

Fear and Political Mobilization

Dibyesh Anand

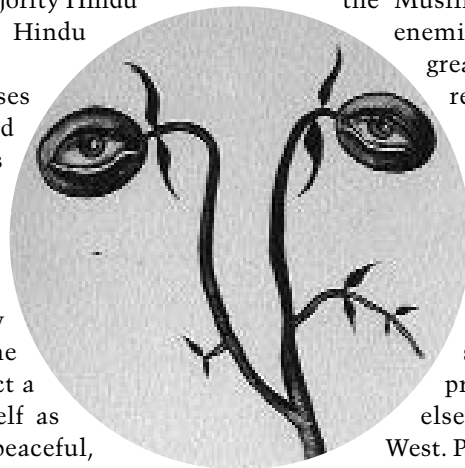
Representation of the Self and the Other(s) is integral to political movements. In movements of the political Right, a hagiography of the Self is based on the representations of Other as threatening; this justifies the use of political violence. The Hindutva (the ideological and political Hindu nationalist movement that seeks to convert India, a secular state with a majority Hindu population, into a Hindu nation) is no exception.

Hindutva discourses imagine a masculinized Hindu society that is reproductively fertile, effectively organized, proud of its culture, and awake to the dangers posed by 'enemies' within the country; they construct a myth of the Hindu self as virtuous, civilized, peaceful, accommodating, enlightened, clean, and tolerant. This claim to represent a pre-existing Hindu nation – at the same time as Hindutva is trying to construct a coherent Hindu nation – has at its core a conception of threatening Others: enemies within.

These enemies, as articulated by the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (a militant Hindutva organization) leader Ashok Singhal in his speeches and pamphlets, include secularists ('weak' Hindus who

allow foreign and hostile domestic forces to denigrate the Hindu nation), communists, the Westernized media, and the Christian and Muslim minorities. These enemies become dangerous because they are supposedly backed by hostile foreign forces – communists by China, the media by the West, Christians by the Western/Christian world, and Muslims by the 'Muslim world'. Of all these enemies, Islam poses the greatest threat. The representations of Muslims as the most threatening Other – morally corrupt, barbaric, violent, rigid, backward, dirty, and fanatical – borrow from stereotypes and motifs prevalent in India and elsewhere, including the West. Proponents of Hindutva scavenge voraciously from Western racist writings – especially in cyberspace – about Islam and the 'Muslim mind'.

'The Muslim' in the Hindutva imagination derives its danger from a mix of stereotypes of religion (Islam as rigid and fanatical), history (a history of violence), physicality (the Muslim male body as virile), and culture (Muslim culture as backward, corrupt and immoral). 'The Muslim' – an imagined entity – is discursively constructed as a site of fear,



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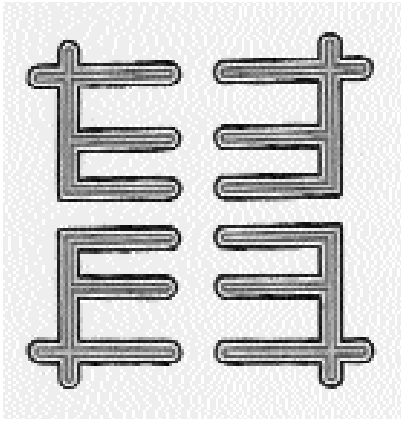
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fantasy, distrust, anger, envy and hatred, thus generating desires of emulation, abjection and/or extermination. These stereotypical representations of 'the Muslim' help explain how extreme collective violence against actual Muslims is normalized, underplayed, and legitimised in the collective imaginary of many Hindutva followers.

PORNO-NATIONALISM

This Hindu nationalism can be conceptualised as 'porno-nationalism'. No other term captures the centrality of sexualized imagination in nationalism as an ideology and as a lived collective political movement. While the public aspect of Hindutva discourse is consciously asexualized, 'the Muslim' has a conspicuous porno-sexual dimension for ordinary young Hindu male activists. Jokes, slogans, gossip, public speeches and pamphlets reveal how the fertile threatening body of the hypersexed 'overpopulating Muslim' is framed as the gravest threat to India.

The sexual dimension of the Hindutva discourse is not just an ethnographic curiosity; it is also politically salient. Suresh Das, a Hindu nationalist religious leader, explained in a speech in Hardwar in December 2005 that there is an Islamic conspiracy – based on the twin strategies of religious conversion and demographic growth – to turn India into another Pakistan. According to Das, Muslims do not worry about how to take care of their many children – they just want to overtake Hindus, seize control of India, and then grab Hindu properties and women: '*roti, beti, zameen loot lenge*' ('We will loot your food, daughters and land'). The

only proper response, in Das's view, is that 'each Hindu *bhai* [brother] should have at least six sons, two for the service of religion, two for protecting borders and two for the economy'. In Das's vision of the Hindu nation awakened to the demographic danger posed by duplicit Muslims, there is no place for daughters (or mothers), only sons (and fathers)!

A porno-nationalist imagining of the Muslim Other does two things simultaneously: it assures the Hindu nationalist Self of its moral superiority and instils an anxiety about the threatening masculine Other. This anxiety threatens to destabilize the Hindu collective body unless this body is awakened to the threats posed by this Other. Hindu nationalism, despite claiming to represent the majority Hindu 'community', has at its core a deep masculinist anxiety. This anxiety, Hindu nationalism suggests, will be dispelled by an awakening – one that promotes personal politicization and facilitates socio-cultural mobilization – that is masculinist, indeed often militarized.

THE HINDU BODY

As Dr Rameshwar Das Vaishnav Das, another Hindu nationalist religious figure said in a public speech in December 2005: 'so long as we have potent (*punsat*) men, we will win the oncoming war against the Muslims and their allies'. These potent men are the ones who can protect Hindu female bodies, the Hindu nation, and mother India. This potent masculinity demands an awakened mind and an awakened body. Hindutva's emphasis on physical exercises, outdoor sports, and quasi-military drills are meant to make the Hindu male body physically strong. Brute physical strength is accompanied by an awakening of the mind – a mind that is able to recognize the enemies of the nation and is proud of Hindu history and culture. The concept of *shakti* (strength) combines physical ability and mental fortitude. What makes these men potent is not their ability to perform sexually as an individual body, but their willingness to sacrifice their individual desires to serve the higher cause of the collective Hindu body.

A narrative common amongst

Hindutva intellectuals, leaders, and activists across the country is of a conscious Muslim ploy to seduce 'innocent' Hindu girls. The handsome, seductive Muslim, the lecherous Muslim, the Muslim rapist – all these images play upon each other as a danger for 'innocent' Hindu females. This encourages the mobilization of Hindu women for Hindutva in the name of self-defence and of the protection of the body of Hindu women and the Hindu nation. More crucially, it exhorts Hindu men to 'protect' their innocent Hindu mothers, sisters, and daughters from the lecherous 'Muslim'. It also entails protecting Hindu women by policing interactions between Hindu women and Muslim men; such relationships are cast as evidence of sly Muslim men polluting, converting, and oppressing Hindu women. Any agency of the Hindu woman in such relationships is denied.

These representations facilitate particular forms of violence (including extreme sexual violence) – such as those inscribed on Muslim bodies during riots in Gujarat in 2002; mask the instrumentalist aspects of this violence; and often facilitate the (well-documented) widespread lackadaisical attitude of the Hindu majority to the plight of the Muslims. The Hindutva imagining of the Muslim as a hyper-sexualized

'The hypersexed "overpopulating Muslim" is framed as the gravest threat to India.'

overpopulating Other allows Hindutva to cast the victims as the instigators of violence and to frame itself as a legitimate, defensive reaction.

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The Myth of the Failed State

Aidan Hehir takes issue with the claim that ‘failed states’ both attract and breed terrorists

Failed states have become a critical issue in contemporary international relations. Proponents of the war on terror routinely identify failed states as causal variables in the threat posed by global terrorism; they cite Afghanistan's links to the 11 September attacks as evidence of this. The 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States* famously suggested that the US was threatened more by failing than conquering states and that this necessitated a concerted emphasis on the ostensibly causal link between intra-state collapse and the proliferation of global terrorism.

An increasingly dominant corollary of this hypothesis is the premise that democratization, in addition to its ethical benefits, mitigates the terrorist threat. Failed states have thus become a primary target for Western state-building initiatives.

However, there has been little, if any, inquiry into the validity of this hypothesis. Failed states certainly evidence internal problems and pose a challenge to international politics; yet their relationship with terrorism has not been properly examined. (Indeed,

the term ‘failed state’ must be used cautiously; as I indicate below, the definition of a failed state is contested.)

STATE FAILURE AND DEMOCRACY

Intervention in failed states has been advocated on moral and security grounds. The former were prominent in the 1990s in the humanitarian intervention debate; here advocates stressed the ‘responsibility to protect’ that was incumbent both on states towards their own citizens and on states with the capacity to ‘save strangers’ in other states. After the 11 September attacks, however, state strategy in the West reverted to an emphasis on national security.

11 September catalysed the emergence of the radically expansive ‘Bush Doctrine’ and the launch of the ambitious war on terror, which was

rationalized by a mixture of moral trailblazing and national security concerns. In his second inaugural speech, in 2005, President Bush stated that ‘it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture’. This policy was greatly influenced and bolstered by the neo-conservative theoretical outlook, which became more influential in the Bush administration after 11 September. The neo-conservative approach identifies US national interests with international progress: therefore ‘creating an international order of values . . . is good for both America and the world’ (Michael Williams, *European Journal of International Relations* 11/3, 2005). This view advocates a ‘muscular patriotism’, with foreign policy driven by expansive international missions.

The Bush administration’s defining foreign policy initiative has consistently emphasized the link between intra-state collapse and national security. Thus the *Commission on Weak States and US National Security* (2004):

Weak and failed governments generate instability, which harms their citizens, drags down their neighbors and ultimately threatens US interests in building an effective international system, providing the foundation for continued prosperity, and, not least, protecting Americans from external threats to our security.

The threat was considered so great

“Weak and failed governments generate instability, which harms their citizens, drags down their neighbors and ultimately threatens US interests in building an effective international system”

that, in 2004, the US government established the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and

Stabilization. The Office's mission statement describes failed states as 'one of the greatest national and international security challenges of our day', and as 'breeding grounds for terrorism'. The dangers posed by failed states and the importance afforded to tackling state failure is thus a 'top priority' and directly linked to the most pressing national security issue.

Advocates of intervention do not, however, just assert the need to stabilize a failing state; they suggest that democratic governance should be encouraged – democracy will both be good for the newly liberated citizens and is the political system most likely to remove sources of internal instability and, ultimately, terrorism. The state reconstruction process is therefore specifically oriented towards democratization rather than just stabilization. This approach – part of a broader ideological initiative described by Condoleezza Rice as 'transformational diplomacy' – is evident in the post-intervention policies pursued in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The view that democracy is a bedrock of stability and key to national security is not unique to the US: it has been a key element of the foreign policies of many Western governments, including that of the UK.

FAILED STATES AND TERRORISM

The claim that there is a causal link between failed states and terrorism is, however, weak. What are 'failed states'? While Somalia ostensibly represents 'the quintessential case of state failure' (T. Langford, *International Studies*

Table I: Foreign Terrorist Organizations and the Failed State Index

| Failed State Index | State | Number/Name of Group(s) |
|--------------------|--------------|---|
| 1 | Sudan | (1) al-Qaeda |
| 2 | DRC | (0) |
| 3 | Ivory Coast | (0) |
| 4 | Iraq | (5) Abu Nidal Organization, al-Qaeda organization in the land of the two rivers, Ansar al-Sunnah, Mujahedin-e-Khalq, Palestine Liberation Front |
| 5 | Zimbabwe | (0) |
| 6 | Chad | (0) |
| 7 | Somalia | (1) al-Qaeda |
| 8 | Haiti | (0) |
| 9 | Pakistan | (6) al-Qaeda, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba |
| 10 | Afghanistan | (5) Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya, al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group |
| 11 | Guinea | (0) |
| 12 | Liberia | (0) |
| 13 | CAR | (0) |
| 14 | North Korea | (0) |
| 15 | Burundi | (0) |
| 16 | Yemen | (1) al-Qaeda |
| 17 | Sierra Leone | (0) |
| 18 | Burma | (0) |
| 19 | Bangladesh | (1) al-Qaeda |
| 20 | Nepal | (0) |

Review, 1/1, 1979), the term has been applied to less categorical instances of state collapse; this suggests that there are degrees, not a standard manifestation, of state failure. Further, analysts use a wide variety of criteria by which to judge state failure. In some assessments state failure manifests itself as coercive incapacity.

'There are unusually high numbers of "Foreign Terrorist Organizations" in states with low levels of failure; indeed, some of these states are democracies.'

Jackson believes a state to have failed if it 'cannot or will not safeguard minimum civil conditions, i.e., peace,

order, security, etc. domestically. [Failed states are] hollow juridical shells that shroud an anarchical condition domestically' (Institute of International Relations, University of British Columbia, Working Paper 25, 1988). Other commentators, however, highlight administrative incapacity or the inability to govern; in this case the state fails to meet the needs of the population.

The 2004 *Commission on Weak States and US National Security* defines a failed state as a state that cannot ensure security, meet the basic needs of the population, and maintain legitimacy. This is similar to Rotberg's definition of failed states as being characterized by domestic insecurity and the inability to deliver 'positive political goods to their inhabitants' (*When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, 2004).

There is, however, no necessary correlation between the two broad categories of failure, coercive incapacity and administrative incapacity. A failed state may exhibit pronounced failings in its administrative capacity but have normal coercive capacity.

If there are significantly different kinds of failed states then it is highly probable that failed states as a group will manifest different relationships with phenomena like terrorism. The scope for major divergence between failed states, therefore, challenges the validity of hypotheses predicated on a standard conception of state failure.

The 2006 *Failed State Index* (Table 1), compiled by Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace, illustrates this point. Using 12 indicators of failure, the index awards states a mark out of ten (ten is the worst mark). Yet consider the divergent sources of the failings of the

'top ten' states: Haiti, for example, (ranked eighth) scores 5.0 for Refugees and Displaced Persons, Afghanistan (ranked tenth) 9.6; Sudan (ranked first) scores 7.5 for Economy while Zimbabwe (ranked fifth) scores 9.8. Lists of states that have been assessed according to twelve criteria are likely to produce such divergent scores. This does not itself compromise the argument that these states can be considered failed on the basis of an aggregate score. It does, however, undermine the accuracy of broad extrapolations derived from a necessarily diverse group.

Moreover, there is no correlation between, on the one hand, a state's degree of failure (as indicated by the *Failed State Index*) and, on the other, the number of 'Foreign Terrorist Organizations' (FTOs) on its territory (as identified in the US State Department's 2005 list of FTOs that pose the greatest threat to US interests). As Table 1 shows, of the states ranked by the *Failed State Index* as the seventeen most failed only Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan have a significant number of such FTOs. Yet, as Table 2 shows, states such as India, Lebanon, Israel and the Philippines, low on the *Failed State Index*, contain unusually high numbers of terrorist groups. That is, there are significant numbers of FTOs in states with low levels of failure; indeed, some of these states are democracies.

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban-controlled Afghanistan (1996-2001) is frequently cited as proof of the failed-states-breed-terrorists thesis. Afghanistan undoubtedly served as a base for al-Qaeda. UN Security Council Resolution 1378 in 2001 reflected the widespread international consensus that linked the country to the 11 September attacks. However, those who explain the attractiveness of failed states to terrorists, as we have seen, refer to the lack of central control and the consequent freedom from state

Table II: States containing most Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

| State | No. of Groups | Name of Groups | Failed State Index |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|--------------------|
| Lebanon | 6 | al-Qaeda, Asbat al-Ansar, Hezbollah, Palestine Liberation Front, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command | 65 |
| Pakistan | 6 | al-Qaeda, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Taiba | 9 |
| Afghanistan | 5 | al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group | 10 |
| India (Including Kashmir) | 5 | al-Qaeda, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Taiba | 93 |
| Iraq | 5 | Abu Nidal Organization, al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers, Ansar al-Sunnah Army, Mujahedin-e-Khalq, Palestine Liberation Front | 4 |
| Israel | 5 | al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Hamas, Kach, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine | 67 |
| Egypt | 4 | al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group | 31 |
| Libya | 4 | Abu Nidal Organization, al-Qaeda, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, Palestine Liberation Front | 95 |
| Philippines | 4 | Abu Sayyaf Group, al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiya, New People's Army | 68 |
| Turkey | 4 | al-Qaeda, DHKP/C, Kurdistan Workers' Party, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group | 82 |
| United Kingdom | 4 | al-Qaeda, Continuity Irish Republican Army, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, Real Irish Republican Army | 128 |
| Algeria | 3 | al-Qaeda, Armed Islamic Group, Salafist Group for Call and Combat | 72 |
| Colombia | 3 | National Liberation Army, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia | 27 |
| France | 3 | al-Qaeda, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, Mujahedin-e-Khalq | 129 |
| Ireland | 3 | al-Qaeda, Continuity Irish Republican Army, Real Irish Republican Army | 143 |
| Syria | 3 | Abu Nidal Organization, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command | 33 |

interference. The UN's position was premised, however, on the active support provided by the Taliban to al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda did not establish a base in Afghanistan because the government lacked the coercive capacity to stop its activities. In fact – as highlighted by Resolution 1378 – precisely the opposite was the case: the Taliban gave al-Qaeda extensive support. While al-Qaeda had no coherent links with the Taliban when it took control in 1996 the two soon formed an active alliance. Taliban leader Mullah Omar told Bin Laden, 'You are most welcome. We will never give you up to anyone who wants you'.

Moreover, it is not clear that Afghanistan under the Taliban actually was a failed state. Taliban rule was marked by administrative but not by coercive incapacity. Richard Perle and Bob Frum, key advisers to the Bush Administration, have written that 'Taliban Afghanistan was not a failed state. Indeed, the Taliban gave Afghanistan its strongest government in decades, even centuries' (*An End to Evil*, 2004).

BREEDING GROUNDS

The further assertion that failed states not only act as a base for, but also breed, terrorists also appears to have little empirical support. Conditions conducive to the emergence of terrorist groups are not peculiar to failed states: the attacks by 'home-grown' terrorists in Madrid and London show that stable democracies have also 'bred' terrorists. The members of the al-Qaeda cell that carried out the 11 September attacks 'were educated and well assimilated in the West' where, apparently they became radicalized (Zahab & Roy, *Islamist Networks*, 2004).

Indeed, many stable Western states have features that actually attract terrorist cells. Scandinavia's generous welfare system and efficient



communication and trade network, for example, made Stockholm and Copenhagen 'safe havens' for groups such as the Egyptian *Gamaa Islamiya* and the Algerian *Groupe Islamique Armé* in the mid-1990s. Modern international terrorist groups require access to functioning communication lines; states lacking infrastructural capacity are patently unattractive. Moreover, failed states such as the Ivory Coast, while generally characterized by a lack of effective central authority, are often host to heavily armed warring factions, the

'Islamic terrorist groups – self-proclaimed defenders of Islam – are (unsurprisingly) attracted to states where their co-religionists are engaged in conflict.'

presence of which pose obvious risks even to international terrorists.

REVISING THE LINK

There is little evidence that the

presence of terrorist group bases in certain states shows that those states are attractive to terrorists either because they have failed in some generic sense or because, more specifically, they have suffered a breakdown in law and order. Moreover, other states exhibit evident failure yet have no demonstrable association with terrorism.

The seven states in the top twenty of the *Failed State Index* that contain international terrorist groups do have a common characteristic, but one that has nothing to do with state failure: the involvement of Islamic peoples in conflicts. This does not mean that Muslims are unusually prone to terrorism but, rather, demonstrates that Islamic terrorist groups – self-proclaimed defenders of Islam – are (unsurprisingly) attracted to states where their co-religionists are engaged in conflict. (This is also true of other states or territories cited as proof of the failed-states-attract/breed-terrorists thesis: Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya.) This factor – a variable independent of a state's failure – is a more likely reason than state failure why these states host terrorist groups.

The threat posed by failed states is regularly portrayed as global, occasionally apocalyptic, with some suggesting failed states 'could engulf the rest of the world'. (Eizenstat et al, *Foreign Affairs*, 84/1, 2005). It would be wrong to say that failed states never facilitate terrorism. It is the case that the factors that give rise to terrorism are not exclusive to failed states.

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An important constitutional and legislative responsibility of the United States Congress is to oversee the work of the executive. A brief review of the last 70 or so years provides clear evidence of numerous oversight hearings and investigations into the foreign and national security policies of successive administrations, many of which have led to changes in policy or practice. Examples of congressional oversight extend from the Truman Committee's investigation of military waste in 1941 through the Vietnam hearings led by Senator William Fulbright of the late 1960s to the 1970s hearings on CIA activities and the hearings in the 1990s on US military interventions in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

Particularly after Vietnam and Watergate, the notion that the executive alone should execute, manage and administer foreign and national security policy – while the Congress should merely ensure that laws approved by the House and Senate are ‘faithfully executed’ after the fact – became hopelessly outdated as the Congress became more assertive.

Assertive congressional oversight is wholly consistent with the separated nature of America's constitutional system and Edwin Corwin's reference to the Constitution's ‘invitation to struggle for the control of foreign policy’. The Congress, however, has not always accepted this invitation. The literature on US foreign policymaking, particularly where the use of force is involved, demonstrates almost unequivocally that the Congress is weak in this policy area (e.g. James Meernik, *International Studies Quarterly*, 1994) – because the president is commander in chief and can therefore choose his battles, define the scope and duration of conflict, or set the terms by which the conflict is ended. Focusing on oversight generally, rather than foreign policy in particular, Mathew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz (*American Journal of Political Science*, 28/1, 1984) insist that ‘what has appeared to ... be a

Fire Alarms and Iraq

John Owens analyses the shortcomings of congressional oversight of the Bush Administration

neglect of oversight ... really is a preference for one form of oversight over another, less effective form ... To the extent that they favor oversight activity of any sort, congressmen (sic) tend to prefer fire-alarm oversight to police-patrol oversight’. Given pressures on legislators' time, and their preferences for more beneficial constituency and legislative work, they do not give oversight a high priority; and, when they do practice oversight, they prefer to respond to fire alarms rather than conduct humdrum police patrol checking and scrutinizing – because it is cheaper in time and effort, while affording them opportunities to win political credits for their activism on highly salient

‘The common complaint concerns the inability – or unwillingness – of the Congress to challenge the administration over its decisions to go to war and the occupation.’

policy issues.

A priori, the Bush administration's war and subsequent occupation of Iraq surely qualify as one of those high salient sets of issues that should attract congressional oversight. At the very minimum, one would have to say that the Bush administration's Iraq

policies have operated as planned and, in consequence, have set off the fire alarms that would reasonably prompt congressional investigation, scrutiny and criticism.

Analysis of congressional committee calendars, summaries of activities, and oversight reports, as well as numerous interviews with congressional committee staffers and Washington journalists, provides abundant evidence that since 2002 the Congress has undertaken a considerable amount of oversight activity. Apart from hundreds of hearings by House and Senate committees, there were hundreds if not thousands of briefings requested, letters sent requesting information, responses considered, and informal contacts between members, staff and officials in the executive.

But the common complaint from detractors concerns the inability – or unwillingness – of the Congress to challenge, let alone constrain, the administration effectively over its decisions to go to war and the conduct of the occupation. Such criticisms are often linked implicitly or explicitly to disagreement *per se* over the policies. So, the complaint is not only about the effectiveness of congressional oversight but also about sharp differences over policy. Sometimes,

these two aspects cannot be untangled – and sometimes they can.

GOING TO WAR

In common with every US president since Harry Truman in 1950 over Korea, George Bush claimed the unilateral right to take military action against Saddam's Iraq in 2003. The Congress deferred to Bush, despite having strong doubts about the legality of a pre-emptive strike, and despite plentiful testimony from national security experts and Middle East scholars that the invasion and occupation of Iraq would be 'the most daunting and complex task the US and the international community ... undertaken since the end of World War II'. (Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco. The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 2006.) Bush declined to ask the Congress for a declaration of war and the Congress opted not to insist on a declaration; instead, legislators reacted positively and swiftly – in the context of the upcoming 2002 midterm elections – to the president's request for a 'use of force' resolution sanctioning an attack. As former Democratic Congressman Lee Hamilton concluded: 'Congress has basically given the power to declare war to the president, and, in that way, has fundamentally changed the Constitution'.

INTELLIGENCE

'Congressional oversight of US intelligence gathering, dissemination, and use was either weak or nonexistent'

Congressional oversight of US intelligence gathering, dissemination, and use was either weak or nonexistent. In the period leading up to the Iraq war, congressional committees and individual legislators requested intelligence information, including the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq of October 2002, but few read the 92-page document beyond the five-page executive summary. Neither did congressional leaders or committees effectively challenge



administration statements to the public and the Congress, which were sometimes either false or misleading – for example, when Bush cited in his 2002 State of the Union Address what turned out to be forged evidence relating to Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological capabilities. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence agreed to conduct an after-the-fact 'thorough and bipartisan review of Iraqi WMD and ties to terrorist groups' and found that most of the major key judgments in the October 2002 NIE were either overstated or not supported by the underlying intelligence. However, the Republican-dominated committee delayed the more damaging examination of 'how intelligence on Iraq was used or misused by Administration officials in public statements and reports'.

On the basis of this experience, then, it is hardly surprising that Loch Johnson (author of *Secret Agencies: US Intelligence in a Hostile World*) has observed: 'oversight is still by and large feckless and episodic. September 11 was an intelligence failure, but it's also a policy failure, not only in the White House but in Congress.'

OCCUPATION

Following the onset of military action in March 2003, previously sceptical Democrats and Republicans joined their colleagues to provide overwhelming support for Bush's actions. The president took full

advantage of his role as commander in chief; the Congress effectively deferred to Bush and played an essentially supportive oversight role. 'Congress leaves the field', observed Democratic Senator Richard Durbin. 'We're not even on the sidelines. We're in the stands watching'.

Some 'fire alarm' oversight was instigated – notably following the exposure of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib – and relevant committees held hearings on such issues as the rotation of US troops fighting the insurgency and the size of US forces in Iraq, and required quarterly reports on the war strategy from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. But the Congress proved unwilling to scrutinize and challenge many important aspects of the administration policies. Most of the hearings testimony was provided solely by administration officials – Rumsfeld or his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, for example – or from the most senior military staff officers, notably the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and US Central Command commanders. Most of the congressional questioning was overwhelmingly supportive – and remained so even after the Democrats took control of both chambers in November 2006. When the new US commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, appeared in September 2007 before a 100-member House-Senate panel to report on the impact of the military 'surge' in Iraq, *The Washington Post* reported that the scene was one of 'abundant love' as 'the lawmakers used their allotted questioning time to heap linguistic laurels on the visiting general, and, to a lesser extent, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker'. As the increase in US troops has apparently produced greater security in Iraq, congressional criticism has become even more muted.

At no time since the occupation, then, have congressional committees conducted Fulbright-type hearings that might focus systematically on major 'fire alarm' issues featured in reports published by the military, other executive agencies, and outside bodies,

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STAFF & VISITING FELLOWS

Dr Nitasha Kaul, Visiting Research Fellow. Originally educated at Delhi University, she has a joint PhD in Economics and Philosophy from Hull University. Before joining CSD she was a lecturer at the University of the West of England. Dr Kaul has recently been awarded a British Academy British Association for South Asian Studies project grant to conduct research on democratization in the Himalayan region. Her most recent book, *Imagining Economics Otherwise: Encounters with Identity/Difference*, was published by Routledge in 2007.

Dr Tasmia Mesbahuddin, an ESRC post-doctoral Fellow, has recently joined CSD from Bath University. Tasmia's research interests include the political and theoretical aspects of civil society in non-Western contexts,

particularly from a development perspective (with a special focus on Bangladesh). Her fellowship is part of the ESRC's Non-Governmental Public Action Programme (NGPA).

Dr Jonathan Pugh was recently appointed Honorary Fellow at CSD in recognition of his contribution, with Chantal Mouffe and other CSD colleagues, to the development of the 'Space of Democracy and the Democracy of Space' research project.

Tuula Teräväinen, a doctoral student at the Helsinki Institute of Science and Technology Studies, has joined CSD as a Visiting Research Associate for six months. She will be working on 'changing power relations and practices of democracy in Finnish technology policy'.

CSD's Masters Courses

CSD's Masters programmes (one year full-time, two years part-time) offer innovative and intellectually challenging theoretical and empirical frameworks for postgraduate study in International Relations, Politics, and International Studies, including Asian Studies. The programmes exploit CSD's reputation as a distinctive and well-established centre of excellence in these areas. The United Kingdom Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has rated teaching at CSD as 'excellent'.

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Core modules:

International Relations 1:
Theoretical Perspectives;
International Relations 2: Beyond
International Relations?;
International State-Building:
Exporting Democracy?;
Dissertation and Research
Methods.

Elective Modules: 3 from the list, depending on the course of study.

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

Core modules:

International Relations 1:
Theoretical Perspectives;
The Human Sciences
–Perspectives and Methods;
The State, Politics and Violence;
Dissertation and Research
Methods.

Elective modules: 3 from the list.

Students may begin both Masters courses in September. The Masters in International Relations and Contemporary Political Theory may also be started in January.

ELECTIVE MODULES

- * Controversies in United States Foreign Policies and Processes
- * Democracy and Islam
- * Environmental and Urban Governance: International Perspectives
- * The European Union as an International Actor
- * Governance of the European Union
- * International Humanitarian Law
- * International Security
- * Introduction to Contemporary Chinese Societies & Cultures
- * Latin America and Globalization
- * Modernity, Postmodernity and the Islamic Perspective
- * Perspectives on Post-Cold War Chinese Foreign Policy
- * Politics, Public Life and the Media

For specific enquiries contact:
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Tel: +44 (0)20 7911 5138
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Email: owensj@wmin.ac.uk

MA INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (EAST ASIA)

This MA programme in International Studies offers students an integrated programme of a regional specialism with political and cultural studies. Students focus on East Asia, drawing on the research expertise of CSD staff in political science, cultural studies and international relations.

This MA gives students a critical introduction to the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of contemporary China (including Hong Kong), Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, such as Chinese cultural politics, media across Greater China, and Japanese politics, as well as the inter-relationships between these states and regions.

For specific enquiries contact:
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Email: evansh@wmin.ac.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION/APPLICATION FORMS

For detailed information about our Masters programmes go to <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/csd> (Click on 'Masters'; for online applications see 'How to Apply').

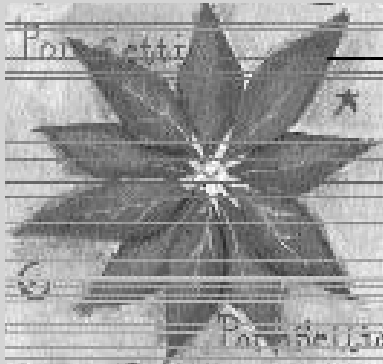
Or write to: Admissions & Marketing Office, University of Westminster, 16 Riding House Street, London W1W 7UW. *Tel:* +44 020 7911 5088; *Fax:* +44 020 7911 5175; *email:* regent@westminster.ac.uk.

PHD PROGRAMME

CSD has a highly-regarded MPhil/PhD programme with over 25 research students enrolled. These high quality students are attracted to the work of the Centre's internationally renowned staff. Staff members' research covers various geographical regions and a broad spectrum of interests in political theory, international relations, cultural studies, and media and civil society, among others. Several of our students have received scholarships from both British and international funding bodies.

Current PhD topics include:

- * Nationalism and identity



- * Anti-terrorism legislation and the future of dissent in the Muslim community
- * EU integration and subjectivity
- * How art can influence democracy and the formation of an active public sphere
- * The construction of the discourse of secularization in the Turkish Republic, 1924-45
- * Reinventing democracy in the era of the internet

FURTHER INFORMATION

For initial enquiries about CSD's PhD programme, contact *Dr Patricia Hogwood* (P.Hogwood@wmin.ac.uk) or *Dr Maria Holt* (M.C.Holt01@westminster.ac.uk). For more detailed information, and the PhD students' web pages: <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/csd>

CSD STAFF NEWS

Dibyesh Anand, recently appointed a Beatrice M. Bain Affiliated Scholar at University of California Berkeley, delivered an invited lecture, 'The Rise of China and India Thesis: Problems and Prospects', at the University of Helsinki in November 2007. His book *Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination* is published in December 2007 in the University of Minnesota Press's Borderlines Series.

Harriet Evans was recently awarded, together with Professor Stephanie Hemelryk Donald of University of Technology Sydney, an Australian Research Council Discovery grant for a three year research project on Posters of the Cultural Revolution: 'Contemporary Chinese Perspectives in an Era of Propaganda'. Professor Evans's new book, *The Subject of Gender: Daughters and Mothers in Urban China*, is published by Rowman and Littlefield in November 2007.

John Owens's latest book, *America's "War on Terrorism": New Dimensions in United States Government and National Security*, edited with John W. Dumbrell, will be published in the USA by Lexington in March 2008. His most recent publication is 'George W. Bush, the "War on Terror"', and the New Constitutional Equilibrium' was published in *L'Empire de L'Executif: La Presidence des Etas-Unis de Franklin Roosevelt a George W. Bush*, edited by Pierre LaGayette (Paris, 2007).

Bhikhu Parekh was awarded Padma Bhushan (the equivalent of a British knighthood) by the President of India this March. His forthcoming book, *A New Politics of Identity*, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in April 2008.



CSD EVENTS

'FACE AND PLACE'

The Asian studies programme hosted an international symposium, 'Face and Place: Visibility and Invisibility in Chinese Propaganda Posters', on October 25-26, 2007. Co-funded by the British Academy, this event brought together documentary film makers, curators and academics from China, Holland, Australia and the UK to discuss posters, badges, stamps and public billboard campaigns as a means of exploring memories of China's recent past.

The symposium featured two recent documentary films, made by Hu Jie, an independent film maker based in Nanjing, and Ai Xiaoming, Professor of Comparative Literature at Zhongshan University, both of whom were Visiting Research Fellows at CSD, in 2005 and 2006 respectively. *Painting for the Revolution* is based on interviews with painters of the famous Huxian Paintings, and explores the views of the Cultural Revolution that emerge from their experiences. *The Cultural Revolution, The Propaganda and the Paintings* examines the political and cultural meanings of the Cultural Revolution, and the ways in which, displayed in different sites of interest between China and Europe, they mould contemporary narratives of China's recent past in distinctive ways.

CSD EVENTS

CSD hosts a range of events and academic programmes, including:

The CSD SEMINAR, at which speakers from CSD and other academic institutions – in the UK and abroad – present papers on a wide range of subjects in politics, international relations and cultural studies. Recent speakers have included:

Dr Paulina Tambakaki (CSD)
'Citizenship and Human Rights: Tensions and Reconfigurations'

Dr Aidan Hehir (CSD)
'Failed States and the War on Terror: Myth and Reality' (see article, pp. 3–6)

Gabriele Matzner-Holzer
(Austrian Ambassador to the UK)
'How Austria Learned to Love Democracy'

Dr Neil Cooper
(University of Bradford)
'Securing Development Diamonds in Sierra Leone'

Professor Tani Barlow
(University of Washington, Seattle)
'The Politics of Chinese Feminism'

The WESTMINSTER
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FORUM

Recent speakers:

Westminster Round Table
(*Dibyesh Anand; David Chandler; Aidan Hehir; Tom Moore*)
'What does it mean to engage critically with IR?'

John Macmillan
(Brunel)
'Marxism and the Democratic Peace'

Professor Mats Berdal
(King's College London)
'Peacebuilding from Bosnia to Iraq'

The DEMOCRACY CLUB, which encourages participation among CSD staff and students and visiting researchers in discussions about democracy, considered as a language, a way of life and a set of institutions.

The DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM programme.

The ASIAN STUDIES programme.

The GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH PROGRAMME
(See page 17 for the January–June 2008 seminar series)

The annual CR PAREKH LECTURE, at which a distinguished speaker explores various aspects of democracy. The speaker at the May 2008 Lecture will be Professor Ashis Nandi of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in Delhi.

The annual CSD ENCOUNTER, at which CSD members and outside academics discuss in detail the work of a leading thinker in his/her presence. The 2007 Encounter was with *Julia Kristeva*.

For more information contact CSD

CSD

The Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD) is the postgraduate and post-doctoral research centre of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster.

Well known for its inter-disciplinary work, CSD is led by a team of internationally recognized scholars whose teaching and research concentrate on the interplay of states, cultures and civil societies. CSD also supports research into all aspects of the past, present and future of democracy, in such diverse areas as political theory and philosophy, international relations and law, European Union social policy, gender and politics, mass media and communications, and the politics and culture of China, Europe, the United States, and Muslim societies.

CSD is located in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages (SSHL) on the Regent Campus, and works alongside the influential Policy Studies Institute. It hosts seminars, public lectures and symposia in its efforts to foster greater awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of democracy in the public and private spheres at local, regional, national, and international levels. It offers a number of MAs on a one-year full-time, or two-year part-time, basis (see page 10 for details). CSD's publications include a series of working papers entitled *CSD Perspectives* and this bulletin.

THE CSD BULLETIN

aims to inform other university departments and public organizations, and our colleagues and under-graduates at the University of Westminster, of CSD's research activities. The *Bulletin* comprises reports of 'work in progress' of our research students and staff and contributions from visiting researchers and speakers. Comments on the content of this *Bulletin*, or requests to receive it, should be directed to The Editor, *CSD Bulletin*, 100 Park Village East, London NW1 3SR. As with all CSD publications and events, the opinions expressed in these pages do not necessarily represent those held generally or officially in CSD or the University of Westminster.

Continued from page 8

and publicized frequently in the specialized press: for example, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) report, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategic Lessons Learned*; and the Council on Foreign Relations's *Iraq One Year* (2003). These well publicized issues included the Pentagon's pre-war planning assumptions that proved to be invalid; the adequacy of US troop numbers both for the invasion and the occupation; and the occupation authority's 'de-Baathification' policy and decision to dissolve the Iraqi army.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

Since the Democrats gained majorities in both the House and Senate in the 2006 midterm elections, much has been made of the dramatic increase in oversight hearings on Iraq and related foreign and national security issues by the Armed Services, Foreign Relations and International Relations committees. Undoubtedly, these hearings have contributed to more critical public debate on Iraq in the US. However, despite their bravado, and in keeping with Meernik's general conclusion, Democrats have neither been willing or able to influence the conduct of the war. The new congressional majorities proved themselves sharply divided over efforts to resist the 'surge' in US troop numbers in early 2007, over exercising the Congress' power of the purse to cut off funding for US combat troops in Iraq, and over whether or not to repeal the 2002 authorization for the Iraq war. Their actions have often been muddled and greatly influenced by the perceived need to reflect and respond to strong popular opposition within the US, to support US troops in Iraq, and to position their party well for the 2008 presidential and congressional elections.

Although the Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs committees grilled Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in often contentious hearings within days of the new Congress and Bush's announcement of a 21,500 'surge' in US troops levels, the

Senate failed to follow the House in opposing the surge, and unanimously confirmed Petraeus as the new US commander of multinational forces. When the House and Senate sought to



impose a timetable on Bush for the withdrawal of US troops, Bush vetoed the legislation. Democratic leaders could not then find enough votes to override his veto, although they were able to insist that Bush accept the congressional concept of setting 18

'despite fire alarms being raised, the fire engines and fire fighters remain in their stations and many Iraq-related "fires" continue to burn'

military and political benchmarks for the Iraqi government or risk losing US reconstruction aid. When, however, the administration's progress report showed only mixed results, the Democrat-controlled Congress did not require the president to withhold funding for US reconstruction aid. To date, similar efforts to constrain Bush have been effectively resisted, with the consequence that the executive has been granted almost complete freedom to execute, manage and administer the Iraq war as well as most other elements of the 'war on terror'.

Accepting the McCubbins/Schwartz argument that legislators' exhibit a strong preference for responding to fire alarms over conducting police patrols, the Congress's acquiescence in the

Bush administration's Iraq policies do not fit the fire-alarm-model claim that the Congress will send out the fire engines, especially when the US is at war. Apart from the superior constitutional, political and tactical advantages that the president enjoys as commander in chief in matters involving military intervention, there is a widespread expectation within the US and within the Congress that it is the president who must provide national leadership on these matters. Under such conditions, most members of Congress will not risk undermining US military efforts or invoking the ire of public opinion unless it is overwhelmingly opposed to the president's policies. For its part, even in the highly polarised partisan context of contemporary Washington politics, the Congress exhibits familiar and endemic weaknesses as a collective and fragmented institution necessarily reliant on the administration for most information. Under conditions of unified party government (as between 2003 and 2006), increased homogenization and polarization of the two main political parties tends to reinforce presidential strengths; whereas split-party government does not necessarily undermine presidential strengths in the absence of a large and unified congressional majority opposed to the president (as in 2001-2 and in 2007). Executive obstructionism and resistance also thwarts meaningful oversight even if the Congress steels itself politically. The consequence – as over Iraq – is that, despite fire alarms being raised, the fire engines and fire fighters remain in their stations and many Iraq-related 'fires' continue to burn.

John Owens is professor of US government and politics at CSD. This is an edited extract from 'Fire Alarms and Oversight: Congressional Acquiescence on the US 'War on Terror'', a paper presented at the 4th General Conference of the European Consortium of Political Research, Università di Pisa, Italy, September 2007.

The CSD Interview

Watching the River Flow

Geoffrey Petts is one of the pioneers of hydroecology and the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Westminster. He was recently interviewed by the Director of CSD, Simon Joss

What made you decide to study geography and geology? Were you always passionate about rivers?

I was born and brought up in rural Kent, so from a young age I messed around in rivers and in the sea. When I was 15 there was a spare place on the sixth form geography field trip; the geography teacher asked me if I'd like to go. Being younger than the rest I was the one who was 'invited' by the sixth-formers to wade into the freezing cold river!

Actually I went to university – the University of Liverpool – to become a world famous palaeontologist. I had really enjoyed fossil collecting along the chalk cliffs of Kent.

But in those days when you studied palaeontology you were given a fossil, and you had to draw it, label the bits and learn them. I thought there had to be more to life than this kind of rote learning. I was excited by how species

evolved, the environmental pressures they were exposed to, and why they became extinct. After my first year at Liverpool I switched to a joint honours degree in Physical Geography and Geology; my focus turned to rivers through fluvial geomorphology (the study of landforms and landscapes created by rivers) and hydrology (the science of water movement, distribution and quality). I won a

'This experience of inter-disciplinary collaboration that linked engineering management, the physical and biological sciences, and policy gave my research new momentum.'

Travel Scholarship to study sediment movement in a glacial river in Norway for my dissertation and then picked up a NERC studentship to do a PhD looking at the geomorphological and hydrological effects of dams.

But the key move was when I joined Loughborough University in 1979. The head of department arranged for me to spend a term at the University of California in Los Angeles, teaching on their Masters programme. I had read an inspiring paper by Eugene Serr, an engineer at the North Californian Water Resources Agency in Red Bluff, a small town north of Sacramento. I wrote to him; he said, come see what we do!

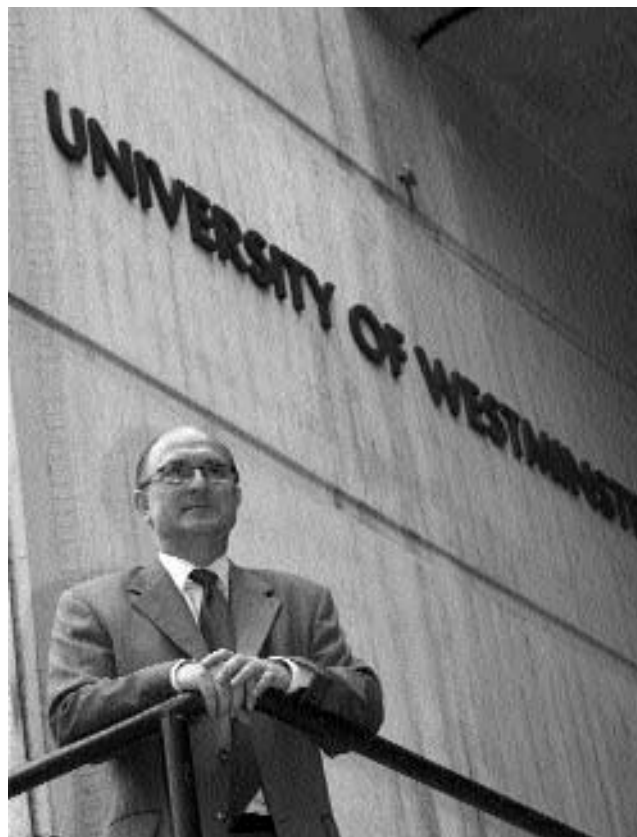
Red Bluff was a one-horse town: there was communal skipping in the street at 6 o'clock in the morning and then drinking – of large amounts of dark Filipino beer – from 4 o'clock in the afternoon. He involved me in their study of the Trinity River dam and river regulation project. One impact of the dam had been to virtually wipe out the salmon population; it had also caused the build-up of sediment across the valley floor and growth of a dense forest along the river banks. The great thing about the Red Bluff water resources team was that they all worked together in a large open-plan room – wildlife experts, biologists, geologists, engineers, and policy makers. This experience of inter-disciplinary collaboration, one that linked engineering management, the physical and biological sciences, and policy gave my research new momentum.

I had a paper in press in the *Journal of Environmental Conservation* that rather nervously developed my idea of an interdisciplinary approach to advancing knowledge of river ecosystems in order to support river management. The Red Bluff experience gave me the confidence to develop this idea into a book, *Impounded Rivers* (Wiley, 1984), in which I argued for the multi-disciplinary integration of knowledge about the environmental impact of dams and reservoirs as a route to sustainable water resources development.

What is hydroecology and why is it significant?

Two key challenges in this century are water shortages in the face of increasing human demands, and

uncertainties in water resource management caused by climate change. Flood protection and waterway regulation for navigation are also high priorities. The conservation of biodiversity and restoration of the integrity of ecosystems are now embedded in strategy documents, but rarely prioritized in practice. Too often, nature conservation along river corridors is reduced to the protection of relatively small areas of wetland or floodplain forest as wildlife sanctuaries or sites of special scientific interest; to enhancing habitats by installing artificial structures; and to maintaining fisheries by stocking with farm-reared fish. If we want sustainable water resources we have to practice river-basin management that integrates the management of water, land, and plants and animals.



Hydroecology is an interdisciplinary science: it integrates hydrology, geomorphology and ecology. As an applied science, it advances our knowledge of river systems so that those who manage our water resources (with regard both to abstractions – taking water from rivers and underground sources to supply the public and industry; and to river regulation – using dams to control the amount of river flow and its seasonal variation) are fully informed about ecological responses to hydrological change. Hydroecology also helps us protect water-dependent ecosystems along river corridors. To advance this approach we established an international journal in 1987, published by Wiley Interscience; today *River Research and Applications* publishes ten issues a year and I continue as Editor-in-Chief – it’s a way of keeping in touch with my primary research interest! (See www.interscience.wiley.com/journal/rra).

As a hydroecologist, how do you actually do research? Do you put your wellies on and go out into the field? Or do you spend most of your time in a lab?

Hydroecology is fundamentally an empirical, field-based science. Some purists argue that, because one can never have an absolute control in the field – one can never replicate precisely – the scientific method doesn’t work there. But, using scientific principles, we do conduct fieldwork in order to identify patterns and relationships across space and over time and to propose new questions. These are explored by ‘laboratory’ experimentation: we look, at how particular processes work, for example with ‘experimental channels’: a series of 3 to 5 identical channels that contain, say, the same size and type of sediment and have the same flow going through them but with different amounts of chemical pollutants; we then might monitor the growth of algae or the succession of invertebrate populations in the channels. In short, in the field and in the laboratory we try to identify the rules of the ecosystem. We then translate these insights into management: the control and regulation of water – for example, how to sustain particular populations of salmon in the UK or the hippo in Africa!

And then one often has interesting research ideas in unlikely places. About ten years ago, a colleague from Alaska and I were discussing our research in a bar after a seminar at Stirling University when we realized that we were telling the same story: we had both observed a consistent pattern of colonization in rivers downstream of glaciers as the ice retreats: that, on a river, certain species appear at certain points in space and time. It seemed that what I was finding in the Alps was identical to what he was finding in Alaska. So we got a big European grant and conducted studies in the Pyrenees, the Alps, Norway, Scandinavia, Iceland, and Spitzbergen. We found a similar sequence throughout Europe. Then he found the same patterns in rivers in New

Zealand. Everywhere on the planet, there are certain predictable patterns that are replicable in both space and time – that provide the fundamental laws, with a small ‘l’, that drive forward knowledge to design better river management.

How do you as a scientist and as an expert in hydroecology view the current political popularity of sustainability? Is this popularity welcome? Or are you worried about how sustainability is becoming politicized?

Over the past fifty years science has demonstrated that the fears of the

‘Over the past fifty years science has demonstrated that the fears of the 1950s are becoming reality.’

1950s – that species are becoming extinct, and that we are losing interesting (and economically and socially important) environments – are now becoming reality. So one has to be excited that sustainability has become a focal point for discussion



people forget and the drive for change vanishes. People's minds turn to more immediate things.

So do you think there's an inherent structural weakness in science policy-making?

I guess so. I'm sure that politicians are sitting with their fingers crossed hoping that some scientist will come up with a new type

of technology to allow us to solve the problems we face. But we can't wait.

of technology to allow us to solve the problems we face. But we can't wait. Take the water crisis. By 2025, 40 per cent of the world's population will face problems related to water shortage. Along the great rivers, 60 per cent of the flows have already been diverted, and the Nile, Colorado, and Yellow rivers at times no longer reach the sea; across the world water-dependent ecosystems are threatened or have already been degraded. The services provided by rivers include not only water for drinking, irrigation and other human needs, but also other goods such as fish, waterfowl and riparian (riverside) plants (many with pharmaceutical possibilities for example); and non-extractive benefits such as recreation, transportation, energy, flood regulation and water self-purification. In many areas goods and benefits are already over-exploited or threatened. Up to 2050 the number of people suffering from water scarcity will grow exponentially, not least because

everywhere, not just in academic circles. There are many small-scale schemes – local community programmes and projects – in both the developing and the developed world that give one hope.

Having said that, if one looks at the big picture, it is disappointing – though not surprising – that we haven't made more progress. The view that was dominant 50 years ago is still prevalent: namely, that advances in technology will solve all environmental problems. In the area of water resources, for example, despite a growing awareness of the environmental damage that could be done to river systems by impoundments and regional transfers of water from one river basin to another, the development of water resources in the second half of the twentieth century remained focused on 'control by construction'. At the start of this century, large dams contributed directly to about 15 per cent of global food production and nearly 20 per cent of the world's electricity supply.

Moreover, while we're very good at responding to disasters – earthquakes, tsunamis, and so on – we're not very good at trying to reduce the impact of disasters before they actually happen. In Britain, when we have a drought the government comes up with all sorts of initiatives to mitigate it. But within two years

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'There's no comprehensive international transboundary plan to manage the developing water crisis.'

they're all moving into large cities on the coasts of various continents. There isn't enough freshwater there to supply them and we certainly don't have the

water infrastructure in place now. We can't keep on providing water for vast areas of cotton and rice – yet rice is the major staple food for this growing population.

A real conflict is developing. Many people have written about it. But no action is being taken. There's no comprehensive international transboundary plan to manage the developing water crisis. An example from the Indian subcontinent: Nepal has vast amounts of hydro-power, Bangladesh is likely to be completely inundated, and India has growing water supply needs. So how does one move the water around? Nobody is looking at the big picture. Why? In part because these are sensitive issues that focus on national security. Politicians are uncomfortable addressing these long-term issues. So we continue to over-exploit local sources; in some areas we're actually mining ground water that was supplied by rain during wetter times 1000s of years ago in a way that is not sustainable. Many rivers are running dry. The Murray River in Australia doesn't reach the sea for much of the year and across its valley floor saline soils are developing because of over- or bad irrigation and drainage around vast cotton fields.

What is the approach to hydroecology in Britain?

In England and Wales the Environment Agency is the statutory body in charge of strategic water resource management: its role is to manage the demands on water so that the long-term future of the water environment is protected and sustainable development is encouraged. The European Union Habitats Directive, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and the agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) have created the framework for the agency's work; in response to this framework advances in hydroecology are creating new, scientifically sound tools.

The Habitats Directive and UKBAP try to safeguard valuable nature conservation sites and threatened species, including wetlands, and to enhance biodiversity.

Governance & Sustainability

In October 2007, a multi-disciplinary team of researchers at the University of Westminster, in association with colleagues at the Smithsonian Institution (Washington DC) and Johns Hopkins University, launched *The Governance and Sustainability: Analysing Environmental, Technological & Social Innovation for Sustainable Development* research programme.

This programme aims to analyse the complex interrelationship between sustainable development and sustainability discourses and diverse forms of multi-level and multi-actor governance processes.

Seminar Series, 2008

5.30–7.30 pm, Westminster Forum,
32-38 Wells Street, London W1T 3UW

24 January

Dr. Ian Bache

(University of Sheffield)

'Thinking Through Governance & Sustainability: Exploring Governance Theory & its Relationship to Sustainable Development'

12 March

Professor Yvonne Rydin

(University College, London)

'Discourses of Sustainability: An Approach to Governance Research'

7 May

Joe Ravetz

(University of Manchester)

'The Case Study Method in Research on Governance & Sustainability'

4 June

Professor Judith Petts

(University of Birmingham)

'Governing for Sustainability - Producing Policy Relevant Research'

For more information go to:
www.wmin.ac.uk/governance+sustainability

CAMS is the Agency's mechanism for managing abstractions through licensing, and it provides the framework for integrating ecological considerations into water resource regulation. However, society's values and priorities drive water policy. Water allocation to protect environmental needs still has relatively low priority among governments and the public.

We academics are developing the science and an understanding of the problems; and we have some solutions to the problems – but politicians are very slow to help us; international leadership is lacking. Why is that? I guess because, as academics, we're regarded as being a bit 'blue skies'. I think one mistake academics have made is not to engage with the core group in this area: those who make policy, plan, and do the engineering.

They're driven by the need to generate schemes that maximize economic growth over short time-scales. Long-term sustainability is not seen as a good money earner: should we support a commercial irrigation scheme or water abstractions for a new town or protect biodiversity? There is still the belief that human innovation and new technology will solve the environmental problems their schemes may cause. We will only change these views by engaging closely with all those who are directly involved in the development process.

What are the prospects for good water management?

'How much water does a river ecosystem need?' remains a key question that we are far from answering. What we now know is that it requires understanding of the direct and indirect interactions between water flows and the animal and plant life of a region over a range of time and space scales. It requires consideration of the seasonal flow regime and flow variability over tens of years; it involves consideration of habitat patterns along 10s of kilometres of river valleys and of local hydraulic conditions.

There have been major advances in science but limited developments in sustainable water management; there is still an infatuation with maximizing economic yield and a belief that technology provides the solution to environmental risks. A culture of environmental stewardship remains limited to a few minority groups. The continuing failure by policy makers to give due recognition to the array of goods, services and other benefits provided by aquatic

'One mistake academics have made is not to engage with those who make policy, plan, and do the engineering.'

ecosystems; the complexity of ownership and rights of access to these benefits; how to integrate livelihood issues into water and ecosystem resource-management: these remain major issues.

If I can end with a plug: this is where the University of Westminster's Governance and Sustainability Research Programme is so important. (See box.) We are building a strong water focus for that programme and getting together a group of external advisers to help us team up with policy experts, planners and engineers. I think we may be in a position to make a difference.

The interview was conducted on 13 November 2007.



Book Review

Raouf Tajvidi

Babak Ganji, *Politics of Confrontation: The Foreign Policy of the USA and Revolutionary Iran* (London & New York: I B Tauris, 2006). ISBN, 1-84511-084-6
Hardback £45.00.

Ray Takeyh, *Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic* (New York: Times Books, 2006). ISBN, 0-8050-7976-9.
Hardback £16.99.

The central argument of Babak Ganji's *Politics of Confrontation* – a study of the Carter administration's policy towards revolutionary Iran – is that the US intelligence community in the 1970s was well aware of the extent of opposition to the Shah's regime. The 'loss' of Iran was, therefore, Ganji argues, the result not of intelligence failure – as Iran experts James Bill and the late Richard Cottam have claimed – but of policy conflict in the Carter administration. This conflict was rooted in the two different approaches to Iran advocated, respectively, by NSC adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

Politics of Confrontation provides useful, up-to-date secondary sources and considers a host of issues that might have influenced the Carter administration's Iran policy. Yet, for various reasons, one wonders why Ganji chose to study this argument. First, the argument has been around since the revolution. Evidence for it has come from members of the Carter administration, from US documents seized by revolutionary students at the US Embassy, and from documents declassified mainly at the request of the National Security Archives in

Washington, a non-governmental think-tank that researches US foreign policy. Ganji has not produced any new declassified historical material; the argument here thus rests, as before, largely on circumstantial evidence, and is hostage to the researcher's preferences as to the choice of evidence.

Secondly, Ganji's claim that he provides 'the first in-depth look' at seized US documents is open to serious qualification: a glance through the endnotes demonstrates heavy reliance on other authors and secondary sources rather than on the seized documents. Thirdly, since the seized documents were published by the Iranian government, their authenticity needs to be verified. Even if they are genuine, one might want to ask which documents were selected for publication and why.

Finally, such an argument is reductionist. The claim that policy conflicts were at the heart of the loss of

'It is only through "deciphering the hidden Iran", Ray Tayekh argues, that the US can address the true challenge that the Islamic republic poses.'

Iran reduces all factors – actors and structures at historical, domestic and global levels in relation to both countries – to only one: bureaucratic politics. This is an oversimplification of US policy towards Iran and deprives the reader of an understanding of the

dynamic situation in 1978–79.

The book also has organizational and structural weaknesses: for example, it lacks an introduction in which the main argument could have been clearly articulated; elsewhere, Ganji's argumentation is sometimes disjointed and even incoherent; and the conclusion (to a 240-page discussion) is a four-page descriptive account – which, out of the blue, refers to Al-Qa'idah, Sunni extremism, the 'blowback thesis' and Iranian President Ahmadinejad. In short, despite Ganji's research skills, his questionable choice of argument and the book's poor organization limit the value of this study.

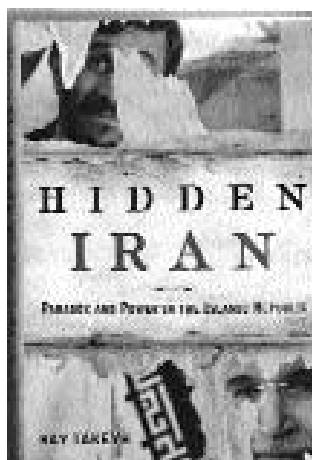
Ray Takeyh's *Hidden Iran*, which aims to contribute to the continuing debate on US policy towards Iran is, by contrast, engaging, refreshing and thoughtful. Explaining the intricacies of Iranian politics, and with a more nuanced reading of the history of US–Iran relations than one usually finds, it aims to challenge the neo-conservative perspective on Iran.

Tarekh begins by asking why 'so many have gotten Iran so wrong'. He answers this question in eight chapters that deal with some of the key factors that have influenced Iran's foreign policy. He examines, amongst other things, Khomeini's legacy; the dynamics of factional politics in Iran; Iran's position in the Greater Middle East; important turning points in US–Iran relations; the impact of September 11; nuclear technology; Iraq and Israel; and the politics of terrorism.

Writing with great insight into Iranian history and politics, Takeyh argues that to understand Iran's foreign policy one needs a 'matrix with three competing elements: Islamic ideology, national interests and factional politics, all constantly at battle'. This battle has produced (a for outsiders confusing) oscillation between pragmatism and dogmatism in Iran's domestic politics and foreign policy. Takeyh argues that President Ahmadinejad's conservative government and defiant rhetoric 'ought not to obscure the reality that this is still a coalition government, with many competing centres of power

and levers of influence', with the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, seeking to balance the contending factions. It is only through 'deciphering the hidden Iran' that the US can address the true challenge that the Islamic republic poses.

Takeyh prescribes a long-term approach to US-Iran relations. He regards Iran as a problem that can be managed, and believes the US should opt for neither containment nor alliance but for a 'policy of selective partnership on an evolving range of issues'. The United States should



integrate Iran into the global economy and the regional security dialogue in order to create environment conducive to cooperation on issues of common concern.

The best way to arrive at such a mature relationship is to begin direct negotiations with the Islamic Republic on the three issues of critical importance to the US: the future of Iraq, Iran's nuclear programme, and Iran's sponsorship of terrorism. Negotiations should be conducted on three separate tracks, with progress on one track not dependent on progress in another.

Takeyh's liberal-accommodationist policy prescriptions and proposed method of implementation are informed by the experience of the stalemate between Washington and Tehran over the last three decades. Hidden Iran is one of the few recent books on Iran and Iran-US relations that is truly worth reading.

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The Hesitant Rationalist

Ali Paya highlights what he regards as the Achilles Heel of the Iranian philosopher Abdolkarim Soroush's thought

Abdolkarim Soroush's ideas have had a significant impact on intellectual and religious discourse both in Iran and in Muslim communities around the world. (See 'The Beauty of Justice', the CSD Interview with Abdolkarim Soroush, *CSD Bulletin* 14/1&2, Summer 2007.) He has played a particularly important role in the movement known as religious or Islamic intellectualism. The roots of this movement's modern manifestation lie in the first encounters between a triumphant West and a weakened Islamic civilization in the early nineteenth century. The main question exercising the minds of its representatives since then has been, 'How can one make 'Islam' compatible with modernity?'

Soroush's main contribution to this debate has been 'critical rationalism' – the view that 'reason' should assess all epistemic claims, including those based on revelation, and that the claims of reason itself must always be critically scrutinized – an approach he learned from Karl Popper and that he has to tried to graft onto Islamic doctrines. As a Muslim critical rationalist, Soroush has urged fellow Muslims to distinguish conceptually between 'Islam' and one's understanding of 'Islam'; 'essential' and 'accidental' aspects of 'Islam'; minimal and maximal interpretations of 'Islam'; values and norms internal and external to 'Islam'; religious 'faith' (belief in the most basic elements of a

religion but not necessarily in its more formal aspects and ritualistic dimensions) and religious belief (in the official body of doctrines that constitute the orthodoxy of a religion or a sect); and Islam as a faith and a belief system and Islam as an ideology. Soroush has suggested that, by adopting the critical rationalist framework, Muslims and Islamic societies can more easily effect a smooth transition to modernity.

In sum, Soroush's views on democracy are that, while it cannot be derived from Islamic sources like the Qur'an and *Ahadith* – the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (and, in the Shi'ite interpretation of Islam, also of the Imams) – and while *liberal democracy* is not compatible with Islamic values, many aspects of *procedural democracy* are acceptable to Muslims. Independence of the judiciary is one such aspect; as is the separation of powers, which, in recent years, some of the *Fuqaha* (Muslim doctors of law) have argued can be deduced from main Islamic sources.

Political representation, by contrast, cannot be easily inferred from these sources. In traditional Islamic theories of *fiqh* (the body of Islamic laws also known as Shariah law) there was no theory of representation; only the – very different – theory of agency (*vekala*). This contrasts with the European notion of the *vox populi*, which underpins theories of representation. Traditional assemblies

in Islamic societies have had purely advisory roles. Establishing the mandatory nature of decisions by a constituent assembly thus requires new *ijtihad*s (that is, the application of rational thought to Islamic sources in order to deduce solutions for the problem at hand, an approach to the sources that contrasts with that of those who either interpret Islamic sources literally or, at most, allow for some analogical, rather than deductive, logical, reasoning from them).

POPPER AND SOROUSH

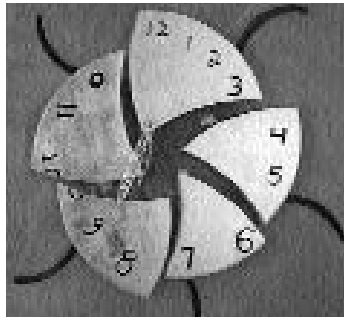
Yet – by contrast with Popper, a consistent critical rationalist – Soroush has not developed a fully-fledged interpretation of critical rationalism in the context of Islamic thought. The root cause of this seems to be his failure to synthesize credibly the rationalist doctrines he has learnt from the West with mystical doctrines in Islamic culture.

As a critical rationalist and realist, Soroush views reality as a many-layered totality, the secrets of which can, in principle, be revealed through the cooperation of many individuals. These individuals offer fallible and tentative explanations of the mysteries they encounter; these explanations are then criticized by objective reason in the public sphere and replaced by better explanations. This process of producing conjectures and refuting them empirically and conceptually is modern man's best tool for producing knowledge about different aspects of a multi-layered reality. Such knowledge remains conjectural and thus open to revision and improvement.

But Soroush is also a disciple of Muslim mystics such as Jalal Uddin Rumi, Al-Ghazzali, and Ibn-'Arabi. When he looks through Rumi's eyes, for instance, he sees a world of mysteries that only those individuals endowed with cognitive faculties not available to ordinary people can understand. These individuals, of which the Prophets – Mohammad, Moses, Abraham, Jesus – are the prime examples, produce true wisdom. Soroush maintains that genuine intellectuals are in the same league as the Prophets and mystics.

Popper never lowers his critical

guard; he believes a sceptical attitude must be maintained with regard to all epistemological matters. Soroush, under the spell of mystical teachings, tends to forget that in social life only a constant – and public – critical assessment of socially constructed entities, including all man-made



institutions, will allow us gradually to improve our lives. In Soroush's thought, the two realms of faith and reason, and the spheres of inner experience and publicly accessible thought, are not always satisfactorily separated, nor is their overall relationship clearly explained.

Soroush's interpretation of critical rationalism, and his particular combination of it with mysticism, has an unintended consequence. Though, like Popper, he starts by assuming that all human beings are fallible, Soroush soon advocates the view that there are some super-humans amongst us capable of acquiring types of

'Reason should determine
its own limits.'

knowledge not accessible to others.

Soroush's mystical theory also encourages him to drive a wedge between liberalism and democracy. He maintains that, in constructing a democratic model suitable for Islamic societies, one can replace a liberal with an Islamic value system. However – as David Beetham (*Democracy and Human Rights*, 1999), amongst others, has shown – though logically the concepts of democratic rule and liberalism are not identical, historically democratic rule has emerged out of liberalism.

Soroush's separation of liberalism

and democracy, along with his adherence to mystical doctrines, could pave the way for an elitist model of democracy – perhaps like that propounded by Schumpeter – in which some are regarded as superior to others and better equipped to decide about the public good. Such a model is the rule of the few in disguise, not genuine democracy.

ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECT

In *Under Western Eyes*, Joseph Conrad explores the disastrous consequences of the influence of uncritical mystical views in nineteenth-century Russia. Mystical views tend to belittle the role of intellect. The deep roots such views have in Muslim countries mean that these countries have a weak culture of rational and critical thought. A project – such as Soroush's – of intellectual enlightenment in Muslim countries will thus fail in the long term unless it simultaneously insists on the validity of critical and rational approaches and makes a concerted effort to establish a tradition, an intellectual school, and related cultural institutions. Muslim intellectuals have been producing ideas for the past two centuries. Yet religious intellectualism of the kind espoused by Soroush and others – despite its many positive aspects – has not yet achieved these two goals, in Iran or elsewhere in the Muslim world.

Yet in the mystical schools that have flourished in Islamic culture one finds trends that recognize reason as the final arbiter in epistemological matters. These trends emphasize that reason itself, not another faculty or agency, should determine its own limits. Abdolkarim Soroush, with his knowledge of Islamic mysticism and his familiarity with rational schools of thought both in and outside Islamic civilization, is well placed to promote a new interpretation of Islamic mysticism based on these trends. Religious intellectualism could then become attractive to many more believers.

Ali Paya is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the National Research Institute for Science Policy (Iran) and a Visiting Professor at CSD. This is an edited version of his talk at the 2006 CSD Encounter with Abdolkarim Soroush.