

Khalistan Movement and Narco-Terrorism

Dr. Shinder Purewal¹

Abstract:

The use of savage violence to spread terror in the security forces and society to protect the fiefdom of narcotic smuggling is no longer confined to the smuggling gangs. It has been adopted by various political movements. The study's focus on Sikh secessionist narco-terrorism sheds light on the expansion of drug-weapon trade to ransoms, kidnapping, money-laundering, human-smuggling, and the control of entertainment industry and professional sports. Beginning with smuggling operations during the height of the cold war in South Asia, the criminal gangs were strengthened and expanded their operations in the Punjab and among Sikh Diaspora. The financial resources bought political support, which enabled the Khalistan movement to establish powerful lobbies in the West. The links created by the underworld in the Punjab expanded worldwide with the help of Sikh Diaspora. This terror-based movement gave some state actors a chance to use the Sikh card to arm-twist India on its foreign policy of strategic autonomy. Danger of savage violence faced by the civilized world is precisely the use of narco-terrorist movements by the state actors.

Keywords: Sikh, Khalistan, Punjab, Narco-Terrorism, Ethnonationalism, Punjab, Narcotic, Bhindernwale, Canada.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore and explain the link between narco-terrorism and Sikh secessionist movement called Khalistan. This study of Khalistani movement argues that narco-terrorism is no longer confined to drug-weapon smuggling and use of terrorist methods. The criminal-Khalistani nexuses in the Punjab and Sikh Diaspora shows that it has become a vast enterprise involving traditional activity of drug-weapon smuggling combined with ransom, kidnapping, extortions, human-smuggling, money-laundering, contract-killing, control of the music industry and professional sport. The enormous financial resources backed by gun-bomb

¹ Dr Shinder Purewal is a Professor at the Department of Political Science, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey, Canada.

terror and willingness to use this deadly force has created a vast kingdom of narco-terrorism. Political campaign of referendum politics for Khalistan in Sikh Diaspora is backed by this great terror network. While Sikh secessionists have made every effort to turn Khalistan into an international issue, it has only become a token in the geo-strategic interests of some states. Scope of this study is confined to the Punjab and the Sikh Diaspora in Canada and the US. Briefly, it became a temporary anti-India card in Ottawa and Washington. Recent flare-ups in the foreign policy of Ottawa/Washington and New Delhi over allegations of assassinations are reminders of some of the coldest days of the Cold War. The Khalistan issue, it seems, became a provisional issue in the ‘strategic’ tactics of state actors to exert pressure on India’s foreign policy of ‘strategic autonomy’. Narco-terrorist movements have always been used by some states to wage proxy wars, the Khalistani movement is no exception.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) states that “narco-terrorism may be characterized by the participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security for, or otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavors in an effort to further, or fund, terrorist activity (Bjornehed, 2004: 306). The term narco-terrorism was first used in Latin American countries like Colombia and Peru. It was used to describe anti-police terror tactics of kidnappings, car bombs and assassinations of targeted individuals by drug traffickers. In the post 9/11 scholarship, the decade’s long “war on drugs” and more recent “war on terror” found a common ground in “countering the threat of narco-terrorism” (305). Omelicheva and Markowitz study points out that “the post-cold war environment has ushered in an era of threats from terrorism, organized crime and their intersections giving rise to the growing literature on the so-called crime-terror nexus” (2021). While terrorism and organized crime had devastating effect on Latin America, South Asia and elsewhere, the US scholarship’s claim of after 9/11 phenomenon is highly debatable. The United Nations was among the pioneers to recognize the relationship between political instability and organized crime, drug trafficking in particular. Long before the 9/11, the CIA Contra-Crack Cocaine investigation by the US Justice Department found that “three contra groups were engaged in cocaine trafficking in part to help finance their war against Nicaragua” (DOJ, 1997). Based on this report, California’s Bay Area newspaper *Mercury News* analyzed its domestic impact on American society and claimed that “the CIA and other agencies of the United States government were responsible for the crack epidemic that ravaged black communities across the country” (20 Dec. 1985).

While western scholarship focuses on Latin America and 9/11 events in analyzing narco-terrorism, the pioneer role of the United Kingdom followed by the US and other European colonizers in promoting opium trade to China and fighting opium wars to “civilize” the Chinese people are often ignored in the studies on drug-terror nexus. A study explains that “Western traders had long sought a variety of Chinese products like silk, porcelain and tea, but found there were very few products that China wanted from the West” (National Archives, 2024). Thus, in order to balance its trade deficits, “British started growing opium in its Indian colonies and exporting it to China” (Blakemore, 2023). In the West, there is no dearth of literature praising the “positive” contribution of colonial powers. Kipling in his Victorian era poetry justified the colonial robbery by the use metaphor of “white man’s burden”; however, historian John McQuade has rightly observed that “It takes a highly selective misreading of the evidence to claim that colonialism was anything other than a humanitarian disaster for most of the colonized” (2012).

As evident, the drug-terror nexus is more than two centuries old. It began to expand when weapons trade to both state and non-state actors on black market became enormously profitable. In South Asia, the combination of drug-weapon-terror mushroomed after the Soviet army entered Afghanistan in 1979. The Cold War shifted to Afghan-Pakistan theatre. The US decided to appoint Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan Army to distribute Arb-Western funds and weapons to Mujahideen groups fighting the Soviets. Much like the CIA support to Nicaraguan Contras and the Iranian support for Hizballah, the drug trade became an important fund-raising activity. In fact, the religious organizations like the Hizballah received moral and ethical support from a Fatwa, issued in the 1980’s, providing religious justification for the otherwise impure and illicit activity of drug trafficking: “We are making drugs for Satan-America and the Jews. If we cannot kill them with guns, so we will kill them with drugs” (Mathew, 2012). Similarly, ISI allowed the Mujahideen groups to engage in the smuggling of drugs and weapons to earn cash in addition to Arb-Western funds, *albeit* without any Fatwa. Haq study provides details on how CIA’s aid to Afghan Mujahideen’s in the 1980’s expanded opium production in Afghanistan and linked Pakistan’s border area heroin laboratories to the world market. In 1989, after a decade as the sites of the major CIA covert operations in coordination with the ISI, Afghanistan and Pakistan ranked, respectively, as the world’s largest and second largest suppliers of illicit heroin (Haq, 1996).

This context of South Asian theater of drug-weapon smuggling is vital to understand the violence associated with the movement for Sikh/Punjab autonomy under Bhindernwale, which eventually became entirely secessionist; hence laying the foundation of the Khalistan-narcoterrorism nexus. Sant Bhindernwale was recruited by the Congress Party for electoral gains in its competition with the *Akali Dal* in the Punjab. More specifically, it was Sanjay Gandhi, Mrs. Gandhi's younger son, who had recruited the Sant against the regional political rivals (Nayyar and Singh, 1984). Sanjay Gandhi was known for his political support to the criminal underworld in the service of the Congress Party. The Intelligence Bureau of India described: "The cost of contesting elections has thrown the politician into the lap of the criminal element.... There has been a rapid spread and growth of criminal gangs, armed *senas* (private armies- SP), drug mafias, smuggling gangs, drug peddlers and economic lobbies in the country which have, over the years, developed an extensive network of contacts with the bureaucrats/government functionaries" (Vohra Report, 1995). The *Dera* (abode) of Bhindrnwale was a known hotbed of orthodox Sikhs who were heavily armed. Its location near the Pakistan border made it easier for his followers to acquire smuggled weapons. The cost of weapons was covered by drug smuggling. Grewal points out that the growth in illicit drugs in Punjab "can be attributed to Punjab's close proximity to the Golden Crescent region covering Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran" (2016). During the Afghan war, the security risk of smuggling from Pakistan was minimal; furthermore, the ISI actually encouraged it.

The Punjab scholarship was puzzled at the heinously violent upsurge in the state in 1980's. The concept of Khalistan was developed in a peaceful manner to oppose the bifurcation of India demanded by the Muslim League on the basis of "*Do Qaumi Nazria*" (two-nation perspective) in 1940. Dr. Vir Singh Bhatti had coined the term "Khalistan" to create an imaginary state between Hindu-dominated India and Muslim-ruled Pakistan (Singh and Georgio, 2021). Since the British rulers offered no such option to the Sikhs, the Sikh-leadership was successful in bifurcating the state of the Punjab in 1947, at the price of the most barbaric killings, rapes and the largest migration of humans in the twentieth century. After independence of India, however, the rhetoric of the Sikh leadership like Master Tara Singh changed from anti-Muslim to anti-Hindu because the Congress government refused to recognize Sikh autonomy in the constitution. As the majority of the Sikh leadership and masses accepted their fate in the new state of India, Sikh dominated *Akali Dal* (regional party in the Punjab) moved in the direction of autonomy and ensuring Indian Punjab's division on the linguistic basis just like the other nationalities of India. Selected Sikh politicians

like Sirdar Kapoor Singh, a former ICS (Indian Civil Service) officer removed from service for embezzlement of refugee funds, were publicly raising concerns about discrimination in India. However, he did not advocate an independent state. His best role is remembered as the creator of the *Anandpur Sahib Resolutions* which asked for more powers to the states in an Indian federation. However, a much bigger step toward Khalistan was taken by Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan, a former deputy speaker of Punjab Assembly, when he joined the Sikh Diaspora in England. After taking over the defunct 'Home Rule' organization, he published a half-page advertisement in the *New York Times*, on 11 October 1971, pleading the case for Khalistan.

The 1980's witnessed the first full-scale coordination between the Punjab based Sikh secessionists and the Sikh Diaspora. Khalistan protagonists like Talwinder Singh Parmar (accused air-India bomber- SP) in Canada, Ganga Singh Dhillon in the US, and Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan in the UK began massive propaganda about Sikh secessionism in the Western capitals. In the context of the cold war, the Western powers were not regretful with the availability of a strategic Sikh card in view of India's refusal to denounce the Soviet army's entry in Afghanistan. Even prior to the red army's entry in Kabul, the US relations with India were less than friendly on diplomatic front. Nixon tapes reveal that the 1971 'Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation' India signed with the USSR on the heels of Kissinger's groundbreaking trip to China was viewed by the President as a particular cause for alarm because it "was deliberately steering nonaligned India toward a *de facto* alliance with the Soviet Union" (1971). Despite its military dictatorship, Pakistan was the most favorite child of the US because it became the frontline state in the cold war. On the domestic front in India, the "success" of the Green Revolution was driving the unemployed youth from ruined small and medium farmers to criminal gangs like the Bhindranwale brigades, the booming Middle-Eastern economies and the Western countries for greener pastures. The old feudal system of the Punjab had collapsed. It may not have provided prosperity but it guaranteed stability. The new crisis in the political economy of the Punjab began as Antonio Gramsci observed, "the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear" (Gramsci, 1971).

One of those symptoms was the emergence of predatory capitalism which began with super profits from illicit underworld economy guided by the use of Kalashnikovs. As the ISI gave free hand to Sikh smugglers operating from Pakistan, Sant Bhindernwale's connections to the state

power in India through the Congress domination in the state and the Centre Executives meant a free trade zone existed for Sikh smugglers associated with him in India. A relatively unknown figure until 1978, Sant emerged as the Godfather figure of the Punjab (Purewal, 2000). In 1982, however, he joined the Akali Dal's *Dharm Yudh* (religious struggle) movement either at the direction of the Congress to hijack the Akali initiative or from a genuine desire to support the state's long-standing issues like the exclusive control over its capital and fair share of the Punjab river waters which also including a demand for more autonomy. By 1984, he was virtually calling the shots in the state despite the direct control of New Delhi through the President's rule. It ended with Operation Blue Star in the Golden Temple which was followed by years of mayhem in the state and country as both Bhinranwale and Mrs. Gandhi lost their lives to bullets. Next nine years witnessed lawlessness in the state on an unprecedented level. As Punjab Police combat operations appeared to be weakening, Khalistan terrorism acquired an upper hand. A 1987 research paper by the CIA (declassified in May 2012) summed up the secessionist strategy: "contributions from Sikh temples and profits from narcotics trafficking" were used for terror by "the extremists to provoke Hindu migration from Punjab and reprisals against Sikhs elsewhere in India." Criminal gangs operated with impunity indulging in every conceivable crime including rapes, murders and robberies. However, electric wires on the Indo-Pak border and an army-police coordinated strategy eliminated gangs operating in the name of Khalistan in 1993. Many gangsters/militants took the Indian state's generous offer of immunity in exchange for abandoning violent struggle. Many more moved to the Western capitals as asylum seekers. Loaded with ill-acquired money, they became one of the most successful generations of Sikh immigrants in the West.

In the economic and political spheres, Canada was most hospitable. Almost non-existent money-laundering regime and the political system of nominations and leadership contests open to manipulation by organized groups with deep pockets offered haven to Sikh secessionists. They decided to penetrate the elected ranks of all parties but NDP (New Democratic Party) and the Liberals offered best opportunities. Like many armed struggle groups, the Sikh secessionists split into two groups: one wing advocated parliamentary/legal ways, while several others adopted terroristic methods. A similar strategy like the IRA (Irish Republican Army) division in 1969 into the "official" and "provisional" wing. WSO (World Sikh Organization) founded in 1984, self-appointed itself as the "official" wing. However, Khalistani "provisional" wing remained divided because the criminal underworld gangsters refused to unite under one command. Sikh terrorists

blew-up Air-Canada flight with 329 Canadians on board. They were able to intimidate and assault anyone in the Indian community. Canadian authorities ignored these terrorist acts because in their views it only impacted India and the Indian-Canadian community. After India-Canada signed an extradition treaty in 1987 (Swami, 2023), the Khalistani lobby became more active in Canada. In the 1990 leadership convention of the Liberal Party of Canada, two Sikh organizations heavily recruited delegates and paid their fees for two leading contenders: Jean Chretien supported by the WSO, and Paul Martin supported by the ISYF (International Sikh Youth Federation).

The 1993 end of Khalistani terrorism in the Punjab came after India's adoption of "liberalization reforms" and the collapse of the USSR. The movement for Khalistan shifted among Sikh Diaspora while India became the darling of Western Multinationals (Purewal, 2011). Despite 1998 nuclear explosions, President Clinton ended a chill in US-India relations. Media began singing the praise of a fellow democracy with laissez fair economy. During the cold war and now in the post-cold-war global affairs, the US has continued to equate democracy with capitalism. Nothing could be further from the truth as Horn of Africa scholar John Young argues that "capitalist democracy is an oxymoron since they have different and even conflicting value systems" (2024). However, the razzle and dazzle of American "way of life" dominated the post-cold-war era because China remained an introvert focused on its development and Russia was reeling under Yelstin zapoy. The US and the West enjoyed heydays of neo-colonial loot and power arrogance in the Global South by moving their armies at will. Realizing the post 9/11 anti-terrorism environment, the Khalistan movement in Sikh Diaspora changed its focus on alleged human rights violations by India. Globally the emergence of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) alliance signaled a change in 2009. However, the US and the West witnessed a rude awakening in 2014 when Russia took re-possession of Crimea. China was of the view that it belonged to Russia "in the beginning" and India remained silent. It reflected their desire to see a multi-polar world where China and India are also superpowers along with countries like the USA, Russia, Brazil and South Africa. Emerging giant India maintained its focus on "strategic autonomy" in international affairs. Through non-alignment, it had pursued a policy of no-alliances with the superpowers or their respective alliances. Now, India was ready to align with any power to pursue its strategic interests. The US did not like non-alignment as John Foster Dallas summed it up by stating that "neutrality was immoral and shortsighted" (Ayles, 2023). It also does not like other countries, including India, to pursue "strategic autonomies".

Since the 1980's, Sikh Diaspora's Khalistan activities had become bilateral issues between New Delhi, and Ottawa/Washington. India suspected Western support for Sikh secessionists. As criticism of Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan's, the putative president of imaginary republic of Khalistan, activities to solicit official support from the US grew, the United States refused to give a visa to Chohan. However, Senator Jesse Helms found a way to circumvent this ban by inviting Chohan to testify before the United States Agriculture Committee (Barrier, 1993). After the secessionist movement ended in India, focus on Sikh Diaspora increased. It became more important as the world moved toward the metaphorical "Global Village." Punjab based criminals established contacts with criminals in the Sikh Diaspora. It was no longer confined to traditional drugs-weapons trade with sophisticated fire-power, predatory capitalism offered super profits in the entertainment and sports sectors. The Punjab based music/movie industry and Kabaddi federations got involved in monopolizing respective sectors with super profits earned through control over drug smuggling. The print reported that while investigating a youth Akali leader's murder a special task force of Punjab Police arrested many drug dealers which included several Kabaddi players from Canada (7 September 2022). Kabaddi players like Bambiha were not only involved in drug smuggling but also controlled Punjabi music industry with major human smuggling operations. Thus, developed a complex network of criminal Godfathers who unleashed another round of targeted assassinations.

Criminal underworld of Punjab's connections with Sikh Diaspora gave them a global reach. As the criminal gangs proliferated in the Punjab, they managed to transfer manpower to Canada under the international student program. Private and public colleges and universities of Canada gave admission to anyone willing to pay fee four times more than Canadian students. International students paid "tens of billions of dollars into Canada's post-secondary system at a time when provincial governments were imposing austerity measures on public universities and colleges" (Oulett and Crawly, 2024). The heavy presence of Sikh émigré gangsters was depicted by a journalist as gangland war theatre in Canada where "money, drugs, and, in some cases, weapons have become the medium for these rivalries and killings" (Antonopoulos, 2024). Meanwhile, Sikh secessionists control over Sikh temples in Canada, the US and other Western countries has given them economic, social, cultural and political clout, beside financial resources. Criminals of the Punjab and Sikh Diaspora found secessionist Sikh connections profitable, from money-laundering

to much needed political support for human smuggling operations. Of course, common commitment to the use of violence solidified these relations.

Khalistani narco-terrorism links were first exposed in the 1990s, when drug dealers Jimmy and Ron Dosanjh- both members of ISYF, were murdered by a rival gang in Vancouver (Gangster Profile, n.d.). New routes of cross-continental drug trades opened with the arrival of Khalistan émigré. These former “militants” were involved in murders, robberies and rapes. However, now they were able to coordinate their activities with Punjab criminals from safe havens of North America. The arrest of champion wrestler and Punjab police officer Jagdish Singh Bhola revealed “a billion-dollar network supplying heroin and methamphetamine to North America and Europe through Canadian contacts who smuggled drugs out of India” (Hussain, 2022). The drug trade mushroomed in North America as “war on drugs” intensified. As control over drug smuggling in North America shifted from Latin American Colombian mafia to Mexican drug cartels, ground transportation of drugs by long-haul trucks replaced the sea and air routes. This is also the time when Sikh trucking sector started emerging in North America. A report by *Toronto Star* estimated that 6% of Ontario’s long-haul truck drivers were Sikhs in 2012 (14 October 2012). By 2018, it was estimated that 30,000 Sikhs were involved in the US trucking industry. Taking note of trucking schools, truck companies, truck washes, trucker temples and trucker’s restaurants in California, *Los Angeles Times* reported that “Sikhs from the state of Punjab dominate the industry” (27 June 2019). *Toronto Star* investigation also reported the presence of broker system among the Sikhs drivers. The regulators found that “brokers worked with drug dealers and work to find “truckers from their own community.... They know these truckers won’t disappear with drugs worth millions of dollars because these coordinates know where these truckers are from in Punjab...right down to their villages” (14 October 2012).

While the militant wings of secessionist Sikhs continued on the path of narco-terrorism, WSO reaped the benefits of traditional lobby techniques in Canada. Their sons and daughters became MLAs, MPs, Ministers and Judges. However, the organization used the services of all militant associations to finance, elect, and lobby in Canada, and, in turn, defended their unparliamentary tactics. The role it played in electing Justin Trudeau as the leader of the Liberal party and Jagmeet Singh as leader of the NDP (New Democratic Party) served its agenda perfectly in a minority government. Justin Trudeau’s Liberals are dependent on Jagmeet Singh’s NDP for

survival as a government. While both leaders never miss an opportunity to highlight India's human rights record, they are silent about a straight ban on Sikh Turbans in Quebec's civil service employment. When an Indian-Canadian journalist, during an election debate, questioned Bloc Quebecois leader about this glaring human rights violation, both Trudeau and Singh denounced her question instead of asking Quebec about this discrimination. Jagmeet Singh's social democracy and Trudeau's Liberalism are silent on Quebec's racism toward minorities, the US pursuit of hegemony in the Global South and the global neo-colonial institutions of loot. Both are enthusiastic supporters of the US proxy war in Ukraine; however, they will not tolerate the international movement toward a multi-polar world and the emergence of the Global South from the clutches of neo-colonialism. The latest narrative playing in North America has been "foreign interference" in elections. Imperialist powers that have engaged in colonial loot, destruction of social and natural environments, and engaging in wholesome devastation of civilizations are presenting themselves as victims of foreign intervention. It was traditional to blame Russia but now the countries of the Global South are in the orbit. During the Cold War, the military-industrial complex sponsored propaganda about "Godless Empire of USSR". Every year Soviet submarines suddenly appeared in American waters during annual budget times. Now the foreign hand appears just around election times while Russia is still the evil empire. The US has sponsored sophisticated color revolutions to seed political instability and sponsor bloody coups to overthrow democracies. But somehow the victims are Canada and the US.

Since the US failed to twist India's arm on Russia's military action in Ukraine, Washington realized that two countries held remarkably divergent worldviews. India's foreign policy, built around the concept of strategic autonomy, is an issue-based approach (Kabir, 2020). It has carefully managed to avoid permanent alliances with either Russia or the US, managed its relationship with Sunni Arab states and Shia Iran, and kept a balance between Israel and the Palestinian authority. Notwithstanding the border dispute, it is working with China for the success of the BRICS. Despite the presence of its naval ships in the Red Sea, it decided not to join a US led naval coalition of the region. The US is unable or unwilling to accept such an approach which is contrary to Washington's ambition of holding onto its fading hegemonic position. Narrative changes with changing strategic interests and tactical maneuvers. The Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the US) alliance was overshadowed by the Squad. *Nikkei Asia* pointed out that "an emerging quadrilateral group, between the US, Japan, Australia and the Philippines, has become

the core of Washington's foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific, quickly overtaking the Quad in priority" (Moriyasu, 2024). As late as May 2023, the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) offered to include India in NATO Plus security arrangements to "build upon the US and India's close partnership to strengthen global security and deter the aggression of the CCP across the Indo-Pacific region" (House Select Committee, 2023). However, NATO plus security arrangements for India disappeared from public dialogue. The US and Canadian frustrations were apparent in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's speech in the House of Commons when he announced "India's hand behind Khalistani Najjar's killing" (Yun, 2023). Soon after, the US came with its own allegations of a plot against Khalistan leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannu. As both allegations are in the pre-trial period, the "evidence" will shed more light. However, both India and the US conceptually seem destined to be partners are more interested in their respective "strategic autonomies". As each nation is vigorously defending its geo-strategic objectives, using pragmatic policy is the only way forward.

Conclusion

Despite the presence of numerous nations with their own geography, history, economy, psychology and a sense of belonging, the Indian subcontinent was partitioned on the basis of the two-nation theory of the Muslim League in 1947. The British had only promoted religious identities because it served the policy of "divide et imperia". The growth of "the modern state, the introduction of new systems of knowledge, the expansion of capitalist mode of production, and the spread of communication of all forms" (Robinson, 1998) helped shape new identities. In order to oppose the "two-nation" theory of Jinnah, a Sikh author- Dr. Vir Singh Bhatti- advanced the notion of Khalistan to oppose the bifurcation of the sub-continent. Sikh identity, however, emerged on the global scene at the height of the cold war during Mujahideen-Soviet war in Afghanistan. A deluge of heroin and AK-47 started by this "holy war" created a perfect storm for smuggling operations in the region. Muslim warriors and Sikh fighters fought a war in the name of god but with the blessing of ISI which provided them funds. The holy path was cleared by the profits made from turning their own compatriots into drug addicts and blowing-up their own neighborhoods. Rejecting the path of death and destruction, a sense of belonging among the Sikhs became much narrower as the great majority of Sikhs in the Punjab and Sikh Diaspora distanced themselves from

Khalistan movement. With massive funds at their disposal; however, Khalistani underworld's global empire made their voices stronger and louder. It gives an illusion to some state actors that these narco-terrorists can be used as mercenaries in diplomatic tactics. From the time of Air-India bombing in Canada to the threats of modern Sikh underworld, Western states like Canada face more threats from Sikh secessionists than India. For years, Pakistan gave sanctuary to various terrorists hoping to reap benefits for its foreign policy objectives. It specifically targeted India and Afghanistan by helping narcoterrorism from its soil. Instead, it has suffered more from the terror of these guests than the neighbors. A strategy to combat narcoterrorism can only develop when all states realize its common threat to their societies and institutions. Due to its trans-national nature, it is a threat that cannot be faced by one country on its own.

Zig-zag policy of the US toward India has not changed. However, volatile domestic and external affairs are impacting Washington's rhetoric in South Asia. The US is losing clout in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America at a time when Washington's proxy war in Ukraine is facing a rout. Around 60% of UN member states representing around three-fourth of the world's population refused to go along with the US supported 'Ukraine peace conference' in Switzerland. Even President Joe Biden was conspicuous by his absence. Further, in the wake of hard-liner Lai Ching Te's election as the President of Taiwan and China's threats to use force, the US has not forgotten the necessity of India to counter China in Asia. The power of Washington to "direct the affairs of the Global South in pursuit of its own interests is in decline, a new era of multipolarity is emerging, and likely to take form quicker" (Young, 2024). Asked to clarify Indo-US relations after the Pannu assassination allegations, the US ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, replied: This "case will not affect ties with India" (Seli, 2024). While the Khalistan activists in Canada continued to threaten Indian diplomats, the US took a harsh note as "State Department condemned vandalism by some protesters in San Francisco who attempted to set fire to part of the Indian consulate in July 2023" (Hussain, 2023). However, the Canadian Prime Minister's diplomacy toward India is still discourteous. In the tradition of the cold war "scholars" like Robert Conquest and George Orwell's fabricated lies, the stories and rumors of secessionists are automatically believed in Canada. Academia never mentioned to the students of the Western Universities that both Conquest and Orwell worked in the British Army's intelligence wings responsible for anti-Soviet propaganda. Conquest also believed that the best way to check rumors is to compare them with other rumors (Conquest, 1969). UCLA historian Arch Getty also discovered that dominant

tendency in Robert Conquest's work on Great Terror during Stalin was that Soviet émigré were considered automatically right (Getty, 1979). Media narrative on Nijjar killing is full of rumors. Real threat of Khalistan narco-terrorism is in Canada. However, much like the Air-India bombing of 1982, the Canadian authorities still view this as India's problem. Needless to say, the use of Sikh card by ignoring the dangers of Sikh narco- terrorism has become an essential part of strategy and tactics of some state actors. Therefore, it is important to examine narco-terrorism in more details, in general, and Sikh narco-terrorism, in particular. All states use narco-terrorist networks to achieve foreign policy objectives. Further research on narco-terrorism at global levels is essential to be cognizant of this phenomenon. The significance of this study is realization of necessity of more research on narco-terrorism which can guide states to find a common strategy to combat it.

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