



# NEWSLETTER

REGIONAL CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, COLOMBO

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## Understanding and Responding to 'Terrorism' in South Asia

'Terrorism' is not a new phenomenon, but it has taken a central, if not the most prominent, role at the global level as one of the main threats to peace and stability of nations in the world. Aside from the dramatic events accompanying the end of the Cold War, a little more than a decade ago, no other event has had such a profound impact globally as the terrorist attack in New York and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001. South Asia emerged as one of the epicentres of the war against terrorism immediately afterwards with the involvement of the American and coalition forces against Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. This development brought into focus not only the specter raised by the threat of global terrorism, but also the dangers which terrorism poses within and among the countries of South Asia.

In this backdrop, a *Conceptualization and Planning Conference* was organized by the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) in "Understanding and Combating Terrorism in South Asia," at the Royal Palms Beach Hotel, Kalutara, Sri Lanka, during July 5-6, 2003. This is a part of the Phase II of the Non-Traditional Security project funded by the Ford Foundation.

Discussions centred around the following four parts of the project, that will be developed into full-fledged areas for research in the South Asian context:

1. Developing a better understanding of the concept of 'terrorism';
2. Responding to 'terrorism' in South Asia;
3. Impact of Insurgencies on Women and Children and
4. Developing a database and profiles of terrorist groups and chronology of terrorist activities in the region.

Working papers on different themes were presented at the conference by Professors Jayadeva Uyangoda, S.D.Muni, Moonis Ahmar, Doctors Rohan Gunaratne, Ava Shrestha and Ms Rita Thapa. Major- General Afisr Karim also had contributed a paper, although he was not able to attend the meeting.

Prof Uynagoda in his working paper on *Researching "Terrorism"? A Conceptual Note With Some Proposals*, went on to argue that the term 'terrorism' as "some social science scholars have begun to deploy as an instrument of understanding the political world in South Asia, particularly after the so-called September 11, is a politically conservative and conceptually inadequate category." He elucidated that 'terrorism,' as a category of thinking, understanding and explanation has a particularly statist and nation-centric history in South Asia. He stressed the need for reframing the term 'terrorism' as "it is both tainted and partial" and he felt that critical social science inquiry should have found an alternative category long before the global imperial agenda after September 11 re-introduced it to the social science conversation. Prof Uyangoda reacted to some chapters in a recent RCSS book, *Terrorism in South Asia: Impact on Development and Democratic Process*, (ed. Sridhar K. Khatri and Gert W. Kueck) and "examined some of the analyses, arguments and assumptions of its many authors and saw how they, both in their inadequacies and strength, would suggest areas of reflection and research that can enrich our understanding of the acutely political world in which we live."

In his presentation on Combating Terrorism in South Asia, Prof S D Muni conceded that 'terrorism' has emerged as one of the principal issues in contemporary international relations and South Asian countries and people need to understand terrorism dispassionately for three specific reasons. Firstly, the region has been facing a scourge of terrorism for nearly the past fifteen years, with the international community paying only casual and partial attention to its concerns until very recently. Secondly, South Asia stands in the forefront of fighting "global terrorism" since 9/11 when its epicenter was discovered in Afghanistan. And lastly, in South Asia, diverse and complex forms of terrorism-generating conflicts are still raging.

**Dr Abdus Sabur**, Research Director, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), Dhaka;

**Prof P R Chari**, Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi;

**Prof Anuradha Chenoy**, Dept of International Relations, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi;

**Prof Mehendra P Lama**, South Asia Division, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi;

**Prof S D Muni**, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi;

**Mr B Raman**, Chennai;

**Dr P Sahadevan**, Associate Professor, South Asia Studies Division, School of International Studies Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi;

**Prof Lok Raj Baral**, Executive Chairman, Centre for Contemporary Studies, Kathmandu;

**Prof Dhruba Kumar**, Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu;

**Ms Rita Manchanda**, Programme Executive, South Asia Forum for Human Rights, Kathmandu;

**Dr Ava Darshan Shrestha**, Institute for Social and Gender Equality; Kathmandu;

**Mr Deepak Thapa**, Himal Association, Lalitpur;

**Ms Rita Thapa**, Kathmandu,

**Prof Moonis Ahmar**, Department of International Relations, University of Karachi, Karachi;

**Dr Pervez Iqbal Cheema**, President, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Islamabad;

**Maj Gen Jamshed Ayaz Khan**, President, Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad;

**Ms Amara Saeed**, Senior Research Analyst, Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad;

**Prof R A Ariyaratna**, Director, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo;

**Dr Rohan Gunaratne**, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore;

**Maj Gen (Retd) Upali Karunaratne**, Colombo;

**Dr Vernon L B Mendis**, Director General, Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute, BMICH, Colombo;

**Mr Jagath Senaratne**, C/o International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo;

**General (Retd) Gerry H De Silva**, 24, Ward Place, Colombo;

**Prof Jayadeva Uyangoda**, Head, Dept of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Colombo, and

**Prof Sridhar K Khatri**, Executive Director, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo.

## Participants at the Conference

Kim Cragin and Peter Chalk, *Terrorism & Development: Using Social and Economic Development to Inhabit a Resurgence of Terrorism*, (RAND, USA, 2003); RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org>

Ahmed Sultan, "The Roots of Terrorism," <http://www.defencejournal.com>:3p.

Paul K Davis and Brian Michael Jenkins, *Deterrence & Influence in Counterterrorism; A Component in the War of Al Qaeda*, (RAND, A National Defence Research Institute, USA, 2002); RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org>

*National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Collection of Speeches by President George W Bush); (February 2003) URL: <http://www.usembassy.org.uk/terror.html>

Barletta Michael ed., *After 9/11: Preventing Mass Destruction Terrorism and Weapons Proliferation*, Occasional Paper No: 8, Monetary Nonproliferation Strategy Group, Centre for Nonproliferation Studies, California, USA, 2002

URL: <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/opapers/op8/op8.pdf>  
"Bangladesh Assessment 2002,"

URL: <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh>  
"Bhutan Assessment 2002,"

URL: <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bhutan>  
"Nepal Assessment 2002,"

URL: <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/nepal>  
"Pakistan Assessment 2002,"

URL: <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan>  
"Sri Lanka Assessment 2002,"

URL: <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/srilanka>  
"Terrorism Project" Web Reports of Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, India.

URL: <http://www.ipcs.org>.

Titles of Reports from the compilation includes: "Philosophy of Terrorism in Kashmir," "C& B Ws: Panic Poisons," "A New Face of Terrorism and Coming Anarchy," "War Against Terrorism Some Anti Thoughts,"

"Cashing on 9/11: Nepal's war against Maoist Insurgency" "9/11 and the US," "Shift in American Anti-Terrorist Policy," "US and Taliban: Remembrance of Things Past," "Changing Equations in the War Against Terrorism," "Security Threat Assessment of Naxalites in India," "An Inquiry into Suicide Bombings," "Fighting the Fidayeens: Combating Suicide Terrorism in Kashmir" and scores of more reports on the subject.

#### On 'Terrorism': Extracts from Leading Journals

"The main finding in the studies presented in this volume, based on original data, facts and analyses of the developments in 2001, particularly against the background of the tragic events of 11 September and the ongoing change in the international security process are the following:

Armed Conflicts: In 2001, there were 24 major armed conflicts in 22 locations throughout the world. The only interstate conflict that was active in 2001 occurred between India and Pakistan. All of the 15 most deadly conflicts in 2001-those that caused 100 or more deaths during the year -intra-state conflicts, most commonly, they threatened to destabilize neighbouring states through the burden of refugees, cross-border movement of rebels (and occasionally national military forces), and the undermining of legitimate economic and political structures through the illicit trade in resources and arms. 11 of the 15 conflicts have lasted for eight or more years, leading to extensive destruction of economic and social infrastructure. One of the reasons for their endurance is the inability of either side to prevail by force. In the vast majority of the conflicts, rebels used a guerilla military strategy but failed to win wide popular support. Governments were unable to use their full strength against small and mobile opponents."

- Adam Daniel Rotfeld, "Global Security after 11 September 2001," *SIPRI Yearbook, 2002, Armaments, Disarmament And International Security*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oxford University Press, 2002.

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#### RCSS Web Discussion Forum:

We invite you to join us in examining the dynamics of contemporary South Asian conflicts, on different outstanding issues time to time on our Web Discussion Forum. The ongoing topic of discussion is. "Future of Indo-Pak Dialogue: Possibilities and Limitations". The Centre will appoint leading practitioners and national experts who will facilitate the forum by providing in-depth analysis and also respond to your views on the subject of discussion.

We welcome all of you to express your views and we also encourage you to take part in this lively web discussion that will work as an ideal forum for talent spotting of participants for our workshops lined up in the future, and also help self introduction of newcomers to RCSS's network.

## From the Bookshelf

Jayadeva Uyangoda and Morina Perera eds., *Sri Lanka's Peace Process- 2002: Critical Perspectives* (Social Scientists' Association, Colombo 2003).

The year 2002 was significant in Sri Lanka's contemporary politics due to the de-escalation of the ethnic conflict. A ceasefire agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) was formalized in mid February, 2002. Formal, direct negotiations between the two sides commenced in September of the same year. The cease-fire and the negotiation process has now moved into the year 2003, with indications of progress as well as problems.

It is evident that a single perspective on Sri Lanka's present negotiation process is neither possible nor desirable. Bringing a protracted war to an end through non-military means is a hugely complex task, the trajectories of which can at best be uncertain. In this context, critical public scrutiny of the negotiation process is crucially important in order to ensure that the political process remains open, transparent and inclusive. This book is an attempt to encapsulate the diversity of the intense, wide-ranging and politically stimulating public debate that the negotiation exercise has generated.

Maj Gen Vinodh Saighal, *Dealing with Global Terrorism: The Way Forward*, (Sterling Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 2003)

Highlighting the changing nature of conflicts, the author provides a fresh perspective on dealing with the "disproportionality" factor related to terrorist actions- as in Bali- whereby a small cell can force extraordinarily large deployments on nations responding to the terror. He goes on to show how national response patterns, ignoring several alternative strategies, still hover between retaliatory insufficiency and retaliatory overkill. Delving into territory that has seldom been chartered before by scholars and experts writing on the subject, Saighal novel approach is particularly discernible in his views: - Breaking the definitional impasse- that has eluded the comity of nations; -Looking Beyond Iraq;-Countering Suicide Missions;- Furture Projections to tackle the menace of global terrorism.

S Rajagopal and Sridhar K Chari ed., *Prospects for Stability in a Nuclear Subcontinent*, (National Institute of Advances Studies, Bangalore, India, 2003)

The book sets out to explore prospects for stability in a nuclear sub-continent and brings together papers by top strategic thinkers from India, Russia, the United States, China and Bangladesh on Indo-Pak relations. The papers are drawn from those presented at an international roundtable conference at the National

Institute of Advance Studies in Bangalore, India in September 2002. Also included are the intense and productive discussions that followed these presentations, and a critical introduction and conclusion. This volume is offered as a contribution to policy-and decision-making and to international relations scholarship in general.

Imtiaz Gul ed., *Liberalism and Islam*, (Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, Kabul, Afghanistan)

The objective of this intellectual discourse is to highlight the inherent dangers of public posturing on issues that relate to human belief and social sensitivities. The war on terror resulting from the devastating suicide attacks on the World Trade Centre has inadvertently denigrated Islam, relegated the image of its followers to mindless religious mercenaries ready to kill and die and took the anti-Muslim sentiments to unforeseen levels across the world. The Islamic world owes it to itself to correct those in its ranks who narrowed down the meaning of 'Jihad' to killing of "infidels" in the name of Islam...Does Islam permit killing of innocent people to avenge? Does jihad mean flying into death to kill more than 2,500 people (World Trade Centre?)

Is Islam opposed to fundamental human liberties? Does the Quran restrict women's rights? Does Islam represent a narrow world view? Is it something based on clergy alone?

These are few questions that this collection of articles by prominent scholars and writers tries to address.

### WISCOMP

The Scholar of Peace Fellowships

Women in Security, conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) invites applications from South Asian professionals and scholars under the age of 45 for its *Scholar of Peace* Fellowships awarded for academic research, media and special projects. WISCOMP seeks to promote an inclusive, gender sensitive discourse on issues related to peace and security in South Asia. The fellowships cover a period ranging from three months to one year. The last date for receipt of applications is Sept. 15, 2003. Please download the application form from our website [www.furhhdl.org](http://www.furhhdl.org) by clicking on the WISCOMP link or write to:

WISCOMP  
Foundation for Universal Responsibility  
Core 4A, Upper Ground floor, India Habitat Centre  
Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110 003, India.  
Ph.: 91-11--24648450 Fax : 91-11-24648451  
Email: [wiscomp@vsnl.com](mailto:wiscomp@vsnl.com).