

Chapter 2: Extremists

The confrontation between India and Pakistan must be seen in the context of evolution of political structures in the two countries. In the case of India, democracy has deepened in the last fifty years. Representatives of backward castes and classes have found it possible to acquire power in large states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Representatives of backward sections of society as well as minorities have made it to the high offices, including that of the President of the Republic. On the other hand, deterioration in the quality of politics has resulted in the induction of criminals in public institutions. The concept of dynastic succession has spread with many political families mushrooming at the national, regional and district levels. Thus, the Indian democracy is a work in progress. It remains to be seen how efficient and clean governance it can produce in the future; however, the commitment to democracy itself is firm and solid.

Pakistan has experienced basic structural changes in its political system in the last fifty years. In the first decade, there was essentially a rule of the bureaucracy. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the army ruled the country. In the 1970s, elected government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was in power, but on account of separatist agitation in Balochistan in 1973 and demonstration against high prices in Sindh in the mid 1970s, Bhutto had effectively given all power to the army. In the 1990s, there was sharing of power between the army and democratic institutions. Since the end of 1999, the army has been in control of the formal power structures.

Since the late 1980s, a new force jihadi organisations has emerged in Pakistan's political system. In the 1980s and 1990s, they were tools of the army and Inter Services Intelligence Agency (ISI). Currently, they are junior partners, both of the army and the democratic institutions. If they continue to grow, it is possible that they may emerge as dominant partners in a future scenario. There are more than 100 jihadi organisations in Pakistan. It is difficult to estimate their exact strength. Many independent observers believe that approximately one million young men are associated with this sector, including many in non-combatant roles such as logistics, propaganda, preaching, organisational work, fund raising and commercial activities. The number of armed militants is estimated to be around 200,000 but it is important to bear in mind that there are no defined lines between armed and unarmed militants due to frequent changes in their respective roles. This compares to the strength of army at around 620,000. At the current rate, the strength of the armed forces can at the most expand to 650,000 by 2010. During the same period, jihadi forces can increase to over 300,000 and infiltrate various institutions.

The military leadership obviously had not anticipated that it might at one stage be reduced to play a subservient role to the jihadi forces. In the next five to ten years, the greatest risk to the development of Pakistan, peace in South Asia and stability in the world is that the jihadi forces may succeed in turning Pakistan's military into their strategic tool. Twenty years ago, the military had created jihadi organisations as its own tool of state craft. In this task, the Pakistani military received ample support from external sources in the form of funds, illicit arms and other wherewithal due to the Western obsession to drive the (former) Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. As the Russians left Afghanistan, Pakistan began using the extremist organisations to seek strategic depth in Afghanistan itself, suppress Shi'a minority in Pakistan, intervene in India and produce terrorists in jihadi factories for export around the world. In the process, Pakistan has created a hydra-headed monster of terrorism and extremism. Since 2001, Pakistan has accepted the directives from its Western sponsors to reverse the process. Between 2002-2004 it helped to nab over 600 militants belonging to Al Qaeda. But the military leadership is proving to be both ineffective and disinclined though taking a different public stance in arresting the genie it has produced.

Of the 100-125 jihadi organisations that now function in Pakistan, many are small and ineffective. They are created by the ISI for a specific purpose and for a specific period of time and then forced to lie low until they are required again in future. Nevertheless, ten of these organisations have managed to grow into a big force, to some extent in partnership with and to some extent autonomous of the army. In fact, they account for most of the strength of jihadi forces. These organisations are:

Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami
Lashkar-e-Taiba
Harkat-ul Mujahideen
Jaish-e-Mohammad
Sipah-e-Sahaba
Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
Hizbul Mujahideen
Tehreek-ul Mujahideen
Tanzeem-ul Ikhwan
Al Badr Mujahideen

Militant organisations with a focus on Kashmir as their primary and substantial objective have formed the United Jihad Council. When the Council was formed in 1999, it had only seven member organisations. Currently, the membership is almost 20. The Council includes two big players - Hizbul Mujahideen and Tehreek-ul Mujahideen. However, many of the other members are either small or have been only sporadically active. These include Al Umar, Muslim Janbaaz Force, Tehrik-e-Jihad, Lashkar-e-Islam and Al Barq.

Among the ten big players listed above, except for Hizbul Mujahideen and Tehreek-ul Mujahideen, the remaining eight aspire to destroy India, create a theocratic state covering the entire subcontinent or indeed the whole world. For them, Kashmir is just one item on their agenda. In other words, irrespective of whatever happens to Kashmir, they will continue to expand in order to achieve their larger objectives. In fact, Hizbul Mujahideen and Tehreek-ul Mujahideen also seem to be keen on expanding their agenda to Islamise the entire subcontinent.

The ten big organisations have more in common with Al Qaeda than a Kashmir-focused group like the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front. They would like to capture the state of Pakistan, if they can forge unity among themselves, and then aim to capture Delhi. Once they control the vast assets, particularly strategic and nuclear assets of Pakistan and India, they dream of taking over the world. In a way, they are more dangerous than Al Qaeda, which currently has barely one thousand members due to the three years of the war on terror. The ten Pakistani organisations have several hundred thousand members constituting a mass base for terrorism. They have unlimited supply of manpower through open and covert sources, and a complex financial base independent of any particular source. They have linkages to legitimate businesses, smuggling rings and security agencies. They have been able to conduct their recruitment and fund raising activities in ways that are only possible with official patronage. But their success must be also seen in the context of Pakistan's social and economic milieu. There are 20 million young men in the age group of 14-40 years, providing a large pool of potential young terrorists to be tapped by zealous leaders of jihadi groups. Moreover, male dominated social structures, where boys are alienated from women in early age, support macho tendencies and discount compassion and care as social values. With these economic and social realities, it is very easy to feel humiliated and tempted to join groups, which massage egos and provide employment.

Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami

Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HUJI) is the largest international terrorist organisation created by Pakistan. It was set up by two Deobandhi religious bodies in 1979 at the outset of the Afghan war. The initial objective was to organise relief camps for the Afghan mujahideen. Gradually the organisation was subcontracted by ISI to recruit and train mujahideen, and not merely to restrict to relief work. The group then developed links with Hizb-e-Islami (Yunus Khalis faction). After the death of Maulana Irshad Ahmed in 1985, the organisation went through several splits and changes. In 1992, HUJI set up its Bangladesh unit under the leadership of Shaukat Usman alias Sheikh Farid and Imtiaz Quddus with support from Osama bin Laden. By 2005, HUJI had spread its wings to 24 countries. These include Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Iran, Malaysia, Fiji, UK, US, Ireland, the Philippines, and parts of Africa and the Middle East. In Pakistan its network is spread in 40 districts. Some of the units in Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan have been asked to lie low since 9/11. In India, HUJI has been primarily active in the north-east, operating from its platform in Bangladesh.

The motto of the organisation is “Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami: the second line of defence for every Muslim”. With this motto, HUJI has ambitions to be seen as the main patron by all Muslims in the subcontinent and possibly elsewhere in the world. It has an active Department of Preaching, besides a military wing and publishing activities. It is known to have extremely close links with *madrassas*. It recruits students for *madrassas* from different parts of the world and then absorbs some of them in its ranks. It is known for its ambitious fund raising program including trade in arms and ammunitions on behalf of different jihadi groups. Thus, HUJI is a growing conglomerate with multiple objectives and activities.

The strategy of HUJI is to capture the state of Pakistan, eastern provinces of India and the western neighbours in Central Asia. Eventually, it would like to establish its rule around the world in partnership with other like-minded organisations. In 1995, it supported Major General Zahirul Islam Abbassi and Major Mustansar Billah to revolt against the military leadership in Pakistan. When the plan backfired, Qari Saifullah turned himself as the government witness. Saifullah was a member of the first group of Talibs that went from Pakistan to Afghanistan. He is credited for bringing together Mullah Umar and Osama bin Laden. His release in 1995 enabled him to establish a firm base in Kandahar as an adviser to Mullah Umar. In 2003, he plotted to kill General Musharraf. In August 2004, he was arrested from his hideout in Dubai and extradited to Pakistan.

The prospects of HUJI taking over the state of Pakistan appear to be weak, except as a junior partner of LeT, JeM and SSP, as discussed later. HUJI has now shifted its substantial focus to the eastern provinces of India with an operational base in Bangladesh. It has also established a branch in Arakan province in Myanmar. Besides, it has a training base in Bangladesh to impart military training to the youth from Arakan. Because of its emphasis on the eastern part of India, it has merged its activities in Kashmir with Jamaitul Mujahideen al-Alami. The role of HUJI in fomenting insurgency in the eastern and north-eastern states of India is discussed in the next chapter.

Lashkar-e-Taiba

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is also known by the name of its parent body, Markaz Dawa Wal Irshad, lately renamed as Jama'at-ud-Dawa. Unlike many other organisations of the Deobandi School, LeT belongs to Ahle Hadith School. It was set up by Hafiz Saeed in 1986. Jama'at-ud-Dawa/ LeT has their headquarters at Mudrike, 32 km from Lahore on Gujranwala-Islambad road, in the heart of the industrial base of Pakistan. Despite being officially banned, it continues to operate on a campus spread over 190 acres. The campus has a huge mosque, a swimming pool, vocational and recreation facilities, a garment factory, a wood works factory and fishing farms. There are also free health clinics.

Currently LeT has a large number of recruitment centres and propaganda offices across Pakistan. It has 2,200 camps to provide armed training. The number of LeT offices is not known, but is estimated to be more than 500. The number of LeT workers is estimated to be more than 100,000. There are indications that LeT has a presence in the US and Iraq and has links with the leaders of Mujahideen in Baghdad.

LeT has a very comprehensive and systematic method of recruitment. First, it conducts social welfare activities for general public and also for the families of the men killed in action. The focus is primarily on health with 3 hospitals, 34 dispensaries, fixed and mobile medical camps, and 11 ambulance services. The patients and their families form an important catchment area for recruitment. The second sphere of activity used for recruitment is education. LeT has 150 model schools and plans to set up another 126 model schools. These schools are different from *madrassas*. Whereas in *madrassas* education is restricted to the religious scriptures, the LeT model schools teach religion along with mathematics, science, and political ideologies. In order to reach recruits and supporters beyond patients and students and their families, LeT also runs a large publishing empire. It has a monthly magazine *Majallah Dawa* with circulation of about 140,000, a weekly paper *Ghazwa* with comparable circulation, and special periodicals for women and students. Besides, LeT organizes public rallies and conferences to widen its base. The pace of conferences has considerably increased since the ban on LeT in 2002. There have been several periods of time in 2003 and 2004, when the banned LeT organized massive public conferences almost on a daily basis. It also has mobile teams to visit schools and houses to attract youth to its conferences and training programs.

The process of recruitment is followed by training. LeT emphasises the arming of minds before arming the youth physically for terrorist activities.

There are seminars for ideological and psychological training and night training programs for youth living with their own families, before they are selected for residential courses. At these introductory seminars, the objective is to win hearts and minds of the participants. At a later stage, those selected for residential courses are sent for a 15-day course in religious indoctrination. In the third stage, arms training is provided in the form of courses lasting from 3 weeks to 3 months.

LeT uses its public rallies, conferences, and night seminars for fund raising from general public. It also earns funds from routine business activities such as fishing farms, sale in hides of animals sacrificed on religious occasions, as well as illegal business activities. Besides, it is a major recipient of funds from Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan. The estimates of total budget of ISI vary from \$500 million to \$3 billion. There are indications that LeT receives 20-30 per cent of ISI's total funding for subversive activities. As a proponent of Wahabi Islam, LeT is also believed to have been a beneficiary of Saudi charities on a large scale.

LeT has eight objectives. The top seven objectives relate to the creation of Islamic order in the world. Even though as of now, LeT has been mainly active in Kashmir, its stated objective is to challenge the West and to establish universal Islamic community. It projects the United States to be its primary enemy, Israel and India as American stooges that need to be dismembered, and Kashmir as a mere irritant. Accordingly, LeT treats Kashmir as a minor element on its agenda. Its real priority is reflected in the text of its pamphlet outlining its purpose: *Why are we waging jihad?* The pamphlet emphasises the restoration of Islamic rule over all parts of India. It seeks to bring about a union of all Muslim majority regions in the countries surrounding Pakistan. Towards that end, LeT is active in Chechnya and parts of Central Asia. It claims that it has assisted Taliban and Al Qaeda in their fight against the US and the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan in December 2001. In India, it is reported to have penetrated in Jammu and a nationwide student organisation. According to the Maharashtra state police reports, it had helped a student body to organise riots in Malegaon near Mumbai in August 2001.

LeT has a network extending beyond South and Central Asia. It is known to be particularly close to Jemaah Islamiyah of Indonesia. In 2003, it was found to be training Southeast Asian students at its Al Ghuraba cell in Karachi for jihadi operations in their home countries. In its own literature it proudly announces that it has provided training to Mujahideen from Bosnia, the Philippines, Somalia, Chechnya, the Middle East, and Muslim migrants in the United States and Europe.

At a conference organised by Jama'at-ud-Dawa, Hafiz Saeed, as reported by weekly *Ghazwa* (a publication of LeT, 16-22 April, 2004), argued that Pakistan should not be captured within its geographical limits. All Muslims from Ahmedabad, other parts of Gujarat, Hyderabad Deccan, Bihar, Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh should be treated as Pakistanis. He has described Pakistan's atomic weapons program as an instrument of Islam and not merely the State of Pakistan. His utterances at various meetings and the voices of his followers clearly indicate that LeT considers the entire Indian subcontinent as its potential catchment area. It would like to establish its rule in South Asia and then move on to conquer the world.

Harkat-ul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammad

Harkat-ul Mujahideen (HuM), earlier known as Harkat-ul Ansar, was recently renamed as Jamiat-ul-Ansar. It was originally founded in 1985 to fight against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan and to organise humanitarian relief operations for the Afghan refugees in NWFP. It went through mergers and separations with HUJI in the following 10 years. It has 48 offices in Pakistan, out of which 24 are working irregularly. It also has four training camps in Afghanistan though it is not known whether they are fully operational in view of the war on terror there. It has several thousand members but a small core of 300 Pakistani, Arab and Afghan veterans of the Afghan war. It claims to have fought on the side of Al Qaeda and Taliban against the US forces in Afghanistan in December 2001.

In February 2000, Maulana Masood Azhar, leader of HuM, formed Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM). He managed to take control of most of the offices and properties of HuM. The organisation maintains close ties with the former Taliban. Since early 2002, it has been formally banned and therefore maintaining a low profile due to Pakistan's cooperation with the US war on terror in Afghanistan and JeM's close links with the Taliban. However, Maulana Masood Azhar continues to be free to build his organisation for use at some point in the future.

It is also operating as Al-Furqan, though some believe that this is a separate organisation.

HuM says in its literature that its primary objective is to provide awareness of jihad. It claims to be determined to liberate suppressed humanity throughout the world and to eliminate injustice and discrimination. In comparison to the universal focus of HuM, JeM places equal emphasis on Kashmir and justice for Muslims all over India. It expresses anger for the demolition of Babri mosque and vows to take revenge against India's Hindu leaders. It was suspected to be associated with the attack on the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly in October 2001 and the Indian Parliament in December 2001. The organisation's agenda covers entire India and beyond.

Maulana Masood Azhar clarifies the objective of JeM in his editorial of the June 2001 issue of its official publication bearing the same name as his organisation. He has described JeM as the world Islamic movement based on the principles of Sharia. He has identified two targets. First, enemies of Islam around the world are described as military targets. Second, non-devout Muslims are described as tablighi targets. Thus, the movement is projected as a vehicle for reform in Islam in order to take the religion to its most puritanical form. The objective of JeM appears to be Islamisation of Pakistan and take over of the Pakistani state. Towards this end, it has created a hundred active offices around the country, out of which only three are in Kashmir on the Pakistani side. The rest of the 97 offices are in other provinces with 85 of them in Punjab and Sindh.

Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi

Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) are closely related to each other and also to Jammat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI), though some of their spokesmen claim separate existence. Both organisations aim to convert Pakistan into a fully Sunni state. Their main targets are the Shi'as of Pakistan. In fact, SSP came into existence in Jhang district of Punjab particularly in response to the socio-economic repression of the masses by the Shi'a feudal lords in the area, and partially as a result of General Zia-ul-Haq's doctrine of Sunni political Islam.

The SSP has reportedly 500 offices and branches in all 34 districts of Punjab. It has approximately 100,000 workers on its rolls. It also has 17 branches abroad including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Bangladesh and England, mostly for the purpose of fund raising. It manages maximum proportion of foreign funded Sunni *madrassas* in Pakistan. While it provides funding to the *madrassas*, in return it recruits young men from them. It also maintains a political profile and recently changed its name to Millat-e-Islamia. The focus of SSP is internal Pakistan. While it started its operations in Jhang district in Punjab in 1995, it concentrated heavily on killing doctors and other professionals in Karachi in 2000-2005. At one stage, SSP wanted to bring about a Taliban type revolution in Pakistan, but this agenda was put on a back burner in the context of the war on terror after 9/11. On 24 October 2001, Munir Bhat, Section Officer in Pakistan's Home Ministry, slapped a notice on the organisation for registering 50,000 youth for military training in Afghanistan. Further, the Home Ministry official charged the organisation with the intention to use the trained youth for internal operations in Pakistan on their return. The SSP leadership did not deny these charges. Nevertheless, the organisation was banned in January 2002 and 1,600 of its members were rounded up. By the end of March 2002, most of the SSP members were released and were reported by the Pakistani press to be campaigning for General Musharraf's referendum to maintain presidency of the country. Its sister organisation LeJ has had very close relationship with the Taliban. In fact, whenever conflict took place between factions of LeJ, Taliban appointed other jihadi leaders to help resolve them. Like SSP, the objective of the LeJ is to change the character of the Pakistani state and society.

Tanzeem-ul Ikhwan and Al Badr Mujahideen

Like SSP and LeJ, Tanzeem-ul Ikhwan aims to change the character of the Pakistani state and society. It was set up in 1986, a year after the formation of SSP. Its leadership comprises preachers and retired army officers. Tanzeem-ul Ikhwan does not have a strong organisational structure. Most of its activities centre around assemblies for religious prayers, the time for which is set throughout the country. It plans to bring about a social revolution through education and religious activities. It has a strong presence in Gilgit-Baltistan with a view to undermine the work of the Aga Khan Foundation and foreign missionaries.

This group uses social services to tap vulnerable youth in far-flung areas. It supplies human and material resources

to other organisations such as the LeT. It also has a good base in the army and civil service. It is mostly active underground and therefore manages to remain unnoticed most of the time.

Al Badr is considered to be a reasonably large jihadi organisation, which has been changing its colours since its establishment in the 1970s. In the beginning it was active in East Pakistan just about the time it became Bangladesh. Later, it was involved with the war in Afghanistan and began its activities in Kashmir in 1989. It maintains a very close relationship with the Hizbul Mujahideen and had even been part of the HM for some time. Its headquarters are located between Rawalpindi and Islamabad. It is a large complex with a mosque, *madrassas*, a hostel, hospital and library. This organisation has the maximum proportion of foreign mercenaries among its cadres including those from Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Turkey, Algeria, Afghanistan and Egypt.

Al Badr was involved in the Kargil adventure of 1999 and has consistently opposed any dialogue between India and Pakistan. Al Badr projects Kashmir as the gateway to India and states that acquisition of Kashmir is essential to occupy the rest of India. Thus, it is clear that it will not be satisfied with any negotiated solution to Kashmir unless the organisation is able to establish a physical base in the state to be used as a platform to attack the rest of India. There are also indications that in the mindset of its own leaders, Al Badr seeks a global space, much beyond the Indian subcontinent. It is opposed to policies of the US, Saudi Arabia and Israel. It has been exhibiting replicas of a nuclear bomb in its fund raising campaign, projecting it as an Islamic weapon. In reality, unlike HUJI or LeT, Al Badr does not have operational experience outside South Asia. Therefore, its criticism of the United States and its allies may remain confined to its publications and speeches of its leaders. However, it will seek to extend its presence from Jammu & Kashmir to other parts of India if it can create a space for itself.

Jhang-Peshawar Consensus

It is not merely a few selective jihadi organisations that are spreading the philosophy of Islamic rule in the subcontinent, as the first step for establishing Islamic rule all over the world. There is growing consensus among a section of the armed forces, political parties, intellectuals, media and citizens that the time has come to prepare for taking over the region and the world. This school of thought obviously has to contest with the liberal school, which is in favour of improving economic and cultural relations with India and the West. Thus, Pakistan is seized by a competition between the forces of socio-economic modernism and religious orthodoxy. Those representing orthodoxy have a strong base in Jhang and Peshawar. The army is split between two schools of thought. The corps commanders, including the Chief of Army Staff, claim to be on the liberal side. But they show no hesitation in using extremism as a tool in their internal games, as well as external policies. The fact that those representing orthodoxy are able to create huge empires, organise public meetings every day, and aggressively recruit young men for their enterprises shows the implicit or explicit support they enjoy from authorities in Rawalpindi. Indeed, whatever are the winds of change in parts of Islamabad and Karachi towards pragmatism, there is a growing Jhang-Peshawar consensus about a theocracy in the entire subcontinent and a universal Islamic Caliphate.

Qazi Hussain Ahmed, chairman of Jamaat-e-Islami party has clarified time and again that his priority is to bring about education 'reform' in Pakistan in order to influence the minds and hearts of people in favour of jihad. His second priority is to establish a Muslim ummah all over the world and the third priority is to separate Kashmir from India. Since Kashmir is the most proximate, it makes immediate action feasible. However, JI leaders make it clear that Kashmir is only a means and not an end in itself.

Hafeez Idrees, JI Amir for Punjab, announced while addressing a meeting of Hizbul Mujahideen that the ultimate objective of his party was to hoist a green flag on the White House. He appealed to the HM cadres to be prepared to bring this about. This would require spreading jihad across the Atlantic. Javed Kasuri, Deputy Supreme Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, states in *Jasarat* (June 12, 2004): "The entire West is Islam's enemy. All the Muslim sects must unite and wage jihad against the West."

Some leaders are not as ambitious as Qazi and his followers. They would be satisfied if they could merely capture New Delhi. On May 20, 2004, Hizbul Mujahideen had organised a public rally in Muzaffarabad. Several leaders used the occasion to condemn peace moves between India and Pakistan. Sheikh Jamil-ur-Rehman, a leader based in Muzaffarabad, declared: "The Hindus can never be our friends. In clear words, Allah also says that Jews and

Christians cannot be our friends either. Those who are attempting friendship between India and Pakistan are deceiving the nation. Friendship with Hindus is unnatural, illegal and unprincipled.” Syed Salahuddin, the leader of Hizbul Mujahideen, declared at the rally that the jihad movement would liberate “crores of Muslims and other minorities in India oppressed by Brahmin imperialists.” Abu Sayyaf Kashmiri, an Islamic scholar who writes in the Voice of Islam (April 2004), urges that the maps of India and Pakistan should be redrawn. He argues that all Muslim areas adjacent to Pakistan and Bangladesh should be handed over by India to these two states. Moreover, a state of Deccan should be created in southern India as an independent state for Muslims in the peninsula.

It is possible to identify several statements from public rallies, news reports and columns from Pakistan advocating the Jhang-Peshawar Consensus. Hafiz Saeed summarises them in several of his articles in the official organ of his group. “We request Muslims of India to rise, since jihad is the only defence of the oppressed Muslims. There is a need to organise a pure Islamic movement in the subcontinent. The Muslims can be steered to the right path by giving them right ideology, enabling them to participate in jihad, and forging integrity among their ranks.”

Hindu Extremists

India's democratic ethos places constraints on the extremists in the Indian political system. There are organisations such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), which advocate Hindu nationalism. They have often taken an antagonistic stand against Muslims in India. They argue that Pakistan cannot be trusted at all and therefore India should have a huge military budget including strategic weapons. They also support the strategy of surgical strikes in Pakistan to cut supply lines to the militants in Kashmir. However, no Hindu extremist leader has ever launched a campaign for dismantling the state of Pakistan or for flying either the tricolour or the saffron flag in Islamabad. Dr Praveen Togadia, who is considered to be one of the most hard-line Hindu leaders, has often asked Pakistan in his public speeches to stop terrorism and urged the Indian government to attack terrorist camps across the Line of Control if they are not closed. Neither he, nor any other leader of the Hindu organisations has sought to acquire the territory of Pakistan. In fact, when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Lahore in 1999, he made it a point to visit Minar-e-Pakistan as a symbolic acceptance of the Pakistani state.

In the 1950s, there were sections in the Indian public opinion, which found it difficult to accept Pakistan as an independent state. Over the last 50 years, the Indian mind has evolved in its perception of Pakistan. Most Indians, particularly the strategic thinkers, may not trust Pakistan and therefore may lack enthusiasm to build friendship with their neighbour. However, there is no sign of any interest in capturing Pakistani territory. India's acceptance of the government's decision to hand over the territory and prisoners secured in the 1971 war, without any significant returns, demonstrates the underlying desire to live and let live. The people of India are not ready for any cartographical changes that would adversely affect their country. At the same time, they are not seeking any cartographical changes to the detriment of Pakistan or any other country. The fact that even the most extremist leaders confine themselves to this school of thought is a consequence of democracy. If any political group wants to come to power, it needs a genuine mandate of people, which is not possible to secure on an agenda of violence and war. Whether Pakistan would have had a similar experience had it nurtured democracy in the last half century is a matter of speculation. The growing interest in sections of the Pakistani society to seek reconciliation with India and the international community perhaps indicates that in a genuine democracy, organisations such as HUJI, LeT, JeM, and others would have found it difficult to create space for themselves. The conflict between India and Pakistan may appear to be a territorial conflict on the surface, but in reality it is very much a conflict between the respective political structures of the two countries.