INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI®

ASSESSING THE THREAT:
HINDU NATIONALISM AND SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY

by

Hasit B. Thankey

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August, 1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This study examines the rise of the Hindu nationalist movement in India and its potential to adversely affect the regional security dynamic in South Asia. Hindu nationalism can be explained as a significant product of a paradoxical trend in Indian politics: the rising political awareness and mobilisation of Indians has resulted in the deterioration of the state's capacity to accommodate rising and vocal articulations of interest, leaving a vacuum characterised by institutional stress and popular cynicism about the basic aims and principles of the secular Indian state and rising violence based on ethnic ties and rivalries.

As a majoritarian movement that ideally seeks to alter the conceptual and institutional core of the Indian state from a secular to a "Hindu" worldview, Hindu nationalism has the potential to disrupt the structures of state and society that have promoted accommodation, tolerance and democratic governance in India. A "Hindu" India would have far reaching consequences for the region that it dominates in terms of size, economic significance and political and strategic weight.

It is not possible to rule out the long-term effects of Hindu nationalism on the region's security. However, recent events – most notably the election of a Hindu nationalist led coalition government in New Delhi – suggest that Hindu nationalism does not pose a proximate threat to the secular foundations and stability of the Indian nation-state, and thus its regional effects are circumscribed. Lingering insecurity in the region, demonstrated by communal violence, secessionist conflict within and between states, the stresses of poverty and underdevelopment and inter-state rivalry and conflict are more aptly explained by the continuity of insecurity in the region based on the mindset of states and civil societies that have been born and have developed in an environment of mistrust, deprivation, persecution and conflict. Hindu nationalism, while it has considerable potential in intensifying these problems by injecting majoritarian, communal rhetoric and ideology into the mix, cannot be assigned as a proximate reason for current instability in South Asia.

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSF	Border Security Force (India)
CPRF	Central Police Reserve Force (India)
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organisation (India)
HUM	Hezb-ul-Mujahideen
IGMDP	Indigenous Guided Missile Development Programme
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
INC	Indian National Congress
JKLF	Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front
LoC	Line of Control
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs (India)
MoD	Ministry of Defence (India)
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
OBC	Other/Backwards Castes
RR	Rashtriya Rifles
RSS	Rashtriya Swayemsevak Sangh
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several individuals whom I would like to thank for their assistance and generousity during the past 12 months. My supervisor and my friend, Frank Harvey, demonstrated the most enduring faith and patience. His insightful criticisms and comments fuelled my interest and contributed to the soundness of my work. David Black's intellectual support and practical advice during the year, despite the intensity of both our schedules, provided encouragement and insight into both present and future. Tim Shaw and Robert Finbow have also been sources of valuable professional and academic support. The kindness of my instructors will not be forgotten.

I would also like to thank several friends for their intellectual acumen and camaraderie over the year. Jay Johnson and family, Darryl Crawford and Kirk MacLeod in particular have readily shared their broad, inquisitive minds and experiences (and sometimes a dining table, a computer or transportation) which enriched my own life considerably. Fahim Qadir helped fill in the blanks as I tried to comprehend the behemoth that is South Asia. Sanjay Mehta, Sarah Siebert, Priya Sood, Andrew Wilson and Ayanna Ferdinand also deserve my gratitude for helping pass the days so enjoyably.

Finally, but most emphatically, I'd like to thank my parents and my brother for their love, wisdom and undying support. They have given me the wherewithal to reach for the best of East and West.

Hasit B. Thankey
Halifax, Nova Scotia. 1999.

INTRODUCTION
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY

The surge in conflict fuelled by ethno-religious movements is a central concern in the evolving world order. Ethnicity does not seem to want to die, no matter how confidently many theorists proclaimed it would in the face of the juggernaut of modernisation. Upon its independence, India was hailed as a model of a viable, modern nation-state able to control the "fissiparous" tendencies of ethnicity. But recent events have introduced the world to India's own majoritarian ethno-religious revivalism as Hindu nationalism becomes more prominent in Indian society and politics. What was once a fringe association of militant Hindu elites or saffron-clad spiritual leaders are now leading a formidable cultural-political movement that has tremendous implications for policymakers both inside and outside of India.

The evolution of Hindu nationalism has generated important questions about the validity of painting the Hindu nationalist movement as a communal menace to internal and regional security in India and South Asia. The primary objective of this thesis is to determine the actual potential of Hindu nationalism to constitute both a proximate and a long-term threat to regional security in the subcontinent. Moreover, it seeks to examine the role of ethno-nationalist movements within the spectrum of security linkages in South Asia, and, as a result, speaks to the importance of broad conceptualisations of regional security for the purposes of a comprehensive analysis of the issues that ethnicity can bring to a broader grouping of individuals, socio-cultural movements and states in an environment of extensive internal-external security interdependence.

India's nuclear tests of May 1998 conducted by the coalition government of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spurred commentary on the nature of the Hindu nationalist movement, its broader policy implications for India and the broader regional and international security concerns

associated with its surge. It is more than just a strategic issue, however, for both domestic and international actors and phenomena are evident. Hindu nationalism is characterised as a potentially serious threat to the security of the secular Indian state and, as a result, to the prospects for peace and stability in South Asia. Any fundamental change in the domestic social and political composition of India – most notably the Indian state's commitment to secularism – is thought to likely have a destabilising effect on the rest of the region.[1] This study does not disagree with this assertion. Yet such massive social and political change is easier said than done, especially in the context of India's enormous socio-political diversity. Considering the seemingly contradictory behaviour of the *Sangh Parivar* (the institutional embodiment of a coalition of Hindu nationalist groups spearheaded by the RSS or Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) rooted in its well documented moderating imperatives, the resilience of India's democratic political culture, the dynamics of state-society relations and internal conflict (both sectarian and secessionist in nature) and the continuity of Indian foreign and security policy, where can the proximity of this nationalist threat be placed? What effect does it have on the fabric of Indian politics and society, including the dynamics of nationalist politics as a whole, the conduct of democratic governance, conflict resolution and development? Does Hindu nationalism worsen the communal tensions already latent within the country? What effect does it have on India's internal security with regard to ethnic conflict of a society-wide communal scale or secessionist conflict over particular regions? How does it relate to the conduct of India's foreign and security policies?

I hope to demonstrate that for the near future the Hindu nationalist movement is constrained from taking full control and injecting its own derived ideology into the maelstrom of

---

[1] This is not to argue that the reverse does not occur. Indeed, many of the challenges the Indian state faces is insulating its own domestic and foreign policy interests from the destabilising influences of ethno-religious and economic conflicts from its neighbours. Nevertheless, India's political, military, economic and cultural centrality in the region means that the neighbours are more apt to be affected by India than vice-versa.

Indian politics. As such, its potential to independently destabilise a region already beset with seemingly intractable insecurity – including crippling poverty, incongruousness between sub-national movements and centralising states, inter-state mistrust and anxiety and a historical obsession with foreign domination and persecution – seems limited. Hindu nationalism is in fact part of this greater malaise. Explanations for its regional security ramifications are better found in the strain on state institutions and conflict resolution machinery in the face of an ethnic awakening throughout the region. In addition, South Asia's lingering instability is rooted in its own well developed psychological and political culture of insecurity that pervades its elites and affects both the internal security policies and foreign policies of the countries of the region. Thus, the state can be a source of the problem, spawning ethno-religious responses to its growing inability to realise the ambitions of a more aware and politicised society. It is in this dimension, however, that Hindu nationalism poses a long-term threat to the stability of India and South Asia: should its ambitious project of cultural nationalism succeed in changing the institutional and social foundations of the Indian polity, the prospects for democracy in India, internal peace and cohesion and, thus, regional security are not rosy.

Much of the literature comes from identifiable camps that either support or decry the Hindu nationalist movement from theoretical or comparative political perspectives. Few sources have directly engaged the issue of security, but this is not altogether surprising. Orthodox international relations analysis is directed at the state level, and non-state social movements are often not regarded as major determinants of a state's foreign and security policies. Also, realist ideology – based on Western and indigenous conceptualisations of power politics, the central, overarching role of the state and the assumed rationality of state actors – has a firm grip on the intellectual mindset of analysts of South Asian politics and security affairs. This is not to say that this study rebuff's the state's central role in determining foreign policy and affecting the strategic

environment. Indeed, in South Asia, the state is an unusually strong and overarching one.[2] Nevertheless, the dearth of "non-traditional" or "revisionist" materials in the international relations literature has compelled some analysts – including this one – to look for more catholic explanations for regional insecurity. This study therefore aims to bridge the importance of the state with the growing resonance of non-state actors and movements, especially those of an ethnonationalist variety, linking them to the portrait of peace and security (or the lack of it) that is being painted throughout the world.

Chapter 1 will examine the conceptual and ideological roots of Hindu nationalism and its dynamics within India's political system and culture. The assertion among pan-Indian "secular" nationalists that modernisation would render benign heretofore powerful traditional identities was misplaced, for ethnicity has proved more resilient than hoped. Ironically, the success of the state's nation-building project in awakening political consciousness in many sectors of Indian society has brought ethnicity back to the forefront. The Indian state's difficulty with balancing its own agenda and the heterogeneity of India's *nations* has fuelled the surge in ethnic politics, of which Hindu nationalism is an important part. The Sangh Parivar has been successful in growing into a major political force in Indian politics, taking advantage of both the system of electoral politics and the weakening of the state's ability to control the surge of ethnic politics. Its strategies of "stigmatisation and emulation,"[3] ethnic mobilisation and *Sangathanism* (the organisational network development of Hindu nationalist groups and cadres throughout the country) have resulted in steadily growing support, reflected by the resonance of its policy preferences on communal issues and its recent electoral success. Nevertheless, it is constrained from turning its majoritarian

---

[2] Many Indian and Pakistani authors tend to betray their respective patriotic biases, only further illustrating Pasha's thesis that much of civil society in South Asia, and particularly academic analysis, is slaved to the all-encompassing nation-state. Mustapha Kamal Pasha, "Security as Hegemony," *Alternatives*, 21, 1996.

[3] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, (New York: Columbia University Press).

appeal into true majoritarian support. Hindu nationalism is prevented from gaining full control of the state due to the compulsions of India's democratic political culture and institutions that moderate radical groups within the context of electoral politics. The staggering diversity of Indian political life suggests that ethnic political movements will have difficulty in crossing ascriptive stratifications and gaining mass appeal. Internal divisions within the Sangh Parivar are a result of this tension between ideological purity and popular support, forming yet another barrier to the successful dispersion of Hindutva on an India-wide scale.

Chapter 2 details the rise of communal violence and secessionist conflict as a direct result of the weakening of the Indian state's capacity to insulate itself and peacefully resolve the growing rifts between competing groups. It looks at two types of ethnic conflict prevalent in India today: communal violence (between Hindus and Muslims mostly) and secessionist conflicts, especially those of an ethno-religious character (most notably Kashmir). Hindu nationalist groups have been at the centre of a dangerous rise in communal strife between Hindus and Muslims. This is demonstrated time and again during communal riots, such as those that seized the country after the demolition of the Babri *Masjid* (mosque) in 1992. However, the Indian state has a significant role to play in the Hindu-Muslim split. Indeed, it has become an agent of the communal surge, throwing the principles of secularism to the wind by manipulating ethno-religious sentiment for its own ends. In regards to secessionist conflict, the Sangh Parivar has attached much importance to insurgency in Kashmir and has used the issue to catapult itself into a higher profile. Hindu nationalism has played a role in fomenting communal violence within the embattled region as its populations polarise on religious grounds. However, Hindu nationalism is a only a part of the larger equation of instability. The increasing reliance on coercion to crush secessionist or autonomist insurrections is the source of rather than the solution to anti-national sentiment and violence. As such, the Hindu nationalist movement is an important actor in this realm of instability,

but its formation and development within the confines of a deteriorating state-society relationship suggests that the broader malaise of India's conflict resolution machinery is the major reason for growing internal instability.

In terms of India's relations with other countries, recent events have demonstrated the inability of Hindutva to be applied comprehensively to Indian foreign and security policy. The Sangh Parivar sees international relations as a struggle for power among the strong and demonstrates a belief in Huntington's thesis of a clash of civilisations. However, as Chapter 3 argues, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a leading Hindu nationalist political party and the core of India's current government, has been caught up in the stream of cultural continuity in Indian foreign policy and has resisted RSS pressure on these matters. India's suspicion of other countries and practice of orthodox realist ideology and, at the same time, the idealist undercurrent in its foreign policy can be explained by the development of a culture of continuity arising from the historical legacy of external intervention in the region, the paradigms of *Kautilyan* realism and *Gandhian* cosmopolitanism and the latent desire for acceptance as a great power. This policy continuity effectively explains the apparent contradictions in the BJP's decision-making since it took office. For instance, India's nuclear testing was based more on long-standing Indian political and security concerns and interests and short-term domestic political calculations than Hindutva. At the same time, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee also engaged in a non-conventional sort of "bus diplomacy" with Pakistan to develop a bi-lateral framework within which to ameliorate their long-standing disputes. Also, India exercised restraint throughout the Kargil conflict of May-July 1999 in the Kashmiri Himalayas even though it had destabilised Indo-Pakistani relations with its use of force against "infiltrators" so close to the Line of Control (LoC) and was under intense domestic pressure to escalate the conflict. These cases are of use in demonstrating the continuity

of Indian foreign and security policy that the Hindu nationalist movement is pressured to accept when it assumes the vaunted prize of state control.

Finally, Chapter 4 offers some concluding insights into the future of the Hindu nationalist movement and the conditions necessary for it to exert a destabilising influence on South Asian security in general. It attempts to engage the discussions of Indian domestic politics, internal security and foreign policy to merge them into the broader dynamics of regional security analysis. While this study's main focus is explaining the main reasons why the Hindu nationalist movement may not be a proximate threat to regional security, it does not refute the original claim that the movement may be a major source of insecurity in the long-term. Given its plans of societal transformation – which affects every relationship of security interdependence including those between individuals, social and cultural groups, the state and the broader regional and international communities – Hindu nationalism should not be seen as a movement that has already seen its apogee.[4] After all, the movement is in a critical phase of its relatively early development. Control of state institutions and power, now a realisable objective, is a potential vehicle for the Sangh Parivar's larger sectarian agenda through "saffronising" policy and personnel throughout the government. Also, at a societal level, the spread of RSS cells and other Sangathanist organisations, as well as the dispersion of Hindutva into everyday political discourse, might have grander repercussions in the future in terms of the erosion of secular democratic structures that stand in the way of a Hindu *rashtra* (nation). A communally charged India which takes the Sangh Parivar to power on the coattails of majoritarian fervour is not inconceivable. Minorities mistrust

[4] Eric Kolodner asserts that Hindu nationalism may have exceeded its sell-by date simply on the basis of the BJP's setbacks in elections earlier in the 1990s. Although Kolodner's understanding and analysis of the movement is praiseworthy, he tends to disregard the cultural and social resonance of majoritarian politics in a political environment characterised by a crisis of secularism in India and the growing inefficacy of the state in repairing this damage. See "The Political Economy of the Rise and Fall (?) of Hindu Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 25 (2), 1995.

the Hindu nationalist movement for this reason in particular, for they would experience tremendous insecurity should the state no longer be relied upon as a faithful secular guardian.

Furthermore, its capacity to exert influence on the conduct of India's counter-insurgency strategy might increase as a result of greater fears surrounding Islamic fundamentalism, especially the increasingly transnational Islamic militancy in Kashmir. In terms of India's foreign and security policy, the injection of hyper-nationalist rhetoric into an already unstable nuclear relationship with Pakistan is a worry that policymakers and analysts cannot ignore. There is every indication that RSS party stalwarts and other religious reactionaries throughout the Sangh Parivar care little for the politics of deterrence. The Islamic "menace" is a tempting tool of political mobilisation that traverses human, group and state security considerations and taps into a deep well on anxiety in India. Combined with India's traditional complex of insecurity vis à vis its neighbours and the great powers, it is a possibly explosive mixture of religion, state power and violence. As such, it would not be wise to altogether rule out the *Kulturkampf*[5] between arcs of civilisation-states who feed off of one another's deeply felt insecurities.

This study has policy implications that transcend a particular region or ethno-nationalism in general. Certainly, as India develops – albeit haphazardly – into a potential continental power with massive political, economic and human potential, Western policymakers must throw aside the goggles of colonial or Cold War vintage and view the region with more clarity, interest and sensitivity about why different people make different decisions (or, indeed, why different people could make the *same* decisions). Even for the sheer mass of humanity involved – some estimate that one in every six people on earth is South Asian – and the array of difficulties the region faces,

---

[5] I borrow this term from Robert Wirsing, *India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 163. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3), Summer 1993. See pp. 33-34 especially for discussion of Hindu-Muslim clashes and the conflict between secular and Hindu India.

policy must take into account the internal and external linkages that make ethno-nationalism such a potentially dangerous factor in South Asia. Nor is the issue limited to South Asia. The implications of destabilising ethno-nationalism conducted by and for the "majority" is an important problem in many parts of the world. Majoritarian nationalism can be seen not only in bloody ethnic catastrophes such as the Balkans (of which Albanian nationalism may be the latest source of ethno-nationalist rage) but in outbreaks of xenophobia against migrants and minorities in the West, in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union, Turkey, the Middle East and South East Asia. When these sentiments coalesce with organised political or cultural groups with sufficient access to resources and support, the results can be devastating. Further research that analyses the political economy and sociology as well as the political or security issues embedded in such conflicts is therefore critically important.

CHAPTER 1
THE RISE AND CONSOLIDATION OF HINDU NATIONALISM

> I mean to say that the long-suffering Hindu is being called a religious zealot today only because he wants to build the temple [at Ayodhya]. The Muslims got their Pakistan. Even in a mutilated India, they have special rights. They have no use for family planning. They have their own religious schools. What do we have? An India with its arms cut off. An India where restrictions are placed on our festivals, where our processions are always in danger of attack, where our religious beliefs are cruelly derided. We cannot speak of our pain, express our hurt. I say to the politician, "Do not go on trampling upon our deepest feelings as you have been doing for so long."[6]

This excerpt from a speech by militant Hindu orator Sadhvi Rithambra is indicative of the symbols, demands and context of the resurgence of Hindu nationalism in India. After a period of internal ideological consolidation centred around vilifying and emulating "foreign" minorities (especially Muslims) and the development of strategies of mass ethnic mobilisation centred around strong organisational networks of political parties and socio-cultural groups, the Hindu nationalist movement is occupying the vacuum left by the decline of secularism and the erosion of its protective institutions. The Sangh Parivar and its ideology of *Hindutva* (political Hinduism or, literally, Hinduness) has attracted support as one of a number of competitive voices assuring security, safety and prosperity in troubled times. Yet it is a potentially destabilising agent in the region insofar as its rise and consolidation is a direct result of the crisis of the secular Indian nation-state, which is increasingly under strain to peacefully and legitimately ameliorate conflict within Indian society and to meet the growing demands of economic development from a population that is generally more politically conscious than at any other time in modern Indian history.

Two recent events mark a watershed in the development of the Hindu nationalist movement: the razing of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December, 1992 and the growing power of

the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the polls in consecutive elections since 1984, culminating in the BJP's capture of government in 1998 with the largest number of seats in the lower house of the Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha. These developments are indicators of the growing support for Hindu nationalism across the country, but are interpreted in different ways. For some, Hindu nationalism and its saffron agenda of enhanced national pride and cultural awareness has the potential to rescue India from the stale, spiritless leadership of the Congress and other "secular" parties. At the same time, these incidents spark fear in many across the country, for a stronger Hindu revivalist movement may have destructive consequences for the secular and democratic ethic that has, arguably, kept India united and relatively stable.

This chapter seeks to understand the conceptual and ideological nature of Hindu nationalism and to determine whether it has become an increasingly powerful force in contemporary Indian politics and society. It took its roots in the same soil as its rival, the secular Congress Party, but was relegated to the sidelines of Indian politics and society as the Congress proved capable of obtaining mass support and legitimacy for its vision of the Indian nation-state. However, the crisis of the Congress and changes in state-society relations have given Hindu nationalists the space to spread their message and attract mass support. The movement's core ideology, composition, mobilisation strategy and organisation have all played a major role in constructing a coherent cultural nationalist alternative well versed in the language and symbols of modernisation and nation-building out of a diverse, non-doctrinal religion. Although the movement has been weakened by the backlash against the Babri Masjid incident and the rising spectre of communal violence nation-wide and faces a further internal challenge as its political arm – the BJP – becomes increasingly moderate as it engages in competitive electoral politics, its position as a

---

[6] Taken from a speech in Hyderabad in April 1991, cited in Sudhir Kakar, *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion and Conflict*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 161.

major player in the somewhat chaotic nature of Indian politics seems assured for the foreseeable future.

I. THE DILEMMAS OF NATION-BUILDING: THE UNDERPINNINGS OF NATIONALISM IN INDIA

Nationalism is contested territory in India. In the late nineteenth century, a number of different principles and strategies for independent nationhood were emerging as British colonial domination wore thin among the increasingly educated and worldly elites of Indian society. Although the pan-Indian nationalist movement spearheaded by the Indian National Congress (INC) quickly pushed it to the fringes of the political landscape, Hindu nationalism has since evolved into a well organised ethno-religious movement that commands greater support in Indian politics.

Anthony Smith's theory of nationalism is useful in gaining a complementary understanding of the modernising imperatives of nationalist movements as well as the lingering influence tradition and ethnicity have upon the politics of nationalism. As a potentially powerful social and political force, nationalism's immediate goal, especially in colonial societies, is removing the yolk of external domination. However, that is merely the first step. Their programme of post-colonial modernisation is dependent upon the elite's possession and utilisation of a powerful military-bureaucratic state that can co-ordinate the construction of a modern polity through centralised political institutions.[7] At the same time, nationalism is often twisted and altered in important ways depending upon the culture in which it is dependent upon for definition. Any analysis of the organisations and strategies that perpetuate nationalist movements must be integrated with an understanding of the broader socio-cultural context within which it is embedded.[8]

---

[7] Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, Second Edition, (London: Duckworth and Company, 1983), p. xxxv.
[8] Ibid., p. xxxii.

Reflecting this assertion by Smith, this analysis holds that there are two primary reasons for the contemporary influence the Hindu nationalist movement now possesses. Certainly, there are other theories that engage the issue of ethnicity, but they can readily be generalised into two schools: the instrumental approach that focuses on the malleability of ethnicity by structural forces or by individuals (which include political psychology perspectives and rational choice) and the primordial school which emphasises the resistance of cultural inertia to external change (which also encompasses sociobiology and the family values approach).[9]

Instrumentalist perspectives frame Hindu nationalism in terms of a political ideology that supports a cultural (or ethnic) nationalist agenda through the instruments of modernity and syncretic secularism. This approach holds ethnicity and culture as a dynamic variable embedded in a process of modernisation. These "traditional" forces can be altered by the deliberate choices and strategies of powerful elites, political parties and social movements. Instrumentalists tend to dismiss the centrality of identity, however, and argue that the targets of political Hinduism, broadly conceived of as "the masses", are susceptible to the ideological machinations of influential individuals and organisations within the Hindu nationalist movement.

The approach is inadequate all by itself because it places more emphasis on the politicisation of the movements through elite and state lenses over the inertia of ethnic sentiment, which contains within it deeply felt worldviews, beliefs and animosities that are very resilient. As a result, the second tool that analysts use is a "primordialist" or historicist perspective that engages the cultural roots, historical development and contemporary trends in Indian state-society relations. Culture, ethnicity and history are structural and contextual factors within which Hindu nationalism operates and the degree to which its support is based on accepted social and cultural identities.

---

[9] A good summary of the various competing and co-operating theories on ethnicity are contained in Michael Freeman, "Theories of Ethnicity, Tribalism and Nationalism," in Kenneth Christie, ed., *Ethnic Conflict, Tribal Politics: A Global*

Fusing these two approaches is necessary to gain a broad based, complementary understanding of the phenomenon of Hindu nationalism and the impact it may have on the Indian nation-state in general.

The two dominant competing visions of post-colonial India – a secular, "civic" form of pan-Indian nationalism in which all religions are equidistant from the state and an "ethnic" nationalism built around idealised Hindu religious beliefs – originated at approximately the same time (in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) as a reaction to, and product of, colonial domination.[10] Although the pan-Indian nationalism of the Indian National Congress (INC known as the Congress Party or simply Congress upon independence) was to become the vanguard movement in the pursuit of sovereignty other forms of nationalist sentiment were by no means dormant. Hindu nationalism, while unable to compete with the broad legitimacy of the Nehruvian project for mass support until some time after India's independence, was nonetheless able to develop in the background, altering myths and histories in the pursuit of more followers and greater support in order to exercise greater power in relation to the state and society.

Inspired by the values and practices of the West, the elites that formed the backbone of the pan-Indian nationalist movement sought to build a thoroughly modern India. This movement was largely composed of learned, well established and upper class Hindu males from the northern, Hindi-speaking regions, along with an increasingly prosperous and prominent merchant class.[11] The Hindu nationalist movement had a similar caste and class makeup. As a reaction against colonialism each nationalist vision considered the immediate necessities of the independence

---

Perspective, (Surrey: Curzon, 1998), pp. 18-30.

[10] These different conceptions of nation-hood were joined by separatist nationalisms, evidenced by the separatist demands of the Muslim League and various regional separatist movements since independence. See Ashutosh Varshney, "Contested Meanings: India's National Identity, Hindu Nationalism, and the Politics of Anxiety," *Daedalus*, 122 (3), Summer 1993, pp. 229-230.

struggle to be the foremost objective for all Indians, despite their differences on the means by which to achieve it and their ideas about the nature of the post-colonial Indian nation-state. The secular nationalist movement was also informed by a number of prominent individuals who came to be known as "Hindu traditionalists," using religious customs and mythologies to mobilise mass support among Hindus.[12] Even Gandhi, the father of Indian secular nationalism, fell back on his own Hindu beliefs and refused to separate entirely the "Hindu" from India.[13] These linkages were to be a major weakness for the pan-Indian nationalist movement, for the Muslim League was able to exploit the perception among many Indian Muslims that the INC was essentially a "Hindu" movement and as proof of the inability of the two communities to live together peacefully.[14]

However, their differing vision for an independent India was the cause of much disagreement and, ultimately, different fortunes. Each took their own interpretations of India, often based on the golden age of Indian pre-colonial society, as the basis for their ideological rift. The secular view of this period is one in which "Indian unity was achieved on the basis of pan-Indian cultural identity and common civilizational values" [15] – of religious tolerance and co-operation – rather than by a political ideology. Through centuries of migrations, invasions, religious reformations and changing mantles of civilisational control, Indian society developed deeply entrenched stratifications and, at the same time, interdependencies among and between ethnic, cultural, linguistic, regional, caste, class and religious lines. India was noted for its capacity to

---

[11] Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: New York University Press, 1979), p. 11. Although the Indian nationalist movement – especially the INC – did include lower-caste ranks, it was mostly a high-caste grouping. Hindu nationalist groups were almost exclusively high-caste in composition.

[12] Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, p. 32; see also Sue Ellen M. Charlton, *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China, and Japan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), p. 93.

[13] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India*, p. 9.

[14] Yogendra K. Malik and Dhirendra K. Vajpeyi, "The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India's Secular Democracy at Risk," *Asian Survey*, 29 (3), 1989p. 323. Largely due to these types of perceptions, the Muslim League successfully convinced the British to partition the subcontinent before their departure.

[15] Yogendra K. Malik and V.B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p. 2. See also Ashis Nandy, "The Twilight of Certitudes: Secularism, Hindu Nationalism and Other Masks of Deculturation," *Alternatives*, 22, 1997, pp. 157-176.

assimilate newcomers into a common civilisational ethos. The concept of a "nation" or a "state" was considered alien to a land accustomed to diverse forms of identity and political organisation.

Hindu nationalists, on the other hand, saw Indian society as an essential Hindu civilisation that had been terrorised by centuries of oppression from outsiders. As opposed to the inclusiveness of Gandhi's vision, Hindu nationalism was a reaction to the perception of a threatening "Other" and a growing concern that secular nationalists were too welcoming of western values and traditions that disregarded the cultural and spiritual heritage of Hindu India.[16] This vision, based as it was on a parochial, caste-specific worldview, did not initially enjoy any significant degree of mass support. The assassination of Gandhi by a member of the RSS in 1947 did nothing to further their cause. Instead, it was the INC's version of nation-building that embraced secularism, brought minorities into the fold and promoted economic development and equality that led to greater legitimacy for the pan-Indian movement and for the Indian state. Secularism – defined in terms of the equidistance of religions from each other rather than the outright separation of religion and state – was confirmed as the Indian nation's cornerstone.

The preference among secular nationalists for a nation-state built on Western ideas – an amalgamation of secularised citizens populating a "...specialised, territorially defined and coercively monopolistic state..."[17] – reflected their education and professional vocations which were largely forged in anglicised schools and the colonial administration. As such, only a strong, "supranational" state built on secular, modern principles and committed to industrial economic development (with both liberal and Marxist elements) would best suit an Indian polity characterised by diversity and dissonance. Managing differences among diverse groups and interests was seen

---

[16] Islam is usually held as the most dangerous "Other" by the nationalist movement, although Christianity is, from time to time, also vilified as an invasive religious presence. See Sumit Sarkar, "The Fascism of the Sangh Parivar," *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 30, 1993, p. 165.

[17] Anthony D. Smith, *State and Nation in the Third World: The Western State and African Nationalism*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 17.

as the only realistic way to ensure stability while advancing an agenda of modernisation and development.[18]

Moreover, traditional sources of identity, including ethnicity, language and religion, were downplayed by the independence movement. It was initially hoped that an independent India built on the principles of modern secularism would engage India's diverse population in the exercise of political will, bring them above parochial traditional identities and further strengthen both the unity of the country and the nationalist ethos which held it together. The desires of the elite nationalist class notwithstanding, the imperative to "modernise" in the classical western sense was diluted to an extent by Indian cultural traditions. Indeed, as Smith argues, "in few non-western areas can a secular nationalism afford to ignore or over-ride pre-industrial attachments."[19] Due to the deep penetration of religion into almost every aspect of Indian society and the resulting impossibility of separating it from politics altogether, the secular foundation of the Indian nation-state envisioned by pan-Indian nationalists was not an exact copy of western ideas about secularism and state-society relations.[20] It was defined in the Indian Constitution as equal tolerance and respect for religious beliefs, or an "area in which Government, the political parties and the people...work together to find a happy balance between religious beliefs and conscience on the one hand and the demands of the modern society on the other."[21]

Thus, while the imperatives of Indian culture and society were recognised, India's nation-builders also deemed it necessary to balance tradition with the principles and laws of the nation-state to reduce the preponderance of religion in society in the long-term.[22] These traditional

---

[18] Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 4.
[19] Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, p. 33.
[20] Malik and Vajpeyi, "The Rise of Hindu Militancy," pp. 309-310.
[21] A. Sahay, cited in ibid., p. 309.
[22] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 102.

imperatives proved difficult to sweep under the rug, though, and combined with changes in the political context would play a considerable part in the rise of Hindu nationalism as an important movement in contemporary Indian politics.

II. The Politics of Hindu Nationalism

Founded by elite Brahminical (upper caste) Hindu groups in northern India in the early twentieth century, the Hindu nationalist movement has grown from a confused, fledgling participant to a major actor on the stage. The significance of the movement, which is composed of a variety of different social, cultural and political organisations co-ordinated through the Sangh Parivar and its lead outfit, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, or National Volunteer Organisation), lies in its stated objectives. The Sangh Parivar seeks to reshape Indian culture, society and politics through redesigning the religious and social structures of Hinduism into a politically malleable and resonant vehicle.

Although the Hindu nationalist movement has developed a highly intricate ideological framework, it is difficult to disregard the cultural and political context within which an ideology must operate. I hope to demonstrate here that any analysis of the politics of Hindu nationalism must engage both its historical and cultural dimensions and the process of modernisation in India as well as the ideological and institutional consolidation that the movement has embarked on to struggle for a central position on an increasingly crowded political stage. From this approach, it is evident that the Hindu nationalist movement and its strategies of ideological consolidation, ethno-religious mobilisation and party construction work in tandem with the growing crisis of the nation-state in India. As the ability of the secular state to impartially deliver on the rising expectations of its citizens declines, an increasingly conscious and mobilised population turns to the Sangh

Parivar's majoritarian solutions.[23] The RSS and its family of Hindu nationalist organisations, which now include fifty or more political, socio-cultural and paramilitary groups with a known support base into the tens of millions, had been sidelined for sometime by the hegemony of Congress and state secularism. However, decades of internal organisational consolidation and the development of populist mobilisation strategies now appeal to a politically mobilised yet dislocated electorate disenchanted with continuing deprivation and uncertainty that have gone along with a state under heavy institutional and political strain.

A. A Brief History of Hindu Nationalism

The Hindu nationalist movement at its genesis was strongly concerned about foreign influences in India. The Arya Samaj, perhaps the first organised Hindu nationalist group, was opposed to the penetration of western culture in India – namely the British Crown and proselytising missionaries – on the grounds that it was materialist, dogmatic and shallow. On the other hand, India's *Hinduness* was idealised as spiritually and morally advanced due to its ancient roots, its lack of a monotheistic, rigid orthodoxy and its open yet assimilative and adaptive qualities.[24] Subsequent incarnations – including the Brahmo Samaj, the Hindu Mahasabha and, most notably, the core components of the Sangh Parivar (the RSS, the VHP and the BJP) – have continued their opposition to the policies and preferences of Indian secularism that, in their eyes, generates policies that unfairly favour minorities and distort the Indian political system through minority "vote banks."

The inherent oneness of Hinduism and India creates an ideological worldview that supports the stigmatisation of an "Other." Virtually every minority group or religion which

---

[23] Eric Kolodner, "The Political Economy of the Rise and Fall (?) of Hindu Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 25 (2), 1995, p. 238.

professes to have developed in India (Sikhism and Buddhism for example) are considered to be essentially Hindu; on the other hand, Islam and Christianity are thought of as pernicious foreign influences that seek to convert Hindus by whatever means necessary to their fold and destabilise Indian society, much like they are thought to have done for centuries. [25] The Sangh Parivar especially singles out the now over 110 million-strong Muslim minority with a campaign of stigmatisation that disregards the diversities inherent within the Muslim community and constructs it as a threat to vulnerable Hindus and their sacred country. The secularism institutionalised by the Congress Party in the transition to independence has, they argue, become a "pseudo-secular" exercise in pandering to religious minorities and regional diversities, thus neglecting and threatening the Hindu majority and the country's security. More recently, separatist violence in the Punjab, Assam and Kashmir has fuelled the reactionary, anti-Other rhetoric of the Sangh Parivar. Its leaders have attacked government counter-insurgency efforts that usually have some accommodative dimension as weak sell-outs of the Hindu populations of those states.

The institutional development of the Sangh Parivar and its ideological programme of Hindutva into a co-ordinated cultural nationalist movement and the decline of the institutional guardians of Nehruvian secular democratic development (witnessed by Indira and Rajiv Gandhi's flirtations with narcissistic authoritarianism) has had profound implications. The Sangh Parivar's conception of a Hindu India strikes at the very heart of the state-society relations in supposedly secular India. The split between communal and secular brings painful histories out of the closet, especially those surrounding the trauma of Partition, and significantly divides Indian society. It has exploded recently over highly charged symbolic issues. The most significant was the destruction of Ayodhya's Babri Masjid by a group of organised Hindu militants in 1992, reflective of an

---

[24] Ibid., pp. 1-4.

increase in Hindu-Muslim clashes throughout India over the last ten years. The mosque's razing, conducted on the grounds that the mosque was built upon the birthplace of Lord Rama, a major deity in the Hindu pantheon, unleashed some of the bloodiest communal riots in India since Partition. Other sites of communal bloodletting include cities throughout the Hindi heartland, including major religious or political flashpoints such as Delhi or Varanasi, industrial areas in Gujarat and even Bombay or southern regions considered to be resistant to communal conflagrations. Hindu-Muslim violence, temple controversies, anger over a separate civil code for Hindus and Muslims, anti-cow slaughter campaigns and bitterness over the government's handling of the insurrection in Kashmir have all helped generate a majoritarian Hindu constituency of great use during general elections when such issues can take centre stage.

B. Historicist Interpretations: Accepting the Importance of Culture and Tradition

It is unwise to entirely discount culture in comparative political analysis, especially in light of the ongoing debate between tradition and modernity. In fact, a useful way to frame the distinction between the secular, pan-Indian nationalists and their Hindu revivalist counterparts is to conceive of the matter as a clash between differing modernisation processes that must contend with the resistance offered by traditional identities and authorities, complicating the process of nation-building. The deep religious and cultural affiliations that pervade Indian society are an inescapable fact, and have equally inescapable implications for the conduct of politics and the programme of modernisation. Although the competing nationalist movements are committed to the sanctity of India's borders (a theme in which the notion of India's "sacred geography" is embedded), Hindutva fuses the "sacred" geography of India with an idealised focus on religion

---

[25] Ashutosh Varshney, "Battling the Past, Forging a Future? Ayodhya and Beyond," in Philip Oldenburg, ed., *India Briefing 1993*, p. 26.

rather than on a broadly based interpretation of Indian culture inclusive of Muslim and Christian identities that is supported by secular nationalists.[25] What Sudhir Kakar calls a "primordialist" analysis of Hindu nationalism emphasises this point, examining the importance of the underlying psychological, historical and socio-political resonance of the Hindu identity that serves as a foundation for much of Indian society.

The historicist approach places the most explanatory value on the stages of social and political development within India. Although a systematic exploration of the religious aspects of Hinduism is not the intent of this work, it is important to briefly mention the nature of the religion and its socio-cultural base in order to analyse how the Hindu nationalist movement has risen to prominence. It has used a pick-and-choose technique of redefining the parameters of Hinduism into a malleable form conducive to its own interests, which are derived from a the perspective of its founding elites – Brahminical, upper-class males from the Hindi heartland.

The Hindu nationalist movement's objectives are to redefine the parameters of Hinduism into a vehicle for political and cultural control. As opposed to its Semitic counterparts, Hinduism is an inherently diverse religion that has no single religious scripture or ecclesiastical authority. It is characterised by a divergence in beliefs, philosophies and value schemes that defy the development of a single "fundamental" religious consciousness. The caste system is a source of social stability and continuity for the religion. Before the incursions from the Muslim world and the West, the caste system fostered the integration of outsiders into the prevailing socio-cultural system and thus the religion had no original conception of a threatening "Other" since foreign influences were all assumed to be capable of assimilation into the broader civilisation.

---

[25] Varshney, "Contest Meanings," pp. 235-236.

The very term "Hindu" was originally used by other civilisations in reference to the people that lived beyond the Indus River, and became synonymous with the religious beliefs of the upper caste Brahminic groups of India after medieval invaders and migrants had made established contact with the region. British colonialism only accelerated this process as missionaries and colonial administrators sought to understand the prevailing religious order along the lines of a centralised, "classical" Hinduism which occupied a sacred geography in the subcontinent and was fused together by certain texts and Brahminical high culture.[27] The impact of medieval and colonial external influences demonstrates that religion does not exist in a vacuum. While Hinduism remains characterised by its diversity, flexibility and capacity for assimilation, the forces of historical and social change have had an indelible impact on its structures, belief systems and politics. The Sangh Parivar's idea of modernisation is an extension of idealised, Brahminical Hinduism.

The Hindu nationalist movement draws its strength from a deep well of support for Hindu traditions and a recognisable Hindu core in Indian society. While Hinduism is a diverse religion and categorising it can prove to be "messy," the basic definition of the religion is one that is steeped in the perception of its adherents' identity and circumstance. There seems to exist a twofold sense of centre-periphery conflict and continuity that indicates a "rather continuous civilizational structure that is recognizably Indian..."[28] The fact that Hindus consider themselves to be Hindus and part of a greater whole may be the most important cornerstone of the religion and of its political complications.[29]

---

[27] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, pp. 1-5, Hansen, *The Saffron Wave*, pp. 65-67.
[28] Cynthia Keppely Mahmood, "Rethinking Indian Communalism: Culture and Counter-Culture," *Asian Survey*, 33 (7), 1993, p. 730.
[29] Ibid., p. 726.

The members of the Sangh Parivar themselves share the view that pre-colonial Indian history was a cohesive, diverse and adaptive "civilizational" society.[30] However, they do not separate India from Hindu. While more radical Hindu nationalists have argued since the beginning of the movement that Hinduism was the keystone of Indian society, moderate elements have also found this argument more appealing as of late. In an increasingly polarised communal environment, many Hindus (which tend to be treated as a homogenous group), are said to be beginning to believe that the historic roots of their religion, and the civilisation which it founded and sustained, have been neglected. Moreover, Kakar's treatment of the psychological roots of communal violence in India makes the useful point that ethno-religious identities have, in fact, existed for hundreds of years in India. Various communities are raised on the deeply held and shared values of their particular ethnic or religious heritage. Communal confrontation can develop when these societies come face to face with trends and pressures from without, changing their dynamic and dividing them along communal lines as latent identities flare into conflict. Kakar contends that secularists in India underestimate the power of these communal identities while Hindu nationalists overestimate the degree of doctrinal divergence and enmity between Hindus and Muslims.[31]

Current analysis of the Hindu nationalist movement has also raised the critical point that India is at a juncture in its social and political development which is amenable to the rise of ethno-religious revivalism. From a modernisation perspective, Indian society has undergone a phenomenal degree of change as local, regional and global trends and pressures influence the context of politics and culture. Kohli's analysis of the "ungovernability" of the Indian nation-state is important in this regard, for eroding state institutions and public confidence in the levers of

---

[30] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India*, p. 2.
[31] Kakar, *Colors of Violence*, pp. ix-x, 16-21.

government power and promises fuel the growth of parochial or destabilising forces.[32] Hindu nationalism has drawn much support from those dissatisfied with the uncertainty of Indian political institutions to help Indians realise material and political imperatives. Similarly, Hansen's work on Hindu nationalism treats the movement as a populist phenomenon which is moving into the vacuum created by the deterioration of India's political institutions and exploiting the gnawing cynicism which has begun to set in as rising expectations are not met.[33] Hindu nationalism has an impact at this level because it aims its programme of Hindutva at those most displaced by social change, attempting to attract them with the "..implied belief that majority can sanction the sacrifice of equity."[34]

A critical turning point in Indian politics which is reflective of this trend was Indira Gandhi's style of quasi-authoritarian government, which effectively backfired. In an attempt to institutionalise her own power and cult of personality, Indira Gandhi destroyed the Congress' ability to represent diverse opinions and communities, rooted out its internal dynamism and propped it up as a populist party which sought to exploit both communal and secular identities in the quest for votes. This development fragmented the hegemony of Congress and resulted in the rapid proliferation of opposition movements, political parties and interest groups that anchored themselves in particular identities and interests that Congress had been perceived as neglecting or abusing.[35] It was fertile ground for the planting of the Hindutva seed. After all, nationalist groups almost always take advantage of latent hostilities and dissatisfaction with governing authorities to press their case.

---

[32] Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent.*
[33] Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 4-5.
[34] Sudipta Kaviraj, "Crisis of the Nation-state in India," *Political Analysis*, 42, 1994, 115-129.
[35] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave*, pp. 134-136.

C. The Instrumentalist Approach: Ideology, Party Building, Mobilisation and Electoral Politics

Although it takes root in a particular context, Hindutva is a systematic political ideology thoroughly rooted in modernist pragmatism. Through years of constructing a politically salient ideology Hindutva exploits the potent value of an altered history, a stigmatised "enemy" that is the source of the Hindu community's alienation, fear and humiliation and its right to inherit a glorious future reminiscent of a "golden age." At the same time, Hindu nationalists have become adept at utilising the structures and language of modern Indian politics to advance their objectives, exposing the movement to certain challenges but also delivering tangible results in their objective to expand their support base and contest elections against the traditional parties of Indian politics from a more confident footing.

The reinterpretation of history – painting Indian society as synonymous with Hindu culture while developing the image of a powerful "foreign" cultural menace – is a key component of the ideological perspective. The nationalist discourse is a reinterpretation of Hindu history and culture from an upper caste elite perspective, rife with invented mythologies and threat perceptions, altered histories and syncretic behaviour that adapts more politically convenient dimensions of other religions (such as the glorification of a certain text, like the Vedas, or a monotheistic appeal) to mobilise mass support and argue that their vision is truly secular. It politicises the concept of the Other while, in essence, redefining Hinduism to "...assimilating those cultural features of the Others which were regarded as prestigious and efficacious in order to regain self-esteem and resist the Others more effectively."[36] The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP – World Hindu Congress) is an institutional manifestation of this imperative, for its functions resemble that of a central religious authority which brings together prominent *sadhus* and *sants* (Hindu holy men), expatriate Hindus and others dedicated to the cause to bring about a "national Hinduism" that is

standardised, homogenised and rationalised.[37] It seeks to overcome Hinduism's diversity in an attempt to construct and define a politically salient community that relies on a constructed sense of identity.

Hindutva is claimed to be the only true "secular" way in India. The literature of the nationalist movement consistently mentions secularism in the same breath as a perceived neglect of the Hindu population, including the following passage from the BJP:

> When Hindus realized that pseudo-secularism had reduced them to a role of an innocent bystander in the game of politics, they demanded a true secularism where every religious group would be treated that same and a government would not take Hindu sentiments for granted. Hindutva awakened the Hindus to the new world order where nations represented the aspirations of people united in history, culture, philosophy, and heroes. Hindutva...took the idol of Israel and made Hindus realize that their India could be just as great and could do the same for them also.[38]

According to Ashis Nandy, evoking secularism gives Hindu nationalist groups the ability to rationalise an inherently irrational and traditional phenomenon, which makes it easier to manipulate politically and "...contest for the allegiance of the decultured, the atomized, the massified."[39] It becomes an instrument in a political ideology to gather support from a society in a state of turmoil.

For these reasons it is considered to be an ideological, cultural nationalism rather than a theocratic or fundamentalist religious movement. In other words, it is the very definition of a *modern* political phenomenon. It seeks to glorify its versions of Hindu culture (which is more appealing to the diverse masses of Hindus) by incorporating the structures and terminology of modernism and secularism. Contrary to the realities of Hindu beliefs and Indian socio-cultural

---

[36] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, p. 6.
[37] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave*, pp. 101-102.
[38] Mir Meghani, "Hindutva: The Great Nationalist Ideology," Online, Bharatiya Janata Party web site, www.bjp.org/philo.htm. Accessed March 28, 1999.
[39] Nandy, "The Twilight of Certitudes," p. 169. Interestingly, Nandy offers the argument that Hindutva represents the "death" of Hinduism, for it not only a means of rallying Hindus around a constructed platform but also a critique of

practices, the Hindu nationalist movement seeks to create, in Rajni Kothari's terminology, "a synthetic majority" which transcends the fragmentations of ethnicity, language, region, caste, gender and class.[40]

The appeal of this ideological alternative means that Hindu nationalism is not simply a passing phase in India's political and social development. Nor is it an obscure or unorganised amalgam of fringe groups lacking in any significant mass support. It is an increasingly powerful and resonant voice in Indian politics supported by extensive networks among well organised Hindu nationalist groups in the Sangh Parivar and developed over the years through strategic ideological construction and political mobilisation. Both proponents and opponents of Hindu nationalism agree on the ends of the movement: to essentially remake Indian society. Yet power over the political institutions of the Indian nation-state and an attempt to codify the tenets of Hindutva into government policy are just one aspect of this process. The deeper, more difficult process is the transformation of Indian society through the strategic re-conceptualisation of Hinduism as a monotheistic, proselytising and centralised religious and political force.

Institutionally, the BJP has emerged as the front-runner for translating popular support into political power. Socially, the RSS, VHP and other constituent members of the Sangh Parivar are continuing with their strategy of building up well-organised, disciplined networks of cadres and ideologues and spreading the message among the masses. According to *India Today*, the declared membership of the Sangh Parivar numbers over 54 million, including 17 million "traceable" BJP members and 125,000 RSS *shakas* (quasi-paramilitary centres of organisation and discipline where recruits are given Hindutva training and encouraged to do "community" service). The VHP is more nebulous because it has no official membership list, but it is

---

those aspects of Hinduism that the architects of Hindutva most detest (i.e., the religion's perceived weakness against foreign influences and its overwhelming diversity that defies central authority and organisation).

considered to be "massive."[41] Such numbers are illustrative of the organised manpower the Sangh Parivar can count on to take part in agitations and pressure campaigns against local, state and central governments in addition to the resources available to spread the Hindutva word. The consolidation of these tightly knit cells of activity, the widespread and growing membership of the Sangh Parivar's constituent organisations and the recent inclusion of a sizeable number of respected Indian army officers, diplomats and career civil servants into the ranks of the BJP is a sign that the Hindu nationalist movement is attracting critical support from both the traditionally militant ranks as well as the technocratic elite within the Indian bureaucracy.

The Sangh Parivar utilises the structures of the Indian democracy, such as political parties and interest groups, and the language of secularism, unity and equality to advance their Hindutva agenda. In contrast to fundamentalist groups in the Islamic world, Hindu nationalism has accepted the ideal and mechanisms of liberal democracy and worked through it to gain popular support and challenge for a say in policy making.[42] They were on the frontline of the anti-Emergency movement in the late 1970s and afterwards exploited the decline of secularism's supposed guardian, the Congress.[43] The Sangh Parivar has time and again portrayed itself as the true guarantor or "democracy" and "secularism" in India, and was more adept at wielding this argument after the Emergency period as many of its prominent leaders, including much of the current BJP leadership, were imprisoned for anti-Indira activities.

Although it received some competition from the increasingly populist policies of the Congress in the 1980s, the Sangh Parivar was able to start building Hindu "vote banks" long

---

[40] Rajni Kothari, "Class and Communalism in India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 3, 1988, p. 2592.
[41] Sumit Mitra and Harinder Baweja, "RSS on the Rampage," *India Today*, 28 September, p. 21.
[42] K. Raghavendra Rao, "Religion, State and Society in India: Theory versus Reality," in Neera Chandhoke, ed., *Understanding the Post-Colonial World: Theory and Method*, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1994), p. 139.
[43] In this light, the Gandhi dynasty is a major contributor to the decline of secularism in Indian society and politics. See Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*, (Cambridge:

before the 1998 elections as a result of which it formed a coalition government. The movement as a whole was instrumental in dispersing their ideology and exploiting divisions within secular forces to take the lead role in communal politics. Their call for "value-based" politics was aimed at setting itself apart from a demonstrably weaker and corruption riddled Congress.[44] Indeed, the dispute over Ayodhya was exploited by the Sangh Parivar to take advantage of the potentially rich Hindu vote banks which had opened up as a result of the bloodshed. The salience of the communal issue cannot be denied. Since it is a central issue in Indian politics today the ability of a large, relatively popular political party such as the BJP to extract some political benefit from the communal divide is not insignificant. The Ayodhya dispute, the Islamic insurgency in the embattled state of Jammu and Kashmir, cow slaughter, the reservations system for lower-caste Hindus and an ongoing debate over the nature of Indian civil law and its equal application to all Indians (regardless of religion) have all been taken up by the BJP as contentious issues for discussion on the national stage.

Moreover, BJP victories in state assemblies with the support of well established networks of Sangathanist groups has revealed much about the importance of Hindutva at a political level. BJP governments in several heartland states has seen a shift in education policy to reflect Hindu nationalist ideology while some governments have been accused of either allowing communal riots to take their toll on the minority population or even encourage state-level security forces to join in violence against them. The example of Shiv Sena, a militant Hindu nationalist organisation in Maharashtra, serves as a useful illustration. Under its leader Bal Thackeray (a Hindu chauvinist firebrand who has admitted his "admiration" for Hitler), Shiv Sena has evolved from a regionalist, pro-Marathi incarnation to an important member of the Sangh Parivar. It rode the wave of Hindu

---

Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 233-245. Hansen and Jaffrelot also engage the issue of secularism and its rise and decline comprehensively.

nationalist fervour that swept across the country in 1992, and has since been able to take control of the state government and effectively implement its own agenda. Shiv Sena "...now finds itself the dominant political force in the state of Maharashtra, with a ready capacity to incite widespread violence, extract rents, and shape public policy and legislative initiatives."[45] The power of Hindu nationalist discourse and its wide support as a result has permitted it to act with relative impunity vis à vis the state's political institutions while using those aspects of state power to promote its own agenda. It is indicative of the type of governance that proceeds the installation of militant Hindu nationalist groups into positions of power.

At the same time, while the Hindu nationalist movement has extracted some political gain from communal issues, it has also demonstrated remarkable flexibility and pragmatism in order to maximise its political gains.[46] The BJP, the only official political party among the ranks of the Sangh Parivar, has especially proven to be an innovative and enthusiastic participant in the Indian political process. Rather than rejecting the principles and institutions of a democratic system inspired and largely designed by colonial administrators and their Indian pupils, the BJP has engaged in electoral politics on a highly pragmatic and skilful basis.

Shaila Seshia's analysis of the BJP's recent successes in the elections of February, 1998 is highly instructive in this regard. Since the late 1980s, the BJP has been able to capitalise on certain factors that were largely beyond ethno-nationalist politics. For the most recent general elections in 1998, popular frustration and disillusionment with a dilapidated, corrupt and apparently rudderless Congress and the BJP's emphasis on common-sense issues – corruption, political stability, development, economic liberalisation and national security for instance – held more

---

[44] Ibid., p. 1040.
[45] Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, Uday Singh Mehta and Usha Thakkar, "The Rebirth of Shiv Sena: The Symbiosis of Discursive and Organizational Power," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 56 (2), May 1997, p. 371.
[46] Seshia, "Divide and Rule in Indian Party Politics," p. 1041-1043.

resonance than its Hindu nationalist agenda.[47] For example, the BJP has thrown its weight behind the liberalisation process despite opposition from other members of the Sangh Parivar, most notably the RSS.[48] As such, it has courted the support of the large Indian middle class which is more supportive of India's liberalisation efforts than the hard-liners in the RSS, the religious community and those political forces representing the lower classes and castes. The Hindu nationalists' traditional emphasis on national security found a secular following as well, for the BJP's hard-line on the status of Kashmir in the Indian federation and its widely publicised intent to declare India's nuclear capability were attractive features of the BJP's manifesto that addressed fears of a hostile regional neighbourhood inimical to India's "national" interests.

III. Challenges for the Sangh Parivar: The Divisiveness of Indian Electoral Politics

The above might be overstating the ability of Hindu nationalists to take effective control of the levers of state, however. The reality is somewhat more textured, mainly because the nationalist movement itself is divided between moderate and more extreme wings due to the imperatives of democratic politics. After all, to successfully contest elections characterised by an increasingly fragmented yet mobilised polity, the movement must necessarily moderate itself. Through this process, the internal divisions within the Hindu religion become apparent, and so do the institutional cleavages between different members of the Sangh Parivar.

The persistent instability of coalition government in India is useful in illustrating the point that the Hindu nationalist movement exists in a vastly different political context from that which it is accustomed. The BJP's electoral success in the 12th Lokh Sabha elections of 1998 was a result of

---

[47] Shaila Seshia, "Divide and Rule in Indian Party Politics: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party," *Asian Survey*, 38 (11), 1998, pp. 1040, 1049.

[48] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, p. 544. There is a great deal of debate within the Sangh Parivar between *swadeshi* (a Gandhian notion of indigenous production and development) and liberalisation. The BJP has

its ability to cobble together electoral coalitions in regions and constituencies in which it was demonstrably weaker (such as the southern states and poorer, rural areas). This reflects the trend towards greater local and regional influence in Indian politics as the states become more important in the federal equation, as well as the greater cogence of heretofore disadvantaged groups such as the Dalits (sometimes known as OBCs or Other Backwards Castes), Schedules Castes and non-Hindu minorities in Indian politics. As Kohli points out, Indian politics is now characterised by the acute dilemma of "how to maintain...power while fending off or accommodating the growing demands of power blocs in the polity."[49]

Coalitions limit the influence the other members of the Sangh Parivar can have at a governmental level. The BJP has always been a more moderate element of the Sangh Parivar, and through its charismatic and historically moderate leader, Vajpayee, its 13 month coalition government had to negotiate the demands of the RSS and the VHP on communal issues, the problems posed by various coalition partners and the spectre of a resurgent Congress Party with Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi's widow, at the helm.

Moreover, Hinduism is interspersed with divisions on ethnic, linguistic, regional and caste lines. A Brahminical, middle-class movement cannot effectively promote its interpretation of "Hindu" without encountering these inherent divisions and disagreements. For instance, the problem of caste has been a major impediment to the construction of a single Hindu nationalist sentiment, for "one of the fundamental difficulties for the BJP is how to mobilise Hindu sentiments without inflaming the question of caste."[50] OBCs, Scheduled Castes, Tribals and others lower on the rungs of Indian society are in the majority in India, and their increasing democratisation means

---

publicly announced its support of economic liberalisation with some *swadeshi* reservations intended to mollify resistance from the hard-liners in the RSS and other anti-liberalisation groups.

[49] Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent*, p. 16.

[50] Sudipta Kaviraj cited in Sagarika Dutt, "Identities and the Indian state: an overview," *Third World Quarterly*, 19 (3), 1998, p. 413.

they are altogether more important. The rapid proliferation of political parties committed to causes of the lower castes demonstrates that it is increasingly difficult for a single party with a communal agenda to win convincing majorities at the Centre.

Thus, the inherent instability of Indian coalition politics presents a major challenge to the Sangh Parivar. It is difficult for the BJP to win a majority, and to survive in office it must moderate its policies and accept the input of its coalition partners. The necessity of moderation suits many of the BJP's more liberal members but heightens ideological differences within the party and causes friction with the Hindutva stalwarts of the RSS, the VHP and other more extreme but dedicated "non-political" groups such as organised labour and student groups. In general, the Sangh Parivar seemed fairly upset with the Vajpayee government's tenure, taking direct aim at the BJP for its pro-liberalisation preferences and criticising the appointment of liberal moderates to the influential portfolios at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Finance. It demanded a greater share in decision making at both the Centre and in the several BJP-led state governments, frustrating the efforts of BJP officials and senior civil servants attempting to keep the Vajpayee government together. "The Sangh Parivar, with its Taliban-like adherence to ideology, turns its back on the fact that its 'family member', the BJP, is not in power on its own but in coalition with 18 partners, some of whom swear by socialism while some others stand by the regional agenda."[51]

It is evident that if Indian political culture has not yet grasped the subtleties of coalition politics, the Sangh Parivar refuses to do so despite the clear realities of Indian politics today. There is an important motivation behind this behaviour, however: the RSS' refusal to openly declare itself a political party is a long-standing policy which seeks to insulate it from the very moderating influences that are causing the BJP to subtly move away from its Hindutva manifesto

[51] Mitra and Baweja, "RSS on the Rampage," p. 24.

and maximise the utility of a division of labour within the Sangh Parivar. Nevertheless, the ability of the Hindu nationalist movement to exercise power is limited to some degree by the infighting that seems set to continue between its moderate and hard-line wings, especially over the critical policy choices New Delhi must make on the progress of economic reforms and the changing nature of India's foreign and security policies.

Conclusion

The trend towards the communalisation and criminalisation of Indian politics – witnessed through the growth of narrowly conceived political groups along sectarian lines, the increasingly strong roots of corruption throughout the public sector and the violence that may arise as a result – is recognised as a major threat to the contemporary Indian nation-state. They are but symptoms, however, of a nation-state that is in the throes of a structural crisis of governance and expectations. It struggles to effect progressive change and deliver on the expectations of its citizens for political stability and economic prosperity. The state continues to use what some criticise as outmoded institutions and strategies whose socio-political context seems to have evolved past the point of being able to use them constructively for India's new challenges. Hindu nationalism is seen by many in India as a majoritarian solution to the crisis that offers stability and security. However, in reality it simply draws upon the same sources of crisis and instability. It is an imagined sense of majority and a synthetic homogeneity that has risen in the ranks rather than a genuine mass movement with any real depth. It is more a modern, parochial construct than a primordial force that unifies the total Hindu population.

The significance of a Hindu nationalist movement that has learned to interface with the Indian political system in the pursuit of its political and material objectives should not be taken lightly. The nuclear tests of May, 1998 and the BJP's steadfast adherence to a market

liberalization strategy have demonstrated its ability to both advance the objectives of Hindutva as well as moderate its policies to act on behalf of broader interest formations. On the other hand, it could also be indicative of the pressure of Indian social forces on the movement. After all, the surge in Hindu nationalist sentiment cannot necessarily be cause to predict the total transformation of the Indian state into a Hindu *rashtra*. The experiences of the (now erstwhile) BJP coalition and its predecessors indicates that the atomisation of the Indian political culture and the proliferation of interest groups and political parties will present formidable obstacles to the formation of stable single party majority governments. The Sangh Parivar cannot get everything on its wish list. As long as they continue to operate within the confines of India's democracy, Hindu nationalist governments will be forced to moderate their policy agendas or risk losing the support of essential governing partners.

While this may mean that the Indian political landscape has enough diversity built into it to prevent communal forces from possessing absolute power, the instability of Indian politics for the foreseeable future may only exacerbate the crisis of the Indian nation-state as the potential for change and renewal are neglected while political turmoil accelerates and demands to be resolved in the short-term. Although the BJP may subscribe to the importance of building a strong political party to engage in elections despite the penalty of moderation, the RSS and the rest of the Sangh Parivar are under no such compulsions. Their insulation from Indian democratic politics, derived from closed, highly opaque institutional and social structures, could be critical to undermining a secular and democratic India through long-term social manipulation and change. The prospects for Hindu authoritarianism, both at the political level and in Indian society at large, point to concerns over the impact Hindu nationalism might have on India's internal stability and its role in the South Asian regional security dynamic. In this case, the threat to democracy and the implications for South Asian peace and security in an era of increasing cross-border

interpenetration are serious despite India's demonstrated historical resistance to authoritarianism and its careful orchestration of relations with its immediate neighbours. This necessarily effects the future of both the internal and foreign and defence policies of the Indian state. These issues will be the locus of discussion for the remainder of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2
BLOOD AND SAFFRON: HINDU NATIONALISM AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN INDIA

This chapter seeks to examine the place of Hindu nationalism within the larger scope of ethnic conflict in India. Hindu nationalism has come to occupy part of the political and social space of the nation's imagination. As both a determinant and a result of the rise of ethnic politics in India, the movement is a key factor in the dynamics of ethnic conflict in modern India. Hindu-Muslim enmity and violence – both in terms of communal strife and as secessionist struggle – is of considerable importance to this study as a primary mode of ethnic conflict that is challenging the security of India and of the broader region.

The Sangh Parivar has latched onto several symbolic issues associated with communal politics and intra-state conflict in India to heighten the degree of communal tension in the country, thus endangering the integrity of the secular nation-state according to some analysts. The rising and potentially disastrous spectre of Hindu-Muslim violence, illustrated by the anti—Muslim rioting and retaliatory bombings that paralysed the country following the Ayodhya mosque incident and recent concerns over anti-Christian violence, are of considerable concern for a state that already struggles to contain civil and social conflict. Furthermore, the religious nature of secessionist conflict is also of importance, as the Sangh Parivar has utilised the immense symbolic and strategic significance of these conflicts for its own programme of Hindutva.

However, it is critical to understand the surge in communal violence and the outbreak of secessionist conflict within the political and social context of the Indian state. India's experience with balancing a fragmented composition with the imperatives of an ambitious central development strategy has been pivotal to the "supranational" state's nation-building programme. With a significant degree of success, the state executed this daunting task using a combination of both

accommodative and coercive strategies to control outbreaks of ethnic conflict that were thought to have destabilising consequences for the Indian Union. However, the state's capacity to ameliorate conflict, raise political awareness and promote economic development and prosperity has paradoxically contributed to the strain on its structures; this is especially true of the Congress Party, an informal yet critical institution in Indian politics that has traditionally been seen as synonymous with the state. This development has caused other forces and movements to enter the fray as a widening abyss of cynicism and uncertainty about the prospects for India's very stability and unity contributes to the rise of ethnic identity as a locus for pursuing interests. As such, the fault lines of instability arising from ethnic conflict in India can largely be found under the foundations of the state, which is undergoing a profound crisis rooted in its growing inability to manage ethnic diversity within its own agenda for political stability and development.

The chapter will firstly analyse the context of ethnic politics in India, especially the role of the "supranational" state in controlling ethnic conflict. This necessarily requires an analysis of the role of state institutions, particularly the Congress Party, in managing ethnic diversity within the confines of the Indian state's centralised nation-building programme. Second, it will focus on communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, articulating the role Hindu nationalist groups have played in fomenting and responding to such conflict. Again, the state's changing role is important here in terms of the conditions it has laid out for the increasing salience of communal politics and the recourse to violence that has followed. Third, using the case of Kashmir, it will demonstrate that explanations for secessionist conflict in India are demonstrated better by the strain on the state to satisfactorily deal with politically conscious ethnic groups rather than the views and rhetoric of Hindu nationalism. Although Hindu nationalism might affect the degree to which the state uses force in reacting to secessionist conflict, a weakened state does much of the substantive damage.

I. Setting the Stage: Ethnicity in India and the Mechanisms of State Control

The state and the nation are rarely synchronous in the post-colonial world. The transnational or sub-national body politic of ethnicity "...stems from a real or believed common ancestry of the group, symbolized or expressed in shared characteristics such as common race, language, religion, customs, or – even more intangibly – in a historically derived consciousness of being a separate group."[52] In South Asia, ethnicity is often a combination of two or more of such distinctions, leading to the development of ethnic groups of astounding internal diversity and richness. At the same time, it makes the resolution of conflicts within and between ethnic groups and third parties all the more difficult for the state. South Asian states are constructed on the premise of building strong nation-states out of ethnic compositions that are potentially centrifugal within states but also overlap state boundaries.[53] The establishment of boundaries, governing institutions and a coercive apparatus cut through communities and cultures that not had to contend with being divided from kith and kin. The post-colonial state in South Asia has been forced to contend with the lingering fallout of its mismatched relationship with its multi-national composition.[54]

Until recently, India was able to meet the challenges of only partial congruence. The state was founded upon a secular constitution of broad legitimacy, stable democratic institutions and the expertise of a vanguard nationalist elite. Thus armed, it used a combination of coercive and accommodative strategies that sought to impartially resolve conflict between ethnic groups or between an ethnic group and the Centre while reaffirming the supreme role of the state. It

---

[52] Astri Suhrke and Lela Garner Noble, eds., *Ethnic Conflict in International Relations*, (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 4.

[53] For instance, while there may be overwhelming diversity within these states, they are also characterised by transnational ethnic populations that cross their inherited boundaries. Examples include the Tamils of southern India and Sri Lanka, Kashmiris in northern India and Pakistan and the Bengalis of eastern India and Bangladesh.

[54] Ishtiaq Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity in Contemporary South Asia*, (London: Pinter, 1996), p. 12.

demonstrated a remarkable ability to promote a centralised, secular concept of nation-building that kept the constant danger of "fissiparous" forces at bay.

Maya Chadda's term "relational control" is a useful one which explicates New Delhi's strategies for creating unity out of diversity. The challenge faced by India's nation-builders was to bind the potentially divisive forces of ethnonationalism within the structures and ideas of the modern state. The overarching nature of the state necessarily poses a threat to the accepted identities that certain ethnic groups possess or come to possess as they interact with one another and with the state. "The supranational state tries to develop methods for co-opting the elites of the nationalities or controlling them, while the latter look for ways of shoring up their autonomy in various fields. When this process breaks down, secessionist demands can arise."[55] Such a relationship between the state and ethnic groups requires established frameworks of impartial conflict resolution to ameliorate disputes and maintain the precarious balance between the centralising imperatives of nation-building and the demands of autonomy or recognition. Without such a balance, the capacity of the state to insulate the conflict from the reach of domestic political opponents (such as Hindu nationalists) and maintain its own freedom of action is circumspect.

Chadda's construct is useful in explaining the dynamics of this phenomenon and illustrates the importance of examining the capacity of the Indian state to have some say over the "rules of the game" (i.e., the framework within which it bargains with groups seeking autonomy or other states in the region). In essence, the state desires ample room to manoeuvre in order to adequately balance the two imperatives of post-colonial society within a matrix that accommodates, co-opts, co-operates and coerces, when necessary.[56] For this study, the usefulness of Chadda's model is found in the room it leaves for Hindu nationalism to enter the

---

[55] Maya Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 6.
[56] Ibid., p. 12.

scene as a product of the decline of the Indian state's conflict resolution structures. In terms of ethnic conflict, Hindu nationalism has found resonance at a particular time and context, namely the decline of the state's ability to maintain the balance between a centralising state and divisive ethnonationalisms. The loss of relational control manifested by the state's embrace of ethnic politics and its consistent recourse to coercion and subterfuge has opened the way for Hindu nationalism and other domestic and external factors to influence the dynamics of ethnic conflict.[57] Relational control therefore puts the emphasis on threats to India's internal security on the broader impact of the strain on the state's institutions to ameliorate conflict and facilitate development. Hindu nationalism enters the equation as a factor which influences the degree of insecurity rather than its substance.

Contrary to the expectations of classical modernisation theorists of both Marxist and Weberian persuasions that ethnic identity and conflict would fade away, the deepening and widening of political mobilisation around the world has resulted in the concomitant deepening and widening of the resort to ethnic politics.[58] In India, this paradox of political modernisation is founded in the growing crisis of the secular state's institutions and its inability to further maintain its nation-building activities as Indian society undergoes a significant political awakening that has injected new discourses and new demands upon the state. Ethnic groups have especially become more vociferous in their articulations of interest and their role in the political fabric of the nation. Political parties organised on regional, ethnic, caste and class lines, religious revivalism (including Hindu nationalism and Islamic activism) and social movements have spilled into the gap left by Congress as its capacity to represent the spectrum of Indian society declines. The state's growing

---

[57] Ibid., p. 122.

[58] See Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 102-105. Horowitz, while accepting many of the useful arguments of modernisation theory, especially critiques the emphasis modernisation theorists place on the role of elites in fomenting ethnic conflict as insufficient in explaining the reason why "the masses" often support ethnic revivalism.

inability to manage these proliferating interests through accommodative means of conflict resolution has led to confrontation which has only been further amplified by the state's growing resort to coercive authority to quell disturbances. The rise in ethnic conflict is not surprising trend if seen in this light, for it reflects the loss of the state's ability to exercise relational control among competing ethnic groups.

India's experience under the leadership of Indira Gandhi and her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, was the turning point in India's experience with resolving conflicts of an ethnic dimension. The centralising, authoritarian tendencies of Indira Gandhi's regime, epitomised by her infamous "Emergency" of 1975-1977 in which constitutional rights were suspended, rooted out the internal democracy within the Congress which had, until then at least, yielded a degree of responsiveness to local contexts and demands. Congress was left a broken, divided and hollow party which could not replicate its earlier feats of democratic governance even after Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1979. The participation of Hindu nationalists in the anti-Emergency movement notwithstanding, Indira Gandhi and her son were instrumental in the surge of Hindu nationalism as they purposefully wooed the "Hindu" vote, co-opting the RSS and other elite elements of the Hindu nationalist movement for a time and fanning the flames of communal sentiment against both Muslims and Sikhs in a cynical ploy to obtain electoral support. Rajiv Gandhi did attempt to regain control of the situation and re-infuse the Congress with some degree of responsiveness and protection from increasingly cogent ethno-nationalist movements, but the legacy of his mother's authoritarian experiment had severely battered the Indian state's capacity to deal with ethnonationalist groups on an impartial basis.[59] The intensification of ethnic conflict, both communal and secessionist in nature, laid the groundwork for a more powerful and influential

---

[59] Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, p. 117.

Hindu revivalism which Congress could not control. The Sangh Parivar's potential impact on the future capacity of a secular state to manage ethnic conflict internally and its implications for South Asia in a broader sense are just beginning to be understood.

II. THE MALIGNANCY OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

At a societal level, the Hindu-Muslim cleavage is perhaps the most potentially destabilising relationship in India today. Kakar's useful definition of communalism, "where a community of believers not only has religious affiliation but also social, economic and political interests in common which may conflict with the corresponding interests of another community of believers sharing the same geographical space," is useful in framing the question as a multi-layered one that is prone to considerable change from the outside and from within. From this perspective, although neither community should be conceived of as homogenous monolith with no history of peaceful co-existence, the degree of social instability based on conflictual identities and the escalation of violence between them cannot be dismissed as having no serious repercussions for India's stability as a viable nation-state.

India was born in communal fury, and communal identities continue to exert strong social and political pressure. The partition of British India upon the departure of the colonial government triggered the largest migration in modern history as an estimated 10 million Hindus and Muslims spontaneously attempted to relocate to the new-born republics of either India or Pakistan, respectively. In the process, up to half a million people are estimated to have been the victims of communal butchery. This left an indelible impact on the psyche of both countries, and has contributed to the rivalry of India and Pakistan but also to the rift in the communal fabric of supposedly secular India. Until very recently, communalism was seen mostly through elite eyes as "...the irrational force of primitive and atavistic hatred emanating from 'the masses' steeped in

tradition and superstition [and] easy targets for manipulators..."[60] The communal pains of Partition were relegated to the history books as a bloody confrontation between the secular "good" and the communal "evil", but dismissed in the new India. The supranational state, built on modern institutions and secularism, was thought to be poised to overcome the "pathology" of communal sentiment and build an India unencumbered by traditional divisions. Indeed, in Nehru's India, those incidents of communal violence that did occur were explained away as dispersed and localised acts of irrational ethnonationalist fervour.

However, the Nehruvian ideal of what India ought to be was a static one. Kakar argues that the rise of communal politics in India is a development that could be seen long before it came to pass. Traditional communities struggle to fully come to terms with imposed modernity and thus seek shelter under canopies of collective identity that offer some protection from the uncertainty of the storms of the new world.[61] Beginning in the late 1960s, communal strife increased as the political consciousness, economic confidence and national profile of minorities and disadvantaged groups were increasing and, at the same time, the state's capacity to ameliorate ethnonationalist conflict eroded and allowed ethnonationalist forces to mark out terrain from which to pursue their own agendas.[62] The 1980s represented a turning point in the degree to which ethno-religious sentiments were being exploited for political gain as the Congress' legitimacy visibly crumbled and it fell back on playing the communal card to rescue its grasp on power. The participation of supposedly impartial state forces in communal violence, including police forces and local

---

[60] Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 201.
[61] Sudhir Kakar, *Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 143.
[62] Raju Thomas, *Indian Security Policy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 69-70.

administrators, only worsened the state of Indian secularism as communal violence was fuelled rather than ameliorated by the state.[63]

While Hindu-Sikh strife in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984 was certainly not insignificant and was evidence of the increasingly malignant and partisan role of the state in communal relations, tension between Hindus and Muslims has been the greater worry. The Sangh Parivar has exploited several domestic and international trends as symbols of the India's inherent Hindu character (which includes Sikhs as well as Buddhists, Jains and other "home grown" minorities under its umbrella) and its simultaneous vulnerability to an imagined threat from the Muslim world in order to advance its programme of Hindutva. Horowitz's theory of ethnic conflict rightly assesses the importance of symbolic issues as powerful tools for manipulating ever present ethnic identities and passions among the masses into confrontation. He argues that "[s]ymbolism is effective in ethnic conflict, because it clothes ethnic claims in ideas and associations that have acknowledged moral force beyond the particular conflict, thereby masking something that would otherwise be controversial."[64]

Seen in this light, the symbols pursued by the Sangh Parivar have indeed proved effective as they are regarded as proximate causes for the escalation of Hindu nationalist sentiment as of late. What is being masked is the attempt by the Sangh Parivar to alter the secular nature of India in favour of a culturally and territorially nationalist and "majoritarian" entity. Ethnic conflict has been a vitally important symbol in the pursuit of such an objective, relying on issues that have tremendous political and social resonance. Secularism's identity crisis has in itself become a symbol, for it is seen as an increasingly moribund principle invoked by politicians during elections

---

[63] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, pp. 332-333.
[64] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 218.

but disregarded in the deeper workings of Indian politics. For Hindu nationalists, secessionist conflict on communal lines (such as the Kashmiri insurgency), the threat of global Islamic fundamentalism, the role of "pampered" Indian Muslims and mass conversions of lower-caste Hindus to Islam are all pointed to as signs that Nehruvian secularism weakens Indian/Hindu society from within and without, leaving it vulnerable to a threat from an external enemy.[65]

The psychology of mob violence notwithstanding, there seem to be direct linkages between the agenda and activities of Sangh Parivar member organisations (especially the RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal, the Sangh Parivar's youth wing) and the outbreak of communal strife unparalleled since Partition. The Sangh Parivar's success at advancing Hindutva by exploiting certain symbols and mythologies has substantially contributed to Hindu-Muslim enmity over the years, for "...the waves of rioting between 1990 and 1992-1993 were in most parts of India rarely triggered by local circumstances but rather by the ideological fantasies and Hindu communal discourse systematically circulated and organized in the public in the preceding years."[66] The thousands that died in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a result of strife over Ayodhya and other symbolic issues were often organised or even led by Sangh Parivar cadres, often with conscious assistance from police forces and criminal elements.[67] More recently, the erstwhile BJP coalition government was highly criticised for the outbreak of anti-Christian violence in Gujarat and Orissa

---

[65] Sumit Ganguly, "Ethno-nationalist Conflict in South Asia," *Survival*, 35 (2), Summer 1993, pp. 104-105.

[66] Hanson, *The Saffron Wave*, p. 207. See also Ashish Nandy, et. al., *Creating a Nationality: The Ramjanmabhumi Movement and Fear of the Self*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 7., for a table of incidences of and casualties from communal violence from 1954 – 1985, which reflects a particularly steady increase in such strife between 1977 and 1985.

[67] The Sangh Parivar had mobilised its cadre network around the country from 1989 until December 1992 through religious ceremonies and a series of *yatras* (processions) to Ayodhya to commemorate their intention to build a temple in Ayodhya dedicated to Lord Ram, a Hindu deity upon whose fabled birthplace over which the mosque had been constructed. Much of the violence that preceded and followed the razing of the Babri Masjid took place in regions where the *yatras* passed. In urban centres, organised rioting sometimes went on for weeks after the mosque's demolition. Notorious examples of instigators include cadres of the militant Shiv Sena and underworld criminal gangs of Bombay. See Hanson, *The Saffron Wave*, p. 165. Also see "Bloody Aftermath," *India Today*, 31 December 1992, pp. 56-61 for a regional breakdown of casualties and the various instigators and bystanders that helped fuel the violence, including the complicity of police and paramilitary forces.

in 1998, reportedly perpetrated by members of the VHP and Bajrang Dal. Grasping the reins of power and professing a commitment to Indian secularism did not lead to any thorough inquiry or action to punish those responsible on behalf of the BJP, however, adding fuel to the suspicions that despite the imperatives of moderation, the BJP continues to be guided by those organisations within the Sangh Parivar that lack transparency and conduct their politics from behind the scenes and harbour dangerous authoritarian tendencies.[68]

The increase in communal violence illustrated by the effects of the rioting and destruction that followed the disaster at Ayodhya is regarded as a serious threat to the internal stability of the Indian Union. To be sure, the Hindu nationalist movement has not lived up to its own benchmarks of "success" (i.e., the creation of a "culturally nationalist" Hindu *rashtra*), and so there remains sufficient concern that the Sangh Parivar could seriously jeopardise the viability of India and its precocious democracy should it get its way. However, the political utility of communal issues as demonstrated during the 1991 elections when the BJP successfully capitalised on the centrality of the Ayodhya issue has declined significantly. Although Christianity does not have the same threat appeal as Islam, the condemnation of the latest round of anti-Christian violence by almost every major political party outside the Sangh Parivar might be indicative of a still decreasing value placed on communally inspired violence by Indian society.

Indeed, issues today are of a more daily, "secular" nature including the struggles surrounding economic liberalisation, the struggle against corruption, "national security" vis à vis Pakistan and, perhaps most salient today, governmental stability.[69] The fall of the BJP-led coalition in February 1999 was only the latest sign that India needs a government – coalition or otherwise – that can survive for its full term without regular recourse to mid-term polls. Besides, as

---

[68] Sukumar Muralidharan, "A bitter aftermath," *Frontline*, 26 February 1999, pp. 22-23.
[69] Radhika Desai, "The stability plank," *Frontline*, 4 June 1999, p. 41.

discussed earlier in the thesis, the BJP struggles with the dilemma of either sticking to its Sangh Parivar roots or moderating itself to become a more acceptable national that transcends communal and caste stratifications. Further, it stands to reason that Indian social groups – the increasingly influential and "modern" middle class included – are more interested in "bread and butter" issues than the questionable importance of constructing Hindu shrines or antagonising minorities. As such, the extent to which the Sangh Parivar can rely on whipping up communal frenzy for political benefit is somewhat circumscribed as the BJP's moderate wing attempts to steer a more benign course. The nation-wide reaction against anti-Christian violence in 1998, the continuing resilience of secular institutions and civil society and the Sangh Parivar's own internal divisions as it struggles to assert itself within the somewhat careening and unpredictable institutions of Indian government are formidable bulwarks to the outright communalisation of the Indian polity, and thus present obstacles to the development of communal violence akin to the bloodshed during Partition or even the civil unrest in the early 1990s.

III. SECESSIONIST CONFLICT: THE RESONANCE OF KASHMIR

Those secessionist conflicts in India of a religious dimension have taken on a special significance with the rise of Hindu nationalism. Separatist movements in Kashmir and Punjab in particular can be seen as an extension of communal violence at a narrower, regional level as integral territories of the Indian Union which have non-Hindu majorities attempt to secede from a state that is resented for either neglecting or repressing their aspirations. These communally charged conflicts have been of particular importance to the Sangh Parivar, which has exploited secessionist conflict, especially in Kashmir, for political purposes. However, the Sangh Parivar has not had a central role in affecting the climate of instability. Its ability to influence the discourse surrounding the conflict is primarily due to the Indian state's incapacity to insulate secessionist conflict from the

political reach of domestic opposition groups. More importantly however, the state has been unable to cope with the rising political mobilisation of various ethno-religious groups within the country. As a result of its growing frustration with the inadequacy of accepted methods of conflict resolution, the state has turned to engaging in ethnic politics on its own, resorting to coercion and subterfuge further still.

Under the Congress, traditional methods of dealing with internal threats to national security of a secessionist nature have been to batter insurgent groups with military force, bait them with promises of change and autonomy and then defeat those movements at the polls to ultimately banalise them.[70] This was a critical element of relational control as the state sought to maintain its own freedom of action in dealing with separatists. The testing ground for this strategy was in the north-east states of Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura, among others, where tribal autonomist or secessionist insurgencies were successfully tackled. The insurgents came to the table after being convinced by the state's use of force that concessions could only be won through negotiations. Congress or its political allies in the region were eventually able to take power in these regions after insurgent groups were co-opted into the electoral process and defeated at the polls after a sufficient amount of state coercion brought them to the negotiating table for a settlement.[71]

This strategy encounters limitations when faced with secessionist conflicts of an ethno-religious nature. According to Shekhar Gupta, four issues make the communally-inspired conflicts in Kashmir and Punjab distinct from the counter-insurgency testing grounds of the north-east. First, the religious motivations of the insurgents helps insulate them from pursuing an accommodative solution with the state. Second, both Kashmir and Punjab are closer to the Indian heartland geographically, politically and symbolically than the remote jungles of north-eastern India

---

[70] Shekhar Gupta, *India Redefines its Role*, Adelphi Paper 293, (New York: Oxford University Press/IISS, 1995), pp. 25.

and are more sensitive to domestic political forces and external intervention, which makes accommodation much more difficult. Third, the sense of injustice and outrage over these conflicts within India has been particularly intense surrounding the persecution of the local minority Hindu populations in each of these states. The attention to the deaths of Hindus in Kashmir and Punjab decrease the likelihood that the Indian state would be able to localise the insurrections and deal with them in a more narrow context as the conflict obtained the interest of the larger Hindu majority (and the Hindu nationalist movement) throughout the country. Finally, communications technology and the media have opened up heretofore closed parts of India, beaming news developments and reports of human rights abuses by all sides of the conflict around India and around the world.[72] Thus, the insurgencies in Kashmir and Punjab are extremely sensitive and difficult to insulate from the larger political spectrum and defy traditional methods of resolution. These conflicts have persistently demonstrated the limitations of the Indian state to manage them as it increasingly loses its "supranational" character, falling into the politics of ethnic revivalism to shore up its weaknesses in dealing with a more conscious and politically mobilised society.

Separatist militancy was eventually brought to heel in Punjab only recently after years of bloodshed and terror had increased the desperation for a political settlement, providing the momentum for the government of Narasimha Rao to co-opt the Sikh Akali Dal party into a power-sharing arrangement which has proven resilient barring isolated incidents of continued violence. Kashmir, on the other hand, has proved to be particularly intractable for the Indian state and no resolution is yet in sight. The protracted nature of this conflict and its communal overtones have attracted the attention of the Hindu nationalist movement. The Sangh Parivar has tried to extract a great deal of political gain from Kashmir, using it as a key piece in its programme of stigmatising

---

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

Muslims and manipulating the vulnerability of the Hindu majority. The Sangh Parivar's hard-line has also been aimed at those who are more likely to be moved by issues surrounding national security, namely the growing middle class from which the Hindu nationalist movement already draws a significant amount of support.

The conflict is so loaded with symbolic, political and communal significance that the resolution of the insurrection is a distant prospect. Kashmir has tremendous symbolic and strategic resonance for both Hindus and Muslims and for India and Pakistan. As India's only Muslim minority state, it is often cited as an example of the capacity of the Indian state to incorporate Muslims into the Union. At the same time, however, Kashmiri independence groups and Pakistan argue that Kashmir is evidence of the salience of ethnicity and religion in South Asia since India is an essentially Hindu country that cannot realistically defend the interests of Kashmiris. Pakistan goes even further to argue that the dispute over Kashmir is unfinished business from the rivals' Partition, and that it deserves to incorporate Kashmir into its own tenuous state.[73]

Defending India's "sacred geography" is the core of the Hindu nationalist movement's approach to the insurgency in Kashmir.[74] The communal divide in the Kashmir Valley, where Muslims form a majority and where insurgent activity is most intense, is an enormously salient, symbolic issue for Hindu nationalists. Constructing a Muslim threat is critical to the Hindu nationalist strategy on Kashmir to bring latent hostility across India against the militancy to a communal level. They consistently try to portray the crisis as a noble quest by Hindu India to

---

[73] Sumit Ganguly, "Kashmir: A Strategic Crisis or Ethnic Nationalism?" in Sudipta Kaviraj and R. Alison Lewis eds. *Subnational Movements in South Asia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p. 163.

[74] The Sangh Parivar's claims suffer from some inherent contradictions. The symbolic importance of Kashmir to India is founded in the development of a secular nation-state that tried to integrate Hindus and Muslims into a modern polity. Yet if India is a Hindu state, then why retain a state which has a Muslim majority? If a Hindu *rashtra* is evidence of the inherent "separateness" of Hindu and Muslim communal identities, then why continue the struggle for a province which is supposed to be a symbol of India's secular foundation and success? Such contradictions illustrate how Hindu nationalism has strayed from ideological and communal purity to issues of national resonance as it seeks a wider

arrest the menace of Islamic militancy and terrorism which seeks to violate the territorial integrity of the Indian motherland.[75] The increasingly diametrical relationship between Hindus and Muslims on their respective ethno-religious and nationalist identities is indicative of the success of such a campaign. Moreover, the Sangh Parivar has become directly involved in anti-insurgency politics in India, discovering that its hard-line has caught the attention of many Indians outside of its traditional support bracket.

It has sought to affect state policy on Kashmir by encouraging a crackdown against the militants and altering its communal demographics by calling for the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which entrenches Kashmir's special status within the Union and prevents non-Kashmiris from acquiring substantial property holdings in the territory.[76] Before the BJP formed a coalition government at the Centre in 1998, the Sangh Parivar had begun to commit populist mobilisation strategies based on the resonance of the Kashmir dispute across India and well entrenched fears for national security and territorial integrity. For instance, in 1991, after a relatively poor showing in national elections earlier in the year and in an attempt to take advantage of the Kashmir issue's national profile, the BJP launched its *Ekta yatra* (procession for unity) in early 1991 from the tip of southern India to the capital of Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, to demonstrate in a campaign of *satyagraha* (truth force) for the "liberation" of the state from the militants. The yatra, although generally meeting with a tepid response in non-BJP strongholds, eventually gained a following as hundreds of thousands flocked to its trail in north India. Approximately 100,000 BJP cadres marched with the yatra to the border of Jammu and Kashmir in

---

constituency. It continues to slant these issues in a communal fashion, but the issue is a potent vehicle of political mobilisation.

[75] In this light, the position of Hindu nationalist is similar to that of secular nationalists, for both hold India's unity and integrity as sacrosanct. See Ashutosh Varshney, "Contested Meanings: India's National Identity, Hindu Nationalism, and the Politics of Anxiety," *Daedalus*, 122 (3), Summer 1993: p. 230.

[76] Robert G. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and Its Resolution*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 164.

an atmosphere of militant hyper-nationalism. The demands for a crackdown in Kashmir and Punjab against insurgents characterised the growing bellicosity of the Hindu nationalist movement as it attempted to gain a nation-wide profile on internal security issues.[77]

With the BJP in power, however, not much has changed. Its term in office has moderated its threats to revoke Article 370 and crackdown against the insurgency. In the previous election campaign, senior BJP leader L.K. Advani and currently Home Minister, even raised the possibility that New Delhi would allow Indian security forces to engage in the "hot pursuit" of militants fleeing into the safety of Pakistani territory. Yet only months later, Advani has proven to be less hard-line than he had originally boasted[78] and the Vajpayee government has tackled the crisis from more or less the same angle than its predecessors. Even the BJP's position on Article 370 has not proved to be set in stone; although the more hard-line members of the party continue to insist that it remains a major plank of the BJP policy platform, Vajpayee has distanced the government from the issue in order to keep the BJP's alliances with other regional and secular parties together.

Meanwhile, the state continues to rely on coercion against the militants at this point, hoping to eventually force Kashmiri militants (today mainly composed of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and several Islamic groups all of whom are thought by the Indian government to receive moral and material support from Pakistan and elsewhere) to some kind of accommodation.[79] Further, it has continued to nurture a relationship with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah and maintains some degree of contact with the non-militant Kashmiri opposition which has distanced itself from Pakistan. Indeed, Pakistan's role in fomenting the insurrection is a critical element to the conflict, utilised by the Hindu nationalists use to portray

---

[77] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave*, pp. 168-169.
[78] Harinder Baweja, "Striking Posture," *India Today*, 1 June 1998 and Sumit Mitra and Ramesh Vinayak, "Whatever Happened to Mr. Tough?" *India Today*, 17 August 1998.

the conflict as a communal war with both internal and external dimensions. Pakistan's intervention in the conflict serves Islamabad's own ends, for it is hoping to incorporate the region into its own state, and thus uses limited military engagement with India and a complex support regime for insurgents to keep up the pressure. This has been a not insignificant reason for the recent intensification of the insurgency in the wake of the Kargil conflict. The redeployment of Indian troops to the Himalayan frontier of the Line of Control (LoC) to counter the infiltration of insurgents and Pakistani troops as well as meeting the long-term challenges of patrolling the unforgiving terrain throughout the year has had an adverse effect on counter-insurgency operations in the Valley and elsewhere. The government is moving more troops, mostly drawn from the ranks of paramilitary units such as the Rashtriya Rifles (RR) and the Border Security Force (BSF) to the region, but the insurgency continues to boil.

Given the secondary role the Hindu nationalist movement has played in the politics surrounding the conflict in Kashmir, explanations for the rise of insurgency in Kashmir are linked to the process of both state crisis and political awakening. Interestingly, this process has spawned both Hindu nationalism and ethnic separatism in Kashmir as ethno-religious groups become increasingly disassociated from the state's nation-building activities. The loss of relational control, which accelerated under the governments of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, continues. The state has been ethnically compromised, for its has either directly pandered to ethno-religious sentiment or tried to repress it ruthlessly when it feels threatened by growing support for regional autonomy.[80] In both cases, it has been more difficult to control than expected, and the resulting resistance from ethnic groups that are increasingly politically conscious is frustrating attempts by

---

[79] Getting tough on the militants has necessitated a repressive regime which has come under harsh criticism for widespread human rights abuses. Indian and international human rights groups have condemned both the Indian government's and the militant's violations of civil, political and human rights.
[80] Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, p. 144.

the state to reassert its hegemony. This frustration is manifest in its primarily coercive responses to conflicts in which it has little manoeuvring room. The use of indiscriminate force by the state, often in favour of one community or the other, results in a growing resort to militancy and anti-national violence, eventually exploding into insurgency in the Kashmiri case.

According to Ganguly, "Kashmir represents both the mobilizational success and, simultaneously, the institutional failure of Indian democracy."[81] India's nation-building programme has led to the stabilisation of India's democratic political culture as more people become politically conscious and mobilise along new articulations of interest. At the same time, the state's institutions are in the midst of a structural crisis manifest by the decay of traditional state secularism marked by the state's engagement in ethno-religious and caste politics, the pressure to centralise power in response to the surge in regional political parties and rampant corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency. The combination of these two processes in Kashmir has culminated in a protracted insurgency and the inability of the state to localise the conflict as other elements, such as the Hindu nationalist movement and external actors, become involved in the crisis.

On the one hand, the political mobilisation of the Kashmiris took place in response to the populist strategies of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Tying his party to the nation-building programme of the Congress, Abdullah mounted a campaign of populist mobilisation in the state which focused on civil and political rights and improving the socio-economic conditions of the Kashmiri populace. The main thrust of the programme was to enhance education and literacy, in both a formal sense as well as through Islamic *madrassa* religious education, tackle economic inequality and underdevelopment and challenge the system of property rights to redistribute land among the middle and lower classes.[82]

---

[81] Ganguly, p. 20.
[82] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

The latest insurgency was sparked in 1989 following a series of rigged elections, violent demonstrations and attacks against Indian rule in Kashmir. Improving political rights and socio-economic conditions meant a more sophisticated, better educated and politically aware population in Kashmir that more fully understood their role and rights.[83] Although the policies of Sheikh Abdullah did contribute to the awakening of the *Kashmiriat* (Kashmiri nationalism) and made him an extremely popular figure, his regime was marked by corruption and repression that went unheeded by New Delhi so long as Abdullah did nothing to jeopardise Kashmir's status within the Indian Union.[84] The institutional crisis of the Indian state and its federalist enterprise has meshed with the process of political and socio-economic change to produce conditions which are ripe for insurgency.

India's political failure in the region, manifested by New Delhi's increasing reliance on coercion and subterfuge in dealing with the growing resistance of the Kashmiri population, including its role in overthrowing the Kashmiri government of Farooq Abdullah, led almost directly to the insurrection. The failure of secular politics to allow Kashmiris to express their discontent and work for redress has pushed a great many Kashmiris into the separatist camp, where the rallying cries of Kashmiri self-determination or Islamic solidarity have been particularly effective in furthering ethno-religious mobilisation.[85] In this regard, the rise of Hindu nationalism and its role in helping to polarise Kashmiris on religious lines is of note, for a rise in the ethno-religious fervour of one side is usually mirrored in the other. Corruption, coercion and subterfuge marked the Indian state's response to the political problems of Kashmir, resulting in a protracted insurgency with far-

---

[83] Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute*, p. 116.
[84] Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir*, p. 29.
[85] Certainly, Kashmiri opposition is not unified. The role of Islamic opposition groups is particularly controversial since they have demonstrated their own ruthlessness towards Kashmiri civilians, Muslim or Hindu. This is a source of much of New Delhi's leverage against the insurgency, for it can exploit divisions within the separatist camp to frustrate their efforts. But the Indian government cannot use this leverage to restore order because of the groundswell of generally anti-Indian sentiment and the role external actors play in fomenting violence.

reaching local, national and regional effects. In Kashmir, the use of force against the insurgents is rife with problems because it only further alienates the population. It is increasingly difficult to restore control through accommodation as coercion becomes the only acceptable way to strike back against emboldened militants. There is no military solution in Kashmir though owing to the wider effects of the conflict. It is integrated into a broader external relationship, which greatly complicates Indian counter-insurgency and political resolution efforts. The outbreak of the insurgency has been combined with the growing tensions with Pakistan along the LoC as India accuses both Islamabad and militants of foreign nationality (most notably from Afghanistan) of providing material support to the insurgents. This external dimension only enhances the obstacles of finding a solution to the conflict as domestic political groups, most notably the Sangh Parivar, press for a less restrained response to the role external actors play in the conflict.

Thus, while Hindu nationalists might be a factor that informs the governments preferences and interests on the matter, the responsibility for the rise of insurgency and the sources of instability lie within the state and its difficult relations with India's nations. From the active sidelines of state decision-making, Hindu nationalists are involved in helping define governmental priorities, which have been focused on the first phase of its traditional counter-insurgency policy: the use of force to wear down separatist groups. In this regard, they have had a communal impact on the issue because of the way they have attempted to re-order the conflict as one arising from discontent with the way Kashmiris have been treated in a supposedly secular state to a communal reinterpretation of identity and conflict. At a state level, however, the BJP's response to the insurgency has been typical of its predecessors, indicating continuity in the Indian political system and culture in terms of national security issues. The high degree of Kashmiri discontent about the way they have been traditionally treated, the erosion of accommodative institutions within the

Indian state and the paucity of new ideas for conflict resolution considering New Delhi's hard-line means that there is little room to manoeuvre.

Conclusion

It may be too early to condemn India to an ugly fate of ethno-religious anarchism. The state and its founding institutions and principles – however weakened – are still resilient and the crisis in governance and relational control is not necessarily a permanent conundrum. Nevertheless, communal violence involves protracted instability and undermines the secular basis of the Indian state which has been a bulwark against centrifugal forces. Moreover, while Hindu nationalism is a factor in the intensification of communal violence, the explanation for increasing ethno-religious conflict cannot be ascribed to it alone. Rather, it should be remembered that the movement exists within the context of a nation state that is struggling to maintain its central position as an impartial arbiter of its own centralising tendencies and the growing ethnonationalist demands upon its capabilities and resources.

In terms of secessionist conflict, the Indian nation-building programme has clearly been successful in raising the levels of political literacy and improving the socio-economic situation of many. However, the struggle of the Indian nation-state to cope with the institutional crisis it faces has limited its capacity to sufficiently address the expectations and discontent of a growing number of ethnic political movements. Hindu nationalism might actually flow from this tension and prove to exacerbate it , but it is part and parcel of a larger problem in Indian state-society relations.

CHAPTER 3
HINDU NATIONALISM AND INDIAN FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY: CULTURAL CONTINUITY AT WORK

This chapter's goal is to demonstrate that substantive continuity in Indian foreign policy overrides those few differences between the positions of "secular" governments (particularly the Congress) and those of the BJP. First, it explains the basic determinants of Indian foreign and security policy which are forged in the predominant culture of foreign and security policy. This culture is based on deeply held elite beliefs about India's role in the region and in the world. Second, it provides a discussion of the Sangh Parivar's worldview and the impact it has on its own interpretation of Indian foreign policy. The "civilisational" thrust of the Sangh Parivar sees India as an inherently Hindu state, and thus prescribes a foreign policy that confronts those external and internal civilisational threats to its security. Third, it analyses the track record of the BJP's foreign policy, illustrating the effects of a common cultural approach to foreign and security policy decision making. Finally, two case studies – Indian nuclear policy and Indo-Pakistani relations – are utilised to provide some evidence about the relative continuity and stability of Indian foreign policy decision-making. It will become evident that the key developments in these dimensions are suggestive of some deep contradictions between the supposedly "Hindu" foreign policy it seeks to promote and the powerful factors that meld its own policy prescriptions with long-running policy undercurrents.

The sections of this chapter deal with the following issues. First, being a regional power, India's foreign policy is of interest when analysing the dynamic relationship between domestic and external factors and their effects on the broader regional and international communities. Foreign policy is more than simple geopolitics of course: it is the configuration of worldviews and

perceptions that influence "rational thinking." Indian foreign policy is no different, for it draws its underpinning conceptual and imaginative roots from India's historical experiences and indigenous worldviews about social and international relations.

Second, the rise of the BJP into a serious contender for government means that it now has the opportunity to drive Indian foreign and security policy. Its Hindu nationalist credentials have marked it as a harbinger of a posture reflective of Hindutva and thus a destabilising factor for India's relationships with regional neighbours, extra-regional partners and the great powers which have heretofore been based on secular interpretations of geopolitics and security dynamics. The Sangh Parivar's worldview of international relations as a dangerous game in which civilisations must defend themselves from the depredations of external cultural menaces survive points to a confrontationalist posture that would almost certainly manifest itself should Hindu nationalists get their way.

However, Hindu nationalists are not in full control. Thus, thirdly, the performance of the BJP suggests that it does not harbour plans for a dramatic change in Indian foreign, and in particular, its security policy. Even the nuclear tests that received a startling reaction outside of India need to be seen in the long-term context of Indian nuclear policy. There seem to be several factors that link Indian foreign policy through its successive governments, no matter what their party affiliation. The "security" culture of the Indian policy establishment (composed of bureaucrats, military officers and an influential group of academics) and composed of certain indigenous perceptions of the realities of domestic, regional and international politics have all contributed to a high degree of continuity in Indian foreign policy under the BJP. When assessing the threat potential of Hindu nationalism from this perspective, and using two case studies to introduce evidence to that effect, it becomes clearer that lingering insecurity and instability in the

region is due to the overall thrust of Indian foreign policy more than the effects of pro-Hindu ethno-religious influence in the policy machinery of the Indian state.

I. Understanding Indian Foreign and Security Policy: Culture and Continuity

From a simplistic, realist perspective, New Delhi's foreign and security policies are based on its imperative of insulating itself and its neighbourhood from extra-regional intrusion and interference.[86] New Delhi has sought to strike an independent foreign policy similar to its nation-building strategy as it utilises both its technocratic and capable diplomatic service and its powerful military capability to pursue its interests and deter the revisionist designs of others through a combination of diplomatic and coercive means. Although the region is also characterised by a single major rivalry – between India and Pakistan – the centrality of India in the regional security complex is firmly entrenched. India's geographical, political, economic and strategic depth and preponderance over the region suit it to pursuing an autonomous foreign and security policy that promotes its own hegemony within a stable regional order. Despite the weakening of its link with the former Soviet Union and the emergence of new threats to national and regional security, India has, arguably, emerged from the era of superpower rivalry in better shape than its regional rival and poised to markedly improve its relationship with its bigger neighbour, China.[87]

As established in the previous chapter, the state seeks to maintain a balance internally between its centralising agenda and those forces of greater autonomy or dissenting identity. Externally, Indian foreign policy seeks a degree of relational control over other states in the region to maximise its own centrality and room to manoeuvre in order to insulate itself from its neighbours' internal difficulties and interdict the opportunities for extra-regional intervention

---

[86] Devin Hagerty, "India's Regional Security Doctrine," *Asian Survey*, 31 (4), 1991, p. 362.
[87] Sandy Gordon, "South Asia After the Cold War," *Asian Survey*, 35 (10), 1995, p. 879.

inimical to Indian interests.[88] Further, as Mohammed Ayoob has commented, foreign policy consensus in India has also revolved around the centrality of the democratic, secular nationalist project.[89] Indian secularism has been a centralising and stabilising political factor which positively affects the conduct of Indian diplomacy and statecraft with its neighbours in a troubled region. This has become ever more important as the interrelationship between internal and external security becomes evident in South Asia. Although it is evident that the secular state has been just as willing to use force to realise its ends, there is a distinction between a state that makes policy on the basis of accurate knowledge of its own pluralist nature than that which disregards sectarian divisions and attempts to conduct itself on the basis of that misconception. A secular and democratic domestic polity can thus have a stabilising effect on the foreign policy of a post-colonial society.

However, concentrating exclusively upon the geopolitical and strategic interests and goals of Indian foreign and security policy tends to overestimate the capacity of political elites in India's policy establishment to objectively assess, identify and pursue India's interests. It conceals the more complex array of historical, social and cultural factors that are at work behind the conception and articulation of India's foreign and security policy. Understanding these imperatives is critical to gaining a more complementary view of the continuity inherent in the Indian policy mindset. To be sure, cultural factors do not work to nullify any change and dynamism in policy nor are interest calculations irrelevant to the analysis. Rather, as Andrew Latham persuasively argues, an emphasis on culture allows analysts to examine how culture shapes and even changes contexts, options and interests which have an indelible impact on the eventual policy configurations.[90]

---

[88] Maya Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 13.
[89] Mohammed Ayoob, "India as regional hegemon: external opportunities and internal constraints," *International Journal*, 66, Summer 1991, p. 421.
[90] Andrew Latham, "The Role of Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Policy: A Preliminary Investigation," in Andrew Latham, ed., *Non-Proliferation Agreements, Arrangements and Responses: Proceedings of*

A wide range of commonly held beliefs, myths, symbols and perceptions coalesce around several historical, social and political factors to form a distinct security (or perhaps *insecurity*) culture in India that is pervasive in foreign and security policy decision-making. The collective myths of the Hindu "golden age" and Indian civilisation shape Indian perceptions about the world and India's place within it and contribute to the conduct of Indian diplomatic and strategic behaviour. The pure religious struggles and lessons of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are combined with the Kautilyan ethos embodied within the *Arthashastra*, whose teachings present the external realm as a violent, competitive and anarchic place where the strongest rulers survive.[91] At the same time, Gandhian notions of mass mobilisation and people power directed against injustice and oppression are injected into the mix. India's transition from Nehruvian morality, internationalism and non-alignment reflective of Gandhian ideals to a policy of regional assertiveness of Kautilyan dimensions during the tenure of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi is reflective of the functional importance and dynamic interdependence of culture on Indian external behaviour.[92]

The Kautilyan worldview is deeply intertwined with the historical legacy of several mass invasions and incursions from ancient to modern times. India's contact and conflict with other civilisations – most notably the Aryans, Mughals and British colonialists – contributes in no uncertain way to the lingering feeling of vulnerability. According to elite's perceptions, India's inherently peaceful, stable and glorious society was brutally subjugated by external powers throughout history. Suspicions about regional rivals and great power ambitions are intimately tied up with this notion of vulnerability, and are intensified as threat perceptions increasingly see India's adversaries as directly supporting or fomenting communal or secessionist conflict within its

---

the 1996 Canadian Non-Proliferation Workshop, (Toronto: Centre for International and Security Studies, York University, 1997), p. 208.

[91] The Kautilyan paradigm is India's own indigenously developed theory of inter-state conflict, which closely resembles that of Western realist thinking and focuses on the importance of power in anarchic international relations. See S. Mahmud Ali, *The Fearful State: Power, People and Internal War in South Asia*, (London: Zed Books, 1993), pp. 13-15.

borders.[93] Paradoxically, Gandhian ideals have also been a hallmark of India's foreign policy. The "truth-force" of *satyagraha* which was of such utility during the independence struggle is distinct from Kautilyan *realpolitik*. Such ideals are reflective of Indian myths and histories about the capacity of its people to use persuasive non-violent techniques to mobilise mass support from a superior bargaining position. Yet the "power" evoked by Gandhian moralism "...can be said to reinforce rather than contradict the Kautilyan paradigm; for in traditions, the successful pursuit of one's interests is seen not as a function of compromise and concession but of *preponderant* power."[94] Even the Gandhian ideal of moral force is consistent with the unflinching pursuit of one's objectives.

In addition to a sense of vulnerability, however, Indian cultural perceptions also hold the view that India's broader regional neighbourhood is its own backyard. In addition to Kautilyan teachings which stress the importance of dominating the weak and surrounding oneself with small, quiescent states, this Indian "Monroe Doctrine" is firmly rooted in the fear that the incongruousness between nation and state in other South Asian states could inflame those within India itself. As such, India's regional security doctrine of maintaining its dominance over South Asia to prevent foreign infiltration into the region and to insulate itself from the external dangers or internal fissiparous tendencies from its neighbours springs from this perception and worldview.[95]

So far reaching is the culture of security, with its rationale for building a regional hegemonic order which is conducive to the pursuit of the interests of the Indian state and its policy elite, that it has commandeered the dynamics of civil society as well. Hindu nationalism can be easily manoeuvred into the broad analytical panorama of civil society as a "social movement."

---

[92] Achin Vanaik, "Communalism and our foreign policy," *Seminar*, 374, October 1990, p. 18.
[93] Latham, "Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Policy," pp. 215-217.
[94] Ibid., p. 215. India's pioneering role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an example of the weight New Delhi placed on mass movement politics, even in international politics.
[95] Ibid., p. 217.

Although it represents much more – for its simultaneously exists at an imaginative, social, cultural, political and international level and wields great influence at the state level – Hindu nationalism has embraced "realist" thinking based on the perceived vulnerability of Hindus in a world marked by civilisational struggle, and the home-grown "realism" of Kautilyan geopolitics.

II. The Saffron Alternative: Civilisational Responses to External Threats

The Hindu nationalist project has a significant external dimension founded in the RSS' civilisational view on human organisation, but also on a sense of lingering insecurity and vulnerability which it shares with India's secular nationalism. From both its authoritarian core and its liberal democratic façade, the Sangh Parivar attempts to assert itself as a movement which represents the greatness of Hindu civilisation and which sees India as a major player in the struggle against the depredations of Islamic fundamentalism. Its worldview does have distinct parallels with the overall thrust of Indian foreign and security policy based on exercising regional hegemony, but in its own vision of a Hindu *rashtra* that dominates the length and breadth of the region. The anti-secular emphasis of the Sangh Parivar's vision of India as an international actor is one that evokes the most concern.

The spread and consolidation of Hindu nationalism is seen as necessary for the creation of a genuine Hindu cultural and political entity capable of exercising its autonomy and power on a global stage, free of the threat of minorities thought to be allied with pernicious foreign influences. According to the RSS, "spiritual" and "tolerant" Hindus must not hesitate to unite in the defence of their Hindu homeland to fend off challenges from external forces.[96] To this end, the defence of India's territorial integrity is of utmost importance. India's sacred geography is the home of Hindu civilisation, and its defence is considered essential. Islamic aggression and American hegemony

are consistently exploited in populist campaigns that portray them as threats to the integrity and security of the Hindu *rashtra*.

The goal of a Hindu India is to dominate the region in order to protect India from the spectre of civilisational vulnerability. In this arrangement "...balances are not required in the 'Hinduized' India because it is defined as a homogenous nation that will reclaim what the Hindu nationalists believe is the cultural scope of Hindu civilisation."[97] As such, Hindu nationalists wish to be taken seriously as a great nation and as an emerging great power in Asia. The Sangh Parivar sees India as the rightful hegemon in South Asia and an ascendant great power, and thus deserving of the spoils of international relations rather than being treated like an unimportant, third-rate developing country. Thomas Blom Hansen eloquently sums up the imperative of external recognition inherent in ethno-religious movements:

> "...these movements are driven by a desire to abandon the location assigned to them as exotic or irrational peripheries on the lower steps of the global evolutionary ladder. Through internal cultural purification and moral discipline and awakening, they want to arrive as national, sovereign modernities – as 'lights onto themselves' – and thus be recognized as respected members of that elusive 'comity of nations' that remains the most sublime object of desire among even the most parochial nationalists anywhere."[98]

While it attempts to emulate the organisational characteristics of the religions it holds in contempt, the Sangh Parivar has always played on the romantic ideal of "spiritual" and virtuous Hindu civilisation as opposed to the hedonistic and materialistic culture of the West or aggrandising and expansionary Islam. Although the West, embodied by the United States, is vilified as the harbinger of Indian economic slavery, it is the latter which is especially portrayed as the greater civilisational threat to Hindu India. The Sangh Parivar sees international relations as

---

[96] "Widening Horizons – Sangh's March," RSS web site: www.rss.org/ library/books/WideningHorizons/ ch10.html.
[97] Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, p. 216.
[98] Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 234.

the struggle of different state-civilisations for survival and dominance.[99] The emergence of a transnational Islamic fundamentalist arc (extending from the Middle East through Afghanistan, Pakistan and, ultimately, to Kashmir) and the perception that it inevitably saturate India itself extremist, "pampered" and "rich" Indian Muslims intensifies the worldview that Islam represents a multi-pronged threat to the security and integrity of Hindu India.[100] Moreover, the "...idea of national security, often employed to evoke deep feelings of hostility towards an imagined Other, is also used to create hegemony or 'a succession of interlocking and ideological practices which make and remake social integration.'"[101] The sense of vulnerability engendered by the successful dispersion of anti-Islamic versions of reality is a useful strategy for the Sangh Parivar. It has demonstrated its capacity to successfully manipulate the cultural insecurity rife in Indian thinking about international and regional politics, usually to further its own grand project at rendering malleable an astonishingly resilient Indian social and cultural milieu to communal reinterpretation.

III. Dynamic Continuity: Explaining Recent Events in Indian Foreign and Security Policy

In a strict sense, the fears surrounding the greater resonance of Hindu nationalism in foreign policy may not be exaggerated. Hindu nationalism is a competing vision of nation-hood, and since its worldview determines its policy prescriptions, a Hindu *rashtra* as envisioned by the Sangh Parivar would have far reaching implications. A foreign policy based on the assertion of Hindu values throughout the subcontinent, a hardening stance against Pakistan and any other country in the region that challenged the dominance of regional Hindutva and an increasingly hostile relationship with extra-regional partners and adversaries alike would go far in destabilising, at the very least,

---

[99] Subramaniam Swamy, "Vajpayee's China Fiasco," *Frontline*, 6 November 1998, p. 43.
[100] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 339.
[101] Mustapha Kamal Pasha, "Security as Hegemony," *Alternatives*, 21, 1996, p. 289. Pasha quotes from Bradley S. Klein, *Strategic Studies and World Order: The Global Politics of Deterrence*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

the South Asian regional complex. If an end to secularism domestically could lead to growing internal instability, it stands to reason that the decline of a foreign policy based on "secular" norms and practices could lead to regional and perhaps even international conflict on a larger scale.

However, a nearly paranoid attention to "national security" and "territorial integrity" – borne of a sense of pragmatic insecurity embedded within cultural beliefs and practices – was been central to India's foreign and security policies, regardless of party affiliations. Certainly, political parties do demonstrate some divergence in terms of individual policy considerations. However, the continued resilience of secularism in Indian politics, the low salience of foreign policy issues in Indian elections[102] and the hegemony of the national security ideology – and, increasingly, of economic liberalisation – tends to promote a remarkable continuity in the way Indian governments conduct foreign policy.

Their differences notwithstanding, there are important parallels between the Sangh Parivar's foreign policy thinking and that of previous Indian governments that suggest that BJP governments – so long as they are subjected to the same cultural and political hurdles – will continue to colour inside the lines of Indian foreign and security policy parameters. The resonance of Hindu philosophy and values in even secular interpretations of Indian nationalism, the importance of deep cultural undercurrents based on historical experience and the realities of the regional and international political environments tend to render foreign policy amenable to a certain "consensual and non-partisan framework" whereby everyone agrees to certain threat perceptions within the confines of stable beliefs and norms of foreign policy behaviour.[103]

The attention to national security is based on perceptions of simultaneous regional preponderance and vulnerability from pernicious foreign influences. Protecting India's sacred

---

[102] Partha S. Ghosh, "Foreign Policy and Electoral Politics in India," *Asian Survey*, 34 (9), September 1994, p. 816.
[103] Vanaik, "Communalism and our foreign policy," p. 18.

boundaries, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, is a fundamental tenet of both secular and Hindu nationalist ideology. Furthermore, both "secular" and "communal" approaches to foreign policy see a greater place for India in the community of nations. The desire to be taken seriously by the great powers in particular has always been a fundamental undercurrent in Indian thinking about the world. Certainly, the BJP is a party whose foreign policy is founded on a particular civilisational and political interpretation of India and its role in the world, but it is not appreciably different from Nehru's attempt to carve out for India an important role globally or the regional *realpolitik* and communal leanings of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi in the late 1970s and 1980s. This also goes hand in hand with New Delhi's consistent stand on "discriminatory" practices and injustices in world politics, such as the nature of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the composition of the United Nations Security Council and economic inequality and dependence by the developing world on the industrialised nations. Paradoxically, however, it is also illustrated by India's desire to possess the very weapons it decries in the name of reaching great power status.[104]

The BJP manifests only subtle differences with its predecessors in the form rather than the substance of Indian foreign policy. The need to improve its "communal," "fascist" or "fundamentalist" image to garner greater electoral support brings a more moderate, populist appeal to its policy agenda. Its election manifestos and public pronouncements on foreign and defence policy consistently refer to its attention to the "national interest," which appeals to the middle class and the foreign policy establishment in New Delhi. Although middle class support is nothing new to the BJP, the growing list of prominent bureaucrats, retired military officers and non-

[104] Latham, "Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Policy," p. 227.

governmental policy analysts that have joined its ranks is indicative of such a trend.[105] It is also suggestive of the importance of bureaucratic politics in contributing to policy continuity.

Its track record in office aside, the inner circle of the BJP government has proved to be a major stabilising force for Indian foreign policy, an especially difficult task while attempting to weld together a shaky coalition of regional, ethnic, caste and class political parties. At the centre is Vajpayee – a moderate who tries to distance his government's policies from the Sangh Parivar, mostly because he has to worry about stringing together a coalition but also because he epitomises the "softer" side of the Sangh Parivar that is willing to relent on ideology in the pursuit of widespread electoral support. It is also based on foreign policy calculations: Vajpayee is aware that for India to avoid a long sentence of international opprobrium and suspicion it must continue on the liberalisation track and assuage fears of Hindu regional hegemony. Thus, the "new" BJP must steer Indian foreign policy in a less radical direction that appropriately assesses regional and global realities and India's capabilities in interacting with them.

Key Vajpayee aides and Cabinet Ministers also contribute to the BJP's "national interest" first foreign policy and are indicative of the professional, non-Hindutva leanings of the Vajpayee government's foreign policy agenda. External Affairs Minister and PMO stalwart Jaswant Singh, a former military officer and no favourite of the RSS, is well versed in the rigours of a variety of tasks and issues including foreign and economic policy and has proved to be a vital asset for Vajpayee's leadership. From the MEA, Singh took a leading role in India's post-test diplomacy and damage control, and is spearheading the Indian government's negotiations with Washington to sort out their post-test relationship, which includes India's acceptance of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in exchange for relaxed American sanctions on foreign investment and defence co-

---

[105] Yogendra K. Malik and V.B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p. 119.

operation.[106] Another example is George Fernandes, a Samata party veteran, ex-union boss and a non-Hindu trusted with the Defence portfolio. His ministerial performance has – with varying degrees of success – been pro-active in trying to sort out the bureaucratic lag in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and asking tough questions about the military's stalled modernisation programme, command structure and compensation packages.[107]

To be sure, the presence of a Sangh Parivar organisation in the seat of government in India opens up a fair degree of room for Hindu nationalist ideology to be instilled at the level of the foreign policy establishment.[108] Also, it should be noted that the BJP's foreign and security policies have not met with general acquiescence among the Sangh Parivar and the broader Indian political arena. But this misses the point about the continuity of state policy origins and, thus, state policy behaviour. As long as the BJP has to undergo the trials and tribulations of electoral politics, manage coalition governments and navigate the treacherous waters of South Asian regional politics, the ability of the Sangh Parivar to sufficiently restrain the bureaucracy and promote Hindutva in Indian foreign policy will be circumscribed. Two case studies illustrate the continuity of Indian foreign and security policy and the role the BJP plays in reaffirming the importance of such stability.

IV. Case Studies

Through its determination to abandon the long-cherished "nuclear option" and forge a weaponised nuclear deterrent capability, its simultaneous overtures to Islamabad to improve Indo-Pakistani

---

[106] Saba Naqvi Bhaumik, "In the Court of Atal Behari Vajpayee," *India Today*, 15 June 1998, p. 23.
[107] Manoj Joshi, "Gung-ho George," *India Today*, 5 October 1998, pp. 45-46. Fernandes has also courted controversy in the public and discipline from Vajpayee over his failure to make any headway in solving problems in the MoD, his involvement in the scandal over the dismissal of Indian Naval Chief Adm. Vishnu Bhagwat and his statements just prior to the Pokhran II blasts that China was "potential threat No. 1" to India. (Manoj Joshi, "George in the China Shop," *India Today*, 18 May 1999, p. 20).
[108] Jonathan Karp, "Amid Arms Race, Who Calls the Shots in India?" *Wall Street Journal*, 1 June 1998, p. A12.

relations and its restraint during the recent conflict over the mountainous territory along the Line of Control (LoC), the BJP has attempted to portray the Hindu right as a responsible regional power. It continues to argue – even at time of writing during a typically fierce election campaign – that it seeks to protect India's own interests while, at the same time, successfully engaging neighbours, partners and adversaries on a wide range of issues of mutual interest. These case studies demonstrate that the BJP's own policy agendas are not substantively different from its predecessors, which suggests that the ideology of Hindu nationalism has not yet had much success in penetrating the foreign policy establishment of the Indian state.

A. *Nuclear Proliferation: Sorting out Pokhran II*

India's traditional policy of retaining the "nuclear option", part and parcel of an independent. careful posture in Indian foreign policy, was symbolically abandoned in May 1998 with five nuclear tests in the desert state of Rajasthan. With the declaration of nuclear capability, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, heading up a fragile BJP coalition government, proclaimed that the tests had demonstrated India's willingness to safeguard her security vis à vis threatening neighbours, proved the extent of India's technological sophistication and united the nation behind the ethos of self-reliance and nuclear-power prestige.

Hindutva was not a deciding factor in the Vajpayee's government decision to test. Speculation that Pokhran II (as the tests are sometimes called) signalled the advent of the "Hindu bomb" is inaccurate for a number of reasons and tend to gloss over the complex historical, cultural and bureaucratic factors that went into the decision to "go nuclear." Although Hindu nationalists have always shared an overarching sense of insecurity in a troubled region and strongly supported the development of a nuclear arsenal, it should be remembered that Nehru himself gave the go

ahead for the nuclear programme's creation.[109] Moreover, India's first test was under Indira Gandhi in 1974 and successive Congress governments consistently developed the infrastructure and expertise to weaponise India's previously unspoken deterrent capability while publicly claiming the moral high ground of pursuing the "peaceful" uses of nuclear technology and global disarmament. There were also a number of signs that testing by the BJP's immediate predecessors was imminent. In 1995 the United States' had detected preparations for a test by the Congress government of Narasimha Rao, and successfully exerted pressure on New Delhi to cancel the planned explosions. According to American intelligence reports prior to Pokhran II "...preparations for the tests were taking place long before the victory of the...BJP or the testing of the Pakistani Ghauri missile [shortly before Pokhran II], which means that neither of these events triggered the tests as some reports have declared."[110]

The wisdom of the tests notwithstanding, their rationale is embedded in genuine Indian security concerns for strategic developments in the region and beyond and a culturally derived sense of insecurity in foreign and security policy behaviour. Analysts have argued that the outpouring of condemnation and the immediate application of sanctions that greeted the tests in both India and Pakistan does not do justice to India's own set of important political and security concerns.[111] The humiliation of defeat at Chinese hands in 1962, the first Chinese test in 1969, fears of great power intervention in South Asia and, more recently, the growing nexus of nuclear co-operation between Beijing and Islamabad which had significantly enhanced Islamabad's own undeclared nuclear capability had provided the strategic and political rationale for developing a full

---

[109] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," p. 151.
[110] Harold Hough, "Ground Zero: In the Rajasthan Desert," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1998, p. 21.
[111] See Marshall Bouton, "Heed South Asia's Concerns," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 June 1998, p. 34 and Tariq Rauf, "Accommodation not Confrontation," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 55 (1) January/February 1999, p. 15.

fledged nuclear weapons programme.[112] At a deeper historical level, the BJP and its compatriots in the Sangh Parivar have always been candid on their views concerning Indian nuclear policy. India must possess nuclear arms because, historically, a weak India has been a magnet for invaders. To be a strong, unified Hindu state and fend off lurking predators, India requires nuclear arms to defend itself.[113]

The exponents of such a view underestimate the role of India's nuclear policy elite – especially the scientific community, the military and strategic analysts – as a powerful force for continuity in Indian nuclear security policy. The nuclear elite have advocated an overt Indian nuclear posture for some time. In order to test, the BJP had to rely on the scientific-military infrastructure and expertise developed and nurtured by previous governments who also shared concerns about India's national security and its role in global disarmament. The Indian scientific establishment has been particularly vociferous in the pursuit of nuclear weapons, having served as Nehru's advisors for India's upstart nuclear programme during his tenure as Prime Minister.[114] Officials in the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), chief among them Dr. Abdul Kalam, have consistently promoted the declaration of Indian nuclear capability.[115] Both organisations have been hard at work advancing Indian research and development into nuclear energy and weapons, resulting in numerous spin-off programmes such as the Indigenous Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) which is attempting to deliver a fleet of ballistic missiles for nuclear warhead deployment and Indian space

---

[112] Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," *International Security*, 23 (4), Spring 1999. See also Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, *Enhancing Indo-US Strategic Cooperation*, Adelphi Paper 313 (New York: Oxford University Press/IISS, September 1997), pp. 15-20.

[113] Frank Wisner, "South Asia's Cold Dawn: United States' Policy Toward India and Pakistan," Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service web site: www.georgetown.edu/sfs/programs/isd/wisner.htm. April 28, 1999.

[114] Itty Abraham, "Science and Power in the Post-Colonial State," *Alternatives* 21, 1996, p. 330.

[115] T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj, "India's bomb-test scientists prevail," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 11 (2), February 1999.

exploration and development research.[116] The military and strategic analysts have also thrown their lot into the Indian nuclear programme, referring back to the growing dangers of Asia's nuclear neighbourhood and expounding on the values of a deterrent capability against a Sino-Pakistani axis. Both communities have also contributed to the dispersion of the idea that nuclear weapons protect national security to an almost hegemonic level.[117]

India's nuclear policy was also embedded in the seemingly contradictory imperatives of possessing great power ambitions and attempting to represent the interests of the downtrodden nations of the world. India has always been eager to take up the reins of great power status and therefore gain from foreign powers a respect for its prestige and stature as a grand civilisation and a responsible member of the international community.[118] At the same time, it has also demanded that the established nuclear powers – the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France – stop practising "nuclear apartheid" and end the discriminatory non-proliferation regime embodied by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and, more recently, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).[119] Indian disarmament policy was founded on this principle for many years, calling for total global disarmament rather than the consolidation of nuclear arsenals among a select club of great military powers.[120] As it turned out however, much of India's moral stand for global disarmament, criticising the insularity of the nuclear club, evaporated when it staked its claims to join the ranks of those nations it had so bitterly attacked in the past. Regardless, the BJP shared an assessment with other Indian political elites that trying to blast its way into the nuclear club was a risk that India had to take considering the importance it has attached to the presence of nuclear armed neighbours and its historical opposition to a "discriminatory" global non-proliferation regime.

---

[116] Sidhu, *Enhancing Indo-US Strategic Cooperation*, pp. 22-23.
[117] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," p. 175.
[118] Latham, "Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Policy," p. 221.
[119] Jaswant Singh, "Against Nuclear Apartheid," *Foreign Affairs*, 77 (5), September/October 1998, p. 44.
[120] Latham, "Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Policy," p. 227.

Finally, the BJP was only successful in cobbling together a fragile coalition after the elections earlier in the year. As such, domestic political calculations determined the timing of Pokhran II. The newly installed Indian government – headed by Vajpayee and his inner circle – moved quickly to prepare the blasts and were ready to test weeks after being sworn into office. Without a doubt, the leadership of the Sangh Parivar – from whom even moderates of Vajpayee's prominence have developed – was extremely supportive of a nuclear test. But in more immediate political terms, at the time Pokhran II was considered to be a deft move on a political chessboard that sought to isolate the BJP's opponents and consolidate its fragile coalition.[121] An *India Today*-MARG poll conducted after the tests indicated that over 85% of Indians approved testing and weaponising India's nuclear weapons, 92% said that they were "more proud to be Indian" after the tests and 44% said that their willingness to vote BJP had increased.[122] The strong degree of public support for the tests – both before and after 11 May 1998 – suggested at the time that this ploy worked. Such support proved to only be short term, however. The magic of Pokhran II was to wear off soon after the reality of India's desperate political and economic situation re-asserted itself. In four state assembly elections later in the year the BJP was unceremoniously ejected from office as a resurgent Congress asserted new found confidence with the installation of Rajiv Gandhi's widow, Sonia, as Congress Party President, signalling the restoration of India's pre-eminent political dynasty.

Despite the election setbacks, it is evident that the BJP undertook the tests more for reasons based on non-partisan concerns about India's security, long-standing issues with the global disarmament regime and, at a more proximate level, the advantages of cementing together its weak coalition than as a command from the Sangh Parivar. Indeed, the prescriptions of the

---

[121] Pankaj Mishra, "A New, Nuclear, India?" *The New York Review*, 65 (11), 1998, p. 55.
[122] Manoj Joshi, "Nuclear shock waves," *India Today*, 25 May, 1998, pp. 26, 29.

Sangh Parivar for India's security policy mirrored the sense of insecurity from regional rivals and extra-regional adversaries and great powers present throughout the Indian cultural security ethos. That the government that decided to openly declare India as a nuclear capable country happened to be a Hindu nationalist one does not necessarily indicate causality between Hindu nationalism and India's new nuclear security posture.

B. Indo-Pakistani Relations: From Lahore to Kargil

Indo-Pakistani enmity is a defining characteristic of the region's security landscape and is a cornerstone of the foreign and security policies of both rivals. "Midnight's children" – twins borne out of colonial domination and communal bloodshed – exist in a diametrical relationship. India is supposedly an example of the ability of Hindus and Muslims to share the same land. Pakistan, on the other hand, represents the failure of secularism and the salience of Islam as the cornerstone of a nation-state. The rise of Hindu nationalism is watched with concern in Islamabad since the intensification of communal discord and the Sangh Parivar's traditional hard line against Pakistan has obvious implications for Pakistani policymakers. The formation of a BJP-led coalition government was a particular worry for Pakistan, for the BJP's stated goal of "inducting" nuclear weapons could only make matters worse in the tense subcontinent. After Pokhran II, Pakistan had little choice but to respond with its own series of tests, throwing prior attempts at rapprochement into chaos.

However, on February 20, 1999, less than a year after the tit-for-tat nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee crossed the Indo-Pakistani border aboard the inaugural commercial bus trip between Delhi and Lahore, Pakistan. The significance of the gesture was contained in its timing and context: here was the leader of a Hindu nationalist political party known for its anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan sentiment conducting "bus

diplomacy" with a country with whom relations were in a disastrous state only months before. The seeming contradictions of the visit were of much interest to analysts, who saw it as a pivotal, euphoric moment in Indo-Pakistani relations. The Lahore Declaration that emerged from the meeting between Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was regarded as a strong basis for slowly normalising relations based on bilateral dialogue and progress on confidence building mechanisms in nuclear and conventional security issues.[123]

The Indian government sold the controversial trip to Lahore as the second part of a twin-track process, involving *shakti* (strength) and *shanti* (peace), to improving troubled relations between the two countries. The strength lay in the nuclear capability that New Delhi had demonstrated with the Pokhran tests. The peace was the extension of a hand of friendship across the troubled border, and an offer to engage in a dialogue to work towards the resolution of lingering disputes over Kashmir and the establishment of a stable nuclear balance that both sides understood had changed the strategic equation in the region. The BJP took pains to assure its critics that its overtures to Prime Minister Sharif were not a sign of inherent contradictions in its foreign policy. It argued that India could better deal with its neighbour from a position of strength, for it enhanced New Delhi's position at the bargaining table. As External Affairs Minister in the short-lived Janata government in 1978, Vajpayee – a dedicated member of the Jan Sangh (the BJP's predecessor) – made a historic trip to Pakistan in an attempt to smooth relations upset by policies of Indira Gandhi. In 1999, his continued preference for moderation and the support of his like-minded inner circle overrode Sangh Parivar objections to "bus diplomacy."

This hardly meshes with orthodox, hawkish Hindu nationalist bitterness towards Pakistan. The moderate face of the BJP, which appears to be resisting the attempts of RSS hard-liners to

---

[123] Amit Baruah, "The Bus to Pakistan," *Frontline*, 12 March 1999, p. 5.

influence policy, determinedly pursued a less confrontational foreign policy after the nuclear tests. All the old hallmarks of Indian diplomacy returned: an emphasis on bilateral negotiations in good faith with Pakistan, re-engaging China to patch up differences after the Pokhran tests and assurances to the international community that India is responsibly meeting the challenges of its new security environment in the region and beyond. In engaging Pakistan in talks right after Pokhran II, mixing blunt Kautilyan power politics with Gandhian pseudo-diplomacy, India attempted to bring their relationship into a position from which it could have some influence on the agenda.

Unhappily, the spirit of the Lahore Declaration turned to dust only months later as the Indian military attempted to repulse the incursion of Pakistani-supported "Islamic" infiltrators from the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, using air power for the first time since the 1971 war over erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The downing of two Indian aircraft in the early days of the fighting, the suspected mutilation of the captured bodies of Indian soldiers and the growing evidence that Pakistan had orchestrated and even contributed its own troops to the influx across the LoC even while warmly welcoming Vajpayee's willingness to talk at Lahore fuelled anti-Pakistani sentiment across India.

In the face of calls to cross the LoC and attack the militants' suspected camps and supply lines in Pakistani territory, India's BJP caretaker government exercised restraint throughout the conflict. While praised by Vajpayee's political allies, such restraint was not guaranteed. War hysteria and nationalist sentiment in India was at a fever pitch as dramatic reports of the heroism and hardship of Indian troops was churned out by Indian news media.[124] Both Indian and

---

[124] Interestingly, the explosion in television ownership from 45,000 in 1971 (during the last Indo-Pakistani war) to over 70 million today meant that many people, including the wealthier and middle classes which increasingly support the BJP, had the opportunity to view images and reports from the "battlefield." Sadanand Dhume, "Beyond the War," *Far Eastern Economic Review On-Line*, 5 August 1999: www.feer.com.

Pakistani news reports covered the conflict with blatant jingoism. Indeed, the nationalist fervour whipped up by the media was evident with even a brief perusal of the online editions of the various newspapers and newsmagazines in both countries. Moreover, taking advantage of the patriotic storms unleashed by news of the fighting, Hindu nationalist groups were particularly active in anti-Pakistan demonstrations. Some, including the notorious Shiv Sena in the state of Maharashtra, even called into question the fidelity of India's large Muslim minority population despite the outpouring of support and solidarity across ethnic, religious, caste and class lines with the *jawans* (soldiers) of the Indian army.[125] Meanwhile, the RSS publicly advocated a nuclear strike against Pakistan to "teach it a lesson."[126]

However, as the head of a caretaker government – whose mandate is relatively undefined – the BJP had room to manoeuvre and use the conflict for wider political ends. It sought to avoid an escalation with Pakistan, especially in light of the nuclear parity that had developed between them since the nuclear tests. Attacking Pakistani territory, no matter what the rationale, was thought to be a move that would perhaps escalate the conflict beyond New Delhi or Islamabad's capacity to control. Further, India sought to use the crisis in Kargil as an international public relations victory. Despite rumblings of potential offensive operations across the LoC from within the Indian policy establishment, including several generals, academic analysts and even high ranking BJP stalwarts, India continued to refrain from crossing the LoC to avoid jeopardising the favourable international response to the fighting. The Cologne G-8 Summit in June 1999, without directly naming Pakistan, called for the evacuation of the infiltrators and a restoration of the sanctity of the LoC. India was determined to maintain the pressure on Pakistan by avoiding escalation.

---

[125] C.P. Bhambri, "Opinion: Super-Patriot Games," *Outlook India Online*, ????

There were also domestic political calculations for restraint: worries about a nuclear exchange, favourable reaction to the international community's veiled support for India's position and the still forthcoming elections of September 1999 all played a role in convincing Vajpayee and his caretaker administration that restraint was the best policy. The Indian Army's apparent successes in mountain warfare against the militants – however exaggerated by the Indian media and however high the casualties – was a useful political tool in convincing the public that it was only a matter of time before the Army repulsed the incursions. As such, it was judged that there existed no pressing need to escalate the conflict, for the consequences of that action could have been disastrous for the ruling coalition. Following the withdrawal and, in Indian eyes, the successful defeat of the militants and Pakistan's "humiliation," Washington's tacit support for India's position and the conduct of the Vajpayee government during a crisis even in the midst of an election campaign represent a possible political windfall for the BJP. Vajpayee himself is a central figure in the BJP's post-Kargil election hopes. Brushing off concerns that Indian intelligence failed to detect the infiltrators before it was too late, the BJP will be able to deploy a triumphant Vajpayee and his Kargil conduct as evidence of the government's ability to protect the country's national security and territorial integrity, as well as act responsibly in the interests of international peace and security by avoiding an escalation of the conflict and thereby turning over a new leaf in relations with the United States.[127]

In this regard, Kargil has seemed to instil New Delhi with greater confidence in its dealings with Washington. Although the relationship remains beset with highly intractable issues, the Clinton Administration, for its part, has warmed to the advice of policy analysts in the United States

---

[126] The RSS embarrassingly withdrew the statement soon afterwards. Rajesh Joshi, "Forced Restraint," *Outlook India Online*, www.outlookindia.com/issue3/fraffairs[12.htm.

[127] Saba Naqvi Bhaumik, "Scoring Plans," *India Today Group Online*, 2 August 1999, www.india-today.com/itoday/19990802/cover3.html.

and the appeals from New Delhi that it take India's security concerns seriously and treat it as a partner in the pursuit of peace and security in South Asia rather than maintain an acrimonious relationship rooted in Cold War geopolitics.[128] Such a development can only appeal to India, which has tried to convince Washington that its concerns and perceptions – embedded in the cultural roots discussed above – had to be taken into consideration in its own policy towards South Asia.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the culture of security responsible for a great deal of continuity in Indian foreign and security policy also extends to the Hindu nationalist movement's foreign policy at a governmental level. While this may yield a degree of predictability to Indian external behaviour, the insecurity complex also prevents the amelioration of those aspects of Indian foreign policy that do contribute to instability. Indian policymakers, especially in the wake of the Kargil conflict, are loath to commit India to substantive negotiations on conflict resolution and regional integration. Kashmir remains an apparently intractable problem. Nuclear confidence building mechanisms are not evolving. Issues surrounding trade, commerce and transport links – perhaps more important to regional peace and prosperity in the long run – go unresolved.

As such, while Hindu nationalism may not represent a direct threat to security, traditional perspectives on the hegemony of national security ideology in India are probably a deeper source of concern. While it has the same overall thrust with that of "secular" foreign policies, there stands the possibility that a "Hindu foreign policy" will accentuate the Indian insecurity complex and lead

---

[128] Contrary to the pro-swadeshi, anti-US stance of the RSS, the BJP seems intent on building India's relationship with Washington to put more pressure on Washington, which includes providing concessions on signing the CTBT and examining the prospects of accepting the LoC as an international border. Ibid., see also Seema Guha. "Clinton speaks to Vajpayee, wants better ties," *Times of India Online*, 21 July 1996: www.timesofindia.com/today/21home1.htm.

the region to greater instability. The inflexibility of the Indian foreign policy establishment and its subsequent unwillingness to deal with Pakistan and its neighbours from anything other than a largely zero-sum orientation is a major obstacle to regional peace and security, especially since it is difficult to separate the international from the domestic sources and solutions to instability in troubled regions such as South Asia. The steady diet of realism – both Kautilyan and Western – in the thinking of the policy establishment is probably the real reason for concern because notions of power politics and the enmity it tends to create in South Asia removes the possibility for real rapprochement with Pakistan. Even the Lahore Process, a good step by all means, remains problematic owing to the considerable cynicism and political opposition it has received in both countries and the refusal of either New Delhi or Islamabad to commit to rapprochement in good faith.

Having made this qualification, the analysis provided herein is still significant in explaining why, at least for now, the current incarnation of the BJP, Hindu nationalist ideology has not steered Indian foreign policy in a drastically new direction. If Indian nationalism were to drift onto a more confrontational path, it stands to reason that it does not particularly matter who is at the helm. A common conception of India's place in the world and a deep seated desire to protect its security would drive policy makers to this orientation if it is seen as beneficial to Indian interests. Of course, the way Indian policymakers interpret and define their interests through the lens of an insecurity complex is a fundamental problem and must be addressed should India overcome the immense political, economic and social challenges it shares with its neighbours.

Chapter 4
Conclusion: Hindu Nationalism and the Dynamics of South Asian Regional Security

Having demonstrated that the rise of Hindu nationalism may not be a proximate threat to Indian national and South Asian regional security, it is equally important to discuss in what circumstances the movement might pose a threat in the future. Hindu nationalism is at a relatively early point in its evolution into an all-India phenomenon capable of seriously contending for power. Until now, it has had been compelled to dilute its agenda of often militant ideological and instrumental societal revision as it struggles with the forces of continuity in Indian politics and society – forces that keep democratic political institutions alive through greater democratisation of previously acquiescent or disadvantaged groups and maintain the resilience of Indian democratic ideals and values at many levels of society.

Accompanying these forces of continuity have been forces of change, however, which have directly fuelled the growth of the Hindu nationalist movement and given it a window to further pursue its goal of re-orienting Indian society from a pluralist, "secular" grounding to a culturally closed and ethnically majoritarian basis. Hindu nationalism can be seen as a threat to the long-term security of India and of the broader South Asian region when it is regarded as a phenomenon deeply embedded in the politics of state-society relations, capable of destabilising a security environment characterised by interdependence domestically, internationally and transnationally. The continuing strain on India's political institutions, the increasing propensity of the state to use coercive force in an attempt to restrain dissension and diversity in the name of "nation-building" and the growing cynicism towards the relevance of democracy and secularism in achieving

expectations point to the potential for the Indian state itself to provide Hindu nationalists with an anchor from which to forge an artificial, authoritarian and destabilising Hindu *rashtra*.

In what will be a predictive exercise, this chapter seeks to develop the interplay between the domestic and external factors, constraints and compulsions that has been an underlying theme throughout the thesis. It will attempt to explain what factors and conditions are necessary for Hindu nationalism to pose a threat to the regional security environment in South Asia. It will be necessary, however, to first outline the obstacles to the Hindu nationalist movement's objectives and activities that have heretofore dominated this study before engaging the question of regional security analysis and its importance for understanding the dynamics of security interdependence in a post-colonial state and society that is undergoing dramatic political and social change. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to understanding where Hindu nationalism enters the equation of regional security analysis, and the cascade effect it may have on India and South Asia should it be successful in realising its objectives. As will hopefully become apparent, the threat of Hindu nationalism is not a threat in and of itself. Rather, it is representative of a larger malaise in the region's politics: the deterioration of state conflict resolution and productive capabilities combined with the rise in ethnonationalist and ethno-religious sentiment and violence. Such a trend, if it continues, has the potential to inject instability into almost every security relationship in the region.

I. PROXIMATE OBSTACLES TO THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL HINDU-NATIONALIST PROJECT

The rise of Hindu nationalism has been strewn with periods of great violence and instability: the strife of Partition left almost a half a million dead in a massive communal bloodbath; Indira Gandhi's Emergency in 1975 galvanised the Hindu nationalist movement into a political movement of some distinction; the razing of the Babri Masjid in 1992 killed hundreds and marked both the

end of "secular" India and the end of business as usual for the Hindu nationalist movement as it was thrust into the limelight of Indian politics.

Hindu nationalism attempts to remould Indian society through its own cultural nationalist lens. It seeks to create a powerful state founded on Hindu religious and cultural values, which cannot be had without altering India's perceptions of its minorities from a pluralist perspective to a majoritarian, parochial one that attempts to paint Muslims and even Christians as threatening "Others." As such, it represents a departure from the secular foundation that has arguably kept India united despite the country's potentially crippling diversity. Communal violence inspired and orchestrated by Hindu nationalist groups polarises society and renders state institutions impotent against the fury of ethno-religious rioting and strife. The hyper-nationalism that the Hindu nationalist movement attempts to fan, especially against Pakistan, is dangerous because it risks further communalising the relationship and hardening already intransigent attitudes in each country. As a result, despite their enmity, Indo-Pakistani relations could be removed from their relative stability (characterised by low-intensity conflict and a careful avoidance of direct confrontation) and threatens established and future mechanisms of peaceful crisis amelioration and conflict resolution.

This thesis has thus far argued that *at present* the conditions do not exist for the Hindu nationalist movement to succeed in transforming the Indian state and society into a Hindu *rashtra*. There are intervening variables at play which suggest that Hindu nationalism will not destabilise the region for the time being. It is a project of sweeping social, cultural and institutional change that is being buffeted by the complexities of Indian politics, the realities of globalisation. India's changing place in the world community and the resilience, however weakened, of the secular nation-building institutions and principles of Indian state and society. The Hindu nationalist project is either constrained by factors and obstacles within Indian society to communalise the agenda, or

its programme and policies are not vastly different than that of the secular nation-state which it seeks to dismantle.

First, at the level of domestic politics, Indian state-society relations are characterised by a remarkable degree of resilience for secular democracy based on India's staggering diversity. As such, the cultural nationalist project of the Sangh Parivar – led by the RSS – encounters difficulties in convincing those individuals outside its traditional support bracket (upper-class, upper-caste Hindi speaking males from north India) to throw their lot in with a communally oriented movement. This is manifest in the resistance the BJP – the Sangh Parivar's political wing – encounters in its electoral campaigns, forcing it to engage in regional alliances and shift its focus to socio-economic and national security issues that have wider appeal from the narrower, communal reinterpretation that it seeks to foment. Strategies of ethno-religious mobilisation and Sangathanism lose their efficacy in such an environment, and lead to greater organisational rifts among the members of the Sangh Parivar as they struggle between the equally important values of ideological purity and electoral success.

In terms of communal violence, the political currency of Ayodhya has been exhausted. There is currently a significant amount of distaste surrounding communal politics. This may especially be true for India's growing middle-class, which is increasingly interested in the socio-economic issues embedded in the process of globalisation and liberalisation. As such, there is growing pressure on the BJP to focus on "bread and butter" concerns. Resistance to the Sangh Parivar's attempt to polarise society and raise the level of anti-minority fervour might suggest that it does not suit the interests of Hindu nationalists to do so lest it alienate those parts of the population it depends upon for electoral success. Thus, the Hindu nationalist camp may not be able dominate the agenda and inundate the state with a regression into communal strife. As a result, the spectre of Hindu nationalist inspired communal violence may not be a looming threat.

The Sangh Parivar places a great deal of emphasis on maintaining internal security and stability, mostly in response to communally inspired secessionist conflict in Kashmir and, to an extent, in the north-east. In this light, the Hindu nationalists' response is not much different than that of the secular nationalists. Both believe in the fundamental sanctity of India's territorial integrity and demonstrate a willingness to use force to resolve these problems. With the BJP in power, it has the potential to accomplish this goal through the employment of overwhelming force to crush revolt and insurgency. However, the difficulty of extinguishing secessionist conflagrations through the use of coercive power alone has made an impression on the BJP leadership, and also, to an extent, on the rest of the Sangh Parivar: a crackdown on secessionist movements is constrained by the imperatives of governance and conflict resolution which necessitate an approach which combines accommodative and coercive strategies. The costs of such a campaign, including greater exposure in international media of human rights concerns (which may jeopardise India's hold on troubled Kashmir) and the exhaustion of the armed forces through long bouts with counter-insurgency operations, have been all too clear. In spite of from RSS and VHP stalwarts and although it continues to use force to wear down ethnic militants, the BJP government maintains some commitment to traditional strategies of counter-insurgency which involve some degree of accommodating the demands of secessionist or autonomist movements.

On India's foreign and security policy, there is ample evidence cultural continuity in the country's external orientation under the BJP as opposed to a commitment to Hindutva and direction from the RSS executive. Pakistan is usually the only country which invokes the ire of Hindu nationalists: Bangladesh is sometimes a target of rhetoric, mainly over the mass migration of Bangladeshi Muslims into north-eastern India, but Sri Lanka, Nepal and India's other, smaller neighbours are rarely considered important enough. The symbolism of India's bitter enmity with

Pakistan endures and, to an extent, unifies the Sangh Parivar.[129] Nevertheless, despite the power of Hindu nationalism and its animated views on this issue, Indo-Pakistani relations have been marked by the usual ups and downs: diplomatic engagement followed by low-intensity, limited military confrontation or vice-versa – and lots of rhetoric, both hopeful and corrosive. There is hope, however perverse, that the relationship between the two can be stabilised into such a controlled enmity which maintains the peace between them at any reasonable cost.

Moreover, although Hindu nationalists have always been eager proponents of a declared nuclear capability and had something to do with the BJP's intention to come clean, even the Pokhran II nuclear tests in May 1998 are not rooted in the desire to develop a "Hindu" bomb. After all, the Indian nuclear programme has existed since independence and there was almost unanimous agreement around the world that if it did not already possess a weaponised nuclear arsenal, India was only "one screw away" from gaining that capability. Rather, a more accurate explanation for Pokhran II is that the BJP had the domestic political support to proceed with a significant, perhaps even inevitable, step in the continuing development of a programme of technological and political importance nurtured by India's scientific and political elites and rooted in deep-seated regional and global political and security concerns and accentuated by the desire of attaining the prestige and status of a great power.

Therefore, at present, Hindu nationalism has been constrained from truly implementing its broad agenda at social manipulation and reconstruction, which has had corollary effects at the levels of domestic politics, internal security and foreign policy. The massive scale of the movement makes it quite unwieldy to a certain degree, and thus there is not insignificant division within the ranks of the Sangh Parivar. For now, it seems to have bitten off more than it can

---

[129] As the massive outpouring of nationalist support and rhetoric over the fighting in the Kargil region of Kashmir in spring and summer of 1999 indicates, the Pakistani bogeyman is also a source of all-India unity.

tolerably digest and to be content to use subtler means of backdoor persuasion on Vajpayee's increasingly moderate ruling corps in the BJP.

II. Prospects for the Future: Situating the Long Term Threat Potential of Hindu Nationalism

Such a conclusion about the contemporary state of affairs necessarily brings up a few questions about the purpose and use of the thesis. What about tomorrow? Can Hindu nationalism be treated as a transient phenomenon, one which will quickly fade from the scene? Can it achieve a more prominent profile and status? If so, what are the conditions for the successful implementation of Hindutva and its assumed capacity for trouble in an already tense and unstable region? Such questions can be answered by adding the question of Hindu nationalism to the chain of seamless security interdependence in South Asia and attempting to discern the impact the Hindu nationalist movement might have on the regional security environment of South Asia in the future should it mature to the point that it is unified and autonomous from Indian electoral politics.

In simplistic state-centric terms, the South Asian regional security environment is characterised by a high degree of seemingly hegemonic control by its central actor – India. The smaller countries in the region either seek to challenge New Delhi's assumed writ outright (as Pakistan does) or fear India's hegemony but seek to undercut it rather than have it replaced or overthrown. Although the inter-state dimension is admittedly more complex than this broad generalisation, it nonetheless neglects the critical importance of domestic, transnational and extra-regional factors which all exert some influence on the regional dynamic. While the relations among various capitals in the region is important, regional security analysis requires greater attention to the linkages between domestic and external factors in determining the nature of the

security environment and assessing threats to the stability of that environment. In South Asia, the interdependence between domestic and foreign policy and between internal and external challenges and threats suggests that security is *seamless*.

The potential threat Hindu nationalism may pose to regional peace and security might be fathomed by analysing it through this perspective. As a potential agent of instability, Hindu nationalism plays a role in externalising internal conflict, and, on the other hand, internalising external conflict. There are also sub-state and transnational or extra-regional implications of Hindu nationalism, especially for the future role of the state in conflict resolution, the powerful motivations of transnational ethnicity and the difficulties in controlling such movements and the interaction between Hindu nationalism and globalisation.

As such, both state and non-state actors and foreign and domestic factors are of importance in assessing the prospects of Hindu nationalism as an agent of regional insecurity in South Asia. Linking all of these together, however, is the central importance of the crisis evident in the Indian nation-state and the increasing salience of non-state actors. The symptoms of this crisis are the rise of non-state, transnational ethno-nationalist movements that depart from the usual tradition of Indian secularism (and thus contribute to the crisis of secularism itself), the noticeable difficulty of Indian political institutions and parties (state actors) to adapt and deliver on the rising expectations of such non-state groups and an increasing reliance on coercive authority to extinguish dissent and conflict arising from these expectations. The decline of secularism and the greater propensity to use force is only increasing the appeal of Hindu nationalism and other ethno-religious or ethnonationalist identities as it seeks to convince greater numbers of people that the old "secular" India should be swept away in favour of its own reinterpretation.

Where the Sangh Parivar succeeds on this score is at the level of cultural and societal discourse and interaction. Its spreading network of saffron organisations (such as the RSS *shakas*

engaged in spreading Hindu ideology and dispensing social services that the state cannot provide), the rising prominence of its more overtly political organisations (such as the BJP) and the orchestration of communal violence, anti-secular activities and hyper-nationalist rhetoric all have the capacity to communalise Indian politics and society at a fundamental level. Although it may not be able to dominate at present, its increasing interpenetration in Indian society in the future is likely to have more of a "bottom up" impact on the regional security environment than from the "higher" rungs of state decision making institutions and processes, especially if it accompanied by rising levels of ethno-religious violence, state repression and resistance. Interestingly, the Hindu nationalist movement may find that its position as a powerful non-state actor will bequeath it the most leverage in eventually taking the reins of the Indian state.

A. *Regional Security Interdependence: Hindu Nationalism and the Seamless Web of South Asian Security*

Throughout South Asia's storied history, societies and states in the region have developed mechanisms of continuity and change that flow from the level of the individual to the regional and international relations systems. Despite the orthodox power-politics worldview of most analysts and policymakers in the region, there is an increasing recognition of the relationship between internal and external sources of insecurity and conflict.[130] Given the interdependence between these various levels of society, India's security environment is characterised as highly interdependent. The nature of the state, the historical continuity of the prevailing regional social and cultural personality, the continuing devastation caused by poverty and economic

---

[130] Mustapha Kamal Pasha, "Security as Hegemony," *Alternatives*, 21, 1996, p. 285. Pasha's critique of the pervasiveness of the realist imagination in South Asia contends that national security is a hegemonic ideology inextricably linked to the nation-building project of modern states. Their explicit or tacit approval by every layer of the Indian political and social elite, including the state and civil society, suggests that there remain obstacles to different characterisations of South Asian society, politics and security aside from the sweeping brushstrokes of state-centric national security imperatives.

underdevelopment and the role of extra-regional forces all help shape the linkages between individuals, societies, states and the regional neighbourhood. Inter-linked social and political spheres often result in complex security configurations with broader threats and risks to peace and stability.

Barry Buzan's contribution to regional security analysis in South Asia often arises as an important departure from the realist orthodoxy that is pervasive in the literature. Buzan contends that regions of the world possess their own unique security fingerprint, which is an essential starting point for regional security analysis.[131] However, Buzan focuses almost exclusively on state actors and on political or military affairs as the main determinants of a regional security entity: in his eyes security complexes are made up of varying levels of security interdependence between the state's domestic duties, inter-state relations and great power intervention. Such an analysis does not adequately address the pressures non-state actors, ethno-nationalist movements and non-military forces may exert in the configuration of patterns of security interdependence. His theoretical framework tends to underestimate or entirely miss critical aspects of the region that are necessary in understanding the roots, dynamics and prospects of its insecurities.

Understanding the regional security dynamic in South Asia requires the identification and analysis of key cultural, political, social and economic features that determine South Asia's peculiar regional personality. In terms of security analysis, the legacy of external penetration and colonial rule, the dynamics of domestic-foreign policy interaction and the complexities arising from the constantly evolving pattern of state-society relations coalesce to create a dynamic of human and state interaction marked by both continuity and change, by social resilience and instability.

---

[131] Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear (Second Ed.): An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1991), p. 188.

Sources of instability at the level of the individual created by economic inequality, unemployment and devastating poverty combined with greater political awareness and mobilisation can often sharpen existing tensions between different ethnic or political groups (many of which exist outside of traditional state structures), leading to ethnic or communal conflict or resulting in secessionist or state-wide political conflict.[132] Linked to this dimension, the growing weakness of the state – manifest in its increasing resort to force and the deterioration of its supposedly secular and democratic institutions – has led to a decline in its ability to impartially negotiate conflicting demands and expectations and, at the same time, strengthen its own centralising nation-building designs. The rise of ethno-religious sentiment is indicative of the social forces that are in ascendance, helping individuals make sense of their changing environment and attempting to fill the void left by a wounded secularism.

The region's insecurity complex often takes on a critical international dimension at this point. Weakened states struggling to maintain internal order and legitimacy continue to exhibit behaviour ingrained in their own mutual hostility and mistrust. In a perennially unstable region, South Asian states have demonstrated a willingness to support or foment political and ethnic violence or secessionist movements in each other's territories, often increasing the pressure on their bilateral relations and jeopardising the promotion of conflict resolution, confidence building, regional integration and economic development in what remains one of the most desperately poor regions on the planet. The legacy of foreign influence and intervention, including the incursions of the pre-modern era, British colonialism, superpower rivalry and, most recently, the effects of globalisation, introduce a further international aspect to South Asian regional security, reaffirming the significance of each level of interaction in a security relationship.

---

[132] Sandy Gordon, "Resources and Instability in South Asia," *Survival*, 35 (2), Summer 1993, p. 80.

B. Hindu Nationalism and the Bottom-up Perils of South Asian Regional Security

The factors of instability rooted in the present leave the door open for Hindu nationalism to have a much greater impact on regional security in the future. Given the increasing difficulties of the state in insulating Indian society from the pressures of ethno-religious mobilisation, Hindu nationalism is a symptom of the Indian state's greater malaise. The erosion of Indian secularism through many years of Congress' hegemony and subsequent decline has given the Sangh Parivar the political and social space to recast the complexity of India's problems into straightforward ethnic assessments of pride, guilt, fear and hatred using majoritarian, populist strategies of power consolidation. Constructing Hindu vulnerability opens up the potential for a further rise in communal tensions, which further weakens the state's mechanisms for an impartial response to such strife.

The diffusion of communal values and ideology into the national mainstream has had several effects on Indian state-society relations. It is an example of the capacity of a non-state, cultural force to wield enormous influence over the configuration and development of political forces within a state. The continuing diffusion of Hindutva at a cultural and societal level marks a departure from the secular ethos that has, arguably, kept India united and relatively free of massive bloodletting. The state has provided all Indians with equal legal status in a country characterised by vast diversity along religious, caste, regional, linguistic, cultural and racial lines. It has also been the framework within which both the state and non-state actors struggle for space and pre-eminence. New Delhi has sought to treat the problem of ethnicity with both an accommodative and coercive formula that maximises its own autonomy and independence of action. The decline of this capacity has let the communal genie out of the bottle, leading to a marked increase in ethnic conflict, communal tensions and a further weakening of the state as it becomes caught up in the communal web and as increasing numbers of people grow cynical and

resigned to its ineffectiveness and impotency. As the political and cultural strength of the Hindu nationalist movement grows, the significance of the Sangh Parivar's influence at both a mass politics level at the governmental level and holds the potential for the Indian state to increasingly resort to authoritarian measures to quell internal discord, clamp down on dissent and assure a cynical population of stability and prosperity in the name of redressing India's historical and cultural anxieties.

Moreover, an increase in ethno-religious strife – especially between Hindus and Muslims – has the potential to explode into an all-India problem, polarising relations between both groups and plunging the state's capacities and institutions into a major crisis. The implications of another communal crisis akin to the bloodletting of the Ayodhya disaster could further damage Indian secularism, polarising the country on communal grounds. The spreading network of Hindu nationalist organisations and ideology and the growing weakness of the state will conceivably weaken the resilience of Indian society to communal forces. Such worries have been intensified by indications of the growing power of the VHP, the Bajrang Dal and other far-right Hindu groups that have recently targeted Christians and Muslims in episodes of communal violence. They are also magnified by the attempts of BJP state governments, many of which are unhindered by cumbersome coalition arrangements, to re-tool education policy to alter the battleground of history and reflect Hindu nationalist ideology.[133] At a wider societal level, Hindu nationalism is making progress in its stated objectives of changing the very ideological and intellectual founts from which the Indian secular state has sprung.

Although the realities of electoral and coalition politics in a more politically conscious society have impinged on the Sangh Parivar's ability to dominate the agenda, a yearning for

---

[133] See Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "A spreading network," *Frontline*, 20 November, 1998, p. 11 and Parvathi Menon and T.K. Rajalakshmi, "Doctoring textbooks," *Frontline*, 20 November 1998, p.14.

stability seems to be the most salient issue in Indian politics at present. As such, for the upcoming elections both the BJP and the amalgam of political parties it has assembled into its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is taking advantage of Vajpayee's immense popularity and India's successful counter-infiltration operations in Kargil. At the time of writing, analysts and polls are suggesting that the BJP and its NDA allies might be able to win a majority – however slim and qualified – in the Lok Sabha on these grounds.[134] The BJP seems to be in the process of moving from the untouchable fringe of Indian politics to the main stage, and, as a result, the BJP will come under much more intense pressure to pursue the saffron agenda from the ideologues in the Sangh Parivar.

At another level, Hindu nationalism retains a capacity for affecting the dynamics of conflict and instability that springs from intra-state tension and spreads across borders. The state has been compromised in its capacity to insulate itself and Indian society from becoming caught up in the whirlwind of ethno-religious conflict. India is no stranger to the role transnational ethnicity can play through its struggles with refugee movements, cross-border insurgencies and the intervention of its neighbours – particularly Pakistan - in fanning civil and ethnic conflict.

In this light, Hindu nationalism and Islamic revivalism in India are interdependent forces. The perception of an Islamic fundamentalist "menace" swallowing up Hindu India figures quite highly in the calculations and rhetoric of the Sangh Parivar. Growing anxiety surrounding the perceived threat of "transnational" Islam and the concurrent Islamisation and weakening of the Pakistani state do little to reassure worried Hindu political elites that India has little to fear from the

---

[134] K. Balakrishnan and GVL Narasimha Rao, "In Kargil's afterglow: BJP and allies are on a roll," *Times of India Online*, 14 August 1999, www.timesofindia.com and Swapan Dasgupta, "Turning Tide," *India Today Online*, 2 August 1999, www.india-today.com/itoday/19990802/cover5.html.

Muslim world, both external and internal.[135] The growing assertiveness and international connectedness of the Muslim minority, partly through providing migrant labour to wealthy Gulf countries and sending remittances to family and community in India, and the fear of a possible Kashmiri *jihad* as Islamic militants from abroad converge on the embattled region have only contributed to such sentiments. Although most Muslims continue to contest politics through established parties like the Congress and others that espouse the "minority" cause, the polarisation of both communal groups into diametrically opposed extremist movements raises the spectre of even greater, all-India communal violence.

The intensification of communal hostilities orchestrated and fuelled by the Sangh Parivar only results in even further suffering by the millions of people belonging to minorities that are not considered to be Indian "enough," forcing them into radical postures that feed back into Hindu vulnerability. The popularity of Hindu nationalist projects such as the campaign to ban cow slaughter or revoke the status of Shariat (Koranic) civil law and the demonstrated electoral success of the BJP have increased the level of Islamic activism in India. The surge in Hindu nationalist sentiment has also led to the intensification of Islamic militancy in Kashmir, with radical insurgent groups including the Hezb-ul-Mujahideen (HUM) and the Lakshar-e-Toiba recruiting greater numbers of "foreign" mercenaries (reported to include Afghan, Sudanese or Gulf-area nationals) and establishing linkages with India-based Islamic groups and other militant outfits, organised criminal figures and drug traffickers throughout the Middle East and South Asia.[136] Therefore, it seems evident that rising Hindu nationalist sentiment results in the further alienation

---

[135] Zahid Hussain, "In a Holy Mess," *India Today*, 14 September 1998, p. 20. The economic crisis in Pakistan combined with Islamic groups increasing their hold over the state's institutions and growing more popular in the general public is thought to be dangerous for India and the broader region as well.

[136] Praveen Swami, "Extending Terror," *Frontline*, 26 March 1999, p. 16. See also Manoj Joshi and Ramesh Vinayak, "The Fire Next Time," *India Today*, 7 September 1998, p. 50. Although many of these "radicals" seem to be joining insurgent groups because of extreme material deprivation and poverty, the growing ranks of the Islamic militants has become a major factor in the Indian insecurity complex.

and radicalisation of the Muslim minority and vice-versa. As a result of the state's increasing willingness to resort to force to solve conflict or to directly pander to ethno-religious sentiment, its capacity to exercise some modicum of control over and distance from the fragmentary and strife-ridden tendencies of modern communalism has eroded, and thus ethno-religious forces have gained a foothold in the intercourse of politics and culture in India.

There is also a link between the rise of Hindu nationalism and the growing tension between the states in the region, especially in the Indo-Pakistani rivalry, as the Sangh Parivar uses latent unease about Pakistan's Islamic "threat" to intensify hyper-nationalist rhetoric and posturing against Islamabad. The considerable literature on ethnic conflict suggests that the phenomenon is not only a result of the failure of modernisation and not localised to the domestic realm of nation-states. Instead, ethnic conflict is also a link between both internal forces of division and conflict and external factors including third party intervention, co-operation and even inter-state conflict.[137] The salience of ethnic conflict as a factor in greater inter-state tensions should not be underestimated, especially in South Asia.

First, non-secessionist communal strife is of an increasingly orchestrated and all-India nature, and this development has not gone unnoticed in India's neighbours, many of which have predominantly Muslim populations. One Pakistani analyst referred to the rise of Hindu chauvinism and communal violence in India as ethnic cleansing akin to that in the Balkans or the Middle East.[138] The demolition of the Babri Masjid and the communal violence that followed provoked the ire of Islamabad and Dhaka and kicked off anti-Hindu riots and tit-for-tat demolitions of Hindu temples. The complacence or direct assistance of security forces seriously eroded the law and

---

[137] Astri Suhrke and Lela Garner Noble, eds., *Ethnic Conflict in International Relations*, (New York: Praeger, 1977), pp. 5-6.

[138] I.H. Malik, "Beyond Ayodhya: Implications for Regional Security in South Asia," *Asian Affairs*, 24, October 1993, p. 290.

order situation in both Pakistan and Bangladesh. Mobs attacked not only members of very small Hindu minorities and their temples but also Indian government offices and other symbolic structures and events in retaliation for the actions of the *kar sevaks* at Ayodhya.[139] Such incidences are illustrative of the impact weakening state structures and the awakening of heretofore neglected or disadvantaged groups have in terms of ethnic politics across South Asia. Even today, some years after the bloodletting of Ayodhya, the successes of Hindu revivalism in India incurs the fear and wrath of its Muslim neighbours.

At an inter-state level, Pakistan is representative of the "Other." Strategically, analysts argue that India sees Pakistan as a regional rival determined to undermine its power and hegemony in the region and its larger great power aspirations.[140] However, there is a deeper ideological and communal enmity at the core of their relationship. Internal communal divides between Hindus and Muslims can be transferred to an international level between "Hindu" or even "secular" India and "Islamic" or "communal" Pakistan. An escalation of communal violence and the deterioration of Indian secularism can only further polarise the relationship between India and Pakistan, a relationship which is already characterised by deep mistrust and insecurity. Pakistan can only worry about the inability (or unwillingness) of the Indian government to defend itself against the influence of Hindu nationalism, especially if the state falls back on blaming "foreign forces" for its internal difficulties.[141]

Kashmir is important in any discussion of the externalisation of Indian communalism because it is, historically speaking at least, a conflict founded in the cleavages of Hindu-Muslim

---

[139] Mahmood Monshipouri, "Backlash to the Destruction at Ayodhya: A View from Pakistan," *Asian Survey*, 33 (7), July 1993, p. 712 and Partha S. Ghosh, "Bangladesh at the Crossroads: Religion and Politics," *Asian Survey*, 33 (7), July 1993, p. 706. See also Shekhar Gupta, "India in the Dock," *India Today*, 31 December 1992, pp. 83-84.

[140] Stephen P. Cohen, "The Regional Impact of a Reforming India," *Asia's International Role in the Post-Cold War Era: Part II*, Adelphi Paper 276, (London: IISS/Brassey's, April 1993), p. 85.

[141] Chris Smith, *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal: Direction or Drift in Defence Policy?*, (New York: Oxford University Press/SIPRI), p. 39.

relational uncertainty. The status of Kashmir – whether it belongs to India or Pakistan – symbolises the legitimacy and the success of the nation-building programmes of both India and Pakistan to themselves, while claiming that Kashmir is the last piece of their own post-colonial puzzles:

> The fundamental nature of the [Kashmir] dispute meant that the two successor states were locked in a dialectic and philosophical duel from the day they were born. Each appeared to pose a challenge to the legitimacy of the other; each was driven to try to prove that its *raison d'être* was somehow more valid than the other's.[142]

For India, Kashmir's integral status within its secular, pluralist federation is a sign that Indian secularism works; Hindus and Muslims can live together in a single state united by their status as secular Indians rather than their respective communal identities. On the other hand, Pakistan is a lingering symbol of the power of such identities, for it is a state founded on the principles of Islam and evidence that a secular marriage between Muslims and Hindus is not possible.[143] Both of these visions have been ridiculed as of late as the state of Jammu and Kashmir polarises on communal grounds, communal politics gain more prominence at an all-India level and both Indian security forces and Islamic militants engage in terror tactics and human rights abuses that alienate the very population they are apparently trying to defend.

The communal polarisation of the Indo-Pakistani rivalry an only spell further instability in the region, especially since the dispute over Kashmir intensifies as a result of the growing Hindu nationalist presence in Indian domestic politics. The ability of either government to contain conflict and manage crises in such an environment of communal hatred is suspect, and even more dangerous considering the devastating potential of all out war between them. India and Pakistan

---

[142] S Mahmud Ali, *The Fearful State: People, Power and Internal War in South Asia*, (London: Zed Books, 1993), p. 6.
[143] See Maya Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 61 for an analysis of themes in Kashmiri nationalism and how they interact with the nation-building imperatives of both Pakistan and India. See also Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes for Peace*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Woodrow Wilson Centre, 1997), pp. 38-3. Ganguly's work is a well argued piece on the

have built a tradition of professional conflict diplomacy over the years and, as of late, demonstrated considerable restraint in their newly nuclear adversarial relationship. There is every indication that both countries have embarked on an intensified programme of low-intensity conflict combined with intense diplomatic and political manoeuvring among the international community to destabilise and isolate each other rather than open confrontation. Today, open confrontation means more trouble than ever, for crisis management in South Asia is rife with difficulties. Optimism about a "stable minimum deterrent" between the two rivals aside, there is no guarantees that either New Delhi or Islamabad will remain committed to such a rational engagement.[144] Religious extremists and nationalists on both sides remain responsible for generating intense jingoistic sentiment. Their growing political resonance at the state level and their ability to mobilise opposition against their "mortal" enemies has the potential to undermine the progress – however halting – of developing confidence and reconciliation in security and political matters between Indian and Pakistan let alone the safe management of crises. The RSS' crisis rhetoric of using nuclear arms against Pakistan and the explosion in nationalist, anti-Pakistani fervour during the Kargil conflict is illustrative in this regard. Amongst the backdrop of a race for superior nuclear capability between New Delhi and Islamabad, the implications for the bitter communalisation of their already feral enmity is cause for deep concern.

Furthermore, anxiety has arisen over the future of India's usually agreeable relations with many countries in the Middle East as rising levels of communal violence and the inability or unwillingness of the state to intervene in the defence of minorities becomes an irritant in Indo-

---

role of both ethno-religious mobilisation and institutional decay in fomenting the Kashmiri insurgency and leading to a state crackdown of dubious effectiveness.

[144] See Devin T. Hagerty, "Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: The 1990 Indo-Pakistani Crisis," *International Security*, 20 (3), Winter 1995/1996. Hagerty argues that "New Delhi and Islamabad were deterred from war by their recognition of each other's nuclear weapon capabilities." (p. 82). Although this may be a useful analysis when examining state behaviour, both India and Pakistan that have a large degree of non-state penetration within them and traditions of

Middle Eastern relations. Almost every country in the Gulf criticised the razing of the Babri Masjid and expressed concern over New Delhi's ability to prevent such communal paroxysms.[145] Given the large numbers of Indian migrant workers in the wealthy Gulf countries, the economic significance of their remittances and India's dependence upon Gulf oil, the deterioration of Hindu-Muslim harmony in India might have deleterious consequences for inter-regional stability. Although Pakistan has difficulty rallying the Muslim world to its cause, it would make Islamabad's case for assistance and co-operation to enhance its strategic depth vis à vis New Delhi much easier if the Sangh Parivar was able to take full control, aggravating the internal and external relationships of Hindus and Muslims.

Yet another internal-cum-regional effect that the surge of communal violence and secessionist conflict in India may have concerns the role of the state's instruments of authority and coercion. As the Indian state's capacity for accommodative strategies of conflict resolution has weakened, it has grown more coercive in its attempt to suppress ethnic conflict. To be fair, the Indian state has hardly failed. The strategy of accommodation still manages to work in certain dimensions, such as the successful extinguishing of the Punjab militancy. However, the problem of Kashmir and its communal overtones and lingering secessionist conflict in the north-east is instructive of the growing inability of the Indian state to adequately deal with ethnic opposition groups on an impartial and genuinely accommodative basis.

In this light, the communalisation of Indian state-society relations may have the unintended and destabilising effect of politicising India's security forces.[146] The inability or unwillingness of the police to quell communal strife brings in both state government controlled and

---

culturally-acceptable "rational" responses to crises different from the standard, Western rationality that Hagerty assumes.

[145] Gupta, "India in the Dock," p. 83.

[146] Shekhar Gupta, *India Redefines its Role*, Adelphi Paper 293, (New York: Oxford University Press/International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), pp. 34-35.

Union directed paramilitaries such as the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). In several cases of communal rioting, state police and paramilitary forces demonstrated either outright complicity or involvement in violence directed at Muslims.[147] Such a development is a warning sign that the state's coercive apparatus is not immune to the polarising effects of communal tension.

At times, even a massive show of force at the police or paramilitary level is insufficient to subdue widespread civil unrest, which results in the deployment of the Indian Army – historically a doggedly secular and subservient organ of state authority. The potential impact on the Army as it participates in the suppression of secessionist conflict and communal violence exposes it to the same challenges which the police and paramilitary forces face. Still further, it represents heightened interference by the Centre in areas of state government responsibility, which is becoming more untenable as the demands for some degree of decentralisation and local-level autonomy grow louder. Although the impact of internal security operations on the Army's tradition of subservience to civilian government might sometimes be overstated,[148] the military has expressed its concerns that an intensive counter insurgency and public security role removes it from what it is intended to do: protect India's external boundaries and interests.[149] The military argues that the Army's readiness to deal with outbursts of militancy in unstable regions or meet external threats at short notice has deteriorated.[150] This was illustrated during the recent armed conflict in Kargil with Pakistani troops and Islamic militants. The Indian Army was largely re-deployed from exhaustive, manpower intensive counter-insurgency operations in the Kashmir

---

[147] Kuldeep Mathur, "The State and the Use of Coercive Power in India," *Asian Survey*, 32 (4), April 1992. p. 345. The Meerut and Ayodhya riots of the early 1990s are illustrative of the direct involvement of Indian police and paramilitaries against Muslims during episodes of communal violence.

[148] Apurba Kundu, *Militarism in India: The Army and Civil Society in Consensus*, (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), p. 193.

[149] Gordon, "Resources and Instability in South Asia," p. 79.

[150] Raju G.C. Thomas, *Indian Security Policy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 79.

Valley to the Kargil sector in the Himalayas while rear echelon Army units and paramilitary forces took their place. According to the military and Indian defence analysts, the sudden shift had a debilitating impact on the Army preparations for mountain warfare.[151] The presence of more than 250,000 Indian troops in Kashmir – and the need for still more to fill the gaps created by the Army's redeployment to the Himalayan frontier – is indicative of the massive drain on material and human resources that the insurgency and the face-off with Pakistan incur.

Globalisation is India's latest struggle with the extra-regional dimension about which its elites have always harboured deep reservations. Extra-regional forces have laid down a considerable legacy of conflictual societal and inter-state relations that manipulates ascriptive differences and represses dissent.[152] It is now poised to have an powerful impact on the configuration of domestic and regional political and economic forces and actors. Globalisation is inextricably linked to the Hindu nationalist project and to the future of stability in South Asia. Growing middle class and political elite support for globalisation and economic liberalisation suggests that the state might eventually clampdown against anti-liberalisation dissent on the basis of religion or caste or developmental status consistent with the Hindutva agenda. Although there is considerable disagreement within the Sangh Parivar over an appropriate policy on economic liberalisation, it is not questioned by a growing number of mostly middle class Indians which have always been a well of support for the BJP. Although rifts over this issue will remain within the Sangh Parivar, India's cautious integration into the global economy may eventually suit the interests of Hindu nationalists. After all, judging from their own upper-class origins, they have the most to gain from liberalisation. The impact of liberalisation programmes in breaking up

---

[151] "Kargil, Post Mortem," *Outlook Online* web site, 26 July 1999, http://www.outlookindia.com/ issue3/fraffairs|6.htm. See also Rahul Bedi, "India's over-stretched forces," *BBC Online Network*, 15 August 1999, www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_421000/421359.htm.

[152] Ali, *The Fearful State*, p. 2.

established behaviours and structures and, sometimes, forcing a bitter programme of pre-millennium modernisation on a largely traditional workforce has consequences for individuals, groups and states.[153] The pain and frustration that inevitably comes along with liberalisation for a country such as India would have to be explained in some way, and it is not inconceivable that the Sangh Parivar would link this with Hindutva, further accessing grievances founded in economic inequality and deprivation to accelerate communal strife.

Conclusion

The subcontinent's modernist, post-colonial inheritors managed their new wards with a hint of arrogance in their assumption that ethnicity would fade away. But South Asia is characterised by ethnicity which spans borders and undermines grand state projects dedicated to reducing its salience. This cultural contiguity in the region is under threat, however. The state, as it falls into the comfort of an ethno-nationalist foundation, papers over these important unifying elements of the region's personality in favour of its own preferences. Instead of a new age of modernity, ethnicity is back. India is not alone in experiencing the effects of the resurgence of revivalist sentiment. In Pakistan, there is growing worry that the state has tied its fortunes to the appeal of Islamist groups, many of which are linked to radical elements in Afghanistan and elsewhere and hold distinctly anti-Indian, anti-Western worldviews. Bangladesh has not been able to escape an Islamic surge, either. Sri Lanka has been dealing with its own ethnic paroxysms for more than a decade, as civil war rages between a majoritarian group that has traditionally persecuted the transnational identity of Tamils.

---

[153] See Mustapha Kamal Pasha, "Globalisation and Poverty in South Asia," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 25 (3), 1996: pp. 635-656.

Given the ethnic polarisation of the subcontinent, which has arguably been growing since the region's independence from colonial paramountcy, what is the potential for a "clash of civilisations" in South Asia? It is evident from that the thesis of a *Kulturkampf* overemphasises the degree of cultural homogeneity in various societies, especially those pervasive and intractable multi-level diversities within India. However, while culture is a nebulous phenomenon, difficult to quantify or theorise, it is not static. It has the capacity for change at all levels: from below at a mass societal level, from the point of view of powerful elites in control of the levers of state and from broader international and transnational trends. Culture remains a vital tool in understanding the modalities of security in a new order characterised by the simultaneous forces of integration (brought on by globalisation) and fragmentation (brought on by responses to globalisation). Through different cultural lenses we can sometimes grasp why individuals, groups and governments might articulate their interests and implement their decisions in ways different than what we might expect. Culture shapes rationality into internally accepted reasoning that might not be comprehended elsewhere. Therefore, if the Hindu nationalists are capable of reconstructing culture and if India is to continue down the path of its saffronisation, then the polarisation of the region and its immediate surroundings into competing religious civilisation-states would certainly bear witness to those who believe that culture will be the world's defining wall of division. It would also necessitate a greater understanding of why Indians see and interact with their world in the way they do.

The convergence of several different actors, trends and forces from multiple levels yields varied explanations and interpretations of how societies are reconfiguring themselves. This work faces limitations rooted in this reality. Although every attempt has been made to recognise the salience of as many important variables as possible, this work is invariably centred on the emerging security dynamics of India and its immediate geographical surroundings. A more

nuanced look at the Hindu nationalist movement would have more fully engaged the political economy and foreign policy implications of the Sangh Parivar's internal divisions over liberalisation and the broader impact on India's plans to integrate with the global economy. This analysis can also be taken to task for assuming the centrality of India on South Asia and not considering the critical role its neighbours play in the region. As such, the process of regional integration and external intervention could have been more fully developed.

It should be noted that this issue is in its early development. The Hindu nationalist movement has achieved a remarkable degree of success on the political front as of late. With elections looming at the time of writing and the public mood still ensconced in the haze of post-Kargil nationalist rhetoric (of the pan-Indian variety, interestingly enough), the Hindu nationalist movement is at a critical moment in its development. Without a doubt, it has grown into a major political and cultural movement in India. Moreover, it now has the capacity to affect state policy making – whether it controls the levers of power or informs them from the opposition benches of the Lok Sabha or from the colourful cacophony of the politics of interest groups, social movements and civil society. While there is much room for it to grow and it has yet to deeply affect the configuration of the region's security, the conditions for the entrenchment of political Hinduism into an authoritarian and chauvinistic state may yet present themselves. The development of Hindu nationalism within the confines of India's noisy democracy should thus be carefully observed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Newspapers and weeklies are listed following the bibliographical references.

Abraham, Itty. "Science and Power in the Postcolonial State." *Alternatives* 21, 1996: pp. 321-339.

Ahmed, Ishtiaq. *State, Nation and Ethnicity in Contemporary South Asia.* London: Pinter, 1996.

Ali, S. Mahmud. *The Fearful State: Power, People and Internal War in South Asia.* London: Zed Books, 1993.

Ayoob, Mohammed. "India as a regional hegemon: external opportunities and internal constraints." *International Journal* 66, Summer 1991: pp. 420-448.

Buzan, Barry. *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*; Second ed. Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1991.

Buzan, Barry and Rizvi, Gowher. *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers.* London: MacMillan, 1986.

Carment, David and James, Patrick. "Two-Level Games and Third-Party Intervention: Evidence from Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans and South Asia." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 29 (3), September 1996: pp. 521-554.

Chadda, Maya. *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Charlton, Sue Ellen M. *Comparing Asian Politics: India, China, and Japan.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.

Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Cohen, Stephen P. "The Regional Impact of a Reforming India." Adelphi Paper 276. *Asia's International Role in the Post-Cold War Era: Part II.* London: Brassey's/IISS, 1993.

Cortright, David and Mattoo, Amitabh. "Elite Public Opinion and Nuclear Weapons Policy in India." *Asian Survey* 36 (6), June 1996: pp. 545-560.

Dickens, David. *More than Bombs and Border Tension: India and Regional Security.* Wellington, N.Z.: Centre for Strategic Studies, 1997.

Dutt, Sagarika. "Identities and the Indian state: an overview." *Third World Quarterly* 19 (3). 1998: pp. 411-433.

Freeman, Michael. "Theories of Ethnicity, Tribalism and Nationalism," in Kenneth Christie, ed., *Ethnic Conflict, Tribal Politics: A Global Perspective*. Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998.

Ganguly, Sumit. *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes for Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 1997.
——— "Ethno-religious Conflict in South Asia." *Survival* 35 (2), Summer 1993: pp. 88-109.
——— "Future Uncertain: Indian Security Policy Approaches the Millenium," *Journal of International Affairs* 51 (1), Summer 1997: pp. 221-238..
——— "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," *International Security* 23 (4), Spring 1999: pp. 148-177.
——— "Kashmir: A Strategic Crisis or Ethnic Nationalism?" Sudipta Kaviraj and R. Alison Lewis eds. *Subnational Movements in South Asia*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1996.

Ghosh, Partha. "Foreign Policy and Electoral Politics in India: Inconsequential Connection." *Asian Survey* 34 (9), September 1994: pp. 807-817.

Gordon, Sandy. "Resources and Instability in South Asia." *Survival* 35 (2), Summer 1993: pp. 66-87.
———"South Asia After the Cold War: Winners and Losers." *Asian Survey* 35 (10), October 1995: pp. 879-895.

Gupta, Shekhar. *India Redefines its Role*. Adelphi Paper 293. New York: Oxford University Press/IISS, 1995.

Hagerty, Devin T. "India's Regional Security Doctrine." *Asian Survey* 31 (4), April 1991: pp. 351-363.
———"Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: The 1990 Indo-Pakistani Crisis." *International Security*. 20 (3), Winter 1995/1996, pp. 79-114.

Hansen, Thomas Blom. *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Hardgrave, Jr., Robert L. "India: The Dilemmas of Diversity." Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds. *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
——— and Stanley Kochanek. *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*, 5 ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1993.

Hoffman, Steven A. "The International Politics of Southern Asia." *Journal of African and Asian Studies* 33 (1), 1998: pp. 43-61.

Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Huntington, Samuel P. "Clash of Civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3), Summer 1993: pp. 22-49.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Jalal, Ayesha. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Joeck, Neil. *Maintaining Nuclear Stability in South Asia*. Adelphi Paper 312. New York: Oxford University Press/IISS, 1997.

Kakar, Sudhir. *The Colours of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion and Conflict*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Katzenstein, Mary Fainsod, Uday Singh Mehta and Usha Thakkar. "The Rebirth of Shiv Sena: The Symbiosis of Discursive and Organizational Power." *Journal of Asian Studies* 56 (2), May 1997: pp. 371-390.

Kaviraj, Sudipta. "Crisis of the Nation-state in India." *Political Studies* 42, 1994: pp. 115-129.

Khan, Rasheeduddin. "Communalism and the Nation-State." *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 11 (2), Spring 1994: pp. 41-44.

Kohli, Atul. *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
——— Ed. *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Kolodner, Eric. "The Political Economy of the Rise and Fall (?) of Hindu Nationalism." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 25 (2), 1995: pp. 233-253.

Kothari, Rajni. "Class and Communalism in India." *Economic and Political Weekly*. December 3, 1998: pp. 2589 – 2592.

Kundu, Apurba. *Militarism in India: The Army and Civil Society in Consensus*. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998.

Latham, Andrew. "The Role of Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Policy: A Preliminary Investigation." Andrew Latham, ed., *Non-Proliferation Agreements, Arrangements and Response: Proceedings of the 1996 Canadian Non-Proliferation Workshop*. Toronto: York University/Centre for International and Security Studies, 1997.

Mahmood, Cynthia Keppley. "Rethinking Indian Communalism: Culture and Counter-Culture." *Asian Survey* 33 (7), July 1993: pp. 722-737.

Malik, Yogendra K. and Singh, V.B. "Bharatiya Janata Party: An Alternative to Congress (I)?" *Asian Survey* 32 (4), April 1992: pp. 318-336.
——— and V.B. Singh. *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata*

Party. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994.
——— and Dhirendra K. Vajpeyi. "The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India's Secular Democracy at Risk." *Asian Survey* 29 (3), 1989: pp. 308-325.

Meghani, Mihir. "Hindutva: The Great Nationalist Ideology." Bharatiya Janata Party web site, www.bjp.org/philo.htm. Accessed March 28, 1999.

Monshipouri, Mahmood. "Backlash to the Destruction at Ayodhya: A View from Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 33 (7), July 1993: pp. 711-721.

Nandy, Ashish, Shikha Trivedy, Shail Mayaram and Achyut Yagnik. *Creating a Nationality: The Ramjanmabhumi Movement and Fear of the Self*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.
——— "The Twilight of Certitudes: Secularism, Hindu Nationalism, and Other Masks of Deculturation." *Alternatives* 22, 1997: pp. 157-176.

Omvedt, Gail. "Hinduism and Politics." *Economic and Political Weekly*. April 7, 1990: pp. 723-729.

Pasha, Mustapha Kamal. "Security as Hegemony." *Alternatives* 21, 1996: pp. 283-302.
——— "Globalisation and Poverty in South Asia." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. 25 (3), 1996: pp. 635-656.

Rao, K. Raghavendra. "Religion, Society and State in India: Theory Versus Reality." Neera Chandhoke, ed. *Understanding the Post-Colonial World: Theory and Method*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1994.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. *Widening Horizons*. 1992. www.rss.org.

Rubinoff, Arthur G. "The Multilateral Imperative in India's Foreign Policy." *The Round Table* 319, 1991: pp. 313-334.

Sarhadi, Ajit Singh. *Nationalisms in India: The Problem*. Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1973.

Sarkar, Sumit. "The Fascism of the Sangh Parivar." *Economic and Political Weekly*. January 30, 1993: pp. 163-167.

Seshia, Shaila. "Divide and Rule in Indian Party Politics: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party." *Asian Survey* 38 (11), 1998: pp. 1036-1051.

Sidhu, Waheguru Pal Singh. *Enhancing Indo-US Strategic Cooperation*. Adelphi Paper 313. New York: Oxford University Press/IISS, 1997.

Singh, Jaswant. "Against Nuclear Apartheid," *Foreign Affairs 77* (5), September/October 1998: pp. 41-52.

Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. New York: New York University Press, 1979.

——— *State and Nation in the Third World: The Western State and African Nationalism.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
———*Theories of Nationalism.* London: Duckworth. 1971.

Smith, Chris. *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal.* New York: Oxford University Press/SIPRI, 1994.

Suhkre, Astri and Lela Garner Noble, eds. *Ethnic Conflict in International Relations.* New York: Praeger, 1977.

Thakur, Ramesh. "Ayodhya and the Politics of India's Secularism: A Double-Standards Discourse." *Asian Survey* 33 (7), July 1993: pp. 645-664.
——— "A Changing of the Guard in India." *Asian Survey* 38 (6), June 1998: pp. 603-623.

Thomas, Raju G.C. *Indian Security Policy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.
——— "The Security and Economy of a Reforming India." Adelphi Paper 276. *Asia's International Role in the Post-Cold War Era: Part II.* London: Brassey's/IISS, 1993.

Vanaik, Achin. "Communalism and our foreign policy." *Seminar* 374, October 1990: pp. 17-20.

Varshney, Ashutosh. "Battling the Past, Forging a Future? Ayodhya and Beyond." Philip Oldenburg, ed., *India Briefing, 1993.* Boulder, Westview Press, 1993.
——— "Contested Meanings: India's National Identity, Hindu Nationalism, and the Politics of Anxiety." *Daedalus* 122 (3), Summer 1993: pp. 227-261.

Wirsing, Robert G. *India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Wisner, Frank. "South Asia's Cold Dawn: United States' Policy Toward India and Pakistan." Remarks to the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, April 28, 1999. www.georgetown.edu/sfs/programs/isd/wisner.htm.

News Sources (print and online media)

BBC Online Service: www.bbc.co.uk.
The Economist.
Far Eastern Economic Review, print and online editions: www.feer.com.
Frontline, print and online editions: www.frontlineonline.com.
The Hindu, online edition: www.india-server.com/thehindu/thehindu.html.
The Hindustan Times, online edition: www.hindustan-times.com.
Indian Express, online edition: www.expressindia.com.
India Today, print and online editions: www.india-today.com.
New York Times, online edition: www.nytimes.com.
Outlook Online, online edition: www.outlookindia.com.
The Times of India, online edition: www.timesofindia.com.
Wall Street Journal.
Washington Post, online edition: www.washingtonpost.com.