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# South Asian Conflicts Comparative Perspectives

**ABSTRACT** This paper compares conflict patterns and conflict management in and between different countries in South Asia, historically as well as in the more recent context of the war against international terrorism. Due to its extreme heterogeneity, the region provides an interesting base for comparative analysis of conflict and conflict resolution, as do some of the individual countries, which are almost as complex as the region as a whole. However, because of the many cross country interconnections and the trend towards regionalisation of conflict, a regional perspective is needed. Furthermore, as this chapter argues, the conflict pattern to a large extent emerged through the break-up of British India at independence (the traumatic Partition), the forceful integration of some of the Princely States and tribal peoples, the division of some peoples through new political borders, and the non-coincidence of languages and state borders within the countries. Therefore any lasting conflict resolution must in most cases be linked to a healing of these wounds, i.e. deeper regional integration that also provides a degree of autonomy for local groups. Recently this option seems to have been more widely recognised in South Asia.

## **Introduction**

This paper compares conflict patterns and conflict management in and between different countries in South Asia, historically as well as in the more recent context of the war against international terrorism. Due to its extreme heterogeneity, the region provides an interesting base for comparative analysis of conflict, as do some of the individual countries, which are almost as complex as the region as a whole. However, because of the many cross country interconnections and the trend towards regionalisation of conflict, a regional perspective is needed. Furthermore, as this chapter argues, the conflict pattern to a large extent emerged through the break-up of British India at independence, the traumatic Partition, the forceful integration of some of the Princely States and tribal peoples, the division of some peoples through new political borders, and the non-coincidence of languages and state borders within the countries. Therefore any lasting conflict resolution must in most cases be linked to a healing of these wounds, i.e. deeper regional integration that also provides a degree of autonomy for local groups. Recently this option seems to have been more widely recognised in South Asia. Regionalism, or more particularly “the new regionalism”, could in certain sense be seen as a recreation of empire in a new and more benevolent form as an alternative to a conflict-prone nation state-system.<sup>1</sup> Regionalism is also a possible remedy for problems related to globalization, not least the

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<sup>1</sup> On the New Regionalism, see Hettne et al, 1999-2001

internationalization of conflict after 11/9. By *regionalization* of conflict I refer to both the outward spread or spill over of the local conflict into neighbouring countries, and the inward impact from the region in the form of more or less diplomatic interference, intervention and, preferably, conflict resolution, carried out by some kind of regional body (security regionalism). The record in South Asia is unfortunately more hegemonic intervention in conflicts than conflict prevention or resolution.

### **The Pattern of Regional Conflict in South Asia**

The pattern of conflict in the South Asian region during the last five decades can be described as pathological in the sense that the image of “the other” is based on a distorted perception of reality, coupled with suspicion and fear. The artificial and only lately established nation-state structure has contributed to this. Pakistan was created on the basis of the “two nation theory” which, in wording reminiscent of “Huntington's thesis”, asserted that co-existence between the two civilisations was impossible. After Pakistan was split up, there are more Muslims in India than in Pakistan (and Bangladesh), namely 130 million. The Hindus in India see themselves, in their quality as Hindus, as alone in the world and surrounded by Islam. The same subjective experience of latent threat is to be found in the Buddhist Sinhalese “majority” in Sri Lanka, in relation to the in all more than 50 million Tamils who live in Sri Lanka and in southern India (as well as in parts of Southeast Asia). The Tamils in southern India, on the other hand, have built their identity on opposition to what is described as a North Indian oppression of Dravidian South India going very far back in history. The small states in the region, Nepal and Bhutan, are afraid of their larger neighbours; and in all states immigrant groups from neighbouring countries in the rest of the region are persecuted.

To this suspicion between peoples must be added that between states, nurtured by several wars between India and Pakistan as well as repeated interventions by India in neighbouring states. The interrelationship between between the two types of hostilities, between states and between peoples, may be said to define the South Asian security complex where most security threats emerge from within the states only to poison relations between the states. The traditional security policy in South Asia has been characterised by the efforts of the regional great power, that is to say India, to avoid external interference, while other countries have attempted to escape India's hegemony by the contrary means of establishing relations external to the region. (Muni, 2000) Sri Lanka thus once tried to achieve a rapprochement with the regional organisation ASEAN. Pakistan has conducted an energetic West Asian policy in the search for national identity, and by trying to control Afghanistan it acquired ‘strategic depth’ vis-à-vis India. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 gave Pakistan an important role in the anti-communist counter-offensive which ultimately resulted in the “Talibanisation” of Afghanistan. Two decades later, paradoxically enough, the country again acquired a key role, this time in the war efforts against the Taliban regime and the al-Qaeda network’s bases in Afghanistan. By this drastic move Pakistan lost control over Afghanistan, except in Pathan areas.

The analytical model used here to compare conflicts relates the historically created pattern of conflict in the region both to the process of globalisation and to the war against terrorism. The

pattern of conflict can be analysed as a series of interconnected levels: conflict events, particular conflicts, and types of conflict, together shaping the conflict pattern. The pattern of conflict is thus formed by different types of conflict (ideal models), which are manifested in concrete conflicts (mixed) and, finally, conflict events (see appendix). The conflicts and hence the pattern of conflict is transformed over time under the impact of globalisation and now latterly the war against terrorism. It is obvious that a large number of different types of conflicts are being collapsed into the overall category of terrorism, a new discourse which seems to replace, as far as India is concerned, the old discourse focused on communalism. For this reason I will first take a historical perspective, and then deal with the emerging post 11/9 conflict pattern in a regional perspective.

### **Legacy of political violence: types of conflicts**

In a historical perspective the following variants of social and political violence can be distinguished in South Asia. The conflicts are derived from many different sources, and have been distinguished with respect to horizontality/verticality of conflictual relations.

(1) Assassination of prominent political leaders, Mahatma Gandhi being the best known example. A remarkably long series of heads of state and government have since been assassinated in most countries of South Asia: Indira Gandhi (1984) and Rajiv Gandhi (1991) in India; Liaquat Ali Khan (1951) and Zia ul-Haq (1988) in Pakistan; Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1975) and Ziaur Rahman (1981) in Bangladesh; S.W.R.D Bandaranaike (1959) and Ranasinghe Premadasa (1993) in Sri Lanka. The majority of these assassinations, in so far as it has been possible to establish the motives, were linked with religious or ethno-national conflicts, thus being essentially horizontal. In the classical political assassination the target is one single, carefully selected individual. Often moderate leaders within a particular movement (sometimes) even chief ministers are killed by militants in order to prevent a certain political outcome. Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a suicide bomb attack.<sup>2</sup>

(2) More or less spontaneous, locally limited, riots between two social, often ethnic/religious groups, motivated by a struggle for power, status and scarce resources, but as a rule sparked off by a provocative religious ritual or neighbourhood conflict of a more material or personal nature. In connection with the liberation movement this relatively old and recurrent phenomenon acquired, as it took national dimensions, the designation “communalism” and then referred primarily to the (politicised) relation between Hindus and Muslims. This is a horizontal conflict in the sense that there are two distinct groups with limited interaction living side by side.

(3) Sectarian violence within the same religion, for instance Shia- and Sunni-Muslims in Pakistan or rival sects within Sikhism in Punjab, e.g. the conflict between the Nirankaris and the more orthodox Khalsa Sikhism. This conflict is also horizontal, since we are dealing with two groups unilaterally claiming to have the correct interpretation of a particular religion. The major religions of India cannot as such be seen as being in conflict. They constitute ingredients in ethnic and communal conflicts.

(4) Inter-ethnic violence between ‘sons of the soil’ and immigrants from poor neighbourhoods looking for jobs (Weiner, 1978). ‘South Indians’ in Bombay, Bengalis in Assam and other parts

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<sup>2</sup> The massacre of the royal family in Nepal has so far not been proven to have any political connections. However what people believe is also of political importance.

of the Indian North East, Balochis in Karachi, Nepalis in Bhutan are cases in point. This conflict is also horizontal: two groups competing for the same scarce resources.

(5) Socio-economically motivated actions of violence carried out by extremist left-wing movements, often directed against the local symbols and representatives of the state, for example police stations and administrative buildings. Annihilation of class enemies was another goal. Examples of this are the Naxalite movement in some of the states in India; the People's Liberation Front (JVP), a guerrilla movement formed in Sri Lanka by radical students in 1971; and the Maoists in Nepal who began their revolt in 1996. This is a vertical type conflict, since it is characterised by the class dimension. Naxalism was founded on revolutionary theory.<sup>3</sup> Today it is generally referred to as 'terrorism', which certainly makes the making of revolution (whatever its potential) even more difficult.<sup>4</sup> Revolutionary theory has some status, less so terrorism.

(6) Violence from upper castes directed at the Dalit and Other Backward Classes (OBC) attempts at emancipation and liberation from feudal bonds and the discrimination implied in the caste system. Here terror acts, such as burning Dalit quarters in rural villages, are used in a very conscious way to threat people into passivity. Violence rarely comes from below in this case of vertical conflict characterized by caste or hierarchy but may of course be part of a socio-economic struggle (the point above).

(7) Ethno-national political violence, aimed at political independence or some other form of autonomy for a specific ethnic group having national aspirations, for example the liberation movement in Kashmir, the Sikh movement in Punjab, the Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka and the Naga people (or rather the Naga peoples) in north-east India. This conflict is horizontal since the purpose is separation or autonomy (statehood) on the basis of a linguistic and territorially defined group.

(8) Power-policy motivated acts of vandalism and violence (pogroms), which are more organised, politicised and state-wide communal riots than the traditional type (point two above). Examples are the July 1983 massacre in Colombo and the 1984 killings of Sikhs in Delhi. The most prominent example of the political fall out is the Hindu nationalist movement which seized power partly by means of political violence.<sup>5</sup> Typically the criminal acts carried out in the context of such pogroms are rarely taken to court, and when they are the criminals are acquitted. Vandalism can be targeted against artefacts, cultural events, films, and books which are said to defame certain (now mostly Hindu) values.<sup>6</sup> This can be described as a verticalisation of horizontal relations.

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<sup>3</sup> The original uprising in the north Bengal countryside near Naxalbari took place in early 1967. The formation of the CPI (ML), the supportive party, took place in mid 1969 (Ray, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> See Rabindra Ray, *The Naxalites and their Ideology*, Oxford University Press (1988,2002).

<sup>5</sup> Its terror, in the sense of creating fear, was first aimed at the destruction of "the other's" cultural symbols, for example the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, demolished in 1992. However the terror was not limited to physical structures. Thousands of Muslims died in the subsequent riots, and the response to this came with large-scale bombings in Bombay at the beginning of 1993. History repeated itself 10 years later in the state of Gujarat, to be discussed later.

<sup>6</sup> A significant event happened in January 2004. A mob entered the famous Institute for Oriental Studies in Poona, vandalising the place and destroying invaluable documents. The reason was a book about Shivaji questioning the

(9) Gang Wars, normally ethnically organised, are purely criminal clashes which may use a religious or political cover but essentially fight for criminal space, control over smuggling routes, production of drugs, services of 'protection' or simply dominance. It has been suggested that the Karachi gang wars are instigated by the intelligence agencies to keep a check on them. For these reasons many of these killings go unreported and unsolved (Wilson, 2003:33).

These are ideal models which in real life are mixed to create what I called distinct concrete conflicts in the framework developed above, that is ongoing tensions and hostilities which form particular histories, which can be identified in space and time, and which are manifested in conflict events such as (before 2001), the July massacre of Tamils in Colombo in 1983, the killing of Sikhs in Delhi 1984, the December 1986 riots in Karachi, the destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya December 6, 1992, and the consequent Bombay blasts on March 2, 1993. On the level of the actual conflict there is a mixture of motives and identities. For instance the sectarian violence in Karachi, where it is difficult to distinguish between sectarian terrorists and members of criminal syndicates (Wilson, 2003:24). To create an atmosphere of fear, which essentially is what terrorism is about, also gives a reason to provide income-generating protection. Religious zeal is often a cover for criminal activities. Obviously such links are hard to research, and we rely on journalist who are risking their lives in the process.

### **Conflicts: an historical overview**

These different types of conflict can in different combinations be found in most countries in the region. Regional diversity is, as mentioned above, also reflected within the individual states. This has implications for external as well as for internal conflicts in the region. In fact both are intimately related, which can be exemplified from all over the region. The Partition in 1947, and the religious mobilization behind it back in the 1920s, marks the most important starting point for communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims as well as for the Sikh problem. The importance of this event can hardly be exaggerated.<sup>7</sup>

In the Lahore-declaration 1940 the by then only one decade old 'two nation thesis' was most clearly stated:

"Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literatures. They neither intermarry or inter-dine together and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions"<sup>8</sup>

This Muslim declaration, which had its counterpart in Hindu radical nationalism, opened the gate for communal politics. Normal politics became pathological politics. In Punjab the system organised political power collapsed, which enabled extremists to take over by ruling the streets.

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parenthood of the hero/king. The book has been written by an American professor who used the institute for archive studies. Later the Maharashtra government banned the book.

<sup>7</sup> See Ishtiaq Ahmed, 'The 1947 Partition of India: A Paradigm for Pathological Politics in India and Pakistan', Asian Ethnicity, Vol 3, No 1, March 2002, pp. 9 – 28.

<sup>8</sup> Jinnah's Presidential Address Lahore 1940 reproduced in Mushirul Hasan (1996) "India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilisation", page 56-7.

Private armies turned from self-defence to genocidal violence (Hansen, 2002). The Hobbesian catastrophe was to mark post-colonial India, always sensitive to threats against the state.

Jawaharlal Nehru later made a strong distinction between what he saw as nationalism and what later became known as ‘communalism’ in India:

”Communalism is one of the obvious examples of backward-looking people trying to hold on to something that is wholly out of place in the modern world and is essentially opposed to the concept of nationalism. In fact it splits up nationalism into a number of narrower nationalisms”<sup>9</sup>

Nehru’s position on the correct meaning of nationalism represents what in India generally is referred to as ‘secularism’ now questioned by the Hindu nationalist movement.<sup>10</sup> As Paul Brass has pointed out (X) communalism now constitutes a hegemonic discourse in India, in which the Hindu body is disgraced and ‘polluted’ by the Muslim invasions and occupations, and today by the very existence of Muslim pockets (‘mini-Pakistans’) in the Hindu heartland. This ‘narrativization’ of history (Chadda, 1997:50) was systematized by the BJP regime, through influencing both research councils and textbooks for the secondary school system.

The two nation theory in British India thus became ‘communalism’ in Independent India, a concept normally referring to the continued tension between Hindus and Muslims, which did not disappear on account of the Partition. The Sikhs who suffered most from it and lost their homeland later developed their own two nation theory, the need for Khalistan. We shall come back to this.

#### Experiences of Conflict Resolution

Another, potentially equally serious conflict at the birth of the Indian nation state, was the simultaneous Dravidian resistance to Aryan-North Indian-Hindi domination. Separatism was a major option in this case as well. The early Dravidian (South Indian) movement, dominated by Tamil intellectuals, wanted a separate Dravida nation, consisting of four linguistic groups: Kannadigas, Telugus, Malayalis and Tamilians. Only the Tamils pursued this through the DMK and other party formations gradually dominating the Madras State, later renamed Tamilnadu. The later Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka was supported in and by Tamilnadu, but nevertheless failed to revive the nationalist fervour of the 1960s (particularly the language agitation 1964-65). The democratic transition in 1967 from Congress to the DMK (the Tamil party) rule (a very dramatic event at the time) is significant here. Secondly, the secessionist demands were soon played down. Thirdly, the factionalism and corruption within the Tamil political movement had a sobering effect on exaggerated populist expectations. In this case a more accomodative conflict resolution model was used. In later conflicts the centre was to turn to more confrontative methods (Chadda, 1997, Cohen, 1988).

The Punjab crisis which erupted in the 1980s also goes back to Partition, which was a catastrophe for the Sikh community in Punjab. Without going into details one could say that the crisis resulted from repeated frustrations in trying to restore the homeland of the Sikhs (which have a legacy of political independence since the decline of Mughal power up to the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849). These frustrations were intensified by divisive policies from the

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<sup>9</sup> Letter to Chief Ministers, 1961, quoted from Barnett, 1976.

<sup>10</sup> See *The Concerned Indian’s Guide to Communalism*, edited by K.N. Panikkar, 2001, Delhi: Viking

political centre with the purpose of consolidating its power with little regard for the local consequences. The Akali demands on the Centre were initially quite modest and of a rather practical nature (Gupta, XX). They had little to do with identity and nothing to do with secession. The demonisation of the Sikhs was the work of Congress, and it was successful, much too successful. The demonisation was particularly effective among Punjabi Hindus fearing the horrors of a new Partition. A radicalisation also took place among the Sikh youth (Bhindranwale) and the polarisation was a fact.

The unrest ultimately resulted in the armed intervention and partial destruction of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, and the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi and other places in 1984. The State of Punjab was drawn into anarchy and terror from militants (demanding an independent Sikh state: Khalistan). The crisis in the words of Paul Brass was a crisis for the federal system and for the Indian state (Brass, 1994). The agitation met with a very rough response from the Central Government. The suspicion that Pakistan was behind contributed to this. No such suspicion had been there in the case of the Tamil agitation. In Tamilnadu the solution, a radical devolution in practical rather than constitutional terms, was found in the 1960s. In Punjab the moderates were eliminated and President's Rule established from 1987 to 1993. The 'solution' was based on rigid suppression, isolation of the militants, and a general wish for normalisation among the sikh population.

#### Unresolved conflicts

The ethnonational conflicts in Tamilnadu and Punjab are two now (as it seems) resolved crises.<sup>11</sup> Both go back to the 1920s and the early phase of the (Congress-dominated) nationalist movement, but the peaks of the respective conflicts were different. The Kashmir problems stems from the same time but this conflict has reappeared in different forms and is still unresolved. Like the case of Palestine it is a big conflict in a very small area, and with early resultless UN involvement. The Kashmir conflict is often seen as the probable cause of an eventual major war (perhaps even nuclear war) in the region.

The Kashmir conflict also goes back to the Partition, and the history of how it really happened is still controversial and unclear. The conflict, which has led to two major wars (1947 and 1965) between India and Pakistan and 30,000 dead in terrorist related clashes, refers to a problem unsolved at the time of Independence, namely what status should be accorded to the predominantly Muslim, but Hindu governed, Princely State of Kashmir. Together with Hyderabad, Kashmir was the only example of enforced integration of the Princely States, other wise a remarkably peaceful process.<sup>12</sup>

The question was seen as a matter between the two nation-states (i.e. Kashmir independence was not on the agenda), and in particular India has therefore opposed all involvement from outside. Kashmir represented different national projects: *Kashmiriyat* negated the two-nation principle and was therefore of great significance for civic nationalism in India, as well as the idea of a secularised Pakistan, if that should turn out to be a possibility. As a country with a majority of Muslims, Kashmir automatically belonged, on the same principle, to Pakistan. According to the

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<sup>11</sup> The spectacular escape from the Chandigarh prison of three militants in January 2004 seems to have created some enthusiasm among Sikhs who still feel that the suppression from military and police had been unreasonably severe. The Tribune, January 28, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> See V.P. Menon, The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, Orient Longmans, 1961

Hindu view of history, Kashmir was Indian and its Muslim population a minority, like the remaining 130 million Muslims in India. Kashmir was never consulted but would probably have preferred independent status of some sort. The major political figure pursuing this aim was Sheik Abdullah, leader of the National Conference, the Kashmir movement that later emerged as the dominant party in the first free and fair elections in 1977.

According to journalist Tavleen Singh who covered the 1983 elections in Kashmir the issue of separatism was not raised when Farooq Abdullah (Sheik Abdullah's son) led the National Conference to victory (Singh, 1966). As had been the case in Punjab this victory provoked manipulative power politics from Delhi, destabilising the State.

The conflict thus erupted again in 1989. At that time there was a new political generation, largely unemployed, as well as new political issues (Ganguly, 1997, Schofield, 2003). Incompetence in the State and political machination from the national capital in the context of a country-wide Muslim awakening triggered an *intifadah*, in which fundamentalist parties were increasingly dominant. Pluralist Kashmir (Kashmiriyat) was on the losing side. A civil war like situation followed.

The Indian Northeast emerged as another yet unresolved problem after independence because many peoples (Naga, Mizo etc) here did not consider themselves as Indians (Brass, 1994:202).<sup>13</sup> New federal states were created after negotiations with moderates, but the militants continued to fight. In addition this area (with its tea plantations) is an area of immigration, resulting in growing tensions between immigrants and the indigenous population. Assam was an internal colony under the Bengalis already in British India. After 1971 many more immigrants came as refugees from Bangladesh. The complexity of the situation was underlined by a number of insurrectionist movements. The crisis was met with state terrorism sanctioned by anti-terrorist legislation (TADA). This had repercussions in neighbouring Bhutan where the insurgents set up camps. 100,000 Bhutanese citizens of Nepali origin in southern Bhutan were in turn forced to flee to Nepal. This exemplifies the regionalisation of conflict.

Among the unresolved conflicts must be counted the Naxalite struggle (or People's War), which refuses to go away due to resilient tribal poverty (the not so shining India) and police suppression (false encounters) throughout the forest belt stretching from Andhra Pradesh to Nepal.

#### Peaceful Contrast?

In a comparative analysis of conflict it is important not to forget cases where no conflicts occurred, although there were similar preconditions as in the other cases. In India the southern state of Kerala is very often referred to as a Third World welfare state (compare Sri Lanka). It is a successful case of conflict prevention. In fact this has been described as a paradox, since it is not a situation one would expect in a poor country, which, furthermore, has not been a great performer in economic growth (Erwér, 2003). This raises doubts as to the sustainability of the Kerala model, particularly in the current context of globalisation and erosion of state capacity as far as redistribution and social policy is concerned. The reasons for this paradox, the way it

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<sup>13</sup> More problematic cases: Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura; less problematic: Mehalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh

connects with the conflict pattern, and what implications the demise of the Kerala model will have for the conflict pattern are all very complicated issues. The fact that, historically, the state consists of three distinct parts, the Malabar (part of Madras Presidency), Cochin and Travancore (two Princely States) does not make it easier.

However, it is hard to deny the importance of the fact that the dominant regime has had a redistributive orientation. We shall here use Kerala as an example of successful provention, i.e. a pattern of development conducive to ethnic and religious peace.<sup>14</sup> 'Kerala is a unique instance of large numbers of three major world religions living peaceably in one territory' (Nossiter, 1988: 45, 61). Kerala shows that a reasonably equal society can be created by a responsive government and a highly mobilised population, although it may be wrong to speak of the Kerala Model, since some of the preconditions were created long ago. What is of particular interest here is that the relative social welfare also has implied social peace.

### **Restive neighbours**

Space does not permit us to go into any detail about the conflicts in the other South Asian countries, which most of them can compete with India in terms of social and cultural complexity. Pakistan can also compete with India as far as internal conflicts are concerned in spite of having been founded on the principle of a unified religion.

Religion has not shown to be an integrative principle. East Pakistan revolted on the basis of Bengali identity, and Bangladesh was created after a civil war, in which India intervened. This was a clear case of unilateral intervention, and it met with international protests. Bangladesh is a reasonably homogeneous country, since most of the Hindus fled to India. The main ethnic conflict in Bangladesh is now that between the small group of Hill People and the dominant Bengali population.

Sri Lanka has one longstanding conflict, which since decades has taken the form of a civil war. Here, interestingly, we have a case of bilateral intervention, the IPKF mission (Indian Peace Keeping Forces) in northern Sri Lanka from 1987 to 1990. This is a controversial episode in the history of South Asian conflicts. It can be compared to the Dayton agreement on Bosnia in the sense that it was imposed by a strong external hand against the predominant mood of large parts of the population, Sinhalese as well as Tamils (who initially were more positive though). This exemplifies what has been called 'the Indian model of conflict resolution': a relatively generous reform programme unilaterally decided and with the purpose of marginalizing the militants (Perera, 2000:82). It may have worked in Punjab, but it misfired in Sri Lanka. This in spite of the fact that the political formula was basically sound. Political changes in both countries undermined the arrangement (Muni, 1993). India pursued several not fully compatible objectives in intervening in the Sri Lankan conflict. It wanted to support the Tamils, to put pressure on the Sri Lankan government for geopolitical reasons (the Trincomalee harbour) and to prevent the formation of Eelam, as it might have provoked separatist sentiments in Tamilnadu.

Nepal is, after a rather unsuccessful democratic experiment that started in 1990, since 1996 in the midst of a violent rebellion by Maoist gerillas, inspired by the Chinese Cultural Revolution and Sendero Luminoso in Peru. The socioeconomic background is abject poverty in combination with elite corruption. Similar to the Naxalite uprisings in India, there are caste and ethnic dimensions

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<sup>14</sup> Burton (1990) coined the concept 'provention', meaning preventing conflict by promoting economic development and social peace.

involved as well. Professionals who are active are mainly teachers and students. Women are active, as well as Nepalese living and working in India.

Bhutan is not free from conflicts. One major tension is between the majority population and a minority of Nepalese origin. A second problem is Indian insurgents from the northeast establishing camps on the Buthanese side of the border.

The Maldives is a homogenous but authoritarian Muslim country. Political conflict led to another unilateral intervention by India in 1988 . There are no signs of democraqtisation. On the contrary. Amnesty International has stated: “By repeatedly dismissing reports of human rights violations in the country, the Government of President Gayoom has allowed perpetrators to continue to act with impunity. This has effectively perpetuated a cycle of repression, eroding people’s confidence in the state’s institutions to protect their fundamental rights. It is high time that government authorities accept their own responsibility and failure to protect and promote human rights”.

The traumatic India-Pakistan conflict, which so far has exploded in three wars (minor skirmishes uncounted), has prevented all more organized efforts towards regionalism. This conflict has been fueled by later national, religious and ethnic struggles: the problem of Kashmir, the Bengali uprising against West Pakistan, and the Sikh aspiration to create Khalistan. Bangladesh’s initially warm relations with India soon turned sour because of Indian arrogance, refugee problems and conflicts related to water management problems. The relations between India and Sri Lanka became increasingly tense as the Sinhalese—Tamil conflict erupted and Tamils fled to Tamilnadu, where they also received covert military training. The northern mountain kingdoms of South Asia were more or less absorbed into the Indian Union through processes of democratization and anti-monarchy agitations, discretely encouraged from India. The bilateral conflicts in the region invariably involve India. The prospect of a multilateral intervention in a conflict is distant; the regional power would not even permit regional conflict management. This may change, however.

### Conflict transformation?

After 11 September South Asia found itself at the centre of the war against terrorism.<sup>15</sup> The International Jihad continued against India; this occurred more precisely in Kashmir where many war-veterans from Afghanistan (Arabs and Afghans, but also Bosnians and Chechens) were gathered to establish a second front. Pakistan was requested by the USA to make a choice between joining the war against terrorism or be regarded as a rogue state. A large number of conflict events followed one another.<sup>16</sup> The state parliament in Kashmir was the target for a bloody action on October 1, 2001. On December there was then an attack against the Indian Parliament House in New Delhi, when militant Muslims shot dead a number of security guards (and a gardener), but failed in their objective of killing MPs who were in the building. India immediately accused Pakistan of being responsible and staged along the border with Pakistan the

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<sup>15</sup> For recent overview, see *South Asia Post 11/9*, published by Rupa & Co in association with Observer Research Foundation and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Delhi 2003

<sup>16</sup> From September 2001 to December 2002 there were 3940 terrorism related acts of violence. 604 persons from the security forces, 1197 civilians and 2412 terrorists were killed (*Frontline* 17 January, 2002). Though there is no proof, some major railway accidents have also been linked with terrorist related sabotage.

biggest mobilisation since the war of 1971.<sup>17</sup> The conflict was sharpened further after an attack on the USA Information Centre in Calcutta when five policemen were shot dead. In Pakistan a journalist from the Wall Street Journal was kidnapped in Karachi and later brutally executed. The arrest of a variety of more or less suspected individuals revealed much about the terrorist network in South Asia, for example the link between on the one hand religious and political militants and on the other hand criminal organisations. The latter did much of the dirty work: murdering, kidnapping and collecting ransoms: in return they were protected by militant political organisations and their contacts with the rest of the political world (largely criminal), the security service and so on. This protection consisted in supplying false passports (the most prominent terrorists had a number of different identities) and houses in different countries in the region, as in the Middle East. A political analysis which only considers the overt part of politics will obviously not get far. The darker side cannot be penetrated until much later, or through successful but dangerous investigative journalism. Thus many of what I here call conflict events are never fully investigated, which makes it hard to relate them to specific conflicts and categorise them in terms of types of conflicts.

In other cases the connection is obvious. A Muslim attack against a train of pilgrims/activists (*kar sevaks*) who had been on a visit to Ayodhya, the scene of the Temple conflict 10 years earlier, initiated a large scale conflict between hindus and muslims. Some 60 men, women and children were burned to death when the train made a stop in the city of Godhra, in Gujarat. In the subsequent revenge actions against Muslim areas of the city of Ahmedabad and other places 1000-2000 people died, while more than 100,000 were driven out to live in refugee camps. On 24 September two Muslims entered the Akshardham temple in Gandhinagar, Gujarat and shot dead 37 people and injured 81. There is much to suggest that this was an act of revenge. The same has been suggested about the Bombay blasts in August 2003 that killed 50 people, although no organisation claimed responsibility. This seems to be a general pattern.

Let us now examine what has happened as regards the different types of political violence mentioned above. Attempts at assassination continue but tend to form part of terrorist attacks in which many lives are lost, the two December 2003 attempts to kill Musharaff being the most obvious examples. Hindu-Muslim communalism is on the increase. The rapidly growing Hindu movement of the last decade is a totally different phenomenon from the elite conflict between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League before 1947. While Islam is a universal religion, not rooted theologically in any specific culture or territory, Hinduism is a 'territorial' religion which, after having been a fundamental part of an Indian (Indic) civilisation, has evolved towards religious nationalism: Hindutva. The inclusive characteristic, a capacity to absorb other cultures, which many see as central to Hinduism, is being replaced by a monolithic, masculine arrogance. The traditional cultural capacity for absorption is now associated with weak femininity which in this context is thus given a decidedly negative meaning. The Hindutva movement distinguishes between religions which are regarded as internal and hence more acceptable, such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, and religions that have come from outside such as Christianity and Islam. In recent years there have been a number of high-profile attacks also against Christians, and several churches have been burnt down. But as Hinduism's historic

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<sup>17</sup> Three accused terrorists, all Indians, were condemned to death in December 2002 under the POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act). There was a lynch atmosphere at the trial and Amnesty has questioned whether it was properly conducted (*Frontline*, 17 January 2003). FÖLJ UPP

enemy, Islam is in a class of its own. There is a similar trend in Pakistan. After 11/9 Indian Muslims are seen as terrorists at its worst, and as a minority at its best.

A polarisation between Hindus and Muslims like that now taking place in India can have unforeseeable consequences for the whole region. Up to now large scale violence has been concentrated to the state of Gujarat, which has an exceptionally bad record as regards what we have called “power political terrorism”. This is the worst communalist political crisis since Partition in 1947. The state government in Gujarat, which trivialised the events by speaking of “communal riots”, while the train attack against Hindus was immediately described as “terrorism”, has been implicated by various human rights organisations as directly responsible, and party-politics is openly suggested as the motive. It is thus a matter of a form of state terrorism. The pattern can be recognised from the massacres in Colombo in 1983, against Tamils, and in Delhi in 1984, against Sikhs. It can however be noted that in this case there was a larger element of the middle-class among those responsible for it and that sexualised violence played a more prominent part. Several witness reports describe an unimaginable bestiality. The political objective is, however, obvious. The trend is towards power-policy motivated and directed terrorism, linked to state power. It also happens that state power links up with ‘local sovereignties’ embodied in mobilised communities and ‘strong men’, as also that such local power is transformed to state power (Blom Hansen).

Since 11 September terrorism in South Asia has acquired greater significance on the global scale, given that Hinduism, together with Christianity (“the West”) and Judaism (Israel), have become targets for Islamic terrorism. All these religions have their own form of fundamentalism, which gives the cultural conflicts of today, or what Huntington called “clashes of civilisation”, an apocalyptic character. One may think what one will about Huntington’s terminology but not unexpectedly it seems to become more and more popular with the self-appointed representatives of civilisation among both Muslims and Hindus. It is, however, quite misleading to see the Hindutva phenomenon as a civilising renaissance. It is rather a new-minted fascistoid chauvinism which arises from the frustrations of globalisation and has little to do with Hinduism as a civilisation.<sup>18</sup> As such it has formed part of a pluralistic Indian civilisation.

The major conflict is thus once again the original communalism in a new international context. The state election in Gujarat took place in an atmosphere of recurrent attacks by Hindus on Muslims and vice-versa. The Chief Minister of the state, Narendra Modi, went into the election on an anti-terrorist platform in which he identified Pakistan as responsible for the Muslim attacks. The militant Hindus saw Gujarat as a “Hindutva Laboratory”. If the tactic worked there, which unfortunately it did, it can be expected to be applied on a national basis and the wholly decisive dialogue will be made the more difficult, perhaps irreparably. In the State Assembly elections that followed BJP emerged as the clear victor which made the government plan for early elections in 2004. At the same time, a militant Islam based in Kashmir has become a pan-Indian phenomenon with attacks that are more and more co-ordinated. Although militant Muslims constitute a very small minority, Islamic terrorism is by nationalist Hindu leaders described as a major threat. The number of unsuccessful terrorist attempts increased even more, which may indicate that polarisation stimulates less professional but more desperate youth to violent action.

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<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of Hinduism as a culture, see Niels Brimnes, “Globalisation and Indian Civilisation: Questionable Continuities”, in Mehdi Mozafari (ed.), *Globalization and Civilizations*, Routledge, 2002.

As in Israel, the hardening attitude towards supposed terrorists leads to ever more terrorist actions. "Terrorism", whatever that may mean, has become an integral part of politics. Today the uprising in Kashmir is, despite of its complex historical background, regarded more as international terrorism, organised by Pakistan, which of course is not the whole truth but which cannot be entirely denied. There are more than 100 revolutionary movements in the state. The struggle for independence in Kashmir has more and more been subordinated to International Jihad. On the occasion of his visit to the region Secretary of State Colin Powell described the conflict as "international". This caused great consternation in India which decisively rejected the idea of international electoral observers at the election in October 2003. It is, however, not only a matter of internationalisation; behind the change lies a more profound ideological difference: from the focus on territory to the principle of a non-territorial Islamic community. Opposed to a territorial project in which religion was part of an ethno-national identity, *Kashmiriyat*, is a theological, non-territorial project, namely the global Islamic community which observes no political boundaries. There are still internal forces that strive for some form of autonomy. But the assassination of the moderate leader Abdul Ghani Lone before the election diminished the possibility of a Kashmiri solution based on some form of autonomy, a solution which now, after a series of round-table conferences, begins to be discerned in Sri Lanka. It was a sign of progress, though, that the election could be held, to a considerable degree as a result of pressure from the USA, which in turn was motivated by the war against terrorism.<sup>19</sup> After the Islamabad SAARC summit serious negotiations were at least started. These may marginalise the jihadis but provoke the Kashmiri sentiment of a legitimate right to autonomy.

What happened to the Kerala model? In Kerala, seen as a model state in terms of social welfare and communal peace, there has been an ominous trend in the last few years. Here the link between communal riots and orchestrated political violence is rather obvious.<sup>20</sup>

In January of 2002 the 'Marad Massacre' took place in a coastal village near Kozhikode. 14 people died in a clash between Hindu and Muslim fishermen. In May 2003 Muslims attacked the Hindus. 400 Muslim families had to flee Marad.<sup>21</sup> This may be the first breach of social peace in the model State. Consequently the State authorities were much concerned, and in January 2004, two years after the first incident, special courts were set up to speed up the trial.<sup>22</sup> SLUTSATS

Let us now turn to the other countries in the region. Pakistan is by many seen as the most explosive state in the region, close to being a 'failed state' with many no-go areas. Ethnic identities have shown to be stronger than religious bonds, first in the separatism of the Bengalis

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<sup>19</sup> In Kashmir a new regional party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), came in third place (with 16 seats) after the Congress Party (in second place, with 28 seats) and formed government with support from Congress. The National Conference is still the largest party but was weakened.

<sup>20</sup> For the recent incidents in Marad in Kozhikode district, see R. Krishnakumar, 'Kerala's communal challenge', in *Frontline*, June 6, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> On the northern coast of Kerala, from Kasargod to Kodugallur the Hindu fishermen have since the Sixties been influenced by the Sangh Parivar. The Christian fishermen population begins after Kodugallur, a place which one of the apostles of Christ, St. Thomas, visited. Along the coast fishermen live on two sides, clearly demarcated on the basis of religion.

<sup>22</sup> Compare this to the Best Bakery case, showing the failure in Gujarat to bring to justice killers in the 2002 pogrom (*Economist*, September 20, 2003).

(and Balochis and Pathans), then the transformation of the Mohajirs (Muslim immigrants from India) from a nation-building class to the 'fifth nation' fighting with the Sinds and the Balochis in the territory of Karachi. Apart from this there is sectarianism of a militant kind within Islam between the Sunni majority and the Shia minority, and between these two and the Ahmediyas. The problem is that further Islamisation leads to deeper sectarianism, the root cause of political violence in Pakistan. The military has all along been the major political factor keeping the country together, and in the initially very professional military organisation fundamentalism, and therefore sectarianism, has grown stronger.

Islam has many faces, though. On 12 January 2002 the Pakistani general and dictator Musharraf delivered an important speech in which he assumed a role similar to that played in an earlier time by Kemal Ataturk in Turkey. His speech implied a break with fundamentalist forms of Islam and a signal about the modernisation of Pakistan, which has long been in a state of anarchy, criminality and general social dissolution. The two most prominent radical Islamist organisations were banned. Also sectarian violence was defined as terrorism. This was followed by the arrest of activists and a tighter control over the Koranic schools (*madrassas*) with a total foreign student population of 36,000. The majority of the 2000 activists arrested were later released (*Financial Times*, 29 April, 2002). However, many 'freedom fighters' were now renamed 'terrorists'. The reaction in India was cautiously sceptical but some individual voices called on the government in all ways to facilitate this extremely difficult modernisation project. The paradox in the situation is that the once secularist India is at the same time evolving in a fundamentalist direction and thereby confirming *a posteriori* the two nation theory, which was the original motivation for the creation of Pakistan. The 2004 election but a break to this, but we do not know what Hindutva's next step will be.

In the case of Sri Lanka the conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese which resulted in 65,000 deaths has come closer to a solution, in that the international war against terrorism has reduced the freedom of movement for the Tamil Tigers, branded as a terrorist organisation by several countries, including India. Interestingly enough, before the negotiations opened the movement was legalised in Sri Lanka. It does not suffice to define terrorism as criminal since that excludes the alternative of negotiation. A peace process started after international involvement (Norway) and international support for the Tigers diminished.

In Nepal the opposite path has been chosen, denying the Maoists any legitimacy. The Maoist uprising that has been going on since 1996 is directed against police stations in remote and extremely poor corners of the country. Eventually the army, under imperial control, was brought into the fighting and so reinforced the character of civil war. After a guerrilla attack in February 2002, when 130 police and soldiers were killed, representatives of the government emphasised the criminal aspect of terrorism.<sup>23</sup> This was obviously influenced by 11/9. Later there was a "Musharraf" solution when King Gyanendra dismissed the government and put an end to a 12 year democratic experiment. It had not, however, been particularly successful, and the coup therefore did not lead to any extensive protests at the beginning. The justification was the Government's incompetence in combating the Maoist uprising, i.e. what was called terrorism.

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<sup>23</sup> "There is no question of sitting for a dialogue, rather we are moving ahead with a full strength and massive strength to crush the terrorists completely" said the Minister of Interior, Khum Bahadur Khadka, quoted from the *Herald* (Panjim), 19 February, 2002.

The Maoists are extremely anxious not to be dubbed as 'terrorists' for the simple reason of being able to consolidate their position after having taken over the country instead of risking an Indian intervention (to BJP Nepal is important as the only existing Hindu kingdom). The King has used this labelling game as a negotiation card, playing out the Maoists against the democratic opposition. In contrast with India, the USA has not formally designated the Maoists as terrorists (Muni, 2003). Certainly there is nothing whatsoever in common between Marxist revolutionaries of the Maoist/Naxalite type and religious fundamentalists.

India, which for decades has had problems with similar uprisings by the Naxalite movement in Bihar, Jharkand and Andhra Pradesh, will, however, give Nepal discreet support in this objective, since these movements more and more co-ordinate their training in distant and unruly districts which cannot be reached by the arm of the law. There is thus a regionalisation of the socio-economically motivated left-wing terrorism in different countries.<sup>24</sup>

There are terrorist networks, increasingly integrated with criminal networks, which embrace the whole region and build on no-go zones, open frontiers (between India and Nepal), frontiers that cannot be policed (between India and Bangladesh), and false passports. Bangladesh is increasingly polarised between fundamentalists and secularist forces. The former are on the offensive and are believed to receive support from al-Qaeda and Pakistan's security service.<sup>25</sup>

What is completely clear, if we look at the South Asian region, is that internationally organised terrorism demands internationally organised counter-measures and systematic cooperation, in the first instance regionally. The old-time military and security policy actions are insufficient and in many cases counter-productive. We can also note that even within a specific region the concept of terrorism can be used to designate radically different political conflicts and that branding something as terrorism therefore does not always aid the search for political solutions.<sup>26</sup>

### **Regional cooperation**

The other side of conflict is lack of cooperation. South Asia is one of the last regions to wake up to the challenge of the new regionalism, although a breakthrough may be on its way (Muni, 2000). It has been a region of distrust and conflict, penetrated by external powers, which, as a matter of fact, sometimes have been invited by the individual states in the region as part of their internal hostilities. Until the mid-1980s there was no formal regional cooperation whatsoever. To the extent that one can say that South Asia had reached a certain level of 'regionness', its network of relations was mainly conflictive, creating a violent security complex (Buzan and Rizvi, 1986). (high level of regionness in terms of criminal activities) security and development regionalism  
Regionness and security Rodrigo

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<sup>24</sup> The Maoists of South Asia have since 2001 organised themselves in CCOMPOSA (the Co-ordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia), see Muni, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> According to the Indian journal *Frontline*, 3 January, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> In March at 2002 the Indian parliament passed a controversial anti-terrorist law, the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO), on the basis of which suspected terrorists (both Indian citizens and foreigners) can be held in custody for 90 days without trial. On the basis of this law, 12 LTTE sympathisers were arrested in Tamil Nadu. The new regime took measures to repeal this law. The president made the following declaration: "My government is concerned about the misuse of POTA in the recent past. While there can be no compromise on the fight against terrorism, the government is of the view that the existing laws could adequately handle the menace of terrorism. The government, therefore, proposes to repeal POTA",

The early evolution of SAARC coincided with serious internal conflicts ( Sri Lankan Tamil and Sikh separatism), and it is a proof of the inherent soundness and logic of the idea of regional cooperation that a number of important meetings, including the Summit in Dhaka 1985, took place in spite of these disturbances, which also had serious interstate (Pakistan-India, Sri Lanka-India) implications.

The crucial interstate conflict is, of course, that between India and Pakistan. It is a conflict that defines the regional security complex and provides a key to its transformation into a regional security community. Its elimination would make all the difference as far as further regionalization is concerned. Summits of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have emphasized regionalism as the most appropriate way to relate to current changes in world order, but at the same time nationalist suspicions linger on as nationalist and fundamentalist movements gain strength. It is, however, both a strength and a weakness that SAARC contains all the South Asian states. It is a weakness, because the conflicts in the region have paralysed SAARC, confining its scope to non-controversial and marginal issues such as tourism and meteorology. It is a strength, however, precisely because controversial problems can be handled within one organization, providing at least a framework for regional conflict management.

Put differently, the regional organization coincides with the regional security complex and can therefore be seen as an embryo to a security community. Conflict resolution, however, is so far not considered a task for SAARC. There have therefore been cases of unilateral and bilateral interventions, the most traumatic after the emergence of Bangladesh being the IPKF mission in northern Sri Lanka.

BJP is built on the strategy of uniting the Hindus, but the only issue on which they are capable of acting as a monolith is the anti-Muslim sentiment, which proved to be an efficient political strategy in Gujarat (if not in the rest of the country in the general election of 2004). Obviously, South Asia has a long way to go before a regional approach to economic development, security and conflict resolution can be adopted. Regional cooperation in the economic field, or development regionalism, is (similar to the issue of security regionalism) at best embryonic. In the field of resource management, there is, due to the shared river systems, strong interdependencies (environmental security complexes) which so far have been a source of conflict rather than cooperation. They may also, however, be turned into imperatives for regional cooperation, as shown by the agreement between India and Bangladesh on the sharing of Ganga waters. This treaty may change the political climate between the two neighbours and pave the way for a broader regional agreement (including Bhutan and Nepal).

The reason to search for regional solutions is that bilateral suspicions make any other solution fragile. The overall trend in the region is towards occasionally crisis-ridden muddling-through democracies, where the threats from intra-state heterogeneity are more problematic than inter-state conflicts. However, to an increasing degree, internal and external issues become interweaved, reinforcing the arguments for development and security regionalism, but unfortunately not necessarily the political will to implement them.

But surprises occur. Before the January 2004 SAARC summit in Islamabad (after two postponements due to inter-state tensions) a number of prominent politicians expressed what seemed to be a more serious and sincere opinion beyond the usual rhetoric about the need for regional cooperation. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at a conference envisaged mutual

security cooperation, open borders and even a single currency in the region in the long run. He called for promotion of peace and banishing of hostility in South Asia and cited the increased people-to-people contact between India and Pakistan as a reflection of "intense desire for amity and goodwill". He said the demands of globalisation and aspirations of people provided the objective basis for energetic pursuit of a "harmoniously integrated" South Asia. People have waited for over half-a-century for fulfillment of "unexploited potential in their own neighbourhood" and were now now impatient to move ahead, Vajpayee said.<sup>27</sup> The former minister of foreign affairs in Sri Lanka similarly asserted in a newspaper article: "Today, any serious instability in a country will necessarily affect the stability of neighbouring countries. In the South Asian context, the very essence of regional security and cooperation is, first, the political will to forge a cohesive and concerted association amongst ourselves".<sup>28</sup> These expectations were fulfilled when India and Pakistan towards the end of the summit in Islamabad declared that formal peace negotiations would start in the near future. It is, however, problematic that the regional summit was completely bilateralised, since regional integration, which is the long-term solution to the crisis, may receive a back-seat. However there were significant regional agreements as well: SAFTA, an additional clause to the 1988 declaration on terrorism, and a Social Charter.

## Prospects

South Asia is a region of conflicts both in terms of multitude and dimensions, as well as complexity. Security policy has in this region been determined by internal conflicts with repercussions in neighbouring countries and beyond. It is therefore logical that the interest of the surrounding world should increasingly be directed towards these conflicts and their resolution. The external factor has thus become very strong. In the USA South Asia has got a new neighbour. This contradicts India's traditional policy of maintaining regional hegemony and avoiding outside involvement. This policy has also characterized the pattern of conflict resolution, both within India and in India's involvement in neighbouring countries. The Indian approach has been accommodation up to a point, and a strong suppressive hand beyond that point. This, however, has left a number of conflicts unresolved, particularly conflicts that have become regionalized and internationalized. Kashmir for instance is an ethnonational conflict that has become an international jihad.

What are South Asia's prospects for stability and peace in the light of the geopolitical change following in the wake of the global war against terrorism? There are both bright spots and darker elements. In all the states of the region (with Sri Lanka, at least for the time being, as a shining exception), a distinct brutalisation of politics is taking place (in the case of Gujarat on an unimaginable scale). That can, naturally, not be traced back to 9/11, but it is clear that repressive violence is held to be justified by the danger of terrorism and is facilitated by more extreme anti-terrorist legislation. In addition to the degeneration of internal politics, which is bad enough, must

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<sup>27</sup> Conference on 'Peace Dividend--Progress for India and South Asia' organised by Hindustan Times, *The Hindu*, December 12, 2003. Also Benazir Bhutto participated in this conference and expressed similar views.

<sup>28</sup> Lakshman Kadirgamar, *Securing South Asia*, *The Hindu*, 29 December, 2003. The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman told newsmen that the summit provided a "rare and historic" opportunity for Pakistan and India to move towards a dialogue process.

be added the continuing risk of war between Islamic Pakistan and Hindu India. The current peace process has only started and could easily be derailed. It is difficult to imagine a stable Pakistan in which Islam is severely restrained. After the 2004 election India returned to secularism. For how long? In Sri Lanka fresh elections have been carried out, which as earlier in history has complicated the peace process. In Nepal the Maoist uprising continues; in Bangladesh there is a polarisation between secularist and fundamentalist forces, and the relationship with India is also becoming worse. Recently Bhutan closed a number of militants' camps, militants coming from the Indian northeast. In the Maldives the media continued to face rough times.

The regionalisation and internationalisation of terrorism also affect the forms of the struggle against it. The regional co-operation organisation of South Asia, SAARC, might be able to play an important part as a regional means of solving conflicts, but so far the rock-hard Indian bilateralism has prevented it. The atmosphere of suspicion between the states in the region is thus itself a partial cause of terrorism (destabilisation), and also facilitates terrorist activity through the existence of bases on the other side of the frontier. The relations between the countries are, however, so strained that they have been unable to create a common security organisation for combating terrorism, despite the fact that the SAARC already in 1987 adopted a resolution against terrorism.<sup>29</sup>

We have noted that internal conflicts which include violence, nowadays increasingly frequently described as “terrorism”, have become a transnational phenomenon in South Asia as in other regions of the world. Certain conflicts are regionalised, others internationalised. The geo-political landscape is changing. At its extreme, the whole of the future world order is affected. Central Asia has come into focus geopolitically, at the same time as the instability in South Asia is becoming a security threat beyond the region itself. The boundary between South Asia and Central Asia was never rigid. In Afghanistan the new Great Game<sup>30</sup>, relating to geopolitics and control over energy resources (oil and gas) in Central Asia, is shaping up. The academic interest in Central Asian Studies has increased considerably in Indian universities, which is an indication of India's strategic ambitions.<sup>31</sup> In the struggle for Afghanistan, Pakistan has lost its “strategic depth” vis-à-vis India, while India has increased its influence, through its co-operation with the Northern Alliance. Thus Pakistan feels surrounded by enemies. The war against terrorism therefore embraces something more than the struggle against terrorism. It changes the geopolitical map. Afghanistan is no longer a far away corner where nodes of terrorist networks can be hidden. It is a strategically situated route for the transport of Central Asian oil.

International terrorism constitutes part of a global security complex in which security must be defined in ways radically differing from the nation-state idea of security, with its emphasis on national security and military defence. The war against terrorism, as manifested in Afghanistan and Iraq has, as usually is the result of war, reinforced the power of the state and the military apparatus, and for that reason a neo-Westphalian type of world order appears, at any rate in the

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<sup>29</sup> At the first SAARC summit meeting terrorism was identified as a threat to the region's political and economic stability, which justified regional co-operation. A Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed in Kathmandu in November 1987. However, terrorism was never defined. This issue was raised again at the Islamabad summit in January, 2004

<sup>30</sup> The Great Game is a reference to the geopolitical struggle in the region during the 19th century between Great Britain and Russia.

<sup>31</sup> Whereas the BJP regime approached the USA, the Congress regime is expected to favour a multipolar world.

relatively short term, to be more likely than a post-Westphalian experiment. That applies particularly to the unilateral superpower which ever more explicitly disdains multilateral forms of global governance. The prospect for regionalism is a complex issue, however. In the longer term it may see its great opportunity in the fact that so many other options are failing.

Appendix: Conflict events in South Asia  
from 11 September 2001,  
to December 2002.

1/10: attack on the State Assembly in Jammu och Kashmir (38 dead)

13/12: attack on the Parliaments building i New Delhi

*2002*

20/1: Attack on the American Information Resource Centre, Kolkata

23/1: A journalist, David Pearl, is kidnapped and executed in Ka\_rachi

27/2: The train massacre at Godhra

17/3: Attack on a church in Islamabad

30/3: The Raghunath Temple in Jammu is stormed

8/5: Attack on the Sheraton Hotel, Karachi, in which 11 Frenchmen are killed

14/5: Massacre in Kashmir (the Kalu Chak-massacre)

21/5: Assassination of Abdul Gani Lone (Kashmir)

14/6: Car-bomb attack on the American Consulate ii Karachi (12 killed)

13/7: Massacre i Jammu (the Rajiv Nagar massacre)

6/8: Attack on Hindu pilgrims i Kashmir

8/8: Assault on a Missionary Hospital in Pakistan (Axila)

11/8: Seven policemen killed in Naxalite violence (Orissa)

6/9: Independent candidate in the election in Kashmir assassinated

11/9: Minister of Justice in Kashmir, Mushtaq Lone, assassinated.

11/9: Shoot out in a flat in Karachi, suspected terrorists arrested

24/9: The Temple of Akshardham in Gandhinagar attacked by Muslims

29/9: Imam Ali and four other militant Muslims killed in Bangalore

18/11: Bus blown up by Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh

24/11: New attack on the Raghunath Temple in Jammu, 12 killed och 52 injured

7/12: Bomb explosions at cinemas in Bangladesh (Mymen\_singh)

20/12: 18 killed (of whom 14 policemen) in an ambush by Maoist Communist Centre (Jharkhand)

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