Foreword

On May 26, 2017, K.P.S. Gill, the founding President of the *Institute for Conflict Management,* the founding Publisher and Editor of *Faultlines,* and the principal leader, inspiration and guide for all our projects, passed away. This extraordinary man, a rare human and leader who comes once in an age, dedicated his life to the service of the nation. The frailty of human memory and the hopeless absence of institutional memory in India, make it difficult for most to recall the perilous times and the tenuous fragility that this nation experienced during the days of Khalistani terrorism in Punjab, and the multiplicity of insurgencies and political disorders then rampant across the country. At such a time it was this man's vision and leadership that guided India out of the anarchy it was fast sinking into, as he engineered one of the most successful and humane counter-terrorism campaigns in recorded history.

At a time when a rising tide of ideologies of hate was sweeping across South Asia and, increasingly, the globe, and when the discourse on the violence and terrorism these were provoking was as strident as it was ill-informed, it was Mr. Gill's initiative and foresight that led to the establishing of the Institute, and, in quick succession, its most significant projects, *Faultlines,* the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* and the *South Asia Intelligence Review.* He defined and directed the strategy that helped consolidate the *Portal* as the largest and most reliable database and source of information and assessments on terrorism in South Asia; and the Review as an influential open source asset to monitor major sub-conventional conflicts in the region.

It was, however, *Faultlines* that was Mr. Gill's earliest project after the Institute was established, and it was here that some of his

most significant writings on insurgency, terrorism and governance were published. *Faultlines* transformed prevailing standards of academic publication on issues of conflict in South Asia, and imposed new levels of rigour, documentation and rationality on the discourse on terrorism, insurgency and other patterns of conflict, and related policy.

Unfortunately, despite its base of committed readers and subscribers, *Faultlines* suspended publication after its twentieth issue in January 2011, as a result of some resource limitations and an increasing burden of work at the Institute. Its absence was, however, felt constantly, and there were repeated reminders from readers who fondly recalled the quality and contents of earlier editions of the journal.

With Mr. Gill's passing, this sense of absence and, increasingly, of deepening regret, grew acute. In our determination to honour his memory with our work, restoring Faultlines to regular publication became a priority. It was also resolved that the *Faultlines* title would also bear the legend *The K.P.S. Gill Journal of Conflict & Resolution.*

This country has not seen a police leader to compare with Mr. Gill; and the world has no counter-terrorism campaign that equals the sagacity and the completeness of the victory he wrought against the Khalistanis in Punjab. But he was not just a policeman; he was a profound thinker, a writer of distinction, a lover of poetry, of literature, and of life. Mr. Gill's passing leaves a void that cannot be filled, not only at the Institute and among those who had the privilege of personal association, but in the spheres of policing, security and counter-terrorism in India, which he dominated like a Colossus.

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In the years intervening since the last volume of *Faultlines* was published, the world has seen dramatic changes in the patterns, scale and expanse of conflict. These movements have been divergent, dramatically worsening the situation in some theatres,

while significant improvements have been experienced in others, at least in terms of the traditional metrics of violence. But even in the theatres of measurable improvement, the reality is, conditions of political and strategic instability, and the potential for future conflict remain undiminished.

There has, moreover, been a dramatic resurgence of radical political ideologies, primarily of the extremist right, and a parallel dilution of constitutional and democratic norms in many of the most stable and enduring democracies of the world. We find, increasingly, the sway of what Carl Sagan described as the "combustible mixture of ignorance and power"[1], as some of the most sophisticated technologies are harnessed by extraordinarily primitive and violent mindsets, and extremist ideologies explicitly seek the creation of 'conditions of savagery'[2], a progressive randomisation of violence and, indeed, apocalyptic conflict. Race, ethnicity and, crucially, religious identity, today underpin most of the ongoing conflicts across the world and their augmenting savagery.

An exponentially accelerating technological transformation which affects every single life on the planet, but that is understood–and often only partially–by no more than a tiny proportion of humanity, is rapidly creating and unleashing the potential for unprecedented and incomprehensible scales of violence, both structural and overt. A visible aspect of the technology-enabled structural violence already amongst us, is the powerful cyber-manipulation of electoral processes, which has subverted the democratic will in country after country. Drones and the evolution

1 Carl Sagan, The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark, Random House, New York: Ballantine Books, 1996, p. 26.

2 Abu Bakr Naji, The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through which the Umma will Pass, Tr. William McCants, John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, May 23, 2006, https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/abu-bakr-naji-the-management-of-savagery-the-most-critical-stage-through-which-the-umma-will-pass.pdf, downloaded, October 1, 2015.

of quasi-automated killing machines already in play are only ineffectual precursors of the destructive capabilities that science is poised to create, and likely to proliferate across a diversity of users far beyond the agencies of state. The spectre of a surveillance society that could make human freedom a mere memory rises with each new advance in a wide range of invasive technologies. Worse, technology gaps–between regions and countries, as between population groups and economic classes–are widening existing and unsupportable inequalities, threatening to polarize the world between a small fraction of winners, and rising armies of "useless people."[3]

But science has also created unprecedented capacities to address all human ills, and a growing power to heal much of what afflicts our ailing earth. It is only the cyclical retreat from reason, the embrace of atavistic ideologies and identities, which prevent us from diminishing the sum of suffering on our planet.

Faultlines is an enduring effort to bring reason and the free contestation of ideas to bear on the sources and dynamics of conflict, and of its resolution.

Ajai Sahni
New Delhi: April 1, 2018

3 Karl Marx observed, "The production of too many useful things results in too many useless people." Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, 1844, Third Manuscript, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_Economic_and_Philosophical_Mauscripts.pdf.