

# South Asian Terrorism: All Roads Lead to the British Empire

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*This is the first part of a two-part series. Next week: "Baluchistan and FATA in Pakistan."*

March 20—The growing violence throughout Pakistan since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in the Winter of 2001, the November 2008 attack on Mumbai, India, and many other smaller terrorist-directed killings in India, and the gruesome killing of at least 70 top Bangladeshi Army officers in a plot to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed last month, were evidence that the terrorists have declared war against the sovereign nation-states in South Asia. The only bright spot in this context is Sri Lanka, where a powerful terrorist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), better known as the Tamil Tigers, are about to lose their home base. That, however, may not end the LTTE terrorism, particularly since it is headquartered in London, where many South Asian terrorists are maintained in separate cages for future use by British intelligence, with the blessings of Her Majesty's Service.

Since none of the South Asian countries, where the terrorists are gaining ground, have, so far, shown the ability to evaluate, and thus, eliminate, the growth of this terrorism, it is necessary to know its genesis, and how it has affected the leaders of the South Asian nations to the detriment of their respective security. What is evident is that the South Asian terrorism has little to do with territorial disputes among nations, but everything to do with the past British colonial rule which poisoned the minds of the locals, so they have become disloyal to their own countries.

In this article, we will deal with the terrorism that continues to prosper in India's northeast; and the terrorism in Sri Lanka, brought about by the British-induced ethnic animosity among its citizens.

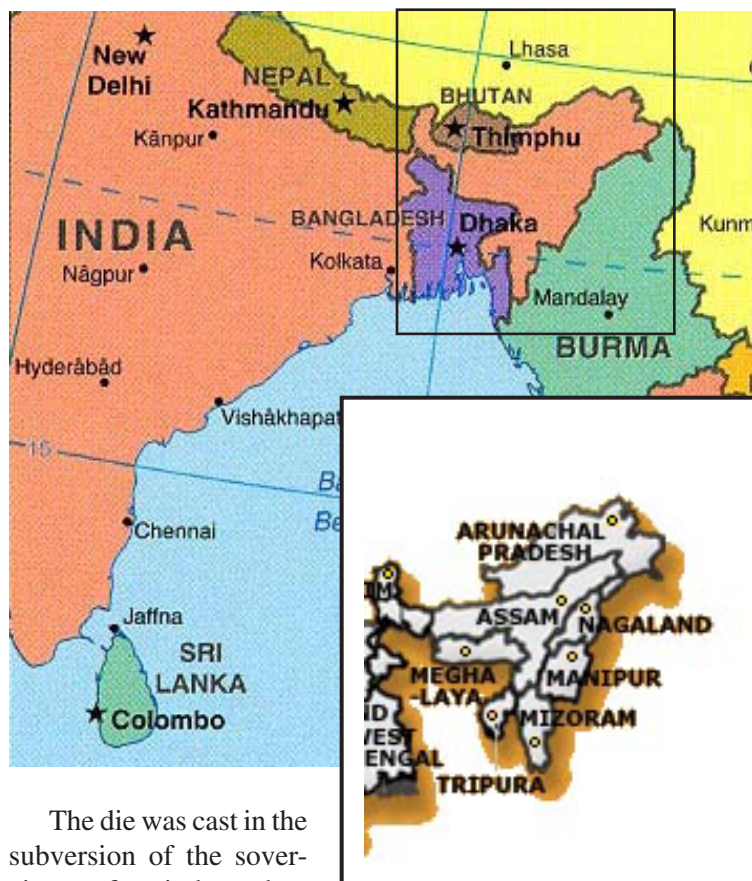
This history is the narration of a tragedy, since those who fought for independence in these South Asian nations, made enormous sacrifices to bring about their in-

dependence; many of those heroic figures turned out to be mental slaves of the British Empire, and pursued relentlessly the policies that the British had implemented to run their degenerate Empire.

## India's Northeast

Six decades after India wrested independence from its colonial rulers, its northeast region is a cauldron of trouble. Located in a highly strategic area, with land contiguous to five countries—Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and China—it is full of militant separatists, who take refuge in the neighboring countries under pressure from Indian security forces. Since most of these neighboring countries do not have the reach to control the border areas, the separatist groups have set up armed training camps, which, over the years, have attracted international drug and gun traffickers. As a result of such unrelenting terrorist actions, and violent demonstrations over the last five decades, this part of India remains today a dangerous place.

These secessionist groups were not created by New Delhi, although New Delhi failed to understand that the promotion of ethnic, sub-ethnic, and tribal identities were policies of the British, who had come to India to expand their empire. The British Empire survived, and then thrived, through identification, within the subcontinent, of various ethnic and sub-ethnic groups and their conflict points; and then, exploited those conflict points to keep the groups divided and hostile to each other. India and the other South Asian nations failed to comprehend that it was suicidal to allow a degenerate colonial power to pursue such policies against their nations. As a result, they were carried out by New Delhi for two ostensible reasons: One, to appease the militants, and the other, to "allow them to keep" what they wanted—their sub-national ethnic identity. The policy deprived the majority of the people of the Northeast of the justification for identifying themselves as Indians.



The die was cast in the subversion of the sovereignty of an independent India by the British Raj in 1862, when it laid down the law of apartheid, to isolate “the tribal groups.” The British came into the area in the 1820s, following the Burmese conquest of Manipur and parts of Assam. The area had become unstable in the latter part of the 18th Century, following the over-extension of the Burmese-based Ahom kingdom, which reached into Assam. The instability caused by the weakening of the Ahom kingdom prompted the Burmese to move to secure their western flank. But the Burmese action also helped to bring in the British. The British East India Company was lying in wait for the Ahom kingdom to disintegrate.

The Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-26 ended with a British victory. By the terms of the peace treaty signed at Yandaboo on Feb. 24, 1826, the British annexed the whole of lower Assam and parts of upper Assam (now Arunachal Pradesh). The Treaty of Yandaboo provided the British with the foothold they needed to annex Northeast India, launch further campaigns to capture Burma’s vital coastal areas, and gain complete control of the territory from the Andaman Sea to the mouth of the Irrawaddy River. What were London’s motives in

this venture? The British claimed that their occupation of the northeast region was required to protect the plains of Assam from “tribal outrages and depredations and to maintain law and order in the sub-mountainous region.”

### The ‘Apartheid Law’

Following annexation of Northeast India, the first strategy of the British East India Company toward the area was to set it up as a separate entity. At the outset, British strategy toward Northeast India was:

- to make sure that the tribal people remained separated from the plains people, and the economic interests of the British in the plains were not disturbed;
- to ensure that all tribal aspirations were ruthlessly curbed, by keeping the bogeyman of the plains people dangling in their faces; and,
- to ensure the tribal feudal order remained intact, with the paraphernalia of tribal chiefs and voodoo doctors kept in place. Part of this plan was carried out through the bribing of tribal chiefs with paltry gifts.

### Lord Palmerston’s Zoo

The British plan to cordon off the northeast tribal areas was part of its policy of setting up a multi-cultural human zoo, during the 1850s, under the premiership of Henry Temple, the third Viscount Palmerston. Lord Palmerston, as Henry Temple was called, had three “friends”—the British Foreign Office, the Home Office, and Whitehall.

The apartheid program eliminated the Northeast Frontier Agency from the political map of India, and segregated the tribal population from Assam, as the British had done in southern Africa and would later do in Sudan. By 1875, British intentions became clear, even to those Englishmen who believed that the purpose of Mother England’s intervention in India, and the Northeast in particular, was to improve the conditions of the heathens. In an 1875 intelligence document, one operative wrote: “At this juncture, we find our local officers frankly declaring that our relations with the Nagas could not possibly be on a worse footing than they were then, and that the non-interference policy, which sounds excellent in theory, had utterly failed in practice.”

Apartheid also helped the British to function freely in this closed environment. Soon enough, the British

Crown introduced another feature: It allowed Christian missionaries to proselytize among the tribal population and units of the Frontier Constabulary. The Land of the Nagas was identified as “virgin soil” for planting Christianity. “Among a people so thoroughly primitive, and so independent of religious profession, we might reasonably expect missionary zeal would be most successful,” stated the 1875 document, as quoted in the “Descriptive Account of Assam,” by William Robinson and Angus Hamilton.

Missionaries were also encouraged to open government-aided schools in the Naga Hills. Between 1891 and 1901, the number of native Christians increased 128%. The chief proselytizers were the Welsh Presbyterians, headquartered in Khasi and the Jaintia Hills. British Baptists were given the franchise of the Mizo (Lushai) and Naga Hills, and the Baptist mission was set up in 1836.

### **British Mindset Controlled New Delhi**

Since India’s Independence in 1947, the Northeast has been split up into smaller and smaller states and autonomous regions. The divisions were made to accommodate the wishes of tribes and ethnic groups which want to assert their sub-national identity, and obtain an area where the diktat of their little coterie is recognized. New Delhi has yet to comprehend that its policy of accepting and institutionalizing the superficial identities of these ethnic, linguistic, and tribal groups has ensured more irrational demands for even smaller states.

Assam has been cut up into many states since Britain’s exit. The autonomous regions of Karbi Anglong, Bodo Autonomous Region, and Meghalaya were all part of pre-independence Assam. Citing the influx of Bengali Muslims since the 1947 formation of East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh in 1971, the locals demand the ouster of these “foreigners” from their soil. Two terrorist groups in Assam, the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the National Democratic front of Biodoland (NDFB) (set up originally as the Bodo Security Force), are now practically demanding “ethnic cleansing” in their respective areas.

To fund their movements, both the ULFA and the NDFB have been trafficking heroin and other narcotics, and indulging in killing sprees against other ethnic groups and against Delhi’s law-and-order machinery. Both these groups have also developed close links with other major guerrilla-terrorist groups operating in the area, including the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Muivah)

and the People’s Liberation Army in Manipur.

In 1972, Meghalaya was carved out of Assam through a peaceful process. Unfortunately, peace did not last long in this “abode of the clouds.” In 1979, the first violent demonstration against “foreigners” resulted in a number of deaths and arson. The “foreigners” in this case were Bengalis, Marwaris, Biharis, and Nepalis, many of whom had settled in Meghalaya decades ago. By 1990, firebrand groups such as the Federation of Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo People (FKJGP), and the Khasi Students’ Union (KSU) came to the fore, ostensibly to uphold the rights of the “hill people” from Khasi, Jaintia, and the Garo hills. Violence erupted in 1979, 1987, 1989, and 1990. The last violent terrorist acts were in 1992.

Similar “anti-foreigner” movements have sprouted up across the Northeast, from Arunachal Pradesh in the East and North, to Sikkim in the West, and Mizoram and Tripura in the South. Along the Myanmar border, the states of Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram remain unstable and extremely porous.

While New Delhi was busy maintaining the status quo in this area by telling the tribal and ethnic groups that India is not going to take away what the British Raj had given to them, Britain picked the Nagas as the most efficient warriors (also, a large number of them had been converted to Christianity by the Welsh missionaries), and began arming and funding them. The British connection to the NSCN existed from the early days of the Naga National Council. Angami Zapu Phizo, the mentor of both factions of the NSCN, had led the charge against the Indian government, spearheading well-organized guerrilla warfare. Phizo left Nagaland hiding in a coffin. He then turned up in 1963 in Britain, holding a Peruvian passport. It is strongly suspected that the British Baptist Church, which is very powerful in Nagaland, is the contact between British intelligence and the NSCN terrorists operating on the ground at the time.

### **‘Dirty Bertie’ and the Nagas**

Once Phizo arrived in Britain, Lord Bertrand (“Dirty Bertie”) Russell, the atheist, courted Phizo, and became his new friend. Russell was deeply impressed with Phizo’s “earnestness” for a peaceful settlement. What, perhaps, impressed Russell the most is that Phizo had control over the militant Nagas, who had launched a movement in the mid-1950s under the Naga National Council (NNC) to secede from the Indian Republic. In a letter dated Feb. 12, 1963, Sir Bertrand told Indian



Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, “I find it hard to understand the difficulty of coming to an agreement which would put an end to the very painful occurrences incidental to the present policy of India.”

It is believed in some circles that New Delhi’s 1964 ceasefire with the Nagas might have been influenced by the letter from Russell that was handed to Nehru by Rev. Michael Scott. Scott later went to Nagaland as part of a peace mission, along with two senior Indian political leaders.

While Russell was pushing Nehru to make the Nagas an independent country through peaceful negotiations, British involvement in direct conflict continued. On Jan. 30, 1992, soldiers of the Assam Rifles arrested two British nationals along the Nagaland-Burma border. David Ward and Stephen Hill posed as members of BBC-TV, and were travelling in jeeps with Naga rebels carrying arms. Subsequent interrogation revealed that both were operatives of Naga Vigil, a U.K.-based group. Both Ward and Hill claimed that they started the organization while in jail, influenced by Phizo’s niece, Rano Soriza. Both have served six-year prison terms for various crimes in Britain. Naga Vigil petitioned for their release in the Guwahti High Court. Phizo’s niece took up the issue with then-Nagaland Chief Minister Vamuzo.

### **Sri Lanka’s Violent Ethnic Strife**

In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tiger terrorist group is in its last throes. Ousted by the Sri Lankan Army from almost all of its “claimed” territories, the militants are now holding on to about 19 square kilometers of land, with about 70,000 Sri Lankan citizens, mostly of Tamil ethnic origin, as their hostages. It is evident that they will be totally routed by the end of this month.

While the U.S. Pacific Command personnel in contact with New Delhi are formulating an evacuation plan for the hostages, London and the European Union are trying to protect the last vestiges of Tiger territory by urging Colombo to work out a cease fire with the terrorists.

The emergence of violent conflict between the Tamil Sri Lankans and the Sinhala Sri Lankans, which gave birth to the London-backed Tamil Tigers, was yet another product of the British colonial legacy. This ethnic conflict, which has engulfed this little island, and unleashed unlimited violence in the region for almost three decades, is, as in the case of Northeast India, due to the British mindset of the Sri Lankan and Indian leaders involved in “resolving” the crisis.

To begin with, Sri Lanka (then, Ceylon) had the misfortune to be colonized by three brutal European colonial powers—the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British. Nonetheless, it is to the credit of the locals that they withstood these brutes and prevented the break-up of the country.

After the Dutch ceded Sri Lanka in the 1801 Peace of Amiens, it became Britain’s first crown colony. Immediately, the British colonials started setting up the chess pieces. The ruling Kandyan King, of Tamil ancestry, was ousted with the help of local chieftains of Tamil and Sinhala origin. The coup set up the British crown as the new King.

As part of the “divide and rule” policy, the British colonials promoted the Buddhist religion, resulting in the 1817 Uva rebellion. The Buddhist religion was given protection by the Crown, and the people were told that Christianity would not be imposed on the unwilling masses as had happened during Portuguese and Dutch rule. Following the quelling of the rebellion, the British did what they do best: They carried out one of the worst massacres of the 19th Century, wiping out all able-bodied Sinhalese men from the Hill Country, and 80% of the native population of able-bodied, according to one report. The Kandyan Kingdom was the kingdom of both the Tamils and Sinhalas—both these groups came from India to settle on that island.

One specific impact of the British colonial presence was the emergence of English as the local language, undermining both the Sinhala and Tamil languages. According to one historian, the two most important effects observed during British rule were: one, by the start of 20th Century, the English language became the passport to getting employment; and those who had an English education became dominant in Britain’s hand-crafted Sri Lankan society. Due to input of the Christian missionaries, more minority Tamils could read and write English, as opposed to the southern Sinhalese and Kandyan Sinhalese.

The other observed impact on Sri Lankan society of British colonial rule, was the reconstituting of the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly of 1921 had 12 Sinhalese and 10 non-Sinhalese, at a time when the Sinhalese constituted more than 70% of the population. Things changed in 1931, when, out of 61 seats, the Sinhalese won 38. This troubled the Tamils, because they had had special privileges under British, and never wanted to accept the dominance of the Sinhalese majority.

In addition, the British also brought to the island a

million workers of Tamil ethnic background from Tamil Nadu, and made them indentured laborers in the Hill Country. This was in addition to the million Tamils already living in the provinces, and another million Map-pilla Muslims, whose mother tongue is Tamil. Thus, the British sowed seeds of ethnic discord. During the colonial rule, the minority Tamils had a disproportionate representation in the bureaucracy.

### **The Role of British Assets in Independent Sri Lanka**

However, when in 1948, the British finally left the island, they left behind their assets, in powerful places, many of whom were educated at Oxford-Cambridge, and some of whom had adopted Christianity, on both sides of the ethnic divide London had so carefully created. Instead of seizing the opportunity to build the nation and set about undoing the misdeeds they were forced to carry out under British rule, beginning in the 1950s, Sinhalese-dominated governments implemented public policies that would institutionalize the majority community's dominance. Sinhala was declared to be the country's sole official language; Buddhism was favored as the state religion; and the unitary nature of the state ensured Sinhalese political domination. Major Sinhalese-Tamil riots in 1956, 1981, and 1983 further heightened Tamil insecurities.

Meanwhile, the Tamils began to press for autonomy. Political parties, such as the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), utilized conventional means, which included participating in coalition governments. Militant Tamils, the LTTE, sought the creation of an independent Tamil state, referred to as Tamil Eelam, which would comprise the North and East of the country. Throughout the 1980s, various Tamil rebel groups engaged in attacks against the Colombo government and its security apparatus.

However, the situation worsened on that island because of the British mindset of New Delhi, which made a number of attempts to intervene in the violent Sri Lankan situation. Besides helping the Tamils to get armed training and intelligence, New Delhi, under late-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, deployed around 50,000 Indian peacekeepers (IPKF) in Tamil areas in Sri Lanka to help ensure peace. In return, the Sri Lankan government agreed to devolve power to the North and East through the creation of autonomous provincial councils. Neither Colombo nor the Tamil militants were sincere about the deal; both were looking at the Indian

troops as the barriers against their independent state. The failure of the Indian intervention led to more deaths and the assassination of Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, and India's Rajiv Gandhi, among many other high-level Sri Lankan officials, by the terrorist Tamil Tigers.

### **London: Break Up India into 100 Hong Kongs**

But, the British were in the middle of all this. Besides the fact that the LTTE was headquartered in London, and raising most of its illegitimate funds from Britain and its former colonies in Australia, South Africa, and Canada, within ten days of Gandhi's death, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who would be assassinated by the LTTE in May 1993, forced the hasty departure from Sri Lanka of British High Commissioner David Gladstone. The charge was that Gladstone, a descendant of the Victorian-age Prime Minister William Gladstone, was interfering in local election politics. But he had also been criticized earlier for allegedly meeting with known drug traffickers in Sri Lanka. Gladstone, who had previously spent years in the Middle East, was a known British intelligence link to the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad, which was involved in training both the Sri Lankan Armed Forces and the LTTE.

Britain's continuing intent to break up India was also expressed openly in this political context. On May 26, 1991, only five days after the British-controlled LTTE-led assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the *Times* of London, the premier voice for the British Foreign Office, put forward this view in an editorial entitled "Home Truths": "There are so many lessons to be learnt from sorrowing India, and most are being muttered too politely. The over-huge federation of almost 900 million people spreads across too many languages, cultures, religions, and castes. It has three times as many often incompatible and thus resentful people as the Soviet Union, which now faces the same bloody strains and ignored solutions as India. . . .

"The way forward for India, as for the Soviet Union, will be to say a great prize can go to any States and sub-States that maintain order without murders and riots. They should be allowed to disregard Delhi's corrupt licensing restrictions, run their own economic policies, and bring in as much foreign investment and as many free-market principles as they like. Maybe India's richest course from the beginning would have been to split into 100 Hong Kongs."