exclusive, separate and irreconcilable nations. This ideology divided the freedom struggle against British rule as early as 1909 with the Morley-Minto Reforms in which the principle of separate electorate was acknowledged by the British government. It subsequently remained the main slogan of the Muslim League and led to the division of independence by religion. Within the two-nation paradigm, two states emerged, a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan, although Indians generally see their country as secular.

The emergence of Pakistan within a struggle divided by religion meant that religious identity came to be the defining characteristic of Pakistani citizenship. This implied that other, sometimes older, sources of identity in language, region or culture had to be suppressed if not entirely erased. The construction of Pakistani identity as Muslim required the forgetting of the identities of Bengali, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pathan or Balochi. In a speech on national integration in 1962, Ayub Khan declared:

> Pakistan came into being on the basis of an ideology, which does not believe in differences of colour, race or language. It is immaterial whether you are a Bengali or a Sindhi, a Balochi or a

> Pathan or a Punjabi – we are all knit together by the bond of Islam.[19]

Ayub Khan reiterated the same sentiments in 1963 when he said:

> I do hope that in a few decades, which is not a long time in the history and progress of nations, our people will forget to think in terms of Punjabi, Pathan, Sindhi, Balochi and Bengali and think of themselves as Pakistanis only…our religion, our ideology, our common background, our aims and ambitions unite us more firmly than any geographical boundaries could have.[20]

The process of national integration, that is, the forced and artificial homogenisation of diverse cultures and peoples, is an inherently violent process. It imposes a monolithic identity, which is expected to override the sentiments of other identities arising from multiple belonging. The latter may include regional, sectarian, caste, class, gender, linguistic or regional identities, which become difficult to accommodate in a state based on a centralized notion of identity. The excluded sources of the self do not just fade away or die out over time, as is hoped by authoritarian rulers like Ayub Khan. Instead, they are stirred and mobilized into action when the highly centralized state fails to distribute resources equitably or otherwise excludes certain sub-national groups from power.

Although the basic premise of the two nation idea is essentially false because it posits two groups of people as polar opposites, and overlooks all mixtures, overlaps and commonalities, it has been a powerful notion in guiding (or rather misguiding) the Pakistani state's actions. The two-nation theory has led to serious conflicts and violence that have plagued Pakistani society from its inception. The conflicts ensuing from, and related to, the foundational myth are primarily of two types: one, Pakistan's failure to develop a just and viable federal structure in order to accommodate ethnic minorities, and two the theory has produced the ideology of Islamisation which lies at the heart of the sectarian and Jehadi struggles.

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[19] Speeches and Statements of Field Marshall Mohammad Ayub Khan (Pakistan Publications, Karachi, 1962), Vol. V, p. 90.

[20] Speeches and Statements of Field Marshall Mohammad Ayub Khan (Pakistan Publications, Karachi, 1963), Vol. VI, pp. 83-84.

## 2.2 Conflict and the Structure of the State

Owing to the vast cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity within what came to constitute Pakistan, the structure of the state was required to be a federal one, with a system for parity between the five provinces. A democratic, plural and just framework required the state to be decentralized with adequate representation of different ethnic groups and regional minorities. However, the failure of the rulers in state formation led to serious disaffection with the centre, and feelings of alienation among minorities and those distant from the centre of power.

The alienation from the rulers was expressed as early as the 1950s when there were language riots resulting from attempts to make Urdu the national language. Since the East Pakistanis, who spoke Bengali, constituted the majority of Pakistani citizens, it was patently unjust to impose Urdu, a language spoken by a small minority, as the national language. However, this controversy was resolved by declaring both Urdu and Bengali as Pakistan's national languages. Another major source of conflict was the infamous One Unit according to which Sindh, Balochistan, NWFP and the Punjab constituted a single political unit called West Pakistan. This move created resentment, particularly among the smaller provinces in West Pakistan where people felt the domination of the largest province, the Punjab. As a result of agitation and protest, Yahya Khan abolished One Unit.

However, the biggest crisis rooted in the inability to evolve a federal structure came with the elections of 1970. The Awami League of East Pakistan led by Shaikh Mujib-ur-Rehman won the elections overwhelmingly. The West Pakistani rulers and politicians refused to hand over power to the legitimately elected party, which resulted in agitation and protest all over East Pakistan. The agitation and resistance to West Pakistan's domination was met with the most violent forms of state repression in the history of the state. The military was sent to East Pakistan in March 1971 where it murdered scores of people opposed to West Pakistani control. Twenty-four years of being treated as a colony and exploited by West Pakistan led to demands for secession in East Pakistan. What followed was one of worst forms of mass genocide and terrorism by the state. Thousands of East Pakistanis were butchered, women were raped and a reign of terror unleashed upon the people. This massive state terrorism and violence ended only with the defeat of the West Pakistani army and East Pakistan's emergence as a separate state of Bangladesh in December 1971.

The events of 1971 did not end the conflicts between the state and its federating units. The next province to offer armed resistance to the centre in the decade of the 1970s was Balochistan. According to Selig Harrison, Baloch insurgents waged a guerrilla struggle over an extended period 'culminating in a brutal confrontation with 80,000 or more Pakistani troops from 1973 to 1977 in which some 55,000 Baloch were involved, 11,500 of them as organized combatants. Casualty estimates during this little-known war ran as high as 3,300 Pakistani soldiers and 5,300 Baloch guerrillas killed, not to mention hundreds of women and children caught in the crossfire. At the height of the fighting in late 1974, United States supplied Iranian combat helicopters; some manned by Iranian pilots, and joined the Pakistan Air Force in raids on Baloch camps. The Baloch, for their part, did not receive substantial foreign help and were armed only with bolt-action rifles, homemade grenades, and captured weaponry'.[21] In 2004, violence once again erupted in Balochistan as the military attempted to set up cantonments and the local Sardars opposed the army's actions. As the largest province in Pakistan but one with the smallest population, Balochistan has historically received a smaller share of the national resources. As a result of the underdevelopment and inadequate remuneration for its resources such as natural gas, resentment continues to simmer in the province. This situation is pregnant with dangers of future conflict because of uneven development and inequitable sharing of national wealth.

The decade of the 1980s saw the province of Sindh up in arms against the centre in Islamabad. This time it was the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) against General Zia-ul-Haq's illegal military rule, and his justification of all repression in the name of Islamisation. Sindh has a long history of sub-national stirrings expressed in the form of the *Jiye Sindh Mahaz* and other parties premised on Sindhi nationalism. August to December 1983 saw a massive civil disobedience movement in Sindh, during which several activists courted arrest and risked imprisonment and state violence. The MRD movement was supported by anti-military rule activists in other provinces, but Sindh received the brunt of the General's wrath. Helicopter gunships were used by the military to suppress the revolt in which hundreds were killed and wounded. Selig Harrison reports that in this uprising, 45,000

[21] Selig Harrison, 'Ethnicity and the Political Stalemate in Pakistan', in S. Akbar Zaidi (ed.), *Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan* (Vanguard, Lahore, 1992), pp. 232-233.

Punjabi troops faced makeshift Sindhi guerrilla outfits and the Sindhi death toll came to 300 people.[22] Although the rural-based militant movement against military rule was crushed due to lack of support primarily from the majoritarian province of Punjab, it highlighted the excesses of the military government and its use of the most violent methods to suppress the uprising. In 1986, another wave of violence and state repression arose in Sindh. According to Shahid Kardar, 'the alleged death of 50 students at the Thori Railway crossing, and the horror of the action taken to suppress the Sindhis in 1986 have left very deep wounds in Sindh'.[23]

The early to mid-1990s were dominated by armed militant conflict between the Urdu-speaking migrants from India, the Muhajirs and the forces of the state. This conflict had roots in the 1970s when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto instituted an urban-rural quota in government jobs and college admissions in Sindh. The measure was designed to give rural Sindhis a chance to compete against the urban Muhajirs concentrated in Karachi and Hyderabad. Historically, the better-educated urban Muhajirs had dominated the state bureaucracy. However, over time Punjabis came be over represented in the civil and military bureaucracy, leading to a threat perception among the Muhajirs. Since no other province in Pakistan had the urban-rural quota system, the Muhajirs resented this move. Additionally, migrants from the Punjab and Frontier Provinces filled a large number of jobs in Sindh. The result was a sense of economic threat from other ethnic groups. In the 1980s, the military regime of General Zia needed to counter balance the influence of the Pakistan People's Party, whose leader had been deposed. The military, therefore, relied upon Muhajir resentment and threat perception, and gave the movement further impetus. Together these factors led to the formation of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement, which later became the Muttahida Qaumi Mahaz as it integrated more people into its fold. Over time, the organization of the party became increasingly fascist and its armed wing, the Black Tigers who had an oath to kill or die for the party, unleashed a reign of terror in Karachi.[24] While there were clashes with the Pathans and Sindhis, even the Muhajir community itself was

[22] Ibid., p. 242.

[23] Shahid Kardar, 'Polarisation in the Regions and Prospects for Integration', in S. Akbar Zaidi (ed.), *Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan* (Vanguard, Lahore, 1992), p. 313.

[24] S. Akbar Zaidi. 'Sindhi vs Muhajir: Contradiction, Conflict, Compromise', in S. Akbar Zaidi (ed.), *Regional Imbalances…*, *op.cit.*, p. 340.

terrorized into submission as the young men collected donations for the Muhajir cause. A large number of Muhajir men, and members of the police and military were killed during the prolonged conflict. The fascist character of the movement was brought sharply into focus when MQM torture cells were discovered in Karachi. Farida Shaheed correctly points out that the role of the state exacerbated the conflict and led to more deaths than that inter-group ethnic conflict. The failure of the state to provide protection to its citizens, led each community to seek shelter and protection within the immediate sub-national group.[25]

The fact that the state in Pakistan clashed with virtually all of its sub-national groups, showed the failure of the rulers to evolve a federal structure with maximum provincial autonomy and a fair distribution of resources. The highly centralizing tendencies, evident from the repeated imposition of military rule, led to the alienation of smaller or distant ethnic groups. The domination of the state by one ethnic group, that is, the Punjabis who were over represented in the civil and military bureaucracy, is another factor that contributed to the alienation of other groups from the centre. As Hamza Alavi points out:

> The moment that Pakistan was established, Muslim nationalism in India had fulfilled itself and outlived its purpose. Now there was a fresh equation of privilege and deprivation to be reckoned with in the new state. Virtually overnight there were ethnic redefinitions. Punjabis who were the most numerous could boast of a greater percentage of people with higher education and were most firmly entrenched in both the army (being 85 per cent of the armed forces) and the bureaucracy. They were the new bearers of privilege, the true 'Muslim' for whom Pakistan was created. The weaker 'salariats' of Bengal, Sindh, Sarhad and Balochistan did not share this and accordingly they redefined their identities as Bengalis, Sindhis, Pathans and Baloch who now demanded fairer shares for themselves.[26]

The forced attempts to contain Pakistan within the religiously defined confines of the two-nation theory came into conflict with linguistic, regional or economic definitions of identity. The near-total conflation of

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[25] Farida Shaheed, 'The Pathan-Muhajir Conflicts, 1985-6: A National Perspective', in Veena Das (ed.), *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1990).

[26] Hamza Alavi, 'Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan', in S. Akbar Zaidi (ed.), *Regional Imbalances and the…*, *op.cit.*, p. 270.

Pakistani with Punjabi identity led to other ethnic groups redefining themselves regionally. The ensuing conflicts led to armed guerrilla insurgencies in which terrorist methods come to be employed by all sides as a means of achieving aims which otherwise seemed to elude them. The seeds of violent conflict thus inhere in the structure of the state, which is in tension with the founding myth of oneness. The various attempts by the state to appear to decentralize have been seriously flawed. Whether it was Ayub Khan's scheme of Basic Democracies, General Zia's local bodies or General Pervez Musharraf's flagship devolution plan, the tendency to centralize has underpinned all such attempts. The latest Local Government Plan by the current government of General Musharraf has been widely criticized for failure to devolve power to the provinces by the centre and for creating a direct federal hold over the districts. The rejection of the plan by the provincial governments, especially in the Frontier and Balochistan, bears further testimony to the tension between the centre and the federating units.[27] The widespread belief that the District system is designed to empower local elites and collect taxes at the local level, lends credence to the view that this plan is a 'decentralization of repression' rather than of authority or service delivery.[28] Although armed insurgency based on sub-national articulation of identity is currently not visible on the Pakistani landscape, struggles over resource distribution arise from time to time and contain the potential to break into a militant insurrection. For example, the Punjab and Sindh have been locked in a struggle over

[27] See Muhammad Ejaz Khan's report 'Balochistan PA grills district govt system' in The News, February 26, 2003. According to Khan the provincial assembly vehemently criticized the district government system in the province and the resentment against it was expressed by a senior provincial minister who appealed for its abolition since it had been created under martial law. Critics levelled the charge that the whole government system had been badly affected by the district system. Similarly, the Nazims in the Frontier resigned as they felt that the provincial government did not accept their powers and jurisdiction.

[28] See 'The Devolution Debate' in *The News*, February 8, 2001. Shahrukh Rafi Khan argues that the local elections had brought members of the same old feudal classes into power. Also see Qamar Shirazi's article 'The New District System and the Government's Horses' in *Mazdoor Jidd-o-Jehd*, August 23-30, 2001, pp. 7-8. Under the Finance System section of the Local Government Plan 2000, number 143 states: The three tiers of local government will have tax collection machinery at their disposal and the specified schedule of local taxes for union, tehsil, and district that will fall under the control of these respective levels.

the sharing of the Indus waters and the building of the Kalabagh Dam. Similarly, the provinces have demanded an increase in their share in the National Finance Commission award. Uneven development remains a persistent problem with regard to the different regions of Pakistan. These problems, coupled with increasing poverty and the widening rich-poor divide, threaten to unleash terrorism in the future because of the conflict inherent in state structure, centralizing tendencies, immature political parties and widespread availability of small arms.

### 2.3 Communal State and Sectarian Conflict

The roots of Pakistan's sectarian and religious conflicts lie in the contradictions that characterized its birth as a separate country. Pakistan's origins within the communal two-nation paradigm meant that religious identity would override other bases of self-definition. On the other hand, the state was also conceptualised as a modern, liberal democracy with a parliamentary form of government. The main, and most serious, contradiction is that democracy by definition requires the state to be secular.[29] As equal citizenship is a fundamental requirement of democracy, the privileging of one religious group over others means that religiously different citizens are not equal. On the contrary, the country's origin within the two-nation theory meant that one religion would come to be prioritised over others as the very basis of the new country. In other words, it is not possible to be democratic without also necessarily being secular. This contradiction lies at the heart of Pakistan's troubles with national identity. Although there were a number of economic and class interests driving the Muslim League, the rallying slogan was religion. Since people had been mobilized on a religious basis, the demands to define the state in religious terms were bound to arise. Over a period of time, the state failed to become either liberal, since liberal freedoms were frequently curtailed under the pressure of conservative clerics and military rule, or democratic as military rule time and again replaced representative institutions.

Measures to define the state in religious terms came as early as 1949 when the Objectives Resolution was made a substantive part of the constitution. This resolution institutionalised religion within the state structure and became the basis for a number of subsequent demands and

[29] In his speech to the Constituent Assembly in August 1948, Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah conceptualised a secular state. However, the use of the religious rhetoric in Pakistan's formation made it difficult for the state to emerge from its founding mythology.

arguments for an Islamic state. Almost all of Pakistan's rulers resorted to religious arguments for legitimisation of their policies and actions. The year 1953 saw the Punjab Chief Minister Daultana playing a role in the anti-Ahmadiya agitation.30 In the period of Ayub Khan religious arguments were used in an attempt to deny Fatima Jinnah's right to contest the elections for the country's top office.[31] Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto called his legitimising ideology 'Islamic socialism', and General Zia-ul-Haq perfected the art of deploying religion in the service of justifying illegal rule. Nawaz Sharif's infamous Shariat Bill (proposed Fifteenth Amendment) and General Musharraf's proclivity to make deals only with the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), while excluding the mainstream non-religious parties from Pakistan's political landscape, are all examples of the way in which every ruler, whether civil or military, has used religion for her/his own continuation in power.

Although the roots of sectarian violence and terror lie deep in Pakistan's history, the Islamisation of the era of General Zia intensified and multiplied sectarian divisions to the extent not witnessed before. Eqbal Ahmad explains the connection between the policies of Islamisation and sectarianism succinctly:

> Religious sectarianism was an inevitable outcome of "Islamisation". There is first of all the simple insight that appears to have escaped several generations of politicians and soldiers of Pakistan: When a state claims a theocratic mission, it is bound to provoke conflicts over whose model shall prevail. Secondly, when religion is pushed explicitly into politics it becomes a currency of power. Any one who can uses religion to garner support and undercut actual or potential rivals. To verify this, one may need count only the number of religion wielding newcomers in national and local politics since Zia's Islamisation began. The most virulent hate-mongers of today also belong to his era.[32]

According to Abbas Rashid, the Islamisation policies of General Zia fostered sectarianism in a number of ways.33 The policies, which were deeply influenced by the Jamaat-e-Islami, seemed to be creating not just

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[30] Abbas Rashid, 'The Politics and Dynamics of Violent Sectarianism', in Zia Mian & Ahmad, Iftikhar (eds.) *Making Enemies, Creating Conflict: Pakistan's Crises of State and Society* (Mashal, Lahore, 1997), p. 28.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Eqbal Ahmad, 'The Roots of Violence', in Zia Mian & Ahmad, Iftikhar (eds.), *Making Enemies, Creating…*, *op.cit.*, p. 19.
[33] Abbas Rashid, 'The Politics and Dynamics…', *op.cit.*, p. 29.

an Islamic, but also a Sunni Hanafi state. The levying of Zakat and Ushr in 1979, and a number of other ordinances, led to feelings of threat among the minority Shia community that Pakistan was being redefined as a sectarian state. The provision of Zakat funds to Sunni deeni madaris (religious seminaries) led to a proliferation of sectarian religious schools. The Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah Jaffria (TNFJ) was the Shia response to Zia's Sunni measures. In turn, the Anjuman-e-Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (ASSP) was formed against the Shia landlords of Jhang by stoking the prevailing resentments against feudal power. Over time, such processes led to the formation of a large number of sectarian outfits representing Shia and Sunni sects and sub-sects. Various religio-political organizations, representing Deobandi and Barelvi versions of Islam, sprung up all over the country and became locked in violent conflicts. Some of the militant religious outfits that gained prominence include the Shia Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan, an offshoot of the TNFJ, the Sunni Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP), an offshoot of the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), the latter a leading Sunni Deobandi political party.

Sectarian violence in Pakistan escalated dramatically with the murder of Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, founder of the SSP, in February 1990. This assassination led to the burning of numerous houses and shops in Jhang. In December of the same year, the murder of the Iranian Consul General in Lahore intensified the violence between Iran-supported Shias and Saudi Arabia-supported Sunnis. As a result of financial and material help from various countries promoting their own brand of sectarianism, the religious militants gained increased access to small arms of all kinds available in the black market. Abbas Rashid reports that in the Punjab, 1994 was one of the worst years in terms of sectarian killing when 73 people were killed and 300 were wounded.[34] In the latter half of 1996, sectarian violence in Parachinar and part of Kurrram agency claimed hundreds of lives. Sectarian violence also led to the killing of the Commissioner of Sargodha and Deputy Commissioner of Khanewal in 1996. The murder of people in mosques during prayers, or while attending funerals became common in various parts of the country. In one of the worst incidents of this kind, 22 people were killed in Mominpura, Lahore while praying in January 1998. This incident was designed to coincide with the anniversary of the killing of Maulana Jhangvi.

[34] Ibid., p. 31.

Muhammad Amir Rana reports that the greatest increase in religious parties was recorded between 1979 and 1990, and a major chunk of it is accounted for by a staggering rise in the number of sectarian outfits.[35] While Jehad-related organizations increased by 100 per cent, the rise in sectarian parties was 90 per cent. Since there were ideological and other differences between them, the fighting, coupled with the easy availability of arms, led to an enormous increase in violence and terrorist activity. The state had, through its myopic policies, created a monster it could barely control. The extent of terror and violence unleashed upon society can be gauged from the number of people killed or injured in sectarian terrorism. Between 1987 and 2002, 1016 people were killed in incidents of sectarian violence throughout Pakistan. In the same period, 2450 people were injured in 1342 incidents of terrorism. Between 1990 and 2002, 593 Shias and 388 Sunnis were murdered, while 44 people belonging to the police department and the administration were killed.[36] The violence intensified due to myriad factors including Pakistan's state policies, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Afghan Jehad beginning with the Soviet invasion of 1979, the interference of the United States, Iran and Pakistan in Afghanistan, and the formation of the Sipah-e-Sahaba in Jhang in 1985 to counter the Iran-backed Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah Jaffria.

Sectarian terrorism continues to plague Pakistan to the present day. In the most recent attack, a suicide bomber was killed when he tried to bomb a Shia Imambargah, Bargah-e-Hussaini in Rawalpindi, in February 2004. Although no one else was killed as the bomb went off prematurely, the attempt is yet more evidence of a continuing sectarian scourge in Pakistan. In March 2004, unidentified gunmen opened fire on the Yaum-e-Ashur in Liaqat Bazaar, Quetta killing over 40 people and injuring scores of others.[37] Sectarian violence greatly escalated in October of 2004. On October 1, 2004 29 people were killed in a Shia Imambargah in Sialkot. On October 7, 2004 a bomb blast in Multan killed around 40 people in a mosque and on October 10, 2004 a bomb

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[35] Muhammad Amir Rana, *Jehad-e-Kashmir-o-Afghanistan: Jehadi Tanzeemon Aur Mazhabi Jamaaton Ka Aik Jaiza* 'Jehad in Kashmir and Afghanistan: An Overview of Jehadi Organizations and Religious Parties' (Mashal, Lahore, 2002), p. 49.

[36] The statistics have been provided by Muhammad Amir Rana, ibid., p. 66.

[37] According to some witnesses, untrained and trigger happy policemen opened fire on the Ashura procession killing people which led to the killings in retaliation. Once again the role of the state is questioned in citizen safety. *The News*, March 10, 2004.

blast in a Shiite mosque in Lahore led to the death of four people. The state's policy of establishing one religion as the state religion, and further giving priority to one sect, the dominant Sunnis, is fraught with dangers as it can potentially lead to more violence in the future. State policy has become an instrument of dividing civil society along the axes of religion, sect and ethnicity.

Although a number of parties joined the Milli Yakjehti Council designed to counter sectarian terror, the leaders are economically dependent upon sectarian disunity and discord in order to collect funds, and sectarian harmony does not suit them.[38] Additionally, members of the capitalist classes and traders have agents within the sectarian parties in Karachi, and they use them to have their competitors' goods declared un-Islamic on one pretext or another. The sectarian conflict ties in with business conflicts within the capitalist class, thus rendering sectarian violence lucrative. The state, foreign countries, secret agencies, members of the administration, business classes, and leaders of religious outfits all have a vested interest in sectarian disharmony, and all contribute to its perpetuation. For the young men who are drawn to sectarian violence and Jehad, unemployment is a major reason for joining such parties. Pakistan has 10, 000 deeni madaris where one million students receive religious instruction. About 7000 students annually graduate from the seminaries and fail to find employment in Pakistan's weak economy. The political economy of sectarian violence thus runs deep and efforts to create sectarian harmony are scuttled by vested interests.

The state's origin within a communal split thus led to its definition in religious terms. When the state acquired for itself a religious identity, it was only natural for each sect to try to have its own interpretation imposed as the 'true' version of Islam. State policy is thus directly responsible for the proliferation of militant sectarian outfits, which terrorize people, kill, and murder and destroy property. Countering sectarian terrorism is difficult for the state precisely for the reason that it means fighting against its own self and its own ideological contradictions. However, the state does not act alone. In a highly interdependent world, state policies are deeply influenced by events in neighbouring countries and the wider world. It is axiomatic to say that domestic policies are influenced by foreign relations and the state's geo-political location, and foreign policies are deeply linked to domestic

[38] Muhammad Amir Rana, *Jehad-e-Kashmir-o-Afghanistan.…*, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

concerns. Pakistan's militant religio-political parties are not purely domestic products. Rather, their politics and focus have been the consequences of wider global politics in which Pakistan's unique location next to Afghanistan has played a central role.

### 2.4 Cold War, Jehad and the Frontline State

The concepts of Jehad have been elaborated in the sub-continent for a long time, especially since the decline of the Mughal Empire and the regeneration of the role of the Ulema, who no longer had state patronage and needed to find alternative sources of income.[39] The role of Shah Walli Ullah, the 18th century reformer, and Ahmad Sirhindi, who contested emperor Akbar's efforts at communal harmony, was highlighted, and attempts were made to represent the Ulema as the torchbearers of Islam in India. In this discourse designed primarily to present the priestly class in a positive light, Shah Walli Ullah is depicted as a believer in armed revolution based on the principles of Jehad.[40] Modern Jehad in Pakistan seems to have resulted from a confluence of several factors, including an interplay between the imperatives of a communal state with its origins in religious separatist myths, cold war geopolitical and geo-economic realities, politics of 'spheres of influence', economic compulsions and strategies, the inability to usher in development and create economic opportunities for poor youth, uneven regional development, electoral politics (creating the vote banks of sectarian and religious parties), proliferation of arms, especially small arms and Kalashnikovs during the Afghan war, and the failure to create a liberal democratic state.

However, the genesis of contemporary militant religious outfits is traced once again to the policies of the state under General Zia-ul-Haq. In 1979 the former Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, a Muslim country on the Western border of Pakistan. The invasion was immediately perceived in the United States as a threat to its interests in containing the spread of communism. As a country with a contiguous border with Afghanistan, Pakistan was selected by the US as the base from which resistance to the Soviet occupation would be launched. Apart from being a frontline state in purely geographical terms, Pakistan was also an ideal choice ideologically as 'godless communism' could be countered by invoking

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[39] Mubarak Ali, *Ulema, Muashara Aur Jehad Tehreek* (The Ulema, Society and Jehad Movement), in Mubarak Ali, *Almiyah-e-Tareekh* (Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1993), pp. 93-106.
[40] Ibid., p. 100.

the sentiments of Jehad. There followed a close cooperation between the US and Pakistan in creating and sending militants across the border to fight against Soviet troops.

On July 3, 1979 Zbingnew Brezinski revealed that the administration of Jimmy Carter had created a secret fund of $500 million for the purpose of the Afghan Jehad.[41] The fund was kept secret even from Congress and the American public. According to John Pilger, the purpose of the fund was to create a global terrorist movement, which could eliminate the Soviet Union from Central Asia and promote Islamic fundamentalism.[42] The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) named this initiative 'Operation Cyclone' for which a staggering amount of four billion dollars was allocated in the years following the Soviet invasion. A large part of this operation involved the creation of deeni madaris (religious seminaries) for the ideological indoctrination and military training of Mujahideen (holy warriors). Pilger reveals that enthusiastic young men belonging to Islamic parties were sent to the CIA training camp in Virginia where the future Al Qaida members were trained. Other young men were sent to the Islamic School of Brooklyn, New York where they received training in militancy. Within Pakistan, aspiring young militants were guided and trained by the British intelligence service, MI6 and the secret agency of the Pakistan military, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). According to the November-December 2000 issue of the US State Department magazine, between 1986 and 1989 the US and Saudi Arabia provided 3.5 billion dollars to Pakistan for the Afghan Jehad.[43] A large portion of this money found its way into the illicit arms and drugs market, and created what came to be commonly called 'the Kalashnikov culture' in Pakistan.

In the same period, religious seminaries began to proliferate in Pakistan. Prior to 1980, there were a total of 700 religious schools in Pakistan and the rate of increase was 3 per cent a year. By the end of 1986, the rate of increase in deeni madaris reached a phenomenal 136 per cent. By 2002, Pakistan had 7000 institutions that award higher degrees in religious teaching. The new schools were mostly set up in the Frontier province, Southern Punjab and Karachi. Religious leaders were provided with economic incentives to create militants for the Afghan war. Thousands of young men belonging to poor families were handed over to secret

[41] Muhammad Amir Rana, *Jehad-e-Kashmir-o-Afghanistan…*, *op.cit.*, p. 17.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., p. 18.

agencies, which ensured their training at the seminaries and then showed them the way to Afghanistan. The other front where trained militant students of religious schools began to be sent was Kashmir. The secret agencies and religious leaders made fortunes from the US money that was funnelled into creating militants. Jehad thus became a roaring, highly lucrative business.[44] Apart from the religious schools, student organizations in universities and colleges recruited youths for Jehad and became the second biggest source of manpower for militant activity in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

In Afghanistan, the Mujahideen became embroiled in the inter-ethnic struggles, which led to an enormous amount of bloodshed, terror and fear for Afghans belonging to all ethnic groups and sects. In the long war which lasted for over two decades, thousands of Afghans were killed or maimed and wave upon wave of refugees, mostly women and children, escaped to Pakistan creating the biggest refugee influx in the history of Pakistan. In 1996, the Taliban, trained in the deeni madaris belonging to the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam, and provided with military training and equipment by the Inter-Services Intelligence, captured Kabul and unleashed the worst reign of terror seen in this part of the world. The terror, violence and excesses of the Taliban are recorded in detail in Ahmad Rashid's *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia.*[45] In Kashmir, the militants of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen weakened the indigenous freedom struggle of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the secular resistance movement came to be couched in religious colours.

Jehad has very little, if anything, to do with religion. Rana relates a number of incidents in which the Mujahideen were involved in teasing girls, beating up a headmaster after forcibly entering a school, beating up a boy whose ball accidentally hit two Mujahideen on a motorbike, and generally terrorizing and bullying local people.[46] The feelings of power, generated by carrying a gun, enable youths from dispossessed classes to feel strong and masculine. Most of them join the Jehad because it is a job in a world where gainful employment is scarce and economic opportunities virtually non-existent. Several of the

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[44] Ibid., p. 19.

[45] Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2001).

[46] Muhammad Amir Rana, *Jehad-e-Kashmir-o-Afghanistan…*, *op.cit.*, pp. 26-27.

Mujahideen recruited from the Punjab reported watching Indian movies in the past and admiring heroes. They wanted to be heroes and had joined the Jehad for the opportunity for adventure. In very few cases, Jehad may be motivated by some genuine but misplaced religious fervour. However, if the young Jehadis disagree with their leaders, they are immediately termed agents of the Indian secret service RAW (Research and Analysis Wing). The young men thus have no avenue of escape even if they become disenchanted. The leaders, who make enormous financial profits from Jehad, inspire the young men with tales of miracles about Mujahideen whose feet shone in the dark and who were taken away by fairies and cured upon being shot and wounded.[47] The young men, who are the ones to die for the so-called Jehad cause, are seldom given an adequate share of the funds, which are pocketed by religious leaders. As a result of the burgeoning economy of Jehad, leaders of religio-political parties move around in Pajeros, travel by air, carry Kalashnikovs or other expensive weapons, employ bodyguards for their protection, live in palatial houses and conduct business on mobile phones.[48] All the symbols of modernity and vulgar consumerism, associated with the so-called hated 'west', are used and openly displayed by the leaders of religious outfits. Jehad, like all other wars, is a classed phenomenon in which the foot soldiers are exploited, while the leaders make profits.

In the 1980s the funds flowed from the US, but in recent times, militant organizations like Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, Jaish-e-Muhammad and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen collect funds through the lectures and speeches of their leaders on cassettes, which are spread through personal contacts. A rousing speech by Jaish leader Maulana Azhar Masood on the Babri mosque demolition, recorded on cassettes and widely disseminated, led many passionate young men into Jehad. Lashkar-e-Tayyaba openly displayed boxes in main bazaars and markets to collect funds, and gave front-page newspaper advertisements for recruitment for Kashmir Jehad. All this would not have been possible without the connivance of the state. The government of Azad Kashmir actively participates in the activities of the militant groups.

The Punjab and the Frontier provinces are the main suppliers of manpower for the Afghan and Kashmir Jehad. The biggest recruitment centre for militancy is the Punjab, which accounts for 50 per cent of all

[47] Ibid., pp. 28-29.
[48] Ibid., pp. 56-58.

manpower. According to ten major Jehad organizations, the total number of Punjabi youths killed in militant action exceeds 12,000. About 4000 of them were killed in Afghanistan, the rest in Kashmir. There are 5500 religious seminaries in the Punjab out of which 3000 follow the Deobandi sect, 3000 are followers of the Ahle Hadees sect, 800 belong to the Barelvi school, 1500 are Shias and 120 belong to the Jamaat-e-Islami.[49] The Frontier province is next to the Punjab as a major recruiting ground on account of its proximity to Afghanistan and ethnic solidarity with Pashtoons. In 1979, there were 350 religious seminaries in this province, and this quantity rose to 1281 by 1999. Around 200,000 youths from the Frontier province participated in the Afghan war out of which around 15,000 were killed. On the Kashmir front, around 3000 young men from the Frontier province lost their lives. Of the 15,000 who were killed in Afghanistan, 60 per cent belonged to the deeni madaris, while the rest belonged to regular schools and colleges of the province. In Kashmir 700 students of deeni madaris lost their lives. In the Frontier region, the main organizations associated with Jehad are Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jabbar wal Islami, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, Al Badr and Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM). The TNSM had the largest presence in Afghanistan where it sent 6000 volunteers. They were disarmed and badly mistreated by the Taliban after which their support in the Frontier province dwindled.[50] Although there has been a visible reduction in Jehad-related activities since October 2001 when Afghanistan was attacked and militants were dispersed, many are still active in the province, especially in Malakand division.

Sindh and Balochistan account for fewer militants, partly due to their relative distance from Kashmir, partly as a result of historical contexts, and partly based on their smaller populations. In Sindh 500 young men have laid down their lives out of which 70 belong to Jaish-e-Muhammad, 115 to Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, 123 to Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, 59 to Al Badr, 103 to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and 38 to Lashkar-e-Islam. The rest belong to smaller Jehadi organizations. Sindh has contributed about 25 per cent militants and 20 per cent of these never return home even if they are the sole breadwinners. Although religio-militant organizations are highly influential in rural Sindh, Karachi is the main supplier of manpower and has 2000 deeni madaris to produce it. Balochistan has not contributed substantially to militancy. Most of its

[49] Ibid., pp. 33-34.
[50] Ibid., pp. 41-43.

militants have fought or been killed in bordering Afghanistan, while very few seem have fought in Kashmir. The most influential party here is Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman's JUI. Between 1990 and March 2002, 112 Balochi youths have been killed mostly in Afghanistan. Most of the militants were enabled by the secret agencies to reach Afghanistan and Kashmir and the infiltration occurred under the cover of gunfire.

In the past, Harkat-ul-Jehad-ul-Islami, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Al Badr Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba have openly admitted their connections with Osama bin Laden, and have acknowledged using the material and technical resources provided by Al Qaida. However, with time and as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, such links are denied or have become difficult due to the sea change in Pakistan's foreign policy under US pressure. The monster created by the cooperative policies of the United States and Pakistan in the 1980s has returned to haunt the two states. While the US is still far away and relatively inaccessible, the violence and terror have erupted within Pakistan, especially after the defeat of the Taliban and the return of militants from there.

### 2.5 The Limits of Counter Terrorism

Terrorism and terrorists have been produced in Pakistan as a result of the state's origin in communal politics, Cold War geo-strategic interests, and inequalities inherent within state structure and policies. Pakistan's counter terrorism efforts have been limited and constrained by the fact that the state has had to reverse its own policies and undo its own ideologies. It has, therefore, become a war against itself.

Pakistan is currently severely torn between the global pressures to end terrorism within and across its eastern and western borders, and the equally strong opposing pressures from religious and nationalist forces to refrain from submitting to US diktat. Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 (ATA) is widely regarded as a highly repressive instrument designed to conduct a witch-hunt of political opponents and to suppress dissent. The ATA defines terrorism very broadly, so much so that even violence based on personal enmity is included, unlike the Indian Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), which is also widely seen as an instrument of state repression, but refers only to acts which threaten state sovereignty.[51] The ATA refers to acts that create a sense of fear

[51] Erum Sajjad Gul, 'Terrorism as understood in Pakistan and India, I & II', *The News*, January 6 and January 7, 2004, p. 16. Also, according to

and insecurity among the population. Since 'a sense of fear and insecurity among the population' are very hard to measure, the Act lends itself to wide misinterpretation and misuse. It has been used by the state against tenant farmers struggling for land rights, journalists who reported the military's excesses against the tenants, and is being invoked against political parties like the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal which are agitating against the alleged humiliation of Pakistan's nuclear scientists.[52] As the standards of human rights and civil liberties have declined worldwide since September 11, 2001, and there is scant respect for due process, presumption of innocence until proved guilty and other principles of international law and norms, there has been a decline of the same in Pakistan. The ATA is invoked for the suppression of dissent or disagreement against the reversed policies of the state.

As a result of the attack on Afghanistan in October 2001, there has been a strong upsurge of sympathy and solidarity with Afghans in the two Pakistani provinces neighbouring Afghanistan, the Frontier and Balochistan. This was reflected in the results of the October 2002 election in which the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of religious parties opposed to the military regime's pro-American policies, won a substantial number of seats. Historically, Pakistanis were not

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commentator Praful Bidwai: "Pakistan, for its part, has done no better with its Anti-Terrorist Act of 1997, nor indeed with other special laws like the National Security Act of 1980, or Maintenance of Public Order, 1997 (16 MPO), and similar legislations. A glance at the ATA shows that it too is replete with draconian provisions that violate the International Convention on Civil and Practical Rights, many fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan and even the Pakistan Penal Code…. The ATA provides impunity to officers provided they are acting in "good faith" — always a dubious assumption. As the South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre says: "The Act's ambiguous definition of terrorism, strict time limits for trials and investigations, use of the armed forces, together with its loose use of military and judicial personnel make it a danger to both the people of Pakistan and the institution of democracy. It seeks, through wide ranging police powers, to give the state the power to judge and sentence terrorists by effectively bypassing the safeguards of the judicial system.… Nawaz Sharif had the Act passed in the teeth of citizens' opposition. Ironically, in 2002, he was himself sentenced to life imprisonment for "intimidating" the special court set up under the ATA — the most famous use of the law." 'Circle of Violence'. *The News*, August 12, 2004.

[52] *The News*, February 7, 2004.

inclined to vote substantially for religious parties. The pattern among the smaller provinces was to vote for nationalist parties representing ethnic interests. However, the state's unstinted support for US policies and the vacuum created by its refusal and inability to deal with the two mainstream parties of Pakistan, the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), led to the victory of religious parties along the border regions. Some of the solidarity is also based on the shared ethnic identity with Pashtoons across the border, with the result that there were massive demonstrations against the 2001 coalition bombing of Afghanistan in Balochistan and the Frontier province.

The Pakistan army operation to 'hunt' Al Qaida suspects in South Waziristan for the last two years has been widely resented by the tribal people and the MMA. Fourteen men of the Pakistan army were killed in the Waziristan operation in 2003. In February 2004, 13 civilians were killed in South Waziristan Agency in the tribal areas, as security forces, searching for Al-Qaida men, opened fire on a vehicle carrying civilians. This led Qazi Hussain Ahmad of the MMA to say that the army had been pitched against the people of Pakistan in the service of the US, which is the 'biggest terrorist state of the day'.[53] There were reports that the US troops would join the Pakistan army in the hunt for terrorists in the tribal areas.[54] In March 2004 massive and bloody battles raged between the Pakistan army and the suspected militants in the tribal areas. Several hundred people were killed and arrested in the search for Osama Bin Laden, who is widely believed to be sought by the Bush administration in an election year. The military operation in Waziristan, and the resulting bloodshed, was widely condemned by people from all walks of life including lawyers, High Court Bar Associations, political parties and rights activists. The government was even warned that a 1971-like situation was developing in the tribal areas where the state was pitted against society, in an effort to please the US, which had conferred the dubious status of 'Major Non-NATO Ally' upon Pakistan.[55] Press reports that Pakistan was sending troops to Iraq to help shore up America's illegal occupation, sparked further resentment against a government becoming increasingly alienated from its own

[53] *The News*, February 29, 2004.
[54] *The News*, March 1, 2004.
[55] *The News*, March 25, 2004. The opposition warned the government that it was leading the country into a civil war-like situation reminiscent of the army action in East Pakistan in 1971. The opposition members staged walkouts against the military operation in Wana, Waziristan.

people.[56] However, the operation pleased the US authorities immensely as Colin Powell, US Secretary of State, praised the operation in the tribal areas, and the post-1999 sanctions on Pakistan were lifted allowing it to purchase military equipment and receive additional financial aid from the US.

There were press reports that the US had offered to support President Musharraf's stand on Pakistan's nuclear scientists, in return for help in finding Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaida. Although the parties concerned denied such reports, the deal was widely suspected.[57] There was widespread public resentment against the perceived humiliation of nuclear scientists and the unreserved support to American designs in Pakistan's tribal areas. As long as the United States continues to use the so-called war on terror as a justification for unilateral, interventionist policies and colonization, and its support for Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land continues unabated, Pakistan will continue to experience a backlash against state support for America. This backlash is likely to place serious limits on its efforts to counter terrorism, as Pakistan is widely perceived by the people to be in collusion with US terrorism.

A large number of the militants, who fled Afghanistan since 2001, have either re-entered Pakistan or gone to Kashmir, and now Iraq, to continue the Jehad. As a result, Pakistan has seen an upsurge of terrorism in the last two years. In Islamabad and Bahawalpur, churches were bombed and several people killed. In Karachi in 2002, the American Consulate was bombed and fourteen members of a French multinational firm were murdered. The journalist, Daniel Pearl, was kidnapped and murdered in Karachi and a Christian human rights organisation, the Idara-e-Amn-o-Insaaf, saw seven of its members gunned down by militants. There were two attacks on the life of General Musharraf in December 2003 and one of them involved suicide bombers. For the state in Pakistan this is a case of the chickens coming home to roost.

Pakistanis generally, and religious parties in particular, have resented the manner in which alleged Al Qaida operatives are hunted (a term that seems to suggest that they are animals) by the FBI in Pakistan. Every time a suspect is handed over to US agencies or is picked up by them, there is an uproar and protest. The handing over of digital maps and

[56] *The News*, Internet Edition, March 28, 2004.
[57] *The News*, March 2, 2004.

National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) data to the US was widely resented in Pakistan, as are the surveillance mechanisms installed at airports and other exit/entry points. Every action that is praised by the US and the so-called 'international community' is resented, opposed and resisted by the religious parties as well as the public.[58] In 2003, a number of senior Pakistani nuclear scientists were apprehended for questioning regarding the proliferation of nuclear technology and know-how, the so-called 'debriefing' by the military. This action was declared to be the humiliation of Pakistan's scientists who are regarded as national heroes. The condemnation of the debriefing by various political parties including Tehreek-e-Insaaf of Imran Khan, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (which also took the matter to court), and the MMA was swift and severe. The MMA called a strike on February 6, 2004 to condemn the debriefing, but Abdul Qadeer Khan, the so-called Father of the Pakistani Bomb, confessed and was pardoned by the President. The whole drama was viewed with scepticism and amusement by those who always suspected and claimed that the state itself was involved in the proliferation of nuclear know-how, and that Qadeer Khan was just the 'fall guy'. The 'international community' watched and gave its nod of approval as statements emanated from Washington giving Pakistan a clean bill of health.[59]

The problem of terrorism in Pakistan is the result of the contradictory processes of state formation, wherein a state formed on the basis of a divisive ideology remained caught within that ideology, and ultimately became a victim of it. The ruling ideology of the Pakistani state needed and created enemies through its vast propaganda machine (the media and state education).[60] As a result of Cold War imperatives, the state created what are often considered non-state actors, the militant terrorists whom the state can no longer completely control. There is a continuum

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[58] For example, the government had to answer angry legislators' questions about the killing of civilians in Wana, South Waziristan and in Quetta in February/March 2004. Angry legislators walked out of the National Assembly session to protest against the role of the state in the murder of civilians. *The News*, March 10, 2004.

[59] *The News*, February 6, 2004. Christina Rocca expressed her satisfaction over the way in which Pakistan's President had handled the difficult issue of nuclear scientists involved in peddling state nuclear secrets.

[60] Rubina Saigol, 'Enemies Within and Enemies Without: The Besieged Self in Pakistani Textbooks', in S. Akbar Zaidi, *Social Sciences in the 1990s* (Council of Social Sciences, Islamabad, 2003), as 'History, Social Studies and Civics and the Creation of Enemies', pp. 223-282.

of state and non-state actors as the one fed upon and strengthened the other. In Pakistan, the dichotomy between state and non-state actors dissolves, as terrorism becomes both an instrument of state policy, as well as the agenda of non-state actors. Even though the two may currently seem to be opposed, the links are too deep to break easily. The fact that the military enabled the MMA to achieve victory in elections by keeping the mainstream parties out, and the deal on the Legal Framework Order was made only with the MMA and not with any of the other mainstream parties, are indicative of the state's inability to entirely discard the project it undertook in the 1980s.[61] Although General Musharraf promised to counter terrorism in his January 2002 speech, and banned militant outfits like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and the Sipah-e-Sahaba, there is evidence that these groups are reconstituting themselves under different names.[62] There are frequent newspaper reports about the regrouping of the Taliban with help from elements in

[61] For a glimpse of the kinds of complexities that beset the relationship of General Musharraf with the Ulema, and the bargains made in order to secure their conditional support by not interfering in their governments in NWFP and Balochistan, see the article 'General and the Ulema' by Anwar Syed in *Dawn*, February 8, 2004. It is widely feared among the liberals in Pakistan that the government will succumb to the pressure by the MMA with regards to Islamisation measures aimed at women and culture, in return for abandoning the opposition to the General's rule.

[62] General Musharraf continues to make statements about his resolve to root out terrorism from the country. On Pakistan's independence day on August 14, 2004, he said: "In my view, the biggest challenge to this country is the spread of terrorism by some elements of foreign countries with the collusion of some Pakistani religious and sectarian extremists," Musharraf said and added "But we can't be scared of terrorism. We can't be defeated. I promise my nation that I will not disappoint you." He lashed out at some political parties for supporting the cause of Islamic militants…Vowing to take Pakistan forward as a moderate progressive Islamic country as envisioned by the Quaid-i-Azam, President Musharraf has appealed to the nation to reject forces of obscurantism and darkness and raise the voice of the moderate majority…. On this occasion of Independence Day, I appeal to the nation to rise and resolve to fight off elements, who want to push Pakistan into darkness and raise the voice of the vast majority — that is, taking the country forward and not backward," he said. The president said Pakistan is capable of moving forward on the path of progress and development…The Quaid-i-Azam envisioned Pakistan as a moderate, progressive Islamic state; we have to take forward this vision by rejecting terrorism, intolerance and extremism. Pakistan will progress and rise every year". *The News*, August 15, 2004.

Pakistan's military. The International Crisis Group report seriously questions the sincerity of Musharraf's efforts in curbing madrassa-induced extremism and terrorism, despite the frequent approbation he receives from the United States for his efforts against religious extremism and terrorism.[63] The state in Pakistan is caught in a web that was woven by it during the Afghan Jehad. The need to strike a fine and difficult balance between the demands of the US and the 'international community' on the one hand, and on the other the interests of the people of Pakistan from whom state sovereignty is expected to flow, places severe constraints and limits on the efforts to counter terrorism.

## 3. The Case of Sri Lanka: Unitary State in a Hybrid Island[64]

The protracted ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, spanning the last two decades, appears to be the result of interplay of complex factors, which have roots in colonial history and the processes of nation and state formation. The State and non-state actors, both have engaged in the violence, bloodshed and terror that characterize the conflict. The violence of one side seems to be mirrored and matched by that of the other, leading to a virtual partition of the Sri Lankan state along the ethnic fault lines stretching from the Sinhala dominated South and the Tamil majority areas in the North and East. Broadly speaking, four elements seem to be pivotal in igniting conflict and violence, which appear to have become endemic in the country: First, the structure and role of the state in Sri Lanka has fuelled the social conflict; second, the construction of exclusivist nationalism in a multi-layered society has led to the hardening of identity postures; third, a deeply fragmented political system has led to the exacerbation of identity politics, and fourth, economic competition over scarce political and social resources has become articulated in the form of ethnic identity struggles. Each of these interconnected dimensions of the conflict need to be examined separately, although the reader should keep in mind that there is a deep interpenetration of the issues and they are de-linked here only for purposes of conceptual clarity.

### 3.1 Structure and Role of the State in Sri Lanka

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[63] *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military.* International Crisis Group Report, 29 July 2002. ICG Asia Report No. 36.

[64] I have borrowed the term 'Hybrid' from Neluka Silva's book, *Hybrid Island*.

Like other South Asian countries, Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and layered society, with a segmented and diverse population. The Census of 1981 showed that 74 per cent of the population comprises Sinahala speaking people who are mostly Buddhists, 13 per cent of the people are ethnically Tamil, while roughly 6 per cent are upcountry Tamils. Approximately 15.5 per cent of the Tamil-speaking people are Hindus. About 7 per cent of the population consists of Muslims, and 7.6 per cent is composed of Christians. Other religions constitute about 0.1 per cent of the population. The mix of religion and language is complex and is further complicated by the vertical fissures of caste and class within and across the communities. Religious and ethnic communities are roughly separated territorially with the Sinhalese Buddhists concentrated in the South, Tamils in the North and East and Muslims in the Eastern province. These multiple and heterogeneous groups have lived, worked, played and prayed together for centuries during which migrations from India, and within Sri Lanka, created a crisscross pattern of cultures, peoples, practices and identities across the length and breadth of the country.

Although localized conflicts among people are a salient feature of all societies, certain characteristics that are distinctive to modernity and the formation of nations and states, have led to the intensification of inter-group conflict in Sri Lanka. The modern idea of a homogenized and centralized state is one of the main underlying causes of the outbreak of group struggles. The accompanying ideology of the modern state, that is, nationalism, is strongly implicated in the genesis of the conflict.

One of the defining features of the post-Enlightenment ideology of nationalism is that older, regional and narrower identities are suppressed, erased and forgotten in favour of an overarching identity related to the centralized state. Official and statist forms of nationalism attempt to construct a homogenized and monolithic identity of ‘the citizen’, in an attempt to reduce the attraction of narrower sub-national, sub-state and older identities rooted in language, religion or caste. A certain degree of psychic violence inheres in the process of redesigning identities to fit the new concept of a modern state. Constitutionally, the Sri Lankan State is unitary, which imposes even greater homogenisation as the different regions have little or no administrative or political autonomy. As a highly centralized State, Sri Lanka has tended to deal repressively with dissent and difference. The frequent resort to the imposition of emergency (for example in 1958, 1964, 1977 and 2003) betrays a tendency towards authoritarianism when dealing with conflict.

The absence of a federal structure, capable of addressing issues at the regional and local levels, has eroded the capacity of the State to understand or respond creatively to assertions of diversity and difference.

In Sri Lanka the modern identities drawn from the state and nation, came to be monopolised by the majority community, the Sinhala Buddhists. After independence from British rule in 1948, the Sri Lankan state came to be dominated by Sinhala Buddhists who attempted to establish a hegemonic position in relation to the numerically smaller communities. One manifestation of this was the Official Language Act of 1956 in which the 'Sinhala Only' policy was adopted. This policy meant that Sinhala would be the language of state functioning and official business. In addition, Buddhism was made the state religion and given special protection and a privileged position as the religion of the Sinhalese.[65] Such discriminatory policies, which institutionalised inequality within the state structure, led a sense of insecurity and alienation among the minority communities, in particular the Tamils who feared the loss of government jobs and access to education.66 The fears were not unfounded as there was a steep decline in the number of Tamil recruits as a result of the policy. For example in 1948, 54 per cent of the government recruits were Sinhala and 41 per cent were Tamil. By 1963, this ratio had changed drastically with 92 per cent Sinhalese and 7 per cent Tamil.[67] In 1958, there were riots against the 'Sinhala Only' policy, and the State declared an emergency.

Similarly, the Tamils, who were one-eighth of the population, were highly represented in the science-based universities. With the introduction of the standardization policy to university entrance examinations, the number of Tamil students became restricted as opposed to Sinhala-medium students, thereby leading to a sense of threat.[68] Furthermore, the Citizenship Act required proof of three generations of paternal ancestry in Ceylon, a measure that deprived the

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[65] Selvy Thiruchandran, 'Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism', in *South Asian Journal: Quarterly Magazine of South Asian Journalists and Scholars*, Religious Revivalism in South Asia, No. 2, October-December 2003, pp. 62-70.

[66] Shyamika Jayasundara, 'The Dichotomy of Security: The Case of Sri Lanka', in *Comprehensive Security in South Asia: Ethnic Dimensions* (Delhi Policy Group, New Delhi, 2003), pp. 268-292.

[67] Ibid., p. 276.

[68] Ibid.

Tamils who had been brought from India as plantation workers, of the right of citizenship.[69] The state's policy measures soon after independence, obviously designed to promote and protect the dominant Sinahala Buddhist majority, created the basis for the intensification of inter-group competition and conflict. As state identity and official nationalism came to be associated with one, numerically larger, ethnic group, the other groups in particular Tamils, came to be defined in ethnic terms.

As the Sinhala Buddhist politicians, priests and ideologues set about the task of constructing an essentially Sinhala State, the Tamils who were perceived to be occupying lucrative positions in government and business, simultaneously came to be defined as the 'Other' against whom the Sinhala identity was juxtaposed. Sinhala politicians eager to win the majority vote, whipped up anti-Tamil sentiments and a series of anti-Tamil riots occurred in 1956, 1958 and 1981. In the early 1970s, the stirrings of a separate homeland for the Tamils to protect their political and economic rights had begun, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE), a militant separatist organization was formed in 1976. In 1979, the State promulgated the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act designed to deal harshly with the growing insurgency. The conflict between a Sinhala Buddhist defined State, and separatist Tamil guerrillas began to take on ominous proportions. The major turning point in the conflict came in 1983 when the anti-Tamil riots took on genocidal proportions resulting in what is now referred to as a pogrom.

In July 1983, the LTTE ambushed and killed 13 soldiers in Jaffna in what was a humiliating military debacle for the State. A day of national mourning was announced for the dead soldiers and the media highlighted the incident in ways, which inflamed communal passions. For the Sinhala armed forces, politicians and priests, the day of mourning was also the day of vengeance. Adele Balasingham provides the following chilling account of the terror unleashed upon the Tamils to avenge the death of the soldiers:

> The state funeral of the 'fallen heroes' turned into state sponsored mass violence against the Tamil people. Rampaging mobs led by politicians and priests (Buddhist monks) aided and abetted by the police and army stormed Tamil houses, shops, buildings and businesses and plundered the property and murdered the defenceless Tamils. Those who led the unruly mobs had precise

[69] Selvy Thiruchandran, 'Sinhala Buddhist…', *op.cit.*, p. 67.

> information of the Tamil residences and properties. Most of them operated with voter's lists to identify the Tamil houses. It was impossible for those who lived in Colombo and in the South among the Sinhalese to escape identification. There were unspeakable horrors. Innocent Tamils were beaten and hacked to death. Hundreds of them were burnt alive. While the Tamil victims cried in agony the Sinhala rioters danced in ecstasy. In one incident in Colombo a group of foreign tourists were terror stricken and sickened as they watched a mini-bus load of Tamils being burnt alive while the Sinhala mobs were dancing in a mad frenzy. For forty-eight hours the Government maintained a calculated silence, allowing time for the violent mobs to avenge the dead soldiers.[70]

Balasingham reports that there was widespread destruction of Tamil property and massive loss of life. Businesses were destroyed and lives uprooted. On July 25th, 35 Tamil prisoners were attacked and killed in Welikdade prison with the collusion of the prison officers. This left a 'deep scar in the soul of the Tamil nation' and drove an irreconcilable wedge between the two groups. The struggle for a separate Tamil homeland escalated enormously after the genocide of 1983.[71] The pogrom of 1983 was followed in 1987 to 1989 with what is now referred to as the 'reign of terror'.[72] During this period the security forces, on the orders of the government of the United National Party, caused male youths to disappear in the South during an uprising by the JVP, an organization based on class ideology, which had earlier led an insurrection in 1971.

The conflict between a communal State and the sub-national guerrillas escalated substantially with dramatic acts of terror, such as the attack on the Bandranaike International Airport in August 2001 in which half the fleet of Sri Lankan airlines was destroyed. The LTTE scored some major victories against the State military, as it became a full-fledged army funded by the Tamil diaspora and the illegal arms and drug market. The most spectacular was the April-May 2000 taking over of the Elephant Pass, which controls land access to the Jaffna Peninsula.

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[70] Adele Balasingham, *The Will to Freedom: An Inside View of Tamil Resistance* (Fairmax Publishing, UK, 2001), pp. 68-69.
[71] Ibid., p. 69.
[72] Neloufer De Mel., *Women and the Nation's Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Sri Lanka* (Social Scientists' Association, Colombo, 2001), p. 16.

The prolonged war led to massive internal displacement, rape, abduction, killing and terrorist acts committed by both sides of the conflict. However, by September 2001, the global climate had changed drastically with 9/11 and the subsequent crackdown on 'terrorist' organizations. Since the major players in the global arena define the LTTE as a terrorist group, and support the Sri Lankan State, LTTE channels of funding and the procurement of arms began to dry up. On the other hand, the State experienced negative economic growth for the first time in 2001 and widespread calls for negotiation and peace began to be heard. In February 2002 a peace deal was brokered by Norwegian mediators calling for a truce and the cessation of hostilities.

The uneasy truce was seriously threatened when in November 2003, the President again declared emergency and assumed three portfolios including defence and communications. The conflicts between President Chandrika Kumaratunga's Peoples Alliance and Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe led to a breakdown, and new elections were called for April 2004. One of the main objections of the President to the Prime Minister's peace deal was that she had no representative on the negotiating team and that the government was handing the North and East to the LTTE on a silver platter. On the one hand, the infighting between mainstream political parties endangered the peace processes, on the other the LTTE also split up, with Commander Karun, who is believed to command around 6000 guerrillas, acting independently against the wishes of the LTTE leader, Villupilai Prabhakaran.

The unitary nature of the Sri Lankan State, along with enormous powers vested in the President, and the difficulties in amending the constitution, are some of the major impediments for the State-society conflict resolution. The imposition of a unitary structure on an essentially multiple and diverse society, prevents the interests and rights of the myriad communities living in Sri Lanka from being adequately protected and promoted. The very form of the State encourages centralization, homogeneity and the domination of the majority community. The attempts at devolution have not met with much success and the creation of a federal structure would require a major constitutional amendment. Redesigning and refashioning the State seems urgently necessary, but the process requires the kind of political consensus that does not currently exist. Conflict is thus built into the very fabric of the State of Sri Lanka.

### 3.2 Exclusivist Nationalism in a Multi-cultural Society

> As for the past, to which we are so fond of having recourse to justify our positions in the present – it is not only another country, it is another culture.[73]
>
> *Arjun Guneratne*

A centralized, unitary State requires a homogenizing dominant ideology, which enables it to galvanize the population around a singular notion of identity. This process is fraught with tension as diverse and multiple identities and histories need to be erased and forgotten, and the dominant version of history and identity aggressively and compulsively remembered. The repression of a long history of heterogeneity, diversity and hybridity requires a certain amount of psychological, ideological and emotional violence as people try to cling tenaciously to multiple pasts remembered in folktales, legends and collective and shared cultural memories. A large part of the sense of self resides in local histories, legends and generational stories carried down by one's ancestors as popular memory. Official, State-sponsored and State-constructed nationalism, designed to alter historical memory and develop a monolithic new national memory by projecting present interests and anxieties on to a distant past, creates violent ruptures in the sense of Self.

When dominant and State-led versions of nationalism privilege one ethnic group over others, the stage is set for inter-group conflict over national narratives and collective memories. Minority groups, fearful of their history and identity becoming subsumed under the memories of others, develop and elaborate their own national narratives and establish their own remembering. Nationalisms are thus contested and contradictory as memories from the margins fracture and interrupt the memories of the Centre. The national narratives of each group are contradictory and contested as they deny, conceal and repress the narratives of those who constitute a minority within the sub-groups. As society is layered and complex, several competing stories of the past, of greatness, heroism, sacrifice, sorrow, suffering and pride intermingle and compete with one another in the politics of 'the Truth'. What often gets obliterated and silenced as competing and opposing narratives are

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[73] Arjun Guneratne, 'What's in a Name? Aryans and Dravidians in the Making of Sri Lankan Identities', in Neluka Silva, *The Hybrid Island: Culture crossings and the invention of identity in Sri Lanka* (Social Scientists' Association, Colombo, 2002).

woven, is the mixing, overlapping and interpenetration of the stories, tales and narratives of the past. In fact mixture, which connotes impurity and pollution, becomes threatening as group identities resort to notions of purity and authenticity in constructing the Self.

In Sri Lanka the Sinhala Buddhists and Tamils constructed their own, competing pasts and identity – the Sri Lankan version of the two-nation theory. As the conflict intensified, the images and identities hardened and solidified. One of the main aspects of the consolidation of a monolithic identity is the exclusion of the 'other' within as well as outside the boundaries of the Self. Inclusion of the 'other' as a part of the self became equivalent to impurity. As Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake argues, the scientific method of arriving at the 'truth', when applied to social and cultural realities, disallows mixed categories – the logic excludes the middle term. A is either B or non-B, A cannot be B and not-B at the same time.74 One is either Sinhalese or Tamil, one cannot be Tamil and non-Tamil at the same time. This kind of exclusivist ideology erased from memory the long history of intermarriage, hybrid cultures, mixtures and overlapping or shared identities. Neluka Silva argues that:

> Hybridity is envisioned as a signifier for 'abnormality' while its binary opposition, normality, implies citizenship, stability…. During nationalist moments, when notions of ethnic purity, authenticity and pristine culture are validated, hybridity is disempowering. At such moments, hybridity as it appears and is lived is fraught with tension.[75]

In Silva's view, Sri Lanka has many cultures and histories, but the Sinhala and Tamil national narratives share a common plot that assumes that the two groups are mutually exclusive, and the nationalist histories they produce mirror and mimic each other in an attempt to enshrine notions of ethnically pure territory and identity.[76] Arjun Guneratne argues that the logic of contemporary nationalism compels it to read the events of the past in terms of present anxieties and this results in a picture of a world populated by two opposed groups that are represented as ancient enemies.[77] Violence and terror flow from nationalist pursuits

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[74] Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake, 'Identity on the Borderline: Modernity, New Ethnicities, and the Unmaking of Multiculturalism in Sri Lanka', in Neluka Silva, *The Hybrid Island: Culture…*, ibid., p. 46.
[75] Ibid., 'Preface', pp. i-ii.
[76] Ibid. p. iv.
[77] Arjun Guneratne, 'What's in a Name?…, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

because enemies are an indispensable requirement of nationalisms created in estrangement and alienation from an 'other'. Enemies help create threat perception and justify the amassing of arms, and provide legitimisation to the pursuit of violence by all parties. As a consequence, dynastic struggles and quarrels over feudal control of labour and resources tend to be redefined as ethnic wars.[78]

The construction of mutually exclusive, opposing and inimical groups is attributed to the colonial knowledge system, which attempted to classify and arrange colonized populations in fixed and exclusive categories that did not permit overlapping and mixture.[79] Attributing the process to a 'racial science of identity construction', Darini Rajasingham-Senanyake argues that in post-colonial Sri Lanka, nationalism is located in the politics of memory and forgetting.[80] To summarise Rajasingham-Senanayke's important arguments, the categories and classifications of colonial population mapping are modern, but nationalism projects these into a distant, primordial past. Armed conflict and the consequent hardening of nationalist images and postures have created a de facto partition of Sri Lanka. The mixtures created by mass migrations and intermarriage and cultural mixing are denied as they interrupt the national narrative. The application of the scientific method of classification in the colonial census was a basic element in the 'process of colonial governmentality'. This method transformed the more fluid earlier notions of identity into fixed and impermeable categories. The process of nation building and state formation in Sri Lanka 'resulted in the bi-polar configuration of Sinhala and Tamil linguistic communities as mutually antagonistic'. Contrary to nationalist claims by ethnic groups, the north-south conflict was not a major fault line of identity and conflict of the level seen today is a modern and recent phenomenon. The transformation of a multicultural border area into an ethnic partition in armed conflict, and the accompanying destruction of hybridity and co-existence, are phenomena located in the peculiarly modern compulsions of state formation and nation building. Violence, both state and non-state, has effaced a history of co-existence and hybridity, while simultaneously militarising civil society. Nationalist myths project the

[78] Ibid., p. 27.
[79] For example, ibid., pp. 20-40 and Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake, 'Identity on the Borderline…', *op.cit.*, pp. 41-70. Both writers point out the methods of colonial knowledge that led to the consciousness of hardened and mutually exclusive identity formation.
[80] Darini Rajasingham-Sananayake, 'Identity on the Borderline…'ibid., p. 41.

two communities as locked in a perennial conflict from primordial times. Nationalist historiography, colonial topography and the census, are the technologies of governmentality of modern times. The effects of this form of knowledge have been political violence, death, loss of life and bloodshed.[81] This post-structuralist reading of the Sri Lankan conflict in terms of colonial topography and post-colonial nationalist historiography, is an important tool for the deconstruction of identity constructs epistemologically, as well as for the political project of softening ethnic barriers.

In a similar vein, Guneratne challenges the dominant cultural constructions of the Aryan-Dravidian divide. He argues that such racial classifications of two primordially opposed groups are problematic since the Sinhalese and Tamils share a large number of the elements of the kinship system. The division by language is a recent one, but kinship systems pre-date linguistic differentiations and reflect the commonalities and shared cultural constructs. Both Sinhala and Tamils share Dravidian kinship systems, and their opposition into Aryan-descended Sinahala and Dravidian-descended Tamils is a recent one. These identities are historically constructed, and the relationship of identity with territory, sets the stage for conflict and violence.[82] Fictional and imagined identities have been crystallized by conflict into political entities that have effects on the lives of both Sinhalese and Tamils.

That fact that such homogenized national identities are fictional, and elide the conflicts of class, is expressed succinctly by Pradeep Jeganathan and Qadri Ismail in the following words:

> Those who speak thus of the nation, beg the question, who is that "nation" and express its will? How can we find out what the "nation" actually wants?[83]

Jeganathan and Ismail argue that the assumption that people homogenously inhabit any given piece of territory is questionable. To quote them again:

> The problems of the nation are not, then, problems of "Sinhalaness," "Tamilness" or "Moorness" *per se*. The problem

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[81] Ibid., pp. 41-70.
[82] Arjun Guneratne, 'What's in a Name…', *op.cit.*, pp. 20-40.
[83] Pradeep Jeganathan & Qadri Ismail, *Unmaking the Nation: The Politics of Identity and History in Modern Sri Lanka* (Social Scientists' Association, Colombo, 1995), p. 2.

> rather is in the making of diverse peoples into "Tamils", "Sinhalas", or "Moors"; and then in turn of making those peoples into Sri Lankans. Or put another way, there is a fundamental contradiction, a continuous oscillation between possible heterogeneity and implied homogeneity in the project of nationalism. The nation has many histories, but it claims one as it own; its people have many identities but they must inhabit one; the nation has many political coalitions within it but they are to be suppressed in the aid of one mission: nationalism. And the pursuit of this single minded, monolithic object has brought nothing but violence, terror, and destruction to us all.[84]

The connection between the invocation of nationalism and violence, terror, and destruction, is eloquently brought out by the two writers in their understanding of how difference comes to *make a differ*ence, as identities become politically and militarily mobilized.

In the Sri Lankan context, the complex relation between women and nationalism takes on a heightened urgency as a part of the nation-making process. Since a large number of LTTE militants are female and many of them constitute a part of the suicide squads (the Sea Tigers and Black Tigers), there has been a debate among feminists regarding the ways in which nationalism mobilizes and de-mobilizes women, and invokes and contains the idea of motherhood. Although this is a major and ongoing debate, it is summarized here since an understanding of the politics of terror and nationalism in Sri Lanka cannot be understood without a reference to the militarisation of the feminine and of motherhood. Neloufer de Mel has argued that the mother figure is central to the nation as 'mothers are duty bound to beget courageous sons' and the grieving mother is an evocative symbol of national pride whether the perpetrators are revolutionaries or the State.[85] De Mel has argued that the mother as nurturer and chaste woman, as well as dutiful housewife is co-opted for 'symbolising this inner and sovereign cultural space of the emerging nation'.[86] At the same time, the image of a woman carrying a baby in one hand and a gun in the other, combines the ideas of a sacrificing mother with sacrifice for the nation, thereby

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[84] Ibid, p. 8.

[85] Neloufer de Mel, 'Static Signifiers? Metaphors of woman in contemporary Sri Lankan war poetry', in Jayawarden, Kumari & Malathi de Alwis (eds.), *Embodied Violence: Communalising Women's Sexuality in South Asia* (Zed Books, London, 1996), pp. 168-189.

[86] Neloufer de Mel., *Women and the Nation's Narrative…*, *op.cit.*, p. 213.

redefining the notion of motherhood without foregoing the traditional concept of femininity.

Women were recruited heavily by the LTTE when youths were no longer easily available after the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987.[87] The LTTE combatant is usually killed in battle, but if taken captive a cyanide capsule worn around the neck is swallowed.[88] Dying for the nation is interpreted as ultimately upholding life – the life of the collective given through the sacrifice of individual death. This is how Adele Balasingham replied to feminist critics of the LTTE women when the former accused them of taking on masculine and militarist values and denying life and femininity.[89] However, critics claim that the politics of nationalism tend to be reactionary and contain women within specific and narrow definitions of womanhood. This assertion is supported by the manner in which Muslim women heightened their customary regulations as a continuation of Muslim identity in the face of forcible eviction by the LTTE from their homes in the Northern province.[90] About 75000 Muslims were subjected to ethnic cleansing by the LTTE thereby forcing the exclusion of the sub-national 'other' to create the pure identity required by a defensive nationalism. Whether or not women are genuinely empowered by national conflict is still a hotly debated question, not only in places of high intensity conflict such as Sri Lanka, in other cases as well. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus that while women are mobilized for national struggles and called upon to make enormous sacrifice, once independence is achieved and even during the struggle, femininity and its values are deployed as an instrument of control over sexuality. Nationalist struggles include women as combatants and in other roles, the State, once formed and established, excludes them from full citizenship in its efforts to create the virtuous and moral nation.

Political violence is a process of the formation of States and nations. The nation is imagined by erasing heterogeneity and hybridity, and imposing homogeneity, if necessary, through ethnic cleansing and pogroms. The State provides the territory on which the story of the nation comes to be written in blood.

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[87] Ibid., p. 37.
[88] Ibid., pp. 209-210.
[89] Adele Balasingham, *The Will to Freedom…, op.cit.,* pp. 286-289.
[90] Neloufer De Mel., *Women and the Nation's Narrative…, op.cit.*, p. 40.

### 3.3 Politicised Ethnicity, Ethnicised Politics

In the multi-cultural post-colonial societies of South Asia, democracy is generally regarded as a panacea for the ills afflicting governance. The intention of the authors of representative democracy was that pre-modern identities based on the narrow loyalties of caste, region, religion or ethnicity would erode, and in their place the modern identity of the citizen of the state would determine collective belonging. Politics would come to be based on political and economic issues instead of caste, communal or ethnic ones. It was expected that political parties would articulate economic and political interests across the divides of ethnicity, caste and community. The larger identity of the citizen would be inclusive of all those who reside within the territory of the state, and it would be irrespective of caste, religion or language. Although this identity would be constructed in exclusive terms in relation to those residing in other states, within a single state citizenship benefits would accrue to all equally, and there would be no discrimination based on any marker of social difference whether race, gender, region or religion. These were some of the assumptions of liberal democracy, drawn from the experience of countries where the populations are relatively more homogenous and the differences of caste, colour or language are not highly marked.

These assumptions underlying liberal democracy seemed to fail in the context of the highly differentiated, multiple and diverse societies of South Asia. Democracy itself became one of the mechanisms of reinforcing older, narrower and sub-national identities as vote banks came to be based on ethnic, caste, religious or linguistic basis.[91] As the South Asian states failed to provide the minimum standards of living, and proved incapable of ensuring security, economic and social rights and welfare, the disillusionment with the State became widespread. People began to seek protection, continuity, and identity and material benefits from smaller and more personal collectivities such as the religious or linguistic community. Democracy became absorbed in South Asian societies in a manner that strengthened caste and communal identities. Increasingly, political parties that cut across the divides of caste, community and religion, failed to win votes and regional and

[91] Selvy Thiruchandran argues that democratic structures themselves create the divisions, which are consolidated through party politics. 'Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism', in *South Asian Journal: Quarterly Magazine of South Asian Journalists and Scholars*, Religious Revivalism in South Asia, No. 2, October-December 2003, p. 66.

smaller parties began to proliferate. When States themselves were formed along communal lines, such as Pakistan, there was no question of the minorities being considered equal since the very basis of the State was the protection of the interests of the majority community.

This situation was exacerbated by the fact that the political parties generally were not mature enough to handle conflicted situations wisely or with foresight. Eager to win the largest numbers of votes, political parties succumbed to the perceived desires of the majority community.[92] In Sri Lanka the eagerness of the parties to win the Sinhala votes, led them in the appeasement of the majority community at the expense of the minorities.[93] Majorities and minorities, which in a democracy meant the largest or smallest number of people, and not the main religious or language group or the smaller religious or language group, came to mean the latter. With democracy being rendered as a purely numerical game, the focus of the parties became winning seats and votes, and making coalitions. The broader meaning of democracy, which includes strong institutions such as an independent judiciary, a supreme parliament reflecting popular sovereignty, a separation of powers along with checks and balances, and justice, freedom, equality and rights, was replaced by the idea of reaching the magical number. This reduced the level and quality of politics to 'whoever can muster enough votes'. The kind of systems put in place in South Asia, brought landlords and the clergy into power in Pakistan, religious nationalists in India and opportunists everywhere. As the majority communities formed parties to further their own interests, the beleaguered minorities formed their own parties to protect their political and economic interests. For example, in Sri Lanka, the Muslims have formed the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress for the protection of their interests, which are threatened by the Tamils who constitute a majority in the areas where the Muslims live. The process thus repeats itself at several levels in multi-layered societies. With the global decline of the politics of the Left and class-based parties, politics increasingly came to be articulated in ethnic terms.

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[92] Jagath P. Senaratne, 'Reflections on the Secessionist Insurrection in Sri Lanka: Consequences for Sri Lanka, and Lessons for the International Community', in Sridhar K. Khatri & Gert W. Kueck, *Terrorism in South Asia…*, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

[93] Jayasundara argues that the system of universal franchise favours the majority community, the Tamils organized themselves along ethnic lines. Shyamika Jayasundara, 'The Dichotomy of Security: The Case of Sri Lanka', in *Comprehensive Security in South Asia*: *Ethnic Dimensions* (Delhi Policy Group, New Delhi, 2003), p. 274.

In Sri Lanka not only did the political parties rush to win the majority community, the infighting and bickering within the Sinhala parties also led to impediments in the peace process. For example the UNF government of Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe was roundly castigated by the ruling Peoples Alliance in 1999 and 2001 for giving in too much to LTTE demands.[94] In November 2003 the President Chandrika Kumaratunga took over three portfolios and imposed a state of emergency. This led to a serious crisis between the President and the Prime Minister over the peace process and culminated with elections being called in April 2004. The violence during the election process has been widely reported in newspapers and the election body took over the Sri Lankan State media, which was accused of biased coverage of the election. Saravanamuttu argues that no party in the South would be able to implement peace settlements even if it wanted to, as there is stiff competition between political parties for the majority vote.[95] The structural conflict inherent in the offices of the President and Prime Minister impedes the peace process as political parties vie with each other for majority support. Although J.R Jayewardene warned as early as 1956 that the rights of non-Sinhala people should not be trampled upon or their grievances would lead to civil war, and repeated his warning in 1966, he did not do much to remove the inequalities and stem the escalation of civil war, when he was in power and an unquestioned leader of the UNP.[96] Senaratne argues that the State tends to react in a knee-jerk response to challenge or genuine grievance, and thereby exacerbates conflict instead of leading to solutions.

Shyamika Jayasundara argues that in mid level democracies, dissident behaviour is less often accommodated than repressed and this intensifies the chances of violence.[97] Democracy bolsters ethno-political conflicts and reinforces communalism. In the case of Sri Lanka, party politics have become ethnicised and ethnicity has become politicised.

### 3.4 The Political Economy of Conflict

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[94] P. Saravanamuttu, 'The Peace Process in Sri Lanka: How Difficult, How Different?' in Sridhar K. Khatri & Gert W. Kueck, *Terrorism in South Asia…*, *op.cit.*, p. 299.
[95] Ibid., p. 312.
[96] Jagath P. Senaratne, 'Reflections on the Secessionist…', *op.cit.*, pp. 266-271.
[97] Shyamika Jayasundara, 'The Dichotomy of Security…', *op.cit.*, p. 283.

Conflicts, and the associated violence and terror, are difficult to sustain over a long period of time unless there are actors who gain from the war. The economic dimension of any conflict has to be understood along with its politics, culture and history for a comprehensive picture to emerge. Without a regular supply of money, arms and materials, fighting cannot go on. Arms manufacturers, smugglers, exporters and users all have a stake in the continuation of the conflict. The arms black market is large and crosses the borders of a single state. Some of the links between arms and drug trafficking, and smuggling have been explained in detail by Imtiaz Ahmed.[98]

Both the Sri Lankan State and the LTTE have financially gained from the war in the past. The war provides employment to unemployed youth and ensures jobs that are related to security issues. According to Sriskandarajah, in the 1990s Sri Lanka evolved into a war economy sustained by high aid flows to both sides by expatriates and the diaspora. The State benefited from the war economy as Tamils were displaced in employment in the North, and the resultant vacancies were filled by others.[99] Sriskandarajah argues that ethnic and political conflicts are essentially struggles over resources. Sri Lanka currently has 20 million people differentiated along ethnic lines.[100] When the State excludes a particular group from power and access to resources (as in the Sinhala Only Policy), or promotes and supports one group over others, the struggle for rights can get articulated as an ethnic one. In the absence of organized and systematic politics of class, ethnicity may potentially become the basis on which economic battles are fought, as people turn to the immediate reference group for the security that the State failed to provide. Although people often have more in common culturally with the working people of other groups, as compared with the elites of either group, they tend to rally around their own political and ruling elites for the articulation of rights.[101] Conflicts are fuelled by the inter-group struggle over scarce resources in an attempt to gain economic security through political and civil rights. Political parties that come to be based

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[98] Imtiaz Ahmed, 'Contemporary Terrorism and the State, Non-State, and the Interstate: Newer Drinks, Newer Bottles', in Khatri, Sridhar K. & Kueck, Gert W. (eds.), *Terrorism in South Asia*: *Impact on Development and Democratic Process* (RCSS, Colombo, 2003), pp. 353-388.

[99] Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, 'Economic Dimensions of Security in Sri Lanka', in *Comprehensive Security in South Asia: Economic Dimensions* (Delhi Policy Group, New Delhi, 2003), p. 186.

[100] Ibid., p. 170.

[101] Arjun Guneratne, 'What's in a Name?…,' *op.cit.*, p. 21.

upon ethnic group identity, tend to articulate the group members' rights to employment, land, college admissions, welfare and so on. If these are not seen as forthcoming in the existing political arrangements, the demand can intensify for maximum autonomy, and ultimately secession.

Sriskandarajah rightly argues that the economy is not merely one dimension of the conflict. Rather, conflict is an inherently economic phenomenon when examined through the lens of resource mobilization for war, costs of war, incentives for war, the economic agendas served by war, economic policies designed to reduce the risk of war, peace dividends etc. Conflict is not an interruption of peacetime, but a continuous struggle varying in intensity.[102] Although this theory of economic determinism may seem crude or extreme to some, even a cursory glance at the conflicts of today seem to uphold it. If it is not oil, it is water, if not water, it is land, but conflicts invariably seem to arise over the sharing of economic and survival resources. Of course resources are not merely material but also intellectual, social, cultural, ideological and political over which political parties seek to gain power.[103] In a world of shrinking resources and the control of existing resources by some classes at the expense of others, conflict seems to be inherent in the very structure of social and political life.

In the case of Sri Lanka, it was initially a Sinhalese perception that the Tamils were predominantly over represented in lucrative positions,[104] and the drive to 'correct' the imbalance led to Tamil insecurities regarding employment and education. The majority perceived itself to be at a disadvantage and proceeded to correct the imbalance, a move widely seen by the minority community as designed to annihilate its existence and sources of existence. Jehan Perera provides some evidence for the economic decline of the Tamil areas by arguing that the economic output of the North and East is now 60 per cent of what it used to be when the war commenced.[105]

However, the economy can also end war when it is no longer believed to be gainful. When the costs of war are calculated in material and human terms, as well as political and diplomatic terms, peace seems attractive

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[102] Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, 'Economic Dimensions of Security…', *op.cit.*, p. 176.
[103] Jagath P. Senaratne, 'Reflections on the Secessionist…', *op.cit.*, p. 250.
[104] Ibid., pp. 180-184.
[105] Jehan Perera. 'Sri Lanka: Confrontation to Accommodation', in *South Asian Journal*, Number 3, January – March 2004, p. 94.

and carries dividends. Senaratne reveals that from 1983 to 1989, which is the most destructive phase of the Tamil insurrection, and up to 1996, it has cost 287.5 billion rupees, which is 6 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product and 21.6 per cent of the national budget. Between 1997 and 2001, the war cost a further 200 billion rupees. In 2000 and 2001, the economic crisis came to a head when the LTTE captured significant territory in Jaffna and the military expenses increased substantially. Sri Lanka, which had boasted the most vibrant and fastest growing economy in the South Asian region, registered a negative growth in 2001 for the first time. The public debt had become unsustainably high at 1414 billion and the country experienced severe economic difficulties.[106] Additionally, there are indirect costs of war in terms of an uncertain investment climate, loss of skilled labour as nearly 65000 people were killed in the war, frequent security checks and roadblocks leading to delays in reaching one's destination, armed desertions, and loss of manpower and productivity.[107] Among the social costs of war is the burgeoning sex worker industry in major cities in North and Central province, where the armed forces were kept standby or stopped over for Rest and Relaxation.[108] Another is the conscription of child soldiers by the LTTE.[109] It is not surprising then that a Norwegian-brokered peace accord was reached in February 2002 in a war-torn and war-weary Sri Lanka.

However, war enables a State to further empower itself and increase its repressive apparatus. In 2000, the World Bank reported that the per capita expenditure on defence in Sri Lanka is the highest in South Asia.[110] Sri Lanka had 25 years of economic liberalization but the war necessitated a reallocation of resources from welfare to warfare.[111] This also meant that the State was increasing its capacity for violence, control and terror, with the LTTE equally trying to arm itself to the teeth. Thus while the arms industry profited, Sri Lankans killed one another on a regular basis. State terror was met by non-state terror, in an endless

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[106] Jagath P. Senaratne, 'Reflections on the Secessionist…', *op.cit.*, p. 262-263.
[107] Saman Kelegama, 'Managing the Sri Lankan Economy at a Time of Terrorism and War', in Khatri, Sridhar K. & Kueck, Gert W., *Terrorism in South Asia…', op.cit.*, 147-148.
[108] Ibid., p. 148.
[109] P. Saravanamuttu, 'The Peace Process in Sri Lanka…', *op.cit.*, p. 299.
[110] Saman Kelegama, 'Managing the Sri Lankan…', *op.cit.*, p. 145.
[111] Ibid., p. 149.

spiral of increasing violence, death and repression of their own people by both parties.

To a very great extent then, war and peace are economically determined. There are those who gain from either one and those who gain from both. The global, national and local economies all play a part in producing the conflict as well as ending it, either temporarily or permanently. In the case of Sri Lanka, the international aid flows, contributions by the diaspora, the black or parallel economy, liberalization and inter-group economic competition, all played a role in igniting, maintaining and reducing the conflict.

### 3.5 Costs of State and non-State Terror

The two decade long Sri Lankan civil war has taken a huge toll in terms of life, sorrow and suffering. The loss of life and suffering have been inflicted by all sides, be it the State, a class-based organization like the JVP, or the nationalist LTTE. For example, 'the Presidential Commission into Involuntary Removal found 7239 cases of disappearances, since January 1988 from an alleged 8739 reported cases. Of these 4858 were at hands of state forces while 779 were JVP instigated; journalists and scholars who have written on the reign of terror place the number of deaths at 40000. There were 60000 casualties in the North and East, half of them civilian with 55000 maimed, over 750000 people of mainly Tamil origin displaced in a diaspora, and nearly a million Lankans, mainly Tamils and Muslims, but Sinhalese too internally displaced in refugee camps'.[112] As the conflict intensifies, postures become hardened and the resolve to win the war is strengthened.

The State's discriminatory policies and majoritarian forms of democracy, along with a unitary constitution, are at the heart of the genesis of the conflict. The State has been forced to negotiate with the LTTE not only because Sri Lanka is war weary and the economy registered negative growth in 2001, but also because the LTTE is bargaining from a position of strength. In the long run, it appears that unless serious changes are made in the very structure of the Sri Lankan state, so that minority communities are adequately represented, and a federal system is evolved, peace will be difficult. Additionally, the political system would have to be transformed so that it is able to accommodate minorities in a just and equitable sharing of power and

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[112] Neloufer de Mel., *Women and the Nation's…*, *op.cit.*, p. 235.

resources. This would mean that democracy would have to be more than elections, voting, majorities and parliamentary seats. Institutions of justice and representation would have to be strengthened in such a way that the whims and fancies of a person or political party cannot deprive the minorities of rights. A system that privileges one religious and linguistic community is not likely to lead to a viable and sustainable solution. The hybridity and diversity of Sri Lanka require this to be reflected in the political system without reducing the diversity to mere 'vote banks' and narrow communitarianism.

The reductive, false and binary nationalisms of Sinhala Buddhism versus Tamil nation need to be challenged by emphasizing the essential hybridity of the Paradise Island. Exclusionary and narrow nationalisms tend to contradict democracy, which requires equality as a fundamental condition of justice. The nation as a monolithic construction cancels out the state, and narrow identities erode citizenship. The distribution of equal citizenship rights to employment, education, resources and power, would require some constraints to be placed upon majoritarianism. All this is not an easy task or one that will be accomplished soon. It requires patience, vision and statesmanship on the part of Sri Lankan leaders.

**Concluding Reflections**

An exploration of the causes and dynamics of terrorism, and counter terror measures, shows that terrorism is not the monopoly of any group, whether religious, linguistic, national, ethnic, state or non-state. Any group or State can resort to terrorist methods based upon certain contingencies, for example the blocking of State or group goals. The State is not necessarily a representative of the good and a victim of terror, but frequently also a perpetrator of terror, especially when it represents the interests of one class, or ethnic group to the detriment of others.

Terror tends to reproduce terror. The violence of the oppressed comes to match or even exceed the violence of the oppressor. The two forms of violence may mimic and mirror each other. Matching terror tactics with terror, or using excessive force and military means to squelch dissent and disagreement serves to exacerbate conflict. The basic causes of conflict need to be acknowledged and addressed, if the grievance is not to become a festering wound and finally secession.

In countering terror, it is a gross error to overlook history and ignore the genuine grievances of the dissenting group. The policies of States can be discriminatory, leading to feelings of deprivation and injustice, which must be addressed through conflict-resolutions mechanisms built into the democratic process. Denial of injustice and the tendency to deal with terror with repression only seems to worsen the situation. The means of redress for injustice, inequality or deprivation need to be a part of the systems of governance. Democracy, therefore, needs to be defined and instituted in a manner that enables it to address conflict in a systemic way, rather than allowing dependence upon a political party or individual to resolve conflicts. Constitutional amendments may be required to institutionalise the conflict-resolution methods. Instead of democracy becoming merely majority rule, the rule of law, supremacy of parliament, independence of the judiciary, rights of citizens, freedom and equality of citizens, separation of powers and checks and balances need to be the principles of operation. Democracy means institutions and not just elections.

In multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies, the federal system needs to be developed, with provincial autonomy guaranteed and limits placed on the power of the Centre. The relationship of the Centre with the federating units needs to be constitutionally defined and clarified so that the Centre does not become too powerful and authoritarian, and the federating units do not threaten the very existence of the federation. Provisions need to be made to protect the minorities within the federating units, since South Asian societies are layered and there are sub-minorities within minorities.

Although the State is not a monolith and represents myriad voices, interests and concerns, a certain level of conflict and violence inheres in the very nature of states. The tendency to homogenize and centralize seems to be built into the very concept of modern states. This becomes a condition of violence as difference and diversity are forcibly erased or suppressed.

The pursuit of so-called ‘national interest’ by states spurs them on to violence against minorities perceived to be acting against the state-defined ‘national interest’. In the pursuit of ‘national security’, states attack other states to annex territory or capture resources. This creates a situation of violence against which resistance is offered by those whose territory is conquered, and resources captured. States have a built-in tendency to be aggressive and belligerent in the pursuit of resources and

domination. Conflict seems to be woven into the very fabric of the nation-state system, internally as well as internationally. As states sacrifice human security in the name of national security, and exclude human from national, insecurity of human beings becomes intensified. This insecurity creates its own dynamics of violence and terror.

Finally, war and conflict are forms of nation building and state formation. Pakistan was formed in conflict and a great deal of blood was spilled. Yet, Pakistan's formation cannot be called a terrorist act. The emergence of Bangladesh was also a blood stained story but it cannot be said that it was a terrorist act. Rather, terror was committed by the Pakistani military. Similarly, the USA was liberated through a war of independence and its formation cannot be called an act of terrorism. France's liberation from Nazi Germany cannot be called an act of terror. The point is that the current tendency to call all wars of liberation against occupation and repression, terrorism, is a gross misunderstanding of history, society and states. Tamil Ealam may or may not emerge, but it is a struggle for state formation that has taken a violent turn as a result of the dynamics of State and non-state violence.

Terror cannot be countered by more and intensified terror. Civilians die as much in war as they do in terrorist attacks. The old adage that violence begets violence, hate begets hate is true today. The only way to counter terrorism is to address the fundamental grievances that produced it in the first place. History is a guide to a great deal of common sense.

**Postscript:** This paper was written in 2004. Since then events in Balochistan and Wana have taken a serious turn and violence and terrorism both by the state and non-state actors has intensified manifold. The building of cantonments in Balochistan has led to a great deal of resentment in the already restive and deprived population of the resource-rich province. The murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti by the military in August 2006 has sparked off a new resistance movement across the smaller provinces. The mindless actions of the state have heightened sub-nationalist passions in Balochistan where a Baloch nationalism is being constructed in opposition to the state's own problematic version based on a false notion of unity and oneness. The two competing nationalisms are being simultaneously constructed to address the issue of the Bugti murder and each one is potentially pernicious in its effects. The events in Kohlu and Dera Bugti deserve separate and detailed analysis of their own. Similarly, in Wana there has been a peace accord after much bloodshed and killing of innocent

people in both state and non-state terrorism. In Sri Lanka too the Norwegian brokered peace accord of February 2002 broke down leading to renewed fighting between the Sri Lankan state and the Tamil Tigers who have both been warned by the Norwegians that aid to the island nation will be cut off if the fighting does not stop. While these events have overtaken the data base of this paper, the analysis provided herein remains valid. This analysis is based on the thesis that conflict and violence inhere in the very structure of the modern state-nation, and that the founding mythologies of nations and states, that is all forms of nationalisms, often lie at the root of inequality, injustice and discrimination which at given historical moments turn into terrorist acts.

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1. Inayatullah (ed.), Associations of Social Scientists: An Analytical Study, 2006.

2. Inayatullah, Rubina Saigol and Pervez Tahir (eds.), *Social Sciences in Pakistan: A Profile*, 2005.

3. Inayatullah (ed.), Towards Understanding the State of Science in Pakistan, 2003.

4. S. Akbar Zaidi (ed.), *The State of the Social Sciences in Pakistan in the 1990s*, 2003.

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