

## 2. Overview of regions, countries and conflicts studied

This study on causes of conflict in the Third World has been carried out in South Asia, West Africa and Central America. In this way a certain degree of variety was reached.

- Each region shows another stage in the life cycle of conflict. West Africa seems to be at the start of a conflict cycle; Central America seems to have arrived at the end of a long conflict cycle; and South Asia is characterized by protracted conflicts that have lasted for several decades.
- The regions also have a different colonial history.

Below, the countries are shown that were studied in each of the regions.

South Asia	West Africa	Central America
Afghanistan	Ghana	Costa Rica
Bangladesh	Niger	El Salvador
India	Nigeria	Guatemala
Pakistan	Senegal	Honduras
Sri Lanka		Nicaragua

Below some general characteristics of the different regions will be presented, as well as a brief overview of the history of each of them. A final section of this chapter will be devoted to the conflicts in each region.

### 2.1 Some general characteristics<sup>1</sup>

All three have a history of colonial rule. Independence came most recently to the West African region in the late 1950s and 1960s, while South Asia's independence is 50 years old. The Central American region became independent between 150 and 175 years ago. South Asia formed part of the British *raj* (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) and British empire (Sri Lanka), while the Central American region was part of the Spanish colonial empire. In West Africa we see a mixture of British and French colonial rule. Afghanistan is an example of a classic buffer state between the expanding British and Russian colonial systems. The Central American region came under the influence of the growing power of the United States throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, a type of imperialism that was as pervasive as direct colonial rule. As a result the area felt the effects of the Cold War even to a greater extent than the other two regions.

South Asia is the home to two of the oldest religions of the world, Hinduism and Buddhism and has been an important center of Islamic civilization for about nine hundred years. There is also the influence of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches (especially in Sri

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<sup>1</sup> This section is a shortened version of a part of chapter I 'Methodology' of the Regional Report South Asia by K.M. de Silva.

Lanka). The political and cultural influences of these religions have a contemporary significance, and still form a matter of contention if not conflict in the states of South Asia. South Asia is by far the largest of the three regions in surface area: almost twice as large as the West African region and about ten times as large as the Central American. Its current population of over one billion people is 8 to 9 times larger than that of the West African region and nearly 50 times as large as that of the Central American. Despite the huge populations of the cities in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, South Asia is more rural than either West Africa or Central America. Development indicators place South Asia below Central America but above West Africa. The South Asian and West African regions are clearly behind Central America with regard to social indicators, with the exception of Sri Lanka. South Asia has about 60% of the world's illiterates and its population ranks among the world's poorest with a per capita income of about a tenth of the world average.

Central America has the highest number of armed services as a percentage of total population. In regard to defense expenditure as a percentage of GNP and per capita Central America and South Asia show higher figures than West Africa.

## 2.2 History

The analysis of the conflicts in the three regions may benefit from a historical perspective. Though contemporaneous events or incidents may have triggered off the escalation of conflicts into a violent phase, frequently there are underlying causes that have a long history, not seldom reaching far into the colonial epoch. In this short report evidently no justice can be done to the histories of the regions and countries involved in this study and to the data provided by the experts in the different regional and country reports. Yet it will be tried to indicate some major relevant historical issues by way of background information.

### 2.2.1 South Asia<sup>2</sup>

South Asia has two layers of conflict: international including regional, and intrastate. India is central to the first of these, and not without influence on the intrastate problems of its neighbors. Few regions in any part of the world are dominated by a single state, in population, in armed might and in the size of the economy, as India dominates South Asia. India accounts for 72% of South Asia's territory, and over 75% of its GNP and population. In addition, it has nearly 60% of its total international trade. Thus the very vastness of India is a central feature of any study of conflict in South Asia. Moreover, each of India's neighbors has minority groups with linguistic, religious or cultural ties with groups in India. India has been and is in a position to exploit these links to its advantage or the disadvantage of its neighbors whenever it wants to.

All South Asian states have inherited border problems from the *raj*, which bring them into conflict with neighboring states (India and China and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan and Afghanistan) or with each other (India and Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma).

The post-independence state in all parts of South Asia bears the marks of its colonial origins, except in the case of Afghanistan. It was won from the colonial power after protracted agitation in the case of India, inherited through partition in the case of Pakistan, seized through successful

<sup>2</sup> This section is a shortened version of a part of chapter II 'Conflicts in South Asia – a general historical overview' of the Regional Report South Asia by K.M. de Silva.

rebellion in Bangladesh, and in Sri Lanka alone obtained through a process of peaceful negotiation. The processes of post-colonial consolidation and state building by the new rulers have much in common in all of these instances. Language, culture, religion and ethnicity have often been disregarded. As a result, the successor states confront separatist forces. Separatism in South Asia is as much a colonial legacy as it is a re-emergence of powerful pre-colonial forces seeking a political identity based on language, culture, or religion, in a post-colonial setting. Ethnicity became linked to language as well. This happened often already within a decade after independence when the first euphoria started to wane and the deficiencies of the new power structures became obvious. The political establishments of the newly independent states became embroiled in protracted conflicts with ethnic and religious minorities who sought to resist the expanding powers and demands of the state. In Bangladesh language and culture became points of identity in a state -the original Pakistan- that was constructed on the basis of religion. There were several other examples of such conflicts in parts of South Asia: the Punjab, Jammu Kashmir, and Assam in India; Sind and Baluchistan in Pakistan, and in Sri Lanka. The principal separatist trouble spots are all border areas and this adds to the volatility of the situation and implies a potential for cross-border tensions. Afghanistan is an example of long-term ethnic, tribal and religious division.

While separatism appears to be endemic in South Asia and is a powerful destabilizing force, it has generally been held at bay by an even more powerful force: nationalism. Because practically every state is vulnerable to different forms of separation, it was seen to be in all states interest to resist threats to their integrity from indigenous and external separatist forces. The partition created two hostile states, India which inherited the bulk of the *raj*, and Pakistan, a political oddity whose two wings were separated by over 1,400 kilometers of Indian territory. The *raj* as an economic and fiscal unit had been constructed over a century and a half. The new territorial boundaries imposed their own restrictions on road and rail systems, on the river systems and cut across the complex system of head-works and canals in the irrigation network of the Punjab.

Externally four sets of political problems emerged from the colonial history and partition. The border between India and China on the northwest and northeast along the Himalayas became a matter of contention and, later on, of conflict. Second, the accession of Jammu Kashmir to the Indian union has been a matter of the deepest controversy between India and Pakistan. They have gone to war over these territories in 1947, 1965 and 1971. Thirdly, Pakistan and Afghanistan differ on the Durand line that had been imposed by the British on Afghanistan in 1893. Bangladesh inherited minor problems relating to the porous border with Burma. The fourth is the problem of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Why the CHT should have been awarded to Pakistan in 1947 at the partition of the *raj*, remains a mystery. By religion and culture the population of that region had a greater affinity with the people of northeast India, or of neighboring Myanmar, than they did with the people of East Pakistan.

Migration of population, some of it voluntary and some of it involuntary, has contributed and still contributes to tensions among and within the states of South Asia, and among their neighbors. Some demographic shifts go back to colonial times and others are post-independence. The British treated the *raj* as a vast reservoir of labor. In Sri Lanka the British imported Indian Tamils to work on their tea plantations.

The partition led to a huge influx of persons to India as well as to Pakistan. At the present time, voluntary population shifts within India generate more tensions than issues relating to the political status of the Indian community abroad. In the north-east of India, for instance, Bengali-speaking groups, both Hindu and Muslim, have moved from densely populated parts of Eastern

India and from the former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) into relatively under-populated Assam and neighboring regions. The involuntary movements of population -refugees or displaced persons- are associated with cataclysmic political events in the region such as the crisis in Afghanistan.

### 2.2.2 West Africa<sup>3</sup>

With the exception of Liberia, every single other state in West Africa was once colonized by a European power. These fifteen states all acceded to sovereignty in a seventeen-year period stretching from 1957 to 1974. Nine of these states were once the sprawling French West Africa administered from Dakar and, as such, remain active participants in the Francophone bloc. Four came under British dominace and still maintain close political and cultural links with the Commonwealth, while two others were, until as recent as 1974, overseas provinces of Portugal.

The British were the first to embark on the process of de-colonization in Africa. Ghana achieved sovereignty in March 1957. In the same year, both the Eastern and the Western regions of Nigeria attained the status of self-government while the country as a whole achieved full sovereignty in 1960. The French were more reluctant than the British to de-colonize; the Portuguese foreclosed that option altogether. The reasons for this divergence lay in the differing colonial projects of the European powers. The introduction of Indirect Rule as a colonial policy by the British was dictated by both necessity and by deliberate choice. It was cost-effective, but also signaled an early acceptance by the British that these colonies would have to go their separate ways eventually.

The French did not share this reasoning then. Two major considerations underpinned the French attitude. The first was the strategic value of the colonies in Africa; the people and the territories under France had played vital roles in the Free French Movement and in the Allied Powers' campaigns in the course of the Second World War. Second, control of the colonies in sub-Saharan Africa was important for France's great power status in international politics. Independence for these colonies was conceived at best as an internal arrangement within the Franco-African Community that was proposed in the 1958 Fifth French Republican Constitution. Guinea's refusal to endorse this framework was the reason for its independence. When independence came in 1960 to the other states, it was both a recognition of the genuine aspirations of the people and an acceptance of the shortcomings of this new Community. France then sought to preserve its influence in these countries through other arrangements such as the signing of bilateral and multilateral treaties.

Colonialism has impacted upon West Africa in a number of ways. First, contemporary West African states are creations of European powers, indeed, the outcome of the scramble for Africa. The boundaries of these states were entirely defined (negotiated) and delimited by the colonial powers. These states are not the outcome of indigenous processes of state formation. The second point concerns the forced incorporation of diverse nations and cultures into single political entities. In the post-colonial setting, the resulting frictions and ethnic antagonisms have persisted in the absence of a meaningful strategy of political management and nation-building. Thirdly, colonialism has left a legacy of cultural orientations and vertical economic and political linkages between West African states and their former colonizing powers that have so far proved difficult to surmount in the quest for regional co-operation.

<sup>3</sup> This section is a shortened version of a part of chapter 2 'Perspectives on armed conflicts in West Africa' of the Regional Report West Africa by O.C. Nwokedi

In the early years of independence, in the 1960s, most states were content with treading carefully on the international scene. Ghana, Guinea and Mali adopted anti-imperialist stances. The sometimes radical and pan-African quest for unions between independent West African states was a manifestation of a willingness to build continental unity by transcending colonial territories. In 1959 Senegal, Sudan (Mali), Upper-Volta (Burkina Faso) and Dahomey (Benin) decided to establish the Mali Federation that undermined the Franco-African Community. In reacting to this projected federation, Felix Houphouët-Boigny (1960-1993), the first president of Ivory Coast, set up with French support the *Conseil de l'Entente*. This brought together his country, Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger (Togo joined in 1966) thus short-circuiting the Mali Federation made up eventually of Senegal and Sudan (Mali).

Thus, there were two contradictory tendencies in inter-West African relations in the immediate post-colonial period: the dismantling of links existing from colonial times on the one hand, and the reinforcement of these on the other. Ghana (former Gold Coast) moved quickly to dissociate itself from the common British institutions and services. The French-speaking states were engaged in reinforcing their own common institutions such as the Franc zone (*Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine*) and in creating fresh ones to respond to emerging needs and challenges. Examples were the *Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (UDEAO)* transformed into the *Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO)*, and the now defunct *Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache/Mauricienne (OCAM)*. The salient point, however, was that until the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, which bridged theoretically the linguistic divide in the region, the most important state in the area -Nigeria- was excluded from the multilateral framework for co-operation and diplomacy. This was partly the consequence of deliberate political choices by the key players in the region. In weaving a network of functional co-operation, the French-speaking West African states as well as France were motivated by the necessity to check the real and the potential influence of Nigeria in the region. France's support to the secessionist province of Biafra in the course of the civil war in Nigeria, was part of the same strategy. At another level, the establishment of these networks was also motivated by Cold War calculations. Military technical co-operation agreements and secret defense treaties were part of Franco-African Co-operation Accords, on which basis French troops were and still are stationed in Senegal and Ivory Coast, for example.

At another level, Ghana and Nigeria were perceived as rivals for influence in the region in the immediate post-colonial period, while there also have been tensions between Ivory Coast and Senegal and the between Ivory Coast and Guinea and Ghana.

As a result of the continuing economic and political dependency on the erstwhile colonial powers the elite of the post colonial states developed clientelist relationships. In most Francophone states a strong centralized state system was implemented through authoritarian rule. Elites in the post-colonial setting were strongly socialized into Western cultural values and standards; but maintained a paternalistic attitude towards the majority of mostly illiterate poor peasants. Simultaneously, these groups maintained the pre colonial patron-client relationships with their ethnic constituencies. The integration of the various ethno-linguistic communities into a national framework failed. The incomplete process of nation building and the failure to deliver social services to the population at large resulted in demands for greater autonomy and in regional and ethnic secessionist tendencies. The ensuing reactions from the state bureaucracies and power elites invariably involved internal repression of some kind leading in turn to military coups and the power transfer from civilian to military rule with few notable exceptions (Senegal and Ivory Coast). In some states, due to a lack of legitimacy and the disintegration of state institution, a process of state failure materialized provoked by

large scale internal conflict (Liberia and Sierra Leone). In the aftermath of the ending of the Cold War democratization slowly appeared on the political agenda of a number of states leading to more popular participation in the decision making process and the weakening of authoritarianism. However, the recent history of the region shows cases of success and failure, indicating that democratization in its present appearance does not provide a solution for all problems of governance.

### 2.2.3 Central America<sup>4</sup>

Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica were originally the five provinces of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, the administrative unit representing the colonial government of Spain. The process of building modern states began with independence in the early 19th century. Independence from Spain occurred without any type of direct confrontation. The Central America Republic, also known as the United Provinces of Central America was established in 1821 and fell apart in 1838. The new states were based on a liberal, republican constitutional regime that, in principle, established the conditions for gradual democratic development under the rule of law. Frequent amendments and new constitutions, however, reflected the whims of the leaders. National territories were increasingly better defined and controlled by a central authority although certain areas, such as the Caribbean and border areas, remained virtually outside the state system. The state-society relationship reflected, in practice, an authoritarian political regime and forceful forms of social control.

The Central American economies were controlled by the land-owning elite and were dependent on the exportation of a limited group of primary products. Submission of the masses and their enforced labor was the key to production. The coercion necessary to supply such a labor force gave armies a repressive task. Landowners began to emerge as local leaders, or *caudillos*, who co-opted the local masses through patronage and violence; in turn, *caudillos* were linked through clientelism to the head of state. This style of autocratic government considered central power as personal, almost family property; therefore, political struggles, whether peaceful or violent, broke out among members of the same oligarchic class.

The main elements of the emerging political culture included: constitutionalism; a weak sense of rights; *caudillismo* and then presidentialism (or an emphasis on the executive); populism generated through patronage and clientelistic loyalties; patrimonialism; centralism; and intolerance. Due to all this, political competition for central power was something distant for the great majority of the population.

The republics adopted fairly rapidly some of the characteristics commonly associated with strong states, such as the constitutional organization of a defined governmental structure and territorial control; but they lacked their own functional autonomy vis-à-vis the oligarchy. In fact, state strength was associated more with its monopoly on organized violence and territorial control than with the gradual creation of generalized mechanisms of social consensus.

<sup>4</sup> This section is a shortened version of a part of chapter 'General historical overview' of the Regional Report 'The causes of conflict in Central America' prepared by the Arias Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation.

By the end of the 1920s, populist political parties, mass movements and trade unions had emerged with radical, socialist and communist ideologies. At the same time, a profound crisis began to affect the agro-export model as a result of its increasing vulnerability to changes in the international economy and global market prices. With only the important exception of Costa Rica, the immediate response was the implantation of military dictatorships that repressed popular demands. The United States ended up backing all of these dictators. This dictatorial period was a transition toward the modernization that would occur following World War II. Although the communist and radical groups had been temporarily eradicated, the demands for economic and political reforms continued to grow, particularly among the expanding professional middle class. Modernization was also understood as democratization of the state and of politics.

None of the Central American countries made it through the post-war modernization period without acute domestic conflict. Revolutions took place in Guatemala (1944) and El Salvador (1948), initiated by alliances of the middle class with progressive, young military officers who attempted to create a popular base so as to implement democratic programs of economic and social reform. The revolution in Guatemala confronted the traditional oligarchy and the conservative Catholic Church more openly, but its social-democrat and anti-United States profile proved to be its downfall. In 1954, a military invasion took place backed by the U.S. government. In El Salvador, initial clashes with the traditional, conservative sectors forced the revolutionaries to moderate their economic and social reforms. In the other two countries with a dictatorial tradition, Honduras and Nicaragua, modernization was much slower in the economic and social spheres and almost nonexistent in the political realm. In Honduras, change toward a more democratic regime came in the second half of the 1950s, and in Nicaragua the Somoza family was ousted only in 1979. In both countries the governments were in full control of the armies and counted on strong support from the Catholic Church and the U.S. government. In Costa Rica, popular tensions led to a civil war in 1948. The new Costa Rican government gradually recovered its democratic institutionalism, broadening the benefits of the welfare state. In the rest of the region, authoritarianism prevailed well into the 1970s under distinct forms of association between the military and civilians. It operated as institutionalized autocracy (the best examples being the family dictatorship of the Somozas in Nicaragua and the majority of the Guatemalan military governments after 1954), or as a populist state with a significant repressive component, as in El Salvador and Honduras.

## 2.3 The conflicts

### 2.3.1 South Asia

#### *A. Border disputes*

The Sino-Indian border dispute provides us with an example of a prolonged international conflict. The central feature of the defense plan of British India was the Himalayas. Though the Himalayas were more distinctive geographically than politically, any ambiguity was settled in favor of the *raj* by the exercise of military power, clever diplomacy and sheer bluff. The defense thinking of the *raj* lives on in Delhi. Since 1959 and until very recently relations between China and India had been seriously affected by conflicting interpretations on the "true frontiers" of the *raj* in the Himalayan region. The conflict with China was a direct result of India's public posture as the heir of the British in regard to the borders demarcated between the *raj* and the Chinese Empire of the 19th and early 20th century. These borders had been imposed on a weak China

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despite its protests and refusal to acknowledge them. Needless to say the much stronger post-war China was hardly likely to accept them either.

### *Pakistan*

After partition Pakistan's two component units were separated from each other by over 1,400 kilometers. Power lay with the western wing while the eastern wing had over half the population of the new state. The new state was constructed on the simple proposition that a common religion would bind its peoples together, in the face of distinct ethnic identities and of a multiplicity of languages. The Bengali speaking population of East Pakistan had the great advantage of the intervention on its behalf of India, seeking to exploit separatist agitation there to its own strategic advantage. Apart from inheriting the less developed parts of the *raj*, Pakistan had the disadvantage of inheriting two unfriendly neighbors. One was India, against whom the new state had many grievances, especially the absorption of a large section of Kashmir.

### *Afghanistan*

It was almost inevitable that Pakistan would inherit the suspicion if not hostility of the rulers of Afghanistan because of the Durand line, which the British had imposed on them in 1893, which divided the Baluchi and Pathans between Afghanistan and the British *raj*. Disputes over this boundary have remained a source of discord between Afghanistan and Pakistan since 1947. That discord became part of the global cold war virtually from the time of Pakistan's creation and on a few occasions the two countries were on the verge of a military conflict. Although this was averted there was no resolution of the issues in the conflict. There were a number of diplomatic incidents and demonstrations against Pakistan in Afghanistan, to which Pakistan responded by the closure of consulates and trade missions and the stoppage of transit. The Afghani-Pakistani conflict was kept alive by the compulsions of the Cold War, but these same Cold War compulsions prevented it from erupting into violence through adventurist initiatives on the part of either of the two states.

### *Jammu-Kashmir*

The roots of the Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India date back to the imperial conflicts of the 19th century when the *raj* wanted to build a buffer zone between British India and the Tsarist Empire. Although the British established control over Kashmir they did not make it part of British India and the boundaries with China and with Afghanistan in the Kashmir region were never clearly or fully demarcated. The manner in which the state of Jammu-Kashmir acceded to India violated the principles that guided the partition of the *raj* in 1947. In the first two wars with India on the Kashmir issue, in 1947 and 1965, Pakistan sought to challenge if not reverse the decision to convert Jammu-Kashmir into a state of the Indian Union. The first of these wars brought about a third of Jammu-Kashmir under Pakistani control. The second war gave Pakistan no advantage at all. The third in 1971 took place against the background of India's successful intervention in support of the Bengali separatist movement and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state. This time, the diplomatic and political advantages were unmistakably with India as evidenced by the Simla Accord of 1972. Mediation and conflict management in this dispute has been attempted on three levels, beginning first of all with the United Nations. Since 1947-48 there have been numerous Security Council resolutions on Kashmir and even today the UN maintains a peacekeeping presence on the cease-fire line. There have also been third party mediations especially by the former Soviet Union in 1965, as well as bilateral negotiations between the two countries since 1971-72. But none of these have brought the conflict anywhere near resolution. For Pakistan, Kashmir was part of the unfinished business of the partition of the *raj*. For India, control over Jammu-Kashmir was an assertion of the secularity of the Indian state.



## B. Intrastate conflicts

### *Afghanistan*

The ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity has always presented an enormous political difficulty in developing a coherent sense of nationhood. Even within ethnic tribes there are many layers and sub-layers. This all had a strong bearing on the making and unmaking of military alliances in the different wars Afghanistan faced. Internally, Afghanistan remained a weak state with underdeveloped state institutions. The state was ruled by a King, relying on a coalition of traditional tribal and religious leaders. Territorial and tribal affiliation were the only bases for legitimacy of political power. When Dardar Saoud ousted the monarchy in 1973 he contested the Durand line which had been imposed on Afghanistan by the English in the eighteenth century. This, however, strained relations with the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Ali Bhutto. Iran expelled over one million Afghans and Pakistan launched a modernization program in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) to counter the overthrow of the monarchy. Although this prompted a more modest stance by the regime of Daoud, the contours of future conflict were already visible. Daoud was killed in a violent 'coup d'état' that took place in 1978. This was the result of reforms Daoud had undertaken whereby the army was reinforced and trained by the Soviets as opposed to religious leaders who received training in Egypt and intellectuals who were oriented towards Western Europe. Because the intellectuals were excluded from power some sections joined radical Marxist groups. The Parcham movement eventually spearheaded the movement but internal rivalries led to power shifts with another Marxist faction, the Khalq movement. In 1979 the Soviets feared destabilization of this emerging Marxist regime and decided to invade as US interest had suffered a major setback through the ousting of Shah Pahlavi from Iran. The Soviet occupation developed into an all-out war between the Soviet-backed Marxist regime and the opposition forces backed by Pakistan and the US, mainly operating from Pakistan. This broad so-called *mujahideen* movement succeeded eventually in defeating the Soviets leading to their withdrawal in 1989. However, the resistance movement was highly diversified and could not agree on a power sharing arrangement. The various factions split according to territorial origin and ethnic lines. Afghanistan virtually was divided in a number of ethnic regions, especially when the Taliban emerged as the leading Pashtun movement after years of internal strife among tribal leaders. During the Soviet occupation each group was supported by kin groups residing in neighboring countries. As a consequence, the major political antagonists had direct connections with regional powers. The Hazara Shiite group received support from Iran, the Pathans were backed up by Pakistan and finally the Uzbeks and Tajiks were supported by the former Soviet Central Asian States. During the Soviet occupation the United States heavily supported the Pakistan based resistance groups. During the Reagan administration, notably after 1985, this support reached an average of \$ 600 million yearly. The Afghanistan conflict can be viewed as the last proxy war in Asia, fought between the superpowers in the framework of the Cold War. However, when the Soviets were defeated and left Afghanistan, the interest of both rivals suddenly declined, leaving a power vacuum that gave local powers an opportunity to meddle in the affairs of this collapsed state. Afghanistan has had five types of conflict. The first type was related to efforts of the various kings to assert or extend their authority over rebellious ethnic and tribal groups, especially minorities such as the Uzbeks, Hazarans and Tajiks. A second type refers to inter-tribal warfare, mainly about territorial claims, but also related to murders, revenge killings and disputes about women. Armed conflicts among different *mujahideen* forces also have to be seen as motivated by a struggle for political power or territorial claims. The fourth type of conflict is sectarian between the Shia and the Sunni and occurred at different times in Afghan history. It continues in present-day Afghanistan as the struggle between the orthodox Sunni Taliban and the Shiite

Hazarans which are supported by Iran. Finally, the civil war has acquired an ethnic dimension of Pathans against an alliance of non-Pathan ethnic minorities. The last three conflicts have also some regional or international dimensions, as nearly all neighboring states are involved and support one of the parties in one way or another. The main reason is that the same ethnic or sectarian groups live on each side of Afghanistan's borders.

### *Bangladesh*

Bangladesh has seen quite different types of conflict. First of all, there have been civil-military feuds finally leading to a bloody coup in 1975 as well as a series of coups and counter-coups since then. A tumultuous and violent political scene accompanied the militarization of society and the administration. Also after the coming to power of democratic governments, these violent political feuds and agitation continued especially during election campaigns and the elections themselves. The violent political culture has not yet been mastered sufficiently by the government. This is illustrated by the phenomenon of campus violence, in which extremist student fractions confront each other violently. Political agitation in the process has become mixed up with elements of crime and terrorism. In the South and Southwest of Bangladesh armed gangs resort to acts of ransom, threat, dacoity and robbery. Begun as left-wing ideological guerilla movements, they are now devoid of any ideological content and simply commit crimes and terrorize common people. The government is apparently not able to counteract or arrest those gangs and is even accused of harassing people instead of protecting them. Until the present day the political process in Bangladesh continues to be strongly agitated and polarized between different political parties. Partly this situation results from the position and role different actors played during the war of independence. The cleavage between right wing and left wing independence fighters divides the security forces and fuels armed confrontation.

The insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts was an ethnic separatist struggle partly explained by the colonial decision to make the CHT part of Pakistan, but also by exclusionist policies of Pakistan and later Bangladesh. When the military regimes started counter-insurgency operations and settling Bengali migrants on lands in the region, the threat perception of the Hill people increased further and finally propelled them into a full fledged insurgency. The conflict had also a regional aspect as the Indian state of Tripura hosted as much as 50,000 refugees from the area, while the insurgents not only took shelter in India, but also were trained and armed there. Only as recent as in 1997 some settlement has been reached though not all involved parties are in full agreement with the provisions of that settlement. Another important conflict situation facing Bangladesh is the Rohingya refugee problem. The Muslim Rohingyas have fled the Arakan province of Myanmar as a consequence of their independence struggle and the repressive measures by the Myanmar army already since the 1970s. This escalated in the 1990s when the total number of refugees amounted to 270,000. Bangladesh is not prepared to sustain them and is also reluctant to allow Rohingya activism on its soil in view of repeated incursions of the Myanmar security forces.

### *India*

The intrastate conflicts in India have their roots in society. There are several types in this category: communal, ethno-linguistic and class and caste oriented tensions. There are also conflicts related to political instability and as a consequence of institutional failures against overall poverty and underdevelopment.

Some of the intrastate conflicts have significant international linkages, especially the ethnic and religious movements in Kashmir, Punjab and the Northeast. In the Hindu-Muslim or communal

conflict there have been spells of serious clashes interspersed with periods of relative peace. The conflict has seen peak periods in 1947, 1964 and 1992-3, but the situation has seriously worsened in the 1980s when communal politicization took place and mutual mistrust increased. In general the Muslim community suffered from insecurity on account of political under-representation and economic marginalization after independence, as many educated and well-placed members of their community had gone to Pakistan. In these days, however, the Congress party followed a secular line and identified with both Hindu and Muslim interests. Later Congress came to play more explicitly the role of the patron of Hinduism in view of populist, electoral motives and competition from Hindu radical parties. This, in combination with the Emergency measures by Indira Gandhi, led the Muslims to vote against the party in 1977. In the 1980s Hindu nationalism grew steadily and a Hindu vote bank emerged. Also Congress was seen moving towards a still more explicit Hindu point of view. Tensions increased due to the controversy about the Babri Mosque and finally its destruction triggering widespread communal violence. Up to date the situation is very sensitive, especially as a consequence of Hindu extremism.

Caste conflict in India has its origin in the system of traditional social stratification and socioeconomic inequity. Originally caste violence comprised Brahmin-led violence against the *harijans*, but now it is more related to issues of political and economic domination. Lower castes started to mobilize on the basis of their identity and wanted to fulfil their aspirations for recognition as equal citizens with equal rights. There are no hard data on caste conflicts, but there are serious incidents nearly every year. The number of incidents and killings seems to be on the increase according to figures of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Another type of conflict is the one in which (left-wing) peasant movements have been involved. Among those movements the Naxalite movement was the most prominent, typifying a kind of armed struggle on the basis of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideology. The movements were directed against the domination of the tax collectors, landlords and usurers over share croppers and laborers. This type of struggle could be seen in several Indian states from the late 1950s to 1970. In the Naxalbari revolt of 1967 over a hundred violent incidents took place between the movement and the police. Finally, some improvements were promised and certain aspects of land reform implemented.

Separatist and regional movements have emerged in various parts of India over the last fifty years. Most of them were restricted to small areas and small groups and most of those movements are dormant now. Most prominent has been the armed political turbulence in the Northeast and the Punjab. In the Northeast India faced serious challenges to its territorial integrity in the form of the Mizo, Naga and other separatist insurgencies. Most political movements were ethnicity based, but also had strong economic demands. The groups perceived also a threat to their identity, sometimes as a consequence of central state policies or because of the influx of migrants from elsewhere. Most of these movements were fairly parochial and not only directed against India but also towards other contending movements locally. Many of them had a large following among the youth. In all these conflicts there have been attempts at negotiated settlements, but these generally failed, as again more radical and aggressive movements emerged. Today there are several (factionalized) insurgent groups active, some allegedly supported by governments in the region.

The separatism in the Punjab started on the basis of a number of grievances that were not addressed by the government as they were seen as going against the unity and integrity of the nation. Partly as a consequence of this type of political mismanagement, as well as on account of