

THE SAFFRON FACTOR AND THE KASHMIR PROBLEM:
COMMUNALISM, THE WEAK STATE, AND INTERNATIONAL BRINKMANSHIP

by

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at one instance of the security predicaments faced by many states in the Third World: primordialist challenges based on ethnicity, language or religion. More specifically, it discusses the impact of Hindu communalist organizations, especially the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on one issue of Indian domestic politics which is linked with its foreign policy: the problem of secessionism in Kashmir, which is allegedly supported by Pakistan. The thesis stated here is that while the BJP may represent a factor likely to complicate the task of the Indian state in its efforts to ensure socio-political cohesiveness over a culturally fragmented polity, the influence of that movement is very limited in sensitive areas of national security like foreign policy.

The first chapter reviews the literature on conflicts in South Asia, with reference to Kashmir and the role played by Hindu communalist organizations. This overview identifies a methodological difficulty limiting our understanding of this conflict: the Euro-centric bias of the discipline of international relations theory. This bias is expressed by a tendency to overlook a major source of insecurity within most Third World states: the lack of socio-political cohesiveness. The continuum from strong to weak states established by Barry Buzan is brought forward in an attempt to overcome this methodological difficulty because it points to the low degree of socio-political cohesiveness in weak states as a problem generating high levels of violence within and between states. As such, it seems relevant to analyze the impact of domestic cleavages on foreign policy-making.

The second chapter presents the contradiction between communal and secular nationalism in India as a fundamental political cleavage with repercussions for Indian foreign policy. The nature of Hindu communalism is explored through a presentation of its origins, its scope and its political philosophy. The divisive potential of this world-view is explained by pointing to the problems likely to be raised by the attempts to implement its recommendations. The overview concentrates on the policies advocated by the Hindu communalists towards secessionism in Kashmir and its implications for the relationship between New-Delhi and Islamabad.

The third chapter describes how Hindu communalist organizations have sought to influence the Indian central government in its policy towards Kashmir. It illustrates how Hindu communalism can have a direct and indirect influence with evidence from the campaign of the Praja Parishad in 1952 and the exploitation of communal cleavages by the Congress in 1983. The central part of the case study focuses on the attempts made by the BJP to influence the National Front government of 1989, and contrasts the uncertainties of that period with the firmness showed by the Congress government of Narasimha Rao in late 1991 and early 1992.

The fourth chapter evaluates the attempts by the BJP to influence the policy of New Delhi towards Kashmiri secessionists and assesses to what extent this influence was conducive to interstate tension between New Delhi and Islamabad. What emerges is that the BJP was rather unsuccessful in prodding the government into adopting policies that would compromise a political settlement in Kashmir.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
CONTENTS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
I. THE WEAK STATE, PRIMORDIALIST CONFLICTS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.....	3
II. THE IMPACT OF HINDU COMMUNALISM ON INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY.....	18
III. THE IMPACT OF THE BJP ON NEW DELHI'S POLICY TOWARDS KASHMIRI SECESSIONISM.....	39
IV. COMMUNALISM AND THE INSECURITY DILEMMA IN SOUTH ASIA.....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	76

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Introduction

The problem

This study will discuss the impact of Hindu communalist organizations, especially the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on foreign policy-making in India. The thesis will focus on the relationship between New Delhi and the secessionist movements in Kashmir, and the Indian response to the support received by these groups from Pakistan. The thesis presented here is that the political parties representing Hindu communalism can limit the freedom of manoeuvre for a minority government in New Delhi, but that they are rather unsuccessful when the government at the centre disposes of a majority.

However, this statement of the problem does not imply that the secular state would accept secession for Kashmir if the Hindu communalist organizations were weak. Other fundamental considerations, such as the strategic value of Kashmir, or its economic resources, also matter. The concern about the nationalist appeal of the Hindu communalist organizations is only one factor among others which can influence the foreign policy of India. However, it has received only scant attention so far. It is important to overcome that lacuna since the BJP ranks now as the second most important political party in India. It also matters because this party has a policy that is detrimental to peaceful communal coexistence within India, and thus represent a complicating factor in the attempts by New Delhi to solve the problem of secessionism in Kashmir.

Apart from analyzing one aspect of the Kashmir conflict, there are two purposes to this study. First, there are many commonalities between this instance of escalation from domestic turmoil to inter-state tension, and similar situations elsewhere in the Third World. It is hoped that this study of the impact of Hindu communalism on the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir will contribute to our understanding of the security predicaments faced by many states in Asia and Africa, which are also facing various primordialist challenges. Second, I have an interest in bringing to the discipline of international relations the insights of comparative politics. While the latter also looks for patterns and recurrence, it pays more attention to the specificities of the societies it observes, than does the dominant paradigm of neo-realism in international relations theory.

Organization of the thesis

After a review of the literature on conflicts between India and Pakistan, the thesis will turn to the relationship between the central government in New Delhi and the secessionist movement in Kashmir as a key issue. However, it will be stressed that the Euro-centric bias of the discipline of international relations theory hinders the understanding of this kind of conflicts. To overcome the problem, the continuum from strong to weak states established by Barry Buzan is brought forward because it points to the low degree of socio-political cohesiveness in weak states as a problem generating high levels of violence within and between states. Several theoretical studies of the impact of domestic ethnic conflicts on disputes between states will be reviewed to evaluate whether this approach is fruitful. At this juncture, the contradiction between secession and state consolidation is singled out as dependent on a struggle between two perspectives on the foundations of socio-political cohesiveness in India. Kashmir's accession to India is seen as a vindication for each of the contending world-views.

The second chapter presents the contradiction between communal and secular nationalism in India as an important political cleavage, and Hindu communalism as a source of threat to the security of India. The nature of Hindu communalism is explored through a presentation of its origins, its scope and its political philosophy. The divisive potential of this world-view is explained by pointing to the problems likely to be raised by the attempts to implement its recommendations.

The third chapter explores in more concrete terms how Hindu communalist organizations can influence the centre in its policy towards Kashmir. After distinguishing between indirect and direct influences, it looks at the campaign of the Praja Parishad in 1952 and the exploitation of communal cleavages by the Congress in 1983. The central part of the case study focuses on the attempts made by Hindu communalist organizations to influence the National Front government of 1989.

The fourth chapter evaluates the attempts of Hindu communalists to influence the policy of New Delhi towards Kashmiri secessionists and assesses to what extent this influence was conducive to inter-state tension between New Delhi and Islamabad. It will conclude by asking whether the findings fit with the theoretical model of weak states and one of its postulates, the idea that domestic contradictions and inter-state conflicts are intertwined.

Chapter One

The Weak State, Primordialist Conflicts and International Relations

India, Pakistan, Kashmir: Three Ideas of Nationalism

Assessing the influence of Hindu communalism on the foreign policy of India is a complex undertaking, because of the fluid nature of Hindu communalism itself, but also because of the peculiarities of India's security concerns, whose external dimensions often get intertwined with internal problems. The crisis in Kashmir represents a vivid illustration of the connection between domestic issues and foreign affairs. The challenge of the secessionist movement in Kashmir raises a problem of governance within India, but also a problem of international relations because Kashmir is a contested territory between India and Pakistan.

Thus, assessing the influence of Hindu communalism on the foreign policy of India requires looking at the policy of New Delhi towards secessionism in Kashmir, as well as looking at Indian foreign affairs, and more specifically, at New Delhi's relationship with Islamabad. This task is facilitated by the fact that most historical accounts of the wars between India and Pakistan, India's foreign policy, or India's security predicaments implicitly make the connection between the domestic problems of secessionism within India and its foreign policy.

One of the pioneering efforts to understand the root of the first conflict between India and Pakistan was made by Michael Brecher, who explained the Kashmir war as primarily a conflict of ideology on the resolution of which depended the welfare of religious minorities within both states.¹ Josef Korbel elaborated on that analysis by emphasizing that the struggle for Kashmir was primarily an uncompromising conflict between two concepts of political organization.² The Congress and the leaders of India viewed the subcontinent as one nation united by history, while the Muslim League and the leaders of Pakistan viewed it as two. Jawaharlal Nehru always believed in the national unity of India, and interpreted conflicts between Hindus and Muslims as disputes among elites for privileges. His view not only rejected the two nations theory, but also stressed the need to inject a more rationalist thought into the spirit of religiosity prevailing in South Asia.³

¹ Michael Brecher, *The Struggle for Kashmir* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1953), 51-4.

² Joseph Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, rev. 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 25.

³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India* (New York: The John Day Company, 1942), 20.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, on the other hand, believed that Hinduism and Islam were not only different religions, but distinct social orders. Furthermore, he was convinced that if Hindus and Muslims were to be brought together under a democratic regime, the result would be Hindu majority rule over the Muslim minority.⁴ Sisir Gupta has pointed out how the ambiguities about the final status of the princely states and the boundaries of the successor states to the British Raj were factors transforming this contradiction between the Congress' rejection of the theory of the two nations and the Muslim League's fear of Hindu domination into the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan.⁵

S. M. Burke was the first to elaborate on the indirect impact of Hindu communalism on the conflict between India and Pakistan by pointing to the rationale behind the resolve of the Muslim League to carve out an Islamic state in South Asia.⁶ He wrote that the demand for Pakistan derived from the suspicions of many Indian Muslims about the solidity of the commitment among Indian nationalists within Congress to establish a secular state.

This view deserves some comment since the generally held opinion is that Pakistan was a Muslim state while India was secular. While Mohammed Ali Jinnah was committed to the establishment of a state for Indian Muslims, he did not advocate the creation of a theocratic Islamic Republic.⁷ Sumit Ganguly has pointed to substantial evidence revealing the collaboration between Congress leaders and Hindu communalists before independence, in the arena of local politics, to show that the fears of Muslims about Hindu communal sentiments were not entirely unfounded.⁸ In his study of the politics of Kashmir, Balbir Singh has demonstrated that even in a state with a non-Hindu majority, Hindu communalist organizations had enough leverage to influence the state government to enact policies congenial to their interests.⁹

⁴ *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, vol. 1, (Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1946-47), 174-80.

⁵ Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966), 440.

⁶ S.M. Burke, *Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974).

⁷ In his speech of 11th August 1947 to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Jinnah stated: "You may belong to any religion, caste or creed -- that has nothing to do with the business of the state." See *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, ed. Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, vol. 1, (Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1942), 404.

⁸ Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of Wars in South Asia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 6-7.

⁹ Balbir Singh, *State Politics in India* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 211.

Sumit Ganguly has summarized some of these findings and has tried to theorize about the roots of the conflict.¹⁰ His main point is that the ideological conflict between secular India and Islamic Pakistan led to a confrontation because of the haste in which the post-colonial arrangements for South Asia were made. With the Kashmir issue still pending, the new states were left with a territorial dispute which violated the founding principle of communal representation at the core of one of the two states (Pakistan). This ambiguity left a legacy of irredentist claims in Islamabad, as well as a strong anti-irredentist sentiment in New Delhi, which was vital to sanction India's non-communal ideal. What is lacking in this study, however, is an evaluation of the impact of Hindu communalist organizations in this refusal by the secular leaders to accept Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

All the historical accounts reviewed so far were written at a time when the phenomenon of Hindu communalism appeared to be on the decline. Predictably, the impact of the BJP and other similarly-minded organizations on the relationship between India and Pakistan, or on New Delhi's policy towards secessionism in Kashmir, received only marginal attention.¹¹ However, the reemergence of Hindu communalism during the 1980's has led to a renewed interest in the impact of this political movement on Indian foreign policy-making.

Recently, numerous accounts of the relationship between New Delhi and the secessionists in Kashmir have alluded to the impact of Hindu communalism. After offering a concise account of the three forms of nationalism contradicting each other in Kashmir, Ashutosh Varshney pointed to the internal contradictions within each of them to explain the dynamics of their interactions.¹² He identified Hindu communalism as the main challenger to the secular nationalism of India and pointed to New Delhi's fear of empowering this movement as an explanation for the refusal by New Delhi to deal "generously" with secessionists in Kashmir.

¹⁰ Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of Wars in South Asia*, 7.

¹¹ For instance, Gowher Rizvi dismisses the idea of Kashmir as a symbol of the secular state. He rather views in the refusal by New Delhi to accept Kashmir's secession from India the Congress' refusal to accept the *fait accompli* of Pakistan's independence. See "The Rivalry Between India and Pakistan," in *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers*, eds. Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi (London: Macmillan, 1986), 93-126.

¹² Varshney identified Pakistani nationalism as a state ideology founded on religious identification; Kashmiri nationalism, as an ideal rooted in ethnic identification; and Indian nationalism, as a movement providing a broadly-based mean of identification attuned to India's cultural diversity though its secular ideology. See Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan and Kashmir. Antinomies of Nationalism," *Asian Survey* 31 no. 11 (November 1991): 997-1019.

In 1990 several articles tried to make sense of the sudden escalation of tension between India and Pakistan in the midst of a violent uprising erupting in Kashmir. This crisis occurred during the minority government of the National Front, a fragile coalition which depended on the support of a Hindu communalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (hereafter BJP). Putting the crisis in a broader perspective, Sumit Ganguly linked the insurgency in Kashmir with a spate of anti-Muslim incidents committed by Hindu communalist organizations throughout North India during the 1980's and pointed to the possibility of inadvertent military escalation between India and Pakistan because of the tremendous domestic pressures experienced by the coalition government in New Delhi.¹³

Ayesha Jalal pointed to the pressures of Hindu communalists on a hung parliament as an impediment in the implementation of a solution likely to assuage the demands of Kashmiri secessionist militants and lessen the tension at the border with Pakistan.¹⁴ Shekhar Gupta hinted at the worst-case scenario contemplated by most secular leaders in India: the breakaway of Kashmir under the aegis of Muslim fundamentalists. Such an event would leave the Indian Muslims "suspects forever" and single them out as the targets of reprisals by Hindu communalists on a scale similar to that which followed the partition of 1947.¹⁵

All the studies reviewed so far are mostly descriptive and historical, and their authors have not attempted to draw generalizations relevant for other instances of armed conflict. This is understandable since the uprising in Kashmir, like the majority of conflicts in the Third World, do not accord with the prevailing understanding of international wars, which is rooted in the experience of wars by Western states. Predictably, these theoretical shortcomings on the etiology of war have repercussions on the analysis of the factors influencing foreign policy-making. However, since instances of intra-state conflict turning into inter-state confrontations, such as Kashmir, are likely to recur in the Third World, it is necessary to revise our analytical framework for the study of how domestic political factors might influence decision-making.¹⁶

¹³ Sumit Ganguly, "Avoiding War in Kashmir," *Foreign Affairs* 69 no. 5 (Winter 1990-91): 72.

¹⁴ Ayesha Jalal, "Kashmir Scars," *The New Republic* (July 23, 1990), 17-20.

¹⁵ Shekhar Gupta, "The Gathering Storm," in *India Briefing, 1990*, eds. Marshall M. Bouton and Philip Oldenburg (Boulder, CO: Westview press, 1990), 50.

¹⁶ K.J. Holsti has mentioned 58 instances of war since 1945. Among these, only the Soviet interventions in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) involved two states which were not in the Third World. See *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 274-8.

In looking at the constraints in the processes of foreign policy-making, most studies assume that states are unitary actors. Thus, the majority of the studies about the conflict between India and Pakistan which fall within the category of international relations seek to link their problem with the competition between the super-powers. While they acknowledge the attempts of both states to consolidate themselves as a source of insecurity by itself, these studies often tend to see regional conflicts and security perceptions as the result of external influence on the processes of foreign policy-making.¹⁷

Similarly, studies focusing on the processes of foreign policy-making in India have yielded very few results. Despite their titles, most of these works are mainly historical narratives on the foreign policy of India before or after independence, or treatises on the foreign policy objectives of India.¹⁸ While some examine the impact of domestic predicaments on New Delhi's foreign policy, they make only brief mention of communal cleavages as a factor likely to influence the decisions of those responsible for foreign affairs. Furthermore, almost no theoretical contribution has been made to explain the processes of foreign policy-making in India. The case study done by Michael Brecher to illustrate the mutual interaction of domestic and external stimuli to foreign policy behaviour during the devaluation crisis of 1966, and the conceptual work of Bahgat Korany on foreign policy-making in the Third World represent two exceptions to that trend. However, their contributions do not make reference to the issue of communalism.¹⁹

¹⁷ For several examples of this approach, see Selig Harrison, and K. Subrahmanyam, *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Indian and American Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Stephen Philip Cohen ed., *The Security of South Asia: American and Asian Perspectives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Ashok Kapur, *The Indian Ocean* (New York: Praeger, 1983).

¹⁸ For historical approaches to Indian Foreign policy, see Surjit Mansingh, *India's Search for Power: Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Sage, 1984); Bimla Prasad, *The Origins of Indian Foreign Policy: The Indian National Congress and World Affairs* (Calcutta: Bookland Private, 1960). For descriptive accounts of the institutions, see P.N. Haksar, *India's Foreign Policy and its Problems* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1989); C.P. Bhabri, *The Foreign Policy of India* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987); A. Appadorai, and M.S. Rajan, *India's Foreign Policy and Foreign Relations* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985); Vidya Prakash Dutt, *India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1984); J. Bandyopadhyaya, *The Making of India's Foreign Policy: Determinants, Institutions, Processes and Personalities* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1970).

¹⁹ Michael Brecher, "India's Devaluation of 1966: Linkage Politics and Crisis Decision-Making," *British Journal of International Studies*, 3 (April 1977): 1-25; Bahgat Korany ed., *How Foreign Policy Decisions Are Made in the Third World: A Comparative Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 181-3.

International Relations Theory and the Problem of Inter-state Conflicts in South Asia

The classical tradition within the discipline of international relations theory seeks to uncover the causes of armed conflict and thus to define the parameters within which foreign policy ought to be conducted in relation to the matters of national security.²⁰ However, as Holsti demonstrates, the conceptual apparatus of that approach is not conducive to an understanding of the matters of war and peace in the Third World because the political realities there depart significantly from the conditions prevailing in the Western world.²¹ It is important to keep in mind the inadequacies of that apparatus, because it will alert us to the adjustments necessary for a more adequate analysis of the etiology of armed conflict in South Asia, and more specifically will guide us to identify what are the constraints faced by foreign policy-makers in India.

The dominant theoretical understanding of international relations is based on the work of Kenneth M. Waltz,²² who posited that states are all similar units existing in a condition of anarchy, where each suffers from a security dilemma. To put it simply, in the absence of any over-arching authority, states seek to advance their own national security through various policies ranging from arms race and deterrence to the constitution of alliances. However, in behaving this way, they create an environment of decreased security within the community of states and for themselves since their actions increase the insecurity of other states. For Waltz, the best way to accommodate this security dilemma is through balances of power, whereby one great power is prevented from attaining the status of hegemon by the creation of alliances between the weaker powers. What needs to be underlined is that the national security problematic of states has external origins in Waltz's vision of international relations.

²⁰ K.J. Holsti wrote that international theory can be divided into three paradigms: the state-centric paradigm, or the classical tradition; the global society paradigm; and the neo-Marxist paradigm. The classical tradition is defined by a consensus on three points: 1) the focus of the study is the causes of war and the conditions for peace, 2) the main units of analysis are the behaviour of states, 3) states operate in a system characterized by the lack of a central authority. This tradition of enquiry includes both the realist approach from Thucydides to H. Morgenthau, its neo-realist variant identified with K. Waltz and R. Gilpin; and the solidarist perspective identified with Grotius and H. Bull. See *The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1985), 10.

²¹ See K. J. Holsti, "International Theory and War in the Third World," in *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States*, ed. Brian Job (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992), 37-60.

²² Kenneth M. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979).

However, the realities of international relations in the Third World do not fit with this model because they do not reproduce the circumstances of inter-state politics in Europe since 1648, which are at the root of Waltz's theorization. Acknowledging the discrepancy between the conceptualization of scholars about inter-state conflicts and the facts of guerrillas, *intifada*, wars of national liberation and other forms of armed conflicts in the Third World, Brian Job has written about the "insecurity dilemma" of Third World states to describe situations where the threat to the security of states comes from domestic sources as well as from external ones.²³ This insecurity dilemma aptly describes the situation faced by the Indian Prime Minister and his cabinet during the crisis of 1990, when the uprising in Kashmir almost led the country into armed confrontation with Pakistan.

The notion of the insecurity dilemma does not exclude the possibility that states in the Third World can find themselves in classic security dilemma situations. Similarly, there are states outside the Third World to which aspects of the insecurity dilemma can apply with respect to their own security predicaments. Furthermore, the criticism of the Euro-centric bias within the classical tradition in international theory does not propose to substitute another paradigm. Rather, it supports the view that we need to complete it by incorporating insights derived from the examination of security in the Third World. The present discussion will present three aspects of the problem that are inadequately grasped by most international relations theorists because of this bias.²⁴

The first one is the dependent variable of war. Because the view of the problem will determine the means undertaken towards its resolution, it is necessary to start any discussion on foreign policy in the Third World with a preliminary discussion of the antecedent variables of armed conflicts. The problem is that most instances of organized violence in the Third World are "low-intensity conflicts," guerrilla wars, as well as more conventional forms of warfare. In the case of the insurgency in Kashmir in 1990, the phenomenon to explain is difficult to define with precision. Is the secessionist agitation an instance of domestic unrest for India or a war of national liberation for Kashmir? What is the distinction between rebellion and war, since the actions of the secessionists were supported by another state? When was the conflict initiated?

²³ Brian Job, "National, Regime, and State Securities in the Third World," in *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States*, ed. Brian Job (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992), 11-35.

²⁴ The following discussion in this section is derived mainly from K. J. Holsti, "International Theory and War in the Third World," 40-51.

Scholars in the field of international relations who are concerned with the causes of war would exclude from their universe of case studies most instances of armed conflicts that have occurred since World War II if they complied with a definition of warfare based on the European model of 1648-1945, with established states, waging wars for clearly defined objectives, and under specific rules. The secessionist agitation in Kashmir in 1990 and the armed intervention by the central government of India did not correspond to that classical pattern. Still, the tally for victims in that confrontation in 1990 was far higher than the figures for the Indian and Pakistani soldiers that died during the same period (mostly of frostbite) in the Siachen Glacier area.²⁵

A second aspect of the problem which is problematic is the key assumptions about the actors involved. The standard conceptual apparatus makes a distinction between international wars opposing two or more states, and civil wars within states. However, one of the major characteristics of wars since 1945 has been the internationalization of civil wars.²⁶ The requirement that the actors involved in armed conflict should be the organized armies of two or more states would significantly reduce the actual number of wars since 1945. Another problem is that the works of Waltz, Gilpin, Morgenthau and others within the classical tradition in international relations theory concentrate on the behaviour of the traditional great powers.²⁷ However, there are few if any great powers in the Third World, and even though India may be considered as a regional great power, most studies on war do not place the Indian Union in that category. Because of this exclusion, the findings of the discipline on war may have little relevance for Indian security concerns.

²⁵ Approximately 600 soldiers died as a result of the skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani soldiers between 1981 and 1990 in the Siachen Glacier area, while between 1983 and 1990, India has lost more than 19,800 lives in the conflict between the central government and the Khalistan separatists in Punjab, the All Bodo Students Union in Assam, the Muslim Liberation Front and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. The death toll for the victims of separatist military activity against the Indian security forces in the state of Jammu and Kashmir alone for 1990 was estimated at 2000 people. Sources: Karin Lindgren, G. Kenneth Wilson, Peter Wallensteen and Kjell-Åke Nordquist, "Major armed conflicts in 1989," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1990, World Armaments and Disarmament*, 393-419:01-2; Karin Lindgren, Birger Heldt, Kjell-Åke Nordquist and Peter Wallensteen, "Major armed conflicts in 1990," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1991, World Armaments and Disarmament*, 345-83:58-60.

²⁶ The Vietnam War, for instance, is often considered an international war, although it started as a civil war between the Viet Cong and the South Vietnamese government. Similarly, the Algerian war should be excluded if we use the standard theoretical apparatus, since Algeria was not a legally recognized state when the conflict erupted. See K. J. Holsti, "International Theory and War in the Third World," 41.

²⁷ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Kenneth M. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Random House, 1979); Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).

Finally, a third aspect of international relations theory that needs reassessment is the explanations for wars in the Third World. While the structures of the international system may influence the behaviour of an actor in inter-state conflicts, shifts in power distribution in the international system cannot always explain the domestic roots of intra-state conflicts. For instance, the Sino-Soviet rift which propelled an evolution from an absolute bipolar system to a loose bipolar system had no relevance to the discontent in East Bengal from which the third war between India and Pakistan originated.²⁸ The notion of balance of power, used to describe the behaviour of states entering into alliances to prevent a dominant power from exerting its hegemony, also has little relevance to the South Asian context. India's status of regional supremacy is not the result of armed operations, as in eighteenth century Europe, but is a legacy of former colonial structures. The national attributes of size and military power used for the study of war in Europe have little relevance to the situation in most Third World countries. The most important national attribute of Third World states is not power, but their inability to establish the legitimacy of their rule over multi-ethnic societies.

The ambiguities reviewed so far inevitably influence the nature of the problem we have to explain. Once the proposition that warfare in the Third World is a matter of domestic conflict intertwined with inter-state relations is accepted, the dependent variable of foreign policy appears as insufficient to analyze the impact of domestic predicaments on foreign policy. It becomes necessary to consider also the decision of the central government in its relations with the domestic problem of secession, since this last issue is likely to get enmeshed with the international relations of the state.

The argument to this point suggests that some of the central assumptions of the realist perspective are inadequate for scholars and policy-makers seeking to explain Third World security predicaments. The realities of armed conflict in the Third World and the nature of the actors involved suggest that for a better grasp of the insecurity dilemmas faced by Asian states engaged in violent conflicts, it may be fruitful to look at their national attributes. Among these, the continuum from strong to weak states stands as a useful yardstick.

²⁸ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

The Insecurity Dilemma of Weak States

The continuum from strong to weak states established by Barry Buzan is useful to understand the domestic constraints nurturing instances of insecurity dilemma because it puts the problem of socio-political cohesiveness, arguably an outstanding feature of most Third World states, at the core of its definition of security within and between states.²⁹ The spectrum from weak to strong states is established from the recognition that states vary not only in their status as powers, but also in their degree of socio-political cohesiveness.

The term “state” refers to the governing institutions, the idea of the state, and the physical base of the state (the population and the territory, including all the natural resources and the man-made wealth contained within the borders of the state). It is thus distinct from the term “power,” which relates to the military and economic capabilities of states.³⁰ Accordingly, weak states may be strong powers (like India) or weak ones (like Bhutan), and strong states may be weak powers (like Switzerland) or strong ones (like the United States). The existence of a strong state reflects a long history during which a state has had the time to establish the institutions, the ideas, and the physical basis of the state. When the state is weak, the idea and institutions of the state are both weak, and only its physical base may be well defined.

The fact that most weak states are located in the Third World points to the legacy of colonialism, or rather the precipitous nature of decolonization, as an explanation for the lack of socio-political cohesiveness in weak states. The nationalist sentiment which precipitated the independence of most Third World states, Buzan argues, rarely exhibits the “positive unity of a coherent cultural group,” but the negative unity of “common opposition to occupying foreigners.”³¹ As soon as the goal of sovereignty is reached, however, the population of the new states often discovers that the boundaries of their countries are arbitrarily defined, and that the new polities have no political foundation of their own, apart from recognition by the international community.³²

²⁹ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2d ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991).

³⁰ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, Chapter 2.

³¹ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, 98.

³² Robert H. Jackson “Quasi-States, Dual regimes, and Neo-Classical Theory: International Jurisprudence and the Third World,” *International Organization* 41 no.4 (1987), 519-49.

Weak states are characterized by the following attributes: a high level of political violence; a conspicuous role for political police in the lives of citizens; a major conflict over the ideology that should be used to legitimize the authority of the state; the lack of a coherent national identity or the presence of competing national identities within the state; and lack of a well-defined hierarchy of political authority.³³ Because weak states are at an early age in the process of state building, Buzan wrote, the grim reality of violence is endemic. It is the symptom of the accumulation of power by the state, and if the process follows the consolidation model of Europe, it is likely to engender further violence.³⁴

The problem of weak states is that they have not had the time to create a domestic societal and political consensus strong enough to eliminate the widespread use of force as a major element in domestic political life. Further, in many of these societies, Mohammed Ayoob argues, the pressures of state building at a rapid pace has propelled some groups among the elites to deny the multi-national reality of their state and attempt to construct a state dominated by a single national group.³⁵ The result is an encouragement to ethnic/language/religious separatism among the groups that feel deprived by this evolution.

These descriptions of the weak state can be put beside Paul Brass' presentation of the difficulties faced by India since independence, and which increased after Nehru's death: the diminishing ability of the centre to maintain the unity of the country, the decline of authoritative institutions in Indian politics, and the increasing involvement of the coercive arm of the state in the perpetration of violence.³⁶ The Indian state is particularly vulnerable to the problems stemming from a lack of socio-political cohesiveness because of the contrast between the centralizing tendencies of the state and the proverbial ethnic/language/religious cleavages of Indian society, to which needs to be added the divisions between "caste" Hindus and *harijans*, as well as those within the two groups.

³³ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, 100.

³⁴ See Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Predicament of the Third World State: Reflections on State Making in a Comparative Perspective," in *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States*, ed. Brian Job (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992), 63-80; and *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 71.

³⁵ Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Predicament of the Third World State: Reflections on State Making in a Comparative Perspective," 72.

³⁶ Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

While most of the historical accounts reviewed before acknowledge the impact of a lack of socio-political cohesiveness within India and Pakistan on the origins of war in South Asia, the literature of international relations theory has been traditionally more cautious. Most accounts of the politicization of identity and its impact on secessionism, irredentism and other forms of conflicts in the Third World have been made in the field of comparative politics.³⁷ However, some recent contributions in international relations theory have sought to outline the links between a low level of cohesiveness within weak states with inter-state conflicts in the Third World. Most of these studies point to the lack of congruence between states' boundaries and ethnic/language/religious distributions as a source of secessionist or irredentist problems.³⁸

However, the inter-state impact of primordialist conflicts should not be exaggerated. While various calculations may tempt the rulers of some states to exploit the problems accruing from the multi-ethnic/language/religious nature of other states, few governments act exclusively to protect ethnic/language/religious *confrères*. This consideration is always weighed against more utilitarian or prudential ones.³⁹ The contributions to Suhrke and Noble's collection have emphasized this point when they tried to evaluate the impact of multi-ethnicity on the frequency of foreign interference in Third World states. Their findings were that no correlation could be made between ethnic fragmentation and the likelihood of escalation into inter-state armed conflict.⁴⁰

³⁷ See Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973).

³⁸ See Naomi Chazan ed., *Irredentism and International Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991); Stephen Ryan, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1990); Donald K. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

³⁹ Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, 173.

⁴⁰ Among their findings: state to state rivalries produced restraint in the support to ethnic minorities because states want to avoid intensified and unregulated conflicts against their adversary; when minorities are relatively small, the cost of external support necessary to help them reach their objectives acts as a deterrent against intervention. This study contradicts the Wilsonian postulate that internal ethnic conflicts constitute a major source of inter-state conflict. It also concludes that the instances of affective intervention to protect ethnic *confrères* leading to international confrontations require exceptional circumstances. See Astri Suhrke and Lela Garner Noble (eds.), *Ethnic Conflict in International Relations* (New York: Praeger, 1977).

Furthermore, a problem commonly found in the works on the impact of domestic conflicts on inter-state violence is the lack of systematic theorization about the relationship between the expression of primordialist sentiments based on ethnic/language/religious criteria and the lack of socio-political cohesiveness within the weak state.⁴¹ In other words, it is not clear why only a few primordialist cleavages may lead to secessionist, irredentist, or inter-state conflicts, while others may not. A related problem is the lack of conceptual clarity about the categories behind the expression of primordialist sentiment. Concepts such as ethnicity, culture, language groups and sectarian-religious cleavages are not always well defined and distinguished from each other. Sorting out these questions, however, involves numerous definitional issues that are too complex to be undertaken in this thesis. What needs to be noted is that primordial cleavages complicate the ruling elites' efforts to establish political legitimacy and consensus over the whole of society within the boundaries of the weak state.⁴²

However, the operationalization of a theoretical notion like that of the weak state for the analysis of Indian foreign policy does not represent a straightforward task. The first difficulty lies with the evaluation of the impact of ethnic/language/religious cleavages. How is their influence exercised? How can this be distinguished from other sources of influence? To answer such questions, the analyst may have to rely mostly on speculations, since the access to information pertaining to the relationship between New Delhi and Islamabad, or between New Delhi and the Kashmiri secessionists, is a matter of national security. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that many policies with respect to secessionist movements throughout India that seem to be influenced by primordialist interests are policies that would have been entertained anyway by any government if the challenges that these policies sought to address appear to threaten the fabric of the state, or to endanger the position of a government in the parliament.

⁴¹ This thesis does not reify primordial (ethnic/language/religious) categories: it agrees with the views stressing how much the key elements of primordial cleavages - blood relations, language, religion - vary widely, and acknowledges that ethnic/language/religious identification changes to suit changing ends. Ethnic/language/religious diversity *per se* is not the problem that needs elucidation. See Paul Brass, "Ethnic Groups and the State," in *Ethnic Groups and the State*, ed. Paul Brass (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 1-56.

⁴² Legitimacy is used here in the sense of establishing a moral order that will seem proper to the whole of society. See Peter A. Busch, *Legitimacy and Ethnicity* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1974), 1.

A second difficulty lies with the interplay between domestic and foreign policies. The analyst might have to look for decision-making processes within the Home Ministry as well as within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to gain a complete picture of the security predicaments faced by the Indian state. Assessing the impact of primordial sentiments and socio-political cleavages on foreign policy decision-making in such a context is difficult to document since it is mediated through the processes of decision-making in matters of internal security. The evaluation of a problem such as secessionism may differ, depending on whether it is viewed through the lenses of domestic security or the perspective of external security. Which considerations matter more on issues of national security such as Kashmir when there are divergences of opinion?

Because most prime ministers since independence have handled the important issues of foreign policy, it is tempting to assume that the difficulty for the analyst may be surmounted by the observation of their decisions. However, Bahgat Korany has indicated the pitfalls of “psychological reductionism” implied by this approach, which reduces the whole of Indian foreign policy to the whims of one leader. Apart from the obvious difficulty of gaining access to the primary material sources, the approach also tends to underestimate the significance of the operational environment, or what he terms “the frame of reference and parameters of a given decision-making process.”⁴³ The case study presented here will follow Korany’s injunction and look at the environment faced by Indian decision-makers as an explanatory variable.

Fortunately, the nature of the Indian political system, which is relatively open, allows us to have a reasonably accurate picture of the relative strength of the groups representing primordial sentiments within India, and allows us to formulate some hypotheses. The first one is that parties associated with primordial sentiments may influence the central government only if they are in a position to hold the balance of power. The second is that even when this influence exists, it is rather limited by more prudential considerations. What needs to be kept in mind is that some of the policies that primordialist groups seek to influence cannot be altered fundamentally. The observation of influence by primordialist groups on the foreign policy of India will thus look for differences in *degree* rather than changes in *substance*.

⁴³ Bahgat Korany ed. *How Foreign Policy Decisions Are Made in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 58.

The purpose of the discussion in this chapter was to help us understand the security environment within which the policy-makers involved in the areas of Indian foreign policy-making and domestic security operate. The first element that needs to be noted is that the security predicaments of the Indian state, as we know them from the historical account of the conflict between India and Pakistan, are characterized by a connection between the domestic issue of secessionism in Kashmir, and New Delhi's relationship with Pakistan, which stands as the major concern of Indian foreign policy.

However, the classical tradition within the field of international relations, by assuming that states have security predicament of mostly external origins, has developed a theoretical apparatus that inadequately addresses the security problematic of countries like India, which have both internal and external determinants. It has been suggested that this conceptual difficulty can be addressed by using the analytical framework provided by the weak-strong state continuum. The notion of the weak state is useful because it emphasizes the political fragmentation that correlates with ethnic/language/religious diversity, undoubtedly relevant to the Indian case, and points to the fact that threats to the security of the state have internal as well as external origins. The analysis of the foreign policy of the weak state, in sum, requires the observation of its domestic security predicaments as well.

The next chapter will point to one instance of primordial conflicts that is assumed to influence the processes of foreign policy-making; the communal cleavages within South Asia, which have found in the confrontation between India and Pakistan an international dimension. This instance of primordial sentiment is not the only one that exists within Indian society: other cleavages based on ethnicity, language, regionalism, castes, etc. abound. However, the communal cleavage assumes a unique importance because the idea of the India state has been developed explicitly to eliminate the conflicts that might arise from this type of internal divisions, and as such, it is opposed to the idea of the state advanced by the leaders of Pakistan since its inception.

Chapter Two

The Impact of Hindu Communalism on Indian Foreign Policy

The Contradiction Between Communal and Secular Nationalism

The discussion to this point has underlined that the domestic predicaments of India (the anxieties about secessionism in Kashmir) relate to the concerns in New Delhi on matters of foreign policy (the fear that Islamabad provides to India a *casus belli* by supporting Kashmir's secession). The concerns of Indian foreign policy planners, in such a context, are not limited to matters of foreign affairs: they are intertwined with problems of domestic governance. Overcoming the lack of socio-political cohesiveness in a weak state serves two related objectives: limiting the growth of centrifugal forces responsible for domestic insecurity, and deterring the predatory intervention of external powers tempted to take advantage of the weak state's inherent propensity for political fragmentation. This chapter focuses on one of the dimensions of socio-political diversity within India which is related to its domestic political fragmentation as well as the contradiction that opposes it to Pakistan: its communal cleavages, and the response developed to address it.

In 1947, the leaders of independent India strove to establish the foundations for socio-political cohesiveness by the institution of a state which was religiously neutral (which is what the Indians mean by the expression "secular state"). The choice did not garner unanimity. The Muslim League had rejected the idea of an all-Indian secular state and carved out from the British Raj the Islamic state of Pakistan. Further, within India itself, several political groups advocated the creation of a Hindu state. Ideologies favouring the communal state (whether Hindu or Muslim) rested on the premises that religious communities are fundamentally distinct from each other and that their interests are irreconcilable. The result of this reasoning was the idea of political self-determination for each community. However, this principle of creating communal states harboured two internal contradictions. First, as the experience of the partition between India and Pakistan indicated, it is impossible to create homogeneous communal states when religious communities live in the same areas; second, the proclamation of a communal state does not entail the eradication of sectarian differences.⁴⁴ For secular leaders, these two intractable contradictions within communalism were enough to justify the secular option.

⁴⁴ For an account of sectarian conflicts during the attempts to "islamicize" Pakistan during the 1980's, see Hamza Alavi, "Authoritarianism and Legitimation of State Power in Pakistan," in *The Post-Colonial State in Asia*, ed. Subrata Kumar Mitra (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 31.

Hindu Communalism in South Asia

At this stage, some definitions are required to avoid confusion. In this case study, the expression “Hindu communalism” and “Hindu nationalism” are considered as equivalents. However, the terms “communal” and “communalism” need to be distinguished. “Communal” is often used in an adjectival form, as in “communal representation,” and refers to the Muslims, the Christians, the Hindus or others as religious “communities.”

In the context of Indian modern history, “communalism” refers to the actions and attitudes of religious and other cultural organizations seeking from the state the defense and the promotion of their own community’s interests. The term suggests that communalism has political implications; thus the activities of an association strictly concerned with the religious or cultural affairs of a specific group are not communalist.⁴⁵

In a communal state, the laws and the constitution are derivatives of the state’s official religion. Since the faith proclaimed as official by the communal state is usually the belief adopted by the majority, the communal state endows itself with the duty to protect, or promote, the interests of this majority. The choice of establishing a communal state to ensure socio-political cohesiveness may appear as a logical choice for societies with profound ethnic/language cleavages, but where the majority profess a common religion. Furthermore, state ideologies seeking to mobilize compatriots by using the idiom of a religious tradition may have several tactical advantages over nationalist movements stressing a common ethnicity or a national language.

Organized religions provide an established structure and/or a clergy whose authority does not derive from its ethnic characteristics and thus can claim to represent all the members of a multi-ethnic state. The claim of the advocates of a communal state is that they can appeal to a common moral and ethical code with indigenous roots. The same can hardly be said for nationalist political movements stressing ethnic identity and promoting a sense of unity within one ethnic community. They do not, by themselves, create or define a broad political agenda.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 454.

⁴⁶ Saul Newman, “Does Modernization Breed Ethnic Political Conflict?,” *World Politics* 43 (April 1991): 451-78: 70.

Another distinction needs to be made when discussing Hindu communalism, since it is often associated with the cultural movement of Hindu revivalism. All proponents of Hindu revivalism want to look into India's own heritage as a source of inspiration for the reform of Indian society. However, Hindu revivalists are divided between those who emphasized the spiritual wisdom of Hinduism over Western materialism (such as Swami Vivekananda, Shri Ramakrishna and the Mahatma Gandhi), and those who valued modernization and seek to give it an Indian content.⁴⁷ This distinction matters because most Hindu communalist movements trace their roots to the latter group of reformists. This claim is consistent with the Hindu communalist's advocacy of a strong and united India propounded in the notion of *Akhand Bharat* ("Undivided India"), and underlines that Hindu communalism, despite its appeal to primordial values, is a movement harbouring the ambition that India should be a great power.

Hindu communalism rests on the premise that nations are built on the basis of a common culture and a common ideology. Therefore, the reasoning goes, Indian national identity must be rooted in Hindu culture, since the Hindus constitute the overwhelming majority community in India. However, what the Hindu communalist organizations mean by Hindu tradition is unclear. What has come to be known as *Hindutva*, or the "Hindu Way of Life"⁴⁸ incorporates a wide variety of beliefs, practices, and social customs that have developed through centuries.

Furthermore, while a simple head count starting with the subtraction of Muslims, Christians and other religions might suggest that about 80% of the Indian population is Hindu, a closer examination of Hinduism suggests otherwise. Communalist organizations tend to count Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism as Hindu sects, while most adherents of these religions reject the association. The appeal to unify the Hindu majority of India is further undermined by the division among Hindus of those belonging to one of the four varnas and those who are considered as untouchables (30% of the Hindus), as well as divisions among caste Hindus themselves.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ See Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 10-1; Ainslie T. Embree ed. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Beginning to 1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958; reprint, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 53, 72-5 (pages references are to reprint edition).

⁴⁸ For a concise presentation of what constitutes the unity and the diversity of Hinduism, see V. Raghavan and R.N. Dandekar, "The Hindu Way of Life," in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Beginning to 1800*, 201-378 (pages references are to reprint edition).

⁴⁹ Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*, 16.

Secular Nationalism in South Asia

A secular state is a state separated from religious institutions and not officially devoted to the promotion of any faith.⁵⁰ Donald Eugene Smith offered the following definition of the secular state:

“The secular state is a state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion.”⁵¹

The concept of the secular state originated in the context of the Roman Empire, when the Christian subjects of the Caesars refused to profess allegiance to the state in their religious life. The concept was put forward by the church itself to oppose the right of the state to encroach upon the spiritual sphere of human life. While many scholars have pointed out that this strict definition of the secular state is irrelevant to the context of Hinduism and Buddhism, where there is no church hierarchy to separate from the apparatus of the state,⁵² the expression has gained currency enough among indologists and Indian social scientists to be used without ambiguities. Following their usage, then, the ensuing discussion will use the expression “secular state” to describe a state that is religiously impartial, and “secularism” for the attitude of those supporting the secular state.

Throughout the history of the Indian nationalist movement, many have argued that secularism, as we understand it in the West, is not rooted in Indian society and culture. Those who have held this opinion point to the deep religiosity of the Indians in general, and to the absence of separation from politics in minority religions like Islam and Sikhism. They also claim that Mahatma Gandhi’s own tolerant attitude towards all religions was not secular, since he emphasized the inseparability of religion and politics. When he did advocate that “religion and state should be separate,” what he had in mind was that the state should not intervene in the religious life of its citizens.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ved Prakash Luthera, *The Concept of The Secular State and India* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1964), 15.

⁵¹ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 4.

⁵² Ved Prakash Luthera, *The Concept of The Secular State and India*, 40-1.

⁵³ See *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, ed. Raghavan Iyer, vol. 1, *Civilization, Politics, and Religion*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 395.

The views of Gandhi on inter-communal tolerance were themselves derived from a Hindu tradition, known among scholars as the doctrine of “inclusivism,” and known in the West as Hindu tolerance.⁵⁴ This Hindu notion of secularism is the idea that all faiths should be encouraged on the grounds that they all represent different paths to the same universal truth.⁵⁵ Hindu communalists always point to this notion of tolerance when they argue that a Hindu state would not be a theocratic regime. What is left unsaid, however, is that Hindus consider their tradition as inherently superior to other faiths because of its tolerance.

The attitude of Nehru was fundamentally different from the views of the Mahatma and other Hindu reformists on secularism. Influenced by the experience of Western nations and rationalist thinking, Nehru believed that industrialization would erode the influence of religion. As people participate in the political process, he thought, they would rise above religious and ethnic identities, and communal loyalties would be replaced by class consciousness.⁵⁶ In theory, the secular state is tolerant of religious diversity and thus more capable of facilitating the integration of sectarian minorities into the national society. But many secular states of Asia do not offer appealing alternatives to the communal states. For instance, Kemalist Turkey imposed secular principles through authoritarian processes,⁵⁷ while Maoist China persecuted religious minorities in the name of its materialist version of rationalism. In India itself, nationalist modernist leaders, like Subhas Chandra Bose, argued that India should have a dictatorship to eradicate communal conflicts.⁵⁸

The distinction between Hindu and Western notions of secularism, as well as the distinction between democratic and authoritarian versions of Western secularism, represents more than semantic details. As the discussion will make clear later on, Hindu communalists will use the first distinction (and forget the second) to support their claim that their view of “integral secularism” is inspired by the Gandhian ideal, and thus is more suited to Indian society than Nehruvian “pseudo-secularism.”

⁵⁴ Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe. An Essay in Understanding* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 409.

⁵⁵ Cynthia Keppley Mahmood, “Sikh Rebellion and the Hindu Concept of Order,” *Asian Survey* 29 no.3 (March 1989): 326-40.

⁵⁶ Yogendra K. Malik and Dharendra K. Vajpeyi, “The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India’s Secular Democracy at Risk,” *Asian Survey* 29 no.3 (March 1989):310.

⁵⁷ T.N. Madan, “Secularism in its Place,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46 no.4 (November 1987): 57.

⁵⁸ Hugh Toye, *Subhash Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger* (London: Cassell, 1959), 60.

The International Dimensions of the Contradiction between Communalism and Secularism

For most South Asian states since decolonization, the ideal of a communal state has increasingly asserted itself against the secular model as a philosophical basis for political legitimacy.⁵⁹ The ideal of a Hindu, Islamic, or Buddhist state seems to offer a unifying principle to societies divided by language. Further, the policy of communal impartiality seems to be handicapped by a lack of emotional appeal in societies which remain overwhelmingly religious.⁶⁰ However, the foundation of a state's legitimacy on communal sentiments has important consequences for the international system since it cannot provide a firm basis for viable and stable states.

Since most states in South Asia have several communal minorities, it is impossible in most instances to generate a communal consensus. In some cases, the communal balance is so precarious that the imposition of a state religion is a recipe for political fragmentation and civil war along sectarian lines as the communal minorities seek the creation of new states more congenial to their beliefs. Thus, some South Asian communal states are plagued by the violent reaction of minorities seeking to establish separate states to avoid assimilation. The separatist guerrilla war among Hindu Tamils fighting against the state of Sri Lanka, which they perceive as fostering the interests of the Buddhist majority, corresponds to that pattern. In India itself, despite the institution of the secular state, the fear of Hindu communalism and the lure of minority communalism have combined to foster secessionist unrest among Kashmiri Muslims, Sikhs in Punjab, and Christian and animistic minorities in Northeast India. Communal intolerance is a source for further international uncertainty when the transnational nature of universalist religions like Islam and Buddhism is considered: then the appeal of communal minorities for the support of the *Umma*, or the *Sangha*, or to foreign countries where co-religionists are a majority, represents a strong incentive for states harbouring irredentist sentiments. The demands for support by Kashmiri secessionists and the claims of Pakistan over Kashmir represent such a conjunction of these two possibilities.

⁵⁹ While Pakistan has been established as an Islamic Republic in 1947, the adoption of the *Sharia* (the Muslim customary law) was only entertained during the 1980's. Bangladesh was initially a secular state, and it is only under the rule of Mohammed Ershad that the proclamation of an Islamic Republic was contemplated. As a Buddhist state, Sri Lanka seems to head for a similar evolution: while the country was founded as a secular state, it is under the pressure of several Buddhist organizations advocating the adoption of Buddhism as the religion of state. Nepal and Bhutan are exceptions to this rule since they were already Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms organized along a theocratic model.

⁶⁰ T.N. Madan, "Secularism in its Place," 754-5.

The secular leaders in the first decades of independence were fully aware of this potential impact of communalism on international relations and on the foreign policy of India. The struggle for independence convinced them of the necessity to preserve national unity and the integrity of the country. Forced to sacrifice that principle from the start by accepting the independence of Pakistan, and witnessing the communal madness that accompanied the partition of India, they were all the more determined never to make such a concession to communal separatism again. Thus, the leaders of independent India have followed two strict rules when dealings with dissident group demands based on ethnic, religious, language or cultural characteristics. First, no secessionist movement will be tolerated, and second, demands by religious communities for any form of political organization, such as a separate state within the Indian Union, or separate electorates or any form of proportional representation, is prohibited.⁶¹

Opposed to the partition of South Asia along communal lines, India's leaders sought to prove to the international community -- and especially to its communal neighbours -- that religious minorities could thrive inside India. Whether they succeeded or failed to ensure the survival of secular institutions, the "demonstration effect" was bound to have far-reaching consequences. Indian secular leaders know that the proclamation of Hinduism as the state's religion would cause considerable anxieties among its neighbours.⁶² They also see in the domestic growth of Hindu communalism a threat to India's credibility as a non-communal state, thus weakening its argument in the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir. In this context, then, the secessionist crisis in Kashmir is a major foreign policy problem for India, not primarily because of its strategic value, but because of its symbolic meaning. Kashmir is a test of Indian commitment to secularism as well as a show of strength placating the Hindu nationalists. This meant that the fear of Hindu communalism would be a fundamental constraint for Indian foreign policy.⁶³

⁶¹ Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*, 7.

⁶² See Mohammed Ayoob, "India as a Regional Hegemon: external opportunities and internal constraints," *International Journal* 46 no.3 (Summer 1991):442.

⁶³ Even though the role of Muslim or Sikh fundamentalists in the growth of Hindu militancy is far from negligible, this thesis will not survey Muslim or Sikh communalism, since the only force that can successfully abolish the institutions of the Indian secular state is the communalism which claims to speak on behalf of the Hindu majority.

Controlling Hindu militancy is a growing domestic constraint for New Delhi, since the Hindu militants present an increasing electoral challenge to the Congress party.⁶⁴ The ruling party is conscious that any policy of compromise with Pakistan will be denounced as a sign of weakness by the Hindu nationalists and will cost it the support of nationalist voters. Thus, the government has a strong incentive to refrain from being conciliatory on matters of bilateral disputes with Pakistan. Among these, Kashmir remains as the outstanding issue of disagreement between New Delhi and Islamabad.

But if there is a consensus in India about Kashmir's accession to India, divergences remain between Indian secular and Hindu communal nationalists over the rationale for its incorporation into the Indian Union. While secular nationalists view the accession of Kashmir into India as proof that the secular state can ensure harmonious communal coexistence, Hindu communal nationalists see in the integration of Kashmir into the Indian Union the first step towards the dream of *Akhand Bharat* ("Undivided India"). This distinction between secular and communal nationalism has an immediate consequence on the issue of Kashmir: while the former accepts the idea of a special status for the state of Kashmir inside the Indian Union in the hope of dispelling the anxieties of the Muslim majority in the state, Hindu communalists reject this view in the name of an ideology of "Hindu" nationalism that rejects the idea of special status for any minority.

To sum up, the conflict between India and Pakistan has part of its roots in the contradiction between the political ideal for the Indian state advocated by the Congress and other secular groups, and the political ideal for the state of Pakistan advanced by the Muslim League and various fundamentalist organizations. However, Indian secular leaders also have to compete with Hindu communalists within the Indian state. To what extent this domestic contradiction may impinge on the interstate rivalry between New Delhi and Islamabad is a matter for investigation. But first we showed more clearly what are the goals pursued by Hindu communalist organizations, with reference to the policy of the Indian state towards the Kashmiri separatists, as well as the relationship between India and Pakistan. The views of the Hindu communalists on these two areas of Indian policy, and the part of their ideology that seek to influence them, are explored in the next section.

⁶⁴ Atul Kohli, "From Majority to Minority rule," in *India Briefing: 1990*, eds. Marshall M. Bouton and Philip Oldenburg, 1-23.

The Importance of Hindu Communalism in Indian Politics

The rise of Hindu communalist organizations

To understand the impact of Hindu communalism on the security concerns of India, a brief historical overview emphasizing the inter-actions between Hindu revivalism and Indian nationalism as well as between Hindu and Muslim communalism is necessary. It helps us understand that the popularity of Hindu communalist organizations has deep roots in the history of India prior to independence and thus, cannot be dismissed as a marginal phenomenon. The roots of Hindu communalism can be traced back to the cultural movements of Hindu revivalism, as expressed by modernist groups like the *Arya Samaj* (the Society of Aryans, or “noble men”), which advocated reforms like the eradication of idol worship and castes, but which also aggressively criticized Islam, Christianity and the West.⁶⁵ Under its leader Dayananda Saraswati, the *Arya Samaj* attributed India’s sufferings to the activities of foreigners, and sought to instil among Hindus a spirit of resistance against alien influences.⁶⁶ Because of its militant attitude, the *Arya Samaj* is often regarded as the forerunner of Hindu nationalism.⁶⁷

The resentment against non-Hindus as one of the sources of modern India’s predicaments served as the foundation for Hindu nationalism, which blended together patriotism, an interpretation of history fostering a sense of pride in a glorious Hindu past, and a resort to religious symbolism seeking to inspire among all Hindus devotion for the land. At the turn of the century, the Hindu nationalist Bal Gangadhar Tilak and his followers, known as the Extremists, were becoming prominent members of the Congress. Their ascendancy, significantly, coincided with the founding of the Muslim League in 1906.⁶⁸ This last event, in turn, led to the emergence of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha (“Great Assembly of Hindus”) in 1913, an organization formed from the fusion of various Hindu communalist movements founded to address the insecurities of Hindus.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Stephen Hay ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2, *Modern India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958; reprint, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 56-8 (pages reference are to reprint edition).

⁶⁶ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 455.

⁶⁷ Stephen Hay ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2, *Modern India and Pakistan*, 52-4.

⁶⁸ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 455.

⁶⁹ Shekhar Gupta, “The Gathering Storm,” 29.

Until the foundation of the Hindu Mahasabha, the difference between Indian nationalism and Hindu militancy was often difficult to establish, since the ideology of Indian nationalism had to draw from the cultural tradition of the majority of the population to be successful. Furthermore, since India was the only homeland for Hindus (with the exception of the small kingdom of Nepal), the demands to protect Hindu culture seemed to be an integral part of the nationalist ideology itself.⁷⁰ In the 1920's, the Hindu Mahasabha gained the support of communally-minded members of the Congress who became alienated by the accommodating attitude of the party towards the Muslims. The anti-Muslim sentiment of the Mahasabha gave free rein to the expression of communal grievances. These, in turn, led to violent upheavals and the formation of Hindu defence organizations, which put the emphasis on the militarization of the Hindu community.⁷¹

One of the most important of these militant organizations was the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (the "National Assembly of Volunteers," hereafter RSS). Founded in 1925, it was concerned with the development of a highly disciplined group of well indoctrinated and devoted volunteers with which it seeks the creation of a model Hindu society.⁷² Even today, while the RSS rejects politics as the means to achieve its objectives, it supports the work of the major Hindu communalist parties. During Hindu-Muslim riots, from partition onwards, hordes of new members joined the organization.

Despite a two year ban imposed on the RSS because of alleged links between the organization and Gandhi's assassins, the organization grew to the point where all other groups became marginal to the Hindu communalist stream.⁷³ Any attempt to analyze the impact of Hindu communalist parties on Indian foreign policy must take into account the doctrines held by the RSS, since over the years this movement has become the major socializing agency for Hindu communalist political parties. Moreover, the RSS has gained considerable influence by establishing several affiliated associations among students, labourers, and Hindu religious groups.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Since its foundation in 1885, the Congress was a secular party. However, it was not yet a mass organization.

⁷¹ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 455-7.

⁷² Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, 251.

⁷³ Shekhar Gupta, "The Gathering Storm," 30-1.

⁷⁴ Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, Ch. 4.

Since the RSS has always defined itself as a “cultural” organization rather than as a political party, Hindu communalists were left with two options: to work within the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha. However, after the Congress forbade dual RSS-Congress membership within its ranks, and after disagreement between the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha leadership erupted, the need for a full-fledged political party acting as a front organization for the RSS became acute. Leadership was provided by Shyama Prasad Mookerji, who had resigned from Nehru’s cabinet to express his disillusionment with Congress’ policies (most notably its soft line on Kashmir)⁷⁵ and formed a new Hindu communalist party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (the “All-India People’s League,” hereafter BJS).⁷⁶ Since older communalist parties like the Hindu Mahasabha had failed to achieve success at the polls because of their communal nature, the BJS sought to minimize its relationship with Hindu communalism to broaden its support. But the BJS was handicapped in this endeavour by the impossibility of severing its close connection with the RSS, which kept on providing leaders and workers to the BJS.⁷⁷ The fortunes of the Hindu communalist parties were modest during the 1960’s and 1970’s, and their share of popular support was less than 10 per cent.⁷⁸ All that changed in the late 1980’s, as the successor party to the BJS, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), jumped from 7.4 per cent of the popular vote in 1984 to more than 20 per cent in the 1991 poll.⁷⁹

This upsurge has been related to a growing fear among Hindus of resurgent Islam and the emergence of Sikh militancy in India, and the rising consciousness among Hindus that co-religionists in South Asian neighbouring states are reduced to a position of second-class citizenship. The initial impetus for the perception that Hinduism was under threat can be dated back to 1981, when more than a thousand Harijans converted collectively to Islam in the village of Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu. As a reaction, Hindu communalism is increasingly becoming a wave of Hindu militancy against communal minorities.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Shekhar Gupta, “The Gathering Storm,” 31.

⁷⁶ Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, 125.

⁷⁷ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 471.

⁷⁸ Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*, 70.

⁷⁹ Mahendra Prasad Singh, “The Dilemma of the New Indian Party System: To Govern or not to Govern?,” *Asian Survey* 32 no. 4 (April 1992): 315.

⁸⁰ Yogendra K. Malik and Dharendra K. Vajpeyi, “The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India’s Secular Democracy at Risk,” 318-21.

Because the BJP is the prominent political party representing Hindu communalism, it seems reasonable to assume that the evaluation of the impact of Hindu communalism on the foreign policy of India can be undertaken through the analysis of the BJP's policies -- when they differ from those of the other parties in power at the centre -- and look for evidence of influence in the policies that are implemented. However, even such a seemingly straightforward strategy of enquiry would not necessarily produce convincing results. One problem is that our independent variable of Hindu communalism is only one causal factor among others in Indian foreign policy decision-making.

Furthermore, Hindu communalism, as a variable, can hardly be defined rigorously, even though it is identified with one political party. It is the case because the BJP is far from being a homogeneous party.⁸¹ And while the BJP may be the only Hindu communalist political party that matters in the 1980's and the 1990's, the influence of "cultural" organizations such as the RSS, or of Hindu defence associations like the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, on the leadership and the political base of the BJP, is unclear. Finally, it is important to remember that Hindu militancy is not limited to openly communalist organizations.⁸² The next section will explore some of the ideas expressed by the prominent ideologues of Hindu communalism with these cautionary remarks in mind. Emphasis will be placed on their own views about socio-political cohesiveness within a Hindu state, and on the logical consequences of these views for a communally plural society like India. This will give us a picture of the hypothetical security predicaments of a Hindu state.

⁸¹ At least three factions within the party can be identified, each one with a different outlook on matters relating to the foreign policy of a Hindu state and its relations with minorities. The two most important are identified as *moderate* and *mainstream Hindu nationalists*, and are distinguished from *Hindu militants*. Moderates favour a more pacifist foreign policy than the other factions. Mainstream Hindu nationalists, led by Lal Krishna Advani, reject all reference to Gandhism, because they identify it with a policy of appeasement, particularly towards Muslims. Their foreign policy is more aggressive towards Pakistan. Hindu militants are mostly influenced by the RSS and other "cultural" organizations. These groups can be described as "Hindu chauvinists" and they represent as such a domestic source of insecurity for the Indian state. Because of their views, these groups seriously complicate communal coexistence in India and are most likely to impede any movement towards the establishment of a measure of socio-political cohesiveness by the state that is not based on the primacy of Hinduism. From Yogendra K. Malik and V.B. Singh, "Bharatiya Janata Party. An Alternative to the Congress (I)?," *Asian Survey* 32 no. 4 (April 1992):321-8.

⁸² From its inception, the Congress itself has had members sympathetic to Hindu communalist sentiments. During the 1924-1926 period, it even had close connections with the Hindu Mahasabha. See Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 479-80. After Jawaharlal Nehru passed away, many Congress politicians increasingly drifted towards Hindu communalist sentiments to counter the Hindu militants' influence over the communal majority. This embrace of Hindu nationalism by the Congress (I), in turn, won for the party the support of the RSS, which proved useful in ensuring the electoral victory of Rajiv Gandhi in the 1984 elections. See Yogendra K. Malik and Dharendra K. Vajpeyi, "The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India's Secular Democracy at Risk," 318-21.

The ideologies of Hindu communalist organizations

In the midst of violent Hindu-Muslim riots in the 1920's and 1930's, Hindu communalist organizations led by the Hindu Mahasabha centered their activities around the goal of *Sanghatan* (unification, integration, consolidation). Considering that the Hindu community had been hitherto divided by sect, caste, and language, these groups emphasized that the Hindu community had to be reformed into an organic nation with a clear sense of self-identity. While exalting and idealizing the ancient Hindu religion and culture, these groups were also social reformers: they wanted to uproot those traditions that contribute to the "weaknesses" of Hinduism. Thus, the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha recognized that since caste inequality and untouchability encouraged mass conversions to Islam and Christianity, these aspects of Hindu society had to be eradicated.⁸³

The most influential work in the development of Hindu communalist ideology is that of a Hindu Mahasabha leader, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. In his treatise on *Hindutva* first published in 1923, he gave a definition of the key word "Hindu." While most writers before him had emphasized various aspects of Hindu beliefs to answer the question "who is a Hindu?" Savarkar sought a definition with a common denominator acceptable for the majority of Indians. His notion of Hindu was meant to include the worshippers of all faiths that emerged from India.⁸⁴ Significantly, while this definition of "Hindu" was broad enough to include Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, etc., it implicitly excluded Muslims and Christians. Conscious that this notion of Hinduism was likely to alienate one third of India's population, Savarkar sought to tone down the implications of a strict definition of Hinduism by coining the concept of *Hindutva*. (Hindu-ness). Savarkar claimed that Hindus are a racial group because of their roots in India, and that Hinduism is only a part of Hindu-ness. He wanted to cultivate a sense of attachment to the greater whole whereby Hindus, Muslims, Christians, etc. would think of themselves as members of a *Hindu Rashtra* (Hindu nation). Implicitly, *Hindutva* viewed Indian Muslims and Christians as Hindus converted to foreign religions who needed to be converted back. No doubts were left about the foundations of national consciousness: it had to be built upon solidarity of the Hindu majority.⁸⁵

⁸³ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 456-8.

⁸⁴ Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva* (Poona: V.G. Ketkar, 1942), 4.

⁸⁵ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 459.

Savarkar discussed the Muslims in tones of moderation in *Hindutva*, but as the animosity between the two communities increased during the 1930's, the Hindu Mahasabha leader started to view the Muslims as a foreign nation. However, this idea never implied the notion of a separate state for Pakistan. On the contrary, the Hindu Mahasabha was outraged by the demand for Pakistan made by the Muslim League and interpreted each concession to them by the Congress as a further sign of weakness. The Hindu Mahasabha saw the partition of 1947 as an act of betrayal by the Congress, and stood for the reestablishment of *Akhand Bharat* (Undivided India). For years, it even advocated the use of force against Pakistan if other means for Indian reunification failed. On matters of domestic politics, the Hindu Mahasabha did not argue during the pre-independence period for the establishment of a *Hindu Rashtra*. Rather, it complained that the Congress itself was departing from secular principles by accepting the establishment of separate electorates. After independence, the Hindu Mahasabha asked for the establishment of a Hindu state. While this project was not a Hindu theocracy, it distinguished between the Hindus, who were the only "nationals" of India, and the Muslims and Christians, singled out as second-class citizens.⁸⁶

The Hindu Mahasabha also held the view that secular democracy can not "inspire the masses" and viewed the Congress as "anti-Hindu" because of its secular policy. With respect to relations with Muslims, the Hindu Mahasabha viewed them as "fifth columnists and enemies" inside India and branded Congress secular policy as a "game of Muslim appeasement."⁸⁷ Another element of the Hindu Mahasabha platform was the integration of all the territory of Kashmir into the Indian Union. Implicit in that program was the idea of dislodging the Pakistani army from Azad Kashmir, and the advocacy of a stern policy towards Pakistan.

Because the fortunes of the Hindu Mahasabha declined during the 1950's, it is tempting to view its ideology as inconsequential. However, the philosophy of Savarkar provided most other communalist parties with their basic ideological outlook. A quick glance at the electoral platform of the BJS and the BJP shows that despite the renunciation of the elusive goal of a reunited India, Hindu communalist organizations all advocate the goal of Kashmir's full integration into India and the adoption of a tough stance towards Pakistan.

⁸⁶ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 461-2.

⁸⁷ Election manifestos of 1951 and 1957.

The RSS supported the Hindu political parties during the 1960's and 1970's as the proponents of Hindu communalist ideology. The most influential exponent of the RSS' views was "Guruji" Gowalkar, who published in 1939 a pamphlet entitled "We or Our Nationhood Defined."⁸⁸ The influence of Savarkar's *Hindutva* on this work is manifest. Gowalkar exalted the "Hindu nation" and expressed contempt towards the West and Islam. In his preface, Gowalkar stated an extremist perspective of Hindu militancy which has continued well into the 1980's: the Hindus are a nation, while Muslim and Christians and other minorities are outsiders. Gowalkar claimed in this definition that the Hindu nation is a cultural unit, not to be confused with the Indian state, which is a political unit.⁸⁹ However, he made it clear that the ideal Indian state should be a Hindu state. The religious minorities problem, he believed, would be solved by assimilation. Thus, he wrote:

"The non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its long-age traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead -- in a word they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment -- not even citizens' rights."⁹⁰

To give credence to fallacies such as the idea of a Hindu culture (the Vedas? the Bhagavad Gîtâ?), a Hindu language (Sanskrit? Hindi?), and a Hindu race,⁹¹ the RSS' ideologues claim that India is a corporate Hindu nation, or a "living God," or use the metaphor of the Divine Mother to describe India. This "sacred" geography, according to Gowalkar, encompasses territories as remote as Iran, Malaysia, and Tibet.⁹² While the BJP does not hold such a view of the "sacred" geography where the Hindu nation resides, the emotional component behind its idea of the Indian nation is influenced by the RSS' vision. It has to be borne in mind when trying to understand the demands of Hindu communalists for Kashmir's integration to India.

⁸⁸ M.S. Gowalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (Nagpur: Bharat Prakashan, 1947).

⁸⁹ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 466.

⁹⁰ M.S. Gowalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, 55-6.

⁹¹ Savarkar believed that the Aryan people which originated from Northwestern India had gradually spread out over the Subcontinent and that the mixture of blood between this group and non-Aryan people produced the Hindu nation. See Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, 33-4.

⁹² M.S. Gowalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore: Vikrama Prakashan, 1966), 24-5.

To achieve electoral success and broaden their appeal, the Hindu communal political parties were aware that they had to tone down the RSS' inflammatory rhetoric. Despite their close links with the RSS, the BJS and the BJP repeatedly denied that they were communal parties and claimed instead to be nationalist formations. But the departure from *Hindutva* to Hindu nationalism was always ambiguous since the BJS' initial platform was similar to that of the Hindu Mahasabha: implementation of the ban on foreign missionaries, *Akhand Bharat*, total integration of Kashmir into India, compulsory military training, and a tough policy towards Pakistan. Further, the party criticized the Congress' policy of secularism as "Muslim appeasement."⁹³ In the 1980's, the BJP sought to gain wider acceptance of Hindu nationalist ideology among the Westernized middle classes by adopting a revisionist stance. The strategy of the party was to define Hindu nationalism as real secularism while the policy of the Congress was criticized as "pseudo-secularism," a biased version of secularism enforced only against the Hindus.

The growth of violent Sikh fundamentalism in Punjab and Muslim separatism in Kashmir during the 1980's played into the hands of Hindu communalists, who had always stigmatized the Congress' policy of accommodating the minorities as an encouragement for secessionist demands. Spurred by these trends as well as instances of mass conversions, several Hindu defence organizations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad sought to fight what they viewed as the discrimination by secular leaders against Hindus, "...and inform the majority community about the danger faced by India as a nation and Hindus as a community."⁹⁴ Along these organizations have emerged several Hindu *sena* (armies) such as the Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena, whose slogan --"Whosoever confronts us will be crushed" -- explicitly stress their aim of training and equipping Hindus militarily so that a Hindu state can be created.⁹⁵ All the Hindu militant organizations stress the theme of Hindu unity against the threat of religious minorities. As the discussion below will emphasize, however, the proposition of ensuring socio-political cohesiveness within India with a Hindu ideology is a recipe for further divisions.

⁹³ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State*, 471-2.

⁹⁴ Yogendra K. Malik and Dharendra K. Vajpeyi, "The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India's Secular Democracy at Risk," 316.

⁹⁵ *India Today*, 31 May 1986, 32.

The Divisive Potential of Hindu Communalism Examined Through its Policies

The definition of the Indian state as a Hindu state

Despite repeated denials to the contrary, the establishment of a Hindu communal state would be problematic for communities belonging to religions of foreign origin like Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, or Judaism. A favourite theme of the Hindu militants is that Muslims cannot be loyal to India.⁹⁶ The claim of Hindu communalists is that conversions to Islam or Christianity lead to “anti-national” results, and distance Indians from their past.”⁹⁷ Notwithstanding the fact that the implementation of such a program by a Hindu communalist government would be hardly compatible with the principle of freedom of conscience, it raises questions about the rights of those who would refuse to comply: would they become second class citizens, as the texts of Gowalkar and other Hindu communalist leaders suggest?

The leaders of the Hindu communalist organizations, from the RSS to the BJP, deny that they would establish a theocratic state in India and resent any parallel made between their ideal of “Hindu-ness” and movements like Muslim fundamentalism. They argue that tolerance is part of the Hindu tradition, and contend that in a Hindu state the division between religion and state would be similar to the division between Church and state in the West. This reassuring rhetoric, however, is far from convincing when put in the context of the proliferation of Hindu defence associations throughout India. The representatives of the BJP claim that they are not anti-Muslim or anti-Christian, but express their aim of ending special privileges for the minorities. They point to the crisis in Kashmir as the “proof” that granting separate status to minorities only hampers their integration into the Indian “mainstream.” However, rationalizations justifying the campaigns of Hindu communalists against minority privileges are contradicted by their actions during the 1990 crisis, when the BJP sought to pit Hindus against Muslims by claiming that the secessionist revolt against the centre in Kashmir was in fact Muslim communalist agitation against the Hindu minority living in Kashmir.

⁹⁶ This assertion was made by the VHP general secretary, Ashok Singhal, August 24, 1990, to foreign journalists. Quoted in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 September 1990, 32.

⁹⁷ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 September 1990, 32.

The imposition of Hindi as a national language

Another policy that a program of "hinduization" would try to implement is the abandonment of English and the promotion of Hindi as the official language of the Indian Union. This policy, which was abandoned by secular leaders after unsuccessful attempts in the 1950's to implement it, may be revived by a BJP central government if the actual policy of BJP state governments is any indication.⁹⁸ Such a policy, identified in South India with domination by the North -- where Hindi constitutes the language of the majority -- would almost surely lead to renewed agitation in the South, where protests for the preservation of Dravidian languages, especially Tamil, have always been very vocal. The removal of English as a constitutional language would also seriously handicap the Muslim minority all over India and the Muslims of Kashmir in particular, who already rank among the most underprivileged sections of the Indian population. The situation of Kashmiri Muslims who are speakers of English as a second language and cannot speak Hindi would be extremely difficult if the BJP policies were to be implemented, since their mother language is not spoken outside the valley. Since Kashmiris already experience several problems when they try to find work outside their underdeveloped native state, any attempts to impose Hindi as the national language at the expense of English would further alienate them.

No issue in the language policies of India, however, is more emotional and potentially explosive than the debate about the status of Urdu. Would a Hindu communalist government try to limit the use of Urdu on the ground that it is the language of the Muslims? The recent agitation led by Hindu communalist organizations in the state of Uttar Pradesh (where Muslims represent more than 15% of the population) against the inclusion of Urdu as a second official language, along with Hindi, offers an indication of the policy that a Hindu communalist government may contemplate nationwide with respect to the status of Urdu as a national language. While a gesture against Urdu would not have direct consequence for the Muslim majority in Kashmir who speak Kashmiri or Dogri, the message sent to Indian Muslims nationwide would certainly further increase the sense of alienation felt by the Kashmiris.

⁹⁸ On August 13, 1990, the BJP Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh endorsed a campaign to drop, at the state level, English as an official language. The move worried the national leaders of the BJP, who did not want to compromise the electoral support of English-educated urban middle classes. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 September 1990, 28.

The integration of Kashmir into the Indian state: ending a ban on migration from India

While it is hard to imagine a worsening of the situations which are already disastrous in Kashmir and Punjab, it is clear that a *Hindu Rashtra* would have a negative effect on these regional disputes. While the over-centralizing tendencies of the Congress, especially under the leadership of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, have been blamed for escalating secessionist agitation in Kashmir, Punjab, and the peripheral states of the Northeast, the Hindu militant organizations offer no alternative. On the contrary, as the stand of the BJS and the BJP on the issue of Kashmir's accession to India demonstrates since 1947, the policy of Hindu communalists is for even more centralization.

The status of Kashmir in the Indian Union, like that of all princely states, was initially defined by a treaty of accession, which made New Delhi responsible for defence, foreign affairs and communication but guaranteed autonomy to the state. After 1949, accession was transformed into total merger into India, except for Kashmir, whose accession into India became incorporated into the constitution as Article 370. The special situation of Kashmir was the result of Nehru's promise to hold a plebiscite deciding the future of the state. The Hindu militants rejected this policy on the grounds that it encouraged secessionism. As early as 1953, they rioted against the inclusion of article 370 into the constitution.⁹⁹ They vehemently opposed the notification that those who were not citizens of the state could not buy land in Kashmir. But, the irony was that this disposition has been made to assuage the fears of Hindu landlords who wanted in the 1920's to restrain the immigration of Muslims into the valley.¹⁰⁰

Since 1947, Hindu militants have constantly criticized the centre on this aspect of its policy on Kashmir and made this issue their favourite theme. This position held by the BJP has dangerous indirect implications. It may re-ignite other regional conflicts, as in Nagaland and Mizoram, where the centre has reached agreements with secessionist rebels whereby the centre would not allow immigration from neighbouring states and would restrict the acquisition of property there. These policies were not enshrined in the constitution like Article 370 but their goal was similar. The repeal of Article 370 by a BJP government would undoubtedly be interpreted in the Northeastern states as a repudiation of these tacit accords between them and the centre.

⁹⁹ Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, 234-9.

¹⁰⁰ "An Article of Faith," *India Today*, 28 February 1990, 11.

Conclusion: the Regional Impact of Hindu Militancy

This chapter has started with the theoretical proposition that weak states, such as India, are characterized by a lack of socio-political cohesiveness, and that this national attribute is translated empirically by the assertion of primordialist sentiments based on ethnic/language/religious cleavages. The chapter has focused on a single dimension of primordialist sentiment: communal cleavages based on religion. This mean of identification is not the only one that exists in a society as diversified as India. Furthermore, it is not the only one that can lead to instances of domestic conflicts or inter-state confrontations. However, it is an important one because religious identification in Pakistan and the secular alternative offered by the Congress in India are the two main strategies used by the state in South Asia to overcome the problem of socio-political fragmentation that may arise from ethnic/language diversity. Incidentally, these two strategies have been presented in the first chapter as one of the main sources of the conflict between the two countries.

For an understanding of the impact of domestic constraints on Indian foreign policy-making, it is necessary to identify what are the ideas and values propagated by the organizations that claim to represent the Hindu community within India, before asking whether these ideas can have an influence on the foreign policy-making processes of India. What emerged is that while the Hindu communalist organizations are rather important in the Indian political culture, it would be a mistake to assume that they form a united movement, able to determine the course of foreign policy.

However, even though the secular majority within the Indian parliament makes sure that Hindu communalists have a limited impact on Indian foreign policy-making, these groups can have a disruptive influence at the level of domestic policy. The virulent anti-Muslim position of some of the most radical organizations within that movement bode ill for the welfare of minorities under an hypothetical Hindu communalist government. Predictably, the increase of popularity for Hindu communalist parties is likely to complicate the dealings of New Delhi with secessionist movements belonging to minority religious communities, which are feeling uneasy about this trend. Because the domestic issue of Kashmir is linked with the relationship between India and Pakistan, it is with reference to that issue that the influence of Hindu communalism on Indian foreign policy may be assessed.

Indian secular leaders are aware that the inability of the secular state to crush Kashmiri secessionism is seen by Hindu chauvinists throughout India as yielding to Muslim fundamentalism, and drives Hindu fanatics into anti-Muslim agitations. However, the relationship works both ways: failure to curb Hindu chauvinism is also likely to be seen by Muslims as yielding to Hindu communalism, and inevitably strengthens the demands for secession in Kashmir. This contradiction between Hindu and Muslim communalist movements and the efforts of the central government to hold them in check represents a central constraint for the Indian state that analysts must bear in mind when trying to make sense of New Delhi's dealings with Kashmir and Pakistan.

The state of India under Nehru's direction managed successfully to limit the impact of communalism in Indian politics. However, while the principle of secularism seemed firmly entrenched in the constitution and the rationalist outlook of national leaders like Nehru, the practices at the lower echelons of politics suggested otherwise. In the 1980's, the allegedly secular leaders of the Congress started using blatantly communal symbols to get elected, or pandered openly to the caste Hindu voters, to counter the growing appeal of overtly Hindu communalist parties. Meanwhile, the growing political clout of Muslim fundamentalism throughout the Islamic world, as well as the emergence of a Sikh fundamentalist movement within the Sikh community, provides the Hindu communalists organizations a renewed sense of insecurity that further propels their militancy in northern India. The conflicts between secular and communal nationalists that divided India before independence are now re-enacted. The next chapter will examine the influence of Hindu communalism on the Indian secular state's foreign policy, specifically, in its dealings with the secessionists in Kashmir and its relations with Pakistan.

Chapter Three

Case Study:

The Impact of the BJP on New Delhi's Policy towards Kashmiri Secessionism

Assessing the Influence of Hindu communalists on Indian Politics

This Chapter will look at several instances where Hindu communalists have pressured the centre to adopt a tough stance towards Kashmiri separatists, and how it reacted to these demands. The role of Hindu communalism as a constraint on New Delhi's policy towards Kashmiri secessionists will be put in the perspective of the state's accession to India after the invasion by Pakistan and in light of the Congress' attempts to rob Hindu militants of their support among the Hindus of Kashmir in 1983. Then, the case study will focus on the crisis of 1989-1990, which culminated with New Delhi's armed intervention in Kashmir and brinkmanship with Pakistan.

The impact of Hindu communalist organizations can be felt in various degrees. The government may simply act as the representative of Hindu communalist organizations if these groups form a majority government: it would be then mandated to implement the policies advocated by them in their electoral manifestos. Alternatively, a government formed with a "hung" parliament depending on the support of Hindu communalists for its survival may try to assuage these groups by enacting the most popular parts of their program.

A third possibility is the election of a BJP minority government. In this situation, Hindu communalist sentiments might have to be toned down to avoid the defeat of the government at the hands of a secularist opposition. Finally, another possibility is that a minority government facing an opposition comprising Hindu communalists may seek to steal its adversaries' appeal by co-opting the most popular parts of their program. In the first three cases, the influence of Hindu communalist organizations would be direct, while in the last case, it would be indirect.

Modern Indian history provides several instances where the influence of Hindu communalism may have been exerted both directly and indirectly. A first instance of direct influence was during the first decade of independence, when the leaders of Congress believed that Hindu communalist organizations were very popular, and faced extra-parliamentary opposition supported by the BJS against the rule of Sheikh Abdullah in Kashmir.

An instance of indirect influence was highly probable when the Congress fought the National Conference in the 1983 state elections of Kashmir. Finally, a second instance of direct influence was during the National Front government of 1989, which depended on the support of the BJP. Since the first two cases of influence did not involve an international response from Pakistan, they will be discussed only briefly.

The Hindu communalists' campaign of 1953 against Sheikh Abdullah

Because of the peculiar circumstances of its accession to the Indian Union, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was autonomous, with this status enshrined in the Indian constitution under the provisions of Article 370. The arrangement satisfied the aspirations of Kashmiris and had the support of New Delhi, because the prominent leader of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, was initially committed to the establishment of secular values. But the cleavages of the multi-communal state soon made the situation extremely volatile. When Abdullah advocated a radical land reform in the state, politics in Kashmir became polarized on communal lines because many of the landowners were Dogra Hindus while the majority of the poor peasants were Muslims.

Those among the Hindus who opposed the secular and socialist-oriented policies of the National Conference or the Congress founded their own organization, the Praja Parishad. But since the total number of Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists in the whole state amounted to less than one third of the population, the Praja Parishad realized that it could not form a government as long as the National Conference managed to secure the support of the Muslim majority.

This situation gave rise in 1950-52 to a wave of discontent headed by the Praja Parishad. The Hindu organization asked for full integration of Jammu and Kashmir within India and scrapping Article 370.¹⁰¹ In the 1951 election, Abdullah had provided the Hindu militants with further reasons to launch a campaign against him, since the National Conference had rigged the elections.¹⁰² Whether Abdullah acted in good faith to prevent further polarization on religious lines or not, the action was ill-advised.

¹⁰¹ For an account of oppositional politics in Kashmir during the 1950's, see Balbir Singh, *State Politics in India*, Ch. 4.

¹⁰² Balbir Singh, *State Politics in India*, 5.

The rejection of the nomination papers for the candidates of the Praja Parishad on questionable grounds led to agitation in Jammu. Abdullah viewed this action as a warning sign that the commitment of the Hindu majority in India to secularism might not be solid, and wondered whether the Muslims of Kashmir could rely on Indian promises of autonomy. In the summer of 1953, Abdullah delivered a speech in which he criticized India for the communalist agitation and warned against any attempt by New Delhi to renege on its pledge to grant an autonomous status to Kashmir inside the Indian Union.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, the Hindu militant opposition within Kashmir was encouraged to continue its campaign against the National Conference after the Hindu Mahasabha, the BJS, and a regional Hindu communalist organization based in Rajasthan, the Ram Rajya Parishad, expressed their solidarity with the Praja Parishad. The three groups launched a nationwide campaign calling for the full incorporation of Kashmir within India, and the leaders of the BJS even asked its followers to march to Jammu. The events reached dangerous proportions when Dr. S.P. Mookerji, the BJS president, died in prison of a heart attack after his arrest for having defiantly travelled into Jammu.¹⁰⁴

At the beginning of July, the three communalist parties abruptly called off the agitation for the complete integration of Kashmir into India. This decision coincided with a meeting between Nehru and Abdullah's rival, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed.¹⁰⁵ While it is impossible to determine whether the two events are linked, shortly thereafter Abdullah was forced to resign by dissident members of his cabinet led by Mohammed, who asked for fuller integration into India, and thus supported the stand of the Praja Parishad. To fight Hindu communalism, secular leaders in Delhi needed Abdullah's unequivocal support. The problem was that while Abdullah himself was not convinced by the solidity of secularism in India, his unqualified faith was required for ensuring it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, 239-40.

¹⁰⁴ Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, 234-5.

¹⁰⁵ Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, 237-9.

¹⁰⁶ Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. Antinomies of Nationalism," 1005.

1983-1988: The secular state plays communal politics

When Sheikh Abdullah died, his anointed son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, succeeded him. The Congress believed that the son would not inherit his father's charisma and saw a chance to regain control of the state. The party of Indira Gandhi unleashed a fierce campaign: the violence accompanying the 1983 election for the Vidhan Sabha (state assembly), left five dead and more than 500 injured, and was marred by religious polarisation.¹⁰⁷ The party expected to win the poll by rallying the Hindu vote in Jammu, and the Buddhist vote in Ladakh, and by splitting the Muslim vote in the Valley. But the strategy failed as the Congress won only a few seats in Jammu and failed to establish its presence in Kashmir. This episode of Kashmiri politics was the result of the largely successful attempts by Dr. Abdullah to establish himself as an active player in an all-Indian opposition to the government of Indira Gandhi. It was no secret then that the centre sought to retaliate by orchestrating the installation of more conciliatory governments in the dissident states. The irony is that while Farooq introduced Kashmir into the mainstream of Indian politics, New Delhi's approach to Kashmiri politics led to a renewed upsurge of anti-Indian sentiments in the Valley.¹⁰⁸

If the Congress failed to achieve its objective through intimidation during the state's election, the situation improved for the party during the summer as the Congress-inspired violence and the political feud gave way to palace intrigues. After charging that Abdullah was indulgent towards secessionists and accusing him of cooperation with fundamentalist groups, Indira Gandhi arranged the defection of dissidents from the state's ruling party and replaced Abdullah with a more pliant leader.¹⁰⁹ Having achieved this "toppling" operation in Kashmir and following the success of Operation Blue Star in neighbouring Punjab, the Congress felt ready to embark on a nationwide Lok Sabha poll for the end of 1984. Then, in October, Mrs. Gandhi was killed by one of her Sikh guards. As the new leader of the Congress after his mother's assassination, Rajiv Gandhi did not depart from Indira's style: the electoral campaign of December 1984 was also conducted on the theme of threats to Indian unity.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 June 1983, 10.

¹⁰⁸ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 December 1983, 38.

¹⁰⁹ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 February 1984, 24.

¹¹⁰ Iqbal Narain, maintains however that the sympathy vote significantly account for the scope of the Congress victory. See "India in 1985: Triumph of Democracy," *Asian Survey* 36 no.2 (February 1986): 253-69.

The December 1984 elections for the Lok Sabha were conducted in an atmosphere of communal violence and marred by appeals to the Hindu vote.¹¹¹ In its electoral manifesto, the Congress claimed that the challenge to India came from separatists and their external allies, a covert reference to Pakistan.¹¹² The allusions to Pakistan and the threat to secularism, without naming them, stigmatized the Muslims as potential separatists. That this electoral strategy was used to placate the growth of Hindu militants' discontent is obvious when the manifestos of the Congress and the BJP are compared. Apart from the added demand for the abolition of Article 370, the BJP's manifesto looked like a copy of the Congress' in the sections devoted to national security and foreign policy.¹¹³

After the Congress won an impressive victory where it played its communal and patriotic cards, many Kashmiris wondered whether living in a Hindu-majority state would be in their interest. As anti-Hindu riots erupted, the Congress suddenly came to the realization that its manoeuvres in the state might be worse than the illness they were supposed to cure. Anxious to find a political solution to the oncoming crisis in Kashmir, the Congress staged the return of Abdullah as Chief Minister, but under the condition that an electoral alliance with the Congress denying him an absolute majority would be formed. This return to rigged electoral practices convinced a majority of Kashmiris that New Delhi would never respect their aspirations.¹¹⁴

Mounting Hindu militancy in India and the growing audience found by their leaders further compounded Muslim anxieties. To the injunction that "Indian Muslims must be Indians first; Muslims by religion but Hindus by culture,"¹¹⁵ some Muslims in Kashmir reacted by lending an ear to the fundamentalist groups that sought to defend their "Islamic identity." The Nehruvian vision of secular politics for India and the status of Kashmir as its symbol of communal harmony were eroding dangerously.

¹¹¹ Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*, 199.

¹¹² *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 December 1984, 14.

¹¹³ "Manifestos of Political Parties", in *1984: The Bullets and the Ballots. The Parliamentary Elections in India*, eds. B.N. Varma and A.K. Varma (Bareilly: Samuchit, 1986), 191, 198.

¹¹⁴ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2d. October 1985, 31.

¹¹⁵ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 March 1988.

Not surprisingly, the relationship between New Delhi and Islamabad suffered from this domestic turmoil. In the midst of a climate of mutual suspicion, the two countries nearly entered into armed collision in 1987, as misunderstanding arose about the scope of each other's annual military exercise.¹¹⁶ After the 1987 election in Kashmir, violence became endemic in the state. Most of the violence was in support of demands for separation from India and its character was non-communal.¹¹⁷ But this eroded over the years as a new organization, the Hizbul Mujahideen, started competing with the non-communal Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). In September 1989, the secessionist movements murdered their first non-Muslim victim, a local BJP leader.¹¹⁸ Reacting to that incident, the BJP President L.K. Advani held New Delhi responsible for the rise of terrorism in Kashmir and criticized the Rajiv Gandhi government for being "too friendly" towards Pakistan.¹¹⁹

The trends observed in 1983 repeated themselves in 1989, when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi launched his electoral campaign with a controversial speech in the twin cities of Faizabad-Ayodhya. The choice of that location was ominous since it was at the centre of the renewed Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy which had led to nation-wide communal confrontations since 1984. Harping on a theme hitherto associated with the BJP, Rajiv Gandhi asserted that only the Congress could bring back *Ram Rajya* (the rule of Rama) in the country. In pointing to the fact that all Indian rulers since the days of Lord Rama have called themselves Hindustani, he attempted to play up the theme of Indian unity, thereby stealing from the BJP the argument that *Hindutva* meant "Indian-ness." The BJP's manifesto also placed the theme of national unity and national integration at the top of its priorities. Stating its opposition to discrimination and its commitment to ensure justice and equality for all minorities, the party left no doubts about the meaning of this commitment, when it asserted that in the interest of "national integration" minorities should not develop a "minority complex." With reference to the Kashmir problem, the party put at the top of its agenda the deletion of the "temporary" Article 370.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Bharat Wariavwalla, "India in 1987: Democracy on Trial," *Asian Survey* 28 no.2 (February 1988): 119-25.

¹¹⁷ *The Times of India*, 14 January 1989, 1; 12 February 1989, 1.

¹¹⁸ *The Times of India*, 15 September 1989, 1.

¹¹⁹ *The Times of India*, 17 September 1989, 1.

¹²⁰ Sharda Paul, *1989: General Elections in India* (New Delhi: Associate Publishing House, 1990), 138-62.

Assessing the Direct Influence of Hindu communalists on the Centre

The influence of the BJP on New Delhi's Policy towards Kashmiri Secessionism: the Context

The most important representative of Hindu communalism in the late 1980's and in the early 1990's is undoubtedly the BJP. The examination of its electoral platform, available in the manifestos published by the party, along with its statements in the Lok Sabha, or the special public campaigns that it convened, provide scholars ample opportunities to get acquainted with its efforts to translate the worldview of the RSS into a political program. As suggested before, the influence of the BJP on the foreign policy of India will be assessed through its ability to prod the government in New Delhi to entertain policies with respect to the secessionist movement in Kashmir which are congenial to its own views. The peculiarities of the Hindu communalist *weltanschauung* are difficult to operationalize in real-life indicators: how can we attest that a government in New Delhi acts in way that relates to such concepts as *Hindutva*, *Hindu Rashtra*, or India as a Holy Land? Despite the obvious difficulties, two policies can be identified as typical of the Hindu communalists' view.

The first is the refusal of any negotiation, whether overt or covert, with the secessionist movements in Kashmir. While the National Front, the parties on the Left, the Congress, and other formations of the mainstream reject the secessionists' actions or the option of Kashmir's independence, they have unofficially agreed in principle to unofficial negotiation with secessionists. Only the BJP refuses any form of negotiation with the secessionists. The stand of the BJP on the matter was translated into action by its unflinching support to the rule of governor Jagmohan in Kashmir, and in the organization of public campaigns to "save Kashmir," where the party advocated attacks on secessionist training camps allegedly based in Pakistan.

The second policy that the BJP sought to impose on the centre was abolition of the status of autonomy granted to Kashmir. In this second instance, the contrast between the position of the BJP and that of other political parties is total. While no party could accept the secession of Kashmir, everyone knows that keeping Article 370 in force represents a bare minimum for the Kashmiris, and any attempt to abolish this part of the constitution would remove the last hope for its integration within the Indian Union.

Before discussing the internationalization of the crisis in Kashmir in 1990, it is necessary to recall at this point some of the basic elements that pertain to bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Since 1972, Delhi and Islamabad had both pledged to abide by the provisions of the Simla Agreement concluded between the governments of Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The agreement, which followed India's victory in the Bangladesh war, featured the following points: both countries agree that any differences between them have to be solved by peaceful means; attempts to solve differences are to be entertained through bilateral negotiations; neither side should try to alter the situation unilaterally; both sides will prevent the organization, assistance or encouragement of any act detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations between the two countries; neither side will interfere in the domestic affairs of the other; and the line of control in Kashmir has to be respected.¹²¹

With the exception of the erstwhile BJS, which accepted nothing short of the recovery of all Pakistani-occupied territory, all the parties in the Lok Sabha agreed with the provisions of the Simla agreement. Sardar Swaran Singh, then Minister of External Affairs, praised the agreement since it in no way derogated from the Indian position that Kashmir is an integral part of India, that its accession is final and complete, and that part of it is still under the illegal occupation of Pakistan.¹²² Since 1972, India and Pakistan have always referred to the Simla agreement when bilateral disputes had arisen. Since then, too, Pakistan has ceased to represent a military threat to India. The strategic thinking of Delhi since 1972 has been to prevent an alliance between Islamabad and Beijing. The timid thaw initiated since 1985 in their bilateral relations has been already compromised by the Indian accusation that Pakistan supported communal riots in Kashmir and attempted to alter the status quo through infiltration and subversion.¹²³ When Benazir Bhutto was elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, her counterpart in New Delhi saw an historic opportunity to solve bilateral problems. Consequently, Rajiv and Benazir met in July 1988, and the two signed an agreement not to attack each other's nuclear installations.¹²⁴

¹²¹ From "Reply to the Lok Sabha Debate on the Simla Agreement by the Minister of External Affairs (Sardar Swaran Singh)," 1st. August 1972, in *Foreign Affair Record*, Government of India, 240-2.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 245-6.

¹²³ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 March 1986, 34.

¹²⁴ Bharat Wariavwalla, "India in 1988: Drift, Disarray or Pattern?," *Asian Survey* 29 no. 2 (February 1989): 189-98.

The BJP's influence on the National Front Government's Policy towards Kashmiri Secessionism

The Indians held their ninth general election in 1989, and after a stormy campaign, no majority government could be formed. While the Congress remained the most important party with 197 seats, this was not enough to constitute a government. It was up to Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the head of the National Front coalition, to form a minority government. The new regime was extremely fragile since it held fewer than 150 of the 545 seats in the parliament. The National Front depended on the support of two groups which differed totally in their ideological outlook: the BJP, which controlled 86 seats, and the Left Front, which won more than 50 seats.¹²⁵

The new government had to face its first test when, barely one week after it was formed, militants of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) kidnapped Rubaiya Sayeed, the daughter of Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the newly-appointed Home Minister.¹²⁶ In the immediate aftermath of these events, the government sought to convey an impression of decisiveness by convening an all-party conference to deal with the problem of secessionism in Kashmir. However, the conclusion of this first crisis was foregone: the release of the Union Home Minister's daughter in exchange for the liberation of five secessionists, far from creating an atmosphere of conciliation, was interpreted as a sign of weakness and led to renewed agitation. The new round of disturbances in the Valley was especially humiliating for the new government; while the curfews imposed by the Indian authorities were defied, those of the militants were widely respected.

Even though the crisis was a domestic upheaval within Kashmir, the containment of the issue within the internal affairs of India was difficult, since the Pakistanis continuously raised the issue of Kashmir's independence in various international fora. At the first talks held between V.P. Singh and Benazir Bhutto's envoy, the Indians criticized Islamabad for supporting anti-Indian militants in Kashmir. To the Pakistanis' plea for "understanding" the constraints exerted against the minority government of Bhutto, the Indians pointed to "the pressures against their own minority government in New Delhi."¹²⁷ This last statement amounted to an official recognition that the new Indian government had its hands tied by BJP's support.

¹²⁵ Atul Kohli, "From Majority to Minority rule," 1.

¹²⁶ "Nation's Ordeal," in *The Times of India*, 11 December 1989, 6.

¹²⁷ *The Times of India*, 11 January 1990, 1.

The pressures exerted by the BJP on New Delhi's foreign policy materialized in incendiary statements made by its representative, Murli Manohar Joshi, who further inflamed an already heated situation by claiming that the problem in Kashmir was "even worse than in 1947," and by asking for "search and destroy operations" on Pakistani soil to control the infiltration of secessionists from across the border.¹²⁸ Simultaneously, the ultra-nationalist pressures mounted by the BJP within India had their counterparts within Pakistan, where Muslim fundamentalists harassed the government of Benazir Bhutto for being "soft" on the issue of Kashmir. Predictably, the Pakistani government was only too eager to placate its opponents by zealously expressing its concerns for Muslim co-religionists in Kashmir, and keeping alive the issue of Kashmir's right to self-determination in international meetings. This policy of moral support to the secessionists in Kashmir culminated when Prime Minister Bhutto said that there can be "no compromise" with India on the question of "the right of self-determination" for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and added that the conflict in Kashmir was not only a matter of concern for the people of Pakistan, but further an issue causing "resentment in the entire Muslim *Umma* (community)."¹²⁹

The Indian government was outraged by the suggestions made by the Pakistani foreign minister Yakub Khan that Kashmir's accession to India was not legal, and that the 1972 line of control was not an international border.¹³⁰ The statement almost suggested that the Pakistanis wanted to reject the Simla accord by transforming into a matter of international dispute what was, from the Indian perspective, a domestic problem. The second statement amounted to the claim that Pakistan had a right to intervene in Kashmir. This analysis was supported by the argument made in Islamabad that the emotional ties between co-religionists in Kashmir on both sides of the line-of-control explained the "passions" aroused in Pakistan by the developments in the Valley. These declarations, which suggested that Pakistan was an aggrieved party, raised eyebrows in New Delhi because they were associated with the fear in Islamabad that a war by miscalculation might flare up because of the inability of the Indian minority government to control its domestic opposition.

¹²⁸ *The Times of India*, 16 January 1990, 1.

¹²⁹ *The Times of India*, 16 January 1990, 1.

¹³⁰ *The Times of India*, 24 January 1990, 8.

To the pressures put on the National Front government to act decisively on foreign affairs, the BJP added statements about domestic politics in Kashmir that further whipped up passions. Even though the National Front government had made it known that it preferred a policy of moderation on its dealings with Kashmiri secessionists, the BJP harassed V.P. Singh on the issue of law and order. Through the voice of its general secretary, Krishna Lal Sharma, the BJP reiterated its rejection of dialogue with any group that did not shun "agitation for separation." Meanwhile, BJP President Lal Krishna Advani asked in a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister that the state of Jammu and Kashmir should be declared a "disturbed area," an administrative measure that implied the permanent stationing of armed forces from the centre in the sensitive areas of the state to ensure order. The memorandum also asked all political parties to consider the abolition of Article 370, and justified its stance by claiming that the legislation had created "artificial" barriers between the state and the rest of India. Finally, the BJP sought to make political gains with the whole issue by announcing that it would observe January 27, 1990 as a "Save Kashmir day" to highlight how the Valley is held "under siege" by Pakistan-trained terrorists. The BJP also raised the issue of the "plight" of Hindus who were singled out as the targets of attack by secessionist militants. Posing themselves as the defenders of the Hindus, the BJP leaders labelled the assurances of the state to Hindus as "hollow" and urged the centre to ensure the safety of Hindu refugees.¹³¹

Acknowledging that its carrot and stick policy drew the criticism of the National Conference and the Congress as well as that of the BJP, the National Front abruptly changed its strategy for dealing with the secessionists in Kashmir. The centre decided to appoint Jagmohan, a former governor of the state, as the new governor for Jammu and Kashmir.¹³² The appointment of Jagmohan was applauded by members of all political parties as a non-partisan gesture since the governor had been hand-picked previously by Indira Gandhi. There was one drawback with the new assignment, however: it was not approved by the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Dr. Abdullah, who had no choice but to offer his resignation after such a rejection of his prerogatives. The BJP saw in this turn of events a vindication of its policies, since it had asked for the appointment of leaders like Jagmohan and the dismissal of Dr. Abdullah since the beginning.

¹³¹ *The Times of India*, 19 January 1990, 3.

¹³² *The Times of India*, 20 January 1990, 1.

For the four parties of the Left supporting the National Front, Jagmohan's appointment appeared as an administrative solution to a political problem. The concern of the leftist parties was that this approach would "allow the separatist forces to internationalize the problem."¹³³ In fact, the imposition of the governor's rule, far from restoring order, led to renewed agitation as people in the towns of Srinagar, Anantnag and Sopore defied the curfew imposed by Jagmohan. Confrontations between the police and paramilitary secessionist groups on January 20, 1990 led to 35 deaths and about 100 injured.¹³⁴ At the end of that fateful weekend that left about 60 people dead, it appeared as if the majority of the population in the valley of Kashmir was entering into open rebellion against the central government.¹³⁵

The anxieties expressed by the parties of the Left were not unfounded, since the deaths in Kashmir troubled international opinion. In Pakistan, the top opposition leader, the then Punjab governor and president of the democratic Islamic alliance (JI), Nawaz Sharif, used the events in Kashmir to increase his own stature, by calling for international support for the "freedom fighters" in Kashmir, and criticising the Bhutto government for its "inaction" on the Kashmir issue.¹³⁶ At the end of January 1990, the foreign minister of Pakistan responded to this charge by publicly rejecting the Indian claim that Kashmir was an integral part of India. But while the statement delighted Muslim fundamentalists in Pakistan, the authorities backtracked on the military front and stated that their moves on the border would be controlled so that they would not lead to a war with India. At a meeting to discuss the situation in Kashmir convened by members of the Pakistani federal cabinet, solidarity was expressed with the struggle of the people of Kashmir against "Indian aggression," but it was carefully disclosed that the support of Pakistan to the "civil unrest" in Kashmir was "moral" and not material.¹³⁷ The Indians, unimpressed, rejected these denials and claimed that they had in their possession evidence of Pakistani involvement in helping the insurrection in Kashmir.¹³⁸

¹³³ *The Times of India*, 21 January 1990, 1, 16.

¹³⁴ *The Times of India*, 22 January 1990, 1.

¹³⁵ *Newsweek*, 5 February 1990, 36.

¹³⁶ *The Times of India*, 28 January 1990, 1.

¹³⁷ *The Times of India*, 28, 30 January 1990, 1.

¹³⁸ *The Times of India*, 9 February 1990, 1.

The tragedy of Kashmir acquired a dangerous dimension at the beginning of 1990, as Hindus started to migrate out of the Valley to Jammu and New Delhi. Most of the migrants recalled that things had started to deteriorate when the fundamentalists took over in the Valley. They were afraid of forced conversion and harassment. Kashmiris were becoming victims of both the militants and the security forces. This new development was potentially explosive, since it suggested that the militants were adding an Islamic -- and thus communal -- dimension to their political objective of independence. Despite the fact that some Muslims in the Valley sought to dispel these stories as "a self-created fear psychosis," many Hindus preferred to quit the region. The exodus from Kashmir grew even further after the assassinations of an Hindu lawyer in the Valley. The authorities in the province of Jammu tried in vain to persuade the migrants to return to their homes in Kashmir. They feared that the influx of Hindu migrants might inspire rumours about communal tension which would then inflame the situation throughout India.¹³⁹

In February demonstrations by slogan-chanting crowds denouncing Pakistan's interference in the affairs of Kashmir started to respond to the strikes and violence in the Valley. These outbursts were organized by Hindu militant organizations like the Shiv Sena, which had always been critical of Pakistan. Before long, other organizations such as the Congress, the National Conference, the Janata Dal and of course the BJP, followed suit to prove their patriotic credentials in the state by launching their own demonstrations.¹⁴⁰

At the beginning of March, V.P. Singh decided to convene an all-parties meeting to find a political solution to the crisis in Kashmir, as the heavy-handed approach of Governor Jagmohan failed to produce any significant results. A rift was inevitable over the best way to tackle the problem. While the BJP lauded Jagmohan as the "only ray of hope" in Kashmir and chided the Left for its silence on the persecution of the Hindu minority in Kashmir, the Left criticized the BJP for seeking to make partisan gains out of a national tragedy. Along with the Congress, they asked for the return of Dr. Abdullah since in their view the National Conference remained the only political force in the Valley which could claim representativeness.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ *The Times of India*, 13 February 1990, 1.

¹⁴⁰ *The Times of India*, 17 February 1990, 1.

¹⁴¹ *The Times of India*, 9 March 1990, 1.

In North India, Hindu militant organizations had found in the Kashmiri uprising a clear example of the threats levelled against Hindu identity when too many concessions are granted to minorities. On March 7, an organization called the All-India Kashmir Samaj organized a protest rally in the national capital to highlight the plight of Hindus who claimed that they had been forced to flee from Kashmir. The group first asked that the centre give more support to Governor Jagmohan. But after a while, it added that preventing the secession of Kashmir was not enough and required from the government the liberation from "Pakistan's hands" of "occupied Kashmir."¹⁴²

One week later, the BJP took up from the Hindu "cultural organizations" the issue of the persecuted Hindu refugees fleeing Kashmir by organizing a big rally in New Delhi. The journalists witnessing the event heard from young Kashmiris attending the meeting disturbing tales of Hindus receiving open threats, "...either leave Kashmir or become Muslims."¹⁴³ Addressing youths that were chanting the slogans: "We will wipe out Pakistan from the map of the world," the BJP tried to transform the grievances of the Kashmiri exiles into a national drama, with the slogan: "The Kashmir that we irrigated with our blood is ours." The party was now in a mood for pressuring the government on the crisis. It defied it to implement its solutions to the crisis: no negotiations with the militants; clampdown on their organizations; sending an ultimatum to Pakistan urging the immediate cessation of support to the militants; liberation from the Pakistani occupation of "Azad Kashmir," and abrogation of Article 370.

At the end of March, a near consensus seemed to emerge about Kashmir. The all-party meeting agreed that the political process had to be revived and that new elections should be held for the state assembly. Only the BJP and the Shiv Sena rejected the policy as insufficient in the face of the secessionists' rejection of Indian authority. The government of V.P. Singh may have been ready to offer to the Kashmiris the status of semi-autonomy that the Abdullahs had asked for. But it was too late to work out this compromise since the population in the state was now blaming the Sheikh and his son for having "sold out" Kashmir to India.

¹⁴² *The Times of India*, 8 March 1990, 1.

¹⁴³ *The Times of India*, 15 March 1990, 1.

The JKLF and the other militant organizations in Jammu and Kashmir provided to the Hindu militants all the justification they hoped for, since they all stated that they wanted nothing short of total independence from India. The only political cleavages that mattered then were between the secular and the fundamentalist secessionists, or between the supporters of Kashmir's independence and the proponents of accession to Pakistan. The most disturbing development was that increasingly vocal components of the militant organizations were represented by fundamentalists who were ready to renew communal passions.

The hard-line stance of the zealots in the communal majority of Kashmir mirrored that of their counterparts in India. It was clear in the three-day session of the BJP's national executive convened in the beginning of April at Calcutta, where the crisis in Jammu and Kashmir dominated the discussions. Party president L. K. Advani reminded everyone of the stand of his party on the issue: the problem will persist unless the special status afforded under Article 370 is withdrawn. In a reference to Benazir Bhutto's speech supporting the Kashmiri insurgents, the BJP's general secretary declared that the Pakistani prime minister had started an "undeclared war" on India.¹⁴⁴ A resolution adopted by the party stated that unless Pakistan withdrew from interference in the domestic affairs of India and then made it possible to reestablish order, New Delhi might have "to knock out the training camps and transit routes of the terrorists" (in Pakistan). The resolution claimed that "hot pursuit" was a legitimate defensive measure since it viewed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as Indian territory. The party concluded its conclave by calling for the observance throughout India of a "Save Kashmir: Save Bharat Week" to bring to the country's attention the situation in the state.¹⁴⁵

The Congress overbid the BJP on patriotism on the very day that the BJP launched its attack on the V. P. Singh government. Speaking at the extended Congress Working Committee, Rajiv Gandhi pointed to Benazir Bhutto's statement of support for the people in Kashmir and asked the government to take the necessary steps to counter this involvement of Islamabad in Indian domestic affairs. The former Prime Minister criticized the National Front government for not sending adequate signals to its counterpart in Islamabad.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ *The Times of India*, 7 April 1990, 1,5.

¹⁴⁵ *The Times of India*, 8 April 1990, 1.

¹⁴⁶ *The Times of India*, 8 April 1990, 1.

Responding to the challenge posed by both internal and external pressures, V. P. Singh asked the people of India on April 10 to prepare themselves “psychologically” for a war which might be forced on their country by Pakistan. The Prime Minister declared in the Lok Sabha that this war would probably start with a pre-emptive strike by Pakistan. Leaving no doubt about his resolve, the Prime Minister stated that the armed forces were ready to face any eventualities. It was even made clear that if India were to be confronted with a nuclear threat, his government was ready to strike back.

The Prime Minister reiterated the accusations made by his political opponents that Pakistan was using religious fundamentalism to whip up anti-Indian hysteria. The Indian government found especially reprehensible the fact that the government of Benazir Bhutto had set up a fund of Rs.10 crores for “humanitarian purposes” to help the people of Kashmir while the Punjab chief minister (and leader of the opposition) Nawaz Sharif had set a Rs. 5 crores fund explicitly to help the militants. These gestures were seen by New Delhi as violations of the Simla obligations.¹⁴⁷

However, V. P. Singh had to backtrack on his bellicose statement the day after it was spelled out in the Lok Sabha. Speaking to newspaper editors on April 14, he disclosed that he wanted first to avert war by sending “timely warnings.” Pointing to the uncertainties of the Pakistani regime and doubts about who was really in charge since the competition between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif was intensifying, the Indian Prime Minister said that he felt compelled to issue a public warning. He explained that it is usually indecision and confused signals that trigger conflicts.¹⁴⁸

Indecision was precisely the problem that gripped the National Front government, whose majority was put in jeopardy by the growing threat of the BJP to withdraw its support unless the government adopted a tough stand on the problem of Kashmir. The BJP was now relying on massive demonstrations to support its demand. Thus, on May 2nd, it hosted in New Delhi a huge “Save Kashmir” rally where the President L. K. Advani renewed the party’s demand for a military intervention in Pakistan to destroy the terrorist camps.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ “Warning Against War,” *The Times of India*, 12 April 1990, 6.

¹⁴⁸ *The Economist*, 21 April 1990, 35-6.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times of India*, 3 May 1990, 1.

Aware that the volatile situation in Kashmir could easily flare up into a major confrontation, the superpowers worried about the developments in South Asia during the Washington summit of May 1990.¹⁵⁰ The Indian press disclosed that American officials worried until June about the likelihood of war by September or October of that year.¹⁵¹ The superpowers' thaw was certainly helpful in easing the tensions, as both George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev jointly reiterated their position that the Simla accord provided the best framework for a peaceful resolution of any bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan.

Afterwards, doubts started to be expressed about the real possibilities of a generalized conflict between India and Pakistan. At the height of the Indo-Pakistani crisis, the noted commentator on Indo-Pakistani affairs, Bhabani Sen Gupta, claimed that the war rhetoric was "entirely simulated."¹⁵² Leaders in both countries, he claimed, understood that if India and Pakistan dared go at war with each other, there would be no outside support for either belligerent. The U.S. had distanced itself from Pakistan while Moscow hinted that the treaty of friendship between India and the Soviet Union was not binding in the context of the new crisis. Finally, the Chinese did not want to encourage their Pakistani ally as they were busy facing an Islamic rebellion in Xinjiang. Even while Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were engaged in a race for popularity in national politics, both leaders knew only too well the prohibitive cost of a war with India. Similar reasoning about the costs of a war with Pakistan for New Delhi were expressed among Indian strategic planners.¹⁵³ Further, a prominent member of India's military and strategic planning establishment, K. Subrahmanyam, noted in an open letter to *the Times of India* that "[c]onventional wars on large scale do not happen by miscalculation in this age, specially when the army headquarters of the two adversaries are linked by a hotline."¹⁵⁴ The official policy that the Indian government wanted to pursue to address the problem of Pakistan's support to Kashmiri insurgents was one of containment, in which the border between the two countries would be sealed.

¹⁵⁰ *The Times of India*, 31 May 1990, 7.

¹⁵¹ *The Times of India*, 17 June 1990, 16.

¹⁵² Emily Macfarquhar, *U.S. News and World Report*, 11 June 1990, 44.

¹⁵³ Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Neither War, nor Peace," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 June 1990, 24.

¹⁵⁴ K. Subrahmanyam, "Dealing with Pakistan. Containment Better than War," *The Times of India*, 26 June 1990, 6.

While India could then check the infiltration into its territory, the argument went, the Pakistanis would have to deal with the fallout of their support to Kashmiri insurgents. Convinced that the Pakistani polity was already on the verge of fragmentation thanks to “ethnic rivalry, narco-power, religious fundamentalism and political instability,” Subrahmanyam considered that the best strategy for India, instead of waging a costly war, would be a strategy “(...) of containment and allowing the internal situation in Pakistan to come to a boil.”¹⁵⁵ The reasoning was that India would be secure from any spill-over effects of Pakistan’s internal instability if the border between the two countries was mined.

The main roadblock towards the implementation of this policy was the BJP’s continued attempt to derail the process by advocating intervention in Pakistan and whipping up popular support against the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. This last demand put V. P. Singh’s government on the horns of a dilemma: if it reneged on its promise to administer Kashmir according to the provisions of Article 370, it risked cutting the last remaining symbol of Kashmir’s status of semi-autonomy inside India, thus giving further credence to Kashmiri nationalists. On the other hand, New Delhi knew that by refusing to accede to the demands of the Hindu militants, it looked as if it was bending towards the minorities’ wishes for special status, benefits, and other schemes devised at the expense of the so-called Hindu majority.

Instead of reviving the political process, the National Front government chose in the summer of 1990 to beef up its security arrangements in the Valley. The authorities justified their action by the fact that politics among the militant organizations had taken a new and dangerous turn. Secular even-handedness was discarded as Hindus and Sikhs were intimidated in the Valley. Furthermore, the JKLF, as the representative of a secular (albeit separatist) movement, was on the verge of being outflanked by fundamentalist organizations like the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Jamaat-e-Islami. Finally, the moves by Pakistan to control the nationalist movement suggested that the traditional goal of Kashmiri independence was being replaced by that of accession to Pakistan.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ K. Subrahmanyam, “Dealing with Pakistan: Containment Better than War,” *The Times of India*, 26 June 1990, 6.

¹⁵⁶ *The Times of India*, 7 July 1990, 1.

The tension between India and Pakistan diminished markedly in August 1990, since a measure of predictability was introduced in Pakistani politics with the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's minority government and its replacement by a regime promising elections in October of the same year. In India, however, the National Front government was becoming increasingly fragile. The main constituent of the ruling coalition, the Janata Dal, was divided by intense factionalism, and became embroiled in a national controversy after V.P. Singh's decision to implement the recommendations of the Mandal commission despite the strong opposition of the BJP. In November 1990, the National Front government attempted to stop a Hindu communalist campaign led by the BJP. The gesture led to the withdrawal of the BJP support and the fall of the V.P. Singh government.

During the ensuing interim regime of Chandra Shekhar, the BJP prepared itself for a new national poll. In its organizational elections, the party showed its resolve to act as the defender of the Hindu component of Indian national identity. The BJP conclave chose new leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi, more committed than ever to the ideology of *Hindutva*, and openly rejected the Nehruvian model of democracy as not suited to the genius of India.¹⁵⁷ However, the party was aware that a campaign conducted on the theme of "Hindu-ness" would be unsuccessful since it frightened the religious minorities, the "backward" and "scheduled castes," the "tribes" and South Indians who feared that *Hindutva* was a code word for domination by the North. The strategy of the party worked out during the campaign to broaden the party's base, then, was to conceal the program of militant hinduization of the Indian society by an appeal to Indian nationalism. The tactic chosen for promoting this covert form of Hindu militancy was to focus on the crisis in Kashmir.

The party hoped to publicize the issue by marching to Srinagar and protesting against the continuation of Article 370. It was hoped that the campaign, directed against the Muslim militants, would be interpreted as a nationalist gesture rather than a communal action.¹⁵⁸ The BJP's conversion to the seemingly secular ideology of nationalism was an adroit attempt at disinformation since Advani's definition of nationalism stated that "every nation has its own rich culture and heritage. In India the essence of it is Hinduism."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Bhaskar Roy, "Strident Change," *India Today*, 31 January 1991, 29-31.

¹⁵⁸ *India Today*, 28 February 1991, 34.

¹⁵⁹ *India Today*, 15 April 1991, 44.

The BJP's Influence on the Narasimha Rao Government's Policy towards Kashmiri Secessionism

At the conclusion of the May-June 1991 elections, the Congress won 240 seats out of the 511 being contested in the Lok Sabha. While this result failed to provide a majority, it allowed the party to govern. The result of the elections established the BJP as the official opposition and the only other national party along with Congress.¹⁶⁰ Jammu and Kashmir did not go to the polls with the rest of India since it was under presidential rule. Still, the Narasimha Rao government decided in the summer of 1991 to revive the political process.

In this endeavour, the new government faced a continuing dilemma. Its favourite option, reinstalling Dr. Abdullah and the National Conference, was rejected by the secessionist militants as well as by the local Congress. Despite the differences between the supporters of union with Pakistan and the advocates of independence for Kashmir, all the militant organizations shared the view that short of agreement on the right of self-determination, no dialogue with India was possible. On the other hand, Jammu-based Congress representatives asked in the summer of 1991 that the party distance itself from the National Conference. They argued that Dr. Abdullah had become a liability, one which enabled the BJP to erode the Congress' traditional support base. As the favoured option of Delhi was rejected by the secessionist militants and even criticized by allies, the only realistic option seemed to be talks with the militants. This last option, however, was staunchly rejected by the BJP.¹⁶¹ Since the short-lived Chandra Shekhar government was independent of BJP influence, it was in a position to resist yielding to the uncompromising policy of the Hindu communalists. The new Congress government led by Narasimha Rao more or less pledged to continue that policy.

The problem was to inspire confidence in a Kashmiri population caught in the crossfire between the militants and the security forces. The ancient political ideal of independence had given way to disillusion and fear in the wake of the terrorist actions committed by ever younger militants. While the new governor, Girish Saxena, could boast about the number of top militants captured or killed by his forces, the continuation of disturbances by desperate and leaderless elements only added to the confusion.

¹⁶⁰ *The Economist*, 22 June 1991, 37-8.

¹⁶¹ Rita Manchanda, "No Middle Ground," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 August 1991, 26-7.

In the midst of this deteriorating situation, the BJP announced at the end of 1991 that it would launch an *ekta yatra* (“unity march”) from the southern tip of India, Kanyakumari, to Srinagar. Since the tricolour had not been raised at Srinagar for two years due to the state of siege enforced by the militants, the leaders wanted to hoist the national flag to reassert India’s sovereignty over Kashmir. In claiming that the march was a challenge to the forces of terrorism and secessionism that divided the country, L.K. Advani was trying to conceal the text of Hindu militancy behind the more secular theme of Indian nationalism. All the parties worried about the planned *ekta yatra* since the *rath yatra* launched one year before for the revival of the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy had led to communal riots.

The leaders of the Congress and other secular parties first decided to convene an all-party meeting to discuss the matter with the BJP. Their goal was to coopt somehow the *ekta yatra* and try to deprive the BJP of its anti-establishment lustre.¹⁶² But the government also had another motive: since the situation in the Valley was far from stable, the authorities worried about the security of the Hindu militants and warned of the consequences to them if they were bent on issuing provocative statements. Most of the parties did not fail to notice the strategy of the BJP and rejected the party’s claim that the march for the abrogation of Article 370 would “strengthen bonds of nationalism and unity.”¹⁶³ At this point, any event likely to inflame further the passions in Kashmir was to be avoided.

The centre was aware that the replacement of Benazir Bhutto by the hawkish Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad required more caution than ever when dealing with the insurgency. Sharif’s new regime had sent out during the year special missions to gather the support of Muslim states for the “self-determination” of Kashmir and was rewarded for the first time by substantial backing on the issue at the Islamic Conference in Istanbul in August.¹⁶⁴ This development convinced the Indian leadership that any attempt to quell the insurrection in Kashmir through force would trigger reaction of outrage in the international community. In that context, the *ekta yatra* appeared as a dangerous provocation spoiling any efforts to deal peacefully with Kashmiri militants.

¹⁶² *The Times of India*, 11 December 1991, 1.

¹⁶³ *The Times of India*, 1st. January 1992, 1.

¹⁶⁴ K. Shankar Bajpai, “India in 1991: New Beginnings,” *Asian Survey* 32 no.2 (February 1992):215.

The underlying consensus among most parties was that since the *ekta yatra* was likely to whip up passions, it was imperative to contain it. Thus, the national television network Doordarshan received specific instruction to downplay its coverage of the BJP and its demonstration.¹⁶⁵ Another measure agreed upon by the state governments was that the march should not be stopped. The authorities were instructed to focus their attention on maintaining law and order.¹⁶⁶ Here they were facing a paradoxical situation. On one hand, the centre was aware that stopping the march would only increase the popularity of the organization and transform its leaders into martyrs. This was the case since the BJP played the patriotic card with its strident claims about the liberation of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. On the other hand, the government was reluctant to let the march proceed as it could show to the minorities that it back-tracked from its policy of protecting them against the assertions of Hindu chauvinists. In the case of Kashmir, the authorities worried that the march would further strengthen the resolve of the fundamentalists to break away from India.¹⁶⁷ On top of that, the march was likely to revive an irrational fear among the Kashmiris: the realization of the Hindu militants' threat to dilute the Muslim majority in the state through the massive immigration of Hindus.

Far from being the triumphant march expected by the BJP, the *ekta yatra* turned out to be "an odyssey of futility."¹⁶⁸ Because of the threats levelled against them by the secessionists, the Hindu militants had to suffer the ultimate humiliation of being under the heavy protection of the state security forces. Far from being a popular gathering, the conclusion of the march occurred without any Kashmiri witnesses. The BJP President had to be flown into the Valley under the cover of darkness the night before the event because of threats to his security. Far from rallying the country around the BJP banner, the *yatra* may have ended up uniting the militant opposition of the Muslim-majority state. Worse, the event had further alienated Kashmiris just when the population seemed to have grown tired of the militants.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ *India Today*, 15 January 1992, 1.

¹⁶⁶ *The Times of India*, 21 January 1992, 1.

¹⁶⁷ *India Today*, 31 January 1992, 1.

¹⁶⁸ *India Today*, 15 February 1992, 16-9.

¹⁶⁹ *India Today*, 15 February 1992, 16-9.

Chapter Four

Conclusion:

Communalism and the Insecurity Dilemma in South Asia

The Impact of Hindu Communalism on New Delhi's Foreign Policy: Some Findings

Hindu communalist influence on the foreign policy of India can hypothetically manifest itself both directly and indirectly. At the level of direct influence, Hindu communalism could prod the foreign policy of Indian governments in four different ways: 1) parties representing the values of Hindu communalist organizations may themselves form the government or participate in a government disposing of a substantial majority;¹⁷⁰ 2) a minority government led by the BJP or another Hindu communalist organization would be tempted to tone down its primordialist or pro-Hindu rhetoric for fear of losing power; 3) these parties may hold the balance of power in a minority government, and be in a position to exercise pressure on behalf of their policies; and 4) Hindu communalist organizations resort to mass demonstration, agitation or other forms of extra-parliamentary action in order to force the government to act in ways that are congruent with their interests.

Hindu communalist organizations may also exercise an indirect form of influence, when groups claiming to be secular try to rob communalist groups of their traditional support. The problem with this form of influence, obviously, is that it is hard to ascertain, and can only be speculated about. Another difficulty with that form of influence is that it does not tell much when the practices of supposedly secular politicians at the local level are considered.¹⁷¹ Thus, since the RSS was actively involved in 1984 to support the electoral victory of the Congress, should Hindu communalist influence be assessed through an examination of the BJP's program or the Congress policy?

Direct and Indirect Impact of Hindu Communalism Since Independence

The campaign by the Praja Parishad against Sheikh Abdullah in 1952 points to an instance of direct impact by Hindu communalists on New Delhi's policy towards secessionism in Kashmir. This can be inferred by observing the change in New Delhi's policy towards Kashmir before and after the campaign. Before 1952, Kashmir was already an autonomous state within India, whose particular status was enshrined in the constitution. Moreover, Nehru proposed in the aftermath of the 1947-48 war to decide the accession of Kashmir within India through a plebiscite.

¹⁷⁰ This was the case with the Janata government of 1977-79.

¹⁷¹ Paul R. Brass, *Caste, Faction and Party in Indian Politics*, vol. 2, *Election Studies* (Delhi: Chanakya, 1985).

But after the campaign of the Praja Parishad, the idea of a plebiscite was dropped, and a policy of fuller integration within the Union was adopted. The zeal with which Nehru and other secular leaders over-reacted to the actions of Hindu communalists, whose strength in 1952 was far less than in the 1980's, may seem exaggerated. However, it is important to remember that the events occurred at a time when the Indian leaders' recollection of the 1947 communal frenzy was vivid.¹⁷²

The exploitation of communal cleavages by the Congress in the 1983 elections in Kashmir, as well as in the 1984 nationwide poll, suggests an instance of indirect influence of Hindu communalism in the policy of the dominant party in New Delhi. The elections were tainted by references to the designs of separatists threatening the secular character of the country, in an obvious attempt to woo Hindu nationalist voters. The Congress, without naming them, stigmatized the Muslims as potential separatists. That this electoral strategy was used to placate the growing influence of Hindu communalists is obvious when the manifestos of the Congress and the BJS are compared. Apart from the added demand for the abolition of Article 370, the BJS's manifesto looked like a copy of the Congress' in its sections devoted to national security and foreign policy.¹⁷³

In both cases, however, the disruptive influence of Hindu communal nationalism on the international conflict embodied in Kashmir between Pakistani irredentism and Indian secular nationalism was kept to a minimum since India's position both militarily and diplomatically was secure. Furthermore, the dominant party was not facing a credible alternative in domestic politics.

Assessing the Impact of Hindu Communalism on the National Front Government of 1989-90

Since the National Front government of 1989 depended on the support of the BJP, Hindu communalist organizations were theoretically in a position to exert a direct influence on the domestic policy of New Delhi in Kashmir and its foreign relations with Islamabad. However, the BJP's influence was not as successful as it might seem. Its demands on the new government to deprive the secessionist movement of political recognition was a policy agreed upon in advance by all parties.

¹⁷² See Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. Antinomies of Nationalism," 1005.

¹⁷³ "Manifestos of Political Parties," in *1984: The Bullets and the Ballots. The Parliamentary Elections in India* eds. B.N. Varma and A.K. Varma (Bareilly: Samuchit, 1986), 191, 198.

The inclination to adopt a hardline policy against the secessionists by the National Front government was not the result of BJP pressures, but the outcome of the humiliation that followed the abduction of Rubaiya Sayeed, and the ensuing failure to pacify the rebels. The National Front government's decision to appoint a new governor, mandated to restore law and order in the state with the use of armed force, may appear as a response to demands made by the BJP. But even then, the influence of the Hindu communalist organization should not be over-estimated. The appointment of Jagmohan was demanded by secular parties as well, at least initially. Finally, as far as the policy of abolishing the status of autonomy granted to Kashmir was concerned, the failure of the BJP was total.

If the National Front government was ready to adopt an attitude of firmness towards the secessionist militants, was it ready to go as far as waging a war against Pakistan if that country decided to throw its support behind the Kashmiris? In their meetings with the Pakistanis, the National Front representatives may have suggested just that, since they never failed to criticize Islamabad's destabilizing support to anti-Indian secessionist militants in Kashmir as well as in Punjab. The Indians were especially outraged by Pakistani allegations that the minority government in New Delhi might be tempted into desperate actions to assuage its domestic opposition, or that a war by miscalculation might flare up because of indecision in the Indian government. According to its own admission, however, the National Front had rejected the option of a military escalation with Pakistan. The aggressive tone of the language used against Pakistan in the spring of 1990, then, was justified primarily by the imperative to convey the message that the V.P. Singh government was in charge of the situation within India, rather than responding to BJP's pressures.¹⁷⁴

Several Indian strategists concurred *ex-post facto* and claimed that the war rhetoric was political posturing rather than an initial step towards armed confrontation. And while the National Front government was ready to let Jagmohan deal harshly with the secessionists in Kashmir if that could show to the Hindu communalists its nationalist credentials, it was not ready to engage in full-scale confrontation with Pakistan to serve that purpose. In short, the influence of the BJP on Indian foreign policy-making was limited by several factors which weighed heavily in the balance: the pro-

¹⁷⁴ *The Economist*, 21 April 1990, 35-6.

hibitive cost of armed operations, the loss of support from the Soviet Union, and the risk of escalation into a nuclear exchange.¹⁷⁵

The abolition of Article 370 is the second policy that the Hindu communalists sought to implement. For them, the issue is the ultimate test: while secular nationalists have their own reasons for rejecting Kashmir's secession and reacting to Pakistan's interference in Indian affairs, only Hindu nationalists advocate the full integration of Kashmir within the Indian Union. The National Front remained with the Nehruvian consensus prevailing on the issue by consistently refusing to yield to the pressures of the BJP.¹⁷⁶

After the elections of 1991, the BJP emerged stronger than ever before and sought to test its strength on that issue. However, its influence was somewhat diminished by the impossibility of defeating the Narasimha Rao government in parliament. The only way left for the BJP to influence the new regime was through extra-parliamentary demonstrations. During the end of 1991, Hindu communalists tried again to pressure the central government into removing Article 370 through the organization of a vast march for unity (the *ekta yatra*) drawing the attention of all Indians to the situation in Kashmir. The Congress government led by Narasimha Rao, however, was more confident than its predecessor, and managed successfully to head off the BJP's influence.

Assessing the Impact of Hindu Communalism on Indian Foreign Policy: Conclusions

At this juncture, the tentative conclusion that can be reached about the impact of Hindu communalism on the foreign policy of India is three-fold: first, Hindu communalist organizations can prod minority governments into adopting a more nationalistic policy; second, when a government with a clear majority is in place in New Delhi, it is more difficult for political parties identified with Hindu

¹⁷⁵ See K. Subrahmanyam, "Dealing with Pakistan. Containment Better than War;" Krishnaswami Sundarji, interviewed by Dilip Bobb and Raj Chengappa, *India Today*, 30 April 1990, 76; Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Neither war, nor peace."

¹⁷⁶ Behind the idea of abolishing Kashmir's special status lurks the Hindu communalist distrust towards Muslims and the idea that the Muslim majority within Kashmir is a problem in itself, threatening the integrity of the Indian state. The solution to that problem, accordingly, lies in the abolition of Article 370 since that would end the prohibition for other Indians to settle in the region and enable Hindu communalist organizations to bring in millions of Hindus from other parts of the country. Such a massive migration, the reasoning goes, would change the population balance in a way that would deprive the Muslims of their majority in the state. See Shekhar Gupta, "The Gathering Storm," 42.

communalism to influence the centre; third, the indirect influence of Hindu communalism is likely to remain.

Several questions are left unanswered, however. For instance, to what extent are the passions aroused by the crisis in Kashmir a function of the enmity between Hindu and Muslim communalists or of the Hindu communalists' notion of India as a "sacred land?" The distinction may seem spurious, but it is an important one when other problems of Indian foreign policy are considered. Thus, while the notion of India as a sacred land may complicate the resolution of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute and prevent India from making any territorial concession, the emphasis on the communal composition of a contested territory with a non-Hindu majority, like Kashmir or Arunachal Pradesh, may lead to even more problems since Hindu communalists have already hinted that they would consider changing the communal demographic balance through massive migration to strengthen their claim over disputed territories.

At a more methodological level, answering these questions will require examination of the indirect influence of the broader phenomenon of Hindu communalism within the Congress as well as other secular formations. As demonstrated by various analysts, connections between the RSS and Congress are numerous enough to argue that Hindu communalism can influence secular parties.¹⁷⁷ The following discussion will concentrate on the third tentative conclusion reached above: the resilience of Hindu communalism. It will suggest that the growth of Hindu communalism, the secessionist crises faced by India, and the decline of the secular institutions are problems symptomatic of the domestic predicaments within a weak state. This discussion will serve as a preliminary to a more theoretical investigation of whether the linkage between weak states' domestic and interstate insecurity theorized by Buzan is confirmed by the findings.

¹⁷⁷ Andersen, Walter K., and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, 234; Malik, Yogendra K., and Dharendra K. Vajpeyi, "The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India's Secular Democracy at Risk," 321.

The Insecurity Dilemma of the Weak State: Domestic and Regional Dimensions

One noticeable outcome of the brief V.P. Singh government is that it deepened the cracks in the secular consensus that had guided the policy of all governments since 1947.¹⁷⁸ This erosion of a near unanimity among political parties on the merits of a secular state was confirmed in the subsequent election. Even though the Congress was re-elected in 1991 in the aftermath of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, the BJP increased its representation in the Lok Sabha and became the official opposition. Even more perplexing, the support for a secular state in India is now questioned by some intellectuals identified hitherto as supporters of the values of secularism.¹⁷⁹ While the appeal of Hindu traditional values at the expense of secularism among the middle classes in India can be explained by sociological theory, the embrace of the dream of "hinduization" by many intellectuals is a far more disturbing phenomenon. When Hindu revisionists claim that the secular ideology in India is as tenuous as the communal ideology in Pakistan in providing a unifying bond, they overlook the problems that would inevitably crop up if Hinduism is proclaimed as the state religion of India.

The implications of a *Hindu Rashtra* would have far-reaching consequence in troubled Indian states like Kashmir, in nationwide politics in India, but also throughout the whole South Asian region. The abandonment of the secular project of accommodating differences within the Indian state may lead to a balkanization of the continent. Since regional and language differences have already strained the communal ideology of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the point of dismembering the country, it is hard to imagine that India would avoid that situation because it numbers even more language and regional differences than Pakistan. Furthermore, India has the additional cleavage of religious diversity. Judging by the political platform of the BJP and the program of related organizations like the RSS, conflicts along the lines of these three cleavages would erupt in the eventuality of a Hindu communalist government, or a coalition government including the BJP.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ The secular consensus was undermined years before the National Front formed a government. However, with the rise of the BJP, the end of this consensus was made more visible.

¹⁷⁹ See Yogendra K. Malik and Dharendra K. Vajpeyi, "The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India's Secular Democracy at Risk," 310; T.N. Madan, "Secularism in its Place," 758.

¹⁸⁰ See cf. *infra.*, Ch. 2.

Notably worrisome for security in South Asia is the ultra-nationalistic posture of Hindu communalist organizations. The Hindu communalist organizations may have finally reconciled themselves to the existence of Pakistan and abandoned any hope of achieving Indian "reunification." However, they continue to view Pakistan as the perennial enemy with whom no peace is possible.¹⁸¹ Their major fear is a further partitioning of India undertaken with the complicity of Islamabad. The secession of Kashmir, in this perception, represents the starting point in a process that has to be prevented at all cost. It is the symbolic value of Kashmir in this dreaded chain of events that explains, more than anything else, the intransigence of successive Indian governments with the secessionists in Kashmir. In evaluating the impact of Hindu communalism on the Indian secular state, it is essential to keep in mind this impact of Kashmir on the national psyche, constantly nurtured by the world-view of Hindu communalists, and even recaptured by secular politicians that do not want to appear as unpatriotic.¹⁸² During the height of the crisis in 1990, the BJP showed how far its own brand of Hindu nationalism could go, by agitating in favour of preemptive strikes against alleged training camps for secessionists in Pakistan. Such a move, if ever undertaken, would have led to open war between the two countries.

Even without launching a direct action against Pakistan, a Hindu communalist government might provide Islamabad a rationale for confrontation with New Delhi, by acting unilaterally on Kashmir. The abolition of Article 370, which stands consistently as one of the main points in the electoral manifestos of Hindu communalist parties since 1953, would be entertained by a BJP government. Abolition would instantly be perceived as a unilateral violation of the Simla accord by Islamabad and constitute an immediate *casus belli* between the two countries. The international standing of India would be importantly diminished if it abolished Article 370 because that would amount to violating a U.N. resolution calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir and cast India in the role of an international wrongdoer. Such a situation, where India would be isolated, might further encourage Pakistan to weaken India militarily.

¹⁸¹ For a typical statement of the RSS's position on the issue, see "Why Detente is not Possible with Pakistan," *the Organizer*, 23 December 1990, 14.

¹⁸² Nehru himself may have accepted a solution accommodating the separatist desires of the Kashmiris, but he was aware that the breakaway of the state, in the immediate aftermath of partition, risked empowering Hindu communalists. See Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. Antinomies of Nationalism," 1002.

Since 1947, the vital question for the secular leaders of India has been whether the state of Kashmir will secede or not. In the final analysis, whether it joins Pakistan or not matters less, because the independence of Kashmir is sufficient to show the failure of the secular state and strengthen the proponents of a Hindu communal state. This anxiety about the independence of Jammu and Kashmir helps explain the disregard of New Delhi towards the sentiments of the Kashmiri majority and the brutal response to the recent uprising in the valley. This attitude reveals the principal symptom of a weak state: a high level of concern for domestically generated threats to the security of the government.¹⁸³

It is significant that the prime source of insecurity for India, embodied by Kashmir's hypothetical independence, is not a military threat, but a political challenge. The leaders in New Delhi consider the domestic political fallout of Kashmir's independence as dangerous as the actual loss of the territory, because the former would unleash forces that would strike at the legitimizing ideology of the state. In itself, the fear that Hindu communalism would be empowered by the "loss" of Kashmir, underlines the concern that secularism has yet to contend with that primordialist worldview for ideological hegemony. This seems to indicate that India has still not created a domestic societal and political consensus strong enough to eliminate the use of armed force as an instrument of rule.

The outcome of the crisis in Kashmir depends on the ability of the centre to resist the demands of Hindu communalists to scrap Article 370, and to control the activities of the JKLF and other separatist organizations. This popularity is, in turn, a function of New Delhi's attitude towards secessionism in the state. A benevolent attitude may certainly undermine the support of the secessionists, who thrive on Indian intransigence. But there is a long haul ahead since India has lost the affection of the Kashmiri people.¹⁸⁴ The dilemma faced by New Delhi is to what extent it can grant a semi-autonomous status to Kashmir without risking a Hindu backlash throughout the country, which may put the security of all Indian Muslims at risk.

¹⁸³ See Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear*, 100.

¹⁸⁴ For details on this period, see M.J. Akbar, *The Siege Within* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 275.

As summarized by Barry Buzan, a structural political threat has come into existence since 1947 in South Asia because the organizing principles of the Indian and Pakistani states contradict each other and the two states cannot ignore their respective existences.¹⁸⁵ This leads to a situation where the achievements and successes of one state automatically erodes the political stature of the other, thus providing fertile ground on which more direct political threats may flourish. The study by Sumit Ganguly explained the etiology of the first three wars between the two countries with the same logic.¹⁸⁶ According to these views, the organizing principle of India, which depends on its ability to accommodate various religious groups inside its polity, threatens Pakistan major's rationale for existence, which is based on the principle that each religious groups should prosper within its own state. Likewise, the organizing principle of Pakistan, which depends on communal homogeneity, threatens India's rationale for existence and raises the possibility that India might dissolve into many successor states based on religion.

However, this study has shown that the main direct threat to the organizing principle of India has a domestic rather than an external origin. The possibility that the success of Islam as a national ideology for Pakistan would encourage the break-up of the Indian state along religious lines rests on a false premise: the unifying bond of religion in South Asian states. Neither Hinduism nor Islam as a whole are homogeneous religions. Each religious community is divided by distinct ethnic, language, and sectarian cleavages. This is demonstrated by the ethnic and regional conflicts that have impeded the building of a unified Islamic state of Pakistan since 1947. Likewise, the view that the establishment of a secular state in India would represent a threat to the ideology of Pakistan rests on another false premise, the view that the establishment of a Hindu communal state would solve the problem by legitimizing the ideology of the Islamic communal state. It is more likely that a *Hindu Rashtra* would continue to dispute Kashmir with Pakistan because of the sizeable Hindu community living in the state, and also because of the Hindu communalist view that Kashmir is Holy Land. At a more fundamental level, Hindu communalism represents a threat to India's security because the ideal of *Hindu Rashtra* cannot ensure socio-political cohesion for a culturally diverse country like India, and would thus encourage political fragmentation.

¹⁸⁵ See Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear*, 121-2.

¹⁸⁶ Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia.*, 11-2.

The findings discussed so far are consistent with the concept of the weak state presented by Barry Buzan.¹⁸⁷ First, it is characterized by a high level of political violence: this is most obvious in the peripheral and secessionist regions of Kashmir, Punjab and the Northeast. Second, the police and paramilitary forces play a conspicuous political role.¹⁸⁸ Third, there is a conflict over the ideology that should be used to organize the state, as the case study has shown so far in the discussion about the challenge of Hindu communalism to the secular state. Fourth, there are contending national identities within the state, expressed through various regionalist or secessionist demands. Finally, there is no clear and observed hierarchy of political authority, and in the case of Kashmir, the centre's authority is virtually rejected.

The idea of the Indian state, its institutions and its territory, is not adequately defined and stable. In Kashmir, the centre itself has proven to represent the most important threat to approved constitutional procedures for political change, with its repeated attempts to rig local elections, or remove popular local leaders. The physical base of the Indian state is also not sufficiently well defined, with respect to its boundaries with China and the disputed status of Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. The institutions of the Indian state are contested among secessionist groups to the point of violence to such an extent that it is difficult to speak of a clear referent for national security in India. The state of siege enforced by the JKLF in the valley of Kashmir suggest that the real Indian territory under the effective authority of New Delhi is not coextensive with the legal territory identified as the Indian Union.

However, despite these problems India still possesses some attributes of a strong state. Apart from the brief Emergency period, which lasted from 1975 to 1977, India has not experienced the kind of repressive governments typical of most weak states. It remains one of the few states of the Third World where competitive politics are possible and where the media are relatively free of the state's control. It is more reasonable to suggest that the Indian state is weakening, and that it faces increasing difficulties in its effort to ensure socio-political cohesiveness. At any rate, it can be argued that the Indian state stands near the middle in the continuum from weak to strong states.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. *Infra*, Ch. 1.

¹⁸⁸ David H. Bayley, "The Police and Political Order in India," *Asian Survey* 33 no. 4 (April 1983), 484-96.

India did benefit at independence from some features that were likely to help build the foundations for a strong state: the country inherited the administrative structure of the colonial Indian Civil Service and benefited from a gradual evolution towards self-rule through successive reforms extending participation and franchise. India seemed to possess of several advantages when compared to other new Asian and African states because of the prestige of its leaders, the long history of its nationalist movement, and the existence of an even older cultural tradition. But this judgment rested on wrong assumptions: that India was a nation, and that there was an agreement on the shared values of that nation.

The wave of nationalism that propelled the departure of the British from South Asia in 1947 was not the positive unity of a coherent cultural group, but rather the negative one of common opposition to a foreign power. Indeed, the consensus against the colonial rule was eroded even before independence as the creation of Pakistan out of the Muslim-majority provinces of British India demonstrates. India and Pakistan both lacked socio-religious cohesiveness despite the efforts of the Muslim League to create two nations along the lines of the religious cleavages of the subcontinent, since one third of South Asian Muslims remained in India after the partition of 1947. Another factor of diversity for both states was the variety of language groups existing in each country. Finally, a last element of diversity has to be added, which has tremendous implications for the crisis in Kashmir: the two nations not only comprised the former British-ruled provinces of India but also 565 independent princely states.

In most Third World states, the nationalist bond vanished almost as soon as the euphoria of independence died down, since most of the states were deprived of modern political foundations and owed their existence to recognition by the international community. India seemed initially to depart from that situation because the long struggle of Indian nationalists had provided them with a clear set of ideas and goals about the state and its institutions. Among these, the principle of secularism was a widely-shared and deeply-felt value among the nationalist elite. This idea meant that political demands based on religion would not be tolerated, and that the loyalty of the individual to the state, rather than to a primordialist community, was the basis of modern political life.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Paul Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence*, 6-12.

The conflict between Hindu communalism and the secular ideal for India is a conflict between a view stressing the need for a unifying Indian national culture, and a view emphasizing the composite nature of Indian culture. While the first option sees in the symbols of indigenous culture a mobilizing potential to build a "strong India" and compete with the West on an equal footing in the arena of economic development, the second one sees the attachment to indigenous culture, especially in its religious component, a manifestation of parochialism that will disappear as the country modernizes.

This contradiction is exacerbated by the stakes involved: in a short time, India has to build a solid economic infrastructure enabling it to compete in world markets. So far, the strategy adopted has relied on a centrally planned economy, and was intellectually supported by a rationalist worldview that saw in the religious traditions of the country an impediment to modernization. However, this perspective has become increasingly difficult to defend over the years. On the one hand, the politicians had to cater to religious sentiments to get votes, and on the other hand, the failure of a centrally-planned economy, demonstrated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, has discredited the option. The strategy preferred by the Hindu communalists to modernize the country differs significantly from the one adopted by the former regimes on two respects: it is liberal in its economic policy, and it is deliberately using the religious idiom of the dominant religious community to gain popular support.

The drive for achieving "Hindu unity" by Hindu communalists illustrates Mohammed Ayoob's argument that the pressures of state building compel leaders in the Third World to consider the cultural homogenization of society as a prerequisite for modernization.¹⁹⁰ The Hindu communalist organizations have yet to achieve their aim, since their political front never participated in governments at the centre for periods long enough to significantly influence the state. Still, what needs to be noticed is that the pressures of the Hindu communalist organizations to integrate Kashmir fully into the Union betrays the assimilationist prejudices common to many Third World leaders. It is important to understand this emphasis on the establishment of indigenous values to ensure socio-political cohesiveness within the weak state, because it is a trend unlikely to wither away.

¹⁹⁰ Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Problematic of the Third World," *World Politics*, 43 (January 1991), 257-83.

Hindu communalism is unlikely to wither away. It has an old history embedded in the efforts of Indians to modernize without being westernized. Hindu militant organizations formed after independence are the direct heirs of the various reformist organization that sought the consolidation, purification and unification of the Indian society necessary to resist British domination in the nineteenth century.¹⁹¹ Hindu communalism does not represent a reaction to modernization,¹⁹² but an attempt to formulate a "Hindu path to development," whose goal is to catch up with the West without losing Indian identity.

It can be argued that the processes of modernization themselves have weakened the institution of the secular state. Hindu communalism received an impetus from the successes of the democratic institutions themselves. Since independence, political parties and elites have exploited communal divisions in their quest for power and votes. In order to win elections, it has become the interest of all parties, even those who claim to be secular, to build vote banks by appealing to common religious and ethnic sentiments. The Hindu communalists have come to believe that the ability of the minorities to deliver blocks of votes to the Congress has systematically worked against the majority.¹⁹³ Further, the measures put in place to ensure equal opportunity for people belonging to communal minorities are now seen as biased against the Hindu majority.

Nationalist leaders, especially the Western-educated elite influenced by Nehru, believed that by adopting the ideology of the secular state, it would be possible to modernize Indian society and catch up with the West while maintaining the cultural diversity of India. Their rationalist hope was that religion would vanish in the face of economic progress. But the efforts to establish secular values were bound to be difficult in a society which was only partially secularized. While the more westernized sections of the urban population adopted this world-view, the majority of the rural population retained its religious temper. This majority felt that the secular ideology was an attempt to impose materialistic ideals rather than encouraging religious tolerance.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ For a concise presentation of that position, see Cynthia Keppley Mahmood, "Sikh Rebellion and the Hindu Concept of Order," *Asian Survey* 29 no.3 (March 1989), 326-40.

¹⁹² For statements of the positions of Hindu communalists, Congress members as well as leaders of the Left, see Shekhar Gupta, "What is Secularism?," *India Today*, 15 May 1991, 61-72.

¹⁹³ Yogendra K. Malik, and Dhirendra K. Vajpeyi, "The Rise of Hindu Militancy: India's Democracy at Risk," 311.

¹⁹⁴ T.N. Madan, "Secularism in its Place," 747-59.

Conclusion: the Insecurity Dilemma in South Asia and the Discipline of International Relations

The connection made in security studies and international relations between primordial cleavages and armed conflicts in the Third World points to one area where the Euro-centric bias of the field of international relations theory distorts our understanding of the security concerns of Third World states. As this study has tried to underline, the security concerns of states such as India and Pakistan bear few similarities with those of contemporary or even historic states in Western Europe, where the definition of national security is clearly entrenched in the capacity of the state to resist external threats. In India and Pakistan, on the contrary, the inter-penetration between domestic and external predicaments represents an important characteristic of their security concerns.

The Western bias of the discipline of international relations is also historically contingent. When we mention that our understanding of behaviour between states is derived from an examination of the European state system, we also mention that this European system of state has been established in the aftermath of the peace of Westphalia in 1648. That is, our understanding of relations between states not only depends on the experience of a single culture among the four civilizational areas identified by William McNeill,¹⁹⁵ but also on a specific historical stage experienced by that culture, known as the modern era. As any medievalist will tell, relations between states before the Thirty Years War were conducted in a totally different universe. Should we not consider this as a justification for caution when we try to apply universally a theoretical framework devised to observe one regional history?.

Theoretical reliance on the realist paradigm has a limiting effect on our understanding of international politics in the non-Western world. Its normative dimensions are assumed as unproblematic and are rarely questioned. Thus, the end of the papacy's pretensions to temporal rule through the establishment of sovereign states as the fundamental organizing principle in the international system has led to the conviction that transnational agents like religion do not play a role. Therefore, the reluctance to acknowledge the importance of ethnicity as a factor in inter-state relations is even more accentuated in the case of religious cleavages and their impact on inter-state relations.

¹⁹⁵ William McNeill points out that the Eurasian landmass is comprised of four civilizational areas: Europe, the Middle East, the Indic world, and the Sinitic world, all connected through trade since ancient times. See *The Rise of the West* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

While there has recently been an upsurge in the international relations literature on the impact of ethnic conflicts in inter-state conflicts, religious cleavages are not perceived as important factors in the discipline.¹⁹⁶ However, as Barry Rubin has written, religion can be seen as the central political pillar for any ruler, since it often determines the people's loyalty to a state's authority. In many weak states, religious groups are the most strongly organized institutions, and are able to exert a deep influence within society.¹⁹⁷ Further, religions in non-Western states are often the repository of indigenous values which were developed or adapted through long internal practice, and which are confronted with the dominant world-view that emerged in the West in the wake of modernity. The role of religion in inter-state relations does not manifest itself through a contradiction between different communal groups: rather, it is enacted in the contradiction between the attempts by the weak state to establish secular values modelled on those of the West and the attempt by other groups to maintain the supremacy of indigenous values.

Thus, as this case study has sought to demonstrate, the religious cleavage between Hindus and Muslims is insufficient by itself to explain the conflict opposing India and Pakistan. While there is no denying that communal conflicts are endemic within most countries in South Asia, another factor behind the major inter-state conflict in South Asia is a confrontation between two different perspectives on how to establish a strong state. Should the state in the non-Western world establish a morally relevant set of rules, or in other words, establish its legitimacy by emphasizing indigenous values and symbols - this is the communal, or primordialist, perspective advocated by various communalist, revivalist and fundamentalist organizations - or should it claim to subsume these indigenous values under secular values resulting from the experience of Western colonization?

While most states have opted for combinations of various degrees between these two attitudes, many conflicts within Third World states revolve around the proportioning between traditional and modern idioms of legitimacy. It is essential to keep in mind this contradiction when seeking to evaluate the influence of domestic cleavages on the foreign policy of non-Western states, because it provides a precious clue about the decision-making environment in which their leaders operate.

¹⁹⁶ Stephen Ryan, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*; Naomi Chazan ed., *Irredentism and International Politics*.

¹⁹⁷ Barry Rubin, "Religion and International Affairs", *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 1990), 51-63.

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