

## Foreword

From crisis to crisis, the world has stumbled, confounded, in its 'war against terror', with policies marked by incoherence and damning contradictions. Meanwhile, the forces of extremist violence and those who secure their inspiration from the ideologies of hate are recovering from their brief disorientation to consolidate their networks and resume operations. The opportunities of the fleeting consensus that had crystallized in the wake of the 9/11 attacks have largely dissipated, and justifications of terrorism are once again eloquently articulated by those who speak of 'freedom fighters' and 'root causes', deliberately muddying the waters and obstructing coherent counter-terrorism responses. And while a narrowly defined group of terrorists – those that have targeted or are seen to threaten the US – are hunted relentlessly across the world, the pursuit of a 'false peace' has become endemic among other victims of terrorism, as 'world leaders' pressure democracies to enter into unprincipled negotiations with terrorists, mass murderers, and the rogue regimes and state entities that support and sponsor them.

It is crucial, now, to directly confront these obfuscations, for these have led to ambivalence, vacillation and error, undermining the international will to respond adequately to the gravity of the challenge of terrorism. The 'fellow travellers of terrorism' have long drawn their justifications from a large body of liberal literature that applies the rationale of revolutionary violence against authoritarian systems to terrorist violence against

democratic systems. Many of the violent movements derive their legitimacy from a discourse that has been taken from classical anti-colonial and revolutionary movements, and transferred uncritically to contemporary terrorist movements based on religious, ethnic and cultural isolationism. Crucially, the narrow and exclusionary ideologies that inspire most of the violent movements in the world today do not concede to other sub-groups and minorities the very rights that they demand for themselves, and are often guilty of victimizing and mistreating other cultural, religious and ethnic groups within their areas of domination.

It must be understood that terrorism is an ideologically neutral and global method of warfare. While a single ideological form of terrorism – Islamist fundamentalist terrorism (neglecting its many internal variations) – has tended to exhaust much of the international attention and response, terrorism is in no way uniquely tied to this ideology and has been, and continues to be adopted as a favoured method of warfare and state destabilisation by a wide range of actors, of whom many are entirely unconnected with Islamism. It is consequently necessary to understand that any apparent successes attributed to the use of terrorism (including successes in securing a range of ‘intermediate goals’ – one of which is the survival or persistence of the movement itself), produces imitators. Terrorism is, consequently, “not the problem of its victim societies alone. Its impact reverberates across the globe.”<sup>1</sup> It is no longer possible for nations to respond only when their own interests are targeted. Foreign policies cannot continue to be constructed on a near term considerations of the ‘interests of state’. It is now necessary to delegitimise and defeat terrorism in all its manifestations lest it consumes us.

There is, therefore, urgent need to identify and neutralise the sources of terrorist mobilisation; to recognize that there are cultures of accommodation and distinct cultures of hate. To try to apply the norms of an accommodative culture to a culture of hate is to place the former at a definitive disadvantage, and to yield all initiative to the more vigorous, belligerent, determined and

---

<sup>1</sup> K.P.S. Gill, “Statement on the Launch of the South Asia Terrorism Portal,” March 11, 2000, <http://www.satp.org/satporstp/kpsgill/terrorism/Mar11.htm>.

violent side. The cultures of hate – and the many states and regimes that support such cultures – will have to be identified and targeted by a coordinated range of policies that must include coercive diplomacy, economic sanctions, international isolation, and, where necessary, direct, determined and non-discriminatory military interventions. The ‘steady progression of extremism’<sup>2</sup> must be halted. And while counter-terrorist responses will always include significant military, intelligence and policing components, the war of ideas and information will remain critical in any eventual resolution. It is this war that *Faultlines* has engaged in for over four years now. The current volume is another small battle won in the ongoing struggle against extremism and terror.

Ajai Sahni  
New Delhi  
July 18, 2003

---

<sup>2</sup> Robin Wright, *Sacred Rage*, New York: Touchstone, 2001, p. 13.