

# Kissinger revives the British Empire's tactics

by Uma Zykovsky

Since 1980, and in recent months with persistence and frequency, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and several members of her cabinet in charge of domestic law and order, have been warning that there exists a documentable "external factor" stirring up troublespots in the country. As incidents of violence, terrorism, and calculated attempts to instigate fear increase in Punjab state—the country's breadbasket—the Indian government is increasingly faced with the necessity of surgically isolating the "external troublemakers" from genuine internal discontent.

To carry out this policy successfully, an evaluation is under way of two interconnected historical processes. The current troubles in Punjab, or for that matter in the northeastern state of Assam, can be traced back to the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent by the outgoing British colonial rulers, as a costly condition to independence. With partition as a precedent, Anglo-American postwar strategies for the Indian subcontinent have been predicated on the idea that partitions can be imposed again and again, destabilizing the attempts of the political leaders of the area to develop strong, independent nation-states.

In this Balkanization strategy, the 1970s have had a special place. With Henry Kissinger running U.S. foreign policy for most of this decade, new impetus was given to the Anglo-American geopolitical goals.

In December 1971, when Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi decided to send the Indian army into East Pakistan (Bangladesh) in support of the liberation forces battling a Kissinger-orchestrated genocide of the population, she became one of Kissinger's most hated enemies. In 1971 Kissinger told Peter Jay, then a London *Times* columnist and later ambassador to Washington, that "he [Kissinger] regarded India's invasion of East Bengal in the same light as Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland."

Apart from the wild comparison made by Kissinger—himself a conscious promoter of genocide—between Indira Gandhi and Adolf Hitler, one should note Kissinger's reference to East Pakistan (to become Bangladesh after the 1971 war) as East Bengal, the name that acknowledges no independence of the Indian subcontinent from British rule. Only

under the British Empire in pre-1947 days did this entity exist!

Consistent with this view, in the aftermath of the 1971 war a study was prepared by the U.S. State Department under Kissinger titled "U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s." The document asserted that "internal ethnic conflicts and separatist strains, are a phenomenon of the contemporary world. India, more than most, has a heavy stake in the principle that such instability should not be exploited by countries through subversion or resort to arms. The alternative is a formula for anarchy."

The Khalistan drive has taken new life since the Zia coup d'état in 1977. Zia personally met with Ganga Singh Dhillon, a wealthy Sikh American citizen promoting the Sikh nation idea. Dhillon established links between one of Zia's most trusted political lieutenants, the late Chowdhury Elahi, and the Sikh separatists. Sources in London indicate that the Pakistani embassy gives substantial financial and other support to the Khalistan movement. It is said to be instrumental in secretly getting Chauhan himself into Pakistan for further coordination from time to time. And a Khalistan Airlines has reportedly been set up in the same building as the Pakistan International Airlines, an international carrier notorious for drug-smuggling activities.

While Zia goes to great length to deny involvement with the Khalistanis, sources in India note wryly: "He can have his special-force people put on turbans and slip across the border. The timetable for trouble is how long it takes to grow the beards."

Recently the state unit chief of the Punjab Congress Party, Hansraj Sharma, told the press that he has come to know that the Pakistan government has set up a camp right across the Indian border to provide weapons training to Sikh extremists. The easily traversible border has also become a center of opium smuggling.

The 1970s has seen a large growth of Sikh businessmen, particularly small businessmen, in London and the United States. There is little doubt that Chauhan's concentration on the United States, where he makes several tours a year, is to attract some of this new affluence into the Khalistan movement. There are few ways of controlling overseas Indians repatriating their money into India, and fewer still of catching religious and social donations. Nearly \$40 million is known to have reached the agitators' pockets.

## The British colonial scheme

British colonial officers—and modern sociologists—devoted considerable energy to cultivating Sikh feudal interests from the 1880s on in a bid to prevent the Sikh community from becoming part of India's national movement. The British attempts ultimately failed; Sikhs joined the independence struggle in great numbers; but a subterfuged "British current" survived.

As early as 1911, sociologist D. Petrie stated openly: "Sikhs in the Indian Army had been studiously nationalised

and encouraged to regard themselves as a totally distinct and separate nation. Their national pride has been fostered by every available means.”

In the British scheme of control of the Indian subcontinent there were three major religious entities—Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs—and many minor groupings. When several decades into the 20th century it had become clear to British colonial rulers that India would one day no longer be theirs, careful preparations for partition were conducted. In 1942 a special emissary of the Crown, Sir Reginald Coupland, was sent on a mission to determine what boundaries—religious, ethnic, and racial—could be drawn to maintain the subcontinent independent in public view but in reality dependent.

Coupland did his homework and wrote: “India is a geographical unit; it is not divided by such physical barriers as separate nations in Europe. Its unification under British rule has not only saved India from the fate which political and economic nationalism brought on Europe. . . .” This “fate” was the successful industrialization of France, Italy, and Germany, which kept Britain off the continent. Instead, India remained the looting ground for the British oligarchy and became “the jewel of the Empire.”

The 1971 Bangladesh war was a sideshow to Kissinger’s “China Card” diplomacy. Millions of people died because Kissinger desired the geopolitical gain of the U.S.-Peking alliance, over and above political stability and economic growth in Asia. Mrs. Gandhi’s role in stabilizing the subcontinent was antithetical to the Anglo-American game, and Kissinger’s perverse reasoning was that since the creation of Bangladesh repartitioned the subcontinent, why not stir up other “separatist” conflicts? Mrs. Gandhi stood in the way of a pliable Indian subcontinent under Maoist “rule” in Asia, blessed by the Kissinger doctrine.

### **Birth of Khalistan**

A product of this 1970s Kissinger policy was the emergence of Jagjit Singh Chauhan, a little-known former finance minister of the state of Punjab, as the leader in exile of the “Khalistan” independence campaign. “Khalistan” is a demand for redrawing the map of northern India to carve out a “homeland” for the Sikhs, “taking pieces of various neighbouring states—Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and all of Punjab in India including parts of it which are in Pakistan.” In December 1971, when the turmoil in Bangladesh was at its height, Chauhan, until then resident in London, took out a half-page advertisement in the *New York Times* calling for the creation of “Khalistan.” Last year, Chauhan admitted that his relationship to Kissinger started in 1971, when he was encouraged by certain elements in the U.S. administration to publish the *Times* advertisement, in order to call into question India’s nationhood.

Chauhan also indicated that Kissinger promised financial support for the movement and the establishment of various overseas base to organize the movement.

Over the last few years, Chauhan has made numerous visits to the United States to sell his “Khalistan” policy. He has established contact with the American Jewish Congress, as well as an apparently close relationship to Sen. Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina.

In Europe, Chauhan is activating support among the same political networks that have supplied the lifelines to the Islamic fundamentalist operations in the Middle East. This includes prominent European oligarchs, their Swiss bankers such as François Genoud, and many of the so-called human rights organizations based in London. Chauhan has set up a close working relationship to Phizo, the London-based Naga rebel against the Indian central government, and through him into the Anglican Church-controlled separatist movements.

### **The Pakistan connection**

A related aspect to this London activity is the subcontract for the Khalistan activities held by Gen. Zia Ul-Haq of Pakistan. Zia came to power with the green light given by Henry Kissinger to have the late Pakistani Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto overthrown and assassinated. An important reason for this murder of an elected prime minister was that Bhutto was committed from 1973 onward to normalizing relations with neighboring India and winning peace in the Indian subcontinent under the Simla pact. The Indira Gandhi-Z. A. Bhutto political equation went against Kissinger’s geopolitical design for weak, pliable puppet regimes south of the Himalayas.

Coupland developed his point further:

The Partition threatens to throw India back to the condition it was in after the breakup of the Moghul Empire, to make another Balkans. This would negate the development of democracy in India. Partition would also prevent a free India from taking its due place in the world as a great Asiatic power, for it would probably mean disruption into several states ranking from Egypt to Siam.

The British Government cannot impose, but it could if need propose a settlement. The drawbacks to Partition are the converse of the case of Union and apply to all Indians, not to Muslims only. It would rob India of the supreme, the unquestioned boon which British rule has given her. It would convert the whole subcontinent into a complex of rival quasi-national sovereignties, walled off from one another by political and economic frontiers. India in fact would be balkanized and instead of being a peaceful and stable element in the new international structure it might well become like the Balkans in the past, a breeding ground for world war.

The Coupland Plan has been praised by Khalistan leader-in-exile Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan. It reflects the aims of his movement.