

FAULTLINES

The K.P.S. Gill Journal of Conflict & Resolution

Volume 28

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Volume 28

edited by
AJAI SAHNI



Kautilya Books

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THE INSTITUTE FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



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The Institute for Conflict Management, New Delhi
February 2022

ISBN : 978-93-90885-64-0

Price: ₹ 250

Overseas: US\$ 30

Printed by: Kautilya Books

309, Hari Sadan, 20, Ansari Road

Daryaganj, New Delhi-110 002

Phone: 011 47534346, +91 99115 54346

FAULTLINES: THE K.P.S. GILL JOURNAL OF CONFLICT & RESOLUTION

Edited by Ajai Sahni

FAULTLINES - THE SERIES

FAULTLINES focuses on various sources and aspects of existing and emerging conflict in the Indian subcontinent. Terrorism and low-intensity wars, communal, caste and other sectarian strife, political violence, organised crime, policing, the criminal justice system and human rights constitute the central focus of the Journal.

FAULTLINES is published each quarter by the INSTITUTE FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

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Foreword

The rise and rising belligerence of China concerns us all, even as the powers of the West shrink, and the hegemony of the ‘sole superpower’ is successfully challenged by relatively minor entities, including non-state actors (backed by near dysfunctional states). The global power vacuum can only tempt a hubristic leadership, bloated on its economic and technological success and the rampaging growth of its defence establishment. In any event, there is a natural trajectory that any rising power follows, and that is the creation of expanding spheres of economic activity, and a corresponding expansion of defence and coercive capabilities to ‘protect’ interests abroad. ‘Protection’, in the context, translates increasingly into a euphemism for dominance and, eventually, economic colonization of what the Chinese leadership already contemptuously refers to as “small countries” who must know their place and not challenge or question a “big country” like China.¹

Other ‘big countries’ also continue with their mischief around the world, and Ukraine is the unfortunate playground where Russia, the US and the European powers currently are jockeying for their divergent favoured outcomes, much to the alarm and distress of the people and leadership of Ukraine. But this complex

1 Yang Jiechi at the 2010 ASEAN Regional Forum, after China’s South China Sea claims were criticized by the US, declared, “China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that’s just a fact.” Yi Wang, “Yang Jiechi: Xi Jinping’s Top Diplomat Back in His Element,” *China Brief* 17, no. 16, 2017, <https://jamestown.org/program/yang-jiechi-xis-top-diplomat-back-element/>.

Ajai Sahni

powerplay has many layers, from geopolitics, through vast criminal oligarchies, down to the ambitions of local criminals and petty political adventurers.

International organisations, the United Nations in particular, as well as NATO as a regional Alliance, was intended to bring stability and peace to the world order. Unfortunately, they appear to be failing repeatedly to fulfil their mandate, and are often seen to be acting in the interest of particular states or alliances.

State adventurism, the failures and biases of international institutions, and vacuums of power in the global order create the environment for the violation of international and humanitarian laws, as well as for the failure to address the excesses of the past. The Armenian Genocide is one among the many unresolved humanitarian tragedies of recent history, with the perpetrator state continuing to deny Turkey's excesses against its Armenian Christian minority.

Religious identity politics and extremism underpin many of the conflicts of history, as of the contemporary world. The extremism of one denomination often feeds a reflexive intemperance among others. Hate speech, extravagant and unfounded allegations and a politics of polarization have, in many theatres, put truth out of the reach not only of the people, but of relatively better-informed security professionals and commentators. Islamist radicalization has been a subject of much inflamed assessment and argumentation across the world, and no less in India. In such a perverse ecosystem, attempts to wade through the noise to arrive at some approximation of the truth are urgently needed.

In an ongoing exploration of global fault lines, the present volume explores some aspects of these various themes.

Ajai Sahni
New Delhi,
February 7, 2022

Patterns of China's Provocation: What Should We Do?

Satoru Nagao*

Recently, China's provocations against its neighbours, including Japan, Taiwan, and countries around the South China Sea, have been escalating. China has deployed warships and unmanned vehicles in the Indian Ocean. With 36 destroyers equipped with Dragon Eye combat systems similar to the American Aegis system, and 30 modern frigates, along with an emerging nuclear powered submarine fleet, the Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has arrived as a force to be reckoned with in East Asia.¹

Further, in June 2020, approximately 5,000 Chinese troops crossed the Indo-China border and clashed with Indian troops. At least 20 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives and 76 Indian soldiers were injured. Noting these actions, countries in and around China must find a way to deal with these provocations. The analysis in this paper focuses on three questions to consider when determining that path: What activities is China

* Dr. Satoru Nagao is a fellow (non-resident) at Hudson Institute, Tokyo, Japan.

1 Cristopher Colley, "A Future Chinese Indian Ocean Fleet?", *War on the Rocks*, April 2, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/04/a-future-chinese-indian-ocean-fleet/>.

undertaking? What are the significant features of China's provocations? What should China's neighbouring countries do?

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE CHINA UNDERTAKING?

The Sea around China

China's activities have been escalating in the maritime areas (Sea of Japan, East China Sea, etc.) in and around Japan. For example, in 2004, a Chinese nuclear attack submarine violated Japan's territorial seas in the East China Sea. China has also been carrying out naval exercises on the Pacific side of Japan since 2008. Figure 1 showcases the routes used by the Chinese Navy. Their activities have expanded from the first island chain to the second island chain, which makes up China's defensive line.

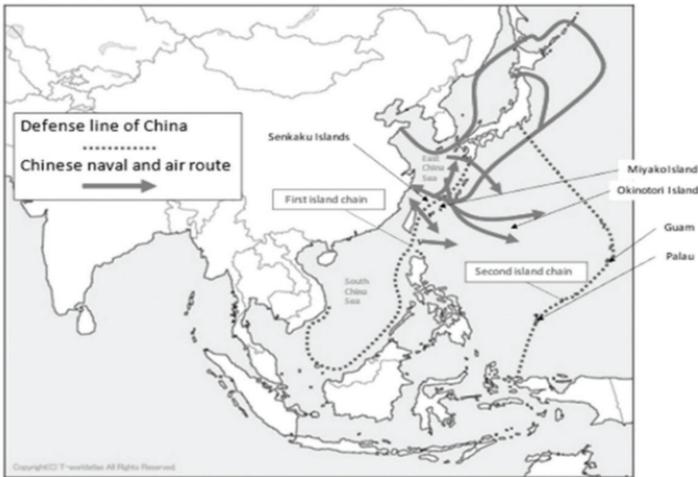


Figure 1: China's Naval and Air Activities around Japan.

Source: Ministry of Defense, Japan, 2020.

China has stepped up its activities in the region, both militarily and paramilitary. In the sea around the Senkaku

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Islands of Japan, China has deployed its Coast Guards and increased its activities. In 2011, only 12 Chinese vessels were identified within the contiguous zone in the waters surrounding Japan's Senkaku Islands, but this number has increased drastically since that year. There were 428 identified vessels in 2012, 819 in 2013, 729 in 2014, 707 in 2015, 752 in 2016, 696 in 2017, 615 in 2018. There were 1097 vessels identified in 2019 (see Figure 2).

This near constant Chinese presence in the contiguous zone, which lies between 12 and 24 nautical miles (nm) of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, is no doubt irritating and appears threatening to Japan. Japan's Defense White Paper released in the month of July 2020 stated that China has "relentlessly continued attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by coercion in the sea area around the Senkaku Islands..."² Nevertheless, although Japan's Ministry of Defense reported that the number of times Japan's military had to scramble jets in response to Chinese air incursions went down 41 percent in 2017, that number increased in 2018 and is on trend to continue increasing in 2019. Lately, Japan has built new military bases on nearby islands, supposedly to monitor the Miyako and Tokara Straits and interdict China from further developing its military capabilities in the region.³

The situation is escalating, as Japan has focused on its defensive capabilities and prudently avoids using the word 'military' for its troops. But then again as it looks to protect its territorial and military interests against the assertive

2 Mike Mochizuki and Jiaxiu Han, "Is China Escalating Tensions with Japan in the East China Sea?", *The Diplomat*, September 16, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/is-china-escalating-tensions-with-japan-in-the-east-china-sea/>.

3 "Global Conflict Tracker", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/tensions-east-china-sea>.

combination of China, North Korea and Russia, officials in Tokyo are pushing citizens to put aside widespread unease over a more robust role for the military and to support increased defense spending. As it is, tens of billions of dollars each year have built an arsenal of nearly 1,000 warplanes and dozens of destroyers and submarines. Japan’s forces rival those of Britain and France, and show no sign of slowing down in a pursuit of the best equipment and weapons money can buy.⁴

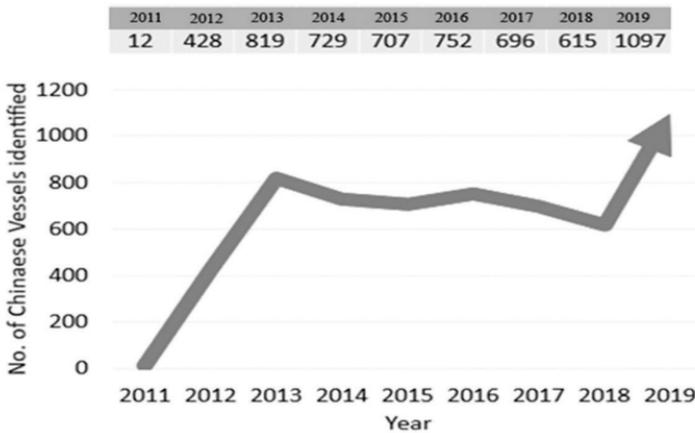


Figure 2: Number of Chinese Vessels Identified within the Contiguous Zone in the Waters Surrounding Japan’s Senkaku Islands

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page23e_000021.html

Taiwan

Around the Taiwan Strait, China’s rapid military modernisation is changing the military balance with Taiwan, even as China provokes Taiwan militarily. Chinese fighter jets have repeatedly entered Taiwan’s air space. On June 15, 2021,

4 Mari Yamaguchi, “Japan’s military, among world’s strongest, looks to build”, *ABC News*, December 6, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/japans-military-worlds-strongest-build-81576818>.

28 Chinese military planes entered Taiwan's Air Identification Zone.⁵ Additionally, its activities on the Pacific side of Taiwan, where a Chinese aircraft carrier battle group made repeated visits, are of particular concern. If Chinese armed forces were permanently deployed there, this would essentially cut Taiwan off from the United States and Japan. Chinese submarine activities are also cause for concern, and the then US Indo-Pacific Commander Admiral Philip Davidson warned that China could invade Taiwan within the next six years.⁶

In addition, Taiwan is facing diplomatic isolation. Since June 2017, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, the Solomon Islands, and Kiribati have abandoned formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, including economic assistance and infrastructure projects, as a result of Chinese efforts. This leaves only fifteen countries maintaining formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan – and the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the fact that Taiwan cannot join many international organizations, including the World Health Organization, due to Chinese opposition.

The South China Sea

The situation in the South China Sea is a serious matter. While the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague rejected China's claim to 90 per cent of the South China Sea in 2016, Beijing is ignoring the verdict and building three new airports on seven artificial islands in the region. This has drawn concern from Japan, and then Prime Minister Abe noted,

5 Brad Lendon, "China sends 25 warplanes into Taiwan's air defense zone, Taipei says", *CNN*, April 13, 2021, <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/12/china/china-taiwan-jets-defense-zone-incursion-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>.

6 "China could invade Taiwan in next six years, top US admiral warns", *The Guardian*, March 10, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/10/china-could-invade-taiwan-in-next-six-years-top-us-admiral-warns>.

increasingly, the South China Sea seems set to become a ‘Lake Beijing,’ which analysts say will be to China what the Sea of Okhotsk was to Soviet Russia: a sea deep enough for the People’s Liberation Army’s navy to base their nuclear-powered attack submarines, capable of launching missiles with nuclear warheads.⁷

His statement points to the possibility of China deploying ballistic missile submarines under the protection of fighter jets launched from these artificial islands – and excluding all foreign ships and airplanes that might identify their submarines.⁸ Abe stated, further, “if Japan were to yield, the South China Sea would become even more fortified.”⁹

The India-China Border Area

Since 2000, China has been developing infrastructure projects in the Indo-China border area, increasing the number of strategic roads, trains, tunnels, bridges, and airports. The military balance at the Indo-China border is changing because of China’s rapid military infrastructure modernization. Along with these infrastructure projects, Beijing has started to deploy more armed forces in the area. In 2011, India recorded 213 incursions in the Indo-China border area, but in the following years, the numbers grew: 426 in 2012, 411 in 2013, 460 in 2014, 428 in 2015, 296 in 2016, 473 in 2017, 404 in 2018, and 663

7 Shinzo Abe, “Asia’s Democratic Security Diamond”, *Project Syndicate*, December 27, 2012, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe?barrier=accesspaylog>.

8 Satoru Nagao, “Nightmare Scenario in the South China Sea: Japan’s Perspective”, *Maritime Issues*, September 12, 2019, <http://www.maritimeissues.com/security/nightmare-scenario-in-the-south-china-sea-japans-perspective.html>; Reiji Yoshida, “Beijing’s Senkaku Goal: Sub ‘Safe Haven’ in South China Sea”, *The Japan Times*, November 7, 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/11/07/national/beijings-senkaku-goal-sub-safe-haven-in-south-china-sea/#.WDQ774VOKUk>.

9 Shinzo Abe, op. cit.

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in 2019 (see Figure 3). These incursions are similar to China's activities around Japan's Senkaku Islands, and China increased activities in both areas in 2012 and 2019 (see Figure 4).

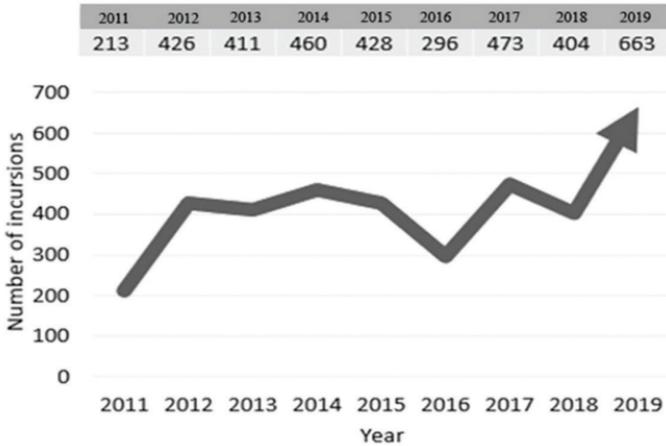


Figure 3: Chinese Incursions in the Indo-China Border Area
Source: Compiled by the author using major media reports

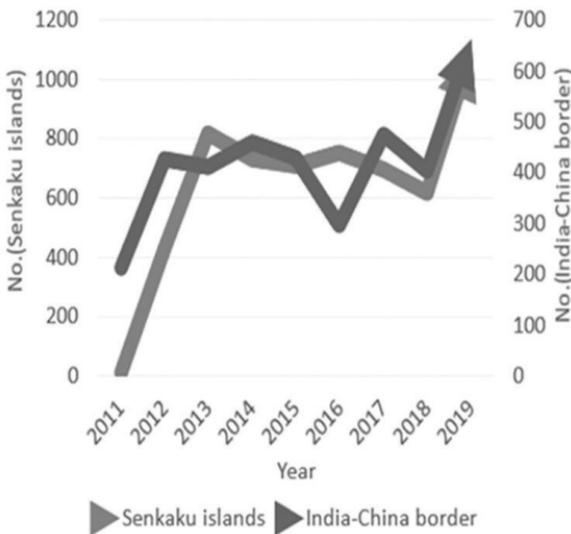


Figure 4: Comparison of Figure 2 and 3

China is deploying troops in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Pakistan, along a portion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) – a core project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).¹⁰ Beijing is also developing infrastructure projects to connect to Nepal. It has entered the Doklam plateau, claimed by both China and Bhutan, insisting on building a new road to deploy more forces. This led to a standoff between Indian and Chinese armed forces along the 4,000-kilometer Indo-China border (including the Line of Actual Control, a line separating India-controlled territory from China-controlled territory).

In 2020, the situation escalated further. China entered the Indian side of the Indo-China border in the spring, and the two sides clashed in June. At least 20 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives and 76 Indian soldiers were injured. After that, China continued to redeploy fighter jets and missiles from other areas of China. For example, China moved H-6 bombers with the capability to employ cruise missiles from Wugong to Golmud and Kashgar. China also deployed DF-21 missiles, which use a new type of warhead that the US and Japan cannot intercept through missile defense systems, to Kailash Mansaravar. At the Hotan air base, China has been increasing its presence of heavy fighters and bombers, such as the J-11 and J-16. Other types of military aircrafts, such as the Y-8G electronic reconnaissance aircraft, the KJ-500 early warning aircraft, the CH-4 drone, and the latest J-20 stealth fighter jets are being held there. To

10 “Chinese Army troops spotted along Line of Control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir”, *The Economic Times*, July 12, 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/chinese-army-troops-spotted-along-line-of-control-in-pakistan-occupied-kashmir/articleshow/51380320.cms>; Manish Shukla, “China deploys troops in Sindh, Just 90 km away from Indo-Pak border”, *Zee News*, March 21, 2019, <https://zeenews.india.com/india/china-deploys-troops-in-sindh-just-90-km-away-from-indo-pak-border-2189314.html>.

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protect these airfields and missiles, China is deploying S-400 and S-300 surface-to-air missiles. To deal with China's build-up, India has repeatedly conducted missile tests. During a six-week period from September to October 2020, India conducted more than 12 missile tests. In February 2021, China withdrew more than 200 tanks from the Indian side of Pangong Tso in Ladakh, and the tension has reduced drastically. However, it took China only two days to withdraw these 200 tanks, demonstrating that China has the power projection capability to rapidly redeploy force of a similar size in this area. Further, China is still present on the Indian side of the border in at least four areas and continues to maintain missiles and jets in the India-China border area.

The Indian Ocean

China has also expanded its activities in the Indian Ocean, which has caused worry for India. Beijing insisted on solving its 'Malacca Dilemma' — the insistence that it must avoid excessive dependence on the Malacca Strait, a strategic shipping lane for China's oil industry that is controlled by the US Navy. As a result, China is creating alternative routes, such as a Middle East-Pakistan-Xinjiang Uygur route and a Middle East-Myanmar-China route. These new routes are core pieces of China's Belt and Road Initiatives.

On one hand, Beijing is investing in developing ports in the Indian Ocean, including Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Chittagong in Bangladesh, and Kyaukpyu in Myanmar. Because of the sheer size of China's investments and the six to eight per cent interest rates it charges on loans, these countries now owe enormous debts to Beijing. For comparison, the World Bank and Asia Development Bank charge 0.25 to

three per cent interest rates.¹¹ Sri Lanka was unable to repay its loan for Hambantota, which made it a victim of China's 'debt diplomacy' policy, and in December 2017, it handed over the port to China as part of a 99-year lease agreement.

In the meantime, in order to secure sea routes, China has started to expand its military forces in the region. It has been increasing its military activities in the Indian Ocean since 2009, when it joined anti-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia. Chinese submarines have patrolled since 2012, and the Chinese surface fleet has called at ports in all the countries around India, including Pakistan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. According to Admiral Sunil Lanba, former Chief of the Naval Staff of the Indian Navy, Beijing has deployed six to eight warships in the Indian Ocean,¹² while in Pakistan, it has started to deploy ground forces. Some raise concerns that if the Chinese navy begins to use civil-purpose ports as naval supply bases, as it has at the Hambantota port, it could overcome its lack of a naval port in the region, outside of Djibouti.

In addition, China also exports submarines to countries around India. Bangladesh received two in 2016, and Pakistan imported eight for its navy. In particular, Islamabad's willingness to acquire nuclear submarines must not be overlooked. Because it lacks the technology to support these nuclear submarines itself, there is a reasonable possibility that China will provide support to these 'indigenous' nuclear submarines to counter India.

11 Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "China may put South Asia on road to debt trap", *Economic Times*, May 2, 2017, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/china-may-put-south-asia-on-road-to-debt-trap/articleshow/58467309.cms>.

12 "China's Growing Presence in Indian Ocean Challenge for India: Navy Chief", *NDTV*, March 14, 2019, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/chinas-growing-presence-in-indian-ocean-challenge-for-india-navy-chief-2007615>.

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The activities of Chinese submarines and exported Chinese submarines indicate that they could potentially be used to attack India's nuclear ballistic missile submarines, aircraft carriers, and sea lines of communication (SLOCs). Therefore, these submarines will, to a great extent, regulate India's activities (see Figure 5).

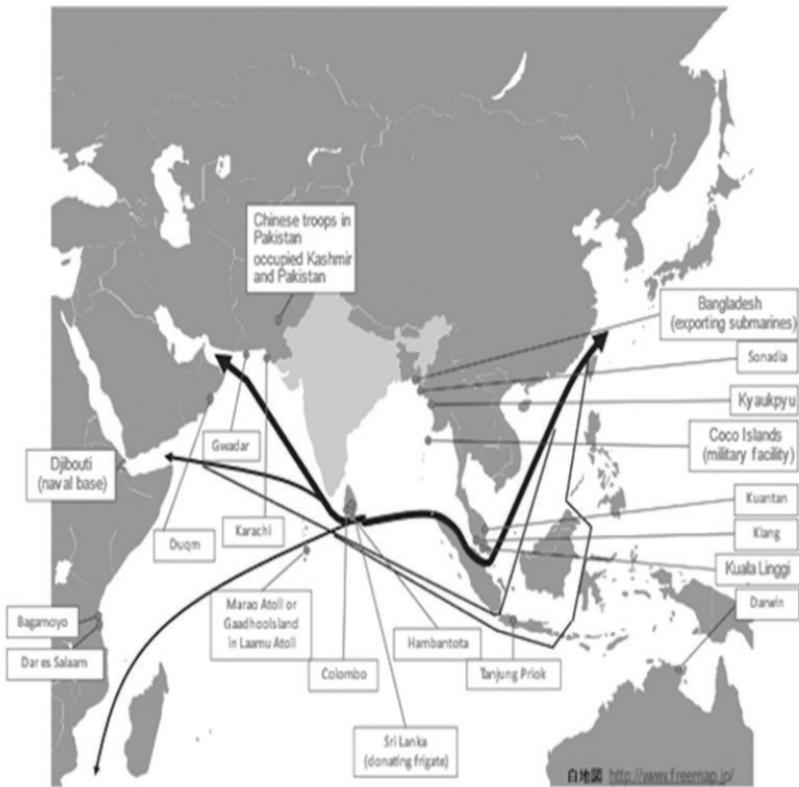


Figure 5: China's Activities in the Indian Ocean

Source: Author

WHAT ARE THE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF CHINA'S PROVOCATIONS?

There are three significant features of China's territorial expansion.

- (a) The first feature of note is China's repeated disregard for international law when laying claim to new territory. In the sea around Japan, China did not claim the Senkaku Islands before 1971. With the potential existence of oil reserves in the East China Sea, China's attitude has since changed. At the same time, the Senkaku Islands are in a strategic location to pressure Taiwan. In the South China Sea, China has expanded its territorial claim, ignoring the verdict of an international court, and has built artificial islands. Despite insisting that these islands have no military purpose, China has started to deploy missiles and military planes to them.

In the case of the India-China border, the Tibetan government in exile clarified that these areas historically belong to India.¹³ China has ignored current international law and expanded its territorial claim in each of these areas.

- (b) The second significant feature of China's territorial expansion is timing. It has exploited the situation whenever it finds a power vacuum. For example, China occupied half of the Paracel Islands immediately after France withdrew in the 1950s and occupied the other half one year after the US withdrew from South Vietnam in 1974. China occupied six features of the

13 Central Tibetan Administration, "'Ladakh belongs to India': Tibet sides with India, exposes China's expansionist tactics," June 5, 2020, <https://tibet.net/ladakh-belongs-to-india-tibet-sides-with-india-exposes-chinas-expansionist-tactics/>.

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Spratly Islands after the Soviet Union decreased its military presence in Vietnam in the 1980s and, in 1995, it occupied Mischief Reef three years after US troops withdrew from the Philippines.¹⁴ According to the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, from 2010–19, China increased its military expenditure by 85 per cent. China's military expenditure, the second highest in the world, is estimated to have totalled USD 252 billion in 2020. This represents an increase of 1.9 per cent over 2019 and 76 per cent over the decade 2011–20. China's defence spending has risen for 26 consecutive years.¹⁵ During the same period (2010–19), India increased its military expenditure by 37 per cent and Japan by only two percent.¹⁶ In the year 2020, India's expenditure was USD 72.9 billion and Japan's USD 49.1 billion.¹⁷ China has tried to expand its territorial claims not only in the South China Sea, but also in the sea around Japan, Taiwan, and the India-China border, because it sees a power vacuum in these areas. Additionally, China has identified a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean and has worked to expand her influence there.

- (c) The third key feature of China's territorial expansion is an attempt at economic control. China has used foreign infrastructure projects — including those aligned with

14 Japan Ministry of Defense, "China's Activities in the South China Sea (China's development activities on the features and trends in related countries)", March, 2021, https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/sec_env/pdf/ch_d-act_b_e_210421.pdf.

15 SIPRI, "World military spending rises to almost \$2 trillion in 2020", April 26, 2021, <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/world-military-spending-rises-almost-2-trillion-2020>.

16 SIPRI, "Military Expenditure Database", <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

17 SIPRI, *op.*, cit.

its BRI — to expand its sphere of influence. Through one of these projects, Sri Lanka leased its Hambantota port to China for 99 years. Because the port project was financed at a high interest rate and created huge debt, Sri Lanka was essentially forced to accept China's terms. In addition, countries with significant Chinese investment and debt are hesitant to criticize the country, even when it flouts international rules. These situations demonstrate the deep connection between China's territorial ambitions and its economic power.

WHAT SHOULD CHINA'S NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES DO?

China's lack of respect for international law, expansion of territorial claims where there are power vacuums, and attempts at economic dominance abroad are all common themes relating to China's exploits in the sea around Japan, Taiwan, the South China Sea, the India-China border, and the Indian Ocean. To deal with China's bad behaviour, the US has been seriously stepping up its efforts. The question, however, remains: What should China's neighbours, like India and Japan, do? Understanding China's behaviour patterns points toward the answer: They should do the opposite of what China wants.

First and most importantly, Japan and India should demonstrate their support of the US efforts to maintain a rule-based order. In March 2021, for the first time after the US-Japan 2+2 foreign and defense minister-level meeting, the US-Japan Joint Statement mentioned China by name multiple times and expressed concern over China's activities in the East China Sea, South China Sea, Taiwan Strait, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang.¹⁸ This clear stance shows Japan's support of

18 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (Japan-U.S. "2+2")", March 16, 2021, https://www.mofa.go.jp/na/st/page3e_001112.html.

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the current rule-based order and democratic norms. After the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting between ministers of India, Australia, South Africa, and South Korea in May 2021, this Joint Statement also mentioned Tibet.¹⁹

Second, to enhance their defense capabilities, India and Japan need to focus on an offensive-defensive balance. Along with the US, Japan, India, and Australia are each planning to acquire 1,000 to 2,000-kilometer long-range strike capabilities, such as cruise missiles and F-35 jets with glide bombs. Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and South Korea are also increasing their strike arsenal with surface-to-surface missiles. These moves could be key. For example, if both Japan and India possess long-range strike capabilities, they could force China to defend on multiple fronts. Even if China decides to expand its territories along the India-China border, it still needs to expend a certain amount of its budget and military force to defend itself against Japan. In addition, long-range strike capability is useful in dealing with the route China is using to expand its territories. If the straits or other choke points are under the range of the strike capabilities of countries siding with the US, China will lose confidence in these routes. In the case of the mountainous India-China border area, India can attack strategic bridges, tunnels, or airports anytime by using missiles. This reduces China's confidence in this strategic infrastructure.

India and Japan, along with the US and Australia, need to integrate their economic efforts and reduce their reliance on China. Although China is the leading trading partner for India and Japan, if these countries depend too heavily on

19 G7 Research Group, "G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting, May 2021: Communiqué", May 5, 2021, <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/foreign/210505-foreign-and-development-communication.html>.

this relationship, their economies will be like passengers on a sinking ship. Decoupling and risk-diversifying these supply chains and markets is necessary, and Japan has already begun this process. Because Japan has relocated its factories from China to Southeast Asia and South Asia, the number of Japanese citizens living in China has decreased from 150,399 in 2012 to 111,768 in 2020. At the same time, the number of Japanese living in the US has increased from 410,973 in 2012 to 426,354 in 2020.²⁰ In addition, Japan earmarked USD 2.2 billion of its 2020 economic stimulus package to help local manufacturers shift production out of China.²¹

Furthermore, India and Japan, along with the US and Australia, should cooperate in infrastructure development, COVID-19 vaccine supplies, and other socially beneficial initiatives. When Sri Lanka accepted China's high interest rate investment, it had no other investor options. Japan and India should collaborate on alternative infrastructure projects in developing countries, including Sri Lanka. The situation around the COVID-19 pandemic offers similar opportunities. Without an alternative source for these countries, for instance, China can expand its influence by supplying COVID-19 vaccines.²² The G-7 and four leaders from India, Australia, South Africa, and South Korea, agreed at the G-7 summit that providing vaccine support to these developing nations would be a critical

20 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Annual Report of Statistics on Japanese Nationals Overseas", 2021, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/tokei/hojin/index.html>.

21 Isabel Reynolds and Emi Urabe, "Japan to Fund Firms to Shift Production Out of China", *Bloomberg*, April 8, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-08/japan-to-fund-firms-to-shift-production-out-of-china>.

22 US White House, "Fact Sheet: Quad Summit", March 12, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/fact-sheet-quad-summit/>.

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step in ensuring China could not further its influence in these countries.

China's aggressive territorial expansion has spurred neighbouring countries like India and Japan to take a tough stance alongside the US and Australia. The more China escalates the situation, the more the defense capabilities of the QUAD (India-Japan-US-Australia) will be institutionalized in the Indo-Pacific. Now is the time to do so.

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Criminality and Covert Action in Ukraine, 2014-2018

Prem Mahadevan*

On 31 August 2018, a light fixture exploded in the Café Separ, which sits on the fashionable Pushkin Boulevard in the centre of Donetsk city. The café's location made it a favoured hangout for workers from the nearby government quarter. Among these was a former electrician named Aleksandr Zakharchenko. As luck would have it, on that day, Zakharchenko's professional skills would not have sufficed to prevent the blow-out. Rather, boosted by explosives that had been cached behind it, the light fixture blasted him into the next world.

Besides being a Separ regular, Zakharchenko was also head of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the most prominent separatist leader in eastern Ukraine. His death marked the ninth assassination since 2014 of a key figure in the Donbas rebellion, which encompassed parts of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* (loosely translated as 'provinces'). The DPR and its sister-enclave, the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), are perceived to have been supported by Russia in their uprising against the Ukrainian

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central government in Kyiv. Following each assassination of a rebel leader, some commentary (usually by Western analysts) implied Moscow's culpability.¹ It was speculated – but rarely asserted outright – that the Russian government was quietly eliminating strong-minded separatist leaders so as to fully control the levers of power in Donbas.²

This paper seeks to question such arguments. Even a cursory reading of media reports would indicate that there is no unanimity as to whether Moscow was indeed behind the deaths of separatist leaders. Three schools of thought exist on who might have been responsible. Taking the case of Zakharchenko's death, one school, which represents the stated position of Russian and DPR authorities, is that the Ukrainian security service was responsible for killing him. A second school, promoted by Kyiv, is that the Separ bombing represented a power struggle among the separatists themselves. A third explanation advanced by informed (and relatively neutral) experts was that the murder might have been carried out by local criminal interests, with tacit blessing from powerful figures in Moscow.³

1 Jack Losh, "Is Russia Killing Off Eastern Ukraine's Warlords?", *Foreign Policy*, October 25, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/10/25/who-is-killing-eastern-ukraines-warlords-motorola-russia-putin/> and Adrian Karantnycky, 'Putin's Warlords Slip Out of Control', *New York Times*, June 9, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/10/opinion/putins-warlords-slip-out-of-control.html>.

2 Konstantin Skorkin, "The Demise of the Counter-Elite: How Zakharchenko's Killing Will Change Donbas", *Carnegie Moscow Center*, September 4, 2018, accessed <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/77158>.

3 Damien Sharkov, "Russian Security Services Working in Ukraine Blame Kiev for Rebel Leader's Death", *Newsweek*, September 3, 2018, <https://www.newsweek.com/russian-security-services-working-ukraine-blame-kiev-rebel-leaders-death-1102735>. Also see Mark Galeotti, "Zakharchenko's Assassination Won't Bring Peace to Ukraine", *Moscow Times*, September 4, 2018, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/09/04/war-politics-crime-blowing-up-the-donbass-a62764>.

This last might be the most plausible explanation, since it suggests a compartmentalized decision-making process and explains why the Russian foreign ministry reflexively blamed Kyiv for Zakharchenko's death (an escalatory step) but the Kremlin did not follow through with punitive measures.⁴ It still leaves the question of what Russian policymakers might gain by supporting the DPR, but overlooking the elimination of its leader. To answer this, one has to examine the trajectory of the Donbas rebellion since 2014, and how far it had moved from its original purpose by 2018.

EXPLORING A CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC

This paper is intended as a neutral exploration of the Donbas conflict, focusing on the role of organized crime. It acknowledges Russia's stake in having a friendly government in Kyiv. The author holds the view that Ukraine is a tragic victim, sacrificed as 'collateral damage' in a broader Russo-American conflict. Yet, Russia too is a victim of a zero-sum game forced upon it by certain Western powers. Sections of the press and think-tank industry in two Western countries in particular, the United States and United Kingdom, have made Moscow-bashing a national rallying point. The goal appears to be to cover up their own governments' lack of success in re-ordering the international system following two disastrous military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq during the early 2000s.

Washington and to a lesser extent London are, today, being confronted with the fallout of three decades of colonial-style hubris, stemming from their imaginary 'victory' in the

4 Rejeanne Lacroix, "Separatist Leader's Assassination Exposes the Complexity of the War in Ukraine", *Fair Observer*, September 5, 2018, <https://www.fairobserver.com/region/europe/alexander-zakharchenko-murder-donbass-eastern-ukraine-war-europe-news-87010/>.

Cold War. As Ukrainian-American scholar Serhii Plokhy has written in his book *The Last Empire*, American neoliberal triumphalism in the 1990s rested largely on an ahistorical fantasy. The Cold War, he argues, had actually ended a full two years *before* the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991.⁵ Its termination had been the result of an amicable agreement reached at Malta between US president George H.W. Bush and his Soviet counterpart Mikhail Gorbachev in December 1989. When Gorbachev later ran into political difficulties at home, the reflexive response of the US administration, worried as it was about losing a compliant negotiating partner, had been to attempt to strengthen his position. It feared that his disappearance from the scene would lead to an intra-Soviet civil war and rampant nuclear proliferation.

Once it became obvious that events on the ground were bound to take their own course regardless of Washington's preferences, and that the worst-case scenario of a civil war was unlikely to materialize, the Americans reconciled to the idea of Gorbachev's resignation from the presidency and the Soviet breakup that would follow. Shortly thereafter, in a breathtaking act of political audacity, Bush executed a 180-degree turn in his official stance and began spinning a narrative that the United States had long strived for the Soviet collapse. Although many within his immediate circle of advisors knew the claim to be an invention, intended solely to bolster his chance of re-election, the damage to Russo-American relations was done. Gorbachev lamented in 1992 that the narrative of the US having 'won' the Cold War was 'a very big delusion.'⁶ He was right. Supremely confident that it stood unparalleled among the world's great powers, the United States also convinced itself that the new

5 Serhii Plokhy, *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union*, Oneworld, London, 2015, pp. 389-392.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 391.

unipolar international order would remain so forever. It started therefore to engage in strategic over-reach.

In 2001, a complacent US permitted an emerging challenger – the People’s Republic of China – to enter the World Trade Organization.⁷ The American expectation was that an autocratic state that traded freely with the outside world would eventually develop a middle class hungry for political freedom, and be forced to democratize as the Russians and other Soviet peoples had done. The superiority of Western values would prevail over Eastern authoritarianism. Except, that was not how the script played out.

Exactly three months before China’s entry into the WTO, the United States had been attacked by Al Qaeda. Lashing out instinctively against a new and largely unanticipated non-state threat from the ‘Islamic world,’ the US invaded Afghanistan and then Iraq (the latter on a pretext of seeking to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction). As both military adventures gradually ran into difficulties, China discreetly prospered in the globalized economy that had originally been meant to railroad it towards democratization. It became a manufacturing and high-tech powerhouse. Meanwhile, America’s ideational appeal among developing nations declined with the 2008 global financial crisis, revelations of human rights abuses in US-run military prisons, as well as racially-charged police brutality towards African-Americans. All of these factors combined to ensure that the America that the world saw throughout the 2010s was not the self-confident, seemingly invincible and yet benevolent United States that stood, colossus-like, over the globe at the turn of the millennium. Rather, it was a country with a poor

7 Faisal Islam, “How the West invited China to eat its lunch”, *BBC*, December 10, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59610019>.

record of winning at land warfare, a heavily-surveilled and domestically-fractured population, and an innate hostility towards geopolitical multipolarity. The American ‘soft power’ once thought to have delivered an ideological advantage over Soviet communism, was slowly being matched by Chinese ‘soft power’, showcased in the form of brutal efficiency.⁸

In this situation, Russia has become, to some extent, a convenient whipping boy to deflect attention from the falsity of American omnipotence. Exaggerating the ‘Russian threat’ in times of domestic crisis creates an artificial sense of achievement for policy pundits in Washington and London when that threat does not reach its fullest potential, but serves to rally the home front nonetheless.

An example is the Great Russian Spy Scare of 2010. As told in British journalist Gordon Corera’s book *Russians Among Us*, the story is one of several male and female Russian intelligence officers having infiltrated the US for decades, living in some instances as couples under false identities and raising children brought up as Americans, who are unaware of their parents’ real background.⁹ It is story of Russian deception and revanchism,

8 Eric Li, “The Rise and Fall of Soft Power”, *Foreign Policy*, August 20, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-soft-power/>.

9 Corera is a good journalist and has strong contacts with the British security establishment. This has enabled him to write an engaging and well-researched account of the 2010 spy case that is for the most part, fair and objective. However, his book fails to interrogate the American interpretation of events more critically, seemingly accepting the narrative pushed out by US officials. This narrative suggests that the timing of the Russians’ arrests was determined by the fact that the CIA had a mole in Moscow who was providing information on the operatives’ activities in the US, and that by summer 2010 the mole had wanted to defect to American. Since that would expose their long-term surveillance of Russians’ secret networks, American officials decided to close down the networks altogether. The story might well be true, but it is almost certainly not the whole picture, especially as Corera also recounts how the FBI and CIA were keen for

ultimately undone by good sleuthing on the part of American counterintelligence experts. However, an entirely different perspective can be taken. The Russian operatives in the book can also be seen as heroic, lonely patriots who suffer emotionally while living in a hostile country, without support from their secret employer. They struggle to create a respectable lifestyle, as would any new arrival in a hyper-materialistic society that is innately prejudiced against those born without wealth or connections. They commit no murders and steal no secrets, instead trying to forge influential contacts who can, if necessary, help protect their country from aggression. Their synchronized arrests in June 2010 by US authorities might have been less a brilliant coup than a publicity stunt to distract from two recent high-profile security failures: the Camp Chapman bombing of December 2009 and the attempted bombing of New York City's Times Square in May 2010. Both of these events had exposed the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, respectively, as incompetent and semi-competent. The Camp Chapman bombing had involved an Al Qaeda triple agent who deceived the CIA into violating its own security protocols. From this instance, it seemed as though a non-state actor had a better understanding of intelligence tradecraft than American spies.¹⁰ Less than six months later, the Times Square bombing failed, not due to intelligence-led police intervention, but due to sheer luck caused by the bomber's own ineptitude.¹¹

the arrests to be followed up by judicial proceedings which would have guaranteed their supposed detective work much (favourable) publicity in the US media. Gordon Corera, *Russians Among Us: Sleeper Cells & the Hunt for Putin's Agents*, William Collins, London, 2020, pp. 229-235 and p. 241.

10 Joby Warrick, *The Triple Agent: The Al-Qaeda Mole Who Infiltrated the CIA*, Vintage, New York, 2012, p. 198.

11 Kim R. Holmes, "The Times Square Bomb Plot: Success or Failure?", *The Heritage Foundation*, May 13, 2010, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-times-square-bomb-plot-success-or-failure>.

Perhaps in this situation, the deep-cover Russian operatives were sacrificial victims on the altar of bureaucratic self-interest, scooped up to make their American counterparts look good to the political executive in Washington. Shortly after the arrests in the US, the British security service MI5, perhaps not wanting to appear any less competent than their American partners, attempted to arbitrarily deport as a spy a Russian national who had been living legally in the UK. In this case however, the intended target fought back through the court system and British judges, to their credit, ultimately cancelled the deportation order after finding the prosecution case to be extremely flimsy.¹²

For its part, Russia too has lashed out, using tactics not dissimilar to those of the West (and, some scholars would argue, in certain cases using even worse methods).¹³ Its immediate victim has been Ukraine, but the larger purpose has been to signal to the world: ‘Moscow matters.’ A message that all neutral observers, including India, need to take note of in the coming decades.

The current conflict in Ukraine broke out over the winter of 2013-14, when the then Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich, after seeking to play off Russia vis-à-vis the European Union to extract maximum benefits for himself, eventually opted to sign an economic agreement with the former. Sections of the

12 Richard Norton-Taylor, “MI5 inquiry into Russian ‘spy’ was ‘Inspector Clouseau not George Smiley’”, *The Guardian*, October 28, 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/28/mi5-russian-spy-investigation> and Nick Fielding, “The men who knew too little: reflections on the Zatuliveter case”, *Open Democracy*, December 9, 2011, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/men-who-knew-too-little-reflections-on-zatuliveter-case/>.

13 David V. Goe, et. al., “Unforgiven: Russian intelligence vengeance as political theater and strategic messaging”, *Intelligence and National Security*, Volume 34, Number 4, 2019, p. 561.

Ukrainian population which had hoped for closer ties with the EU, were disappointed and took to the streets in protest. Over a period of several months, violence escalated. Meanwhile, Russia, which had invested heavily in obtaining Yanukovich's goodwill and which feared the loss of its Black Sea naval base in the Crimean city of Sevastopol, viewed the protests as a Western conspiracy. When Yanukovich was forced to flee Kyiv in February 2014, Moscow acted. So-called 'little green men' (the preferred Western term) or 'polite people' (the Russian term) appeared on the streets of Crimea. These were unidentified soldiers who took over key military installations in the territory. Within the erstwhile Soviet Union, Crimea had been administered as a part of Russia from 1922 until 1954, whereupon it was transferred to Ukraine. Since both Russia and Ukraine were part of the same international entity, the transfer remained a domestic matter until 1991, when the Union was dissolved and Ukraine became a sovereign nation, along with Russia and 13 other post-Soviet republics. Thereafter, Crimea remained a part of Ukraine. The territory's takeover by 'polite people' in 2014, who turned out to be Russian special forces soldiers, was not violently contested by the population, which had a Russian majority.¹⁴ Within Russia it was perceived that Crimea had merely 'returned' to the Motherland, whereas in Ukraine it was seen as a territory under foreign 'occupation.' Even as tensions rose between Kyiv and Moscow over the status of the peninsula, with the West backing Kyiv, fighting erupted in the Donbas region, which lies in the eastern part of Ukraine, directly adjoining Russia.

14 Oleg Kashin, "Polite people with guns", *Open Democracy*, April 16, 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/polite-people-with-big-guns-natalia-poklonskaya-dmitry-kiselyov/>.

A DIFFERENT WAR, A DIFFERENT CONTEXT

Readers of this paper should note: Donbas is not Crimea. Almost all debates that unfolded during 2014 in Western policy circles presumed that Russian actions in the two regions were part of a common plan of territorial, or at least political, expansion. The catchword of that year was ‘hybrid warfare,’ a term that exaggerated the novelty of Moscow’s use of tactical disinformation and the ‘transformation’ of its military to carry out time-sensitive special operations. Events since then have presented a more nuanced picture, suggesting that while the seizure of Crimea was meticulously-planned and clinically-executed towards a clear political objective, the intervention in Donbas was more opportunistic and open-ended.¹⁵ In both theatres, organized crime groups destabilized the polity through civic unrest. But only in Donbas, could they launch a semi-autonomous agenda which not even Moscow fully controlled.

What explains this difference? Unlike the annexation of Crimea, which was a straightforward Kremlin project, the Donbas uprising was a mutating three-way mix of *Russian* state interests, *Ukrainian* elite agendas, and *local* grievances among the Donetsk and Luhansk populace. These last two components are the focus of the present study. The Donbas conflict was, and is, not exclusively a Russian proxy war (Kyiv’s preferred interpretation) or a Ukrainian civil war (Moscow’s preferred interpretation).¹⁶ Rather, it also represented a power grab *within* established hierarchies of organized crime, which have almost certainly been manipulated by extraneous intelligence entities.

15 Tor Bukkvoll, “Why Putin went to war: ideology, interests and decisionmaking in the Russian use of force in Crimea and Donbas”, *Contemporary Politics*, Volume 22, Number 3, 2016, pp. 275-276.

16 Nikolaus von Twickel, “The State of Play in the Donbass”, *Moscow Times*, March 11, 2019, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/03/11/the-state-of-play-in-the-donbass-a64764>.

The long-entrenched kleptocratic elite of Donbas was displaced in 2014 by a revolutionary upsurge of second-tier criminals who set up a ‘counter-elite.’¹⁷ Zakharchenko belonged to this counter-elite as did other native-born leaders of the DPR and LPR. The elimination of any separatist figure who became too assertive about exercising autonomy may have represented a kind of ‘disciplining’ within patron-client networks, where control was tenuous. The patrons were likely foreign-based actors and select Ukrainian oligarchs who dealt with them. The clients were separatist militias in Donbas. These militias were manned by lower class and poorly educated workers, some of whom had a background in petty crime. Messaging between the patrons and clients seems to have been done via a two-channel system: by directly injecting foreign mercenaries into the fighting, thereby reducing the bargaining power of local fighters *vis-à-vis* Moscow (and also Kyiv), and by leveraging cross-border interfaces of criminality to covertly project Russian influence.

The mafia underworlds of both Crimea and Donbas had links with counterparts on Russian territory, inherited from the days of the Soviet Union. Crimea, especially, had direct contact with Russia-based racketeers as a result of shared ethnicity and geographic location. The peninsula’s central position on the Black Sea northern coast made it a favoured transshipment hub for arms, narcotics and women.¹⁸ Ports like Sevastopol served as bottlenecks for illicit flows. When the Kremlin decided to annex Crimea in 2014, it reached out to two local gangs, ‘Salem’ and ‘Bashmaki’, through their Russian partner, the Moscow-headquartered ‘Solntsevo’ gang. Although traditionally at

17 Konstantin Skorokin, “A Counter-Elite Takes Power—the New Leaders of the Donbas”, *Carnegie Moscow Center*, February 16, 2018, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/75549>.

18 Joshua P. Mulford, “Non-State Actors in the Russo-Ukrainian War”, *Connections*, Volume 15, Number 2, 2016, p. 99.

loggerheads, the leaders of both Crimean gangs temporarily put aside their differences at the urging of Solntsevo and the FSB, Russia's all-powerful domestic security service. As a payoff for deploying men on the streets in support of annexation, they were promised support against the non-Slavic (primarily Tartar) gangs who were at the time, encroaching on both their territories.¹⁹

In Donbas, street-level organized crime has long been overshadowed by 'political clans'. These represent a fusion of political and business interests that came together in the 1990s to seize state-owned enterprises and build oligopolies.²⁰ During the Soviet era, Donbas had been the most heavily industrialized region of Ukraine. After the fall of communism, it was also the region that privatized state assets to the greatest extent. In 1997, one political clan, based in Donetsk, floated the Party of Regions (PR). The PR became a local elite in terms of privileged access to resources and opportunities. Membership was seen as a pathway to upward mobility in a socio-economic climate rigged in favour of big industrialists.²¹ The PR's leader from 2003 to 2010 was Viktor Yanukovich, who became Ukraine's president in the latter year and remained so until his ouster in 2014. After he was forced to flee, the party played a decisive role in turning the Donbas population against the newly-incumbent Euromaidan regime in Kyiv (named 'Euromaidan' after the main square where protests took place). PR activists

19 Mark Galeotti, "Crime And Crimea: Criminals As Allies And Agents", *RFE/RL*, November 3, 2014, <https://www.rferl.org/a/crimea-crime-criminals-as-agents-allies/26671923.html>.

20 Phil Williams and John Picarelli, "Organized Crime in Ukraine: Challenge and Response", *Trends in Organized Crime*, Volume 6, Number 3-4, 2001, pp. 129-130.

21 Piotr H. Kosicki and Oksana Nesterenko, "Eastern Ukraine Has Been a Mafia State for Years. Can Kiev Break the Cycle of Violence?", *New Republic*, June 5, 2014, <https://newrepublic.com/article/118010/eastern-ukraine-mafia-state-can-kiev-impose-rule-law>.

played upon populist fears of revanchist Galicians (inhabitants of western Ukraine) and job losses that would follow the widely-expected disruption of trade links with Russia.²²

Unlike in Crimea, where the Russian Black Sea Fleet already had a base at Sevastopol and the FSB had a regional office at the time of the annexation, Russian influence in Donbas was exercised through two rather more circuitous routes. One was the Donetsk clan, which had business ties with both the Solntsevo and Salem gangs. Its political front, the Party of Regions, funded lobbyists in Western capitals such as Washington DC. These lobbyists also represented the interests of Sberbank, Russia's biggest banking institution. The bank is alleged to have links with the Russian foreign intelligence service, the SVR, and has been accused by Ukrainian officials of helping fund the Donbas rebellion.²³

A second route for projecting influence was the Ukrainian diaspora in Moscow. In return for official tolerance of criminal activity, members of the diaspora helped place 'agents of influence' in municipal offices and business enterprises in Donetsk and Luhansk. Former Russian military personnel relocated to these two Ukrainian *oblasts* during the 2000s, running post-retirement businesses in the form of sports clubs and security firms.²⁴ These associations helped the FSB establish a strong presence in Donbas, although not nearly as

22 Elise Giuliano, "Who supported separatism in Donbas? Ethnicity and popular opinion at the start of the Ukraine crisis", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Volume 34, Number 2-3, 2018, p. 172.

23 Taras Kuzio, "Ukrainian kleptocrats and America's real-life House of Cards: Corruption, lobbyism and the rule of law", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 50, 2017, p. 35.

24 Vladimir Peshkov, "The Donbas: Back in the USSR", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, September 1, 2016, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/essay_the_donbas_back_in_the_ussr.

comprehensive as the one in Crimea. When the rebellion broke out in 2014, its human assets in-place helped Moscow steer developments in the direction most desired by the Kremlin, but could not completely exclude local actors from playing a role.

The scholar Mark Galeotti, one of the best-informed Western experts on Russia, has noted that the Russian security services probably had less control over the Donbas rebels than had been hoped for:

Moscow presumably thought that by relying heavily on local militias it could fight its undeclared war against Kiev deniably and on the cheap, but in practice it created a situation in which it was often scarcely in control of its notional proxies. Indeed, from the first it was being embezzled by them, and soon began to pay the price in terms of an upturn in violent crime and illegal arms dealing back home. In Rostov-on-Don, the southern Russian city acting as a logistical support hub for the war, there was a growing problem. In 2015, the Rostov region was the ninth most criminal in all Russia, but by 2016 it had become the seventh, and the city itself had become, according to some measures, the most dangerous in Europe – having not even been in the top ten before.²⁵

Readers who are familiar with the history of covert action in South Asia might be able to recognize parallels between the situation that Galeotti describes in southern Russia, and the criminal violence that afflicted Pakistan following its covert paramilitary intervention in the Soviet-Afghan War.²⁶

25 Mark Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2019, p. 247.

26 A.Z. Hilali, "The costs and benefits of the Afghan War for Pakistan", *Contemporary South Asia*, Volume 11, Number 3, 2002, pp. 298-299 and pp. 301-303.

FROM STAGED UPRISING TO GENUINE REVOLUTION

What was strange about the Donbas rebellion was how crucial the PR was to its emergence and how quickly the party was, thereafter, marginalized. In less than 90 days after the fall of Yanukovich on February 22, 2014, the party created and lost control of a separatist insurgency. By mid/late May, Russian mercenaries and local hoodlums had worked separately to hijack the anti-Kyiv movement. The result was a rebellion that had no unified command structure or overarching leadership. Although launched by the PR, it was shaped by fast-moving developments on the ground. A show of strength by the party morphed into a geopolitical project (as far as Russia was concerned) and an irredentist fantasy to create a pseudo-socialist homeland for Ukraine's Russian minority (as far as the separatists were concerned).

This homeland was conceived from the 'Novorossiya' (New Russia) concept mentioned by Russian President Vladimir Putin on April 17, 2014. On the same day that Putin talked of the continuity of Moscow's rule over territories populated by Russians, his foreign minister Sergei Lavrov concluded an agreement in Geneva on containing the Donbas conflict.²⁷ In hindsight, it seems the Russian president invoked historical claims to Ukrainian territory in order to get the West to reconcile with his annexation of Crimea. Aleksandr Dugin, a prominent ideologue in Moscow, has advanced a similar hypothesis, suggesting that the Kremlin offered a 'Crimea for Novorossiya' deal.²⁸ So long as it could retain the Crimean

27 David M. Herszenhorn, "Away From Show of Diplomacy in Geneva, Putin Puts On a Show of His Own", *New York Times*, April 17, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/18/world/europe/russia-ukraine.html>.

28 Andrei Kolesnikov, "Why the Kremlin Is Shutting Down the Novorossiya Project", *Carnegie Moscow Center*, May 29, 2015, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/60249>.

Peninsula, the Putin regime was prepared to forego further conquest of Ukraine. As if to signal this bargain, slightly over a year later, on May 20, 2015, the leaders of the DPR and LPR, having once been the loudest advocates of ‘Novorossiia’, announced that its creation was no longer their goal. By that time, the character of the rebellion in eastern Ukraine had fundamentally changed as well.

At first, the Party of Regions exploited the isolationist mindset of Donbas’ industrial and coal-mining communities. The latter’s willingness to be corralled and led, whether by communist party *nomenklatura* during Soviet times, or factory foremen in the post-Soviet era, made them uniquely pliant. One hypothesis suggests that a multi-generational tradition of mining activity created a political tunnel vision whereby directives from above were blindly followed.²⁹ While this point is debatable, it does appear as though Donbas had a history of separatist thought, at least to a partial and nebulous degree, before the phrase ‘Russian hybrid warfare’ was invented by Western commentators. The PR’s effort to stoke up resentment against Kyiv, once it had been ejected from power, thus fell on receptive ears.

For decades, Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* have had a cultural and economic identity distinct from the rest of Ukraine. During the 20th century, industrialization and an ethnically-mixed population derived from prison labour and voluntary migration made Donbas the most dynamic region of Soviet Ukraine. Its economic significance meant that regional authorities reported to Moscow rather than to Kyiv. When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, the local population

29 Andrew Wilson, “The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but not Civil War”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Volume 68, Number 4, 2016, p. 644.

hoped that Ukrainian independence would enhance its status in the new Soviet successor state. Instead, coal mines and factories were left to stagnate in terms of capital investment. Privatization created new inequalities in communities that had been indoctrinated in socialist ideals for half a century. Kyiv, having been only reluctantly accepted as a sovereign, came to be seen as engaging in discriminatory redistribution of wealth. The Ukrainian state was thought to be siphoning off revenues earned from Donbas industry and handing them out to less hard-working communities elsewhere in the country.³⁰ The fact that Ukraine had a highly centralized taxation system fueled this sense of grievance. Over the course of a decade (2004-2014), local PR activists concocted a narrative that the party's dominance in Kyiv would represent a 'fair' reward for the achievements and sacrifices of its home region. A false perception was generated that Donbas alone accounted for half the gross domestic product of Ukraine, whereas its actual contribution was 17 per cent (exactly proportional to its share of the total population).³¹

The PR leadership, gaining control over the country's tax system, stifled opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurship while favouring large corporations owned by its cronies. After losing power in 2014, certain individuals close to the former regime are thought to have initially funded the Donbas uprising through these companies.³² Given the PR's ties to big business, the party did not lack funds for agitprop activity. Over the

30 Elise Giuliano, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

31 Andrew Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 30, Number 2, 1995, p. 267 and Ihor Stebelsky, "A tale of two regions: geopolitics, identities, narratives, and conflict in Kharkiv and the Donbas", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Volume 59, Number 1, 2018, p. 37.

32 Andrew Wilson, op. cit., p. 645.

previous decade, it is thought to have also integrated small-time criminals into its ranks to bulk up its street-power. For their part, the criminals received a political ‘roof’ that afforded them some protection from local law enforcement.³³

Perhaps the most important backer of the PR was a tycoon called Rinat Akhmetov. In 2014, this man was the richest person in the post-Soviet space. After Viktor Yanukovich became president in 2010, Akhmetov’s fortune is believed to have tripled in a single year, which may have been a happy coincidence.³⁴ He first made his wealth in the energy sector by partnering with Russian companies. This was a route taken by many first-generation Ukrainian oligarchs in the 1990s – cashing in on the oil and gas trade with Russia. It is also the reason why oligarchs have come to be viewed with suspicion by the wider public, as being more focused on corporate profit than national interests. Akhmetov later branched off into other enterprises, notably steel mills and coal-mining. His rise had been facilitated by the assassination in 1995 of his mentor Akhat Bragin, the founding leader of the Donetsk clan. Known as ‘Alik the Greek,’ Bragin died while Akhmetov was his deputy. Bragin’s death was followed by murders of prominent businessmen in Donetsk. Akhmetov has not been linked to these killings, and circumstantial evidence suggests that he just benefited collaterally from a turf war waged by the rival (and better-known) ‘Dnipro clan’ operating out of Dnipropetrovsk. Even so, a Ukrainian interior ministry report dating from 1999 allegedly identified him as involved in ‘money laundering and financial fraud’ and having once been linked to a criminal group known as ‘Lyuksovaska hrupa.’³⁵

33 Jamie Dettmer, “The Mafia Ruling Ukraine’s Mobs”, *Daily Beast*, March 23, 2014, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-mafia-ruling-ukraines-mobs>.

34 Taras Kuzio, “Crime, politics and business in 1990s Ukraine”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 47, 2014, p. 197.

35 Ibid.

The collapse of the PR government in Kyiv during the Euromaidan protests had left Akhmetov seemingly in a quandary. His history as a Yanukovich supporter made him vulnerable to the same anti-corruption discourse that had ousted the ex-president. After all, one of the main rallying cries of Euromaidan had been ‘de-oligarchisation.’³⁶ He could not afford to opportunistically switch sides as that would anger the PR machinery in its home base, where his fixed assets were vulnerable to expropriation. Neither could he continue supporting the PR as his trading infrastructure was centred on Kyiv.³⁷ With his business empire split between anti- and pro-Maidan territories, Akhmetov seems to have chosen a delicate and, from his point of view, probably sensible compromise.³⁸

Between end-February and mid-May 2014, he showed sympathy for both sides but committed to neither. During this timeframe, some politicians and factory workers in Donbas who were beholden to him launched protests against Euromaidan. Commentators now believe that Akhmetov may have permitted these disturbances in order to strengthen his negotiating position with the post-Yanukovich regime.³⁹ As is often the case, there

36 Wojciech Konończuk, “The Failed Promise of Deoligarchization in Ukraine”, *Vox Ukraine*, January 18, 2017, <https://voxukraine.org/en/deoligarchization-of-ukraine-en/>.

37 Andriy Holub, “The ultimate beneficiary”, *Ukrainian Week*, February 23, 2017, <https://ukrainianweek.com/Economics/186183>.

38 Maximilian Hess, “Ukraine’s Donbas Don: Who is Rinat Akhmetov?”, *Eurasianet*, January 29, 2020, <https://eurasianet.org/ukraines-donbas-don-who-is-rinat-akhmetov>.

39 Daniel McLaughlin, “Delicate balance of personal interest and peace in Ukraine”, *Irish Times*, June 21, 2016, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/delicate-balance-of-personal-interest-and-peace-in-ukraine-1.2692314>. Also see Oksana Grytsenko and Oleg Sukhov, “Rinat Akhmetov: Too Big To Tame”, *Kyiv Post*, October 20, 2016, <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/rain-shine-guys-always-got-shiny-dime.html>.

is little hard evidence to back up such claims. His reputation as a regional power-broker was undisputed and there seems no doubt that he publicly maintained a cautious neutrality while the new regime in Kyiv sorted itself out. Meanwhile, two events, both involving Russia, moved the political ground under his feet (and those of every oligarch in Ukraine). These were the annexation of Crimea on March 18 and the entry of Russian mercenaries into the city of Sloviansk (in the northern part of Donetsk *oblast*) on April 12, 2014. Together, they fueled an expectation, both within Ukraine and overseas, that Donbas would soon be annexed by Moscow.

It was at this point that the anti-Euromaidan protests in Donetsk and Luhansk mutated into a wider separatist movement. Just five days after Sloviansk was occupied, Putin made his reference to Novorossiia. His words were seen as a statement of intent – Russia was coming for Donbas, as it had come for Crimea, and the population of Donbas was not entirely displeased at the thought. Better pensions and welfare schemes seemed to await them, than if they remained part of a Ukrainian state where ‘their’ regional party, the PR, had been unceremoniously ousted from power in Kyiv. Three days after Putin raised the Novorossiia spectre, a pro-Euromaidan militia attacked a checkpoint in Donbas. The attack prompted Donetsk leaders to declare that, regardless of what Russia and the United States agreed to at high-level talks, such as those in Geneva on April 17, the separatist leadership would henceforth make their own decisions.⁴⁰

40 Lance Davies, “Russia’s ‘Governance’ Approach: Intervention and the Conflict in the Donbas”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Volume 68, Number 4, 2016, pp. 736-737.

TRYING FOR A SOVIET (RE)UNION

Local anger at being left out of decision-making on Donbas' future seems to have come into play around this time. With regional oligarchs decamping for their own safety, Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* were rife with militias that ostensibly 'protected' the absentee owners' properties. A power vacuum came into being, one which even Russian-born fighters could not fill. It was in this context that a strange fusion took place between pro- and anti-Maidan views. Before Yanukovich's fall, even the cities of Donbas had witnessed small-scale protests against corruption within his government. After he fled to Russia, these protests were displaced by larger counter-protests about the PR's unconstitutional removal from power. Fear about losing their privileged position in Ukrainian politics thus existed alongside contempt for the party that had strengthened the hold of big business over politics.

One observer commented on how, over the summer of 2014, the interests of the PR leadership gradually diverged from those of the DPR and LPR 'governments':

The political and economic elite of the region, which is the core of the Party of Regions, obviously did not want to join the Donbas to Russia, which would mean the redistribution of property and other troubles. For small businessmen, criminal figures, officials (mostly associated with the most criminalised sectors of the economy), and district-level police officers such radical political changes, on the contrary, gave great hope.⁴¹

41 Nikolai Mitrokhin, quoted in Andrew Wilson, "The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but not Civil War", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Volume 68, Number 4, 2016, p. 646.

Many who assumed leading positions on the separatist side had working-class backgrounds. Militarily, their combat effectiveness was limited but their political value, in providing an indigenous face to the rebellion and enhancing Moscow's denials of involvement, was initially considerable. Those who see Russia as responsible for the subsequent assassinations of such leaders argue that Moscow pursued a utilitarian approach. Once the two Minsk Accords were signed in September 2014 and February 2015, assuring Russia of a say in Ukraine's internal affairs, the more independent-minded separatist leaders were (allegedly) done away with.⁴²

According to this theory, men such as Aleksandr Mozgovoi, a militia leader in Luhansk, may have become liabilities because they refused to follow the dictates of the Moscow-friendly LPR administration. Mozgovoi was one of the most articulate champions of the Novorossiia project. Three days after the LPR leadership announced that the project had been abandoned, Mozgovoi and members of his entourage were killed in a meticulously-planned roadside ambush on May 23, 2015.⁴³ His killers were never identified. As with Zakharchenko, possible suspects range from Russian special forces to Ukrainian covert operatives, and from members of Mozgovoi's own inner circle to rival separatist militias in Luhansk. The truth is unlikely to be definitely known.

Once Russian mercenaries intervened in April 2014, the Donbas frontline (known as the 'contact line') was calcified. A steep divide appeared between the Euromaidan regime and

42 Tetyana Malyarenko and David J. Galbreath, "Paramilitary motivation in Ukraine: beyond integration and abolition", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Volume 16, Number 1, 2016, p. 129.

43 Merhat Sharipzhan, "The Mysterious Assassination Of A Rebel Commander In Ukraine", *RFE/RL*, May 25, 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/assassination-of-rebel-commander-in-ukraine/27035485.html>.

Donbas separatists. For his part, Akhmetov could no longer remain neutral in an increasingly polarized environment. Upcoming presidential elections on May 25 prompted him to pre-emptively issue a statement denouncing the separatist leadership. By doing so, he bought peace with the anticipated victor, Petro Poroshenko, an oligarch who, unlike Akhmetov, had his power base in the western and central regions of Ukraine. Poroshenko was expected to take a tough stance against the Donbas separatists and he did so by ordering an air raid on Donetsk airport the very day after being elected. For the DPR, this air raid has since been commemorated every year on May 26 as the official beginning of the armed conflict with Kyiv.⁴⁴

The raid triggered a slow decline of Akhmetov's influence in Donbas, with the oligarch focusing thereafter on protecting his commercial interests rather than aspiring to be a peacemaker. He reached an accommodation with Zakharchenko, which held for three years and allowed his factories, mills and coal-mines to continue operating and transporting their produce to government-held territory. In return, Akhmetov funded relief measures for civilians – a move that partly mollified sections of the population. However, some accounts suggest that Akhmetov's own employees in Donbas did not appreciate his 'betrayal' of the DPR in May 2014.⁴⁵ Threats to seize his properties were defused because he lobbied contacts in Moscow to appoint Zakharchenko as head of the DPR.⁴⁶ Although the latter banned Akhmetov from entering the DPR, he allowed the oligarch's businesses to function unimpeded.

44 Kimitaka Matsuzato, "The Donbas War and politics in cities on the front: Mariupol and Kramatorsk", *Nationalities Papers*, Volume 46, Number 6, 2018, p. 1010.

45 Ibid., pp. 1016-1017.

46 Oksana Grytsenko and Oleg Sukhov, op. cit.

Eventually, it was a third force that shattered the delicate balance of interests. In early 2015, a group of Ukrainian army veterans blocked railroad traffic to Donbas, accusing Poroshenko's government of being weak-kneed in confronting Russian interference in Ukraine. They also blamed Akhmetov for profiting from the conflict, by playing both sides to his personal benefit. In retaliation for the blockade, the DPR and LPR authorities nationalized 43 enterprises, of which 17 belonged to Akhmetov.⁴⁷

After overt trade was shut down between government-administered and rebel-administered territory, a thriving racket in anthracite coal emerged. Coal mined from Donetsk was sent to Russia, from where it was re-exported back to Ukraine as 'Russian' coal. Zakharchenko profited from this arrangement.⁴⁸ One theory about his death is that he had sought to gain a greater share of the coal-smuggling business, which led to concerns that he was setting up an independent power base. Even so, whether that possibility might have led someone in Moscow to eliminate him remains conjecture.

From available media reporting and scholarly literature, it seems that the Donbas rebellion began as an elite-led movement intended to bolster the PR's heft after it had been toppled by Euromaidan. But the Russian intervention in Crimea and then in Donbas itself, beginning at Sloviansk, raised hopes of a broader political transformation. The PR, and the oligarchs who

47 Brian Milakovsky, "Cut Off: What Does the Economic Blockade of the Separatist Territories Mean for Ukraine?", *Wilson Center*, January 9, 2018, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/cut-what-does-the-economic-blockade-the-separatist-territories-mean-for-ukraine>.

48 Pavel Kanygin, "Why was the separatist leader of Donetsk assassinated? Questions you're too embarrassed to ask about rebel politics in eastern Ukraine", *Meduza*, September 4, 2018, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2018/09/04/why-was-the-separatist-leader-of-donetsk-assassinated>.

had been associated with it, found themselves losing ground to a working-class revolt. The rebels who became leaders of the DPR and LPR were as opposed to elite corruption as they were to Ukrainian majoritarianism. Rather than Vladimir Putin, it was these individuals who talked of fusing Soviet-style socialism with Tsarist-era imperialism, beginning with the creation of Novorossiya. As one scholar observes about the rebellion:

It is a kind of a ‘revolution from below’ because it has an aspiration for political change beyond one’s cultural identity and a socio-psychological power of moral impulse. Grounds for this political agenda were already laid when the elites abandoned the region and ordinary people were left to fend for themselves. Leftist values, i.e., social justice, power to people at local level, rebuilding Donbass on an egalitarian basis and anti-elitism form its key pillars. In Mozgovoi’s words: ‘Novorossiya be! Oligarchs out. Power to genuine, ordinary people. This is our chance in many decades to build a fair, human and humane state.’ In this, Novorossiya ideology had commonality with Maidan. What makes them different is the attitude towards ‘Russian World’ [sic] which is a source of inspiration for rebels. It conveys a sense of belonging to larger historic, political and cultural community, bringing them to the imagined roots of the pre-revolutionary Russia.⁴⁹

Mozgovoi, Zakharchenko and virtually every other separatist leader who died under mysterious circumstances in

49 Anna Matveeva, “No Moscow stooges: identity polarization and guerrilla movements in Donbass”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Volume 16, Number 1, 2016, p. 37.

Donbas had two qualities in common: they were not members of the pre-Euromaidan elite, and they had each shown a predilection for acting autonomously. They represented a momentary success of a ‘rebellion within the rebellion’ when they pushed against oligarchic interests. In the process, they lost the protection of those individuals who had created them in the first place.

The first to disappear from the scene were Cossack militia commanders of the LPR, who refused to obey directives handed down by Moscow-friendly separatist leaders.⁵⁰ Then came the turn of other military figures, including Russian nationals who insisted on staying in Donbas as independent actors. Finally, starting in November 2017 the elimination game went up to the highest political levels. The head of the LPR, Igor Politnitsky, was ousted by his own interior minister, in a palace coup said to have been engineered by the Russian FSB.⁵¹ Control was tightened, including over financial matters. Plotnitsky himself may have been replaced (he was not killed, but allowed to leave the LPR for Russia) because he had been too liberal in leeching off local smuggling rackets. His opposite number in the DPR, Zakharchenko, was a more forceful personality against whom an internal challenge could not easily be mounted. So, Zakharchenko’s violent termination might have been a kind of ‘financial auditing,’ as control over the rebellion and its funding base was consolidated.

The scenario described above is consistent with how, within Russia itself, the criminal underworld had developed

50 Andrew S. Bowen, “Coercive diplomacy and the Donbas: Explaining Russian strategy in Eastern Ukraine”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 42, Number 3-4, 2019, p. 330.

51 Christopher Miller, “What In The World Is Going On In The Russia-Backed Separatist Luhansk ‘Republic’?”, *RFE/RL*, November 22, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-luhansk-armed-masked-men-what-is-going-on-kornet-plotnitsky/28870308.html>.

into two different strata during the 1990s. First there were old, established gangs that had government contacts and could profit from economic changes underway, such as the privatization of state assets. The second strata consisted of newer, smaller gangs that did not and could not. The first type of criminals was collectively known as ‘thieves in law’ and functioned as a kind of parallel society, outside the realm of respectability, but with their own normative code.⁵² The second consisted of former sportsmen, soldiers and policemen who had fallen out of work once the Soviet welfare state collapsed. These drifters turned to the emerging market in private violence, where their limited skills were needed in an economy that was undergoing a rapid and unregulated transition to capitalism.⁵³ After initially working as enforcers in business disputes, they moved into the extortion sector. Inevitably, ‘old’ and ‘new’ criminals faced off against each other for control over turf.⁵⁴ The confrontations only ended when the politically-connected criminal elite used covert linkages with the state machinery to suppress their upstart rivals and impose a measure of ‘governance’ over the underworld.

Ultimately, the truth behind the assassinations in Donbas may never be known. The conflict remains an information war as much as a physical one. Inductive analysis of how

52 Alexander N. Yarmysh, “A Behavioral Model for Ukrainian Organized Crime Groups”, *Trends in Organized Crime*, Volume 6, Number 3-4, 2001, pp. 144-145.

53 Mark Galeotti, “The Criminalisation of Russian State Security”, *Global Crime*, Volume 7, Number 3-4, 2006, p. 479.

54 Siegel, Dina, “Vory v zakone: Russian Organized Crime”, in D. Siegel and H. van de Bunt eds., *Traditional Organized Crime in the Modern World, Studies of Organized Crime 11*, Springer, New York, 2012, pp. 45-46 and Galina Belokurova, “Soviet legacies, organized crime, and economic gangsterism: Russia, 1995-2010”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 51, 2018, p. 12.

organized crime has evolved in the common post-Soviet space that Russia and Ukraine share, points towards an inter-layered struggle for dominance. Elites who were previously dominant found themselves challenged from below. The challenges emerged from political changes beyond the capacity of any power-broker to prevent. Even so, these changes could be manipulated to reassert the interests of ‘old’ elites instead of ‘counter-elites’. Given the predilection which security services have for suppressing revolutionary challenges, any popular movement that disturbed the incumbent regime would be weakened through all measures.⁵⁵

ASYMMETRY OF INTELLIGENCE AND INFLUENCE

A question arises: what role if any, have hidden links between state actors, the private sector and the underworld played in Ukraine? In searching for an answer, it might be helpful to examine one entity in particular. Of all power factions in Moscow, it appears that the FSB has been the most dominant in shaping policy towards Ukraine. This agency combines the defensively-minded patriotism of the Russian national security state – an inheritance of the Tsarist era – with the outward-looking zeal of its revolutionary Soviet predecessor, the KGB.⁵⁶ Having an overriding mission (protection of the ‘*Rodina*’ or Russian Motherland) and political leeway to adopt a wide range of tactics has led the FSB to favour active neutralization of foreign-based threats to regime stability.

What is important is not the moral dimension (many countries, not least the United States, have a similar approach

55 Svetlana Stephenson, “It takes two to tango: The state and organized crime in Russia”, *Current Sociology*, Volume 65, Number 3, 2017, p. 413.

56 Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, *The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia’s Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB*, Public Affairs, New York, 2010, p. 4.

to counterterrorism). Rather, the FSB stands out because it is a domestic security agency which carries out special operations overseas – operations of the kind euphemistically referred to as ‘wet work.’ Such elasticity stems from the agency’s expansive jurisdiction over all territories once part of the Soviet Union. Ukraine is prominent among these. An intelligence agency with overlapping mandates for domestic and overseas operations, like the FSB, is uniquely placed to instrumentalize organized crime, whether at the street-level or the white-collar level. By controlling the tools of law enforcement, it can dole out favours to sections of the underworld willing to put their infrastructure at its (deniable) disposal. The Kremlin is thought to have leveraged precisely such contacts with organized crime actors to conduct some overseas assassinations.⁵⁷

During the Cold War, the Soviet KGB, as the forerunner of the Russian FSB, was at the forefront of building contacts with transnational crime syndicates. It outsourced covert logistics to such syndicates and allowed enterprising officers to develop foreign business opportunities which they were denied at home.⁵⁸ When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, many officers quit the service to work in the private sector. Except, they may not have actually quit. A 1995 scholarly paper described how the emerging market economy was seeded with members of the former KGB’s ‘active reserve’. These were personnel who had ostensibly left the spy agency but continued reporting to it on a voluntary basis (with adjustments made to their government salaries to minimize conflicts of interest).

57 Mark Galeotti, “The Kremlin’s Newest Hybrid Warfare Asset: Gangsters”, *Foreign Policy*, June 12, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/12/how-the-world-of-spies-became-a-gangsters-paradise-russia-cyberattack-hack/>.

58 Mark Galeotti, “Organised crime and Russian security forces: mafiya, militia and military”, *Conflict, Security & Development*, Volume 1, Number 2, 2001, p. 105.

They were effectively ‘ sleeper agents ’ in the private sector. The paper reported that according to contemporary estimates, between 75 and 80 per cent of all joint ventures between Russian and foreign businessmen involved KGB operatives. Public sector firms and public-private partnerships were overseen by an intelligence officer placed at a senior management level.⁵⁹

Unbeknownst to Russia’s adversaries (especially American presidents telling themselves that their side had ‘ won ’ the Cold War), during the 1990s, the country was building up covert influence. This included areas that would normally lie outside the traditional remit of intelligence work. Even more than investing in street criminals, the FSB seems to have concentrated on buying the loyalties of political and business leaders: In other words, oligarchs. A Russian journalist commented in 2014 on how intelligence services of some states share a “ lack of interest in mass movements and the activity on the street in favour of a total focus on the corrupt elites holding power. This is based on the old idea that ‘ if we control the shah, we control the country. ’ ”⁶⁰ Another analyst, Marcel Van Herpen, in his book *Putin’s Propaganda Machine*, reinforced the impression that Russian spies posted abroad focus on recruiting high-level ‘ agents of influence. ’⁶¹ It is likely that long-term penetration of Ukrainian elites at two different levels, security and commercial, enabled the swift and surgical annexation of Crimea.

59 J. Michael Waller and Victor J. Yasmann, “ Russia’s Great Criminal Revolution: The Role of the Security Services ”, *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, Volume 119, Number 4, 1995, pp. 287-288.

60 Andrei Soldatov, “ The True Role of the FSB in the Ukrainian Crisis ”, *Moscow Times*, April 15, 2014, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/04/15/the-true-role-of-the-fsb-in-the-ukrainian-crisis-a33985>.

61 Marcel Van Herpen, *Putin’s Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*, Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland, 2016, pp. 118-123.

An example was Ukrainian-born Semion Mogilevich, sometimes regarded as the most powerful *mafija* figure in Russia. According to American journalist Craig Unger, Mogilevich has been tied to former US President Donald Trump via money-laundering operations.⁶² Mogilevich's networks extend deep into Ukraine, reportedly at all levels of criminality, from sex trafficking to energy deals involving Ukrainian oligarchs. One such oligarch, Dmytro Firtash, reportedly told the US ambassador to Kyiv in 2008 that he had to seek Mogilevich's permission to set up businesses.⁶³ Although Mogilevich has denied American investigators' charges against him, the picture that emerges from open sources is that he sits at the head of a network possibly linked to the Solntsevo gang. He might enjoy a measure of protection if he makes himself useful to his patrons, by providing certain services on demand.

Meanwhile, old-boy networks between the security bureaucracies of Russia and Ukraine dating back to when both were part of the Soviet-era KGB, played a crucial role in 2014. Not only did the Russian intelligence system have detailed information about decision-making in Kyiv, but it was able to facilitate the defection of key Ukrainian officials at critical moments. Such cooperation may have been grounded in ideological conviction but monetary incentive more likely played a role. Both security communities were linked to transnational organized crime, but the hemispheric economy favoured Moscow rather than Kyiv. The vast majority of

62 Craig Unger, "Trump's businesses are full of dirty Russian money. The scandal is that's legal", *Washington Post*, March 29, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/trumps-businesses-are-full-of-dirty-russian-money-the-scandal-is-thats-legal/2019/03/29/11b812da-5171-11e9-88a1-ed346f0ec94f_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.224f8ab167aa.

63 Taras Kuzio, op cit., p. 33.

criminal actors in Ukraine operated at the local and district level. Less than ten percent had an international presence.⁶⁴ This put foreign-based (ie., Russian) criminal networks in a controlling position relative to Ukrainians who franchised for them. The same applied at the intelligence level: the Russian FSB was much the senior partner vis-à-vis its Ukrainian counterpart. It could offer strong inducements for switching sides.

Although Ukraine had a smaller problem with organized crime than did Russia in the 1990s, it emerged worse off in its efforts to resist the corruption of state institutions. This was because, as the main successor state to the Soviet Union, Russia had the police expertise and databanks needed to regulate the criminal economy. Ukraine had neither. Russian civil society was also more developed than in Ukraine. Taken together, these disadvantages accounted for Ukraine becoming perhaps the most corrupt country in the post-Soviet space, with a law enforcement machinery that was either complicit in crime, or lacking in capacity to combat it. As much as any Russian machinations, it was perhaps the weakness of Ukrainian institutions that enabled the conflict in Donbas and the unopposed annexation of Crimea.

UNRESOLVED MURDERS AMIDST MUTUAL RECRIMINATION

Russian spokesmen have insisted that the murders of separatist leaders in Donbas were orchestrated by the Ukrainian government, a line of argument which is worth exploring. While there is not enough information in the public domain about the competence of Kyiv's intelligence apparatus, Ukraine's track record as a site of contract killings does point towards an indigenous market for privatized violence. In September 2021 for example, an apparent assassination attempt was made on

64 Phil Williams and John Picarelli, *op cit.*, p. 100.

the life of a presidential aide.⁶⁵ As in the past, elements within the Ukrainian political establishment blamed Moscow, but these accusations do not seem to have been echoed at a more formal, official level.

There might have been a tendency since the annexation of Crimea and the rebellion in Donbas, to retrospectively find (or at least hint at) Russian involvement in many unsolved crimes. One example is the 1995 assassination of a man who is considered to have been Ukraine's first oligarch. Yevhen Shcherban was gunned down, together with his wife, at Donetsk airport as he walked across the tarmac from a private jet to his bulletproof car. The investigation into his murder identified the then Ukrainian prime minister as a possible suspect. To this theory was later added another former prime minister of the country. More recent speculation has suggested that the Russian state was the ultimate beneficiary, because the murder had the effect of destabilizing Ukrainian politics. While this might be true, it does not automatically mean that the Kremlin, which in 1996 was still reeling from Russia's own massive post-Soviet crime wave, had the strategic vision at the time to weaken and divide Ukraine.⁶⁶

Moscow's claim has been that by killing Zakharchenko and other insurgents, the post-Euromaidan Ukrainian state was seeking to impose a military solution on Donbas and negate the Minsk Accords. Former Ukrainian president Poroshenko, who was in power from 2014 to 2019, had matched Russian

65 Pavel Polityuk and Natalia Zinets, "Ukraine left puzzled after assassination attempt on president's top aide", *Reuters*, September 23, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/shots-fired-car-carrying-ukraine-presidents-aide-driver-wounded-2021-09-22/>.

66 Olga Rudenko, "The 1996 Murder That Changed The Donbas", *Kyiv Post*, December 4, 2020, <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/who-profited-from-1996-murder-of-yevhen-shcherban.html>.

provocations with some of his own. If Moscow introduced its currency into Donbas and strengthened its grip on the DPR and LPR security services, Kyiv also cut off welfare payments and imposed a trade embargo.⁶⁷ Receipt of Western military aid and diplomatic support might have emboldened Ukrainian hardliners to opt for a war of attrition, seeing Russia as ultimately vulnerable to Western pressure.

A CASUALTY OF GEOPOLITICS

The United States, harried by the rise of China, is seeking to portray Russia as a ‘regional power’ (to use the term that former US president Barack Obama employed in March 2014, after the takeover of Crimea).⁶⁸ Washington does not want to see its own ‘global’ stature diminished through a protracted but unwinnable confrontation with Moscow. The US policy establishment would much prefer to let bilateral differences simmer with Russia so that the illusion of American primacy is maintained, barring the occasional (and largely symbolic) flare-up. In this way, it hopes that a Russo-Chinese alliance in Europe might be forestalled. Should such an alliance materialize, it would be far more damaging to American interests than any independent unilateral action by either Russia or China. Russia has traditionally been the most influential non-Western actor in Central Europe, a region of critical strategic importance. Almost all countries here are part of the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. While Russia has both the cultural knowledge and elite connections needed to project covert influence into Central Europe, China

67 Gwendolyn Sasse and Alice Lackner, “War and identity: the case of the Donbas in Ukraine”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Volume 34, Issue, 2018, pp. 139-140.

68 Steve Holland and Jeff Mason, ‘Obama, in dig at Putin, calls Russia ‘regional power’’, *Reuters*, March 25, 2014, accessed <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-russia-weakness-idUSBREA2O19J20140325>.

has money power to support such campaigns on a scale that can far exceed Russian ambitions. Preventing rifts within NATO, or Russian/Chinese-induced defections from its institutional consensus, would occupy Washington's priority list above any effort to return Crimea and Donbas to Kyiv's control. No matter how often American spokespersons criticize Russia, Ukraine can never be fully certain whether, in the event of a massive armed escalation, it will be a 'South Korea in 1950,' with the international community rallying behind it in the face of a foreign invasion, or a 'Czechoslovakia in 1938,' sacrificed for the sake of great power tranquility.

Meanwhile, it is also clear that Russian intelligence has extensive influence in Ukraine, through partners (or 'proxies') in Donbas. The FSB has the capacity to eliminate any leader whom it wishes to, if they act in a manner contrary to Moscow's interest. Even so, it might serve Russia's long-term interests to practice moderation once it has proved its point about deserving respect as a great power. The fact is, neither Washington nor Moscow stands to benefit from a complete rupture in relations; the only beneficiary would be Beijing. Already, Western sanctions have forced the Kremlin to embrace China's leadership, despite heavy penetration of Chinese commercial actors, both licit and illicit, into Russia's sparsely populated but resource-rich Far East.⁶⁹ To avoid becoming too dependent on a neighbour who might turn out to be far more aggressive and expansionist than the distant Americans ever have been, Russia might do well to hedge against both rivals by showing willingness to work with the US, once its vital concerns have been addressed. Most importantly, the US for its part must show flexibility in addressing such concerns in

69 Ben Judah, *Fragile Empire: How Russia Fell In and Out of Love with Vladimir Putin*, Yale University Press, London, 2013, pp. 302-304.

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order to raise Russia once again to the status of a peer nation in international politics. This means being prepared to defend Ukrainian sovereignty, but acknowledging and mitigating deeper Russian grievances that extend much further back than just the events of 2014.

KHALISTAN EXTREMISM MONITOR

KHALISTAN EXTREMISM MONITOR (KEM) is a non-partisan research and documentation web portal which intends to be a one stop resource centre for research on the Khalistani separatist movement in Punjab. The KEM website monitors day-to-day Khalistani activities around the world, and includes a detailed Timeline since 1978; statistical tables relating to terrorist activities; profiles of terrorist and separatist Groups; terrorist and separatist leadership profiles; profiles of terrorist fugitives; major massacres, etc. It has an 'extremism updates' section which provides you region wise updates on a daily basis. The 'trending news' section covers news items related to the subject around the globe.

Apart from terrorism-related data, the website also includes a Hate Speech Tracker and a Narcotics Monitor (since Khalistani networks and activities have become closely interlinked with narcotics smuggling across the border, from Pakistan). KEM also includes an interactive tool that allows the global public to report hate speech, subversive activities, and other manifestations of extremism.

KEM has been set up under the aegis of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM), a registered non-profit society which seeks to focus on various problems and issues related to terrorism, insurgency, low intensity warfare and other sources of conflict and internal strife in South Asia. The Website hosts a series of web-discussion titled "Punjab: Security Matters" and recorded videos of these discussions can be found on its YouTube channel.

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NATO as a UN Peacekeeper

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INTRODUCTION

Peace operations in their broadest definition¹ and mandate appeared after 1945, and were an important new tool and innovation in the mechanism of safeguarding international security and peace. They underwent a significant transformation in the post-Cold War era, which was a direct product of the changing international security environment. This transformation presented a serious challenge to the United Nations (UN), to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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1 Some experts point out differences in English language sources – in the USA such operations are named 'peace operations', while other NATO sources use the term 'peace support operation'. See Demurenko, Andrei and Alexander Nikitin, "Basic Terminology and Concepts in International Peacekeeping Operations: An Analytical Review", *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, Volume 6, Number 1, Summer 1997.

(NATO) and to all those organisations and structures involved in the preservation of world peace.

During the Cold War years, peace operations had a different role, because superpower tensions made it impossible for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to reach unanimous decisions on the use of force in conflict resolution. In view of that trend, the practice of the Cold War included a larger emphasis on bilateral and regional security treaties, rather than on the UN's role in international security arrangements.² Most of these arrangements were based on the principles of the UN Charter and emphasised defence as the main legitimate use of force. Examples worth mentioning include the establishment of the League of Arab States (March 1945 with the Treaty of Cairo), the Organization of American States (its Charter, approved in 1948 after the signing in 1947 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, known as the Rio Treaty), the Organization of African Unity (1963) and the Organization of South East Asian Nations (1967).

One similar arrangement that was to become a key element in the peace-keeping operations in the 1990's was NATO. The Washington Treaty of April 1949 established NATO deliberately³ as an organisation that provided self-defence to its member-states under Article 51 of the UN Charter, rather than as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII. It acted effectively due to the external threat (the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union), the common democratic values of its members, and the lack of outside-of-Europe engagements.

2 Roberts, Adam, "The United Nations: Variants of Collective Security", in Ngaire Woods ed., *Explaining International Relations Since 1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, pp.319-320.

3 More on the negotiations and the US Secretary of State D. Acheson position see Escot Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty 1947-49*, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1977, p.268.

The Allied handling of conflicts outside the North Atlantic area has been a controversial issue since the creation of NATO. However, in spite of pressure from different members, a policy of non-involvement was finely established during the Cold War. NATO, as such, chose to limit itself to the collective defence of its own territory, as formal or informal co-operation between two or several members in other parts of the world was kept off the NATO agenda. Conflicts resulting from the colonial interests of some European countries and the American global anti-communist engagement were handled in accordance with this intra-Alliance understanding.

With the end of the Cold War however, the international community explored different approaches to peace operations in the 1990's, thus making them an important element in the functioning of the overall international system. Those changes had a serious impact on the theoretical definitions of peace operations, reflecting issues of conflict prevention and various types of peace operations – peace-keeping, peace enforcement, peace-making, peace-building, etc. The very evolution of the concept had its own practical implications for the activities of the international organizations involved.

The term 'out-of-area' had a fairly clear and precise meaning in NATO vocabulary during the Cold War, referring primarily to events taking place outside the territory of NATO's members. The only exception to this ground rule was events taking place in the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries, which could have a direct bearing on the Alliance. The difference between the NATO area and the rest of the world was embodied in the security guarantee formulated in NATO's Article 5, requiring all members to consider attack on one state as an attack on all. At NATO's 50th anniversary, this distinction seemed to have lost some of its relevance, as many argued that the term 'out-of-area' no longer conceptualised

any clearly defined area. It could, for instance, be argued that NATO had, in fact, guaranteed the safety of the new state of Bosnia-Herzegovina just as finely as if it had been covered by Article 5. Nevertheless, in this study, the distinction between the territory covered by NATO's Article 5 and 'out-of-area' territory will be maintained, with a claim to its continued relevance.

ORIGINAL CONCEPT OF NATO

In 1945, Europe had been systematically destroyed by six years of brutal war, which would take decades to heal. Amidst the ruins of Europe stood the Allied forces; victorious against the forces of Nazism, yet wary of a new potential conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Representative of two diametrically opposed ideologies, these two countries began an almost immediate struggle for the future of Europe.

During the Second World War, fear of growing Soviet expansionism began to increase dramatically. It was clear that Russia would come out of the war as the most powerful nation in Europe, and the comportment of Russia in Eastern Europe hinted at an alternative agenda to the destruction of Nazi Germany. Reporting on relations with Russia, Ambassador W. Averell Harriman wrote: "We must clearly recognize that the Soviet program is the establishment of totalitarianism [in Eastern Europe], ending personal liberty and democracy as we know and respect it."⁴

After the end of the Second World War, though the Soviet Union was significantly damaged, it chose to act from a position of power and repeatedly demanded the ability to have a virtual free rein in Eastern Europe. As the expansionist goals of the Soviet Union became more obvious, the distrust and fear

4 David McCullough, *Truman*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993, p.262.

among the allies grew, and unity of opinion also grew against the Soviet Union.

The threat of the Soviet Union was growing, and the inability of Europe to protect itself was more apparent than ever. As Russia moved in to take over Eastern Europe, there was little the allies could do. The development of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were clear balancing actions by the United States against the threat of the Soviet Union.

The Brussels Treaty of 1948 is another example of balancing against a common threat. With the fall of Czechoslovakia, the rest of Europe started fearing uprisings in their own nations as well. It was obvious to the Western European nations that they could not stand against the threat of the Soviet Union independently, but unified, would be much more powerful. Through this Treaty, they could ensure that the Soviet Union would be less likely to invade any one of them, due to the increased possibility of retaliation.

In a similar fashion, the North Atlantic Treaty came together. The growing aggressiveness of the Soviet Union and the weakness of Western Europe made it essential for the United States to get involved. The major impetus for United States' involvement, was to halt the expansion of Soviet ideology, and strengthen Europe. This argument is supported by the North Atlantic Treaty itself. The centrally important Article 5 is directly in line with the balancing of threat theory, for it requires military action to protect any nation within the Alliance.

The NATO alliance consequently emerged directly from the end of the Second World War. Politically and ideologically, the alliance drew on the pre-war US-UK Alliance Charter⁵ for

5 "The Atlantic Charter", August 14, 1941, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_16912.htm.

its basic principles, as well as on the 1948 Brussels Treaty, which founded the Western European Union (WEU) and the subsequent 1948 WEU defence arrangement.⁶ The military alliance was formed with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty of April 4, 1949, committing each member state to consider an armed attack against one state to be an attack against all states.⁷ Its original membership of 12 has since grown to 26 (with over one-third of these members added after end of the Cold War).

The threat of Soviet invasion of Western Europe was judged to be real, if not imminent, for much of the Cold War period, to the extent that nuclear weapons were incorporated into the alliance plans as well as its integrated structure (although the latter only after a very real crisis of confidence). In a sense, there was not only a strategic rationale for NATO checking potential Soviet aggression, but also a palpable operational and even tactical imperative to ensure that the alliance had the robust structure to enable it to function both politically and militarily.

In this context, the Korean War is often cited as the galvanizing event for the alliance, as the allies saw the communist intervention as a signal that a more robust and integrated civilian and military structure was required if the alliance was to function.⁸ The North Atlantic Council (NAC)'s 1952 Lisbon Conference, which examined events in Korea, was the political and bureaucratic turning point as it provided

6 "Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence", March 17, 1948, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17072.htm.

7 "The North Atlantic Treaty", April 4, 1949, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

8 David C. Isby and Kamps Jr., Charles, *Armies of NATO's Central Front*, Jane's Publishing Company Ltd., London, 1985, pp.13-14.

for much of what exists today in terms of civilian and military structure and decision making processes of the alliance.⁹

The US Allied Command Operations (ACO), led by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), is the sole command with responsibility for NATO operations. The current structure of ACO is the result of combining several geographical commands after the Prague Summit of 2002 that focused on setting the alliance on a new path.¹⁰ ACO is responsible for the overall command of NATO military operations.

The UN and NATO both emerged within the context of the post-World War II international order. The UN was set up to focus on collective security mechanisms, whereas NATO arose as a collective defence alliance, in response to the emerging Soviet threat. NATO and UN subsist in an ambivalent coexistence – according to the UN Charter, the Security Council (SC) is the sole authority with the ability to legitimise the use of force. However, the ‘inherent right’ to self-defence remains unaffected ‘if an armed attack occurs’ and until the Security Council takes the ‘necessary measures to maintain international peace and security’ (Art. 51 UN Charter). Referring to Article 51 of the UN Charter, the NATO Treaty Article 5 constitutes the legal basis for military action of the collective defence alliance.

The Washington Treaty establishing the North Atlantic Alliance was signed on April, 4, 1949. Its purpose was to deter a Soviet military attack in Western Europe and to defend Europe from an attack should deterrence fail. However, the alliance differed from traditional mutual aid or guarantee pacts

9 “Final Communiqué of North Atlantic Council Conference”, Lisbon, 1952, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c520225a.htm>.

10 “Prague Summit 2002”, November 21, 2002, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>.

in several respects important for understanding its institutional form during the Cold War. In addition to its external mission of deterrence and defence against the Soviet Union, the alliance was also intended to build peace and security among its members as democratic countries.¹¹ In NATO parlance, the alliance was an Article 4 (peace and security) as well as an Article 5 (collective defence) treaty.

For NATO and the Japan-US Alliance, alliances formed during the Cold War, the main task was not to militarily intervene in conflicts that arise outside areas perceived to be covered by their respective treaties. This is because the missions and roles of Western alliances during the Cold War were directed toward securing territorial defence of member states against the military threat from the Soviet Union. Still, as a consequence of the disappearance of the military threat on the European front in the wake of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO became proactively involved in extraterritorial conflicts. The so-called crisis response operations for extraterritorial issues have turned into the main task of the alliance. These changes can be explained by (1) the transformation of the tasks of the alliance, (2) the rise of the spirit of international cooperation and (3) the complex nature of conflicts.

NATO DURING THE COLD WAR

United Nations peacekeeping evolved since its beginnings in 1945. Initially, peacekeeping was limited to observer missions. The first four operations, occurring between 1947 and 1949, involved tasks similar to those undertaken by the

11 Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995, and Robert E. Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962.

League. In two of the missions, the UN Secretariat directly controlled employment of military personnel provided it by contributing nations. In the other two missions, national authorities retained control of their personnel while operating under a UN mandate.¹²

The Charter of the United Nations gives regional organisations a role within the arrangements for maintaining international peace and security.¹³ The primacy of the United Nations is made clear in the Charter by Article 53, which lays down that no enforcement action – no use of military forces without the consent of the states concerned – shall be taken by a regional organisation without the authorisation of the Security Council. On the other hand, Article 52 states that members of the United Nations shall make every effort to attain pacific settlements of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies, before mentioning them to the Security Council. There is therefore a clear distinction between actions taken with the consent of the states concerned and those where action, including military action, is imposed upon states without their consent.

Although the Charter is not explicit, regional bodies have traditionally been seen as having a role in solving problems among their own members.¹⁴ They were seen as providing a measure of regional collective security. In the Cold War period in Europe another kind of regional organisation developed explicitly for collective self-defence against an outside attack. Western European Union and NATO were organisations of

12 Donald C.F. Daniels et.al., *Coercive Inducement*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington D.C., 1999.

13 Roper, John, "A Wider Range of Tasks" in John Roper, et. al. eds., *Keeping Peace in the Post-Cold War Era: Strengthening Multilateral Peacekeeping*, Trilateral Commission, New York, Paris and Tokyo, 1993, p.5.

14 Ibid.

this sort. They based themselves not on Article 52 or Article 53 of the Charter (Chapter VIII) but on Article 51 which makes clear that nothing in the present Charter shall weaken the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

In both, the 1948 Brussels Treaty that created the Western European Union and the 1949 Washington Treaty that created NATO, the key articles which provide the security guarantees on which these military alliances are based, make explicit reference to this provision of the UN Charter and accept the obligation to report any action taken in collective self-defence to the Security Council and terminate it as soon as the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.¹⁵

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter¹⁶ refers to regional organizations, such as NATO, in the context of appropriate regional action in the maintenance of international peace and security.¹⁷ It is in this area that a relationship exists between

15 Ibid.

16 Chapter VIII, in Articles 52-54 of the UN Charter, specifically provides for “regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action. Article 53 provides, in pertinent part: The Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority. But no enforcement action shall be taken under regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council”.

17 See “An Agenda for Peace, Report of the Secretary General”, January 31, 1992, U.N. Doc. A/47/277-S/24111. In paragraphs 60-65, Boutros-Boutros Ghali called upon regional organizations to do more. In his 1995 Supplement to An Agenda for Peace, Report of the Secretary General, Jan. 3, 1995, U.N. Doc. N50/60-5/1995/1, the Secretary General specifically endorsed, in paragraph 79, the present NATO-led operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

the two organizations, with ultimate authority centered in the United Nations. Excepting the area of international peace and security, however, the relationship between the UN and NATO is not hierarchical.

When the NATO Charter was established in 1949 by the Treaty of Washington, it made no mention of any relationship to the Security Council as a 'regional arrangement,' nor did it contain any provision for action only upon the authorization of the Security Council, or for reporting activities 'in contemplation.' Instead, the Treaty expressed the obligation of NATO's member states to be that of 'collective self-defence' under Article 51 of the UN Charter and, correspondingly, embodied only the obligation to report "measures taken" to the Security Council.¹⁸ This formulation was adopted by the United States and its NATO allies because subordination of NATO actions as a regional arrangement to Security Council review in advance during the Cold War would have subjected all actions to Soviet veto. By characterizing NATO's military actions as 'collective self-defence' under Article 51, there would be no action of a 'regional arrangement' under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and no prior Security Council review.

The unifying force in the beginning of NATO's history was the Korean War. Initially, it activated many of the doubts that American behaviour had fed before June 25, 1950. Asia and the Pacific had been the traditional focus of American foreign policy. When the war broke out, NATO had made little progress in raising enough force to resist a Soviet attack – which, for the first time, seemed really possible. The Korean

18 Article 5 of the Treaty of Washington provides, in pertinent part: Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

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War build-up provided not only these troops, but also a larger strategic reserve from which Europe might be reinforced in an emergency. The NATO governments liked the idea. In December 1950, their ministers approved the creation of a unified command and asked that a US officer (they recommended General Eisenhower) be appointed as its chief, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

In another case, the Egyptian Dictator Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal was a more severe challenge to the Alliance. In a bid for leadership of the Arab world and as well as for the assertion of Egyptian nationalism, Nasser took over the operation that had been built and controlled for almost over a century by Britain and France. For the British, the canal was a vital link to what remained of their empire in Asia. The Eisenhower administration had appeared to share the concern of the allies but when it came down to possible military action against Egypt, the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles was evasive about the American position. He wanted to work within the framework of the UN charter to undo Nasser's seizure of the canal.

In 1956, Dag Hammarskjöld created the first UN peacekeeping force in response to the Suez Crisis. The UN dispatched 6,000 soldiers but the use of force was limited to self-defence. This type of involvement in a peacekeeping situation characterised the missions up through 1978 and is often referred to as 'traditional peacekeeping.' These 'traditional peacekeeping' missions had several distinguishing features:¹⁹

19 Schnabel, Albrecht and Ramesh Thakur, "Cascading Generations of Peacekeeping: Across the Mogadishu line to Kosovo and Timor", in Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur eds., *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2001, pp. 3-25.

1. Consent and cooperation of parties to the conflict;
2. International support, as well as support of the UN Security Council;
3. UN command and control;
4. Multinational composition of operations;
5. No use of force, except in self-defence;
6. Neutrality of the UN military between rival armies;
7. Political impartiality of the UN in relationships with rival states.

Though the term ‘peacekeeping’ is not found in the United Nations Charter, the authorisation is generally considered to lie in (or between) Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. Chapter 6 describes the Security Council’s power to investigate and mediate disputes, while Chapter 7 discusses the power to authorize economic, diplomatic, and military sanctions, as well as the use of military force, to resolve disputes.

The failure of the UN during the Cold War caused states to move away from a system of collective security and toward a system of collective defence through alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw pact.²⁰ For a period after the Cold War, peacekeeping missions were undertaken outside of the UN system. The Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) Group in Sinai and the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka are two examples of these types of missions.

NATO AFTER THE COLD WAR

NATO, a consensus-based alliance of 26 countries founded with the primary purpose of collective defence, is one

20 Ibid.

organisation that has been adapting over the past two decades. Throughout much of the Alliance's history, it functioned as a deterrent to possible Soviet aggression against Western Europe. In the past quarter-century, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, have forced NATO to evaluate its position in the modern dynamic global security environment. At the outset of the 21st century, the threat of conventional conflict between NATO and other states was deeply diminishing while the threat of terrorism was on the rise. This change in threat, from conventional, symmetrical war to unconventional, asymmetric terrorism, is the catalyst that forced NATO to institute fundamental changes to ensure its continued relevance. NATO and all of its members understand that it is irrational to extend Cold War thinking beyond that era. Knowing that nostalgia is seldom a solid foundation for current policy, NATO has come to embrace change, which is a principal reason for its longevity.

Search for Identity

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact in 1991, NATO's originating threat ceased to exist. NATO could have been in the twilight of its existence. Of further significance, the loss of NATO's originating threat also marked the loss of its only major threat. Consequently, the probability of an attack on a NATO nation's sovereign territory effectively vanished, and the core purpose for the Alliance, collective defence, disappeared with it. But is the threat really gone? NATO's Baltic and Central European members believe a belligerent Russia is replacing the Soviet threat.²¹ In particular,

21 Janina Sleivyte, "Russia's European Agenda and The Baltic States," *The Shrievenham Papers*, Number 7, Defense Academy of the United Kingdom, Wilts, February 2008, pp. 32-35.

the former Soviet states like Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and others view Russia's aggressive behaviour as motivated by her desire to reclaim 'great power' status – which includes political dominance of former Soviet rim nations.²²

In addition to the Russian threat, the Alliance leadership has identified other emerging threats to the security of the Alliance. At NATO's 1999 Washington Summit, heads of state and governments acknowledged that the dangers of the Cold War gave way to new risks.²³ These risks included instability in the Balkans, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, oppression, ethnic conflict, economic distress, and the collapse of political order.

NATO AS A UN PEACEKEEPER

US experience with the United Nations suggests that there are a limited number of States with the experience required to lead peace enforcement operations effectively. This creates difficulties in two ways. While the UN must rely upon those states with experienced leadership and highly trained forces for its more difficult operations to succeed, it must also provide some opportunity for participation to each of its 188 member States. This suggests that the UN must be encouraged to increase its capability to conduct Chapter VI peacekeeping operations²⁴ where a cease-fire exists and enforcement issues

22 Ibid.

23 "North Atlantic Treaty Organization", The Alliance's Strategic Concept, April 14, 1999, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm.

24 Chapter VI of the UN Charter includes Articles 32-38 and addresses "peaceful settlement of disputes." Although peacekeeping is nowhere mentioned in Chapter VI or elsewhere in the Charter, these articles (32-38) are interpreted to authorize the presence of an international interposition force only after a peace agreement has been signed and the consent of the parties to the force presence and its mandate has been obtained.

are minimal, and that Chapter VII enforcement operations²⁵ might be better left to regional organizations such as NATO under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

NATO was conceived and functioning during the Cold War as a collective defence organisation. The centrepiece of the Allied mission was to deter an attack and to prepare for the emergencies of Article 5 – defending the territory of the member-states against an attack by the Warsaw Pact. Although the ultimate test never came, it is fair to say that the Alliance acquitted itself well in this area.

The end of the Cold War brought the so-called ‘peace dividend.’ Many argued that NATO should be dismantled. The Alliance was no longer needed, it was said, because the common threat to Western Europe and North America had disappeared under an umbrella of global security. Such ‘peace problems’ as ethnic conflicts, separatism, international crime, drug trafficking and the like were seen as essentially internal matters. To the extent that they needed international action, they could and should be dealt with by Europeans working through a European organisation, such as the European Community itself, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), or an effective Western European Union (WEU).²⁶

If the Alliance was to continue, it needed to engage in a fundamental review of its objectives. A number of ideas

25 Chapter VII of the UN Charter includes Articles 39-51 and addresses “breaches of the peace.” Because sovereignty claims under Article 2 of the Charter are subordinate to the international interest in redressing aggression, Chapter VII authorizes “enforcement” actions to restore the peace and maintain the international “status quo” without the requirement to obtain the approval of the disputing parties.

26 On the history of the WEU, see François de Rose, “A European Pillar in the Alliance”, in Susan Eisenhower, ed., *NATO at Fifty*, Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Washington D.C., 1999.

involving radical change emerged in public discussions early on, including the elimination of the Alliance and the assumption of its military responsibilities by a European security organization such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). However, within the Alliance, the focus of discussion was more restricted, with the central issue being how best to match the existing and potential capabilities of NATO to the evolving security requirements of Europe. There was a debate between those who preferred observance to NATO's traditional role as a collective defence organisation, and those who wanted an expanded role including pan-European security.

The adaptation of NATO to a role as a Regional Organization under Chapter VIII with a peace enforcement charter must be viewed as part of a broad, long-term US and Allied strategy that supports the evolution of a peaceful and democratic Europe. The US and its NATO allies have pursued a number of initiatives since the end of the Cold War to advance this strategy. These include negotiation and implementation of the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), support for the unification of Germany, bilateral assistance to support reforms in former Soviet states, negotiation and ratification of the START II strategic arms control treaty, programs to dismantle nuclear stockpiles in Russia, the elimination of intermediate nuclear forces (INF), including a 90 percent overall reduction in NATO's nuclear weapons in Europe, active US diplomacy and the deployment of its troops as part of a NATO-led force to help stop the war and secure the peace in former Yugoslavia.

The definition of NATO's post-Cold War missions has been a piecemeal process; it has not stemmed from a grand design drawn out as a blueprint. In fact, NATO's new missions

developed out of practice rather than a pre-conceived plan of agreement by its members. That practice came with the emerging necessity for an organisation in the international system to undertake effective, co-ordinated multinational military operations for collective security missions. However, NATO's missions did not develop entirely by practice of this nature either, since there were also some preliminary sketches on the political and military direction of NATO in the post-Cold War era. The first of those was the London Declaration of 1990. The London Declaration started the first Strategy Review Process in NATO since the strategy of Flexible Response was adopted in 1967. By the end of 1991, not only had NATO officially outlined its core functions in the post-Cold War era, but also it had a new Strategic Concept replacing that of Flexible Response. The core functions were emphasised as:²⁷

1. Providing a “stable security environment in Europe, based on the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to peaceful resolution of disputes”.
2. Maintaining the transatlantic link between the United States, Canada and Europe in issues affecting their ‘vital interests’.
3. Performing the classical NATO function of collective defence by deterring and defending “against any threat of aggression against the territory of any NATO state.”
4. Preserving the strategic balance in Europe.

They also declared that the Alliance no longer considered Russia an adversary. These efforts were reaffirmed by the Alliance's declaration in Copenhagen in June 1991, which stated that NATO's objective was to help create a Europe

27 NATO's core functions as outlined in the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Copenhagen, Denmark, 6-7 June 1991, final communiqué, paragraph 6.

whole and free. Later, at NATO's Rome Summit in November 1991, the Alliance adopted a new strategic concept, which reaffirmed the continuing importance of Collective Defense, while orienting NATO toward new security challenges, such as out-of-area missions, crisis management and peacekeeping operations.

I. Yugoslavian Crisis

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the geopolitical situation changed drastically. So did the response of the international community to the newly emerging conflicts in the world arena. The evolution in the post-Cold War era brought about new elements (both military and civilian) of working together in order to bring peace in the aftermath of civil wars. Or, as an expert put it, "peace-keeping has become a general term, entailing different kinds of operations to maintain peace within states and peace among states."²⁸

NATO became involved in the Bosnian war for various reasons. At that moment NATO was the only organization which was able and willing to provide the military support requested by the UN in a relatively quick period of time. For NATO, on the other hand, it was an ultimate opportunity to assume new responsibilities alongside its traditional collective defence task. The 50-minute documentary cites retired CIA veterans and surviving Tibetan fighters to shed light on how Washington funded and trained the resistance until it suddenly decided that wooing Communist China made better sense.

But at the same time NATO's first involvement in a peacekeeping operation revealed all elements of experimentalism. NATO operated essentially in support of

28 Eirini Lemos-Maniati, "Peace-keeping Operations: Requirements and Effectiveness: NATO's role", *EAPC Final Report*, June 2001, p. 7.

the UN in general and of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) specifically. No ground forces were deployed by NATO, just NATO vessels and aircrafts were involved. The problem was however that the NATO/UN relationship constantly evolved without creating a clear conceptual framework of cooperation and command. However, after the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa, two so-called UN Safe Areas, the actual authority to launch air strikes to protect these areas and to repel the Bosnian Serbs, was progressively detached from the UN and resulted in a sustained air campaign of NATO against the Bosnian Serbs, bringing an end to the Bosnian war.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) was a great challenge to the world community and its capacity for crisis management and preventive actions in the new post-Cold War international security environment.²⁹ For NATO as an European regional arrangement for safeguarding peace and defending its member states from outside aggression, the unfolding crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina made it very clear that NATO had to change the way it did business. The UNSC agreed to send UNPROFOR peacekeepers and asked NATO to insure the delivery of this aid to Sarajevo. This first non-Article Five peace-keeping mission was also defining for the Alliance, as it had to work closely with other international organisations – the United Nations and the Western European Union.³⁰

NATO's involvement in the peace efforts in the area began in the second half of 1992 with the assistance given, in coordination with the West European Union (WEU) to the enforcement of the UN embargo against Yugoslavia and the equipment and staff, given to the UNPROFOR headquarters

29 Ivan D. Ivanov, *Transforming NATO: New Allies, Missions and Capabilities*, Lexington Books, Plymouth, 2013, p.83.

30 Ibid.

in Bosnia. In its Communique of 17 December 1992, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) declared its “preparedness... to support, on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with our own procedures, peacekeeping operations under the authority of the UN Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for international peace and security.” Moreover, it stated very strongly that “for the first time in its history, the Alliance is taking part in UN peacekeeping and sanctions enforcement operations.”³¹ It is evident here that the initial NATO position regarding peacekeeping was one of support to the UN, while remaining autonomous in terms of decision-making. As a result of the decision to support the UN sanctions NATO secured some ships and airplanes for the conduct of maritime and air-surveillance to Operation Sharp Guard.³²

A new phase in NATO’s involvement in the Bosnian crisis came in February 1994 with the shelling of the Sarajevo marketplace that killed 68 people and wounded over 200.³³ This happened at a time when NATO (under pressure from Britain and France) was reconsidering options about using military force in Bosnia in support of UNPROFOR’s humanitarian actions in the Srebrenica and Tuzla safe areas. The Sarajevo event prompted a strong international reaction and forwarded the idea of establishing a heavy-weapons exclusion zone around the Bosnian capital as an effort to end its siege. In the days that followed, the UN Secretary General asked NATO for

31 “Communique Issued by the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council”, December 17, 1992, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c921217a.htm>.

32 “NATO/WEU Operation Sharp Guard, Final IFOR Fact Sheet”, October 2, 1996, <http://www.nato.int/ifor/general/shrp-grd.htm>.

33 For the tragic incident on the Sarajevo marketplace and the reaction of the international community in the early days of February see Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Penguin Books/BBC Books, London, 1995, pp.309-311.

support in initiating air-strikes for attacks against the heavy-weapons positions. The North Atlantic Council gave a green light to that request but only if it was to be accompanied by the creation of an exclusion zone. Furthermore, NATO gave a ten-day ultimatum to both the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian government for the withdrawal of the weapons and compliance with the exclusion zone. It warned that otherwise in ten days' time "heavy weapons of any of the parties found within the Sarajevo exclusion zone, unless controlled by UNPROFOR, will, along with their direct and essential military support facilities, be subject to NATO air strike."³⁴

Russia opposed the idea but was not capable of getting a new Security Council resolution about the exclusion zone. However, Russia's role in the February crisis was very important in view of the overall international intervention in the area. The Russian decision (taken just days before the expiration of the ultimatum's deadline) to move its UNPROFOR troops from Croatia to Sarajevo was the turning point, that made the Bosnian Serbs agree to the placement of the weapons under UN control.

In those weeks of tensions, the UN also tried to intervene. Most active there was UNPROFOR's Commander Michael Rose. He negotiated with the Bosnian Serbs an immediate cease-fire, as well as the placement of heavy weapons under UNPROFOR's control.³⁵ Thus his efforts got in line with those of NATO, although the prevailing opinion was that the settlement of the crisis was an outcome of NATO's ultimatum – the first such ultimatum in NATO's history.

34 "North Atlantic Council, Decision taken at the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Permanent session", February 9, 1994, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940209a.htm>.

35 Michael Rose, *Fighting for Peace*, Harvill Press, London, 1998, pp. 51-52.

The implications of NATO's involvement in the February 1994 crisis were quite important. In the first place it was the first case of such an ultimatum about the use of military force in the history of the North Atlantic alliance. Secondly, it was a direct warning that NATO was determined to use air-strikes if presumed necessary after the expiration of the ultimatum. Thirdly, it was the NAC as an institution that alone took the decision about the establishment of the exclusion zone, although it cited some UN Security Council resolutions about it (in vague reference to the safe areas concept, which had a UN mandate). Fourthly, the issue of air-strikes demonstrated alliance unity on the surface, although significant differences of opinions occurred within NATO while discussing the issue. And lastly, the crisis brought as power-brokers and mediators in the field, both Moscow and Washington, while the UN and European diplomacy remaining a bit isolated in the final count. Even NATO had to refrain from the use of force as a result of the Russian intervention.

NATO's involvement in Bosnia following the civil war there, confirmed the horizontal evolution of peace-keeping and increasing needs for new 'hard' and 'soft' power capabilities in the mid and late 1990s. After the initial failure of the diplomatic efforts to halt hostilities and implement a cease-fire, the UN passed a resolution in April 1993, declaring Srebrenica and several other enclaves controlled by the Bosnian Muslims and surrounded by Serbian forces 'safe areas.'

The Dayton's Peace Accords of November 1995 made the deployment of UN peacekeepers with the support of NATO a crucial element in the restoration of peace in the area.³⁶ After

36 Boyadjieva, Nadia, "The United States and the Dissolution of Former Yugoslavia: the Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina", in *Essays in American Studies, Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, Polis, Sofia, 2001, p. 185.

being negotiated in Dayton, Ohio, the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) was signed in Paris on December 14, 1995, by representatives from the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.³⁷

NATO's biggest challenge after Dayton was providing a military presence that would ensure the implementation of the peace accords.³⁸ Under the UN Resolution 1031, the Alliance was the backbone for the formation of the International Force (IFOR) for multinational peace-keeping operations. IFOR's primary tasks were to ensure compliance with the cease-fire and troop withdrawal to their respective territories, and to control air space over Bosnia and Herzegovina. IFOR was, in essence, a peacekeeping mission deployed with a one-year mandate and limited peace support functions.³⁹ Soon after its inception, however, the force became involved in additional activities beyond simple peacekeeping, such as road and bridge repair, gas restoration, water and electric connections and telecommunications.

As the situation on the ground remained potentially unstable, when IFOR's one-year term was completed, the international community agreed that a new Stabilisation Force (SFOR) would be introduced. SFOR held a very similar peacekeeping mandate as IFOR – its primary focus was the establishment of a safe and secure environment to facilitate civil and political reconstruction. In addition to deterring the resumption of hostilities, NATO peacekeepers held responsibilities of supervising de-mining operations, arresting individuals indicted for war crimes, assisting with the return of

37 "History of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina", <http://www.nato.int/sfor/docu/d981116a.htm>.

38 Ivan D. Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p.84.

39 *Ibid.*

displaced refugees, and even implementing defence reforms in Bosnia.

The Dayton Accords and their implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the active peace-enforcement engagement of the UN, NATO and all the other international organisations and actors, brought peace to that country but fell short of making peace in the former Yugoslavia area a lasting success. In the late-1990's the international community and especially the US proved incapable of finding a practical political solution to the increasing problems in yet another troublesome region of former Yugoslavia – the Kosovo province. The conflict in Kosovo between the ethnic Albanians and the ethnic Serbs, quite soon brought to the surface some fundamental questions based on the aims and values of the international community and its organizations, as well as on their capabilities for reactions in such conflict situations.

The Kosovo province of Serbia had long been a cause and a subject for political, religious and ethnic controversies within Yugoslavia.⁴⁰ Because of the historic memory about the defeat of the Serbian army at Kosovo Polje by the Ottoman Turks in 1389, most Serbs considered Kosovo (with its shrines, cathedrals, and monasteries) as the 'cradle' of the Serbian nation. In the 1990's, due to various demographic, economic and political factors the majority of the population there was, however, Albanian by ethnic origin and Muslim by religion. The Serbs desired the region to remain within Serbia, but the Albanian-Muslim majority looked forward to a sustained and real autonomy and even independence. The region enjoyed,

40 For Western interpretations of the Kosovo problem, see: Vickers, Miranda, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998; and Udovicki, Jasminka and Ridgeway, James, *Burn This House: The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2000.

until 1989, a high degree of autonomy within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but then the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic altered the status of the region. In 1989 the autonomy of Kosovo was abolished and it was brought under Belgrade's direct control.⁴¹

In the early 1990's, the international community regarded Kosovo as an internal Serbian problem. However, in December 1992, the US informed Serbia that it would not tolerate a violent solution to the situation in Kosovo.⁴² Serbia's reaction was to suppress the independence movement, and the Serbian actions gradually became more intense. The internationalisation of the Kosovo problem and the engagement of the UN there, began with UNSC Resolution 855, which referred to the Yugoslav authorities' refusal to allow the establishment of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) special missions (later changed to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]) in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina.⁴³

At the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, the expansion of war and of violence in the former Yugoslavia, along with the change that had taken place in Europe's political situation, caused the participating States of the CSCE to abandon their initial support of Yugoslavia's integrity and start siding with the breakaway republics:

The political position of the CSCE had to adapt itself as quickly as possible to the new situation created by

41 Malcolm, Noel, *Kosovo: A Short History*, New York University Press, New York, 1998, pp. 345-346.

42 Alex Danchev and Thomas Halverson, *International Perspectives on the Yugoslav Conflict*, Macmillan, London, 1996, p.11; also Julie Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999.

43 "UNSCR 855", August 9, 1993, <http://www.un.org/peace/kosovo/93sc855.htm>.

war, especially when it became clear that the principles of the Helsinki Final Act were not adequate for facing post-cold-war conflicts based on nationalist disputes.”⁴⁴

Among the principles that the Yugoslav crisis put to the test are, particularly, the inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity, non-use of force and self-determination, as well as the principles of respect for human rights and the humanitarian complex as a whole.⁴⁵

The period of CSCE’s institutionalization and transformation into the OSCE, which began with the Paris Charter for a New Europe and was essentially concluded at the Summit held in Budapest in 1994, coincided with the crisis and armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia. The experience gained during the Yugoslav crisis, the Soviet Union’s disintegration and the changes in Eastern Europe, affected the direction of the CSCE’s transformation, its mission today and its institutional framework. In the opinion of Yugoslav authors, the CSCE/OSCE has been altered to such a degree during this period that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’s reactivation in the Organization would resemble the admission into a new and unknown structure, rather than a return to recognizable surroundings.⁴⁶ An opinion prevails that the OSCE is actually a completely new regional organization in Europe, both in substance and in form, differing from the previous (Helsinki) CSCE, within

44 Eric Remacle, “CSCE and Conflict Prevention: The Yugoslav Case, paper presented at the Second European Peace Research Congress”, Budapest, November 12-14, 1993, p. 5.

45 On this point see Ljubivoje Acimovic, “KEBS i jugoslovenska kriza [CSCE and the Yugoslav Crisis]”, in: Milan Sahovic ed., *Medunarodno pravo i jugoslovenska kriza* [International Law and the Yugoslav Crisis], Belgrade 1996, pp. 128-132.

46 Cf. Oskar Kovac/Branko Milinkovic/Predrag Simic, *Komponente evropske orijentacije Jugoslavije* [Components of the European Orientation of Yugoslavia], Belgrade 1997 (mimeo)

whose framework and under whose auspices the Paris Summit was held in 1990. The OSCE is, furthermore, still trying to find its identity, its place and role in contemporary international relations. Thirdly, the OSCE is basically a product of the West for it reflects the West's views and ensures its interests – and, accordingly, the interests of all its other participating States – for security and co-operation.⁴⁷ All three of these points are important not only for an evaluation of the CSCE's current evolution and its activities, but also for the projection of its further development and its role in European relations in the years ahead.

The attempt in Rambouillet to find a political solution to the crisis by making the parties agree to the *Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo*, failed.⁴⁸ Both sides objected to the agreement – the Serbs, because of the international military presence in Kosovo; the Kosovar Albanians to some other aspects regarding the status of the province. The proposed accords mandated the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces and the establishment of a three-year interim period during which Kosovo was to enjoy democratic constitutional self-government. An international meeting was proposed to be convened after three years to determine the final status of Kosovo. NATO was the structure to provide the security forces necessary to ensure compliance with the accords and would have been authorized to use force if necessary.⁴⁹

47 Ljubivoje Acimovic, OEBS u posthladnoratovskoj Evropi [OSCE in Post-Cold War Europe], in: Brana Markovic (Ed.), 50 godina Instituta za medunarodnu politiku i privredu [The 50 Years of the Institute of International Politics and Economics], Belgrade 1997, p. 336

48 Rambouillet Agreement: *Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo*, London, 1999.

49 During the negotiations many Western experts made comparisons between the Dayton Accords and the on-going Kosovo negotiations – e.g. see Friedman T., “Redo Dayton on Bosnia, and Do a Deal on Kosovo”, *International Herald Tribune*, February 8, 1999.

During the 78-day air-campaign against Serbia⁵⁰ (March 23 – June 9, 1999) NATO's objectives in relation to the ongoing conflict were specifically expressed on two important occasions – in the Statement issued at the Extraordinary Meeting of the North Atlantic Council held at NATO headquarters on 12 April 1999, and reaffirmed by NATO's Heads of State and Government when they met in Washington on 23 April 1999 at the EAPC Summit.⁵¹ Those objectives included a verifiable stop to all military action and the immediate ending of violence and repression; the withdrawal from Kosovo of the military, police and paramilitary forces; the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence; the unconditional and safe return of all refugees and displaced persons and unhindered access to them by humanitarian aid organisations; among others. Thus, in the spring of 1999 the achievement of these objectives, accompanied by measures to ensure their full implementation, was regarded by NATO as the factors and conditions that would end the violent conflict in the province.

The framework of the peacekeeping operation in Kosovo was given by UNSC Resolution 1244.⁵² The entire text of the resolution was within the framework of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. It delegated to the international community⁵³ a broad and challenging mandate to establish democratic self-

50 “Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report: Report to Congress”, *U.S. Department of Defence*, Washington D.C., 2000, <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/kaar02072000.pdf>.

51 “An Alliance for the 21st Century, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C.” April 24, 1999, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/international/nato50/communique_4-24.html, also *NATO Handbook*, pp. 126-127.

52 “UNSCR 1244”, June 10, 1999, <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1999/99sc1244.html>.

53 *Ibid.*

governing institutions and to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo.

According to Lord George Robertson, the NATO Secretary General, the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Kosovo, made it clear that Europe was “still subject to the political, economic and military pressures that can and do lead to open conflict...Accordingly, all our institutions must prepare themselves to face these new challenges.”⁵⁴ He said that that NATO political and military reforms begun long before Kosovo paid off during the campaign. “This Alliance has adapted its political and military tools... And we changed our strategy and force structures to better respond to the challenge of peace support operations... In the Kosovo campaign, all these reforms paid off.”⁵⁵

The Yugoslav crisis of the 1990’s was evidence of the need to implement the new doctrine of peace-keeping and the recently formulated *New Strategic Concept of NATO*. Both in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Kosovo, the UN had lost some of its credibility, and as the threats there to civilians as targets of warring factions increased, NATO decided to intervene in order to halt the repression. It was interesting that in Bosnia and Herzegovina the key elements were almost absent, which led to deteriorating confidence in UN peacekeeping capabilities, while in Kosovo they were present but not under the auspices of UN but under that of a ‘regional organisation’ (NATO).

II. Afghanistan

When it comes to illustrating the need for a comprehensive approach to crisis management, Afghanistan provides for an

54 “Intervention” by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson at the Conference “The Trans-Atlantic Century”, Aspen Institute, Rome, January 13, 2000, http://www.usembassy.it/file2000_01/alia/a001130a.htm.

55 Ibid.

interesting case study. The conflict in Afghanistan has been an on-going venue for NATO forces since the US led invasion in the winter of 2001/2002. Under the auspices of UNSC Resolution 1386⁵⁶, renewed annually since 2002, NATO led an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan has been a long and difficult one, which has seen many problems, including the diversion of funds and forces towards the Iraq war. It remains one of NATO's biggest challenges, and thus is a worthy example to use in the analysis of NATO's strategic concept and the way forward in peacekeeping and crisis management.

Afghanistan provides a unique problem, as it is a geographically complex country in terms of its combat environment. It is landlocked, bordering China, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. It is mostly mountainous, which creates a strategic problem. The mountains of Afghanistan provide ample cover for local insurgents, who are more used to the terrain, as compared to foreign forces who often have difficulty with the landscape due to its unfamiliarity.

At the beginning of the Afghanistan conflict, there were two main camps. The first one included those who felt a substantial peacekeeping force was necessary to ensure security in Afghanistan. Within the US State Department, there was a tendency to favour such a force in order to stabilise key urban areas. The then Secretary of State Colin Powell argued that a US strategy had to take "charge of the whole country by military force, police, or other means."⁵⁷ James Dobbins, who was the

56 "Adopted by the Security Council at its 4443rd meeting", UNSC RES 1386, 2001, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/454998?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>.

57 Tariq Ali , "NATO's lost cause", *The Guardian*, June 11, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jun/11/pakistan.nato>.

Bush administration's special envoy to the Afghan opposition, stated that it was "naïve and irresponsible" to believe that "Afghanistan could be adequately secured by Afghans in the immediate aftermath of a twenty-three year civil war."⁵⁸ This camp felt that a small NATO presence in Kabul would help in establishing security and allowing Afghan leaders to return to Kabul. However, they also felt that international forces would be needed in key cities in order to provide security across all of Afghanistan.

Members of the Afghan government also supported this plan, along with other members of the international community. The Bonn Agreement of 2001 includes a paragraph, which allows for the expansion of an international security force outside of Kabul: "Conscious that some time may be required for the new Afghan security and armed forces to be fully constituted and functioning, the participants in the U.N. Talks on Afghanistan request the United Nations Security Council to consider authorising the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas."⁵⁹

The second group supported peacekeeping forces in Kabul but were generally opposed to extending the reach beyond that. Pentagon officials were especially adamant that there should be no peacekeeping force outside of Kabul. There were especially concerned over including US forces in such efforts, as the fear existed that if US forces were to be placed into ISAF, allied nations might begin to rely too heavily on the United States. The State Department preferred to expand ISAF and felt that

58 Interview with James Dobbins, former Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, on June 22, 2018.

59 UN News Center, February 5, 2012. Annex I, paragraph 3.

the stabilization process in Afghanistan should be mainly Afghanistan's responsibility.⁶⁰

The primary US mission in Afghanistan was to combat Al Qaeda, and everything else was considered purely incidental.⁶¹ This led to a conflict of commitment. For example, US forces were told not to engage in counterinsurgency operations, but rather counter-terrorism operations.⁶² Nation-building was also no part of the US plan in Afghanistan. This, along with a rushed move to invade Iraq, helped to undermine the credibility of the Afghan operations and showed a lack of commitment on the part of the US government.

Security-building measures in Afghanistan were handled mainly by two types of international forces led by the US and NATO. These were *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) which was the official name used by the US government for the 'War on Terror' in Afghanistan, and the ISAF, which was started as a peacekeeping force under the framework of the Bonn Conference, 2001. OEF was a joint US, UK and Afghan operation, and therefore was separate from ISAF, which consisted of troops from NATO and 37 other countries. The main purpose of OEF was to conduct warfare against the Taliban, Al Qaeda and like-minded warlords. Whereas ISAF, which was authorised by the UNSC, conducted operations in Afghanistan not only to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, but also to support the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Although ISAF initially operated only in Kabul, it was authorised to expand its mission throughout Afghanistan in October 2003. Many US forces originally deployed in OEF joined ISAF in 2005. ISAF, facing mounting

60 Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*, W.W. Norton, New York, 2009, p. 112.

61 Ibid, p.118.

62 Ibid, p.142.

challenges from the insurgents, was involved in more intensive combat operations in southern Afghanistan after 2006.⁶³

Meanwhile, the UN was in charge of peace-building and reconstruction in Afghanistan, with a longer-term view than NATO. UNDP had carried out aid and development work in the country since the 1950s. Following the Bonn Conference, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was also authorised by the UNSC to support the Afghan Government in its efforts to improve critical areas, including security, governance and economic development, and regional cooperation. The mandate also identified the importance of monitoring and coordination of efforts to protect civilians and support wider human rights, in particular, the rights of women and children.⁶⁴ In this sense, enhancing the sectors of justice, the rule of law and the national police force were a significant task for UNAMA. The UN was also in charge of oversight of social recovery processes including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Therefore, it can be generally accepted that peace-building in Afghanistan adopted the multiple framework model.

There have been several issues in terms of the strategies and tactics adopted by the US and NATO-led security policy in Afghanistan. The first and essential issue is troop numbers. For example, Adam Roberts pointed out that the size of troops for security operations was too small for the entire population of Afghanistan. He claimed that past exponents of counter-insurgency doctrine have generally placed heavy emphasis on achieving force ratios of about 20-25 counter-insurgents for every 1,000 residents in an area of operations. If the entire country with its 31 million inhabitants were to be viewed as

63 ISAF Home Page, <http://www.isaf.nato.ont/history.html>.

64 UNAMA Home Page, <http://unama.unmission.org>.

the area of operations, a staggering 775,000 counter-insurgents would be needed.⁶⁵ The issue of a lack of personnel in ISAF was also significant when one compares them to peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and Kosovo.

In 2003, UN Security Council Resolution 1510 expanded ISAF's mandate to cover the whole of Afghanistan 'as resources permit,' providing security support for 'reconstruction and humanitarian efforts' and 'the performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement.'⁶⁶ Over the next four years, the number of military personnel deployed by ISAF grew consistently, reaching around 9,000 in 2005. A year later, ISAF's presence covered the whole country and the operation had over 30,000 troops on the ground.⁶⁷ With the expansion of ISAF to the eastern and southern regions of Afghanistan, its troops became increasingly involved in fighting an insurgency. In response, ISAF launched a new counterinsurgency strategy in 2009 and US President Barack Obama ordered a 'surge' of some 30,000 additional US troops. ISAF troop numbers continued to grow during 2010, peaking at more than 130,000.⁶⁸

From 2012, NATO started the transition of security responsibilities to ANSF. This process culminated in the shutting down of ISAF at the end of 2014. At the beginning of 2015, at the invitation of the Afghan government and in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2189, NATO opened a follow-on operation to ISAF, the Resolute Support

65 Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan", *Survival*, Volume 51, Number 1, 2009, p. 36.

66 Claudia Pfeifer and Jaïr van der Lijn, "Multilateral peace operations in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, September 16, 2021, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-background/2021/multilateral-peace-operations-afghanistan-between-2001-and-2021>.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

Mission (RSM). The objective of this non-combat operation was to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions to develop their capacities. RSM deployments numbered around 15,000–17,000 military personnel until its drawdown started in 2020. The RSM started the final withdrawal of its troops in May 2021, and was terminated in early September 2021.⁶⁹

The US and NATO troops executed American President Biden’s policy of a complete withdrawal of American troops and contractors supporting the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) by September 11, 2021. The last American soldier left Afghanistan on August 30, 2021. The decision to withdraw without a cease-fire or a framework for a political agreement between the Taliban and the government at Kabul came a surprise to the Afghans and regional countries. They have capitalized on the moment to seize dozens of districts and project an air of confidence and victory.

Before the Doha talks started, the Taliban had maintained that they would hold direct talks only with the US and not with the Kabul government, which they did not recognise. The US effectively accepted this demand when they cut the Afghan government out of the process and entered into direct talks with the insurgents. The deal included four aspects of the conflict — violence, foreign troops, intra-Afghan peace talks and the use of Afghan soil by terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (the IS has an Afghan unit, the Islamic State Khorasan Province, or ISKP, which largely operates from Nangarhar in eastern Afghanistan). According to the agreement, the Taliban promised to reduce violence, join intra-Afghan peace talks and cut all ties with foreign terrorist groups, while the US pledged to withdraw all its troops, roughly

69 Ibid.

12,000 at the time of the signing of the agreement in February 2020, by May 1, 2021.

The insurgents pledged they would prevent international terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda from using Afghanistan as a base for attacks. And the US pledged it would work toward the gradual removal of Taliban leaders from both American and United Nations sanctions blacklists.

The irony of the withdrawal is that Afghanistan's impact on American foreign policy is about to get bigger, not smaller. Biden's hope was that leaving Afghanistan would allow the US to focus on more pressing matters, at home and abroad. The US would reap a strategic dividend, the thinking went, in the form of money, military power and attention freed up by retrenchment.

The Afghanistan crisis reveals several inconvenient truths for the trans-atlantic relationship. For the Europeans, it has exposed both their inability to change the decision calculus of the United States and their powerlessness to defend their own interests (e.g., evacuate their own citizens and allies) without the support of Washington DC. For the United States, it has demonstrated that, even as it looks to Europe to take on more responsibility for security and defence in its own neighbourhood, most European countries still lack the political will and capabilities to do so.

One likelihood is that this experience will accelerate NATO's focus away from out-of-area crisis management and toward collective defence. Even prior to the Afghanistan crisis, the allies' political will to participate in costly, open-ended missions outside of NATO's area of responsibility was decreasing. Since 2014, NATO has refocused on collective defence, and several allies have simultaneously doubled down on national security priorities (e.g., France on terrorism and

Italy on managing the consequences of illegal migration). As a result, any future out-of-area missions may have a smaller footprint and be low intensity.

Allies are also likely to be more discerning about when and under what conditions they join operations, particularly when they would be dependent on US assets. They may seek more specifics on the duration, end-states, and exit plan of a mission; seek assurances in terms of support; or demand a greater say in shaping or leading the mission. A sense of obligation or loyalty to the United States will no longer be enough to generate forces. This is already perceptible in Iraq, where the Europeans are ready to take more responsibility in NATO's training mission on the condition that Washington maintains some degree of military backing (e.g., force protection, airlift, and intelligence).

If the fall of Kabul is often described as a 'Saigon moment' for the Biden administration, it could also be seen as a new 'Suez moment' for the Europeans and NATO, as the crisis brings to light the limitations of Europe's strategic ambitions and the need for adaptation in NATO. While this crisis is unlikely to jeopardize the trans-Atlantic alliance, it could serve as another cautionary tale for both Europeans and the United States, as they embark in a revision of NATO's strategic concept.

III. Iraq

The stage was being set for the US to take unilateral military action against Saddam Hussein after the 9/11 tragedy, midway through the Afghan invasion.⁷⁰ The US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld alleged that fleeing Al Qaeda terrorists from Afghanistan had found refuge in Iraq, and implied that

70 VS Mani, "Is An Attack on Iraq Legal?", *The Hindu*, September 4, 2002; and VS Mani, "A War to Enforce Disarmament?", *The Hindu*, March 20, 2003.

President Saddam Hussein was possibly aware of this. The US President George Bush Jr. in a televised address to his nation in March 2002 declared: “Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict commencing at a time of our choosing.” This ultimatum was the US response to its failure to get a United States-United Kingdom-Spanish draft resolution through the UNSC.

According to the United States and the United Kingdom, the previous Council resolutions on Iraq, including resolutions 661 and 678 (1990) and 687 (1991), already embodied adequate legal basis for any use of force against Iraq. Evidently, they did not want to give the Security Council an opportunity to specify what action it would take, as that could have deprived them of their so-called ‘right’ to unilateral military action. The Bush ultimatum specifically invoked resolutions 678 and 687.

The numerous statements emanating from the US government after late 2002 and in particular the first few weeks of 2003, as also the Bush ultimatum, threw up a wide range of justifications for unilateral use for force.⁷¹ They included the right of individual and collective self-defence, the right of individual self-defence, the right or the duty to enforce international sanctions, the right of action to prevent and punish international terrorism, and the right to ‘humanitarian’ intervention and the duty to liberate the people of Iraq from the clutches of a ruthless dictatorship.

And there was a cluster of justifications of a ‘humanitarian’ character. These were of two categories.⁷² One bore upon the oppressive nature of the Saddam Hussein regime and its

71 VS Mani, *Humanitarian Intervention Today*, Martinus Nijhoff, Publishers, Boston, 2005, p.255.

72 Ibid, p.262.

excesses against the people of Iraq: that the regime had the worst record of protection of human rights, that the Kurds in the north of Iraq and the Shias in the south were oppressed and subjugated, that the Ba'ath party spread and sustained a reign of terror, and the mass graves unearthed after the US-UK invasion of Iraq proved this. The second sought to justify everything else on humanitarian grounds. The defence of the American people from certain future Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and terrorist attacks – should America be a 'sitting duck' until such attacks occurred? The evil designs of Saddam Hussein against the people of Israel; the possible future use of Weapons of Mass Destruction against other peoples, and so on.

Key allies in NATO, such as the United Kingdom, agreed with the US actions, while France and Germany were critical of the plans to invade Iraq, arguing, instead, for continued diplomacy and weapons inspections. After considerable debate, the UN Security Council adopted a compromise resolution, UN Security Council Resolution 1441, which authorised the resumption of weapons inspections and promised 'serious consequences' for non-compliance. Security Council members France and Russia made clear that they did not consider these consequences to include the use of force to overthrow the Iraqi government. Both the US Ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte, and the UK Ambassador, Jeremy Greenstock, publicly confirmed this reading of the resolution, assuring that Resolution 1441 provided no "automaticity" or "hidden triggers" for an invasion without further consultation of the Security Council.

It became clear that the differences in outlook between the US and Europe, which had developed during the 1990's, would mark the relationship during the first years of the George W.

Bush Presidency. While Europeans increasingly tended to rely upon negotiations, diplomacy and international law, the US continued to stress the importance of a strong military. These differences did not change after 9/11; perhaps they were even intensified. Despite an outpouring of sympathy for American citizens, it soon became clear that European nations were not willing to provide unconditional support to the US. As German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated: “We are prepared for risks and also military risks, but not for any adventures.”⁷³

The political and military campaign against Saddam Hussein’s regime exposed to public view deep and seemingly unbridgeable divisions between the United States and some European allies, and within Europe. The United Nations and the European Union were both severely mauled in the process, while NATO came close to collapse.

With tensions escalating prior to events, in February 2003, Turkey requested NATO assistance under Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The Alliance undertook a number of precautionary defensive measures to ensure Turkey’s security in the event of a potential threat to its territory or population as a consequence of the crisis.

On May 21, 2003, the Alliance also agreed to support one of its members – Poland – in its leadership of a sector in the US-led Multinational Stabilization Force in Iraq.

Securing foreign contributions to the reconstruction and stabilization of Iraq later became a major priority for U.S. policymakers after the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003. International participation was sought to support peacekeeping operations, assist in efforts to train and equip

73 Sebastian Harnisch, “Bound to Fail? Germany’s Policy in The Iraq’s Crisis 2001-2003”, Twenty Seventh Annual Conference of German Studies Association, New Orleans, September 18-21, 2003, pp.57-59.

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Iraq's new security forces, and provide financial support to reconstruction efforts. For many countries, the Security Council's passage of Resolution 1511 on October 6, 2003, marked an important milestone in establishing the legitimacy of the post-war international presence in Iraq. Nevertheless, some countries remain wary of deploying or sustaining troops in Iraq.

IV. Libya

To put NATO's war in Libya within the framework of historic analysis, one only needs to be reminded that the main thrust of the sudden physical European colonisation of Africa, called the 'Scramble for Africa,' started when an economic recession – originally called the 'Great Depression' but in retrospect renamed as the 'Long Depression' – hit much of Europe and North America from roughly 1873 to 1893. In this period the entire tempo of Western European contact with African nations transformed.⁷⁴

Prior to this economic recession, Western European companies and enterprises were content dealing with African leaders and recognising their authority. Few Western European colonies in Africa had existed, besides a few coastal strips based on strategically-placed trading posts in Sierra Leone and Lagos in the possession of Britain; Mozambique and Angola in the possession of Portugal; and Senegal in the possession of France. At this time the biggest external force in Africa was the Ottoman Empire, which was beginning its long decline as a great power.⁷⁵

74 Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, "Libya Then and Now: An Overview of NATO's Handiwork", *Global Research*, November 22, 2014, <http://templeton01436.blogspot.com/2014/11/libya-then-and-now-overview-of-natos.html>.

75 Ibid.

Although appropriating Libya's financial and material wealth were objectives of the NATO war in 2011, the broader objectives of the criminal war were part of the struggle to control the African continent and its vast wealth. The 'Scramble for Africa' was repeating itself. Just like the first time, recession and economic rivalries were tied to this new round of colonial conquest in the African continent.⁷⁶

The emergence of Asia as the new global centre of gravity, at the expense of the nations of the North Atlantic in North America and Western Europe, has also primed the United States and its allies to start an endeavour to close Africa off from the People's Republic of China and the emerging centres of power in Russia, India, Brazil, and Iran.⁷⁷

Libya is a lucrative prize of massive economic value. It has immense oil and gas resources, vast amounts of underground water from the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System, important trade routes, substantial foreign investments, and large amounts of liquid capital. Up until 2011, Libya was blessed with a rare gift in regard to its national revenue in that it saved a significant amount. In 2011, as the entire world watched the Arab Spring in amazement, the US and its allies, predominantly working under the banner of the NATO and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), militarily overran the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (official name of Libya).

The peaceful civilian protesters they claimed to be intervening to protect were not really what the US and its cohorts presented to the world. Many of these so-called 'protesters' were armed, and when this became apparent, they eventually began to portray themselves as 'rebel forces.' These so-called 'rebels' in Libya were not a military force that

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

emerged spontaneously for the most part, but an insurgency movement cultivated and organised before any opposition activities were even reported in Libya.⁷⁸

After Libya's rapprochement with the US and the European Union, it was unthinkable to many that Washington and any of its allies could even have been preparing to topple the Libyan government. Business and trade ties between Libya and the US, Britain, Italy, France, Spain, and Turkey had boomed since 2003, after Colonel Muammar Gaddafi opted for cooperation with Washington. No one imagined that Gaddafi's 'New Libya', with its neo-liberalism, could be on a collision course with NATO. Yet, the US and its EU partners for several years made preparations for taking over Libya. They had infiltrated the Jamahiriya's government, security and intelligence sectors. Longstanding imperialist objectives existing since the Second World War, aimed at dividing Libya into three colonial territories, were taken out of government filing cabinets in Washington, London, Paris and Rome, and circulated at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

In league with these colonial plans, the US and its allies had been cultivating ties with different members of the Libyan opposition and had always reserved the option of using these opposition figures for regime change in Tripoli. Putting together their colonial designs and mobilising their agents, the US and its allies began organising the stage for establishing the Transitional National Council (TNC) – simply called the Transitional Council – and similar bodies to govern Libya as its new puppet leadership. The British and French even held joint invasion exercises months before the Libyan conflict erupted with the Arab Spring in 2011, while various intelligence services and foreign military commandos from NATO and

78 Ibid.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries were also on the ground in Libya, helping to prepare for the destabilisation of the North African country and the toppling of the Jamahiriya's government and institutions.

But the Libyan operation also raised questions about NATO's mission, its future role in such conflicts, and how it determines when to intervene. NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen asserted that he saw the Libya operation as a template for future NATO missions, and proof that the United Nations could outsource its muscle to the Alliance.⁷⁹

For nearly seven months in 2011, NATO planes, carried out a massive bombing campaign in Libya, intended to overthrow the government of Muammar Gaddafi.

The involvement of regional organisations in enforcement of the No-Fly Zone (NFZ) in Libya, purportedly in support of UNSC Resolution 1973, raises interesting questions about the role of regional organisations in collective security in general, and their relationship with the Security Council in particular. Libya was not the first case in which the UN has invited regional organisations to assist in implementing a Security Council resolution, or in which the body has collaborated, in whatever form, with regional organisations. Precedents include the UN/Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and UN/Organization of American States (OAS) actions in Haiti, to mention but a few.

While there can be no doubt that great benefits are to be derived from the interaction of the UN and regional

79 Eric Westervelt, "NATO's Intervention In Libya: A New Model?", *National Public Radio*, September 12, 2011, <https://www.npr.org/2011/09/12/140292920/natos-intervention-in-libya-a-new-model>.

organizations, the lack of clarity about their legal basis, an absence of policy precision, and trite rules of engagement, considerably undermine such collaboration and, at the extreme, threaten to compromise the integrity of operations. For this reason, it is important to examine how NATO's involvement in Libya, while undoubtedly legitimate, was legally dubious under UN Charter rules. This article will argue that it is high time for the UN to develop clear policy guidelines for dealing with organizations that are not governed by Chapter VIII of the Charter, but which are, nonetheless, committed to assisting the UN in realizing its historical goal of maintaining international peace and security.⁸⁰

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter recognises that regional "arrangements or agencies" have a marked role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security; hence, these organisations are empowered to conduct pacific settlement of disputes among their members (Article 52) entirely on their own and without recourse to the Security Council.⁸¹ However, while regional organisations are generally forbidden to take enforcement actions (including, of course, military measures), they can do so with the authorization of the Security Council (Article 53). This is one of the three bases recognised by the Charter as constituting exceptions to the general prohibition of force under Article 2(4) of the Charter. [The other two being the Right of Individual or Collective Self-Defense (Article 51)], which accrues only after an armed attack has occurred

80 Ademola Abass, *Assessing NATO's Involvement in Libya*, United Nations University, October 27, 2011.

81 Ibid; Hilary Charlesworth and Jean-Marc Coicaud, *Fault Lines of International Legitimacy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, p.209; and Sean D. Murphy, *Humanitarian Intervention: The United Nations In an Evolving Order*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2010, p.347.

against a UN member, and the now infructuous actions against former enemy States (Article 107). The treaties of most regional organisations contain provisions enabling them to defend themselves, once an attack occurs against their members.

After getting the UNSC to pass a resolution imposing an arms embargo on Libya and then another authorising a so-called 'no-fly zone' in which only their planes could fly, the imperialists succeeded in having Gaddafi captured and brutally killed, opening the way for the establishment of a new regime that they hoped would further their interests in that oil-rich North African country.

Following the Gaddafi regime's targeting of civilians in February 2011, NATO answered the UN call to the international community to protect the Libyan people. In March 2011, a coalition of NATO allies and partners began enforcing an arms embargo, maintaining a no-fly zone and protecting civilians and civilian populated areas from attack or the threat of attack in Libya, under Operation Unified Protector (OUP). OUP successfully concluded on October 31, 2011.

Whenever States decide to use force against another State, whether individually or as a group, the first question that arises is whether such an action is pursuant to the right of self-defence (Article 51 UN Charter) or is one authorised by the Security Council. In the case of Libya, with regard to the former, Article 51 does not apply, as Libya had not attacked any of the NATO member States. It therefore follows that only an authorization by the Security Council could provide a sound legal basis for any military action against Libya and keep NATO action from being in violation of Article 2(4). The question is: Was NATO action in Libya authorised?

The creation of a No-Fly Zone over the whole of Libya by Security Council Resolution 1973 on March 11, 2011,

was done “in order to help protect civilians.”⁸² The Security Council had called on “States that have notified the Secretary-General and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, acting *nationally* or through *regional organizations or arrangements* to take all necessary means to enforce compliance with the ban on flights imposed by paragraph 6...”⁸³

The interaction between NATO and the UN in Libya highlights, once again, the need to sanctify relations between the UN and regional organizations. However, rather than approaching this problem generically, what needs to be done is to understand the specific dynamics of the issues involved in order to devise the most effective approach towards tackling them. In all probability, NATO will likely continue to respond to Security Council resolutions that call on regional organizations to assist in implementing such resolutions as Resolution 1973. It is highly unlikely that there will be an amendment of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter anytime soon, so that if NATO cannot go to the mountain, the mountain can go to NATO.

CONCLUSION

After the end of the Cold War, the Atlantic Alliance is beginning to resemble Oscar Wilde’s Dorian Gray, appearing youthful and robust as it grows older – but becoming ever more infirm. The Washington Treaty may remain in force, the various ministerial meetings may continue to issue earnest and upbeat communiqués, and the Brussels bureaucracy may keep NATO’s web page up and running – all these superficial routines will go on, provided the Alliance isn’t asked to actually do anything else.

82 “Security Council Approves ‘No Fly Zone’ Over Libya, Authorising ‘All Necessary Measures’ to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 In Favour With 5 Abstentions”, UNSC/10200 Press Release, March 17, 2011.

83 Ibid.

The majority of regional organisations strive hard to continue to search for a stronger cohesiveness in the Charter order, and none should be permitted to cherry pick from the instrument. The era of ‘hop-in, hop-out of the Charter’ should be ended.

If NATO greatly desires to benefit from the collective security system of Chapter VIII, as its involvement in the Bosnia/Herzegovina and Libya crises demonstrate, then it must be ready to bear the burden of its adjunct legal obligations as well. After all, as the aphorism goes, the burden and benefit of a thing go together.

But looking back, one could underestimate NATO’s ability to rise from its sickbed. Specifically, it did manage to stagger through the Kosovo War in 1999 and even invoked Article V guarantees for the first time after 9/11. NATO members have sent mostly token forces to Afghanistan (though the United States, as usual, has done most of the heavy lifting). But even that rather modest effort has proved exhausting, and isn’t likely to be repeated. A continent that is shrinking, aging, and that faces no serious threat of foreign invasion, isn’t going to be an enthusiastic partner for future adventures in nation-building, and certainly isn’t likely to participate in any future US effort to build a balancing coalition against a rising China.

FORM IV
(See Rule 8)

1. Place of Publication: Delhi
2. Periodicity of Publication: Quarterly
3. Printer's Name: Kautilya Books
Whether citizen of India? Yes, Indian
Address: 309, Hari Sadan
20, Ansari Road, Daryaganj
New Delhi – 110 002
4. Publisher's Name: Ajai Sahni
Whether citizen of India? Yes, Indian
Address: Suite 58 & 70,
India International Centre,
Max Mueller Marg,
New Delhi 110003.
5. Editor's Name: Ajai Sahni
Whether citizen of India? Yes, Indian
Address: Suite 58 & 70,
India International Centre,
Max Mueller Marg,
New Delhi 110003.
6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of total capital. Ajai Sahni
Suite 58 & 70,
India International Centre,
Max Mueller Marg,
New Delhi 110003.

I, Ajai Sahni, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

February, 2022

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Signature of Publisher

The Armenian Question and its Global Impact

Ararat Konstanian*

Although peace agreements have stopped devastating world wars and nations gained their right to independence in Eastern Europe and the Middle East due to the collapse of Empires in the 19th and 20th centuries, unresolved conflicts between nations and people continue and enmity persists due to the denial by one actor of the reality of actions performed in the past, and the inability to confront its own history. The consequences of such attitudes are manifest in the case of the ‘Armenian Question.’

Paradigms in political science tell us that such attitudes exist, not only between the perpetrator and the victim, but also among various regional and global actors. This is evident in the ambivalence regarding the ‘Armenian Question.’

The reality is that the Ottoman Empire performed a planned and orchestrated act of genocide against the Armenians living

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in the indigenous part (Western Armenia) of the erstwhile Ottoman Empire in 1915. This mass killing transformed relations between the state of Turkey and the Armenians, with the latter fleeing the country and settling in different parts of the world. Moreover, Turkey's expansionist policy against Eastern Armenia caused conflict and triggered the inclusion of Azerbaijan into the conflict situation, starting in 1920. This gradually resulted in new forms of wars in 1991 and 2021, respectively.

In this regard, the 'Armenian Question' is defined by the Armenians as an unresolved national case, which has its historical and contemporary implications, with demands of preserving the full rights of the Armenians in the Greater Middle East and South Caucasus shaping Armenia's domestic and foreign policy.

The first part of this essay, presents the essential historical conditions that resulted in the 'Armenian Question' during the Ottoman Empire and afterwards. along with its regional and the global impact. The second part will analyse the ongoing conditions Armenia faces, and their regional and global implications. The third section, reveals the essentiality of the 'Armenian Question,' not only for Armenia and Armenians *per se*, but also for all the regional and global actors currently under threat of Turkish expansionism.

THE INSTRUMENTAL USE OF ISLAM AND NATIONALISM FOR POLITICAL GAINS

The two main pillars of Turkish political philosophy continue to be formed by Islam and Nationalism. In both cases, the Turkish ideologues, and the high political and military elite, have put forward the essentiality of the Turkish race and the Turkic people living beyond their borders, such as in the Middle East (Syria-Lebanon) and in the countries in Central

Asia.¹ Although, lately, regional countries in the Middle East and the South Caucasus are becoming more aware of Turkey's military interventions and the open messages that are coming from Ankara of its expansionist policy, the two central pillars of Turkey's internal and external policy have been evident, certainly since the mid-19th Century, when the 'New Ottoman' secret group was formed among the elite, with the intention of waging *Jihad* (Holy War) against the infidels and capturing the countries bordering the Byzantium.²

Further, the 'New Ottoman' had been translating the great powers' policy from the perspective of a clash of religions between Christianity and Islam, blaming Russia at first.³ Similarly, at the domestic level, the Ottoman Empire was working to restore the sacred Islamic Law (*Sharia*) by limiting the rights of non-Muslims and imposing *jizya*, taxes on all non-Muslims living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire.⁴ Moreover, amid pressure from the Western countries and Russia, the continual complaints of non-Muslims regarding the harsh conditions due to the state policy of religious discrimination, and through the effective work of constitutionalist liberals (including Armenian liberals among them) in the Ottoman Empire, some new reform had been

1 Ruben Safrastyan, *Ottoman Empire: The Genesis of the Program of Genocide (1876-1920)*, Zangak-97, Yerevan, 2011, p.62.

2 Ibid., p.74.

3 Ahmet Gurel, *Turkish-Armenian Relations in Foreign Sources (1071-2006)*, Izmir, Umay Yayinlari, 2006, pp.63-65, Translated from Turkish to English.

4 Vahakn Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide:Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey, 1999, p.9, and A. Norian, *Episodes from the Activities of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, Hairenik Publication, Boston, 1917, p.17, Translated from Armenian to English.

accepted in the education system for secular schools.⁵ The ‘New Ottoman’ had been forced to accept these reforms, but with the exception that all students must confess to being Ottomans. The Ottoman elite had realized the pressure on them regarding the implementation of *Sharia*, and they countered by focusing on nationalist policies, which meant the Turkification of the Ottoman empire.⁶ Thus, the Turkish elite and policy makers were using both Islam and Nationalism to their own advantage, misleading the people on both the rules of Islam and the concept of Nationalism. They had used Islam to invade the countries in the Balkans and forcibly convert the local population to Islam, and had used Nationalism not as a means to patriotism, but to Turkify non-Turks, again by force.⁷ In both these cases, non-Muslims and non-Turks were put under severe pressure and mistreated, starting from the mid-19th century. To the current day, the same treatment is meted out to the Kurds, after the evacuation of Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians from Turkey. For the Turks, the country belongs only to them.

Reforms have thus been an important issue, both for the Ottoman elite and its relationship with the superpowers, especially the European countries and Russia. The focus on Armenians started in parallel when the ‘New Ottomans’ decided that, in order to escape the pressure of imposed reforms by the West and Russia, they must declare Pan-Islamic *jihad* against

5 Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, I.B & Co Ltd., London, New York, 2011, p.67. and Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p.46.

6 Vahakn Dadrian, op. cit., p.98.; Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p.62, and Jon Kirakosyan, *The Young Turks in Front of Historical Judgment*, Armenia Publication, Yerevan, p.207, Translated from Armenian to English.

7 Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p.90 and Aram Andonian, *The Great Crime*, Bahag Publications, Boston, 1921, p.179, Translated from Armenian to English. Note: One of the most essential primary sources of the Armenian Genocide archives.

non-Muslims and massacre the Bulgarians and the Armenians.⁸ The Armenian Press, during that time, wrote of the growing Muslim fanaticism in Western Armenia (the six Armenian vilayets or provinces) and of the barbaric behaviour of the Turks against the Armenians in Van (now a mostly Kurdish-populated and erstwhile Armenian-populated city in the eastern part of Turkey).⁹ The ‘Armenian Question’ cropped up in International Relations starting from the Berlin Conference, where Russia and the West imposed reforms, specially in Western Armenia (the six Armenian Vilayets). The Ottoman elite then initiated the plan to eliminate the Armenians from Turkey by violent methods, and also to prevent the reforms that they thought could lead the Armenians to seek independence in 19th Century. The Ottomans were also able to prolong the process of implementing the reforms in order to win time and eventually halt the reforms agreed upon with Russia and the European countries.

THE ARMENIAN AWAKENING

The liberation movements of the independent states formed in the Balkans nurtured the notion among Armenians to raise their own voices, after decades of manipulation by the Ottoman rulers, and especially during Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s reign. The two key Armenian leaders were Mikael Nalbandian and Hagop Melik Hagopian (Raffi). The former promoted the idea of liberating the self and the people from the imposed tyranny to achieve freedom, and the latter stressed liberation and freedom through struggle, including armed struggle, if needed. These two intellectuals were the force behind of the Armenian national movement that came into existence at the end of the 19th Century.

8 Ruben Safrastyan, *op. cit.*, pp.104-105.

9 *Ibid.*, p.91.

Many are of the opinion that the Armenians have been deprived of their own nation for more than 600 years. Furthermore, prominent writer and visionary, Shahan Natalie revealed in his book, *The Turks and We*, the Turkish official notion of establishing Turkism by uniting with Azerbaijan over the corpse of Armenia, and the urgency of destroying Armenia, considered to be a barrier between Turkey of Anadolu (Anatolia) and Turkey of the Caucasus. Turks openly used the slogan ‘Death to Armenians and Armenia’ in the wake of invading Armenia in order to move to the east, further invading Russia and reaching to the Chinese Wall under the name of the Turkish Empire and pan-Turanism.¹⁰

It is worth mentioning that the impact of the Armenian intellectuals on common Armenians was tremendous, creating awareness that the Armenians were seen by the Ottoman authorities as a second-class community and that their essential rights had been ignored for centuries. Thus, the Armenian national movements started secretly being formed in the Ottoman Empire. The Armenakan Party was established in Van in 1884 with a mission to liberate Armenia (the six Vilayets) from the Ottomans. Its ideology was based on principles of nationalism and the strategy was to create brigades and find ways to obtain arms and money.¹¹ Next, the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party was formed in 1887 in Geneva, Switzerland, with a Marxist revolutionary model, and with the aim of taking stronger action through rebellion and resistance.¹² At last, in the year 1890, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was formed in Tiflis/ Tbilisi, Georgia, with a Social-Nationalist ideology and a strategy of continuing the previous movements

10 Shahan Natalie, *Turks and We*, Bookinist, Yerevan, 1928, pp. 4, 43-44 and 52.

11 “Armenakan Party”, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party publication, Yerevan, 2017, p.35, Translated from Armenian to English.

12 Vahakn Dadrian, op. cit., p.69.

with a more organised structure and larger capacity.¹³ The Armenian political awakening was reflected in demonstrations in Kum Kapu in 1890, and in the capture of the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople in 1896, events that alarmed the Ottoman authorities.

THE ELIMINATION OF THE ARMENIANS

The long-planned strategy to eliminate the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire was put forward systematically from 1894 to 1923, and is known in history and in political terminology as the Armenian Genocide. To understand the real motivation of the Ottomans' decision of eliminating the Armenians in that period, it is essential to mention their fear of losing a huge Asian part of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the reality of having lost the Balkan region prior to the First World War. The Ottomans were perfectly aware of the abilities of the Armenians to establish a nation of their own.¹⁴ In a way, it can be said that the Armenians in that period had all the political, economic, cultural, and social mechanisms to construct a free nation for themselves. Moreover, Armenian historian Sarkis Hatsbanian, in his lecture dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, mentions the immense financial, economic and ministerial role of the Armenians not only in the the Ottoman Empire,¹⁵ but also as key traders reaching out to Europe, Russia, China, and India, starting from the 1850s.

13 Mikael Varantian, *The History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, Hamazkayin Publication, Beirut, 2013, p.69, Translated from Armenian to English.

14 Mevlan Zade Rifat, *The Dark Sides of the Ottoman Empire and Ittihad's Armenocide plans*, Faximil Publication, Yerevan, 1999, p.101, Translated from Armenian to English.

15 Sarkis Hatsbanian, "Why Genocide", Narekatsi Art Institute, January 18, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Ah5qK-_Ao, Translated from Armenian to English.

Planned acts of genocide were performed between 1894 and 1896 and between 1915 and 1923. The largest campaign of genocide took place when the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War and sided with Germany. Further, the Young Turks came to power with a revolution and with a constitution purportedly to give equal rights to all citizens of the Ottoman Empire, but their hidden agenda was based on Turkish Nationalism, with a strategy of the Turkification of the Ottoman Empire. The ideologue of the Turkification doctrine was Ziya Gokalp, a key figure in the Young Turks movement and subsequently one of the creators of the Turkish Republic. He mentioned in his famous book, *The Fundamentals of Turkification*, that there are two key elements for the process to succeed. First, the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire should be maintained by all means; and second, Turkomanism and Turanism must be established.¹⁶ Based on his writings, it can be said that the Nationalist Turks had the notion of advancing to the regions of the Middle East, South Caucasus, Iran and Central Asia, including the Altay Mountains.¹⁷

This had two critical implications: all non-Turks within the Ottoman Empire and Turkey must accept Turkification and accept a nation only for the Turks, or they must be eliminated from the country constituted on Turkish Nationalism.

The Young Turks party elite formed a secret committee called Teskilat-i Mahsusa¹⁸ (The Special Organization) in 1911

16 Ziya Gokalp, *The Fundamentals of Turkification*, Otuken Nesriyat, Istanbul, 2014, pp.40-41, Translated from Turkish to English.

17 Ibid., pp.42-43.

18 Mevlan Zade Rifat, op. cit., p. 120; Raymond Kevorkian, op. cit., p.244; Ruben Safrastyan, *Mustafa Kemal: The Struggle against Republic of Armenia (1919-1921)*, Yerevan Publishing House, Yerevan, 2019, p.32, Translated from Armenian to English; and Hasan Gemal, *The Armenian Genocide*, Hrant Dink Foundation Publication, Yerevan, 2014, p.67, Translated from Armenian to English.

to plan the strategy, the key participants, and the methods for elimination of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. And this was going to take place amidst the First World War in a large scale. Particularly, the plan was set to massacre the Armenians in their homeland (Six Vilayets) and get rid of the 'Armenian Question'. The official Turkish excuse for this decision was to avoid the Russian military intervention in the expected war against the Ottoman Empire,¹⁹ but the Young Turks prior to the announcement of the First World War, had allied with Germany and received the credentials from the German Ambassador.²⁰ The Ottoman Empire would establish the Turanic Empire, including Armenia, Caucasus, Iran, and the people residing inside the Ottoman Empire. Any people who resisted, were to be eliminated. The expected Russian invasion was, thus, not the initial motive of the Young Turks in their programme to eliminate the Armenians from their homeland. The concern was not the internal security of the Ottoman Empire, but a clear strategy to build a homeland exclusively for the Turks by massacring not only Armenians, but also the Nestorian Christians and the Arabs,²¹ under the dictates of a distinctive ideology and set doctrine.

The plan for moving east to Caucasus and establishing Turan for the Turkic people continued even after the end of the First World War, when Kemal Ataturk, a member of the Young Turks and one of the key figures of the Teskilat-i Mahsusa, planned to eliminate the remaining Armenians and Greeks in Turkey, and to invade the Republic of Armenia.²² Although the new regime in Turkey had come in a secular form, it was the

19 Mevlan Zade Rifat, op. cit., p.89; and Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit., p.51.

20 Mevlan Zade Rifat, op. cit., pp. 18-36.

21 Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1917, p.16.

22 Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p. 136.

continuation of the ideology and the doctrine of the previous regimes based on ‘Turkey for Turks,’ and using Islam as a method to unite all the Turkic people under one Turkish flag.²³ In 1920, in order to achieve his objective of totally eliminating the Republic of Armenia and the ‘Armenian Question,’ Kemal Ataturk worked on invading the newly independent Armenian state in the Caucasus, based on a map that he had shaped in 1907. The excuse for invading Armenia was the fear of the creation of an independent Armenia in the six *vilayets*. In fact, Kemal Ataturk’s real intention had, from the beginning, been to penetrate the Caucasus by conquering the Republic of Armenia, and uniting with Azerbaijan to establish unity with the Turkic country in the Caucasus.²⁴ This was a long-held dream of all previous Turkish governments, starting from the mid-19th Century. In that period, Kemal Ataturk had been able to attack the Republic of Armenia and conquer lands in its eastern parts, but was not able to reach his goal of unification with Azerbaijan, due to Armenian army’s victorious Battle at Sardarapat, which stopped the Turkish Army from invading the Republic of Armenia. Eventually, both Armenia and Azerbaijan became constituent units of the Soviet Union. Hence, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and with the formation of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkification of Turkey and the move towards the east to establish Turan, became an unchained policy and desire for Turkish elites and policy makers.

THE SCALE OF THE GENOCIDE

Eliminating Armenians from their homeland was the objective of the Ottomans, both during the era of Sultan Abdul

23 Jon Kirakosyan, op. cit., p.207.

24 Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit., p.87..

Hamid II and the Young Turks. The systematic plan was set in motion by the leaders of the Young Turks, particularly following the directions of Talat Pasha, the Interior Minister of Ottoman Turkey. Sultan Abdul Hamid is known for altering the demographic patterns within the empire by implementing methods of deportation and massacre of non-Muslims, particularly the massacre of Armenians of the principality of Cilicia in 1984-1986, infamously known as the Adana massacre.²⁵ The second phase of systematic massacres, known as the Armenian Genocide, occurred between 1915 and 1923, during the First World War and after Mustafa Kemal formed Turkey. The plan had been put to work under the guise of 'deportation' of the Armenians from the Eastern region due to the purported threat of possible cooperation between the Armenians and the Russians, in case of a Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire.²⁶

Prior to the large scale 'deportation', prominent Armenian figures in Istanbul had been arrested and deported to Angora in one night, and killed.²⁷ The second deportation targeted the remaining Armenians. The routes during the first phase of deportation in 1915 was from Erzurum and other cities, towns, and villages in the Eastern provinces to Aleppo.²⁸ The second phase, in 1916, from Aleppo to the Syrian deserts (Meskene and Der El Zor), in marching caravans.²⁹ During Mustafa Kemal's rule, the program of eliminating the Armenians not only continued, but dovetailed with a state policy to wipe out Armenia politically and physically from the map.³⁰

25 Raymond Kevorkian, op. cit., p.74.

26 Ronald Grigor Suny, *A History of the Armenian Genocide*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2015, pp. 247-250.

27 Ibid., p.277.

28 Raymond Kevorkian, op. cit., p. 631.

29 Ibid., p.627.

30 Ibid., p.803

It is worth mentioning that the Armenians were predominantly located in their historical homeland in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire such as Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Dikranakerd, Harput and Sepastia, and in cities such as Trabzon, Istanbul and Izmir.³¹ The Young Turks' plan of exterminating the Armenians from their homeland resulted in the physical annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians, and seizure of the cultural, economic and financial belongings of the Armenians by the government of Turkey of that time. This was a crime against humanity, compounded by the denial of the Armenian Genocide by successive Turkish governments.

THE DENIAL OF GENOCIDE

In the last decade many prominent intellectuals in Turkey have started to openly discuss the facts surrounding the Armenian Genocide. Among the intellectuals, Hrant Dink (Armenian), as well as Taner Akcam, Hasan Cemal and Cengiz Aktar. Taner Akcam, a prominent historian who published several books on the subject, emphasised the necessity of Turkey to open its borders with Armenia, to stop the vain rejection of the Armenian Genocide, to face historical reality, and to normalize relations with Armenia.³² Cengiz Aktar, one of the initiators of the Apology Campaign in 2008, asserted that the Armenian Genocide, “a destruction of the Armenian population on its ancestral land is a sheer fact... it was a decision to erase Armenians from Anatolia... the rationale behind it was to engineer a homogeneous population composed of Muslims.”³³ Further, Hasan Cemal (the grandchild of one of

31 “Maps of the Armenian Genocide”, *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, Yerevan, 2021, http://www.genocidemuseum.am/en/g/mapping_armenian_genocide2.php.

32 Hambersom Aghbashian, *Turkish Intellectuals who have recognised the reality of the Armenian Genocide*, Los Angeles, 2015, p.26.

33 *Ibid.*, p.28.

the top military leaders of the Ottoman Empire, assassinated by the Armenian revolutionaries during *Operation Nemesis*), in his book dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, also blames military personnel for the uninterrupted racism and religious fanaticism taking new shape in Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdogan's rule.³⁴ Cemal described the motive of cutting a population from its roots as a sin.³⁵ Hrant Dink, the most remarkable Armenian figure in Turkey, assassinated in Istanbul by a Turkish nationalist in front of his publication's building on January 19, 2007, emphasized the destruction of the taboo regarding the Armenian Genocide and explicitly clarified the annihilation of the Armenians and the Armenian culture from the lands belonging to Armenians.³⁶

The emergence of such intellectuals in Turkey over the last two decades is undoubtedly a positive step, in terms of informing Turkish society about the crimes committed against the Armenians, and ceding rights to the Armenian community who remained in Turkey since. However, none of these intellectuals have articulated the demand for the restoration of full rights to the Armenians, including the recovery of their lands and their properties. Most of the intellectuals faced a harsh response from the authorities and the nationalists, branded as 'traitors' and subject to punishment under the Article 301 for 'Insulting Turkishness.' The principal motive of these intellectuals was to democratize Turkey, and under by raising the issue of the Armenian Genocide, to clear the wounds of the Turkish history, so that Turkey could become

34 Hasan Gemal, op. cit., pp. 249-250.

35 Ibid., p.144.

36 Hrant Dink, "We have our eyes on these lands, because our roots are from here", *Hurriyet*, September 25, 2005, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/bu-topraklarda-gozumuz-var-kokumuz-burada-352797?fbclid=IwAR2a3tcm0jPZDXc3NCCK37x7vIL5vIDkPI17AT1XfHvIyy1wt1yIS-4ynZQ>.

a full member of the European Union (EU). However, such partial or cosmetic approaches cannot bring the two sides to peace talks. Relations cannot be normalised as long as the full rights of the Armenians are not reinstated, and their lands not returned to the original owners.

Turkish authorities and governments have repeatedly denied the facts the atrocities committed against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey were planned acts of genocide against the Armenians and other non-Muslims and non-Turks. The arguments brought forward by the Turks are mostly vague, arrogant, and outdated, reiterating the falsehoods previously spoken by the leaders of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. For instance, former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu asserted that whatever was done in the past was right, and if there the necessity arose, would be done again.³⁷ With regard to the Armenian Genocide, Davutoglu argued that the pain does not belong only to the Armenians, the sorrow was for all the races who were killed during the War. By fusing the Armenian genocide with war deaths, Davutoglu denied the planned Genocide against the Armenians, dismissing these actions as events within a situation of global war in which the Ottoman authority had no responsibility.³⁸ Further, the blame of the genocidal action is put on foreign powers, especially Russia, for influencing the people to revolt against the Ottoman authorities.³⁹ He repeated the populist and hollow rhetoric that such shameful acts had

37 Hagop Chakrian, *The Armenian Genocide, Turkish Genocide denial, falsification and the manifestations of anti-Armenian hatred*, Asoghik Publication, Yerevan, 2017, p.142, Translated from Armenian to English.

38 Ibid., 375.

39 Nikolay Hovhannisian, *The Armenian Genocide under the scope of the Arabic Histography*, National Academy of Sciences of Armenian Institute of Oriental Studies, Yerevan, 2004, p.139, Translated from Armenian to English.

no place in Turkish history. The Turkish elite and the military personnel have incessantly repeated these clichés wherever the issue of the Armenian Genocide comes up, without accepting reality or attempting a logical answer or explanation.

In his book, *Strategic Depth*, which continues to be the doctrine underlying Turkey's foreign policy, Ahmet Davutoglu not only excludes the existence of the Armenian factor in the Ottoman Empire, but also sees the South Caucasus from the prism of Turkish-Russian relations, ignoring the existence of the three South Caucasian Republics.⁴⁰ Davutoglu's approach demonstrates that evading the rights and demands of small nations and their citizens remains integral to the consciousness of Turkish officials. Moreover, considering the South Caucasus merely a territory that Russia or Turkey will control is nothing more than an assault on the rights of self-determination and a declaration of the intention to subjugate the internationally recognised Republics.

In addition, Davutoglu often draws on historic episodes, where he describes the Islamization agenda of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, meant to maintain the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, as being a multi-racial and multi-religious empire. Such statements not only reflect the abusive mechanism through which the Turkish elite govern the country at the expense of indigenous citizens, but also the mistreatment by the Ottomans of the Muslim Arabs of the Levant, as well as of the birthplace of Islam, Saudi Arabia.⁴¹

Moreover, the expansionist agenda continues to shape Turkey's foreign policy, as Davutaoglu asserts Turkey's

40 Ahmet Davutoglu, *Strategic Depth*, Kure Publishing, Istanbul, 2010, p.55, Translated from Turkish to English.

41 Talal Al-Torifi, "Turkish propaganda ignores Ottoman violations of Two Holy Mosques", *Arab News*, July 22, 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1708406>.

presence in Europe, Asia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Mediterranean.⁴² This vision reflects Turkey's contemporary and imperialist agenda, as well as the intention of functioning militarily in the Middle East and the South Caucasus, with systematic tactics intended to recapture Ottoman era territories and build the Turan Empire. It is worth mentioning that the current mentality of the Turkish officials hasn't changed for centuries and the core element in Turkey's foreign policy is to invade and capture lands in order to establish the Turanic Empire. During a military parade in Azerbaijan, the Turkish President Erdogan declared, "Today, may the souls of Nuri Pasha, Enver Pasha, and the brave soldiers of the Caucasus Islam Army, be happy." Thus, in the mindset of the current Turkish elites, Ottoman Enver's vision of invading the East and creating Turanic Turkey is still alive. Accordingly, the irresponsible stance of the previous and current Turkish authorities continues to reject the possibility of arriving at a just solution to the 'Armenian Question.' In addition, prominent leaders broadcast in front of the world, their readiness to repeat such atrocities, if necessary.

THE ARMENIAN REPRESENTATION AND ITS DEMAND

The survivors of the Armenian Genocide in the deserts of Syria, received a positive welcome by local Arabs, regardless of the Ottoman decree to take no notice of those of them who reached Syria, and to show no support for them.⁴³

The strategy of the elimination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire by the means of the Armenian Genocide failed partially in the Arab land, due to the empathy shown towards the Armenians, not only the local population *per se*,

42 Ahmet Davutoglu, *op. cit.*, p.92.

43 Nora Arisian, *The Armenians in the Syrian Thought*, Al Fourat Publication, Beirut, 2002, p.91, Translated from Arabic into English.

but also by the official statements to the Arabs from Al-Husayn Ibn Ali, the Sherif of Mecca, declaring:

What is requested of you is to protect and to take good care of everyone from the Jacobite Armenian community living in your territories and frontiers and among your tribes; to help them in all of their affairs and defend them as you would defend yourselves, your properties and children, and provide everything they might need... because they are the Protected People of the Muslims... about whom the Prophet Muhammad said: *Whosoever takes from them even a rope, I will be his adversary on the day of Judgment*”⁴⁴

This statement shows that the Muslim Arabs were officially against the extermination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as a Christian race. At the same time, the Arabs had been organizing the resistance against the Ottoman Empire,⁴⁵ and the Armenians were seen as allies in their struggle against the cruelty of the Turkish armies and administration against all non-Turk and non-Muslim factions within the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶

The Sherif of Mecca’s statement, moreover, shows that the cruelty of the Turks in massacring the Armenians was against Islam. In other words, the Turks who planned and executed the Armenian Genocide were against Islamic law and the faith itself, and speaking in the name of Islam was a demonstration of their dishonesty. It deserves mention that the Sharif of

44 “The Armenian Genocide”, June, 2015, <https://genocideducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/EXTERMINATION.pdf>.

45 Aram Gasparyan, *The Arab Nationalists and the Young Turks: From Cooperation to Confrontation (1908-1914)*, Gitutium Publishing House, Nasra, 2016, p. 129, Translated from Armenian to English.

46 Tala Al-Torifi, “Turkey repeating Ottoman Empire’s crimes against Arabs”, *Arab News*, July 21, 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1707976>.

Mecca's statement has been the foundational principle of Armenian-Arab relations, not only within the Ottoman Empire but also after the formation of the independent Arab states. This principle has established the friendly and brotherly relations between Armenian Christians and Arab Muslims; and has demonstrated the ability of Christians and Muslims to live peacefully together, whether under Ottoman rule or in independent states. This unique relation between the Christian Armenians and the Muslims Arabs has set as an example of mutual coexistence and peaceful living between different races of different religious affiliations.

The Armenian survivors were re-located in the Middle East after the First World War and especially in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, where they formed an Armenian Diaspora, with full rights to establish churches, schools, political parties, and cultural and benevolent organisations, and to citizenship.

The 'Armenian Question' has now been transformed to another level in unprecedented circumstances. While the majority of the Armenians were struggling for their rights in the Ottoman Empire; their demands for recognition have now reached the global level through the Armenian Diaspora in more than 40 countries, with representative political and benevolent organization in the Middle East, Europe, Northern and Southern America. Armenian political parties such as the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, the Hunchakian Party, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, have primarily been the advocating lobby for a just solution to the 'Armenian Question' globally. These groups have collectively secured official recognition of the Armenian Genocide by more than 30 countries.

The Armenian political parties have continued to recruit ideologues even in the Diaspora under the new environment

that prevails in different geographical locations. Sarkis Zeitlian coined the new concept of an ‘Armenian Orientation’, under which Armenian identity is revealed and preserved in the Diaspora, and the principles of Armenian existence in the host countries are explored.⁴⁷ Zeitlian is one of the key figures in Armenian politics, who has set a political and social agenda for Armenians to function in the absence of a free and independent Armenian nation.

During the 19th Century, Armenian ideologues were stressing the liberation of Armenians from the mistreatment and tyranny of the Ottoman leadership. After the outbreak of the First World War, Armenian intellectuals, political parties and benevolent organisations have emphasized the restoration of Armenian rights, elimination of the consequences of the Armenian Genocide, as well as compensation by Turkey to be paid to the heirs of the Genocide. Further, the return of Armenian Church properties in Turkey, and the return of occupied territories to the Republic of Armenia, are increasingly emphasised. Efforts to keep ‘Armenianism’ alive with national, cultural, educational and political programmes and campaigns are also undertaken.⁴⁸ In his *Armenian Orientation* doctrine, moreover, Zeitlian revealed the mechanisms which the Armenian Revolutionary Party should adopt with different countries and international agencies, which defend of human rights and condemn genocidal acts, and some of which are themselves victims of genocide.⁴⁹ Thus, Zeitlian’s doctrine has been noteworthy in terms of maintaining the organised Armenian communities commitment to the ‘Armenian

47 Sarkis Zeitlian, *The Warrior Ideologue*, Hamazkayin Vahesetian Publication, Bourj Hamoud, 1993, p.55, Translated from Armenian to English.

48 Ibid., p.57.

49 Ibid., p.494.

Question’, and the preservation and projection of the associated ideology and demands among young Armenians.

Within the framework of the ‘Armenianism’ doctrine, the Armenian political parties evolved the ability to initiate interactions with other countries and people, demanding their rights from the sides that committed genocide and from the international bodies. Besides, although this doctrine was articulated at the end of the 1970’s, it is still considered contemporary and has the potential to accomplish new dimensions in International Relations, within which countries could come together to widen the spectrum of their relations to establish blocs against Turkey. Arabic-Islamic countries, for instance, have recently established a coalition against Turkey’s policy, involving Saudi Arabia and UAE; China is also worried by Turkey’s open support to Xinjiang militants and their participation in terrorist blocs in Syria. Further, India is concerned about Pakistan’s alliance with Turkey, the latter’s soft power policy in Kashmir.⁵⁰

The ‘Armenian Question’ has the capacity not only to unite the countries or peoples who have been victims of genocide in the Ottoman Empire and other parts of the world, but also to form an alliance with countries who currently see the expansionist

50 Abhinav Pandya, “Erdogan pursuing Islamic agenda against India”, *The Sunday Guardian*, September 5, 2020, <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/erdogan-pursuing-islamist-agenda-india>; Ararat Kostanian and Bhavdeep Modi, “How India & Armenia can counter Turkey-Pakistan nexus in South Caucasus” *The Daily Guardian*, March 22, 2021, <https://thedailyguardian.com/how-india-armenia-can-counter-turkey-pakistan-nexus-in-south-caucasus/>; and Ararat Kostanian, “Erdogan’s Expansionism and Pakistan’s jihadism in the Caucasus: Understanding the dynamics of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict”, *USANAS Foundation*, April 11, 2021, <https://usanasfoundation.com/erdogans-expansionism-and-pakistans-jihadism-in-the-caucasus-undertaking-the-dynamics-of-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict>.

pan-Turanic agenda as a threat to their national security, or to their territorial integrity, such as India and China. Turkey has been running pan-Turanic propaganda in Kashmir and has allied with Pakistan not only in South Asia, but also in the South Caucasus, during the second war in Nakhorno Karabakh (September to November 2020) against Artsakh and Armenia. Pakistan has not recognised Armenia as a state and continues to develop its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey on the military level as well.⁵¹ On the other hand, Turkey has been openly supporting the Uyghurs⁵² in Xinjiang as a Turkic entity, and its pan-Turanic agenda is meant to create a new version of the Ottoman Empire by force, stretching from Turkey to Central Asia, Afghanistan, India and Xinjiang.⁵³ Although these countries are in friendly relations with Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, stopping Turkey's ambitious expansionist agenda, establishing friendly relations, enhancing trade, and building financial ties and the anti-Turkey coalition, will not suffice to deal with the current Turkey, which has more economic and military abilities and *jihadist* groups located and supported by Ankara.

It must not be forgotten that the superpowers' diplomatic pressures on the Ottoman Empire since the end of the 19th Century failed to stop Turkey from orchestrating the genocides against non-Muslims and non-Turks. Interestingly, the same tendencies appear to be arising again.

51 "What's behind the growing Azerbaijan-pakistan-turkey friendship?", *TRT World*, January 14, 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/what-s-behind-the-growing-azerbaijan-pakistan-turkey-friendship-43259>.

52 "Uyghurs are satisfied from Erdogan's explanations", *Hurriyet*, July 12, 2009, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/uygurlar-erdoganin-aciklamasin-dan-memnun-12055384>.

53 S. Sapah-Giulian, *The Responsibilities*, Doniguin & Sons, Beirut, 1974, p.148, Translated from Armenian to English.

France has not only recognised the Armenian Genocide but, in January, 2012,⁵⁴ also implemented a law, making it a crime to publicly deny the Armenian Genocide in France. The President Joe Biden of the United States of America confirmed the reality of the Armenian Genocide in his annual speech in 2021, though this is yet to be translated into official policy, and such a statement will only put Turkey under pressure for a limited time. There is, as yet, no imposition of direct responsibility to provide a fair solution to the ‘Armenian Question,’ and no evidence of a change in Turkey’s expansionist agenda, which has endured since the 19th Century. A new form of alliances is much needed among the countries and the people with a clear agenda to implement not only economic sanctions against Turkey, but to develop trade among allied alternatives, and also form military alliances. Such alliances must engage in constant joint military exercises to keep Turkey in a state of crisis, and to interdict any plans Ankara may have to invade Cyprus, Syria, Iraq, Nagorno Karabakh, or Libya.

The ‘Armenian Question’ continues to be the keystone in Armenia’s foreign policy and in the Armenian diaspora, regardless of changes in world affairs and in the balance of power among the superpowers, past and present. On the other hand, the Turkish expansionist agenda, formulated on the basis of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism hasn’t changed either, and continues to threaten nations stretching from the Middle East to Central Asia. Turkey has been openly announcing its ambitions and often disseminates maps and plans for its proposed Turkish Empire (Turan), to be realized by the year 2050.⁵⁵

54 “French Senate passes Armenian genocide law”, *BBC News*, January 23, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16677986>.

55 Yeghia Tashjian, “More Than Just a Map: Stratfor’s Map of Turkey’s sphere of Influence 2050”, *The Armenian Weekly*, March 3, 2021, <https://armenianweekly.com/2021/03/03/more-than-just-a-map-stratfors-map-of-turkeys-sphere-of-influence-2050/>.

During the attack on Nakorno Karabakh (September 2020), voices were heard from Azerbaijan declaring, “After Karabakh our next target is Kashmir. Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan are three countries but one nation.”⁵⁶ However, while Turkey is gradually moving to the East militarily and announcing its intentions to create a Turan Army, the anti-Turkish coalition is trying to block Turkey’s moves through diplomatic and economic initiatives. For instance, Greece has been able to diplomatically withstand Turkey’s ambitions in the Aegean Sea; at the same time, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirate have boycotted Turkish products; and Russia has been targeting Turkey’s *jihadi* groups in Syria and Libya.

In order to block and force Turkey back, first of all, the existing nationalist ideologies of Greece, Armenia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Russia, India and China should form an institutionalised bloc similar to the one the liberal world shaped, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is worth mentioning that Armenia has friendly relations with all these countries and, in this sense, could be the meeting place for the formation of such a nationalist bloc, since Armenia faces continuous Turkish and Azerbaijani invasion. A global and cooperative institutional strategy is needed to confront the Turkish threat.

Further, since the extermination of the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire, Armenians in the Middle East and around the world, have been able to generate two organisations for their struggle against Turkey: political and legal institutions such as the *Armenian National Committee*, and the *Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia*. The former focused on a diplomatic agenda to establish relations with

56 Yeghia Tashjian, “Prospects for Future Armenian-Indian Security Cooperation”, *The Armenian Weekly*, November 8, 2020, <https://armenianweekly.com/2020/11/08/prospects-for-future-armenian-indian-security-cooperation/>.

major countries, transnational institutions, political parties and key global figures, to push for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and to put pressure on Turkey to face the truth and to return Armenian lands back to the Armenian people. The latter formation came into the arena in the 1970's to target Turkish officials around the world (similar to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's *Operation Nemesis* of 1920-22, which carried out the assassination of the Ottoman perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide).⁵⁷ The group has also executed a chain of explosions inside Turkey.

These manifestations the Armenian struggle are examples of both the strategies of soft and hard power. For example, it was a positive achievement when the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian communities formed a joint working agenda against Turkey in Australia, and demanded that the federal government recognise the Armenian Genocide. On the other hand, the *Armenian Secret Army for The Liberation of Armenia* shot thirty-one Turkish diplomats in several capitals in 1984. Hagop Hagopian, one of the founders of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, was himself able to enter Turkey and organize more than twenty operations (explosions at Airports and shootings). Armenians have diplomatically secured the recognition of the Armenian Genocide from about 30 countries, assassinated Turkish officials in foreign countries and caused explosion in Ankara and Orly airports.

Despite these activities, they have failed to force Turkey to recognise the Armenian Genocide, largely due to the absence of an institutionalised international bloc to limit Turkey's ambitions with harsher economic sanctions and to hold the threat of a possible attack on Turkey if Ankara continues to invade other territories and countries.

57 Shahan Natalie, op.cit., pp. 12-13.

CONCLUSION

Armenia and the Armenians in the Diaspora have demonstrated their ability to continue their struggle and raise it to a global level. Nevertheless, the 'Armenian Question' has remained unresolved for more than 100 years and remains in the arena of the Greater Middle East and the South Caucasus (Nakorno Karabakh), a national struggle for re-establishing the ancestral nation of the Armenians, which existed long before the invasion of the Turks. In a wider perspective, the resolution of this question is a prerequisite to halt Turkish expansion to the East by blocking the unification of Turkey with Azerbaijan, which is seen as a major alliance on the road to establishing Turan. The Armenians in the Republic and in the Diaspora, have uninterruptedly kept the 'Armenian Question' alive through the Armenianism of the descendants of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, through educational, political, and religious centers. At the same time in global arena they have raised the issue of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the demands for a just solution.

Armenians have also been able to organise armed rebellions and strikes, when diplomacy showed no signs of tangible achievement. Turkey as it stands is unchangeable, with the same imperialist ambitions and rhetoric, its unwillingness to face the truth and to cleanse its bloody past. Indeed, under Erdogan's rule, Turkey has declared a strategy to re-establish the Turkish Caliphate by entering a war, along with Azerbaijan, invading Nakorno Karabakh, and plans to reach Kashmir in a military alliance with Pakistan. It also seeks military agreements with Kazakhstan and supports the Uygurs of China.

The conflict between Armenia and Turkey, both historically and presently, can be called a clash of 'nationalisms.' The Armenian nationalism has clear identity factors (race,

Ararat Konstanian

language, culture, religion) and lies within the territory known internationally as the Armenian Highlands; Turkish nationalism is based on language and Islam, and these have been instrumentalized for decades to conquer lands and justify the torture of non-Turkish and non-Muslim people.

It is evident that Turkey is eyeing a vast territory, from the Mediterranean Sea to Xinjiang in China. Priority must now be given to creating and advancing an anti-Turkey bloc at a global level, stressing military alliances, in order to suspend Turkey's advances, particularly in the Middle East and South Caucasus.

Islamist Radicalization in India

Exploring the Realities

Ajai Sahni*

THE STUFF OF NIGHTMARES

A flood of contemporary literature on, and concerns regarding, Islamist radicalization and terrorism has flowed from vastly exaggerated Western fears, particularly after the 9/11 attacks in the US; this has been enormously exacerbated by later developments with regard to the Islamic State (also *Daesh*). A rash of relatively small incidents in Europe and the US, linked – often tenuously – to *Daesh*, unsettled the complacency and sense of impunity with which Western powers had acted over decades, destabilizing other theatres and collapsing ‘distant’ states. In the shrinking ‘global village’, however, distances proved notional and illusory, and a ‘blowback’, small but unprecedented, was visited on the Western powers. The inability to comprehend and absorb this ‘blowback’ and the loss of impunity in the West, generated a great deal of strident commentary on the ‘global threat’ of *Daesh* and, indeed, in some imaginings, a purported ‘world war’ at the height of the Islamic State’s depredations.

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And yet, Western powers have demonstrated no capacity or willingness to abandon past paradigms of mischievous and irresponsible power-projection that have collapsed relatively stable states, and that created political vacuums and conditions of anarchy in wide areas across the world. These vacuums came to be filled by authoritarian, extremist and terrorist forces, producing tremendous instability in the context of failing Western power.

It is crucial, therefore, to understand the realpolitik that underpinned recent conflicts in West Asia, and the fact that these had been provoked in significant measure by a global great power competition to gain control over resources. Significantly, the West displayed little interest in other countries where critical resources are not available, and where sanguinary terrorist campaigns attracted no more than sporadic international attention.

The intellectual dominance of Western commentary and media also produced imitative and poorly informed assessments across the South Asian region, including India. Such distortions were, at one stage, warped further by the dramatic success of *Daesh*'s sophisticated media projections of its most grotesque atrocities as well as its battlefield victories, and by the perverse agendas of various ideological and political groups among various intervening states. Crucially, Indian commentators in particular were seduced to ignore the very long histories of Islamist radicalization within the country and the region, the far greater scales of terrorism experienced here, and the multiple and competing overlays of affiliation and opposition among radical formations that the unique South Asian dynamic has produced over decades.

While no historical review is here intended, it is useful to remind ourselves of the rather obvious reality that Islamist

terrorism did not begin with *Daesh*, or even with the 9/11 attacks in the US; and that contemporary global *jihadi* terrorism has arisen, in an almost linear evolution, from the US-backed anti-Soviet *jihad* in Afghanistan,¹ principally executed through the agency of Pakistan's military intelligence apparatus, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, for nearly 26 years, all Islamist terrorist formations operating in South Asia were proxies of, or graduated to terrorism with the support of, the Pakistani state.² Across South Asia, these organizations created networks that have engaged in widespread and sustained movements of terrorism and, indeed, produced the "Islamist contagion carried by the returning Afghan veterans"³ that spread gradually across the world.

Within South Asia, consequently, while Islamism was instrumentalized, these groups served the nationalist strategic calculus of Pakistani state agencies, and received aid and prominence in proportion to the loyalty and obedience they demonstrated. Pakistan's calculus was relatively predictable, limited and susceptible to strategic counter-measures (though

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- 1 Indeed, Abdullah Azzam, the ideologue of the early hordes of foreign fighters who travelled to join the *jihad* in Afghanistan and inspiration to the successor organizations of the "global *jihad*", declared, "This duty (*jihad*) shall not lapse with victory in Afghanistan, and the *jihad* will remain an individual obligation until all other lands which formerly were Muslim come back to us and Islam reigns within them once again. Before us lie Palestine, Bukhara, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia, the Philippines, Burma, South Yemen, Taskkent, Andalusia..." Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, I.B. Taurus, London, 2002, p. 147.
 - 2 See Ajai Sahni, "South Asia: Extremist Islamist Terror and Subversion", in K. P. S. Gill and Ajai Sahni, *The Global Threat of Terror: Ideological, Material and Political Linkages*, Bulwark Books & ICM, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 181-239.
 - 3 John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*, Pluto Press, Virginia, Second Edition, 2000, p. 6.

such counter-measures have been adopted rarely and inadequately).

Al Qaeda dramatically altered this calculus, overwhelming and emphasizing the millenarian religious ideology of *jihad* that sought global domination and offered rewards in the afterlife, rather than any necessary and quantifiable strategic gains on earth, though such gains were not outside its vision. Al Qaeda pursued a strategy of catastrophic terrorist acts to propagate its ideology, unleashing a new scale of terrorism on the world, accepting no limits to its violence, and declaring its clear intent to acquire and use nuclear and chemical weapons. Moreover, within the complex of Pakistan-backed terrorist formations, a certain proportion turned ‘rogue,’ evolving their own, progressively global, *jihadist* agenda and, indeed, following Al Qaeda, declaring the Pakistani state *murtad* (apostate) and a rightful target of *jihad*.⁴

It was into this troubled environment that the transient victories and excesses of *Daesh*, and its precursor Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS), in Iraq and Syria introduced a new element of visible virulence and barbarity, with their aggressive and sophisticated projection across the world through the internet and other media. An exaggerated perception of *Daesh*’s ‘arrival’ in South Asia was fed by occasional reports of volunteers leaving countries in the region to join the *jihad* in Iraq and Syria, as well as by a handful of terrorist incidents or conspiracies in which perpetrators claimed allegiance to or linkages with *Daesh*.

The reality, however, is that there was no significant change in these countries as far as the profile of terrorism was concerned, other than the fact that fragments of groups that

4 Khuram Iqbal, *The Making of Pakistani Human Bombs*, Lexington Books, London, 2015, p.123.

were already operating there chose to declare their allegiance to *Daesh* — as many had earlier done with regard to Al Qaeda when that group was dominating the world’s imagination. There was no quantifiable augmentation of capacities, no significant movement of resources, personnel, technologies, or structures of command and control. Indeed, in some cases, particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan, existing local movements split and engaged in fratricidal confrontations as a result of this shift of fealty – broad tendencies that weakened many anti-state formations in the region. These changing affiliations, by and large, reflected opportunistic posturing by weak local formations, or unravelling factions of existing formations, trying to secure prominence by declaring allegiance to or alliances with what was then perceived as the most powerful *jihadi* formation in the world.

This assessment of *Daesh* power was, itself, based on distortions and deliberate falsification. *Daesh* had consistently exaggerated both its excesses and its victories. The truth is, it rampaged across regions of disorder and its initial “conquests” were of areas under the control of other non-state armed formations.⁵ Where it confronted state forces it found an adversary terrorised by the wide propagation of videos documenting tortures, crucifixions and mass executions, and unwilling to defend Sunni majority areas.⁶ The most dramatic instance of this was Mosul, where a state force of two divisions, armed to the hilt with tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery, attack helicopters and a more than sufficient arsenal of small arms,

5 Zachary Laub, “The Islamic State”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 22, 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state/p14811>.

6 Nussaibah Younis, “A Cross-Sectarian Vision for Defeating the Islamic State in Iraq”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, July 6, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/07/06/cross-sectarian-vision-for-defeating-islamic-state-in-iraq-pub-60590>.

simply abandoned their weapons and fled in the face of a tiny ragtag bunch of possibly under 800 *Daesh* fighters, who rode into town in open pickup trucks.⁷ However, the moment the Islamic State hit the sectarian (Shia) and ethnic (Kurdish) fault lines thereafter, its advances stopped, and the performance of *Daesh* fighters was far from exemplary wherever they met with any determined opposition.⁸

The myth of *Daesh* power was also augmented when an ever-expanding coalition of Western and Arab states engaged in a half-hearted and ambivalent fight against the terrorists, even as it sought to provide various armed formations operational spaces and capabilities to weaken the Assad regime in Syria, and allowed *Daesh* not only to benefit from these spaces, but also, for over a year after the fall of Mosul in June 2014, to carry out a lucrative illegal trade in oil through Turkey without impediment.⁹ The Western air campaign against *Daesh* at this stage was accurately described by one American commentator as “a drizzle, not a thunderstorm”.¹⁰

To distant analysts, however, it appeared that *Daesh* had the capacity to resist the combined force of a global alliance of some of the most powerful nations on earth.

This myth was exploded with the unambiguous entry of Russia into the fight in Syria, and the *Daesh* legend quickly

7 Zack Beauchamp, “11 facts that explain the escalating crisis in Iraq”, *Vox*, June 13, 2014, <http://www.vox.com/2014/6/13/5803712/11-things-iraq-crisis-isis>.

8 Aron Lund, “Why Islamic State Is Losing, and Why It Still Hopes to Win”, *The Century Foundation*, June 17, 2016, <https://tcf.org/content/report/islamic-state-losing-still-hopes-win/>.

9 “ISIS, Oil & Turkey: What RT found in Syrian town liberated from jihadists by Kurds”, *RT*, March 28, 2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/336967-isis-files-oil-turkey-exclusive/>.

10 “US Military Pilots: Hands Tied in Frustrating Fight against ISIL”, *Veterans Today*, 29 May, 2015, <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2015/05/29/us-military-pilots-hands-tied-in-frustrating-fight-against-isis/>.

disintegrated in the face of a relentless succession of reverses.¹¹ A string of *Daesh* -linked attacks in Europe, most prominently the Paris and Brussels bombings, moreover, combined with the Russian intervention to shake off Western ambivalence, and a more serious effort to contain and neutralize *Daesh* was then followed, rapidly pushing the “Caliphate” into ever-shrinking territories,¹² and eventual marginalization.

Daesh lost almost a quarter of the territory it controlled in Iraq and Syria through 2016, going from about 78,000 square kilometres in January 2016 to about 60,400 square kilometres in December 2016. This added to an earlier loss of at least 14 per cent of controlled territories in 2015. At its peak, an estimated six to 10 million people were living in territories under *Daesh* control.¹³ The losses increased in 2017, with Mosul falling to the Iraqi state and coalition forces, and the prized ‘headquarters’ at Raqqa lost to Syria. By the end of 2017, *Daesh* controlled under 5 per cent of the territories that it had dominated at its peak. On December 19, 2018, the then US President Donald Trump had declared that *Daesh* had been defeated and signalled his intention to withdraw all 2,000 U.S. troops supporting the Syrian Democratic Forces in Syria.¹⁴

According to US sources the strength of *Daesh* fighters in Iraq and Syria had dwindled from an estimated 60,000 at

11 Zack Beauchamp, “How Russian bombing is changing Syria’s war, in 3 maps”, *Vox*, February 16, 2016, <http://www.vox.com/2016/2/16/11020140/russia-syria-bombing-maps>.

12 Suleiman Al-Khalidi, “Islamic State on the defensive, territory shrinking in Syria and Iraq: U.S. official”, *Reuters*, May 15, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa-idUSKCN0Y60TN>.

13 *BBC News*, “Islamic State and the crisis in Iraq and Syria in maps,” March 28, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>.

14 “Timeline: The Rise, Spread and Fall of the Islamic State,” *Wilson Centre*, October 28, 2019, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state>.

peak, to just 12,000 to 15,000 by the end of 2016. An estimated 50,000 *Daesh* fighters had been killed in these countries since 2014.¹⁵ By December 2018, their number had fallen further to about 5,000, mostly clustered in villages along the Euphrates, south of Hajin.¹⁶

The sense of a ‘global’ crisis, however, was provoked by the rash of occasional *Daesh*-linked incidents, many of them with uncertain linkages to the terrorist formation, that afflicted prominent Western states, among others. Significantly, between the declaration of the ‘Caliphate’ in June 2014 and May 2017, at least 295 attacks in 37 countries were attributed to or claimed by *Daesh*, 3,168 persons were killed in these incidents, and thousands of others injured.¹⁷ A large proportion of these attacks, however, were executed by ‘lone wolves’ or ‘wolf packs’ purportedly ‘inspired’ by *Daesh* online propaganda, but with no demonstrable operational links with the terrorist formation. Western fears were exacerbated further by the potential of radicalized *Daesh* cadres returning to their home countries after being ‘squeezed out’ of Iraq and Syria after the steady erosion of *Daesh* influence in these regions. However, a number of *Daesh* foreign fighters returned disillusioned to their home countries, seeking a ‘normal life’, while an overwhelming proportion were arrested and jailed on return, and this danger also appears to have been vastly exaggerated.

15 Hannah al Othman, “The number of ISIS fighters has fallen from more than 60,000 to ‘between 12,000 and 15,000’ since coalition air strikes began, US officials reveal,” *Daily Mail*, December 15, 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4037552/The-number-ISIS-fighters-fallen-60-000-12-000-15-000-coalition-air-strikes-began-officials-reveal.html>.

16 “Timeline: The Rise, Spread and Fall of the Islamic State,” op. cit.

17 Combined figures from CNN, “ISIS goes global: 143 attacks in 29 countries have killed 2,043”, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/17/world/mapping-isis-attacks-around-the-world/>; and ESRI Storymaps, “2016 Terrorist Attacks”, <https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/terrorist-attacks/?year=2016>.

A great deal of noise was also made about the imminent *Daesh* ‘invasion’ of India.¹⁸ The reality is that the total number of documented *Daesh* ‘sympathisers’ in and from India totals a meagre 340 at the time of writing (January 19, 2022), including 171 persons arrested¹⁹ and 169 who have travelled to Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan to join the terrorists.²⁰ Of the 169 who travelled abroad, 56 have already been confirmed killed.²¹ These numbers can only be reassuring in a population of 1.4 billion,²² including an estimated over 200 million Muslims, and after nearly eight years of *Daesh* propaganda and activity seeking recruits in India. It is useful to recall that the attention

18 See, for instance, Ajai Sahni, “Breaking News: ISIS is not coming! ISIS is not coming!”, *Scroll.in*, February 11, 2016, <https://scroll.in/article/803373/breaking-news-isis-is-not-coming-isis-is-not-coming>.

19 “Investigation of Islamic State (IS) Related Cases by NIA”, September 17, 2021, National Investigation Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, https://www.nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/1082_1_Pr.pdf; “NIA Arrests An ISIS Operative in Conspiracy of ISIS/ISIL/DAESH Case (RC-33/2020/NIA/DLI)”, October 24, 2021, National Investigation Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, https://www.nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/1101_1_Pr.pdf; “NIA Arrests An ISIS Operative in Conspiracy of ISIS/ISIL/DAESH case (RC-33/2020/NIA/DLI)”, November 17, 2021, National Investigation Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, https://www.nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/1122_1_Pr.pdf; and “NIA Arrests An ISIS Operative in Karnataka in ISIS Kerala Module case (RC 05/2021/NIA/DLI)”, January 3, 2022, National Investigation Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, https://www.nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/1143_1_Pr.pdf.

20 Till January 19, 2022. Ajai Sahni, “Pakistan isn’t the threat it thinks it is”, *The Times of India*, September 9, 2021, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/pakistan-isnt-the-threat-it-thinks-it-is/articleshow/86070738.cms>.

21 Data compiled by the *Institute for Conflict Management*.

22 The total population is relevant since, both in India and in a number of other countries, *Daesh* has also recruited among recent converts from other Faiths in many countries.

of the *Daesh* leadership turned fairly quickly to India. Within days of overrunning Mosul and Tikrit in early June 2014, *Daesh* released its “world domination map”, including the whole of South Asia within its imagined *Wilayah Khorasan*. The declaration of a Caliphate by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi *aka* Khalifa Ibrahim shortly thereafter (29 June 2014) caused considerable consternation among South Asian governments, security agencies, the general population and, particularly, among well over 500 million Muslims in the region. These early portents have, however, failed to produce any sustained disturbances beyond the fitful trends of peripheral, often opportunistic, mobilisation.

Indeed, not just India but the wider South Asian region remained surprisingly insulated from *Daesh* mobilisation. In 2017, as the *Daesh* reverses gathered force, The Soufan Group put the number of fighters with *Daesh* from Pakistan at over 650; from India at 75. Bangladesh did not even feature in the Soufan Group’s listing of foreign fighters by country in 2017.²³ An earlier listing in 2015 had also put a number from the Maldives at an unofficial 200, and an official count that varied between 20 and 100,²⁴ but the country did not feature

23 Richard Barrett, “Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees”, *The Soufan Centre*, October 2017, <https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017-v3.pdf>.

24 The Soufan Group, “Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment”, December 2015, http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate_FINAL3.pdf. The Soufan Group (TSG), headquartered in New York, provides strategic security intelligence services to governments and multinational organizations. TSG released its initial Foreign Fighters in Syria report in June 2014, which identified approximately 12,000 foreign fighters from 81 countries. The subsequent revision released on December 8, 2015, calculated that between 27,000 and 31,000 people have traveled to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State and other violent extremist groups from at least 86 countries.

in the 2017 report. While a number of terrorist incidents in the AfPak region and Bangladesh have been claimed by *Daesh*, the reality remains,

the entirety of South Asia jihadists reported going to the ISIS fight is actually less than those from the UK alone, less than Germany alone, and dramatically less than the flows from North Africa or Central Asia—especially when assessed on a per-capita Muslim basis. Even Australasia has a dramatically greater per-capita jihadist-to-the-ISIS-fight participation rate than all of South Asia.²⁵

This is not intended to suggest that the dangers of Islamist terrorism and radicalization are negligible and can easily be ignored. *Daesh* itself has been defeated in its strongholds, but the spectre of terrorism can be expected to persist, even as will its underpinnings in wider processes of religious extremism and non-violent radicalization.

Crucially, as with al Qaeda, a dying *Daesh* has left behind a tremendous ideological, strategic and tactical detritus. It is useful to recall that much of *Daesh*'s tactical successes and brutal excesses were derived from al Qaeda literature and manuals, prominently including Abu Musab al Suri *aka* Mustafa Setmariam Nasr's treatise, *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance*,²⁶ on leaderless jihad, and Abu Bakr Naji's *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through*

25 Thomas F. Lynch III, *The Islamic State as Icarus: A Critical Assessment of an Untenable Threat*, Wilson Center Asia Program, Woodrow Wilson Centre, Washington, 2015, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/theislamicstateasicarus.pdf>.

26 "The Call For A Global Islamic Resistance – English Translation Of Some Key Parts Abu Mus'ab As Suri", https://archive.org/stream/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistance-EnglishTranslationOfSomeKeyPartsAbuMusabAsSuri/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistanceSomeKeyParts_djvu.txt.

which the Umma will Pass. The essential idea of the former was a call to all Muslims to constitute themselves into small self-organising and loosely connected cells and to attack Western targets at will. These actions were intended to force a Western withdrawal from Arab lands, and to collapse the regimes there, creating the opportunities for the establishment of a Caliphate. This process was described as *Nizam la Tanzim* (system without organisation), and was the seed of the lone wolf phenomenon that became integral to *Daesh* strategy in areas outside Iraq and Syria, and particularly targeting the West. Naji advocated the creation or exploitation of “conditions of savagery” – the absence of effective state control and collapse of order across wide regions – within which the Islamist extremists could then establish dominance and, eventually, the desired Shariah state.²⁷ It is this collapse of order that *Daesh* sought to engineer through acts of spectacular brutality in areas of state infirmity in Iraq and Syria.

Daesh also married the strategy of leaderless jihad to technology to catalyse the formation of what has been called the United Cyber Caliphate, a loose conglomeration of tech-savvy sympathisers who come together over the Internet to disseminate IS propaganda and offer ‘guidance’ to would-be terrorists to join the *jihad*, including tips on training, acquisition of weaponry, tactics, the planning and execution of attacks, as well as the selection of targets from elaborate hit lists.

As *Daesh* approached defeat, its legitimacy among followers and sympathisers, as well as its attraction as a magnet for potential *jihadis* waned. Nevertheless, these ideas,

27 See Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through which the Umma will Pass*, trans. 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>.

strategies and tactics survive and will be adopted by successor organisations and surviving splinters. More ominously, the destructive potential of these various strategies and tactics will multiply exponentially if apocalyptic Islamist terrorist formations secure access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and particularly biological weapons that “have the capability to kill many more people than a nuclear attack.”²⁸ It has been abundantly demonstrated that millenarian Islamist terrorists would not hesitate to use these instruments of catastrophic devastation, given their commitment to provoking an end-of-world conflict between the Faithful and the Unbelievers.

Thus, whatever the prognosis for the persistence or otherwise of *Daesh* and its various ‘inheritors,’ the dangers of Islamist radicalization will extend well into the future. Studies of the dynamic of mobilisations in favour of *Daesh* are, consequently, of enduring significance, as they would expose processes and factors that underpin the emergence of violent radicalization and terrorism, and offer an understanding of the stages and opportunities for disruption of this destructive progression.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Historically, perhaps the most persistent and seductive theoretical explanation of political violence – including terrorism – has been the ‘root causes’ thesis that argues that ‘underlying’ grievances and sources ‘provoke’ such violence.²⁹ It is useful, here, to clarify basic distinctions between types of

28 Colonel T.X. Hammes, “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges”, *Military Review*, May-June, 2007, p. 22.

29 I largely rely here on Ajai Sahni, “National Responses to Terrorism”, National Security Paper – 2009, *United Services Institute*, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/ajaisahni/09AS-35USI-NSP.htm>.

causes. It is, without exception, the case that a causal chain can be traced out for every terrorist movement or incident of violence – there can, after all, be no ‘uncaused event’. But the assertion that ‘root causes’ underpin violence is fundamentally different: it amounts to the claim that there are certain unique and identifiable *necessary* or *sufficient* conditions that instigate every act and manifestation of terrorism or violence. The most significant among ‘root causes’ that have been opportunistically identified include poverty, real or perceived deprivation, discrimination and political oppression. This thesis, however, has no empirical basis and numerous studies have demonstrated its manifest speciousness (though these have done little to diminish its appeal). Indeed, a review of the literature on the search for ‘root causes’ of terrorism, for instance,

...provides little reason for optimism that a reduction in poverty or an increase in educational attainment would, by themselves, meaningfully reduce international terrorism. Any connection between poverty, education, and terrorism is indirect, complicated, and probably quite weak... Moreover, premising foreign aid on the threat of terrorism could create perverse incentives in which some groups are induced to engage in terrorism to increase their prospects of receiving aid.³⁰

Some other distinctions in the notion of causation help clarify the issue further. Certain factors may, of course, constitute ‘predispositions’ to violence – but these predispositions exist in every one of us. Who has, in a moment of grievous anger, not imagined inflicting terrible retribution on an antagonist? Such impulses, however, remain unrealized in most cases, unless

30 Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, “The Economics and the Education of Suicide Bombers: Does Poverty Cause Terrorism?” *The New Republic*, June 24, 2002, <http://www.alanalexandroff.com/nr-krueger.pdf>.

suitable ‘triggering factors’ and facilitators are not brought into play. Even where violence is initiated, in an overwhelming proportion of cases, it quickly subsides. Its protraction or perpetuation depends on a unique sustaining dynamic that is quite unrelated, both to the original predispositions and to the triggering events or circumstances. This means that, even if the original causes or triggers are ‘redressed’ such violence could continue if the sustaining dynamic – in the form of a range of newly established equations of power and flow of resources to particular and violent elites – is not neutralized. Conversely, if this latter dynamic is, in fact, neutralized, violence has been found, again and again, to end, even if the so-called ‘root’ or ‘triggering’ causes remain intact. As one study on the collapse of Khalistani terrorism in Punjab noted,

Little change was noticed in the objective conditions, and none of the adduced reasons or causes of the rise (of terrorism) appear to have been removed.... Once the movement collapsed, one was left wondering how could it disappear so suddenly and without leaving a trace of cultural sympathy for the ‘fighters’.³¹

The ‘root causes’ thesis is, in fact, an enormously influential but essentially doctrinaire and unverified position which has drastically circumscribed the range of policy options available to counter-terrorism policy in moments of grave crisis.

Closely intertwined to the ‘root causes’ thesis is the dominance of the ‘developmental solution’, the assertion that the challenge of terrorism cannot be addressed through security responses, but must be resolved through the implementation of a range of programmes for poverty alleviation and the

31 Harish K. Puri, Paramjit Singh Judge and Jagrup Singh Sekhon, *Terrorism in Punjab: Understanding Grassroots Reality*, Har-Anand Publications, Delhi, 1999, p. 51.

‘empowerment’ of disadvantaged groups, to undercut the ‘recruitment pool’ of terrorist and violent political groups. This is another unexamined shibboleth, essentially based on the *a priori* reasoning that nations or regions that have attained a high measure of prosperity tend to escape the blight of terrorism. This is, in the first instance, historically inaccurate. Some of the first terrorist movements of the post-World War era (substantially fueled by the export of extreme Left Wing ideologies and material support from the Soviet Union) emerged in the affluent nations of Western Europe and in a reconstructed Japan, and Northern Ireland is certainly not located in the Third World. Some of the most affluent countries of Europe, today, find themselves susceptible to extremist Islamist mobilization and terrorism, even, indeed, as does the US, despite relatively minuscule Muslim populations.

More significantly, however, developmental strategies as a response to terrorism have not only failed in the past, they are doomed, by their very character, to failure – and this is dramatically the case in India. These are, in reality, politically correct but utterly impractical solutions, based on half-truths and a refusal to recognize the actual constraints within which states respond to the challenges of terrorism.

The ‘root causes – developmental solution’ argument is, in fact, no more than a disguised and hollow tautology. It rests, simply on the unverified claim that the lack of development (poverty, deprivation, etc.) is the ‘root cause’ of terrorism, and then prescribes the ‘elimination’ of this ‘cause’ as the ‘solution’, with no reference either to available resource configurations and administrative capacities, or to any rational assessment of the deficits that would need to be met in order to secure ‘success’.

While the root causes thesis has been repeatedly and empirically discredited, it periodically resurfaces in different forms, and retains its popularity, particularly, in political discourse. While Western perspectives continued largely to endorse the broad logic of the root causes theory as long as the violence it sought to justify was located far from Western shores, in purportedly ‘backward’ Third World countries, the idea became abruptly unsustainable after the 9/11 attacks in the US. Thus, one prominent commentator noted,

There is a long and well-established discourse about the “root causes” of terrorism and political violence that can be traced back to the early 1970s. Following the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, however, it suddenly became very difficult to talk about “the roots of terrorism,” which some commentators claimed was an effort to excuse and justify the killing of innocent civilians... It was through the notion of radicalisation that a discussion... became possible again.³²

Radicalization – and with it, de-radicalization and counter-radicalization – have since produced a steady stream of literature, particularly in Western scholarship, to examine the causal dynamics underlying terrorism and political violence. These concepts, nevertheless, often smuggles ‘root cause’ reasoning through the back door, and have, perhaps, as many implicit ambiguities. Mark Sedgwick notes, for instance,

32 Peter R. Neumann, “Introduction”, *Perspectives on Radicalisation and Political Violence: Papers from the First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence*, London, January 17–18, 2008 (London: International Center for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2008), p. 4; cited in Mark Sedgwick, “The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion”, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 22, Number 4, p. 480, <https://counterideology2.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/the-concept-of-radicalisation-as-a-source-of-confusion.pdf>.

The earlier discourse on terrorism... focused on the circumstances, the ideology, the group, and the individual. The concept of radicalization emphasizes the individual and, to some extent, the ideology and the group, and significantly de-emphasizes the wider circumstances—the “root causes” that it became so difficult to talk about after 9/11, and that are still often not brought into analyses.³³

Sedgwick argues, further, that the sense in which the term ‘radical’ or ‘radicalization’ is used depends on ‘competing agendas,’ and includes, among these, the ‘security agenda,’ the ‘integration agenda,’ the ‘foreign policy agenda’ and the ‘Islamic agenda,’³⁴ and concludes,

At the policy level, all agencies involved need to be aware that the apparent common ground suggested by the use of the common terms “radical” and “radicalization” may mask fundamentally different agendas, and even mask conflicts between agendas.³⁵

These qualifications notwithstanding, the concept of radicalization is useful to understand the processes through extremism and terrorist mobilisation take root, as long as a measure of tentativeness attends our approach. Such tentativeness is evident in one of the influential definitions of the idea of radicalization:

...an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance

33 Mark Sedgwick, “The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion”, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 22, Number 4, pp. 480-81, <https://counterideology2.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/the-concept-of-radicalisation-as-a-source-of-confusion.pdf>.

34 Ibid, pp. 485-488.

35 Ibid, p. 491.

between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialization away from the mainstream or *status quo*-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate.³⁶

The Terrorism and Radicalization (TERRA) program notes that the elements emphasised by this definition include:

- Radicalization is an individual process as well as a group process (so psychological and social factors should be taken into account).
- It is characterised by the rejection of the legitimacy of the existing order.
- It can lead to non-violent tactics as well as to violent or terrorist acts.
- It comprises processes of ideological and social isolation from society, and a dichotomous world view.

36 Alex P. Schmid, "Radicalization, De-radicalization, Counter Radicalization: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review", *International Centre for Counter Terrorism*, The Hague, 2013, p. 18, <https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Schmid-Radicalisation-De-Radicalisation-Counter-Radicalisation-March-2013.pdf>.

- It is essentially a process of change, increasingly justifying commitment to intergroup conflict.³⁷

These components have been variously emphasised in different ‘models’ of radicalization, some of which propose a ‘staged’ process, leading from one level to the next. It is not the intention, here, to provide any exhaustive assessment of these models, but some of the principal features of the more prominent of these are here highlighted.

Alex Schmid proposes three levels of analysis, and a wide range of components within each of these:

1. **Micro-level**, i.e., the individual level, involving, e.g., identity problems, failed integration, feelings of alienation, marginalisation, discrimination, relative deprivation, humiliation (direct or by proxy), stigmatisation and rejection, often combined with moral outrage and feelings of (vicarious) revenge;
2. **Meso-level**, i.e., I the wider radical milieu – the supportive or even complicit social surround – which serves as a rallying point and is the ‘missing link’ with the terrorists’ broader constituency or reference group that is aggrieved and suffering injustices which, in turn, can radicalise parts of a youth cohort and lead to the formation of terrorist organisations;
3. **Macro-level**, i.e., the role of government and society at home and abroad, the radicalisation of public opinion and party politics, tense majority – minority relationships, especially when it comes to foreign diasporas, and the role of the lack of socio-economic

37 Holly F. Young, Jorien Holsappel, Frederike Zwenk & Magda Rooze, “A Review of Literature on Radicalization, and What it Means for TERRA”, *The TERRA Project*, 2014, http://terratookit.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TERRATOOLKIT_LITERATURE_REVIEW_01.pdf.

opportunities for whole sectors of society which leads to mobilisation and radicalisation of the discontented, some of which might take the form of terrorism.³⁸

Among early attempts at systematizing an understanding of the radicalization process was the New York Police Department's (NYPD's) study, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*,³⁹ which distinguished four unique 'phases', each with its own "specific signatures":

- Pre-radicalisation: This is the point of origin for individuals, their 'life situation' before they are exposed to and adopt jihadi-Salafi Islam as their own ideology. The majority of individuals involved in jihadi plots begin as "unremarkable" – they had 'ordinary' jobs, had lived 'ordinary' lives and had little, if any criminal history.
- Self-identification: the phase where individuals, influenced by both internal and external factors, begin to explore Salafi Islam and gradually gravitate away from their old identity and begin to associate themselves with like-minded individuals and adopt this ideology as their own. The catalyst for this 'religious seeking' is a cognitive opening, or crisis, which shakes one's certitude in previously held beliefs and opens an individual to be receptive to new worldviews. The possible 'triggers' for this cognitive opening include:
 - Economic (losing a job, blocked mobility)
 - Social (alienation, discrimination, racism – real or perceived)

38 Alex P. Schmid, op. cit., pp. 4.

39 New York Police Department, "Radicalisation in the West: The Homegrown Threat", New York, 2007, http://www.judicialwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf.

- Political (international conflicts involving Muslims)
- Personal (death in the close family)
- Indoctrination: where an individual progressively intensifies his beliefs, wholly adopts jihadi-Salafi ideology and concludes, without question, that the conditions and circumstances exist where action is required to support and further the cause. That action is militant jihad. This phase is typically facilitated and driven by a “spiritual sanctioner.” While the initial self-identification process may be an individual act, association with like-minded people is an important factor as the process deepens. By the indoctrination phase this self-selecting group becomes increasingly important as radical views are encouraged and reinforced.
- Jihadisation: in which members of the cluster accept their individual duty to participate in jihad and self-designate themselves as holy warriors or mujahedeen. Ultimately, the group will begin operational planning for the jihad or a terrorist attack. These “acts in furtherance” will include planning, preparation and execution.

While the other phases of radicalization may take place gradually, over two to three years, the jihadization component can be a very rapid process, taking only a few months, or even weeks to run its course. Significantly, while social media was yet in its infancy at the time of this study, the NYPD report noted that the Internet was “a driver and enabler for the process of radicalization”. The NYPD study also found that radicalization was “a phenomenon that occurs because the individual is looking for an identity and a cause and unfortunately, often finds them in the extremist Islam.”

The NYPD study has come in for a great deal of criticism and was successfully judicially challenged on the grounds that it had resulted in unlawful investigations against Muslims. Though the Court found no evidence of wrongdoing, NYPD did agree to ‘purge’ the report, and it is no longer available on its own website. Nevertheless, most of the processes instituted as a result of the Report continue to be followed,⁴⁰ and its crucial findings continue to be reflected in many of the other models that have been independently developed to explain the radicalization process.

Marc Sageman, with a focus on international Islamist terrorism, thus elaborates ‘four factors’, clarifying that these “are not stages in a process, nor do they occur sequentially; they are simply four recurrent phases in this process.” The first of these, he identifies as “a sense of moral outrage, a reaction to perceived major moral violations, like killings, rapes, or local police actions.” The second is the interpretation of this outrage within a “deliberately vague” worldview that sees global and local moral violations as examples of a unified global strategy – a war against Islam. These perceptions are then transposed into the individual’s daily life, as he interprets the discrimination or wrongs he experiences or perceives as parts of the generalized ‘war against Islam’. The process is often accelerated by the “the thrill of participating in clandestine operations to escape the boredom of idleness”. Finally, these feelings are translated into action, and “network mobilization allows a very small number of them to become terrorists.”

The element of ‘thrill seeking’ has been emphasised by a number of other writers. Bartlett and Miller note,

40 Brian M. Jenkins and Richard Daddario, “A Symbolic Purging of the NYPD Radicalization Report”, RAND Corporation, January 26, 2016, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2016/01/a-symbolic-purging-of-the-nypd-radicalization-report.html>.

...particularly in cases of ‘home-grown’ young militants... violent radicalisation is not necessarily, or wholly, a religious, intellectual, or rational decision. There is an emotional pull to radicalisation. To join the battle against the power and authority of Western states is considered risky, exciting, heroic, and taps into a counter-cultural and anti-establishment tradition exemplified by many youth subcultures, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Further, in-group peer pressure and an internal code of honour can render violence, in certain social contexts, the most obvious route to accrue status, respect, and meaning.⁴¹

Far more elaborate ‘stage models’ have been proposed by other scholars. Arjan De Wolf and Bertjan Doosje propose a ‘multiple floor’ model, with each floor characterized by escalating social and psychological factors and displaying visible signals. At the ‘ground floor’, feelings of frustration because of relative discrimination and deprivation are experienced in combination with uncertainty and an openness to ‘close others.’ At this stage, the individual becomes potentially open to ideological explanations, has a proclivity to search for positive social identity and is open to influence by others. On the ‘first floor’, the individual experiences conflicting sentiments, hope for improvement and frustration in case of failure. There is a progressive loss of faith in the justice of the ‘system’ and in the effectiveness of the ‘old group’. At the ‘second floor’, the individual seeks out face to face interactions with radicalized individuals and could make a commitment to such a group as he explores the radical ideology. The ‘third floor’ is characterized

41 Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller, “The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalisation”, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 24, Number 1, 2012, p. 17.

by the individual's uncertainty regarding his status within the new group, and efforts to strengthen belief in the group through a range of devices, including reciprocity, cognitive dissonance, a justification of efforts, progressive depersonalization, polarization, learning through role models and the exercise of power, among others. At this stage, the individual begins to isolate himself from his former environment and to dress and behave like a prototypical member of the new groups; rebels against other groups, particularly those very similar to the 'own group'; and adopts a new name and elements of new identity. The 'fourth floor' involves a deepening commitment to the group through the fusion of personal and social identity; increasing power of the group; and changes in self-image as a result of the functional role ascribed to the individual by the group. The individual becomes 'less noticeable' as a result of increasing participation in the 'shadow world' of the group; participates in the preparation of an attack; dresses and behaves in a manner that conforms to the dominant (Western) society once again to be less noticeable; expresses hate against 'unbelievers'; seeks to influence new members with the 'true doctrine' and to create a 'legacy'; and to re-socialize others by instilling fear. Finally, at the 'fifth floor', there is the commission of the act of terrorism. This is made possible by suppressing the inhibitory mechanism through the moral exclusion and dehumanisation of the other, by apocalyptic thinking and a belief in a 'just world' that will supplant the existing and corrupt moral order, and a progressive diminution of own culpability by blaming a complicit state for the evils that exist. Visible signals presaging this stage are the making of a video testament; withdrawal of all money from banks; and expressions of moral exclusion of all other groups.⁴²

42 Holly F. Young et al, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.

An early stages model was proposed by Fathali M. Moghaddam as a ‘Staircase to Terrorism’⁴³ which, importantly, goes beyond Islamist radicalization to explore mobilization through a range of other ideologies as well. The ‘first floor’ of this staircase involves ‘perceived options to fight unfair treatment’, involving “individuals’ perceived possibilities for personal mobility to improve their situation and their perceptions of procedural justice. At the ‘second floor’ we encounter “displacement and aggression” transferred “onto out-groups, particularly the United States... channelled through direct and indirect support for institutions and organizations that nurture authoritarian attitudes.” The ‘Third Floor’ reflects ‘Moral Engagement’: “Terrorist organizations arise as a parallel or shadow world, with a parallel morality that justifies “the struggle” to achieve the “ideal” society by any means possible.” On the ‘fourth floor’ we encounter “Solidification of Categorical Thinking and the Perceived Legitimacy of the Terrorist Organization”, and from this stage, “there is little or no opportunity to exit alive.” The ‘fifth floor’ involves the terrorist act itself and the sidestepping of inhibitory mechanisms.

There have been numerous other efforts to conceptualize pathways to radicalization and terrorist mobilisation, but it is clear from the short sampling above that most of these are overlapping and have sought to describe – with some exclusion or inclusion in different ‘models’ – a process with broad commonalities. Crucially, the ‘stages’ posited do not reflect a clear and necessary process that must be traversed step by step in a sequential manner, but are, rather, factors that variously

43 Fathali M. Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration”, *American Psychologist*, Volume 60, Number 2, February-March 2005, pp. 161-169, <http://fathalimoghaddam.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/1256627851.pdf>.

influence different individuals in circumstances that are unique to each case. Schmid summarizes the broad findings of the literature:

- Most terrorists are clinically normal although their acts are considered widely as extra-normal in moral terms;
- Backgrounds of terrorists are very diverse; there are many paths to terrorism and there is no single profile of a terrorist;
- Radicalisation is usually a gradual, phased process;
- Individual poverty alone does not cause radicalisation towards terrorism but un(der)employment may play a role;
- Grievances play a role but often more as a mobilisation device than as a personal experience;
- Social networks/environments are crucial in drawing vulnerable youths to a terrorist movement;
- Ideology often plays an important role in that it can provide the true believer with a ‘license to kill’;
- Disengagement from terrorism often occurs without de-radicalisation.⁴⁴

Each of the models conceptualized recognize the continuity in the radicalization process, but discontinuities between the various stages also ensure that a very small proportion of those who pass through the initial processes actually graduate to the highest levels. McCauley and Moskalenko observed, much earlier,

Because terrorists are few in relation to all those who share their beliefs and feelings, the terrorists may be thought of as the apex of a pyramid. The base of the

44 Alex P. Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

pyramid is composed of all who sympathize with the goals the terrorists say they are fighting for... From base to apex, higher levels of the pyramid are associated with decreased numbers but increased radicalization of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors.⁴⁵

2. CASE STUDIES: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUMBAI AND KASARGOD

In 2014, this writer sought to document the emergence and dynamics of Islamist extremism and radicalization linked to *Daesh* (Islamic State, formerly Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham) in two target regions, Mumbai in Maharashtra and the Kasargod District in Kerala. These two areas were selected because of the clusters of *Daesh* mobilization that had come to light in these locations at that time, and their associations with prominent conservative/ fundamentalist Muslim institutions, organisations and evangelists

The objective of the study was to examine the motives and processes that contributed to *Daesh* mobilization in India through case studies of these two prominent loci of such mobilization.

The principal device employed in this field study was a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a broad spectrum of opinions, including elements along the conservative-radical spectrum, as well as moderate and progressive voices in the community; community leaders and opinion makers across communal lines; political and social activists; journalists; and those who had some association with individuals who had joined or sought to join *Daesh*, or to engage in activities purportedly

45 C. McCauley and S. Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of political radicalization: Pathways toward terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 20, Number 3, 2008, p. 417.

on behalf of *Daesh* within India. The study also accessed some local records on demography and human development indices to supplement its background profile.

A total of 41 persons were interviewed, 33 in Mumbai; and a total of 51 in Kasargod and Khozikhode, Kerala. Most of the interviews in Kerala were located in Padanna and Trikaripur, the locations from where 17 persons went ‘missing’ in June–July 2016, to join *Daesh* (out of 21 from Kerala who went at that stage, the remaining four were from Pallakad District, further south). Some journalists were also tapped in Khozikhode.

In the second phase, workshops were organised in Mumbai and Kasargod, and these were attended, respectively, by 18 and 14 selected resource persons.

As many interviewees sought anonymity at that stage, most identities have been withheld.

The resignation of all nine Muslim Parliamentarians and two provincial governors in Sri Lanka after the coordinated bombings of Churches and hotels on Easter Sunday (April 21, 2019), exposed the deepening fault lines between the majority Sinhala Buddhists and the small Muslim community in Sri Lanka. Over 250 people were killed and hundreds injured in the attacks, claimed by *Daesh* (Islamic State).

3. MUMBAI

Among the earliest reports of *Daesh* ‘recruitment’ in India came from Mumbai, when a four-member ‘module’ from the Kalyan area of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region went ‘missing’, to join *Daesh* in May 2014. One of these, Areeb Majeed, returned and was arrested. Three other people — Fahad Shaikh, Shaheem Tanki and Aman Tandel, are believed

to have been killed in Syria.⁴⁶ Another four youth went missing from the Malwani suburb of Mumbai in late 2015, though only one, Ayaz Sultan, reached Syria, while the remaining three were arrested. Another four persons from different parts of Mumbai, including Navi Mumbai, Mazgaon and Mumbra, were arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) at this early stage.

The NIA, moreover, had reportedly drawn up a list of more than 50 terror accused and suspects, who it claimed were inspired by Mumbai-based televangelist and preacher Zakir Naik's speeches and videos. On August 2, 2016, Hansraj Ahir, the Minister of State for Home, confirmed in the Lok Sabha that there had been reports of "some known terrorists have reportedly been inspired by the preachings of Dr. Zakir Naik, President, Islamic Research Foundation."⁴⁷

Areeb Majeed, who returned from Syria after a stint with *Daesh*, was reported to have disclosed to his interrogators that he was 'inspired' by Zakir Naik's speeches. Moreover, Arshi Qureshi of Navi Mumbai and Rizwan Khan of Kalyan, arrested for forcible conversion to Islam and radicalization, specifically in the case of some of the Kerala youth who went missing to join *Daesh*, were 'aides' to Zakir Naik, the former working for his Islamic Research Foundation and the latter for a 'connected' al Birr Foundation.

Mumbai also has a very long history of Islamist radicalization and terrorism. Commencing with India's worst terrorist attack, the serial blasts of March 12, 1993, which killed

46 Sonam Saigal, "Kalyan resident who joined ISIS granted bail", *The Hindu*, March 18, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/kalyan-resident-who-joined-isis-granted-bail/article31094785.ece>.

47 Ministry of Home Affairs, Lok Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 2683, August 2, 2016.

at least 257 and injured 713, the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* records 14 terrorist strikes in the country's commercial capital, including at least six complex serial attacks, culminating in the 26/11 outrage of 2008. Significantly, many of the conspirators and perpetrators arrested for involvement in this succession of attacks have come from privileged and educated backgrounds, challenging the entrenched 'root causes' thesis that identifies poverty, lack of education and denial of access to social and public goods as the principal source of terrorist mobilisation. It is useful to recall that Dr. Mohammed Abdul Maten Abdul Bashid, an MD in forensic sciences working at the JJ Hospital in Mumbai, was the main accused in the December 2002 Ghatkopar blast; Sayed Yunus Khwaja Ayub was an instrumentation engineer who had worked in Dubai, and was also charged in the Ghatkopar blast; Anwar Ali held Master of Arts, Master of Commerce and Master of Computer Management degrees, and was an accused in the CST-Karjat Train blast that occurred on March 13, 2003; and Saquib Abdul Hamid Nachen, a commerce graduate from Mumbai who was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation in 1992 for terrorist links and spent almost a decade in prisons, to emerge and allegedly engineer four bombings in Mumbai after 2001. However, Bashid was acquitted on June 11, 2005, by the special Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) court, which gave him the benefit of doubt.⁴⁸ As reported on April 7, 2016, Alwar Ali was also acquitted on terrorism charges.⁴⁹

48 "Issue passport to man cleared of 2002 terror charges: Bombay HC", *Hindustan Times*, July 19, 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/issue-passport-to-man-cleared-of-2002-terror-charges-bombay-hc/story-byKOUHa7hyVzvVynErDJLK.html>.

49 "2002-03 blasts in Mumbai: Ex-NDA professor gets two years in jail, walks free", *The Indian Express*, April 7, 2016, <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/2002-03-blasts-in-mumbai-ex-nda-professor-gets-two-years-in-jail-walks-free/>.

Yunus died in custody in 2003. A trial is currently underway against four Policemen on charges of murder and destruction of evidence for the alleged custodial death of Yunus.⁵⁰ Nachen walked out of Thane Central Jail on November 22, 2017. He was convicted for possession of weapons under the anti-terrorism law and sentenced to 10 years in prison. However, considering his good conduct in prison, Nachen was given a remission of five months and 13 days.⁵¹

Mumbai also has a record of communal violence – the worst of which was experienced in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition of December 1992 and the serial blasts of March 1993 – as well as of communally polarized electoral politics. It has also been an operational base for a succession of terrorist organisations and cells, and with its open metropolitan architecture, remains immensely vulnerable to terrorist attack. It is, consequently, on these considerations alone, an area of immense security concerns.

Mumbai's population was 20.7 million in 2011, of which 20.65 per cent (about 4.28 million) were Muslim. Literacy levels among Muslims across the State of Maharashtra stood at 83.6 per cent, much higher than the all-India average of 68.5 per cent, and *significantly higher than the rate for Hindus in the State*, at 81.8 per cent. However, the sex ratio among Muslims is 911, well below the national average of 951 and the ratio for Hindus in the State, at 928. This is a significant indicator, suggesting that conservatism and patriarchy continue

50 Sadaf Modak, “Khwaja Yunus custodial death case: plea in Supreme Court, progress at trial court”, *The Indian Express*, January 12, 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/khwaja-yunus-custodial-death-case-trial-explained-7719249/>.

51 “Saquib Nachan walks free”, *Mumbai Mirror*, November 23, 2017, <https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/saquib-nachan-walks-free/articleshow/61759331.cms>.

to dominate the community, and the higher level of literacy and education have not impacted proportionately on the gender bias within the community.

From a position of pre-eminence, Maharashtra State had fallen to the fifth position among States in terms of per capita GSDP by 2013-14, behind Goa, Delhi, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Haryana. Nevertheless, the State at large, with a per capita income of INR 114,392 remains well above Indian averages, and Mumbai accounts for a disproportionate share of the commercial activity and is the richest district in terms of per capita income within the State. Nevertheless, there are critical social and economic skews. For one thing, more than half the city's population lives in slums, and there is a high measure of communal ghettoisation. Some studies suggest a wide range of other distortions, including high unemployment rates, particularly among Muslims: 15.2 per cent in Mumbai Suburban; 13.7 per cent in Mumbai, for Muslims. The average rate of unemployment in Maharashtra stands at a low 3.8 per cent.⁵²

Mumbai's vulnerabilities are also exacerbated by its openness and cosmopolitanism. As one interviewee expressed it, "Mumbai is the Europe of India; just as, globally, Europe has been more affected than other parts of the world (by recruitment of foreign fighters to *Daesh*), so Mumbai is more affected than other parts of India."⁵³

4. KASARGOD

Wide areas across Kerala, including Kasargod, had experienced a gradual and progressive process of communalization,

52 CMIE, "Unemployment Rate in India", January 24, 2022, <https://unemploymentinindia.cmie.com/>.

53 All quotes without attribution are from interviews conducted under this study.

radicalization and terrorist mobilization over well over a decade preceding this study. The then Chief Minister of Kerala, E.K. Nayanar accepted, in June 1998, that a number of Islamist extremist and terrorist formations were operating in the State, including the National Development Front (NDF), the Jamiyathul Ehsaniya, the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), the Islamic Movement, and Al-Umma, whose base of operations covered Kozhikode, Malappuram and Thrissur Districts. Significant, 13 NDF activists were arrested on September 6, 2001, while undergoing arms training at a college in Palakkad, the District that accounted for four of the 21 who disappeared to join Daesh in June-July 2016. There have been persistent reports that the area had been consolidating as a haven for fundamentalist and subversive forces.

Kasargod, the northernmost District of Kerala, had a total population of 1,307,375, of which 37.2 per cent (486,913) were Muslims, according to the Census 2011. The district had a literacy rate of 89.85 per cent, lower than Kerala's average of 93.91 per cent, but significantly higher than the Indian average 74.04 per cent. The sex ratio was 1,079, far above the national average of 940, and just below the State ratio of 1,084. The district was among the State's most backward, despite the fact that it had the highest proportion of NRI households, with at least one NRI member in 50.9 per cent of the households, as against 39.7 per cent households on average for the State. Foreign remittances, mainly from the Gulf, brought a high measure of visible prosperity to the area. Traditional traders and businessmen, the people of Padanna speak of a 200-year history of migration, with people setting up businesses in Burma, Sri Lanka, Africa, Mali, China, and the Gulf countries, as well as in various metropolises within India, especially Mumbai and Bangalore. The resulting wealth is reflected in luxurious houses and burgeoning mosques. Kasargod has

also seen increasing Hindu-Muslim communal disturbances, particularly after 1992 and in the coastal regions of the district.

Like other parts of northern Kerala, Kasaragod is also known as the Land of Gods for its variety of religious rituals and festivals, both Hindu and Muslim. Religious symbols and structures abound in every part of the district, with hundreds of age-old Mosques and temples, including the Malik Deenar Juma Masjid, the first mosque on Indian soil (established c. 629 AD, during the life of the Prophet), and the Madhur Mahaganapathy Temple (believed to be between a thousand and two thousand years old). The district is also known for its unique traditional religious rituals such as Theyyam, Yakshagana, Kambala (buffalo race), Poorakkali, Kolkali (ritual dances), etc. The local Muslims have adopted several foreign and Kerala visual art forms and made them their own, with suitable changes. Muslim participation in many of the ritual Hindu festivals, including Theyyam performances, is not unknown. The Moplah Theyyam is performed by Muslims at Hindu *devasthanams* (temples).

Padanna is a Gram Panchayath (village self-administration body) comprising Padanna and Udinur villages, with a population of 21,662 in 2011, of which, unofficial estimates suggest, more than 75 per cent are orthodox Muslims.

Trikaripur is a Special Grade Panchayat and town near Padanna, in the southern extreme of Kasargod District. Trikaripur *panchayat* comprehends two areas, South Trikaripur and North Trikaripur, with a total population of 42,782, of which, unofficial estimates indicate, 50 per cent are Muslim.

The Muslim population of Padanna and Trikaripur is fragmented into different sectarian/ideological groupings, as well as opportunistic institutional divisions, many of which are hostile to each other. The principal among these are:

- A majority of the Muslim (Sunni) population identifies with either E.K. Abubacker Musaliyar (EK Group) or Kanthapuram A.P. Abubacker Musaliyar (AP Group), both fragments of the original Samastha Kerala Jamiyathul Ulema, an organization originally formed in 1926, purportedly to resist emerging trends, on the one hand, towards a puritanical Salafist reform of the Faith, and, on the other, the progressive influence of Western culture. After the split in 1989, an entrenched rivalry was established, at least occasionally manifesting in violence, particularly over the control of various mosques and *madrassahs*. The EK Group is politically identified with the Indian Union Muslim League, while the AP Group has traditionally supported the Left.
- The Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen (KNM), established in 1952, articulated a conservative reformist impulse within Islam, and encouraged adherents – *mujahids*⁵⁴ – to reject the intervention of clergy or other religious intermediaries, and to pursue the doctrines and directives of the Faith, and to dedicate themselves to the worship of the one true God. Significantly, the group is progressive in many of its interpretations, and allows women to pray in the Mosque. Adherents have achieved greater progress, economically and socially, than other groups. KNM has a students’/ youth wing, Ittihad us Subanul Mujahiddeen (ISM).
- The Jama’at-e-Islami (JeI) adheres to the Islamist supremacist ideology of Abu Ala Maududi, rejects nationalism and imposes a principal duty of Jihad on all Muslims, regarding the ‘five pillars of Islam’ (shahada

54 The *mujahid*, in this interpretation, is committed to the ‘greater jihad’, the inner struggle of the believer to master himself in the practice the tenets of the Faith.

or the declaration of faith, prayer, charity, fasting during Ramazan, and hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca) as no more than a preparation for this principal duty. The JeI ideology has been adapted to widely different situations, producing terrorist movements in Pakistan, Jammu & Kashmir and Bangladesh. However, the JeI Hind (the principal Indian arm of the organisation) has sought to tread a middle path, abjuring violence and seeking protection from majoritarian extremism under India's secular Constitution. Nevertheless, JeI continues to advocate the 'establishment of the Islamic way of life in all aspects of life', and to purge Islam of 'all unhealthy accretions' through 'constructive and peaceful methods of propagation'.

- The Tablighi Jama'at (TJ) purports to be a non-political movement seeking to restore the purity of Islam through an unrelenting process of spiritual jihad. TJ formally rejects all violence as a means of evangelism, but some of its adherents and former members have been involved in acts of terrorism in India and Pakistan, as well as in some Western countries.
- A range of new Salafist mosques and *madrassahs* has also come into being, challenging the authority of traditional institutions in the region, and also catalyzing competitive extremism among various groupings.
- Communal political formations such as the Popular Front of India, Indian Union Muslim League, and the All India Majlis-e-Ittihad ul Muslimeen also have a presence in Kasargod, although their influence is peripheral within Padanna and Trikaripur.
- All major religious formations and factions have a number of institutions, mosques and *madrassahs* in

Padanna and Trikaripur, and religious activities have an overwhelming influence on the population. According to one estimate, Padanna has at least 36 mosques of different sizes, including at least five ‘Salafi’ mosques (while KNM, JeI and TJ are also ‘Salafist’ in their ideological orientation, ‘Salafi’ here refers to the new global Islamist stream, often also loosely referred to as Wahabi) just along a four-kilometer stretch of its central road. The ‘morning madrassah’ is popular, and most children will attend religious classes there, before they go to school. [There are also some 15 Hindu Temples in Padanna].

- Kasargod has seen cycles of communal tensions and violence, especially in the coastal areas, but locals insist that Padanna and Trikaripur have rarely been affected by these, though there have been several instances of ‘political’ violence, most recently involving Islamist and Hindutva formations. The record, however, indicates that several cycles of communal violence, including incidents resulting in the loss of lives, have occurred, especially after the 1992 Babri Masjid incident. As many as 469 cases of communal violence were registered in the District over a decade after 2007. 28 cases were reported in 2007, 36 in 2008, 61 in 2009, 22 in 2010, 152 in 2011, 93 in 2012, 45 in 2013, 16 in 2014, 7 in 2015 and 9 in 2016. Minor tensions in any part of the district trigger fears of wider communal troubles, as religious bigots are instantly mobilized. The increasing influence of radical Islamist organisations, prominently including the National Democratic Front (NDF), Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI)/ Popular Front of India (PFI), as well as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

and other right-wing organisations among the Hindus, have repeatedly triggered violent communal clashes. Kasaragod borders on Mangalore in Karnataka, which has also been afflicted by communal clashes for a long time.

The influence of Gulf money and a flow of Salafi ideologies has transformed the profile of Kasargod, particularly in the 2000s, at an accelerating pace. The growing presence of purdah, hijab or burqa among women, and even among very young girls, is a visible index of this change. Earlier, locals confirm, there was little in appearance that distinguished Muslims from Hindus. All women wore a long-sleeved blouse with a kalli or kalli mundu (lungi or wrap) or long skirt, and occasionally a kattam (headscarf), while men wore a loose shirt with the kalli mundu. Most men were clean shaven. More and more Muslim men now grow their beards in the Muslim style and have taken to wearing a range of clothing that clearly confirms their religious identity, including pajamas and long kurtas, skull caps, Arab keffiyah style scarves, and even, among the Wahabi elements, Thawbs or robes in the Arab style. These are not mere aesthetic shifts. As one commentator noted, today they demand that all women wear hijab, tomorrow, they may demand that women should not move about alone, or study, or work outside the home. There have also been increasing campaigns against what are pronounced shirk (deviations) by the Wahabi extremists, and these include the participation of Muslims in various traditional Hindu rituals, such as the Moplah Theyyam. At the Kanamangalam Temple near Trikaripur, during the Perim Kaliyatam festival, Muslims donate pots of sugar. During the 2015-2016 Perim, some mujahid groups challenged the custom, organizing public meetings and denouncing the practice as shirk. Nevertheless, the local Muslims continued with the custom. Established marriage customs are also under

attack. Muslims in the area include many rituals, dances and art forms during the marriage ceremonies, but since the 1990s, some Islamist organisations have pronounced bans/prohibitions against such activities, even within the privacy of the home. One of the participants in this study, C. Shukkur, observed, “Over the last three decades, the Saudi sponsored Islamism, Wahabism, has dominated, with massive funding. Unfortunately, we are not opposing this form because of their wealth; we want their money. Ordinary believers now think this is the real Faith.” While the extremist Islamist groups are small in number, their influence is spreading. Locals speak of an ‘Arab invasion’ and an insistence on ‘pure gold Islam.’

In contrast, however, the status of women appears to have seen considerable improvement on some parameters. Till the early 2000s, most girls in Padanna were educated only up to High School, as the nearest college was some 40 kilometres away and parents were not comfortable sending their daughters far to study. The marriage of underage girls was also prevalent. With the growth of educational opportunities in the village and neighbouring areas, girls are now going in for higher education, and there are several successful women in different professions.

The problem, however, is not simply one of Wahabism. Most mainstream Muslim organisations support extreme orthodoxy, deepening the vulnerabilities to radical mobilisation. Crucially, no Muslim organisation is actively resisting these trends and, indeed, most of these have also hardened their interpretations in a competition with the Wahabi formations. Organisations and individuals who speak out against radicalization face difficulties and intimidation. Moreover, the political dispensation supports the more strident elements within the religious parties, and enforcement agencies often

fail to act against extremist elements – both Muslim and Hindu – contributing to polarization and feeding minority community insecurities.

5. FIELD ASSESSMENT

Non-violent Radicalization

Directly or implicitly, almost all interviewees confirmed the centrality of non-violent radicalization and the ‘closing of the Muslim mind’ as a principal factor resulting in vulnerabilities to recruitment by *Daesh*. Even among the most orthodox constituencies, while their own conservatism and Puritanism was thought to be entirely justifiable, rival groups were soundly criticized for propagating a ‘false Islam’ that had ‘misled the youth’. Complex factors are seen to have contributed to this trend.

Among the most significant of these factors is the sectarian and institutional fragmentation that has afflicted all segments of the Muslim population in the region and has, in turn, fed increasing competitive sectarianism and communalism, often culminating in violence between competing institutions. These processes have given rise to more and more rigid and puritanical interpretations of the Faith, challenges that the moderate orthodoxy within the Sunni Faith, or the Sufi tradition, have failed to effectively respond to.

Interlocutors emphasised the grave “societal consequences of sectarian rigidity”, and many reiterated the dangers of the resulting creation of what they described as ‘spiritual extremism,’ a consuming obsession with ritual purity and a seeking after a perfect religious environment and order. This Utopianism – reinforced by the projection of an ideal Islam in the teachings of most conservative mainstream institutions, as

well as of radicalizing proselytizers – itself contains elements of hatred or strong antipathies towards out-groups.

‘Arabisation’ and Wahabism played a crucial role in these processes in both the areas of study. “An environment of hate is being created. Ours is a broadly composite culture and the Arabs are not kindly disposed to this culture. They believe it needs correction, that it is an aberration. They are spending a lot of money on Wahabisation. But the (Indian Muslim) community is deeply rooted in this culture and will not identify with Wahabism. But where hate campaigns are ongoing, vulnerabilities grow. This is a contestation between the composite culture, on the one hand, and Arabisation and alienation, on the other.”

Processes of competitive communalism have also been unleashed by the political and electoral processes, and are exacerbated by the media. “Radicalization is being created in newspapers, on TV, often through fake news.” Sensational, polarizing and extremist constituencies, postures and statements get the greatest media attention; good work done by community leaders and moderate ideas articulated by Muslims finds no mention in news reports. The treatment of communal crimes, incitement and hate speech often tends to be biased, with agencies perceived as showing greater vigour in prosecuting Muslim offenders and displaying a measure of leniency towards Hindus. Crucially, the chain of violence is poorly understood, or rather, poorly accommodated in existing political and enforcement paradigms. As one commentator notes, “Physical violence comes later. Verbal violence comes first. This goes up to the material, and then to fatal violence. We need to look at this entire chain.” And another observes, “There is a poison of communalism across the country today.”

One interviewee particularly emphasised that the rigidity of the Muslim belief systems and mindset was a result of the “shutting of the doors of *Ijtihad*⁵⁵ since the 13th Century, with the decline of the Abbasid dynasty”, and that “Ulema today do not have the training, knowledge or wisdom to do *Ijtihad*.” *Madrassahs*, where the *Ulema* learn their Islam, have had their curricula frozen for centuries, and admit to no new influences. One of the most popular texts, one of the interviewees emphasised, was Burhan ud Din al Marghinani’s *Al Hidayah*, a regressive 12th Century text that emphasises Muslim exclusivism, the inferiority of other belief systems and the importance of *Jihad* (as religious war) in the spread of Islam. Indeed, it was emphasised that, in modern India, progressive rigidity had been introduced by Muslim elites, even those who were purportedly committed to ‘modernization’ and moderation. For instance, one interviewee narrated that, when agricultural workers went to the great reformist Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to ask for schools for their children, he responded by asking what use they would have for an education. At best, all they needed was basic literacy. The class character of the elites has been decisive in the trajectory that the community has followed. Sir Syed, this commentator noted, set up higher educational institutions only for the *Ashraf* (elite).

Many interviewees insist that mosques, *madrassahs* and religious congregations were the principal locations for radicalization and preliminary mobilisation, while peer pressure may play a crucial role in eventual recruitment and operationalization. The narrative in Mumbai emphasised the oppression of Islam – both locally and globally – and generated psychological pressure to ‘do something.’ There is a process

55 *Ijtihad*: The application of reasoned interpretation to the resolution of questions of religion and law.

of selection thereafter, and more intensive radicalization of those who are seen as willing and promising. It is at this stage that the Internet has become crucial in recent years. In Kerala, however, the idea of the Caliphate and the aspiration to live in a ‘pure’ Islamic environment, appear to have been the principal motivators rather than any real or imagined grievances, personal or of wider injury to Muslims; it is only after the radical elements left the country that their communications with friends or family at home contain elements of the usual themes of the oppression of Islam.

Many of the interviewees, however, warned, that it is not the 2 per cent of *madrassah* students who are at risk, it is rather the 50 per cent who are out of school; “Muslim chauvinism is greatest among this 50 per cent.”

Both perspectives are likely contrafactual, as *Daesh* recruitment has not come from *madrassahs* or from the uneducated unemployed, but has tapped into public⁵⁶/missionary school educated persons, many of them with higher educational qualifications from ‘secular’ institutions. The *madrassah* and its regressive curriculum is not, however, irrelevant even in such cases. In Kasargod, most Muslim children attend ‘morning *madrassah*’ before they go for their classes in various public or government schools. In Mumbai – as in most parts of the country – elite families call in a *madrassah* educated *maulvi* to teach their children Arabic and the Quran, and the residual influence of such instructions should not be underestimated.

In Padanna, several interlocutors spoke of the marginalization of what they called the unique traditions of “Kerala Islam” and the deepening influence of Wahabi-Salafist teachings. In mosques and *madrassas*, extremist and

56 In India, privately funded schools are referred to as ‘public schools.’

radical religious sermons had begun to dominate. The young men who left Padanna to join *Daesh* were followers of the Kerala Sunni tradition, but are said to have joined the Kerala Nadwat ul Mujahiddeen (KNM) over the preceding four to six years. It was after this that they began to follow strict religious disciplines, adopting practices that were strange in the local environment. Yasin, the President of the Eleven Star Arts and Sports Club who knew some of the renegade youth, observed, “Many of us noticed their behavioural changes as they began to grow long beards and wear clothes that adhere to strict Salafist traditions. It seemed to me that they were not comfortable with their surroundings.” Hafizuddin’s (one of the men who joined *Daesh* and was believed to have been killed in the Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan) uncle B.C.A. Rahman confirms, “He refused to trim his beard and felt his family members were moving away from true Islam. He didn’t fight or argue with us, so when one fine morning, he decided to get rid of cable TV, we thought it was just a phase. The real trouble began when he requested that there be no celebrations at a wedding.” Hafeezuddin’s turn to the extremist ideology, Rahman disclosed, occurred in “less than two years.”

Haneef Moulavi, a teacher with KNM, who had taught some of the men from Padanna who went to Afghanistan to join *Daesh*, insists that his organisation was not responsible for their radicalization: “These youths were brainwashed by some extreme spiritual thoughts. I don’t know the exact source of this extremism. We don’t support IS, who kill even Muslims. We (KNM) have our own interpretation regarding issues such as *hijra*⁵⁷ and *jihad*. We never support violent *jihad*.” He claimed that the renegade youth had shifted to another Salafi organisation, the ‘Wisdom Group,’ and then to the ‘Dammaj

57 Emigration for the cause of God and the Faith.

Salifis' who propagated radical ideas and the "pure Islamic life." Haneef also disclosed that Yahiya (earlier Bestin Vincent who converted from Christianity) was the first among this group who asked him about the duty to do *hijra*, citing *ayats* of the Quran. Haneef added, "After Yahiya raised the subject, all the other youth started to ask such questions. Though I clarified their doubts, they were not satisfied by my answers. I suspect Yahiya was the man behind the whole plot."

Prashant M.P., Chief of Bureau, *Times of India*, Khozikhode, noted that regional histories were important, arguing that this had nothing to do with Kasargod as such; it was all over Kerala. The idea of the Khilafat is very strong in local traditions. It is useful to recall that the Mallapuram region was at the forefront of the Khilafat Movement.⁵⁸ This was the greatest element of the appeal of *Daesh* in this area – the declaration of the Caliphate.

Sectarian conflict has contributed to a 'hardening of Islam,' and the greater influence of puritan ideologies. Thus, there have been numerous instances of Barelvi and Deobandi mosques and *madrassahs* being taken over by the Ahle Hadith over recent years. One interviewee suggested that there had been "several hundred cases in Mumbai Metropolitan area alone. Parbani has a population of about two lakh (200,000), and has three Ahle Hadith mosques." Further, he emphasised, the moment Ahle Hadith takes over, activities become secretive, clandestine meetings are held after the last Namaz, the process of indoctrination begins. Visitors are hosted secretly, and surreptitious Dars-e-Hadith (Hadith study) camps are organised. Friday *Taqirirs* become more radical as Ahle Hadith or other Salafist formations consolidate their hold on

58 1919-1924, movement against the British for the restoration of the Ottoman Caliphate.

more mosques. “An army of strong believers is being created.” Most *masajid* have *madrasahs* attached, and the curriculum stealthily introduces exclusivist content. The Tablighi Jamaat is identified as another ‘problem’ in terms of non-violent radicalization. Extremist foreign preachers are often brought in on tourist visas and engage in proselytizing.

Sectarian divisions also deepened across the board because each faction set up its own educational institutions, including schools, colleges and universities, and an overwhelming proportion of their students were drawn from families adhering to that particular sect or ideology, creating higher and higher walls of division, and enduring pools of ideological extremism. Worse, this created an environment in which social interaction with a widening spectrum of ‘others’ was consciously minimized. This was not just the case with Muslim sectarian institutions, but also the result of the proliferation of Hindu caste-based institutions, resulting in a regressive trend of educational exclusivism. “New generation children have no opportunity to mingle with other castes and religions... The lack of mingling will make our new generation an easy target of radical religious groups... Public schools and public cultural institutions need to be strengthened to prevent people getting divided along communal lines.”

Significantly, no section of society was completely impervious to these radicalizing trends. Aberrant cases of Barelvis and even Bohras (a Shia sect) jumping to Ahle Hadith were on record, and, of course, recent converts from other Faiths had also been susceptible to extremist interpretations of Islam, and to *Daesh* mobilisation.

The influx of petrodollars and the increasing flow of migrant workers to the Middle East (and their subsequent return) were at the source of these complex movements, most

of which sought to ‘cleanse Islam’ of Hindu practices and other *bidat* (deviations/ innovations).

It is critical to reiterate consequently, that complex processes of non-violent radicalization, which have largely been neglected out of fear of ‘interfering’ in religious matters, or as a result of the tyranny of political correctness, constitute a grave danger of transformation into extremism and violent radicalism. These are protracted processes, creating enduring influences over long periods of time, and they commence from a wide range of religious organisations, centres and schools.

Isolation

No stereotypical profiles were identified among those arrested for involvement with *Daesh*, or who had left the country to join *Daesh* at the time of this study. Most of them had attended missionary/public schools, and came from relatively affluent backgrounds. Only in the case of a single lone wolf attack on a policeman in Yavatmal, Maharashtra, was the perpetrator *madrassah* educated.

Nevertheless, one of the factors repeatedly emphasized by many interviewees was that the individuals who had chosen to join with *Daesh* tended to be deeply isolated socially, with most of the people within the neighbourhoods having little or no interaction with them. The breakdown of extended and joint family systems, the nuclear family, lack of emotional support and positive family interaction, were seen as crucial to the process of mobilization. The relationships that the radicalized youth were engaged in were not seen as positive and healthy. One commentator noted, “They don’t want love, but they do want sex. Most of them have married more than once.” Negative orientations to gender equality sharpened psychological isolation.

The ‘spiritual extremism’ of these youth results in an obsession with religion and the ‘hereafter’, to the exclusion of the real world and normal interactions with friends and family. It is the ‘conspiratorial group’ alone that becomes the centre of their interactions, most of which occur within a religious setting.

The ‘spiritual extremism’ is articulated in actions reflecting a desperate seeking, as in the case the travel of Abdul Rashid, the principal motivator in the Kasargod case, as well as some of the others (Ahsanullah, Ashfaq, Rashid, Ezza and his wife, Eshia and his wife) to Sri Lanka to live in a puritan Salafist commune, and subsequently, in another such Salafist commune at Athikkad in Mallapuram, Kerala.

As the conspiratorial group and their intentions crystallize, isolation and extremist ideas intensify. In the case of Hafeezuddin, according to one of this family members, he became more and more ‘spiritual’, cut off television at home, declared that music and cinema were *haram*, and also stopped using his car because he had bought it on a loan (with interest), which was ‘un-Islamic’. This process of intensifying isolation and radicalization is a prelude to the final active mobilization or recruitment, as the case may be.

Cyber Mobilization

The internet becomes crucial in the final stages of mobilization in most cases. It is “the last platform of mobilization.” The radicalization process from this stage on is extremely rapid, culminating in action, either to move to *Daesh* areas, or to engage in terrorist action locally.

Echoing the public discourse, most interviewees refer to this stage as cyber-radicalization but the subsequent description of the process indicates access by already radicalized individuals,

and it is more accurate to speak of it as cyber-mobilization or cyber-recruitment. These are already radicalized individuals engaging in a purposeful search on the internet of specific materials that will allow them to identify organizations and courses of action that allow them to take their intentions forward, and thereafter, to establish some measure of contact with such organizations or their mediators. Cyber radicalization may also play a role in early stages as a supplement to face to face radicalization within the community, but even at this stage reflects intentional seeking behavior among individuals who have undergone a sufficient measure of radicalization to create the cognitive opening within which such searching becomes a psychological need.

At peak, between 2014 and 2017, the rate, quality and intensity of *Daesh* propaganda was overwhelming. One source estimated that, over a single week of monitoring, *Daesh* put out 147 propaganda films and more than 60 short video clips, apart from ‘news reports’ and other releases on the Internet. From March 8, 2018 to June 8, 2018, 1,348 ISIS videos were uploaded to YouTube, garnering 163,391 views.⁵⁹ *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* were enormously sophisticated, well packaged and appealing publications that reach out to the potential recruit. And before the social media clampdown, the production quality of video films documenting some of the most horrific atrocities was professional and often exceptional.

Initial contact with *Daesh* intermediaries was often through mediators or activists in Europe, particularly including Finland and the Netherlands. Indians abroad were often brought into the recruitment loop at this stage.

59 Center for Homeland Defense and Security, “What Does ISIS Post on YouTube?”, July 26, 2018, <https://www.hsdl.org/c/what-does-isis-post-on-youtube/>.

Once contact with *Daesh* was established, *Bayah* (oath of allegiance) was sought and given, after which the new recruits were tasked, either to move to *Daesh* areas through a given process, or to define local targets through a consultative process.

Communal Anxieties

A deep sense of crisis in the Faith within the larger community and the failure of the traditional leadership, particularly in addressing the anxieties and aspirations of the youth, have created a cognitive vacuum within which radicalizing organizations, forces and media find the psychological spaces to mediate a transformation.

Muslim apprehensions deepened with the coming of the Bharatiya Janata Party Government at the Centre, with its implicit Hindutva affiliations. There was also a sense that the huge tide of anti-Islamic sentiment that was sweeping the globe, was coming to India as well. This is, no doubt, overlaid by the fragmented consciousness that groups like *Daesh* were doing the greatest harm to Muslims themselves, but this perception was muddled by complex conspiracy theories that blamed the West for many of the trends in global conflict that were enveloping the Muslim world. The average Muslim “sees the world and is afraid of what is happening.” Within India, state institutions were seen as being in bad faith – e.g., BMC Schools in Mumbai made Surya Namaskar compulsory, and this became an issue for all Muslim religious activists. Such actions promoted polarization and empowered the most regressive elements, even as they pushed some Muslims out of secular education and institutions. Moreover, extremist majoritarian speech and violence deepened these processes: “They pour salt on our wounds. Chaar beevi chaalis bacche,

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Haramzaade ya Ramzaade,⁶⁰ Go to Pakistan. These are all problems.”

Discrimination, particularly in enforcement and intelligence action, has a crucial impact on Muslim perceptions.

In the wake of terrorist incidents, they look for ‘terrorists’ only among the Muslims, arrests are often indiscriminate, charges are leveled against the wrong people, without evidence. The media projects baseless allegations, citing unnamed ‘sources.’ False stories are manufactured. Engineers, doctors, educated people have been arrested, kept in jail for decades. Entire families have been ruined. When they are found innocent, no compensation is given; no one will employ them. The community sees all this and is troubled.”

Another observer notes,

Terrorism investigations are terrible. They victimize the entire community. 34 per cent of the prison population is Muslim (as against about 14 per cent of the national population). The conviction rate among Muslims is 6 to 7 per cent, as against an average of 15 per cent. This feeds the sense of grievance in the community.

Nevertheless, both in Mumbai and Kasargod, participants and interviewees pointed out to specific cases where the Police, agencies and special counter-terrorism units had acted with sensitivity, sought to counsel and rehabilitate individuals and ‘saved lives’ in the process. *These examples were seen in a very positive light.*

The cumulative impact of the various adverse factors was to “lock the community with the walls of the Faith,” to

60 “Four wives, forty children, bastard children or children of Ram,” slogans that were (and are) frequently hurled at the Muslims by majoritarian Hindutva extremists.

harden values and practices, even those that are accepted as being regressive, in order to “preserve religion and culture.” The apprehension is that, “if even one element of religious practice is allowed to change, it will be a slippery slope” and will open the doors for every aspect of the Faith to be tampered with. Individuals who are “uneducated in Islam” feel overwhelmingly pressured to seek protection under the Islamic identity.

Crucially, even regressive issues bind the community in these circumstances. Thus, the Law Commission’s intervention in the Triple Talaq issue – an issue that most Muslim religious leaders interviewed concede was legitimate – brought together the entire communal leadership, across sectarian lines. Other non-issues were being brought centre-stage (e.g., beef) for purely political reasons.

It is this environment that radical preachers such as Zakir Naik exploited. Naik tapped into insecurities and resentments, distorting Islam, and prescribed an extremely detailed ritualism that consumed all aspects of his followers’ lives. He did not allow questioning or independent thinking. His teachings indirectly legitimized Islamist violence and *jihad*, though he was very careful not to engage in what would fall into the ambit of criminal incitement. Naik essentially preaches an Islamist supremacist doctrine that is applauded by many, though very few act on these ideas. Crucially, he emphasises that, globally, Islam was under assault, and many appreciated the fact that he was able to ‘refute’ Western supremacists and cultural hegemony on an ‘equal footing’, in their language and idiom. His admirers, most of whom were not his followers, saw him as heroic in this aspect. As one interviewee expressed it, in many ways, what Naik was doing for Muslims was analogous to what Donald Trump did for marginalized Whites in America

– he threw a brick at the glass houses of a failing establishment, of hated, exploitative elites. Such an action may not serve any strategic objectives of the wider community, and is likely, in fact, to do it great harm, but it fulfils powerful atavistic needs.

Nevertheless, the position of the orthodox Muslim leadership, including those ideologically and publicly opposed to Naik, was that, while his projection of Islam was deeply perverted, he had nothing to do with terrorism : “Our institution have great *ikhtalafaat* (disagreements) with him... We listen to him closely, since he is our *mukhalif* (adversary). He does many wrong things, but there is no connection with terrorism.”

It is important to recognize, here, that there is a dominant and false narrative of both *jihad* among Muslims, and of Islam among non-Muslims, and this is feeding polarization and radicalization across the communal barrier.

The wider discourse within the Muslim community, according to most interviewees, was characterized by a high measure of confusion, frustration, anger, and a measure of self-loathing, which translated into various channels of aggression, including radicalization and extremist mobilisation. The Lebanese writer Fouad Ajami, speaking in the context of the turmoil in the Arab world, spoke of the “political tradition of belligerent self-pity,”⁶¹ a phrase that applies with great accuracy to describe the mood of many Muslims across the world, and including some of those in India. Within this broad frame of mind, conspiracy theories abound, and the potential for radicalization is ever-present, lacking only the necessary provocateurs – real or virtual.

International issues play an important role in shaping Muslim consciousness, and are widely discussed, not only

61 Fouad Ajami, “Iraq and the Arabs’ Future”, *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2003.

by religious organisations, but also by social formations and individuals. The influence of global developments, and particularly of events in the Gulf and wider Middle East, have played a critical role in reshaping ideologies in India, resulting in a dilution of traditional cultures and values and a progressive imposition of a ‘crude Wahabism.’

Role of Radicalizers

Extremist radicalization and even terrorist operations are becoming progressively decentralized, so leadership from a traditional core and networks is often not apparent, and sometimes not even critical, in the process of radicalization/mobilization. With the non-violent radicalization process carried out by a wide spectrum of diverse and divergent religious formations and proselytizers operating within the framework of legal systems and with no demonstrable connections to terrorist or subversive formations, the challenge becomes opaque and difficult to dissect, leave alone address. Significantly, the influencers and networks that are significant in early radicalization are most often not the same as those that lead to recruitment or ‘operationalisation’ within a terrorist formation.

There is growing incidence in India of individuals increasingly engaging in “virtual radicalization” – particularly in the end stages of mobilisation – via the internet. This process is often influenced by blogs and jihadist internet forums promoting violent Islamist extremism. Anwar al Awlaki was found to be a larger-than-life presence in various Islamist extremist fora, and is often cited as a significant influence on many radicalized individuals, including those who joined or attempted to join, *Daesh*. While there are methods to monitor some of this activity, it is simply impossible to know the

thinking of every at-risk person. Online mobilization and recruitment of fundamentalist and radicalized elements does constitute a grave threat.

Radicalization cannot be detected by profiling likely target individuals. The radical strategy of “diversification” – mounting attacks involving a wide variety of perpetrators from different backgrounds that cannot easily be profiled – has enormously complicated the task. Further, the incidence of recruitment of youth from backgrounds other than Sunni/Salafi making a direct transition to *Daesh* perspectives and attempting enlistment makes the task of profiling immensely more difficult.

‘Lone wolves’ who are not members of a formal terrorist organization or even incipient network, and who do not fit any particular ethnic, economic, educational, or social profile, are even more difficult to detect.

Despite these increasing difficulties, there is a general consensus that radicalization and recruitment clusters around a small number of core individuals and organisations. Despite Rashid’s central role in the Kasargod/Pallakad mobilization, there was general consensus among locals that unnamed proselytizers were the more significant players in the process – including, according to some, Zakir Naik and his associates – and that these needed to be identified and acted against if future incidents of this nature were to be prevented.

Sources of Resistance

The “cultural warp and weft of India is very different from other countries,” including Muslim majority states, as well as the European nations where Muslim radicalization has proliferated among second generation migrants within ghettoized subcultures of extremism. In India, centuries’ long

bonding has taken place, creating ways of accommodation, despite periodic violence and polarization, and the attempts by some elements to create differences.

Muslim apathy is related to specific conditions in the environment, and not necessarily to religion – other communities and caste groups are also affected. Hence the sense of targeted discrimination does not take permanent root, though it may vary from regime to regime, or within certain global historical phases.

Despite the dominant narrative of discrimination and majoritarianism, the Muslim sees many examples of extraordinary Muslim success in India. Although this mobility is limited, it feeds hope and positive aspirations among a majority of Muslims.

There was increasing recognition among Muslim elites, echoed by several of the interviewees, that the condition of Muslims in India is infinitely better than in any other country where Muslims are a minority. There is also significant recognition that the conditions in India are, in fact, better for Muslims than they are in most Muslim majority countries as well.

6. PARADIGMS OF FUTURE RESPONSE

Daesh mobilization has afflicted such a tiny and varied section of the population that no coherent prophylactic effort at the level of policy can bear immediate fruit. Preventive responses will have to be narrowly targeted, specific and intelligence based. A residual risk of occasional recruitment cannot be entirely eliminated in the foreseeable future.

The complex issue of non-violent radicalization, which creates the base potential for terrorist mobilization, needs to be addressed within a strategic framework over an extended

period of time. Constitutional values must constitute the basis of this approach, which will have to be articulated through the educational system – including the *madrassah* system – as well as social and political organizations and processes. It is the last of these – the political dimension – that will be most difficult to address, as polarizing communal politics remain deeply entrenched within India's political cultures.

Engagement of Muslim leaders and public in common policy concerns, movements and protests – such as those against price rise, corruption and security – can help embed national identity and common purpose with other communities.

A range of social activities, sports, leisure and hobby clubs, to engage the youth, to develop skills, confidence, shared interests and networks, could have some impact on the potential for radicalization. Religious organizations could also be involved in developing these activities and the related infrastructure. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that, in Kasargod, every village has a number of sports, arts and cultural clubs, and these are both very popular, and also attract support from villagers. Rival village clubs play various games, most prominently football, badminton and *kabaddi*, and local tournaments attract substantial audiences and sponsorship. If these have failed to prevent radical mobilization, this is because, from childhood, many young people find the strongest validation in their religious identity. Religious activities and institutions are their principal loci of socialization, and if there is an element of radicalization in these, it is unlikely to be easily countered by the existence of any competing secular activities and formations.

While the Internet has played a crucial role in mobilization, it also offers tremendous opportunities for counter-mobilization, intelligence generation and counselling.

There is significant awareness of a deep crisis within the Muslim community and leadership, and this provides an opportunity to catalyze change. However, the approach demands sensitivity, and it is better to seek to co-opt the community leadership, rather than isolate them or push them into a rigidly defensive posture.

A national strategy – albeit covert – is required for counter-radicalization, although its implementation must be overwhelmingly local.

While there are significant overlaps between the two in terms of responses, a strict separation is needed between counter-radicalization initiatives and infrastructure and counter-terrorism enforcement.

Generating active partnerships with community organizations is crucial, but Government agencies and outreach initiatives must exercise great care in choosing community partners. The established proclivity to reward the most polarizing elements needs to be curbed.

Addressing the challenge of cognitive or non-violent radicalization is the key to long-term prevention of terrorist or violent radicalization.

Policies and interventions must target the populations most at risk, and must penetrate the most difficult environments. The ghetto cannot be left to its own devices, to create sub-cultures of violence and radicalization. The first element of such penetration is, of course, intelligence, but it must be followed up with well-resourced initiatives for appropriate capacity generation, institution-building and the creation of a structure of deterrents and rewards.

Financial concerns dominate a great deal of ‘religious’ activity, and many large and emerging religious institutions

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operate as businesses. The general hesitation to use financial tools and tax laws to ensure compliance with legal and constitutional norms is unjustifiable. These instrumentalities can be the most powerful in curbing negative trends, if they are used without discriminating against particular communities or sects.