

Narco-Terrorism: Khalistani Crime Syndicates

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Abstract:

The use of savage violence by the Khalistani illicit networks to protect the fiefdom of narcotic smuggling with terrorist methods underline their true nature as crime syndicates. They are involved in drugs, extortions, ransoms, murders, kidnapping, money laundering, and human smuggling. They also fought for the control of the entertainment industry and professional sports to realize super profits. Beginning with drug-weapon smuggling operations during the Cold War, they have expanded their crime networks in the Punjab and in the global Sikh Diaspora. The Khalistani criminal networks are using Sikhism to camouflage the evil business in the same fashion as the Latin American drug smuggling gangs use evangelical Christianity. Financial resources thus acquired political support, which enabled these criminal networks to establish powerful lobbies in the West. It provided states a chance to use the ‘Sikh card’ to arm-twist India on its foreign policy of strategic autonomy.

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

The paper is focused on the nature of the Khalistani criminal networks and their leadership that guides the terrorist activities. In other words, it is a focus on organizations and individuals, their self-interests and actions in the name of religion and ethnic secessionism. The academic field does not study drug smuggling as worship, spirituality and theology simply because narcotic smugglers in several countries operate under different strands of Christianity. Dubbed as “narco-evangelism,” a Brazilian trend of narcotic gangsters using evangelical Christianity has become a global tendency (Elle, 2024). We must not, therefore, study Khalistani criminal networks in their faith based political and religious camouflage simply because they use words like Sikhism, ethnonationalism, minority rights and Sikh raj. The paper explores and explains the link between Narco-Terrorism and the Khalistani criminal networks. The use of Sikh faith as camouflage does not make these criminal networks political or expressions of Sikh nationalism. The study asserts that the drug-weapon smugglers nexus in

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the Punjab and the Sikh Diaspora has produced criminal networks at international levels involved in extortion, murders, ransoms, kidnappings, human smuggling, money laundering, and contract killings. Super profits from the Punjabi entertainment industry and professional sports have turned these sectors into gangster's battlefields. Political leadership in Punjab also use their services to settle scores with their rivals. Unlimited quantity of illicit drugs smuggled in the state has turned the land of 'Green Revolution' into an 'Udta Punjab' (flying Punjab). The land of five rivers has transformed into a gangland. In 2017, the police revealed the existence of more than 100 gangs in Punjab (Dutt, 2017).

Geopolitical instability in the region caused by Pakistan backed Kashmir insurgency, growing Baloch insurgency, the ongoing saga of Pakistan-Afghanistan claims and counterclaims, and the growing presence of jihadi terrorism has created a conducive atmosphere for Khalistani criminal-terrorists not only to raise substantial amounts of illicit income but to develop ties with the terrorist fraternity. The enormous financial resources backed by terror and willingness to use this deadly force has created a vast kingdom of Narco-Terrorism. The strategy to seek legitimacy through referendum for Khalistan in the Sikh Diaspora is backed by these criminal-terror networks. Branding criminal networks as a political movement representing a religious minority of India has worked to attract the attention of some Western governments. Global reach of the Khalistani criminal-terrorist networks is beyond the scope of this paper, the study will focus on the Khalistani criminal-terrorist networks of Punjab and the Sikh Diaspora in Canada and the United States. In this context, the study will also focus on how the Khalistan issue has become a temporary pawn in the geopolitical strategy of 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 the states to wage proxy wars, the Khalistani criminal networks are 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 decades-long “war on drugs” and more recent “war on terror” found a common ground in “countering the threat of Narco-Terrorism” (Bjornehed, 2004: 305). A 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” (Omelycheva and Markowitz, 2021). While terrorism and organized crime had devastating effects on Africa, Latin America, Asia, and elsewhere, the US scholarship’s claim of the post-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 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” (OIG, 1986). While extreme right-wing politics may have been behind the Iran-Contra strategy in the US, it is not confined to one country. A 2002 study of Narco-Terrorism not only offers great insights but urges policymakers to have willpower, strategy, and coordinated action to combat this deadly virus. It believes that the phenomenon is thriving because of politician drug lord collusion among other reasons. The reliance of political figures on money has created a channel for narco-terrorists in the corridors of power. The study suggests an all-encompassing strategy based on legal, political, military and educational programs for success (Douglas, 2002).

Studies on imperialism and Narco-Terrorism have focused on violence by state institutions as a form of class struggle. Analyzing violence associated with cocaine smuggling in Colombia, a study has highlighted the role of Spanish colonialists in unleashing terror and the role of U.S. imperialism in helping “state Narco-Terrorism” in resolving class conflict in favor of the comprador bourgeoisie (Villar and Cottle, 2011). While the western scholarship focused 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 the opium wars to “civilize” the Chinese people are often ignored in the studies on drugs-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). In order to balance its trade

deficits, “British started growing opium in its Indian colonies and exporting it to China” (Blakemore, 2023). China fought the first opium war with Britain and the second with both Britain and France. After losing both wars, China was forced to cede Hong Kong and grant access to its ports and markets to Europeans. In the West, however, there is no lack of literature praising the “positive” contribution of the colonial powers. The metaphor of the ‘White Man’s Burden’ by Rudyard Kipling delves into the colonialist mindset of Victorian era England; however, a historian 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” (McQuade, 2012). Colonialism brought nothing but death and destruction, it fought wars, devastated native cultures, caused ethnic conflicts, left a legacy of depleted resources, and distorted development. The process of primitive accumulation developed western societies, the same phenomenon underdeveloped Africa, Asia and Latin America.

As evident, the drugs-terror nexus is more than two centuries old. It began to expand when the drugs-weapon trade on the black market became enormously profitable. In South Asia, the combination of drugs, weapons and terror mushroomed after the Soviet army entered Afghanistan in 1979. Afghanistan emerged in the 1980s as the battleground of the Cold War, a Soviet debacle similar to the American War in Vietnam. It prompted a big shift in the US policy favoring Pakistan under the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Huq. The Asian theater of the Cold War brought an economic boon for Islamabad, political instability to northwest India for New Delhi, and devastation for Kabul. The US decided to appoint ISI (Inter-Service-Intelligence) of Pakistan Army to distribute Arab-Western funds and weapons to Mujahideen groups fighting the Soviets. Much like the CIA support to Nicaraguan Contras and the Iranian support for Hezbollah, the drug trade became an important fund-raising activity. Dubbed as ‘Operation Cyclone’, the CIA in collaboration with British M16 provided funds and weapons assistance to Afghan Mujahideens, who were also encouraged by the ISI to delve into drug smuggling in the region to become more self-sufficient in purchasing arms for the ‘holy war’. The ISI allowed the Mujahideen groups to engage in the smuggling of drugs and weapons to earn cash in addition to Arab-Western funds. This was also an art of siphoning Arab-Western financial aid by the ISI brass. A study provides details on how CIA aid to Afghan Mujahideens in the 1980’s expanded opium production in Afghanistan and linked Pakistan’s border area heroin laboratories to the world market? After a decade as the sites of the major CIA covert operations in coordination with the ISI, in 1989 both Afghanistan and Pakistan ranked, respectively, as the world’s largest and the 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 Khalistani networks and the rise of Bhindranwale; hence laying the foundation of the Khalistan-Narco-Terrorism nexus. Bhindranwale was head of *Damdami Taksal*, a center of Sikh orthodoxy. Emerging on the scene with a religious message of a unique variety, Sant began his journey through Punjab villages to oppose a trend toward modernization in the cultural sphere. In the name of *Amrit Parchar* (Baptization process), Bhindranwale carried out the most poisonous anti-Hindu propaganda in the villages of the Punjab. *Gurbani* of Sikh Gurus, which called for love and respect of all faiths and creeds, became the first victim of distortions to suit Bhindranwale's agenda. He was highly selective in citing *Gurbani*. "He took those passages from the sacred texts which suited his purpose and ignored or glossed over others that did not. He well understood that hate was a stronger passion than love" (Singh, 1991: 330). His popularity or rather the popularity of his conspiracy theories made him the favorite of lumpen youth thus attracting the attention of the politicians. Sant Bhindranwale was recruited by the Congress Party for electoral gains in its competition with the Akali Dal, a regional Sikh party 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. As political protection came with Bhindranwale blessings, petty criminals of Punjab flocked to his establishment. 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, 1995). The *Dera* (abode) of Bhindranwale 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. Cost of the weapons was covered by drug smuggling. An analyst points out that the growth in illicit drugs in Punjab "can be attributed to Punjab's proximity to the Golden Crescent region covering Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran" (Grewal, 2016). Golden Crescent region has become infamous for drug smuggling in the global narcotic market. For smugglers of Khalistan criminal networks, the security risk of engaging in illegal activities was minimal as ISI encouraged these ventures.

The Punjab scholarship was puzzled at the heinously violent upsurge of the criminal networks in the 1980's. They were astonished at the turn of events. The concept of Khalistan

was developed peacefully to oppose the bifurcation of the Indian subcontinent demanded by the Muslim League based on “*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). In British Punjab, Sikhs were not a majority in any of the five divisions with 29 districts. Thus, they could not lay claim to any specific land. Even in the Sikh Princely states, the population was largely Muslims with Sikh rulers. The Akali leader Master Tara Singh presented an *Azad* (independent) Punjab scheme with 40% Muslim population, 40% Hindus and 20% Sikhs with the Chenab river as the western border. He declared that the Muslim League’s “demand might mean a declaration of civil war. To realize this, Muslims would have to cross an ocean of Sikh blood” (Gupta, 1997: 97). Demand for a separate Punjab state also came from the Chief Minister Sir Khijar Hayat Tiwana; however, it was for a dominion status under the sovereignty of the British Monarch. Ultimately, the Sikh leadership decided to join democratic India with multicultural and multi-religious communities. They were not in favor of any community dominating the state. Speaking at a rally to oppose Pakistan, Akali leader Giani Kartar Singh stated that “we want neither Hindu raj nor even a Sikh raj, what we advocate is a joint rule of all parties and communities guaranteeing safeguards and religious freedoms to all faiths” (Gupta, 1997: 97-98). Sikh leadership had realized that partition is simply between the Muslims and the Hindus of India. The situation in Punjab was different from the other Indian states because three communities were competing for power. Punjab had a sizable minority of the Sikhs with 13% of the population besides majority Muslims with almost 55% of the population, and a vast minority Hindu population with almost one third of the Punjab. Since the British rulers could not offer homeland to the Sikhs, the Akali leadership was ultimately successful in bifurcating the state of Punjab in 1947, at the price of the most barbaric killings, rapes, and the largest migration of humans in the twentieth century.

The first three decades of independent India only witnessed a tiny portion of Sikh intelligentsia nurturing a dream of the Sikh state. 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 on religious grounds in a secular and democratic constitution; the same principle did not apply to Jammu and Kashmir. As the majority of the Sikh leadership and masses accepted their fate in the new state of India, the Sikh dominated Akali Dal moved in the direction of autonomy and asked for Indian Punjab’s division on linguistic basis just like 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. He wrote the fabricated conspiracy theories about Indian leadership in his book *Sachi Sakhi - True Story* (Singh, 1972). However, he did not advocate an independent state. His best role is remembered as the author 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 the 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 independent Khalistan. Shortly after the Bangladesh war, the Pakistani authorities became more involved in the Khalistani criminal networks. Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan claimed that the Pakistani support for his efforts began with General Yahya Khan who had invited him to Pakistan and handed holy relics that had been kept in Pakistan (most Sikh Gurus were born, raised, and preached in the region of Pakistani Punjab). Chohan took the relics to the United Kingdom to win a following among the Sikh Diaspora. He also admitted that relations turned sour after the map of Khalistan was published which showed Maharaja Ranjeet Singh’s Punjab that lies mostly in Pakistan. This prompted General Zia-Ul-Huq to keep Sikhs “under strict surveillance” (Aziz, 2015).

The 1980s witnessed the first full-scale coordination between Khalistani criminal networks based in Punjab 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 Khalistan in the Western capitals. In the context of the Cold War, the Western powers had sympathetic ears to the availability of a strategic ‘Sikh card’ because India had publicly refused to denounce the Soviet army’s entry in Afghanistan. Even before the red army’s entry in Kabul, the US relations with India were less than friendly on the diplomatic front. President Nixon’s conversations 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 US as a particular cause for alarm because it “was deliberately steering nonaligned India toward a *de facto* alliance with the Soviet Union” (Nixon Tapes, 2001). Although India did not openly condemn the entry of the USSR in Afghanistan, in private conversations Indian Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh informed the Soviet ambassador that India will not “endorse” any intervention in the neighborhood (Dixit, 2003: 134). However, he lost elections and Mrs.

Gandhi's return to power meant total silence on the Moscow-Kabul affairs. Pakistan was the frontline state for the US, thus it became the largest recipient of economic and military aid. 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: 311).

One of those symptoms was the emergence of predatory capitalism which began with super profits from illicit underworld economies guided by the use of Kalashnikovs. As the ISI gave a free hand to Khalistani smugglers operating from Pakistan, Sant Bhindranwale's connections with the state power in India through the Congress domination in the state and the Centre Executives meant a free trade zone existed for criminal networks associated with the Sant. 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 at the direction of the Congress to hijack the Akali initiative. By 1984, he was virtually calling the shots in the state despite the direct control of New Delhi through the President's rule. Golden Temple in Amritsar had become an armed camp of Bhindranwale. Criminal gangs received armed training under the command of his close confidant, a former Indian army Major-General Shahbeg Singh. They were able to pick targets, deliver justice (euphemism for killing), and return to the sanctuary of the Golden Temple where Shahbeg Singh had his boot camps. From this holy shrine, Bhindranwale ran an effective parallel government. In his book, BBC Delhi bureau chief Mark Tully provides details of a spate of violence and extortion by Bhindranwale brigades (Tully and Jacob, 1985).

It ended with Operation Blue Star, a codename for military action in the Golden Temple. Alternatives to direct army operations were discussed but overruled. A former RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) officer writes that some officers were of the view that a better alternative would have been to "cut of water and electricity supply to the complex and starve the inmates for eight to ten days to weaken their will to fight, and then attack, if necessary" (Sidhu, 2020: 179). The military view was that any wasted time on such tactics would invite

the wrath of Sikh masses who were likely to storm Amritsar. Indian army troops fought their way into the besieged Golden Temple complex which ended with the demise of terrorist leadership. Post Operation Bluestar period witnessed brutal state and terrorist oppression that created anarchy in the state and country as both Bhindranwale and Mrs. Gandhi lost their lives to bullets. In the aftermath of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, the massacre of Sikhs took place under the watchful eyes of authorities. Writing his decision on the conviction of Sajjan Kumar, the trial judge stated that "in the summer of 1947, hundreds of thousands of civilians were massacred during the partition. Thirty-seven years later, India was witness to another enormous human tragedy. A majority of these horrific mass crimes enjoyed political patronage and escaped trial" (Sangar, 2018).

Factionalism emerged in the criminal underworld after the death of their benefactor Bhindranwale. Even during his life, organizations like the Babar Khalsa and Akhand Kirtni Jatha had their own views and advocated different strategies and tactics. After Sant's death, individual dons formed several small and independent cartels under their command. Chaos and anarchy in the state gave an opportunity to crime bosses. As a result, many criminal-terrorist organizations sprung up in the Punjab and in Sikh Diaspora: the Babar Khalsa International, Khalistan Commando Force, Khalistan Zindabad Force, International Sikh Youth Federation, Khalistan Liberation Force, Bhindranwale Tiger Force, Dashmesh Regiment, Khalistan Liberation Front, Khalistan Armed Force, Khalistan Liberation Army, Khalistan National Army (SATP, 2017). There were several other splintered groups like the Malwa Kesri Front of Gurjant Singh Budhsinghwala. The next nine years witnessed lawlessness in the state and the rise of criminal activity and terrorism on an unprecedented level. As Punjab Police combat operations weakened, terrorism and crimes of the Khalistani criminal networks acquired an upper hand. A research paper by the CIA (declassified in May 2012) summed up the terrorist 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 (CIA, 1987)." The strategy was a carbon copy of the Muslim League tactics of the 1940's.

There is no doubt that the Hindus were the prime target of the Khalistani terrorists but more Sikhs were killed for "co-operating" with the Indian government and opposing their criminal activity. As most officers of Punjab police were Sikhs, they and their families were specifically targeted. Easily recognized from their uniforms, they became visible targets of terrorist bullets. Their unprotected family members in the Punjab villages were often the soft

targets of well-armed criminal-terrorist brigades. Criminal gangs operated with impunity indulging in every conceivable crime including rapes, murders, extortions, and robberies. Despite this lawlessness, the political games of hobnobbing with criminal networks continued. Congress support to various criminal factions did not end with the death of Bhindranwale. Lok Sabha elections of 1989 witnessed several jailed Khalistani leaders under the leadership of Simranjit Singh Mann winning their respective seats. According to a Punjab Congress cabinet minister “their nomination papers were filed and campaigns managed from the Punjab Governor Sidharth Shankar Ray’s office” (Singh, 1996). Punjab’s political crises and India’s economic crisis created a serious threat for governance. Times were calling for bold leadership at both the center and the state levels. The government of Prime Minister Narsimha Rao accepted the challenge and gave full support to the government of Punjab headed by Sardar Beant Singh. Chief Minister Singh gave full powers to the Punjab police chief KPS Gill to eliminate criminal-terrorist gangs in the state. The security forces strategy led by Gill were helped by electric wires on the Indo-Pak border and an army-police coordinated strategy. In 1993, the state eliminated gangs operating in the name of Khalistan. Many gangsters took the Indian state’s generous offer of immunity in exchange for abandoning violence. Many more moved to the Western countries as asylum seekers. Loaded with ill-acquired money, they became one of the most successful generations of Punjabi immigrants in the West.

In the economic and political spheres, Canada was the most accommodating country. 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 Khalistani criminal networks. They decided to penetrate the elected ranks of all parties but NDP (New Democratic Party) and the Liberals offered the best opportunities. Like the IRA (Irish Republican Army), the Khalistani terrorists split into two wings: one section advocated parliamentary/legal ways, while several others continued with the terrorist methods. Since there was no unity in the ranks of criminal-terrorist organizations, the group that advocated parliamentary/legal path benefitted the most. In accumulation of wealth, the criminal-terrorist organizations were outperforming the legal wing. The IRA was split into the “official” and “provisional” wings in 1969. WSO (World Sikh Organization) founded in 1984, self-appointed itself as the “official” wing. However, the Khalistani “provisional” wings remained divided because the criminal underworld gangsters refused to unite under one command. The Khalistan criminal-terrorist wings blew up Air Canada Flight 182 with 329 Canadians on board. They were able to intimidate and thrash anyone in the Indian community. Canadian authorities

ignored these criminal acts because in their views it only impacted India and the Indian-Canadian community. Led by former Prime Minister Joe Clark's diplomacy, India-Canada signed an extradition treaty in 1987. The Khalistani network's lobby became even more active in Canada to oppose any cooperation between the two countries. In the 1990 leadership convention of the Liberal Party of Canada, two Khalistani organizations heavily recruited delegates and they paid their fees for two leading contenders: Jean Chretien supported by the WSO, and Paul Martin supported by the ISYF (International Sikh Youth Federation). ISYF is now banned in Australia, Britain, India, Japan, and the US, yet their temples continue to function in Canada to support human smuggling and money laundering activities of the organization.

1993 witnessed an end to chaos and anarchy in Punjab. Same year India adopted "liberalization reforms" to deal with the financial crisis. Global politics changed after the collapse of the USSR. Under different circumstances, the Khalistani criminal networks shifted their operations mainly to Sikh Diaspora in which the 'jewel in the crown' was Canada. As the 'liberalized' economy opened both goods and service sectors to private capital, India became the darling of Western multinationals (Purewal, 2011). Despite the 1998 nuclear explosions, President Clinton ended a chill in US-India relations. Media began singing the praise of a fellow democracy with *laissez faire* economy. During the Cold War and in the post-Cold-War global affairs, the US continued to equate democracy with capitalism. Nothing could be further from the truth as a Horn of Africa scholar argues that "capitalist democracy is an oxymoron since they have different and even conflicting value systems" (John Young, 2024). However, the razzle and dazzle of the American "way of life" dominated the post-Cold-War era because China remained focused on its domestic 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 Khalistani criminal-terrorist networks changed their narrative to 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 the 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 multipolar world where China and India are also superpowers much like the USA, Russia, Brazil, and South Africa. Emerging power 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. On India's non-alignment, Secretary of State John Foster Dallas stated that "neutrality was immoral and shortsighted"^{vi} (Ayres, 2023). For the US policymakers, India was a land of mystery, exotic and inscrutable. Unable to comprehend the realities of South Asian geopolitics in the post-WWII period, the US began searching for allies to "contain communism." As a result, the US concluded a security arrangement with Pakistan based not on American "interests in South Asia but strategic calculations about Middle East" (MacMohan, 1996: 338)

Containing communism and securing energy supply remained a top priority in the region for the US. In the 1962 Sino-Indian war, the US showed huge interest in supporting India against Chinese military adventures. Ambivalence in the US relations with India ended momentarily in 1962 when it resumed arms supplies to the South Asian nation. The Sino-Indian war also attracted the US attention towards Pakistan's developing alliance with communist China. Perhaps it explains the US neutrality in the 1965 Indo-Pak war and its support for the UN resolution calling for an end to fighting and resumption of negotiations. However, India's progressing relations with the USSR alerted the US. Thus, as Bengali resistance expanded in 1971, US President Richard Nixon and Security Advisor Henry Kissinger decided to end the American arms ban on Pakistan. It also meant support for the Pakistani genocide in East Pakistan or Bangladesh. This pro-Pakistan tilt in American foreign policy further compelled India to forge closer ties with the USSR. However, times have changed in the post-Cold War period, a new belief is guiding India's foreign policy- doctrine of strategic autonomy. India's non-aligned policy was also flexible as the country was willing to embrace closer ties with superpowers when the Chinese threat grew more acute. However, realism finally opened another chapter in country's foreign policy under new credo of 'strategic autonomy' to focus on self-sufficiency and independence.

The narrative of Khalistani criminal networks presented their organizations as political and religious movements representing the interests of Sikh community. It was successful in the absence of a visible presence of the Akali Dal in North American Sikh Diaspora. Akali leaders like Surjit Singh Rakhra were more interested in joining politics in Punjab as meritorious and financially weaker leaders were sidelined. In North America, they had to confront the Khalistani gangs who disrupted Akali meetings and harassed their members and supporters. Several party leaders realized the benefits of the Akali control of Punjab executive where they could enjoy privilege and luxury. The rank and file membership of the moderate Sikh party became silent and inactive. As a result, the Khalistani criminal syndicates took control of the

Sikh temples and various other community institutions. Now they were able to present a secessionist ‘Sikh Card’ to governments in the Western capitals. Their anti-India rhetoric became a bilateral issue between New Delhi, and Ottawa/Washington. Even during the Cold War, Indian diplomats suspected Western support for the Khalistani protagonists. As criticism of Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan’s, the putative president of 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). Known India basher Congressman Dan Burton of Indiana and Jesse Helms were lobbied by the Khalistani networks to cultivate support in the US Congress. As India raised questions during Vice-President George Bush’s visit to New Delhi in 1984, he “apparently informed the Indian government that CIA was not conspiring with Sikh terrorists against India” (Limaye, 1996: 190). This marked one of only a few departures from US policy against confirming or denying reported CIA activities.

In the post 1993 period the Khalistani criminal networks were unable to create anarchy and spread fear in Punjab, their activities in the Sikh Diaspora communities soared. The Punjab-based criminals established contacts with criminals in the Sikh Diaspora. Their criminal enterprise also expanded. It was no longer confined to drug-weapon smuggling with sophisticated fire-power, they were now engaged in kidnappings, ransom, extortion, money-laundering and human smuggling. As consumerism expanded, predatory capitalism offered super profits in the Punjabi entertainment and sports economies. The gangsters were involved in Punjabi music, Punjabi movie industry and Kabaddi federations with super profits earned through control over drug smuggling. Police operations in India also started detecting Canadian links with drug smuggling operations conducted by Kabaddi players and Kabaddi Federations (IANS, 2013). Kabaddi players like Davinder Bambiha were not only involved in drug smuggling, kidnappings, extortions and murders but also controlled the Punjabi music industry with major human smuggling operations with help from Sikh Diaspora. Thus, a complex network of criminal Godfathers developed who unleashed another round of targeted assassinations in the Punjab.

The Punjab-based crime syndicate’s connections with Sikh Diaspora gave them a global reach. New markets have opened new opportunities in the latest technology aiding the criminal underworld. The barbed wires at the Indo-Pak border were key to disrupting the drugs-weapon-terror networks in the 1990s; however, drone technology has surfaced to aid the narco-terrorist

networks. A security analyst writes that “the India-Pakistan border, characterized by geopolitical tensions and conflicts, has now become a melting-pot for arms and drug trafficking facilitated by drone technology” (Radhakrishnan, 2024). As the criminal gangs proliferated in the Punjab, they managed to transfer manpower and money to Canada under the international student program. Every Punjab based criminal gang has active cells in Canada. Private and public colleges and universities of Canada gave admission to anyone willing to pay a fee four times higher than Canadian students. Gangs had financial resources for student fee, IELTS (International English Language Testing) scores (one band is available for one Lakh and over), and travel costs. 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” (Oullet and Crawly, 2024). Many gangsters with humble beginnings as street thugs became formidable organized international criminals, a tribute to Canada's international student program. The heavy presence of gangsters belonging to the Khalistani criminal networks was described 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).

Pakistan's involvement in aiding and abetting these networks has been well documented by the media and academics. However, the Canada-Pakistan-Khalistan triangle started getting more attention with the killing of the Khalistan Tiger Force chief Hardeep Singh Nijjar. His visits to Pakistan, meetings with other Khalistani terrorists, and training other Khalistani terrorists on Canadian soil are highlighted in some independent Canadian media (McDonald, 2024). Numerous Canadian links highlight the gangster controlled Punjabi music industry's global reach. After the assassination of gangsta-rapper Sidhu Moosewala, who had lived in Canada as an international student during his rising stardom in the entertainment industry, his meteoric rise and death was linked to his association with the Bambiha gang. Founder of this gang, famous Kabbadi player Davinder Bambiha was killed in a police encounter. However, Sidhu Moosewala was helped by gang's present chief Lucky Patyal who is lodged in an Armenian jail. As the Bambiha gang was suspected behind the youth Akali leader Midhukhera's murder, Moosewala was gunned down after his song praising Bambiha (Sharma, 2022). Ransoms, kidnappings, and shootings are a routine among gangsters, entertainment celebrities and sports luminaries in the Punjab; however, Canada is not far behind. Several entertainment personalities have been targeted with ransom calls and gunfire. Shooters targeted famous Punjabi singer and actor Gippy Grewal's house in Vancouver in 2023. Punjabi music

star AP Dhillon's house received gunshots in Victoria. He was making a video with Bollywood star Salman Khan (John Lo, 2024). Since Khalistani terrorists hate moderate Sikh regional party Akali Dal, it was reported that a Delhi police investigation showed a link between Pakistan based Khalistani terrorist Harvinder Rinda and one of Midhukhera's killers (Staff Reporter, 2022). Whether Khalistani networks have direct links with Bambiha gang or they were simply outsourcing a killing is not clear, the turf war between all gangs including the Khalistani criminal networks is common. The Bishnoi gang had taken responsibility for killing Moosewala because they hated the Bambiha gang for killing Midhukhera. This is a gangland scenario developing like a movie plot. The involvement of temple politics in Canada in this inter-gang rivalry has become an integral part of the episodes, hence the killing of Nijjar.

The control over Sikh temples in Canada, the US, and other Western countries by the Khalistani criminal networks has given them economic, social, cultural and political clout. Criminals of the Punjab have found connections with Sikh Diaspora, in general and the temples, in particular enormously profitable, from money laundering to transfer of gangsters through human smuggling operations. Canadian resident criminals also enjoy the privilege of tax deductions with temple donation receipts for their illicit money. Any police or Revenue Canada investigation will invite criticism and protests from established religion to politicians. The Khalistani criminal networks in Canada came to limelight 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.). Since Vancouver had turned into a gangland from the decade of 1980's and onward, the violence associated with Khalistan terrorism multiplied. Investigations of most inter-gang killings in Vancouver's drug war produced no results but the solved cases produced stunning results. They revealed that the Khalistani criminal underworld either had links with other drug smugglers or their active members like Dosanjh brothers were also leading players of the drug gangs. The trial of hitman Hardip Uppal, who was charged with first degree murder in 2003, divulged that Babar Khalsa had paid gangsters Robbie Soomel and Daljit Basran a sum of \$50,000 to kill *Indo-Canadian Times* editor Tara Singh Hayer. The editor himself was a Khalistani at one-time but became a harsh critic of these networks after noticing the criminal activities and senseless violence in the name of a separate state. Assassins were also paid to kill Balwant Singh Gill, a moderate president of Surrey-Delta Sikh temple, but he escaped (Swami, 2024).

New routes of intercontinental drug trades opened with the arrival of Khalistan émigré networks in North America. These former "militants" from Punjab were skillful in murders,

robberies, extortions, kidnappings and rapes. They became an important link with crime bosses in Punjab and the Sikh Diaspora. 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). 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 Khalistani linked trucking sector started emerging and mushrooming in North America. A 2012 report by *Toronto Star* estimated that 6% of Ontario’s long-haul truck drivers were Sikhs. The investigation report also revealed the presence of a broker system among the Sikh 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 the Punjab...right down to their villages” (Madonik, 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” (Weikel, 2019). Illegal drugs trade of more than 2.2 trillion US dollars in North America is mainly dependent on transportation by the trucking industry. More than 60% of drugs entering the US came in trucks since it is considered safer and more efficient than air and sea routes. Drug enforcement agencies regularly find fentanyl, cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and methamphetamines in large quantities in truck-loads. The scale of narcotic smuggling can be judged from California authorities’ recent discovery of over 600,000 fentanyl pills and 10,000 pills of methamphetamines in just one raid (Meghan, 2024). The data from US district courts and superior courts reveal that Sikhs are a minority only in the population not in the crime world. Most of these criminals are connected with the Khalistani criminal networks. They are well-established in the global trucking industry and drugs trade. No wonder, Amritapal Singh emerged as Khalistani leader after his career in Dubai’s transport industry as a truck driver. He was driving around in the latest model Mercedes cars and lived lavishly in the Punjab.

Word ‘embarrassment of riches’ describes the Khalistani criminal networks in both Canada and the United States. They provide financial support to lobby politicians and intimidate the media in both countries. Adding financial burden with multiple court cases

against reporters and the media outlets is the favorite Khalistani tactic in Canada. Backed by dirty money, the advocates of legal/political strategy have adopted a variety of lobbying and intimidation techniques in both Canada and the US. While the terrorist wings of Khalistani networks have continued on the path of insane violence, the WSO- the peaceful wing- has reaped the benefits of the traditional lobby in Canada. Using all resources collected by the Khalistani terrorist movement, WSO fraternity's sons and daughters have become MLAs, MPs, Ministers, and Judges. The organization also defended their barbaric violent and unparliamentary tactics. They have justified every terrorist act committed by the Khalistani criminals in Canada and abroad. Commenting on their dubious role, Air-India inquiry Commissioner Justice Major wrote that "counsel for the WSO had an important role to play with respect to the reputational interests of the Sikh community. Instead, they expended considerable time, resources, and energy seeking to advance a number of peripheral issues beyond the jurisdiction of the Commission through repeated motions to tender evidence intended to suggest that the Government of India was involved in the bombing of Air India Flight 182. It is regrettable that the WSO missed the opportunity to make a more meaningful contribution to the Inquiry with regard to promoting Sikh reputational interests" (Government of Canada, 2010).

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. Until September 2024, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals were dependent on Jagmeet Singh's NDP for survival as a government. While both leaders never missed an opportunity to highlight India's human rights record, they have been silent about the ban on Sikh Turbans in Quebec's civil service. Clearly within his constitutional jurisdiction, Justin Trudeau skirted his responsibility by saying that "his government won't step into the legal challenge.... in order to avoid triggering a fight with the province over jurisdiction." (Zimonjic, 2021). Both Jagmeet Singh, who wears a tightly wrapped turban on his head, and Khalistan sympathizer Justin Trudeau are silent on Quebec's racism toward the Sikhs, yet the WSO support for Singh and Trudeau remained steadfast. They also support the US pursuit of hegemony in the Global South and 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 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 the “godless empire of the USSR”. Every year Soviet submarines suddenly appeared in North American waters during annual budget times. Now the foreign hand appears just around election times. The US has sponsored sophisticated color revolutions to seed political instability and sponsor bloody coups to overthrow democracies. 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 both 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, 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 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 under the Biden administration. *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 the public dialogue. President Trump may reverse the Biden administration’s course; it depends, however, on Indian position: would they buckle under the US pressure?

The Canadian frustrations were apparent in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s speech in the House of Commons when he announced “India’s hand behind Khalistani Nijjar’s killing” (Yun, 2023). His own party MPs have presented anti-India resolutions in the House of Commons in the past and regularly attend Khalistani functions. Canadian media gleefully reports on Referendum 2020 of ‘Sikhs For Justice’ without commenting on its groundless

credentials in international law and the farce of the entire voting procedure in Gurdwaras. Would they show the same enthusiasm in reporting a Quebec referendum to separate from Canada held in Russia? While the Khalistani criminal networks continued to threaten Indian diplomats, the US took a harsh note as the “State Department condemned vandalism by some protesters in San Francisco who attempted to set fire to parts of the Indian consulate in July 2023” (Hussain, 2023). However, the Canadian Prime Minister’s diplomacy toward India remained discourteous. In the tradition of the Cold War ‘scholars’ like Robert Conquest and George Orwell’s fabricated lies, the stories and rumors of the Khalistani criminals are automatically believed in Canada. During the Cold War propaganda, 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 (University of California Los Angeles) historian Arch Getty also discovered that dominant tendency in Robert Conquest’s work on the Great Terror during the Stalin period was that Soviet émigré were considered automatically right (Getty, 1979). State and media narrative on Nijjar killing is an expression of unhappiness over India’s independent foreign policy. That is why it is full of unwarranted 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 and the Indian community’s problem. The Indian-Canadian community has resorted to open forms protesting police inaction to extortion demands by gangsters in Canada. The community has been crying about ransom calls, and letters from these gangs urging heavy amounts and not contacting the police. Despite these threats, many people reached out to police facing open shootings (Little, 2024). Gurpatwant Singh Pannu of ‘Sikhs For Justice’ (SFJ) openly called for Hindus to leave Canada, yet the law of the land remained silent in Trudeau’s Canada. He also warned people not to travel with Air-India because it would be dangerous, reviving the memories of Air-India flight 182. Instead, the state is busy in mapping out anti-India propaganda. The anti-India narrative in Canada includes cases of asylum seekers from India which are used as propaganda tools to demonstrate the country’s poor human rights regime. In 2023, Canada accepted 1,344 refugee claims from India, making it the third-largest source country for refugees. It’s behind Iran, with 2,730 accepted claims, and Turkey with 1,993, according to Immigration Refugee Board (IRB) data. In order to build a plot, the story line begins with a Sikh member telling IRB his belief in an independent country of Khalistan, and how the police tortured him and are still

hunting for him? (Barrera, 2023). The fact that the person got his passport and the Canadian visa after a police clearance certificate does not bother IRB members in Canada. Needless to say, the use of the “Sikh card” by ignoring the dangers of Sikh Narco-Terrorism has become an integral part of the strategy and tactics of the Canadian state. Therefore, it is important to examine Narco-Terrorism in more detail, in general, and Khalistani Narco-Terrorism, in particular.

The Khalistani criminal networks operate freely in both Canada and Pakistan. In fact, Canada has emerged as the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the Khalistani criminal-terrorist networks. Pakistan diplomats in Canada feel free to become cheerleaders for the Khalistani referendum process in Canada. Pakistan Consul General Janbaz Khan attended two Khalistani Sikh temples of Surrey on the day of a referendum in Toronto (Gupta, 2022). Since Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh have resigned from their government roles as Prime Minister and leader of small opposition in Parliament, would it lead to normal relations between India and Canada. It is commonly understood that the strategic goals of the state in external relations decision making remain constant, some scholars believe that different political support for leaders in democracies leads to a change in foreign policy (Carrol, Leeds and Mattes, 2010). Would this help explain thaw in Indo-Canadian relations under Prime Minister Carney? Khalistani groups did play a role in his leadership campaign but there were several others including cabinet ministers like Anita Anand and Canadian Business Council. In view of President Trump’s Tariff politics, Canada is eager to establish and expand trade beyond North America. The private investment firm Brookfield headed by Carney has an investment of \$25 billion in India and South Asian giant is key to Canada’s path to diversifying trade. Yet, it is far too earlier to see the impact of collective Western strategic interests on India. At this moment, Canadian foreign policy is not following the footsteps of Justin Trudeau.

The US under Biden had also announced allegations of an Indian plot against Khalistan leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannu. As both allegations are in the pre-trial period, the evidence will shed more light on the conspiracy theories. Both India and the US conceptually seem destined to be partners. However, they are more interested in their respective “strategic autonomies”. As each nation is vigorously defending its geostrategic objectives, using pragmatic policies is the only way forward. President Trump has asked both Canada and Mexico to increase border security to stop drugs and human smuggling. The Khalistani criminal networks are important links to this cross-border narcotic smuggling. How will the US deal with this phenomenon and the Khalistani network’s connections with the US long-

haul trucking industry engaged in the transportation of drugs? Snakes are in the backyard of North America; however, the venomous snake bites are not always visible.

By way of Conclusion

In Latin America, the marriage of religion and drug smuggling to hoodwink the authorities began in Brazil in the 1980's. In order to conduct the 'evil' trade of narcotics, the drug lords of Latin America started their 'devotion' to Afro-Brazilian temples and deities. Four decades later, the Afro-Brazilian gods were replaced by various strands of Christianity with "packets of cocaine, handguns and uniforms emblazoned with the Star of David in the so-called narco-Pentecostals" (Phillips, 2022). The imagery of Sikh religion and Sikh kingdom accompanied the rise of the Khalistani criminal networks engaged in drug-weapon smuggling in the Punjab and the Sikh Diaspora. Several narcotic smuggling gangs emerged to fight turf wars over production, distribution and sales of narcotics. They presented themselves as protagonists of the Sikh religion and the Sikh community. The propaganda machinery sponsored by unlimited financial resources of the narco-terrorist crime networks produced a narrative of minority religious rights, the right to self-determination and human rights. Not only were these criminal networks successful in selling this narrative to the mainstream media but many Western governments appropriated this "Sikh card" strategy to arm twist India's foreign policy of strategic autonomy. Instead of focusing and analyzing how and why the Khalistani criminal networks expanded their drug-weapon smuggling enterprise to extortions, kidnappings, murders, rapes, robberies and money laundering, the scholarship started studying minority rights, religious persecution, human rights, the right to self-determination and ethnonationalism. In other words, they accepted the narrative of the Khalistani Narco-Terrorist network's claims. Moderate Akali Dal and its various factions has represented the Sikh interest and Punjab's autonomy since its inception in 1921. During and after the British raj, majority of the Sikhs have supported the party although corruption, nepotism and the increasing role of money power has weakened its dominant faction led by the Badal family. It still continues to advance the ethnic-religious identity of the Sikhs and represent the socio-political interest of the community. Since the beginning of the 21st century, it has also expanded its base among the Hindus of the Punjab. Studies are needed to find why criminal networks engaged in drugs and variety of other crimes were able to appropriate religious and political symbols of Sikhism? How were these symbols used to camouflage drug smuggling and other crimes?

Since the Khalistani narco-terrorism has expanded in the Sikh Diaspora globally, in general and in Canada, in particular. How do we explain the origins, change, development and motion of this phenomenon? With massive funds at their disposal, the Khalistani underworld's global empire has made their voices stronger and louder. From the time of the Air-India bombing in Canada to the threats to Indian diplomats, Canada has emerged as the epicenter of the Khalistani criminal networks. Learning from Air-India flight 182, Justice John Major states that "terrorism is both a serious security threat and a serious crime. Secret intelligence collected by Canadian and foreign intelligence agencies can warn the Government about terrorist threats and help prevent terrorist acts. Intelligence can also serve as evidence for prosecuting terrorism offences" (Government of Canada, 2010). Taking a serious note on the terrorist threat to Canada, in 2019 security experts of the Canadian government included Khalistani extremism in their annual public report on the threat of terrorism to Canada. However, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government immediately expunged references to Khalistani extremism under intense underworld lobby. Canada has earned an image of an indirect supporter of the Khalistani Narco-Terrorist networks. Canada can learn a lesson from Pakistan. 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. Warning Pakistan on the Jihadi terrorists, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that "you can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them to only bite your neighbors. Eventually, those snakes are going to turn on whoever has them in their backyard," (Lamont, 2011). There is a high level of threat of terrorism on Canadian soil. A strategy to combat Narco-Terrorism can only develop when all states, including Canada, realize its common threat to their societies and democratic institutions. Due to its trans-national nature, it is a threat that cannot be faced by one country on its own. Further studies are needed to find common solutions.

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