

## **Terrorism and Movement: A Case Study of Kashmir**

Rekha Chowdhary

Terrorism has come to be defined in the background of the terrorist attacks on the United States (U.S.) on September 11, 2001. “9/11” thus has become the basis for defining the global response to terrorism since that time.

Security analysts, strategic experts and political decision-makers all over the world have become swayed by the particular understanding of terrorism offered by the U.S. government. As defined by the U.S. Department of Defence (DOD) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), terrorism is: “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (US Department of Justice, 2005, **iv**). It has been framed purely as a criminal activity, justifying not only an action by the state after the terrorist incident, but also for its prevention.<sup>1</sup> It was in accordance with this definition that the U.S. State Department identified 45 terrorist groups and 7 “rogue states” supporting terrorism.<sup>2</sup> Washington appropriated for itself the leadership role in dealing with these groups and states, declaring a global war against them.

Given the way that 9/11 has redefined terrorism, as per American logic, it has not only obscured the alternative meanings of terrorism, but has also transformed it into an autonomous ahistorical phenomenon. “Abstracted from time and history” it is seen as “uncaused original evil”, an evil which is neither preceded not caused by any thing (Nuzzo, 2004, **338**). “9/11 is presented,” argues Nuzzo, “as the Nietzschean ‘monument’ that has lost any connection with its causal explanation – a monument

placed outside any causal chain of explanation, a hypostatized event placed outside history” (ibid, 337). She elaborates:

From the outset, the logic of the Bush administration has aimed at presenting 9/11 as an event with no cause, certainly not as an effect of some (hidden or yet unknown but still discoverable) cause. By uncovering the conceptual structure that supports the official definition of terrorism insistently circulated by the media, we discover that terrorism is presented as that which has no ground and is beyond all law. Terrorism is not the effect of a cause; it is not grounded in a ground. And 9/11 is the cause of all evil that, in turn, has no cause and stands at the origin of the causal chain with no possible explanation. (ibid, 337).

This ahistorical approach to terrorism has made it into a “politically charged” term that has been used to raise mass emotions against a “designated enemy”. To quote Gates (2001), “... the concept of terrorism is a rhetoric device used for condemning one’s enemies rather than a scientifically definable category.” Few people, according to him, “can speak of terrorism without a degree of emotional involvement, and there is a strong tendency on the part of potential victims to associate the technique only with enemies who might use it against them.” Often, it becomes a term to brand an “identified group” as associated with terrorist activities or as sympathisers of terrorism, and in the process the world is seen in binary terms – as comprising those people who are associated one way or the other with terrorism and those who are victimized by terrorism. A new hierarchy is therefore created between the Western world that is victimized by terrorism and the non-Western world, specifically Islamic countries and groups, seen as the principal propagators of terrorist activities.

Terrorism has thus become a geo-strategic term used to justify intervention in the internal affairs of countries. Terrorism, it is argued by many, has been a convenient tool for the U.S. to label any threat to its interests. By using the label “terrorist”, it has sought to justify its proactive interventions, which range from

regime change to war.<sup>3</sup> The usage itself remains selective and obscures U.S. sponsored terrorist activities, or for that matter activities of any state that claims to be a part of the “global war against terror”. Domestically, in the name of tackling the terrorist challenge, the state can also assume unrestrained power over its own citizens and erode their civil liberties. Reference can be made to Patriot Act of USA enacted in 2001, which gave new powers to the law enforcement authorities against “terrorist” individuals and groups (Coen, 2001).

The contemporary usage of the term terrorism has also obviated the relations between terrorism and resistance. By isolating it from its historical context and by holding groups and individuals responsible for it, terrorist linkages with politics of resistance have been camouflaged. Until as late as the 1980s, terrorism was seen as a part of the resistance movement and therefore had some positive connotations. The very origin of the term during the French Revolution in 1795 was based on its positive and normative meaning. Terrorism, in the modern period, continued to have a normative basis through its connection with the politics of resistance, especially with reference to decolonization.

After World War Two, terrorism as a tool for revolutionary struggle was used as a matter of course by the national liberation struggles. Referring to the twentieth century as an era of national movements, places like Algeria, South Africa, Israel and Vietnam, Cronin (2002) argues that struggles for separate power became “a catalyst for terrorism, especially aimed at the objective of gaining independence or autonomy from established colonial powers.” The birth of many new states after these struggles further legitimized the use of terrorist violence. Terrorists, at that time and place, were seen as “Freedom fighters” fighting for a “just cause”.<sup>4</sup>

In the later period as well, especially during the 1970s and 1980s when terrorism acquired international character, it was still seen in terms of a “just war” against imperialism. As Cronin (2002) argues, this phase of terrorism captured the imaginations of many young people. He notes:

Sometimes the lowest common denominator among the groups was the forces against which they were reacting—e.g., “imperialism”—rather than the specific goals that were sought. But a notable innovation was the increasing commonality of the international connections among the groups. Especially after the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, for example, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) captured the imaginations of many young radicals. In Lebanon and elsewhere, it also provided practical training in the preferred techniques of mid-twentieth century terrorism such as airline hijacking, hostage-taking and, of course, bombing.

As Oberschall (2004, 27) argues, terrorism is not the act of a madman or of political and religious sociopaths, it is an act of political agents, be they ethno-national, religious or ideological, who choose covert, violent means to achieve political goals. Terrorist acts cannot be explained only with reference to violent individuals or collectives, nor in terms of cultural values of certain groups or communities. As Black (2004, 15) argues, “No individual or collectivity is violent in all settings at all times, and neither individualistic nor collectivistic theories predict and explain precisely how violence occurs... Violence occurs when the social geometry of a conflict – the conflict structure – is violent.” Terrorism, therefore, is “an extreme, violent response to a failed political process engaging political regimes and ethnic and ideological adversaries over fundamental governance issues” (Oberschall, 2004, 26).

Terrorism breeds in a situation of wide-ranging discontent. To understand it, therefore, one has to go beyond the act of terrorism and ask the question: what is the historical or political context in which this act is taking place? It is important to note that terrorism is not the first method adopted to express discontent. When other

methods of resolving conflict and addressing issues of political importance do not seem to be working, only then are terrorist methods are adopted. Bird, Blomberg and Hess (2008) note:

Broadly speaking, they feel that there is no superior alternative. This will be the case where the relevant political system is undemocratic. In a national setting, the government may be autocratic and may seek to suppress opposition views through banning free speech and rights of assembly and association. In a global setting, perpetrators of terrorism may feel that their own governments are not representing their views in global organisations, or it may be that they feel that the global organisations are themselves undemocratic, marginalising the views of poor countries, that nonetheless account for a large proportion of the world's population.

It is in the context of the paradigmatic shift in the conceptualisation of terrorism and its isolation from the politics of resistance that this chapter is written. Elaborating upon the case study of Kashmir, it argues that terrorism is not an autonomous phenomenon and does not exist in isolation of the resistance movement. By contextualising terrorism in Kashmir in its historical and political background, and by linking it with popular discontent, this chapter seeks to contest the contemporary understanding of terrorism as an “original evil” and locate it in the context of resistance politics. It also seeks to explore the basis of legitimization of terrorist acts and emphasise the point that terrorism cannot operate in isolation of the wide support of people in whose name the movement takes place.

### **Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir**

Terrorism (hereafter referred to as armed militancy) came to define the political responses in Kashmir in 1989. In the beginning, it was a small indigenous group of Kashmiris who initiated the era of militancy under the banner of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).<sup>5</sup> JKLF was initially supported by Pakistan, but was later on

abandoned in favour of a newly floated organisation, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (Hizb).<sup>6</sup> Hizb, like the JKLF, was manned by the local Kashmiri youth, but its ultimate objectives were quite different from those of the JKLF. While JKLF aimed at complete independence of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir as it stood before October 1947, the Hizb aimed at a merger of the state with Pakistan. Devoid of the financial and other kinds of support from Pakistan and facing elimination of its cadre by the Hizb, the JKLF was forced to declare a ceasefire in 1994 and began to operate as a political, rather than a militant, group.

By this time, militancy in Kashmir had acquired a more violent and brutal form. In the name of Islamic Jihad, outfits manned by mercenaries from Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries started operating here. The three major organizations operating through foreign Jehadi elements were: Harkat-ul Mujahideen<sup>7</sup>, Lashkar-e-Toiba<sup>8</sup> and Jaish-e-Mohammad.<sup>9</sup> Apart from these major groups, there were numerous smaller outfits which operated in Kashmir. Most of these outfits were either associated with the bigger outfits, or were the front organizations floated in the wake of the ban imposed on some organizations.

Having gone through various phases, militancy in Kashmir has, at present, both an indigenous as well as a foreign face. Hizb remains the most active indigenous militant organization, while the three above mentioned foreign organizations, along with many others, are operating either directly or through their front organizations.

For two decades now, Jammu and Kashmir has been inflicted by armed militancy. Large numbers of people have been killed in terrorist incidents and other incidents of violence perpetrated by security forces or by the counter-insurgency groups. Although the brunt of this militancy has been felt in the Valley of Kashmir, as well as the militancy-infested areas of Jammu, the Kashmiri militancy has made its

impact beyond the state of Jammu and Kashmir and there have been a number of attacks in other parts of India, especially in the capital city of Delhi. Of these, the one on the Parliament of India, in December 2001, has been the most notable.<sup>10</sup>

One of the intended consequences of militancy has been the internationalization of the conflict. Although for a long time India continued to take the official position of terming the militancy as a “Proxy war of Pakistan”, it began to gradually take cognisance of the conflict by making overt and covert efforts to deal with it. In 2003, the Government of India initiated a comprehensive peace process and started dialogue with Pakistan as well as with separatists in Kashmir. It will take time to reach a resolution of the conflict to the satisfaction of all the parties involved.

## **The Conflict Situation and the Politics of Resistance**

### *External Dimensions of Conflict*

The context of this militancy has to be located in the politics of resistance in Jammu and Kashmir. This conflict can be traced to the moment of decolonization, the Partition of India and the emergence of two sovereign states – India and Pakistan.<sup>11</sup> More than 500 princely states of erstwhile British controlled India were given the option to join either of the two States, though demography and politics played a major role in the exercise of such an option. Since Pakistan was created in response to the demand for carving a Muslim Homeland, it was considered inevitable that the Muslim majority areas, like Jammu and Kashmir, would join this new state. However, neither the Hindu ruler who was given the legal right to make the choice nor the Kashmiri Muslim leadership representing the majority of people of the state were keen on joining Pakistan. While the ruler, looking for ways to sustain his control over power,

was exploring the possibility of remaining independent, the Muslim leadership organized under the banner of National Conference and was keen on maintaining the distinct Kashmiri identity, and therefore preferred negotiation with plural and secular India rather than face the risk of getting assimilated within all-Muslim Pakistan. The Accession issue itself created the problem – with Pakistan claiming Kashmir on the basis of its Muslim-majority population and the princely ruler remaining indecisive about the issue even two months after the transfer of power from British to the Indian and Pakistani States.

The Accession of Kashmir to India ultimately took place under the extraordinary circumstances created by the invasion of its territories by the tribals supported by Pakistan, The Princely ruler signed Accession with India, but Kashmir, which was partitioned across the LoC, became a bone of contention between India and Pakistan. While India took the issue of invasion of Kashmir to the United Nations (UN), hostility between India and Pakistan continued and became aggravated over time.

#### *Internal Dimensions of Conflict situation: Resistance Politics*

The conflict situation in Kashmir, however, extends beyond the external dimension of contestation between India and Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> It also has an internal dimension: Kashmiri identity. It is around the latter that the politics of resistance has taken shape. The present phase of resistance politics that was started in 1989 has been preceded by two earlier phases of resistance – from the early 1930s to 1947, and from 1953 to 1975.

It was during the first phase of resistance politics that the contours of identity politics took shape around the question of alien control of political power, on the one

hand, and the exploitative structure of economy on the other. The extreme poverty and backwardness of the Kashmiris, in the context of the oppressive nature of the political power controlled by “outsiders” since the sixteenth century, was the dominant discourse of the movement led by the National Conference and its charismatic leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.<sup>13</sup> The “Quit Kashmir movement” of the 1940s, therefore, was organized around the demand of abolition of the monarchy and transfer of power to people, reorganization of the agrarian structure and right of the people to decide the question of the future of Kashmir and its accession to India or Pakistan. It was during this phase that the people of Kashmir developed a sense of political community, seeking to control their own political destiny and demanding an autonomous space for their political expression.

It was due to the successful culmination of the first phase of resistance politics that the political leadership of Kashmir, subsequent to the abolition of the monarchy, could negotiate autonomy within the government and attain a special constitutional status under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Unlike the other states of India, Jammu and Kashmir was to have its own constitution and was to decide its own terms of constitutional integration with India.

However, the constitutional autonomy (as well as the negotiability of the political leadership) of the state could not be sustained for a long time as it came to be perceived in contradiction to the “national interest”. In a country recently partitioned on a religious basis, the idea of constitutional and federal asymmetry could not be accommodated within the predominant discourse of nationalism, which at that time had the logic of “unity with uniformity”. The plea, therefore, was made for the “Constitutional integration” of Jammu and Kashmir to bring it at par with the rest of the states of India in terms of its relationship with the Central government.

A second phase of resistance politics was initiated in the wake of the systematic erosion of the constitutional autonomy of the state. Soon after Sheikh Abdullah, the popular leader of Kashmir was ousted from power in 1953 (and kept in detention) and the process of the “constitutional integration” of the state with the Centre was initiated. Meanwhile, in the name of “national interest”, democratic norms were compromised – elections were manipulated and governments sponsored by the Centre were imposed on this state. It was in this background that the Plebiscite Front, led by the colleagues and sympathisers of Sheikh Abdullah, contested the finality of accession of Kashmir to India and demanded the right of Kashmiris to decide their own political fate. The Plebiscite politics dominated the political scene in Kashmir for around two decades. It was in 1975, when Sheikh Abdullah joined political power, that the Plebiscite Front was dissolved.

It is in the background of the earlier two phases of resistance politics that the present phase of militancy and movement, since 1989, must be analyzed. The present phase manifested in the accumulated discontent of the Kashmiri political community over the existing political arrangement, given the: absence of democratic channels for political expression, central intrusion in the politics of the state, and the lack of autonomy for local politics; however, one can trace its continuity with the earlier two phases of resistance. The logic of the politics of resistance, like the earlier two phases, is defined by the urge for autonomous space for the expression of Kashmiri identity. The reason as to why the militancy erupted itself in 1989 can be located in the wide-ranging resentment and popular perceptions that Kashmiri identity has not been allowed to express and assert itself.

*Accumulated Discontent, Mass Response and Terrorism*

The immediate context of the militancy can be explained with reference to three political events that took place during a short span of five years, 1984-1989. The first of these was the dismissal of the legitimately elected National Conference government, led by Farooq Abdullah in 1984.<sup>14</sup> This led to substantial resentment in the Valley. It not only reminded the Kashmiris of the ousting of Sheikh Abdullah from power (and his prolonged detention) at the behest of the Central government, but also brought to the fore the logic that no government, however democratically elected, can function in the state unless it is supported by the ruling party in the Centre. It was in acknowledgement of this logic that Farooq Abdullah subsequently decided to go in for an alliance with the Congress party. Commonly known as the Rajiv-Farooq accord, this alliance, formalized in 1986, was the second political event that not only generated anger against the Centre, but also caused substantial damage to the credibility of the National Conference. There was substantial popular hostility and indignation in the Valley. Farooq Abdullah was blamed for being a political opportunist compromising Kashmiri dignity and identity.

The Assembly election of 1987, which was perceived to be rigged, was the third and the final event leading to massive popular reaction. The National Conference-Congress combined swept the election, while the Muslim United Front that had come into existence to counter the National Conference-Congress failed to win the expected number of seats. The coalition government that was formed after this election was confronted with the crisis of governance right from the beginning.

However, the feeling of alienation has deeper roots that go far beyond these events. It lies in the cumulative discontent simmering in the Valley since the early 1950s. It is a response of the majority of Kashmiris who feel that their basic urge for an independent political space has remained unmet and that they have been forced to

experience an ever-intrusive politics. In the common perception, there has been severe erosion of the political dignity of the people of Kashmir.

It is in this context of alienation that armed militancy came to the surface. Soon after the 1987 Assembly elections, the young Kashmiris under the banner of JKLF, decided to launch the armed struggle.<sup>15</sup> Apart from JKLF, there were a number of other militant groups whose presence in Kashmir was marked by targeted killings (of the agents of the state including the police informers, intelligence officers); bomb blasts; attacks on government offices and government property; and kidnapping.<sup>16</sup> Militancy incapacitated the political structures and rendered the agencies of political mediation irrelevant. By 1989, most of the political actors were made ineffectual and there was a political vacuum. There was a significant erosion of political authority and the Indian State had to use its coercive apparatus to maintain it.

#### *Militancy and Popular Support*

Militancy received massive popular support. The first generation of militants, many of whom had participated in the 1987 electoral process in various roles (as candidates, election agents or campaigners), were adopted by the people as “our boys” working for “the cause”. Militancy, at that time, was seen to be a desperate response of the people of Kashmir who had become “convinced” after the Assembly elections that there was no political channel for the expression of their political urges. Militant violence was therefore seen as the last resort to focus national and international attention on the political frustration of Kashmiris.

This militancy was not isolated. It was backed by a popular response. It was a very spirited support of people moved by the sentiment of *Azadi* (freedom). By the early 1990s, this response had acquired the form of a massive movement, the

manifestation of which could be perceived in huge processions of Kashmiris almost on daily basis. To show their anger against the Indian state, thousands of Kashmiris thronged the streets of Srinagar chanting the slogans of *Azadi*.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout the year 1989-90, there were numerous more or less spontaneous demonstrations against India. On any issue, people would find a reason to come out to express their sentiment. For instance, a demonstration against Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, in February 1989, became a week-long anti-India demonstration. The political response of the people at that time was so intense that the government had to impose indefinite curfews. People violated the curfew and joined huge processions. (However, they remained indoors on the call of *Hartal* [strike] by the militants. This phenomenon came to be known as *civil curfew*.) By early 1990, there was mass insurgency. Describing this situation Schofield (2004, 150) notes:

At the end of February an estimated 400,000 Kashmiris marched on the offices of the United Nations Military Observer Group to hand in petitions demanding the implementation of the UN resolutions. It was reported as the largest demonstration the Kashmir valley has seen...Nearly every day a procession of lawyers, women, teachers, doctors marched through the streets of Srinagar.

The mass response not only led to the collapse of the political order, but also to the withdrawal of the political parties from the scene. So intense was the expression of popular resentment that it forced the Centre government to dissolve the State Assembly in January 1990.

### *Indigenous Militancy*

The armed militancy that emerged at that point of time was indigenous and rooted in mass politics. Not only the first generation of militants were local Kashmiris, but the logic of militancy was also purely local:

Young men aged between sixteen and twenty five, they came from the towns of Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama, Kupwara and Baramula... majority were well-educated – doctors, engineers, teachers, policemen – who had become alienated by Indian government policies in New Delhi and lack of job opportunities. (Schofield, 2004, 146).

It was at a later stage that foreign militants started operating and militancy reflected international linkages. Although Pakistan got involved in militancy right from the beginning – since the cadre of JKLF sought material support from it, the nature of recruitment remained local. Even at a later period, when Pakistan sought to control the militancy through the creation of Hizb-ul Mujahideen, it did so through the involvement of local Jamaat-e-Islami. The Hizb, that remains one of the most visible militant organisations in the State, is manned by Kashmiris.

The reason why the militancy could sustain itself during the initial period was that it was rooted in the movement and was indigenous in nature. It needs to be emphasised that the militants enjoyed a very strong legitimacy during this time. In the early period of militancy, there was a total identification of Kashmiri society with militancy. The gun-wielding militants roamed freely and were celebrated. They were seen to be doing heroic things and were called *Mujahids* (freedom fighters). Those killed in encounters with security forces were known as *Shaheeds* (Martyrs).

#### *De-legitimisation of Violence and Terrorism*

This militancy enjoyed a high level of legitimacy during the first phase because it was rooted in the indigenous movement and followed the popular logic. However, during the second phase its character changed and it lost much of its popularity. At least three reasons were behind this. First, unlike the first generation of militants who had joined militancy for reasons of ideology and commitment to the Kashmiri cause, the second generation of militants had many other extraneous reasons

for doing so – including money and power. With the gun assuming ascendancy over political means, it was used many times to silent dissent, eliminate competitors and gain control over resources.

Second, militancy lost much of its sheen when it became an internal war for supremacy between the JKLF and the Hizb-ul Mujahideen. With most of the cadre of the JKLF eliminated at the hands of Hizb, Kashmir faced its first disconnect between militancy and the movement. By 1994, JKLF had declared a ceasefire and withdrawn itself from the militancy.

Third, and the most important, was externalisation in the context of *Jehadis* or the mercenary militants fighting in the name of Islam. At the beginning the *Jehadis* were welcomed and their role in the movement was appreciated. However, their continued presence generated tensions within the movement, which had serious implications not only for the legitimacy of *Jehadis*, but for the armed militancy as a whole. The *Jehadi* phase of militancy, which began in 1993, generated a two-fold tension within the movement – due to its external basis and its underlying logic of Pan-Islamism.

There was always a difference in the popular response towards the indigenous militants, who were seen as part of the movement, and the *Jehadis*, who were seen as “guests”. The cultural difference between the *Jehadis* and the local people, specifically in terms of their approach towards religion, brought out the distinctively external element of the *Jehadis*. Islam in Kashmir, as Khan (2002: 178) argues, “became the religion of the great majority of rural Kashmir ... largely because, through the Rishis, it allowed the main configuration of pre-existing Kashmiri popular religion to adapt itself to the wider Islamic framework.” Muslim Rishis and their Shrines, therefore, became the symbol of Kashmiri Muslim identity. Numerous local

practices and rituals associated with the Rishis and Shrines bring out the cultural factor of Islam, which is unique to Kashmir.<sup>18</sup>

The irreverence of the *Jehadis* towards the Shrines and the local rituals and practices had generated a negative response towards them. This could be seen during the siege and later burning of *Chrar-e-Sharief*, one of the most revered shrines of Kashmir by Mast Gul, a Harkat ul Ansar *Jehadi* trained in Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup>

The Pan-Islamic agenda of *Jehadis* has also been problematic for those in the movement. The *Jehadis* operating in Kashmir consider religion as the logic of the movement and see it in the context of the Pan-Islamic agenda. This, however, does not reflect the ground reality of Kashmir and does not go well with the local imagination. For most of the Kashmiris, the conflict has purely political basis and it has nothing to do with Pan-Islamism.<sup>20</sup>

### **De-Legitimation of Violence and Armed Militancy**

Due to the disjuncture with the popular response, the *Jehadis* could not sustain the legitimacy enjoyed by the militants in Kashmir during the earlier period. By the mid-nineties, a clear cut societal response had evolved in Kashmir against militancy and violence. Thus, Abdul Gani Lone, one of the senior separatist leaders, asserted in the late nineties that these “guest militants” were no more welcome in Kashmir: “They are not for azadi. They are for international jihad and they have their own global agenda.” Their presence earlier was required as they had come to help and support the Kashmiris in their struggle, but in the process, they had transcended their role as “supporters” and had assumed the role of the “owners” of the movement. This was

objectionable because they were not only giving the local movement an external dimension, but were also being insensitive to the local responses (Chowdhary, 2002).

Lone did not stop at suggesting the exit of the non-Kashmir Jehadi elements from Kashmir, he also asked the local Kashmiris to lay down their arms. This, in his opinion, was essential for creating a political environment in which the problems could be resolved through dialogue and negotiations. He said that the phase of armed militancy was over and there was now a need to shift the direction of the movement towards more peaceful methods. In 2001 he urged militants to “help in solving the Kashmir problem” by not resorting to violence (quoted in *South Asia Monitor*, 2001). Since militancy was no more rooted in the local political responses, it lost the popular support.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Impact of 9/11 on Terrorism in Kashmir**

One of the major impacts of 9/11 was that it de-legitimised armed militancy at the global level. However, as argued above, militancy was de-legitimised in Kashmir long before. The political discourse had already begun to change and the movement had started to shift from the politics of violence to the politics of dialogue in the mid-nineties.

However, 9/11 accelerated this. First, armed militancy lost international support. Devoid of such a support, there was a need for the movement to change its strategy. Meanwhile, 9/11 put pressure on Pakistan to change its position *vis-à-vis* armed militancy in Kashmir. Although it did not take an immediate u-turn towards militancy in Kashmir, a gradual change in its position has been visible since this

episode. The decline of militancy in Kashmir in the recent years is evidence of the restraint exercised by Pakistan.

The most significant implication of 9/11 has been that South Asia has become a region of strategic interest for the U.S. and therefore significant pressure has been put upon India and Pakistan to enter into dialogue and resolve the Kashmir conflict. It is the result of such a pressure that a comprehensive peace process had been initiated between the two countries, since 2003. Efforts were also made by the Indian government to initiate dialogue with separatists in Kashmir.

Within Kashmir, the politics of resistance has entered a new phase – the phase of political mechanisms. In this new phase, mass response towards militancy has changed. Despite this change, there is some linkage between militancy and movement. This linkage can be seen in two ways. First, since armed militancy served the crucial purpose of taking the movement to a stage where it attained international visibility and equipped the Kashmiris to regain the negotiability of their political future, the role of the armed militants in the final resolution is important. There is a feeling among the separatists in Kashmir that the militants need to be brought to the table for the sustenance of any long term peace process. However, this feeling is reserved only for the Hizb-ul Mujahideen and not for the foreign militants.

Second, though militancy does not enjoy the kind of legitimacy it did in the initial period, the people of Kashmir still identify with the militants, especially the local militants. Although there is a strong antipathy towards militant violence, the local militants are still owned by and are seen to be serving the cause of the movement. The death of a local militant becomes an occasion to show identification with the militancy. Invariably huge crowds join the funeral procession of the slain militants.

The support to militancy will continue in Kashmir, despite its de-legitimisation, as people still feel that the basic issue underlying the conflict remains unaddressed.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to show the relationship between armed militancy and political movements. Taking the case study of militancy in Kashmir, it has argued that armed militancy, which was manifested in Kashmir during 1989, was rooted in the political movement. The movement had preceded the militancy and had already passed through various phases. The phase of militancy manifested not only mass discontent accumulated over the time, but also a frustration with the political processes. Armed militancy, therefore, was not the first response of the Kashmiris. Before resorting to militancy, other methods of resistance were pursued.

The chapter has also argued that armed militancy needs the support of the masses in whose name it uses violence. Such support is made available only if militancy enjoys legitimacy. In the case of Kashmir, the militancy enjoyed a very high level of legitimacy in the initial period as it was linked with the movement. However, as the militancy became autonomous and developed a logic of its own, it lost its legitimacy.

A distinction has been drawn between the indigenous logic of the militancy, and the one imposed from above. The indigenous logic remains valid for the militancy to retain the support of people. The failure of the *Jehadi* politics to re-define militancy as a part of Pan-Islamism or the global *Jehad* reflects this very clearly.

Armed militancy in Kashmir shows that terrorism is neither an isolated development, nor an ahistorical event. It is very much a part of the wider political resistance and is merely one of the varied expressions of such resistance. Resort to armed militancy is an extreme act of desperation and of frustration, resulting from accumulated discontent and the unavailability of other means of expression of this resentment.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> The FBI makes the distinction between two types of terrorist related activity – a terrorist incident and terrorist prevention. A terrorist incident is a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States, or of any state, to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. A terrorism prevention is a documented instance in which a violent act by a known or suspected terrorist group or individual with the means and a proven propensity for violence is successfully interdicted through investigative activity. See, US Department of Justice, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> These seven states included Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, Cuba and Afghanistan.

<sup>3</sup> To quote Nuzzo (2004), “terrorism is construed by the official definition of the Bush administration as a phenomenon lying outside and beyond any law – civil law as well as moral law, international law, the law of peace, as well as the law of war. Terrorism terrorizes precisely because it is outside all law and all order. It follows (by the logic to which propaganda forces public opinion) that the only response to terrorism can be war, that is, the total annihilation of the enemy. It follows also that war against

terrorism will not abide any law and will simply consecrate terrorism's absolute lawlessness.

<sup>4</sup> In the international political practices as well as political theory, one can find justification of the politics of resistance as well as the use of violence in the resistance politics. Political analysts give reference to the Article 51 of the UN Charter and UN General Assembly Resolution 3246 of 1974 as the basis of legitimacy to the right of resistance. In political theory, the necessity of violence for political purpose was conceptualised by Franz Fanon. Fanon not only gives a justification of revolutionary violence but of terrorism per se. It is only through violence that liberation of the oppressed people of the colonised world can be possible.

<sup>5</sup> The JKLF was originally established in 1964 but became involved in militancy only in 1989. The immediate provocation for initiating the era of militancy in Kashmir was provided by the Assembly elections held in 1987. These elections were perceived to be heavily rigged. Soon after the elections a number of young people crossed the Line of Control in search of financial, armed and other kind of support for waging an armed struggle in Kashmir. Among those who were the first to cross over to Pakistan for armed training including Mohammad Yosuf Shah, who was a candidate in one of the Assembly seats in city of Srinagar. He later assumed the name Syed Salahuddin and has been heading the Hizb-ul Mujahideen, the most important indigenous militant organisations of Kashmir. Among others who crossed over at that time for armed training included Yasin Malik, the chief of the JKLF in Kashmir, Abdul Hamid Sheikh, Ashfaq Majid Wani, Javed Ahmad Mir etc.

<sup>6</sup>This was, mainly due to the divergence of the political objectives between Pakistan and JKLF. While Pakistan aimed at the merger of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan,

JKLF aimed at complete independence of erstwhile territories of Jammu and Kashmir under the control of India, Pakistan and China.

<sup>7</sup> It started working in Kashmir in 1993. It was initially named as Harkat-ul-Ansar. Harkat, based first in Pakistan and then in Afghanistan was established in mid-1980s. It was active in terrorist operations in Burma, Tajikistan and Bosnia.

<sup>8</sup> Lashkar started its operation in Kashmir in 1994. Lashkar is the military wing of Markaz-ad-Dawa-wal-Irshad, a Pakistan based religious organization.

<sup>9</sup> Jaish is a more recent organization formed by Maulana Masood Azhar, a Pakistani cleric in 2000.

<sup>10</sup> In the 26-29 November 2008 attack in Mumbai, high-profiled hotels and foreign tourists were targeted; more than 170 people were killed. However the Mumbai attack was not the handiwork of the militants operating in Kashmir, but rather of Pakistani groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba.

<sup>11</sup> In comparison, Edgardo Lander's contribution examines the colonial legacy and the decolonization of Latin American society and current projects of social transformation, democratization and inclusion in South America.

<sup>12</sup> The external dimension of the conflict has certainly contributed to the present phase of armed militancy in Jammu and Kashmir; it would have been impossible for the armed militancy to sustain itself in Jammu and Kashmir without the material and political support of Pakistan. However, it is mainly with reference to the politics of resistance around the issue of Kashmiri identity that one can actually trace the basis of the armed militancy in this State. Armed militancy, should be seen as one of the recent manifestations of resistance politics.

<sup>13</sup> The successive regimes of Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras were portrayed in the context of the indignity to the local Kashmiris. However, it was in the very

establishment of the Dogra rule in 1846 that the loss of dignity in its extreme form was perceived. The fact that money exchanged hands in the transfer of power from Sikh rulers to the Dogras (the Treaty of Amritsar by which the Dogra rulers came to control Kashmir) made it to be.

<sup>14</sup> This government had been voted into power in 1983 with a huge mandate within the valley. However, due to the defections engineered by the Congress (the ruling party in the Centre), the National Conference government was reduced to a minority and was replaced by the government of defectors led by G M Shah. The outside support to this new government was provided by the Congress.

<sup>15</sup> Crossing over to Pakistan they got the armed training and returned to Kashmir in 1989 and initiated a new phase of the politics of resistance.

<sup>16</sup> Among the groups operating at that time, one may mention Al Barq, Al Fateh, Al Jihad, and Allah Tigers.

<sup>17</sup> Schofield (2004: 148) quotes one of the Kashmiris that she interviewed about the scenario in Kashmir at that time. “There were loudspeakers in the mosques, encouraging people to come out. Everyday, all day people were shouting slogans;;; Azadi, Azadi;;; was broadcast from the minarets. With extraordinary optimism the people believed they had won their struggle almost before it had begun. Even I was thinking within ten days, India will have to vacate Kashmir.”

<sup>18</sup> Khan argues (2002: 234), “Despite the criticism of the local practices by the Ahl-i-Hadith, a vast majority of villagers celebrate the anniversaries of their saints in the traditional manner. They continue to practise vegetarianism on festive occasions when they invite relatives and friends to taste the modest vegetarian food as a mark of respect to the disciplined soul of Rishis. In certain areas austerity is practised in the true manner of their patron saints; relics of the Rishis such as their dress, wooden

clogs, cups, turbans, staff, etc.; are exhibited on festive occasions when devotees invoke the intercession of the Rishis in the presence of these relics”.

<sup>19</sup> This 14<sup>th</sup> century shrine of the patron saint of Kashmir Sheikh Nooruddin Wali was occupied by more than hundred militants.

<sup>20</sup> It is due to the political nature of the movement that the mass of Kashmiris have silently but very forcefully rejected the onslaught of fundamentalism. The societal response to the fringe organisation trying to use the space created by the movement for forwarding the ‘Islamist agenda’ of veiling women or enforcing cultural codes has been quite firm. These organisations have not been allowed to appropriate the movement for ‘religious’ purposes.

<sup>21</sup> Towards the later years of the decade of nineties the majority of militants came from outside the region. With the entry of Harka-ul-Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammad, the militancy acquired a very heavy external character. The Jehadi logic pursued by these organisations was unsuited to the sentiments of the common Kashmiris and went against the tradition of Kashmir’s politics.

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