

Foreword

The past year has been one of extraordinary and ambivalent developments in the South Asian region in the context of terrorism and other patterns of sub-conventional conflict and warfare. The sheer range and pace of transformations has far over-extended the capacities of the very small strategic community committed to the analysis of these trends, and the Institute for Conflict Management has been no exception. While the pressure of these developments has meant a much higher volume of output from the Institute, including weekly editions of the South Asia Intelligence Review, daily News Updates, and an unending chain of assessments, briefs and media interventions, *Faultlines* has suffered unacceptable neglect, with just a single issue brought out in year 2004, against the scheduled quarterly publication.

For the period of our default, we thank our readers for their patience, as well as for the encouragement they have given us through their many concerned inquiries about the journal. Despite the enormous pressure on limited institutional resources, it is our intention to regularize *Faultlines* through year 2005, and we propose to bring out the scheduled volume each quarter. We also hope to attend to at least a part of the backlog as well. These objectives have been made the more urgent by the expanding profile of instability and violence in the South Asian region, by the sheer paucity of analytic literature on the contemporary history and experience of insurgent and terrorist movements here, and by the persistent superficiality, even ignorance, of the larger

academic and political debate and of the policy paradigms that continue to dominate these issues.

The broad thrust of efforts in *Faultlines*, as, indeed, the cumulative thrust of all of the Institute's endeavours, is, in the words of Claude Bernard, "to give birth to an idea by making a fact appear, that is to say, make *an experiment to see*."¹ In the muddy waters of political and polemical discourse, the facts relating to terrorism, insurgency and other patterns of sub-conventional conflict and warfare have often gone undocumented, been obscured, intentionally ignored, or sacrificed to the imperatives of expediency and political correctness. Eight year's into the Institute's existence, and in the sixth year of the publication of *Faultlines*, however, our 'experiment to see' has secured some notable successes, and a faint echo of realism is now audible in many quarters, though its reflection in policy and practice remains, at best, erratic.

The need to delve below the surface, the stereotype and the well-meaning fiction, has been immensely enlarged over the past years by the increasing complexity of conflicts in the region, their ideological and material linkages across borders and across continents, and the subtlety of transformations that are occurring – often unnoticed till they manifest themselves in tragedy – in the patterns and spheres of operation of radical groups and their sponsors.

While there appears to have been a secular decline in trends in terrorist and insurgent violence in South Asia – as reflected in fatalities in various theatres – since 9/11, there are dramatic skews in this trend, and there has, particularly over the past year, been a dramatic expansion in the geographical spread of such conflicts.² Worse, the spheres of political mismanagement and incompetence, of general lawlessness and criminality, and of sectarian, communal and other collective tensions appear to be expanding across much of the region, notwithstanding isolated

¹ Claude Baudel, "Description of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning," <http://www.coheadquarters.com/coBernard1.htm>, Accessed on January 11, 2005. Emphasis added. Baudel was regarded as the 'father of experimental physiology' in 19th Century France.

² See, for instance, K.P.S. Gill, "Qualified Gains against Terror", *South Asia Intelligence Review*, vol. 3, no. 25, January 3, 2005, South Asia Terrorism Portal, www.satp.org.

success stories and dramatic economic and technological transformations in some areas. There are, consequently, powerful emerging threats to regional and national stability in South Asia, notwithstanding the apparent and significant *regime* stability manifested within its constituent states.

The coming years will thus require a continuous and intense struggle to cope with a wide range of destabilizing factors in South Asia, and the endeavour to document, analyse and assess the intricate dynamic of these factors will be integral to their containment. The contribution of a multiplicity of independent institutions and scholars will be necessary to this latter task of study and evaluation, if future policies are to comprehend a necessary measure of consistency and to meet with desired successes. It has been one of the encouraging, though still limited, trends of the recent past that the institutional framework of such independent assessment and analysis is gradually emerging.

The present volume is a small addition to this broader venture that seeks to scrutinize the Byzantine patterns of terrorism and insurgency, as well as the policies and practices to counter these in South Asia, and in the contiguous regions that have an impact on conflict and security here.

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