

POLICY ANALYSIS

The Militant Challenge in Pakistan

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NOTE ≈ The author would like to thank the external reviewers whose extremely thorough review of the preliminary draft helped significantly improve the article. The author is also thankful to Professor Barry Posen for inviting her to present this work at MIT's Security Studies Program Seminar Series during the fall 2010 semester. The comments and questions posed by Professor Posen and the attendees also provided input that motivated important revisions.

KEYWORDS: PAKISTAN; AFGHANISTAN; TERRORISM; MILITANCY; ISLAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This article examines Pakistan's use of asymmetric warfare as an instrument of foreign policy toward India since 1947 and in Afghanistan since the 1960s.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Pakistan's use of asymmetric warfare, although dating back to 1947, did not aggressively expand beyond Kashmir until Islamabad acquired first a covert "existential" nuclear capability in the 1980s and later an overt nuclear capability in 1998. After describing the complex contemporary landscape of Islamist militancy in Pakistan and the relationship between these groups and the state, as well as between religious and political organizations, this article contends that jihad is sustained by important segments of Pakistani society that endorse "militant jihad" in general and specific militant groups and operations in particular. Given Pakistan's enduring security concerns about India's ascent, Islamabad is unlikely to abandon militancy as a tool of policy, even while the government battles former proxies who have turned their guns—and suicide vests—on the Pakistani state and their former patrons.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Pakistan's skill in recasting the historical record in its favor enables the country to extract benefits from the U.S., which seeks to prove that it is a reliable ally.
- Given the varying levels of support for militancy within both the Pakistani public and the military and intelligence agencies, Islamabad likely will be unwilling to abandon militancy as a tool of foreign policy and contend with the emergent militant threat ravaging Pakistan and the region.
- Washington and its partners have been unable to either fundamentally change the way Pakistan assesses its cost-benefit calculus toward India or find some means of ameliorating Pakistan's neuralgic fears of India. Years of U.S. policies toward Pakistan based on financial allurements and conventional weaponry have done little to induce change.
- Given Pakistan's regional equities and the changing regional dynamics, the international community should abandon optimism that Pakistan can or will change course and should prepare for increasing Islamist violence in the region and beyond.

This article seeks to put in historical perspective Pakistan's long-standing use of asymmetric warfare as an instrument to prosecute its foreign and even domestic policy objectives. Although contemporary narratives suggest that Pakistan began using militants and Islamists as a tool of foreign policy after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, its first dalliance with irregular warfare actually took place in 1947, soon after the country became independent. In prosecuting such conflicts, Islamabad has relied on irregular fighters and *razakars* (volunteers), as well as on regular fighters drawn from the military, paramilitary, and intelligence agencies. These regular fighters usually were dressed in *mufti* (civilian clothes) or disguised as irregular fighters.

The first such asymmetric venture in 1947 initially involved support for mid-level officers in the army corps, but later, as the conflict expanded into a full-fledged war, the entirety of the army became engaged. The employment of *mujahideen* (Muslim guerilla fighters), or regular troops disguised as such, has been the basis of Pakistan's efforts to convince domestic and international audiences that these asymmetric operations were conducted by nonstate actors, thereby conferring plausible deniability to shield the state from retribution. The problem is that this strategy has resulted in three wars (in 1947–48, 1965, and 1999) as well as in several “crisis slides” that have brought India and Pakistan to the brink of conflict.

This article contends that while Pakistan's use of asymmetric warfare began in 1947, the country was limited in its ability to expand the jihad beyond Kashmir with impunity until acquiring first a covert “existential” nuclear capability by 1990 and later an overt nuclear capability in 1998. This argument both advances and complements the work of S. Paul Kapur,¹ who focuses on the Indo-Pakistani conventional crises that Pakistan's creeping nuclear umbrella has enabled. The article does so in part by focusing on the antecedent conditions of the country's ability to expand the number, operational scope, and geographic area of militant groups as well as the contemporary landscape of Islamist militancy in Pakistan and the relationship that the state enjoys with these various actors.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows:

- ≈ pp. 108–118 put Pakistan's use of proxy elements since 1947 in historical perspective.
- ≈ pp. 118–21 consider the various ways in which nuclearization enabled Pakistan to dramatically expand jihad deep into India beyond Kashmir, with increasingly bold and lethal attacks.

¹ S. Paul Kapur, “Ten Years of Instability in a Nuclear South Asia,” *International Security* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 71–94.

- ≈ pp. 121–36 describe the landscape of contemporary militancy in Pakistan and the connections that exist among militant groups and other supporting religious and political organizations. Drawing nearly exclusively on field research, this section also considers the relationship that the army and intelligence agencies may have with these various groups.
- ≈ pp. 136–37 conclude with a brief discussion of the likelihood that Pakistan will ever develop the political will—much less the capability—to strategically abandon militancy as a tool of foreign policy. The prognosis is gloomy. Given its enduring security concerns about India’s ascent, Pakistan is likely to rely more intently on Islamist militant groups, even while continuing to battle those erstwhile proxies that are now turning their guns—and their suicide vests—on the state and their former patrons.

PAKISTAN’S HISTORICAL USE OF PROXY WARFARE

Most contemporary media and academic accounts assert that Pakistan first began using militants as a tool to prosecute its foreign policy objectives during the anti-Soviet jihad. Pakistan, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and others built a massive Pakistan-based infrastructure to produce Islamist insurgents generally known as the mujahideen. In most accounts, Pakistan subsequently redeployed these battle-hardened operatives to Kashmir in 1990 when the Soviets formally withdrew from Afghanistan.²

In fact, Islamabad has relied on nonstate actors to prosecute foreign policy objectives in Kashmir since Pakistan’s inception in 1947. In that year, the nascent state mobilized numerous *lashkars*, or tribal militias, from the tribal areas to invade and seize Kashmir, while the maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, dithered on whether the region would join India or Pakistan. These lashkars were supported by the Pakistan Army. Had they not been sidetracked by rapine violence and pillaging, the lashkars might have successfully seized Srinagar. Worried about being overtaken by the tribal marauders, the maharaja asked New Delhi for military support. Delhi’s price was accession to India, and Singh readily signed the instrument committing Kashmir to India. By October 1947, Pakistan’s first foray into asymmetric warfare had precipitated the first Indo-Pakistan conventional military crisis (the 1947–48 War) in the early months of the two states’ existence. The war ended on January 1, 1949, with the establishment of a ceasefire line (CFL)

² Alexander Evans, “The Kashmir Insurgency: As Bad as It Gets,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 69–81.

sponsored by the United Nations, which demarcated the areas under Pakistani and Indian control. The CFL was converted to the Line of Control (LOC) during the Simla Accords, which concluded the 1971 War.³

Following the failed effort to seize Kashmir in 1947, Pakistan supported numerous covert cells within Indian-administered Kashmir, often using operatives based in the embassy in New Delhi. In 1965 a number of events transpired in Kashmir that persuaded Islamabad's covert operatives that a wider indigenous insurgency could be fomented.⁴ Pakistan's interest in using proxy war may have been piqued during insurgency-specific instruction from the U.S. military in the 1950s when Pakistan and the United States were formally allied against the Soviet threat.⁵

While the United States was an important supplier of military equipment, Pakistan's military also undertook an important doctrinal shift under U.S. influence and tutelage. As Stephen Cohen has noted, Pakistan began intensively studying guerilla warfare through its engagement with the U.S. military. Although the U.S. objective in providing this instruction was to suppress such conflict, Pakistan was keen to understand how to engage in guerilla warfare against India or even to develop its own "people's army" as a second defense. Thus, while pledging support to U.S. objectives, Pakistan used its alliance with the United States to build up the country's armed forces to contend with its rising eastern adversary.

With U.S. assistance, Pakistan established a special forces unit in 1959. Pakistani professional military journals also began exploring "low intensity conflict," a concept and vernacular that Pakistan still employs rather than

³ For accounts of this first war over Kashmir, see Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), especially 42–92; and Shuja Nawaz, "The First Kashmir War Revisited," *India Review* 7, no. 2 (April 2008): 115–54.

⁴ On the 1965 War (also known as the Second Kashmir War), see Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, especially 192–218; and Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 30–50.

⁵ As numerous writers have detailed, Pakistan agreed to the terms of the anti-Soviet alliance out of a dire need to rebuild the armed forces because the country did not receive its fair share of moveable assets in the partition. Moreover, most of the fixed assets remained with India, where they were located. Although India was supposed to compensate Pakistan monetarily for these lost assets and provide other financial resources, New Delhi soon reneged on this agreement. The few trainloads of supplies that India did dispatch were full of obsolete equipment and other materials deemed undesirable by Pakistan. Because of British recruitment policies after the 1857 mutiny, there were no all-Muslim military units. Given the logic of partition and the distribution of the armed forces, Pakistan received no unit in full strength and suffered a severe shortage of officers. Thus, the haphazard process of partition gave rise to the intractable security competition that persists. Because Pakistan and India came into being as adversaries, Islamabad felt an urgent need to build its weaker armed forces and concluded that a formal military alliance with Washington was an expeditious means of doing so, in light of India's alliance with Russia. See Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Armed Forces of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 25–29; Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 5–12; and Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan: 1947–1997* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2000), 35–81, 136.

counterinsurgency. Several case studies on Yugoslavia, North Vietnam, Algeria, and China concluded that guerilla warfare could be a “strategic weapon,” a “slow but sure and relatively inexpensive” strategy that was “fast, overshadowing regular warfare.”⁶ Maoist doctrine in particular was appealing because of Pakistan’s close ties to China and because that doctrine seemed most appropriate for Kashmir. The Pakistan government concluded that the prerequisite conditions existed for waging a successful guerilla war in Kashmir: a worthy cause; challenging terrain; a resolute and warlike people (referring to Pakistanis rather than Kashmiris, who were not considered warlike); a sympathetic local population; the ready availability of weapons and equipment; and a “high degree of leadership and discipline to prevent (the guerillas) from degenerating into banditry,” as occurred in 1947.⁷

Likely inspired by case studies of asymmetric warfare and rendered more desperate by U.S. military assistance to India during the 1962 War with China, Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar in 1965, named after one of the most valorized battles in Islam’s history.⁸ Pakistani planners sought to ensure plausible deniability in order to claim that regular forces were not involved in the conflict. The majority of the 120 men in each company were *razakars* and so-called *mujahideen* who were deliberately drawn from Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir and given special training. Officers and a component of men from two paramilitary organizations, the Northern Light Infantry and the Azad Kashmir Rifles, accompanied the irregulars along with a small number of the elite Special Services Group commandos.⁹ Groups of four to six companies were combined into units commanded by an officer with the rank of major. Pakistan later used many locations where it had trained the irregular fighters to train *mujahideen* for the Kashmir jihad launched in 1989.¹⁰

⁶ Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 342. Cohen cites a few illustrative examples of these Pakistan military studies of low-intensity conflict, including S.A. El-Edroos, “A Plea for a People’s Army,” *Pakistan Army Journal* 4 (June 1962): 19–25; and S.A. El-Edroos, “Afro Asian Revolutionary Warfare and Our Military Thought,” *Pakistan Army Journal* 4 (December 1962): 35–41.

⁷ Mohammed Shafi, “The Effectiveness of Guerilla War,” *Pakistan Army Journal* 5 (June 1963): 11, cited in Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, 105.

⁸ Other motivations likely include the belief that India was weak following its defeat by China in the 1962 War and Pakistani confidence following a victory against India in the Rann of Kachchh conflict.

⁹ The Northern Light Infantry was inducted into the regular army in 1999 in part to reward the regiment’s participation in the 1999 Kargil War and in part to compensate families for their losses in that conflict. See Ashley J. Tellis, C. Christine Fair, and Jamison Jo Medby, *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella—Indian and Pakistani Lessons from the Kargil Crisis* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 21.

¹⁰ For the most detailed account of this initiative, see Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad: The Covert War in Kashmir, 1947–2004* (London: Routledge, 2007), 49–75. Swami relies on a number of classified Indian documents (which were subsequently declassified) that he obtained in his capacity as a journalist.

According to Praveen Swami, during Operation Gibraltar, Pakistan dispatched roughly 30,000 infiltrators into Indian-administered Kashmir to set up bases, carry out sabotage, and create conditions that would both foment a wider indigenous insurrection and facilitate the induction of regular troops into the conflict. Unfortunately, few reliable accounts exist regarding the actual number of infiltrators used during Operation Gibraltar. Shuja Nawaz cites one report that Pakistan used 15,000 irregular combatants in one engagement.¹¹ Even though Operation Gibraltar failed to ignite the desired indigenous rebellion against India, it did succeed in precipitating the second conventional Indo-Pakistan conflict: the 1965 War.

While Pakistan engaged in prolonged covert warfare in Kashmir, by the early 1970s Islamabad had also begun to covertly support Islamist Pashtun militant groups in Afghanistan. Likewise, in the 1980s, Pakistan provided extensive assistance to the Sikh ethno-nationalist insurgency in the Punjab. Contrary to conventional wisdom, this policy did not commence with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on December 25, 1979; rather, Pakistan began employing dissident religious leaders who fled Afghanistan during President Daoud Kahn's tenure. Admittedly, Pakistan supported the mujahideen opposition on a modest scale, taking care not to provoke punitive action from the Afghan government's protector, the Soviet Union. From at least 1973 onward, Islamabad adopted a policy of instrumentalizing Islamist Pashtun militias to prosecute its foreign policy objectives in Afghanistan, with varying intensity of involvement.¹² It is also important to note that this policy was preceded by Pakistan's introduction of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) to Afghanistan in the early 1960s, again in an effort both to influence Afghanistan's domestic affairs and to spawn an Islamic awakening throughout Soviet Central Asia. Important militant commanders in the subsequent anti-Soviet jihad, such as Burhanuddin Rabbani, came from this Afghan branch of the JI movement. Thus, in some sense, Pakistan's active efforts to manage Afghanistan can be dated to the early 1960s.¹³

The lineaments of Pakistan's Afghanistan policy thus long predate the Soviet intervention and massive infusion of U.S. and Saudi funds. This point is important because Islamabad often opines that Pakistan was exploited

¹¹ Nawaz, "The First Kashmir War Revisited," 130. Nawaz notes that this figure cannot be confirmed.

¹² See Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 103–5, 167–68; Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 83–84; and Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 79–81.

¹³ Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, 171–75.

by U.S. interests during the Soviet occupation and then abandoned by the United States once Soviet forces withdrew. Regrettably, many U.S. policymakers and military personnel who engage with Pakistan are unaware of the historical facts.¹⁴

Following the Soviet invasion, Pakistan intensified activities already underway in Afghanistan with active support from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and others. The country argued for considerable U.S. military assistance by claiming that large-scale support of the anti-Soviet effort would render it vulnerable to military threats. During this period, U.S. funding, weapons transfers, and training enabled Pakistan to dramatically expand its military as well as the capabilities of its premier intelligence agency, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Pakistan continued receiving U.S. support throughout the 1980s even though the country had crossed red lines with its nuclear program—an action that would have cut off arms transfers had the Pressler Amendment not been passed.

Additionally, in the service of the jihad, Pakistan employed religious institutions and parties, such as JI and the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), to groom Pakistan-based militant groups for operations in Afghanistan and to train Afghan militants who had sought refuge in Pakistan. Islamabad preferred to support Afghan militant factions that were Sunni (rather than Shia or secular) and Pashtun in ethnicity as part of a deliberate effort to ensure that any Pashtun political aspirations would be channeled through religious—rather than ethnic—groups. This preference was motivated by Islamabad's long-standing discomfiture with Kabul's irredentist claims to Pashtun areas in Pakistan and by the activities of Pashtun nationalists in Afghanistan and Pakistan, who have episodically demanded a separate Pashtun state (often referred to as Pashtunistan). With massive international support, the mujahideen prevailed in ousting the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. This was an important lesson for Pakistan: if mujahideen in Afghanistan could defeat a nuclear-armed superpower, could not a similar force succeed in Indian-administered Kashmir? Though Pakistan became interested in launching and sustaining a guerilla war with India as early as the 1950s, the success of the

¹⁴ This deeply flawed narrative is examined in considerable detail in C. Christine Fair, "Time for Sober Realism: Renegotiating U.S. Relations with Pakistan," *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (April 2009): 149–72. Although academic audiences may know this history, this author's experience during years of interacting with U.S. government personnel—whether civilians or military—is that they are often unaware of these facts. This lack of familiarity creates space for Pakistani interlocutors to argue that Americans have been perfidious and unreliable partners. This author contends, though others may disagree, that this is an important part of Pakistan's rent-seeking strategy toward the United States.

mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 1980s buoyed Islamabad's confidence in the utility of such war in Kashmir.

Pakistan's conclusion that it could launch a more sustained proxy campaign in Kashmir, as opposed to episodic operations, was enabled by another important factor. By the mid-1980s, the United States had determined that Pakistan had developed a nuclear weapons capability. Military aid to the country could thus only be supplied through a presidential certification in the latter years of the anti-Soviet jihad. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush declined to certify that Pakistan had not passed a nuclear threshold, thereby subjecting the country to restrictions on military aid.¹⁵ From that point onward, Pakistan assumed the status of a covert nuclear power, which would render any retaliatory conventional response to its jihad ever-more costly.

A third factor that permitted Pakistan to expand the scale and scope of the war in Kashmir was the surplus of battle-hardened jihadis from the Afghan conflict and the sprawling infrastructure to produce and train them. With the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, Pakistan redeployed many mujahideen to the Kashmir front and established militant training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹⁶

Initially, the insurgency in Kashmir developed indigenously in response to India's mismanagement of the province. Several genuinely Kashmiri militant groups emerged, some of which enjoyed Pakistani support. Yet when some indigenous groups began espousing independence rather than union with Pakistan, and when several turned from violence toward political activism, the new coterie of Pakistan- and Afghanistan-based groups directly competed with older, more ethnically Kashmiri groups. After the introduction of these fighters under Pakistan's expanding nuclear umbrella, many indigenous, pro-independence insurgents were eliminated by Pakistan-based groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Deobandi groups such as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami. By the mid-1990s, the conflict in Kashmir had been overrun by several Pakistan-based militant groups who were prosecuting Islamabad's agenda of wresting Kashmir from India. At present, only one set

¹⁵ In 1985 the U.S. Congress added Section 620E(e) to the Foreign Assistance Act. This provision is widely known as the Pressler Amendment. It required the U.S. president to certify to the U.S. Congress that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device for each fiscal year during which the administration wanted to provide assistance to Pakistan. In October 1990, Bush suspended U.S. military assistance to Pakistan when he declined to make this certification. For further explanation, see C. Christine Fair, "Time for Sober Realism." Also see Richard P. Cronin, Alan Kronstadt, and Sharon Squassoni, "Pakistan's Nuclear Proliferation Activities and the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission: U.S. Policy Constraints and Options," Congressional Research Service (CRS), CRS Report for Congress, RL32745, January 25, 2005 ~ <http://www.iranwatch.org/government/US/Congress/CRS/congress-crs-khannetwork-012505.pdf>.

¹⁶ Evans, "The Kashmir Insurgency," 69–81.

of militant groups is largely Kashmiri in ethnicity, Hizbol-Mujahideen and related factions such as al Badr. All other groups are dominated by Punjabis and Pashtuns from Pakistan.¹⁷

The most lethal of these militant groups are adherents to the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith interpretative traditions. Being hostile to the heterodox, syncretic, Sufistic form of Islam practiced by Kashmiris in the valley, these groups have sought not only to fight Indian forces on behalf of Islamabad but also to convert Kashmiris to more orthodox interpretative religious traditions. Whereas indigenous militant groups were loathe to destroy their sacred shrines, these foreign militants show little compunction about doing so.¹⁸

Moreover, the proselytization efforts these groups have employed involve extreme tactics such as attacking newspapers that declined to publish their propaganda or that employed women, throwing acid on women's faces, discouraging families from sending girls to school, and insisting that females abandon traditional Kashmiri veiling practices in favor of *burqas* and *nikab* (outerwear and face coverings).¹⁹ The extent of the dissatisfaction with Pakistan is evidenced by a 2002 Nielsen poll conducted in the urban areas of Srinagar and Anantnag (in the Muslim-dominated district of Kashmir) and in the cities of Jammu and Udhampur (in the Hindu-dominated district of Jammu). That poll found almost no support in Kashmir, much less in Jammu, for unification with Pakistan.²⁰

Recent polling suggests that this continues to be the case. In May 2009, Robert Bradock, with Indian and Pakistani collaborators, conducted a survey both in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and in Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir (also known as "Azad (free) Jammu and Kashmir," or AJK) with sample sizes of 1,400 and 2,374, respectively. The survey was fielded with as much methodological rigor as possible, permitting disaggregated analysis in the individual districts of both J&K and AJK. Whereas roughly 50% of respondents in AJK supported bringing the entire

¹⁷ See C. Christine Fair, "Who Are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 1 (January 2008): 49–65; and C. Christine Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for Al-Qaeda and Other Organizations," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27, no. 6 (November/December 2004): 489–504.

¹⁸ See Evans, "The Kashmir Insurgency," 69–81; Sumit Ganguly, "A Mosque, A Shrine, and Two Sieges," in *Treading on Hallowed Ground: Counterinsurgency in Sacred Spaces*, ed. C. Christine Fair and Sumit Ganguly (New York: Oxford, 2008), 66–88.

¹⁹ This information was obtained during fieldwork in Kashmir in fall 2002. See also "Everyone Lives in Fear: Patterns of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir," Human Rights Watch, September 2006 ~ <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india0906web.pdf>. That report details the atrocities of both the Indian security forces and the militant groups.

²⁰ "Kashmiris Don't Want to Join Pak: Survey," *Times of India*, September 27, 2002 ~ <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/articleshow?artid=23409600>.


area into Pakistan's dominion, a mere 2% of respondents from J&K supported this option. There was tremendous variation across J&K. In six districts no one supported joining Pakistan, while support was the highest in the districts of Srinagar and Budgam in the Muslim-majority Vale of Kashmir, where a meager 6% and 7%, respectively, approved of unification.²¹

PAKISTAN IN AFGHANISTAN

Even while becoming increasingly embroiled in its proxy war in Kashmir, Pakistan maintained its focus on an array of Pashtun Islamist groups in Afghanistan well after the disappearance of direct Soviet and U.S. intervention. Following the withdrawal of Soviet troops, Afghanistan was engulfed by a sanguinary civil war in which warlords fought for control over the country. To achieve a reasonably stable Afghanistan whose leadership was positively disposed toward Islamabad, Pakistan concentrated attention and patronage on the Pashtun militant faction Hizb-e-Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Pakistan hoped that Hekmatyar would secure a corridor to Central Asia, beginning in Peshawar, continuing through Jalalabad and Kabul, stretching onward to Mazar-i-Sharif, and finally reaching Tashkent. Kabul remained the chokepoint in this passageway. Islamabad also hoped that Hekmatyar would recognize the Durand Line as the international border.²²

Later, under Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and with the guidance of the interior minister General Nasrullah Babar, Pakistan concluded that Hekmatyar could not deliver a stable Afghanistan that would be friendly to Islamabad, much less a corridor to Central Asia and formal recognition of the Durand Line as the *de jure* border. Islamabad thus shifted its patronage to the newly emergent Pashtun Taliban movement, to which it provided military, diplomatic, and financial assistance from 1994 to 2001.²³

The Taliban also failed to deliver much of what Islamabad had hoped to accomplish. Though able to provide a highly contested form of security, the Taliban government lacked international legitimacy and increasingly became an international pariah due to its embarrassing activities. Examples of such activities included destroying the Bamiyan Buddhas, aligning with al Qaeda, and drawing international attention for the mistreatment of women.

²¹ Robert W. Bradnock, *Kashmir: Paths to Peace* (London: Chatham House, 2010)  http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/16664_0510pp_kashmir.pdf.

²² C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Relations with Central Asia: Is Past Prologue?" *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 2 (April 2008): 201–27.

²³ *Ibid.*

Moreover, despite repeated requests for remandment, the Taliban continued to harbor sectarian terrorists and criminals that Pakistani authorities wanted to prosecute.²⁴

Over time, Pakistan's security elite began to see the Taliban more as a liability than an asset, especially after al Qaeda organized simultaneous attacks in 1998 on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania—purportedly from Afghanistan. The United States retaliated by showering Afghanistan with cruise missiles, targeting al Qaeda facilities near Khost (as well as mistakenly a suspect pharmaceutical factory in Sudan). The strikes helped consolidate Mullah Mohammed Omar's commitment to Osama Bin Laden, despite earlier reservations. During that strike, the Pakistani militant group Harkat-ul Mujahideen claimed that five members who were training in Afghanistan had been killed. While differences of opinion emerged between the Taliban and elite Pakistani strategists, the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States rendered Islamabad's residual support for the Taliban untenable. Pakistan was faced with the stark option of abandoning the Taliban and joining the war on terrorism or becoming a target of the war.

As is well-known, Pakistan's reversal on the Taliban appears to have been short-lived. Some analysts, such as Ahmed Rashid, postulate that Pakistan recommitted itself to the Taliban in light of perilous U.S. decisions in Afghanistan, such as permitting the Northern Alliance to take Kabul despite assurances to the contrary; relying on Northern Alliance warlords to provide security while the United States maintained a light footprint; failing to secure desirable levels of Pashtun representation in the new interim government; and under-representing Pashtuns in the ranks and officer corps of the police and army. Importantly, Pakistan claims that these conditions still hold despite massive improvements. Other factors that motivate Pakistan's policies toward the Afghan Taliban include U.S. assertions in 2005 that the United States should step down as NATO steps up. Pakistan understood this to mean that the entire international community would withdraw from military efforts after

²⁴ See discussion in C. Christine Fair, *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2004).

the U.S. departure. As is well-known, the United States actually increased its military forces in the wake of that statement.²⁵

Pakistan was particularly concerned about the expanded presence of India throughout Afghanistan. Pakistan determined that soon Afghanistan would again be abandoned by the international community, but this time rendered pro-India and anti-Pakistan. Such thinking justifies Pakistan's sustained commitment to the Afghan Taliban even while Islamabad struggles with an insurgency of its own by forces that are self-described as "Pakistani Taliban." The latter are organizationally distinct from their Afghan namesakes and espouse goals that are nearly entirely focused on the Pakistan government. This is true even if some commanders operating under that umbrella for convenience (e.g., Mullah Nazir and Gul Bahadur, who will be discussed below) have made deals with the state and refocused exclusively against Afghanistan.

Islamabad continually expresses concerns that the United States and the international community will again abandon the region. Its fear is that if this were to occur, the Afghan Taliban would grow in strength from successfully vanquishing international forces, enter Pakistan, and pose a threat to the state.

This narrative, however, should be approached with a measure of skepticism. First, the Afghan Taliban does not pose a direct threat to Pakistan at this point, even though elements of the Afghan Taliban have grown somewhat independent of Islamabad, as demonstrated by the February 2010 arrest of Mullah Baradur in Pakistan. Second, it is the view of this author that contrary to public statements by the chief of army staff, the Pakistan Army prefers that the international military forces leave Afghanistan. During numerous interviews in summer 2010, most Pakistani army and intelligence officers who spoke with this author explained that the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan was directly responsible for their country's internal security challenges as typified by the Pakistan Taliban. Moreover, these officers were nearly unanimous in believing that when the United States departs Afghanistan, Pakistani militant groups will cease targeting Pakistan because the state will no longer be allied militarily with the United States in prosecuting the war in Afghanistan. These officers

²⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008), 86–91, 240–61; and David W. Barno, "Fighting 'the Other War': Counterinsurgency Strategy in Afghanistan, 2003–2005," *Military Review* (September–October 2007) ~ http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20071031_art006.pdf. This analysis also draws from numerous author discussions with U.S. ambassadors to Afghanistan, Robert Finn (March 22, 2002–November 27, 2003) and Ronald E. Neumann (July 27, 2005–April 16, 2007), and with Lt. Gen. David Barno, who served as the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2005.

further noted that after a withdrawal of U.S. forces, India will have less freedom of movement and Islamabad will be able to re-exert control over Afghanistan, which the army still sees as a potential client rather than as a neighbor.²⁶

Based on interviews with Indian interlocutors in summer 2009 and spring 2010, this author believes that India indeed is contemplating withdrawing when and if international forces begin leaving Afghanistan. New Delhi's contingency planning has been further catalyzed by Obama's pronouncement that the United States will begin transferring security and governance responsibility to the Afghan government in August 2011, as long as conditions on the ground permit a safe transfer of power.²⁷

Whether the public views of the current chief of army staff General Kayani or the private views of the officers who spoke with this author are more reflective of Pakistan's strategic assessment, the country reaps tremendous financial, political, and diplomatic benefits from being a frontline state in advancing U.S. and international security objectives. Islamabad thus has a serious incentive for wanting the United States and its partners to remain engaged in the region. Whether the United States continues to have a heavy footprint in Afghanistan or scales back its military mission, Pakistan is well-positioned to gain from either outcome.

ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT UNDER THE NUCLEAR UMBRELLA

Although Pakistan has a long history of using Islamist militants as proxies, Washington's determination that the country had crossed nuclear red lines in the late 1980s enabled Islamabad to expand the jihad in scale, scope, territorial range, and ferocity.²⁸ Recognition as an overt nuclear power allowed Pakistan to support militant groups with increasing impunity, confident that conventional punitive measures would be too risky for New Delhi. Thus, it is not a coincidence that Pakistani jihad groups spread in larger numbers to Kashmir in the immediate aftermath of Pakistan being

²⁶ Author interviews with Pakistan army officers in the Makin Valley in South Waziristan, Razmak in North Waziristan, 11th Corps Headquarters in Peshawar, and at the Anti-Terrorism Training Center near Mangla Dam in July 2010. The author was also briefed in July 2010 by various ISI analysts.

²⁷ Author interviews with analysts and retired Indian officials in April 2010 and August 2009. For a more extensive exposition, see C. Christine Fair, "India in Afghanistan and Beyond: Opportunities and Constraints," Century Foundation, Report, September 2010 ~ <http://tcf.org/publications/2010/9/india-in-afghanistan-and-beyond-opportunities-and-constraints/pdf>.

²⁸ This section reworks and updates parts of an earlier RAND publication. See Tellis et al., *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella*.

proscribed for having acquired extra-legal nuclear weapons. Since India essentially became an overt nuclear power following its first nuclear tests in 1974, Pakistan's development of a nuclear capability meant that any conflict between the two states risked nuclear war.

Pakistan became even more aggressive, however, following reciprocal nuclear tests by the two countries in 1998. Islamabad pushed the envelope of its asymmetric strategy by launching a limited incursion in Indian-administered Kashmir in May 1999 to seize a small amount of territory in the Kargil-Dras sectors. Many analysts have argued that such a brazen incursion would have been unlikely before Pakistan's attainment of overt nuclear weapons status in the late 1980s and the reciprocal nuclear tests in 1998.²⁹ In that limited conflict, often referred to as the "Kargil conflict," Pakistan employed the Northern Light Infantry disguised as irregular civilian fighters. The chief of army staff at the time, General Pervez Musharraf, likely began planning for this operation in fall 1998 when Pakistan's then prime minister Nawaz Sharif and India's then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee undertook the historical Lahore peace process. In February 1999 that process culminated in a historic visit to Lahore by Vajpayee, who was widely considered within and outside India as a Hindu nationalist. Vajpayee surprised the public in both countries by finally accepting the legitimacy of the Pakistani state at an important landmark commemorating national independence, the Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore.³⁰

Though its territorial aims in the Kargil conflict were limited, Pakistan used the mujahideen cover story to obscure the fact that Pakistani regular and irregular military forces intruded well into Indian territory. Kargil caused some analysts to reconsider their evaluation that nuclearization of the subcontinent would have a stabilizing impact.³¹ The conflict instead exemplified what has been called the "stability-instability paradox."³² The notion turns on the dual assertion that nuclear weapons can stabilize security competition between two

²⁹ See Tellis et al., *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella*; and S. Paul Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 115–40.

³⁰ Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), xxiv; and Dennis Kux, *India-Pakistan Negotiations: Is Past Still Prologue?* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2006), 41–42.

³¹ For a discussion of proponents of this view, see Neil Joeck, *Maintaining Nuclear Stability in South Asia*, Adelphi Paper 312 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³² See Glenn Snyder, "The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror," in *The Balance of Power*, ed. Paul Seabury (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965), 185–201; and Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 19–22.

adversaries and foreclose a major war while at the same time enabling, if not provoking, lower-level conflict by conferring immunity against escalation.³³

The Kargil conflict underscored the importance of nuclear weapons to Pakistan's strategy in Kashmir and India, while amply illustrating the destabilizing aspects of the nuclearization of the subcontinent. In particular, Pakistan's possession of such weapons was a critical precondition that enabled the planning and execution of Kargil because nuclear weapons ostensibly provided security against a full-scale Indian retaliation.³⁴ This immunity had two dimensions. First, Pakistan's nuclear assets deterred both conventional and nuclear threats from India. Second, they were instruments by which Pakistan could galvanize international intervention on its behalf in the event that the political-military crisis spun out of control. India understood and publicly acknowledged the value of Pakistan's strategic assets for enabling low-intensity conflict.³⁵ Pakistan also conceded this understanding publicly: in April 1999, then chief of army staff General Musharraf announced that even though nuclearization rendered large-scale conventional wars obsolete, proxy wars were likely.³⁶

While Kargil may have been the first conventional conflict under the nuclear umbrella, the most brazen use of asymmetric and proxy warfare happened after 1998, consistent with the notion that nuclearization has enabled, if not emboldened, Pakistan's use of militancy. Attacks since 1998 include, among others, the 1999 LeT attack on a security forces establishment collocated in a New Delhi tourist attraction, the Red Fort; the 2001 JM attack on the Indian Parliament; the LeT massacre of army wives and children in Kaluchak; and various bombings by LeT and affiliated groups throughout India, including the 2006 and 2008 attacks in Mumbai.³⁷ It would appear that with the development of first a covert and then an overt nuclear capability

³³ Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne, "Introduction," in *The Stability-Instability Paradox: Nuclear Weapons and Brinkmanship in South Asia*, ed. Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne (Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, 2001).

³⁴ Tellis et al., *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella*.

³⁵ Timothy D. Hoyt, "Kargil: The Nuclear Dimension" (paper presented for the Kargil Book Project Conference, Monterey, May 30–31, 2002), draft cited with permission.

³⁶ "Pak Defence Strong, Says Army Chief," *Independent*, April 19, 1999, cited in Timothy D. Hoyt, "Politics, Proximity and Paranoia: The Evolution of Kashmir as a Nuclear Flashpoint," *India Review* 2, no. 3 (July 2003): 117–44. See also the statement of Musharraf from April 1999 that is cited in Kargil Review Committee, *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: SAGE, 1999), 77.

³⁷ The author advanced this argument in 2009. See Angel Rabasa et al., "The Lessons of Mumbai," RAND, Occasional Paper, no. 249, 2009 ~ http://rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP249/; and C. Christine Fair, "Leader-Led Jihad in Pakistan: The Case of Lashkar-e-Taiba," in *Leader-Led Jihad*, ed. Bruce Hoffman and Fernando Reinares (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

(and concomitant delivery means), Pakistan has been able to prosecute the most brazen aspects of its proxy strategy with near confidence that doing so will have few, if any, important consequences.

PAKISTAN'S CONTEMPORARY MILITANT LANDSCAPE

Prior to Musharraf's acceptance of Washington's ultimatum to join the U.S.-led global war on terrorism after September 2001, Pakistan's militant landscape could be meaningfully parsed by sectarian orientation, theater of operation, and ethnic constitution.³⁸ For example, there were militant groups (*askari tanzeems*) that traditionally focused on Kashmir, including the Deobandi groups of JM and Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuA/HuM), and Ahl-e-Hadith organizations such as the Punjab-based LeT.³⁹ While these groups are often referred to as "Kashmiri groups," this is a misnomer because they include few ethnic Kashmiris among their ranks and most do not operate exclusively in Kashmir. Indeed, LeT and JM have long operated throughout India, and in recent years Deobandi groups have begun operating in Pakistan. LeT and several Deobandi militant groups have also been operating in Afghanistan against U.S., NATO, and Afghan forces.⁴⁰ In contrast, some Kashmiri groups are operating under the influence of the Islamist political party JI, such as al-Badr and Hizbul Mujahideen, which tend to be composed of ethnic Kashmiris and have retained a focus on Kashmir.

Other *askari tanzeems* have been traditionally sectarian in nature and include the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).⁴¹ Both these groups are under the sway of the Deobandi organization Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI) and are funded by wealthy Arab individuals and organizations. Notably, these sectarian *tanzeems* have overlapping membership with other Deobandi militant groups, including the Afghan

³⁸ This section is drawn from Fair, "Who Are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?"; and Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan."

³⁹ Deoband and Ahl-e-Hadith are two Sunni schools of thought. An exposition of the differences between these and other groups is beyond the scope of this essay. See Husain Haqqani, "The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups," in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 1, ed. Eric Brown, Hillel Fradkin, and Husain Haqqani (Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute 2005), 12–26.

⁴⁰ See C. Christine Fair, "Antecedents and Implications of the November 2008 Lashkar-e-Taiba Attack Upon Mumbai," testimony presented before the House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, Washington, D.C., March 11, 2009.

⁴¹ Many of these groups have been proscribed numerous times only to re-emerge and operate under new names. This essay uses the names that are likely to be most familiar to readers.

and Pakistani Taliban, all of which have strong connections to the JUI.⁴² In the past, Shia sectarian groups were also lethally active. These groups, though having largely disappeared, targeted Sunni Muslims and obtained funding from Iran.

Since 2004 and possibly earlier, Pakistan has witnessed the development of a cluster of militant groups whose activists describe themselves as “Pakistani Taliban” and who have successfully established an archipelago of *sharia* (Islamic law) within large swathes of the Pashtun belt. Despite the recent and popular characterization of the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP) in monolithic terms, analysts are not in agreement that the TTP has the coherent command and control that the media ascribes to it.⁴³ Indeed, the media often describes the TTP as an umbrella organization for nearly all anti-Pakistan Islamist militants in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) as well as in key settled Pashtun areas such as Swat, Upper and Lower Dir, Buner, and Peshawar. The FATA includes the seven tribal agencies of South and North Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand, and Bajaur, as well as several so-called frontier regions that sit astride the agencies of the FATA and the settled areas. These include the frontier regions of Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan (Darazinda), Kohat (Darra Adam Khel), Lakki Marwat, Peshawar, and Tank (Jandola). Militants from Swat and Bajaur also claim to be affiliated with the TTP. However, Rahimullah Yusufzai, a leading Pakistani journalist and expert on the TTP, dismisses these assertions and contends that the organization is hardly coherent, much less disciplined.⁴⁴

This author reached the same conclusion in a book she coauthored with Seth Jones. Drawing on the work of John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, the book describes the TTP’s constituent groups as forming a system of loose networks.⁴⁵ These networks tend to be dispersed and varying in size; however,

⁴² Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection* (London: C. Hurst and Co., 2004); and Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan,” 489–504.

⁴³ One long-time observer of militancy in Pakistan, Mariam Abou-Zahab, strongly discounts the claim that the TTP is a coherent alliance. She argues that the constituent parts of this inchoate alliance are driven by local factors and constrained, in good measure, by tribal boundaries that circumscribe the leadership. Thus, she discounts claims that the TTP is a coherent organization running the length and width of the Pashtun belt. This view has been buttressed by the author’s field interviews in Pakistan in February and April 2009.

⁴⁴ Rahimullah Yusufzai, “A Who’s Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province: Part One—North and South Waziristan,” Jamestown Foundation, Terrorism Monitor, September 22, 2008 ~ [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=5169&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=167&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=5169&tx_ttnews[backPid]=167&no_cache=1).

⁴⁵ John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., *In Athena’s Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1997), 280; and Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010), 24.

the various nodes can communicate with each other and, to some degree, coordinate their campaigns.

Officially the TTP came into being in late 2007, when several Pakistani militant commanders announced that they were operating under the banner of the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (Pakistani Taliban Movement) led by Baitullah Mehsud (who subsequently was killed by a U.S. drone strike in August 2009). Mehsud claimed many allies, most of whom sought to establish various degrees of sharia within their personal areas of operations across the Pashtun belt. In late February 2008, two dissident commanders, Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur, appeared to temporarily set aside their differences with Mehsud and forged the Shura Ittehad-ul-Mujahiden. The alliance was short-lived, however, and collapsed nearly as soon as it was announced.⁴⁶

Following Mehsud's death, TTP leadership announced amid discord that Hakimullah Mehsud would succeed him.⁴⁷ Under the leadership of Hakimullah, the TTP has been surprisingly coherent and has actually intensified its suicide campaign against Pakistani security and intelligence agencies.⁴⁸ Likewise, TTP campaigns against civilian targets have become more vicious, singling out Shia and Ahmedis, who are considered *munafiqeen* (Muslims who spread discord in the community) and *murtad* (liable to be killed), respectively. Important Sufi shrines have not been spared either.⁴⁹ This focus no doubt reflects Hakimullah's long-time association with the sectarian terrorist group SSP.

⁴⁶ See Hassan Abbas, "Increasing Talibanization in Pakistan's Seven Tribal Agencies," Jamestown Foundation, Terrorism Monitor, September 27, 2007, 1–5; Hassan Abbas, "A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan" *CTC Sentinel*, January 2008, 1–4; and Syed Shoaib Hasan, "Profile: Baitullah Mehsud," *BBC News*, December 28, 2007. Pakistan has considered Maulvi Nazir an ally because he helped oust or kill numerous Uzbeks in South Waziristan. He is considered to be a dedicated foe of U.S. and NATO forces because he dispatches fighters to Afghanistan. Gul Bahadar has had a number of differences with Baitullah Mehsud. It is not clear what this alliance means for Pakistan or for the United States and its allies in Afghanistan. See Saeed Shah, "Taliban Rivals Unite to Fight U.S. Troop Surge," *Guardian*, March 3, 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/03/taliban-pakistan-afghanistan-us-surge>.

⁴⁷ Zahid Hussein, "Hakimullah Mehsud Named as New Pakistan Taleban Leader," *Times* (London), August 23, 2009 <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6806809.ece>.

⁴⁸ Pak Institute for Peace Studies, "PIPS Security Report 2009," January 2009 http://san-pips.com/index.php?action=ra&id=psr_list_1; "Hakimullah Mehsud," *New York Times*, April 29, 2010 http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/m/hakimullah_mehsud/index.html; and "Pakistan Blast Sharpens Concern on Taliban," *PBS NewsHour*, April 1, 2010 http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/jan-june10/pakistan_01-01.html.

⁴⁹ Since 2005, Pakistani militants have launched more than 70 suicide attacks against Sufi shrines, killing hundreds, and attacks have intensified in recent years. For example, Lahore's prominent Datta Ganj Bakhsh—perhaps the most important Sufi shrine in the Punjab—was attacked in late June 2010. See Owais Tohid, "In Pakistan, Militant Attacks on Sufi Shrines on the Rise," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 5, 2010 <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/1105/In-Pakistan-militant-attacks-on-Sufi-shrines-on-the-rise>; and Sabrina Tavernise, "Suicide Bombers Strike Sufi Shrine in Pakistan," *New York Times*, July 1, 2010 <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/world/asia/02pstan.html>.

Prior to the official consolidation of the TTP, however, several militant commanders rose to prominence, thereby providing the necessary conditions for the formalization of the TTP network. Nek Mohammad Wazir (from the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe in Wana, South Waziristan) was perhaps the first Pakistani militant to assume some degree of distinction. Following the Pakistan Army's spring 2004 offensive in South Waziristan, Nek Mohammad fought the army to a standstill, compelling it to ratify its own defeat with a peace deal known as the Shakai Accord on terms that were entirely set by Nek Mohammad. For example, the signing ceremony was held in Shakai, his own stronghold, and during the event he was publicly garlanded by the 11th Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Safdar Hussain. This event was heavily covered by Pakistan's media and thus conferred on Nek Mohammad widespread legitimacy that he had not enjoyed before the accord.⁵⁰ Baitullah Mehsud rose to prominence after his death by similarly forcing the Pakistan Army to concede and ratify defeat in the Sararogha Agreement in February 2005.⁵¹

In North Waziristan, Hafiz Gul Bahadur became the *amir* (commander) of the Pakistani militancy. However, Bahadur is now a pro-Pakistan militant commander opposed to Hakimullah and his predecessor and focusing exclusively on U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. In fact, during winter 2007–08, Bahadur refused to cooperate with Baitullah when the latter was under attack by the Pakistan Army and warned Baitullah against fighting the Pakistan security forces in Razmak, North Waziristan. Subsequently, Bahadur signed a peace accord with the Pakistan security forces. He remains opposed to Hakimullah and his organization's targeting of Pakistani civilians as well as defense and intelligence personnel.⁵²

As the above discussion suggests, several militant groups emerged well before the Pakistan Taliban formally announced its existence under Baitullah Mehsud's leadership. The various militant movements in Pakistan arguably began to gain prominence coincident with—or even as a result of—the Pakistani military operations in the FATA, which were undertaken at the urging of the United States. Several Pakistani analysts contend that the onset of U.S. strikes in the FATA—first by conventional air platforms and later by unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones—catalyzed the insurgency. Specifically, these analysts pinpoint the U.S. drone strikes in October 2006 against an al

⁵⁰ For an interview with Rahimullah Yusufzai about this incident, see "Return of the Taliban," *Frontline*, October 3, 2006 ~ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/militants/mohammed.html>.

⁵¹ Ismael Khan, "Baitullah Mehsud, Pakistan's Biggest Dilemma," *Dawn*, December 31, 2007.

⁵² Yusufzai, "A Who's Who of the Insurgency."

Qaeda-affiliated *madrasah* in a Chingai village, Bajaur, that targeted Ayman al-Zawahiri as the most important catalyst of suicide attacks against security forces in the FATA and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).⁵³

This madrasah in Chingai was run by the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), a Sunni militant group founded by Sufi Mohammad. Mohammad dispatched eight thousand volunteers into Afghanistan to support the Taliban by fighting against the United States and Northern Alliance during Operation Enduring Freedom. When Sufi Muhammad was jailed, his militant son-in-law Mullah Fazlullah took over the organization. Sufi Mohammad's deputy, Maulvi Liaquat, was killed in the Chingai attack. Following that attack, Inayatullah Rahman, a local pro-Taliban elder, pronounced that he had prepared a "squad of suicide bombers" to target Pakistani security through tactics akin to those that militants were employing against Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq. He further explained that the squad "will carry out these suicide attacks soon."⁵⁴

Although the so-called Talibanization of the tribal areas was initially limited to North and South Waziristan, the phenomenon next spread to Bajaur. Pakistani Taliban surfaced in areas that had previously been free of such activity, including Mohmand, Orakzai, and Kurram agencies.⁵⁵ The Pakistan Taliban also emerged in the frontier areas of Bannu, Tank, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, and Swat. Throughout summer 2007, the Frontier Corps and the Frontier Constabulary battled Pakistani militants associated with the TNSM, which seized the Swat Valley in late October.⁵⁶

Militant groups under various local leaders have effectively exploited socio-economic grievances (such as failures of the state to provide services, including access to rule of law and justice) and frustration with the corrupt colonial-era governance structures in place in the FATA. The Pakistani Taliban in Swat

⁵³ Imtiaz Gul, *The Al Qaeda Connection: The Taliban and Terror in Pakistan's Tribal Areas* (London: Penguin, 2009), 95–96; "Islamabad Links Suicide Bomber to Madrasah Attack," *Radio Free Europe*, November 8, 2006 ~ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/pakistan/2006/pakistan-061108-rferl01.htm>; and K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan: A Chronology of Recent Affairs," CRS, CRS Report for Congress, RS21584, December 18, 2006 ~ <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rs21584.pdf>, 2.

⁵⁴ See Bill Roggio, "Aftermath of the Bajaur Airstrike," *Long War Journal*, October 31, 2006 ~ http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2006/10/aftermath_of_the_baj.php. See also Massoud Ansari and Behroz Khan, "Air Force Officers Held for Attempt to Murder Musharraf with Rockets," *PakistanDefense.com*, May 11, 2006 ~ <http://www.defence.pk/forums/strategic-geopolitical-issues/2745-paf-personnel-busted-assassination-attempt.html>.

⁵⁵ It should be noted, however, that Kurram has long been the site of sectarian violence due to the large Shia population in that agency. See Mariam Abou Zahab, "The Regional Dimension of Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan," in *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* ed. Christophe Jaffrelot (London: Zed Books, 2002), 115–28.

⁵⁶ C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan Loses Swat to Local Taliban," *Jamestown Foundation, Terrorism Focus*, November 14, 2007.

reportedly pursued a system of redistributive justice wherein they seized the land of wealthy landowners and rewarded landless peasants who signed up to support the group.⁵⁷ Similarly, militant commanders in the FATA have pressured political agents to provide services without requisite payment of bribes. They have established a functional—albeit draconian—police system and process of dispute resolution. The much-maligned *qazi* courts (courts run by *qazis*, or Islamist jurists) that were to be established in Swat required the addition of new *qazis* should their case load exceed 150 cases. No such provision exists in the mainstream courts. The Pakistan Taliban also established bureaus to solemnize love marriages. This measure appeals to youth who resent forced marriages and ameliorates the economic requirement of young men to pay high bride prices.⁵⁸

In April 2009, news reports asserted the arrival of the “Punjabi Taliban,” referencing the various militant groups ensconced in the Punjab, the most populated province in Pakistan.⁵⁹ Despite its ostensibly recent coinage, the term “Punjabi Taliban” has a long and complex history. Since 2009, however, it has acquired significant political importance.⁶⁰ Many Pashtuns support the use of the term to underscore that Pakistan’s insurgency is not “Pashtun” in essence. However, many Punjabis reject the term and prefer to attribute the threat against Pakistan to the “Pashtun other,” who is often characterized in stereotypical terms such as “uncivilized,” “warlike,” and “violent,” among others.⁶¹ In reality, the movement is composed of Pashtuns and Punjabis, among other Pakistani and even foreign elements.

⁵⁷ See Jane Perlez, “Landowners Still in Exile from Unstable Pakistan Area,” *New York Times*, July 27, 2009 ~ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/28/world/asia/28swat.html>; and Sartaj Khan, “Imperialism, Religion and Class in Swat,” *International Socialism*, no. 123 (June 24, 2009). Khan’s article expands on an earlier piece, “Behind the Crisis in Swat,” *News*, November 27, 2008 ~ available at <http://www.khyberwatch.com/forums/showthread.php?2295-Update-on-Swat!/page48>. For a countervailing view, see Farhat Taj, “No Class War in Swat,” *News*, December 18, 2008 ~ <http://www.khyberwatch.com/forums/showthread.php?2295-Update-on-Swat!/page49>.

⁵⁸ This information was obtained by the author during fieldwork in February and April 2009 in Peshawar, Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore, and in August 2010 in Peshawar, Mingora, Islamabad, and Lahore.

⁵⁹ See Sabrina Tavernise, Richard A. O’Connell Jr., and Eric Schmitt, “United Militants Threaten Pakistan’s Populous Heart,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2009 ~ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/14/world/asia/14punjab.html>; and Hassan Abbas, “Defining the Punjabi Taliban Network,” *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 4 (April 2009): 1–4.

⁶⁰ Rahimullah Yusufzai, “The Discourse on Punjabi Taliban,” *News*, July 6, 2009 ~ <http://www.cssforum.com.pk/general/news-articles/36007-discourse-punjabi-taliban-rahimullah-yusufzai.html>.

⁶¹ Author fieldwork in Peshawar, Mingora, Islamabad, and Lahore in June and July 2010. For a sample of the controversial coverage of the group and the term, see “Rehman Malik Asserts He Used No Term Like ‘Punjabi Taliban,’” South Asian News Agency, June 4, 2010 ~ <http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/06/04/rehman-malik-asserts-he-used-no-term-like-%E2%80%98punjabi-taliban%E2%80%99/>.

Pakistan's political leaders have also sought to exploit the controversy surrounding the term for political gain. Leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) object to the term likely in part because of the PML-N's ongoing support for groups such as SSP and LeJ, which is driven by electoral considerations. The Punjab chief minister of the PML-N, Shahbaz Sharif, accused Interior Minister Rahman Malik of using the terms "Punjabi Taliban" and "Punjabi terrorist" to foment conflict between provinces—a tactic he argued was tantamount to a condemnation of the people of the Punjab.⁶²

While it is tempting to view the Punjab as a new theater or even as a future locus of Talibanization, sites of militancy across Pakistan are inter-related. Punjab-based groups such as the Deobandi LeJ and JM are components of the TTP and conduct attacks on behalf of it. In fact, the so-called Punjabi Taliban groups form the backbone of the TTP and have played an important role in attacking Sufi, Shia, Ahmedi, and other civilian targets in the Punjab.⁶³

In addition to the above Pakistani groups, Pakistan also hosts elements of the Afghan Taliban, with *shuras* (leadership councils) in Quetta, Peshawar, and Karachi.⁶⁴ The Afghan Taliban remain focused on ousting foreign forces in Afghanistan, overthrowing the Karzai regime, and reclaiming a role in governing Afghanistan. Pakistani territory is also used by al Qaeda, whose operatives are known to reside in North and South Waziristan and Bajaur, among other areas in the Pashtun belt. Moreover, many al Qaeda operatives (such as Abu Zubaidah and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed) have been arrested in Pakistani cities.⁶⁵

Since late 2001 and 2002, many of Pakistan's militant groups—particularly those of Deobandi background—have either splintered or changed their targets and tactics. Many Deobandi groups are tightly allied to the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban and are increasingly aiming their resources at the Pakistani state, even though some elements within these groups continue

⁶² Yusufzai, "The Discourse on Punjabi Taliban."

⁶³ Bill Roggio, "Suicide Bomber Kills 60 at Mosque in Pakistan's Northwest," *Long War Journal*, November 5, 2010 ~ http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/11/suicide_bomber_kills_40.php.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Carl Levin, "Opening Statement of Senator Carl Levin, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on Afghanistan and Pakistan," Press Release, February 26, 2009 ~ <http://levin.senate.gov/newsroom/release.cfm?id=308740>; Ian Katz, "Gates Says Militant Sanctuaries Pose Biggest Afghanistan Threat," Bloomberg, March 1, 2009 ~ <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aehmlRXgKi2o&refer=home>; and Barnett R. Rubin, "Saving Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 1 (January/February 2007): 57–78 ~ <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070101faessay86105-p0/barnett-r-rubin/saving-afghanistan.html>.

⁶⁵ See comments made by National Intelligence Director John Negroponte, cited in "Al-Qaeda 'Rebuilding' in Pakistan," *BBC*, January 12, 2007 ~ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6254375.stm; and K. Alan Kronstadt, "U.S.-Pakistan Relations," CRS, CRS Report for Congress, RL33498 ~ <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/115888.pdf>.

to enjoy various levels of formal and informal state support. The targets of these groups have included President Musharraf as well as other high-value military and civilian leaders. Al Qaeda leaders, including Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu al-Yazid, also continue to operate and plan attacks from the tribal areas. Recently executed and preempted attacks attest to these linkages—for example, the foiled 2010 attack on Europe planned in North Waziristan, the disrupted plan to attack U.S. and German targets in 2007, and the preempted trans-Atlantic plot in 2006, as well as the successful July 2005 attack in London. All these conspiracies had connections to Pakistan's tribal areas and sponsoring militant networks.⁶⁶

Pakistanis were late to embrace the government's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. Public opinion surveys in Pakistan conducted in 2007 and later demonstrate that, in general, Pakistanis overwhelmingly supported peace deals with militants and believed that such efforts would secure peace, despite consistent evidence to the contrary. Equally important, Pakistanis remained opposed to the army undertaking offensives against Pakistan's own militants. These trends remained more or less constant until April 2009, when public opinion dramatically changed course after the Taliban broke their "sharia-for-peace" deal in Swat and overran Buner. Survey results in May and July 2009 suggest that the public has become opposed to peace deals and is increasingly supportive of military action.⁶⁷ Polling by the Pew Research Center in April 2010, however, found that some of these gains may be eroding, although most Pakistanis remain worried about Islamist extremism.⁶⁸

PAKISTANI SUPPORT FOR THE MILITANTS?

Implicit in the various U.S. policies that seek to compel Pakistan to cease support for militant groups is the assumption that the country could do so

⁶⁶ Jones and Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*, 31.

⁶⁷ C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Own War on Terror: What the Pakistani Public Thinks," *Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2009): 39–55.

⁶⁸ Because the Pew Research Center's questions and sampling approach differed from those used by the other polls cited here, the results are not strictly comparable. See Pew Research Center, "America's Image Remains Poor: Concern about Extremist Threat Slips in Pakistan," July 29, 2010 ~ <http://pewglobal.org/2010/07/29/concern-about-extremist-threat-slips-in-pakistan/2/#chapter%C2%A01-the-battle-against-extremism>. Unlike the International Republican Institute (IRI) polls, the 2009 poll conducted by Fair, Malhotra, and Shapiro, or the 2009 WorldPublicOpinion.org poll (in which Fair was a collaborator), the Pew survey sample is overwhelmingly drawn from urban residents (55%). Only one in three Pakistanis, however, live in urban areas.

if it mustered the requisite will. There is also the assumption that Pakistan could do more to counter the various groups it currently supports. That these assumptions could be realized is far from obvious. Islamabad's ability to fight militant groups, or the lack of ability thereof, arguably will condition its readiness to cease active and passive support, much less take aggressive action to eliminate these groups.

This section advances several propositions about the degree of state support for various groups and assesses the state's ability to control or counter them. This assessment draws overwhelmingly from the author's fieldwork in Pakistan (including discussions with military, intelligence, and civilian officials as well as with journalists and analysts) over several visits since 2000, fieldwork across Afghanistan since 2007, and extensive interactions with U.S. officials about Pakistan and Afghanistan over the same period. Readers alone can judge whether to accept or reject these various conjectures.

Pakistan's intelligence agencies and army tend to segment the country's militants into a range of groups over which the state exercises varying degrees of control. Pakistan is widely assumed to wield significant influence over the Afghan Taliban, including the network of Jalaludin Haqqani based in North Waziristan, by holding Taliban families hostage in Pakistan to ensure compliance. Since 2001, however, the Afghan Taliban have changed with the consistent turnover of mid-level commanders.⁶⁹ New commanders are less beholden to Pakistan in part because of their age: they were children when the ISI was nurturing the Taliban in the mid-1990s. Moreover, the tribal base and moorings of the Afghan Taliban are also changing. Thus, Pakistan is struggling to cultivate influence among the evolving Afghan Taliban elements, even while seeking to control elements of Mullah Omar's Quetta Shura, the top leadership council of the organization.⁷⁰ Islamabad worries that members of the Quetta Shura may seek a separate dispensation with Afghan president Karzai that does not recognize Pakistan's interests. Exemplifying its efforts to counter such moves, Pakistan arrested Mullah

⁶⁹ For an excellent exposition of how the Afghan Taliban have evolved, see Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan 2002–2007* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 81–96.

⁷⁰ Although the Afghan leadership council retains this moniker, its key leaders have long taken up residence elsewhere, such as in Karachi, under the ISI's protection and monitoring. Ali K. Chishti, "The Karachi Project," *Foreign Policy*, November 3, 2010 ~ http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/11/03/is_pakistan_finally_cracking_down_on_al_qaeda.

Baradar in February 2010 in Karachi because he was negotiating with Karzai independently of Islamabad.⁷¹

U.S. analysts tend to believe that Pakistani agencies also maintained reasonably tight control over LeT. That said, LeT has developed proxies in India (principally through the Indian Mujahedeen) and logistical bases in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Nepal, among other countries. Some LeT cells within India are to a degree independent of LeT's headquarters in Muridke, according to U.S. and Indian officials.⁷² One important piece of evidence that is highly suggestive of the ties between the ISI and LeT is the fact that after JM attacked the Indian parliament in 2001, significant signals traffic was detected that indicated anger in the ISI with JM for launching that attack. In contrast, after the November 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai, significantly less traffic was detected. Such traffic could have been an information strategy used by Pakistan to diffuse the former crisis. It is puzzling, however, that such a strategy was not used in 2008 if it is an instrument of perception management.⁷³ After the 2008 Mumbai attacks, Indian officials were given access to David Headley, the American involved, following his indictment. According to Indian officials, Headley conceded ISI involvement.⁷⁴ Although U.S. officials have demurred from endorsing this claim, Bob Woodward has reported that the current director general of the ISI, Shuja Pasha, acknowledged that persons connected to the ISI were involved in the attacks but insisted that the operation was rogue.⁷⁵ It should be noted that LeT has never attacked foreign or domestic targets within Pakistan and that the literature of the organization remains vehemently pro-state.⁷⁶

At the other extreme is the aforementioned milieu of Deobandi groups. Pakistan's ability to control these groups appears variable and tentative at best. The Bahawalpur-based network of Masood Azhar's JM is perhaps

⁷¹ Dean Nelson and Ben Farmer, "Hamid Karzai Held Secret Talks with Mullah Baradar in Afghanistan," *Telegraph*, March 16, 2010 ~ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7457861/Hamid-Karzai-held-secret-talks-with-Mullah-Baradar-in-Afghanistan.html>.

⁷² C. Christine Fair, "Students Islamic Movement of India and the Indian Mujahideen: An Assessment," *Asia Policy*, no. 9 (January 2010): 101–19; and Animesh Roul, "Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Strategy of 'Encircling' India," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor*, October 21, 2010 ~ [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37056&cHash=b2f2164427](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37056&cHash=b2f2164427).

⁷³ Author discussions with U.S. military, state, and intelligence officials throughout 2010 and earlier, as well as with Indian intelligence officials in April 2010.

⁷⁴ Jason Burke, "ISI Chiefs Aided Mumbai Terror Attacks: Headley," *Hindu*, October 19, 2010, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article837735.ece>; and Jane Perlez, Eric Schmitt, and Ginger Thompson, "U.S. Had Warnings on Plotter of Mumbai Attack," *New York Times*, October 17, 2010 ~ http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/world/asia/17headley.html?_r=1&ref=dauid_c_headley.

⁷⁵ Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 46–47.

⁷⁶ This discussion draws from ongoing research by the author exploring published LeT texts. Exposition of these texts will be the subject of a forthcoming work by the author.

the most tightly controlled of all the Deobandi groups. Pakistani analysts explained to this author in July 2010 that the army is keen to continue supporting Azhar because he has remained adamantly pro-Pakistan and has refrained from attacking the state. Azhar demonstrated his pro-state *bona fides* as early as late 2001 when he opposed calls from within his organization to attack Western targets in Pakistan as well the Pakistani government⁷⁷ and informed the ISI of these conspiracies. Pakistani analysts argue that as long as Azhar can maintain the coherence of his following in the Punjab, members of his group are less likely to join the TTP. However, as is well-known, elements of JM have split from Azhar and launched attacks against foreign and domestic targets in Pakistan.

Other, albeit intimately interrelated, Deobandi groups, such as the network of commanders under the umbrella of the TTP and its various constituent parts, are beyond the grasp of the state, as evidenced by their sustained attacks within Pakistan. The military and the ISI have tried to manage this complex web of allied foes by cultivating or aggravating disagreements among commanders. For example, Pakistan cultivated Mullah Bahadur and Maulvi Nazir to counter the anti-state elements of the TTP generally and Baitullah Mehsud and Hakimullah Mehsud in particular.⁷⁸ Pakistan has also tried engaging and placating the militants through various peace deals, while at other times it has sought to defeat them militarily with varying degrees of determination and success.⁷⁹

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that Islamabad will have the ability—much less political will—to degrade these groups in any significant way. Despite a seeming dedication to combating some elements of the TTP that target the state, Pakistan will likely remain unable to eliminate even those groups. Accounting for this are both overlapping membership between the vehemently anti-state components of the TTP and the other Deobandi groups that Pakistan still views as assets—JM, the Haqqani network, and the Afghan Taliban, among others—and anticipation of a future battle against India,

⁷⁷ Nicholas Howenstein, “The Jihadi Terrain in Pakistan: An Introduction to the Sunni Jihadi Groups in Pakistan and Kashmir,” Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU), Research Report, no. 1, February 5, 2008, 28–31 <http://spaces.brad.ac.uk:8080/download/attachments/748/resrep1.pdf>.

⁷⁸ See Rahimullah Yusufzai, “The Emergence of the Pakistani Taliban,” Jane’s Information Group, December 11, 2007; and Yusufzai, “A Who’s Who of the Insurgency.” For details about the various commanders, see Caroline Wadhams and Colin Cookman, “Faces of Pakistan’s Militant Leaders: In-Depth Profiles of Major Militant Commanders,” Center for New American Progress, July 22, 2009 <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/talibanleaders.html>.

⁷⁹ These deals and military efforts are detailed extensively in Jones and Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*, 33–84.

whether in India or Afghanistan, which makes Islamabad reluctant to fully cut ties to proxy insurgents.

SUSTAINING JIHAD AND THE JIHADIS

Given that Pakistan has been able to sustain numerous militant groups in the service of covert campaigns, there must be some degree of public support, however small, for these activities.⁸⁰ One possible reason for Pakistan's ability to maintain this level of support for militant campaigns over six decades is the fact that the concept of jihad is old and enduring in South Asia, specifically in the areas that are now Pakistan and Afghanistan. The scholar Ayesha Jalal contends that Balakot, located in the district of Mansehra in Pakistan's NWFP, is the "epicenter of jihad" in South Asia. It was there that Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bereilly (1786–1831) and Shah Ismail (1779–1831), both "quintessential Islamic warriors in South Asian Muslim consciousness," were slain fighting the Sikhs in May of 1831.⁸¹ Scholars consider this the only genuine jihad to establish Muslim supremacy in South Asia. Their gravesites have since become sacred places that are intertwined with both jihad and colonial resistance. Jalal writes of these gravesites: "To this day Balakot where the Sayyid lies buried is a spot that has been greatly revered, not only by militants in contemporary Pakistan, some of whom have set up training camps near Balakot, but also by anti-colonial nationalists who interpreted the movement as a prelude to a jihad against the British in India."⁸² This association of Balakot with jihad in the 1990s was mobilized when Pakistan established militant training camps there for groups raised to operate in Kashmir and the rest of India.⁸³

More generally, popular consciousness in Pakistan is strewn with "collective myths and legends of jihad based on selective representation of history."⁸⁴ The state itself has nurtured a public discourse that is anti-India,

⁸⁰ This section draws heavily from C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Islam, Militancy, and Politics in Pakistan: Insights from a National Sample," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 4 (October 2010): 495–521. There are few robust studies of the public's support for militancy, and none that track it over time. For some preliminary findings, see C. Christine Fair, Clay Ramsay, and Steve Kull, "Pakistani Public Opinion on Democracy, Islamist Militancy, and Relations with the U.S.," United States Institute of Peace, Working Paper, February 2008 ~ <http://www.usip.org/resources/pakistani-public-opinion-democracy-islamist-militancy-and-relations-us>.

⁸¹ Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2008), 1.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

anti-Hindu, and pro-jihad using public and military schools, a variety of media, and public celebrations of national events.⁸⁵ Thus, it seems likely that one of the reasons why Pakistan has been able to successfully sustain proxy wars is that Islamabad has marketed them to the public as jihad, which is perceived as legitimate in Pakistan and elsewhere in South Asia.

Indeed, polls have demonstrated that Pakistanis to some degree support different kinds of militancy. In conjunction with Jacob Shapiro and Neil Malhotra, the author surveyed a national sample of Pakistan's four provinces using face-to-face interviews of 6,000 persons in 2009. The survey found that militarized jihad enjoys considerable support among Pakistanis. Respondents were asked the following question: "Some people say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim ummah through war. What do you think?" A plurality (44.6%) answered that "jihad is both a personal struggle for righteousness and protecting the Muslim ummah through war." A similar fraction of respondents indicated either that "jihad is solely a personal struggle for righteousness" or that "jihad is solely for protecting the Muslim ummah through war." (Some 6% indicated that they did not know, and another 1% declined to answer.) As **Figure 1** shows, a large majority of Pakistanis thus clearly embrace militant dimensions of jihad in principle.⁸⁶

Even among Muslims who embrace militant notions of jihad, scholars of Islam debate whether it is the exclusive purview of a Muslim government to declare jihad or whether nonstate actors can do so. (On this basis, some Muslims reject Osama Bin Ladin's arrogated right to declare jihad.) When respondents were asked whether they believe a Muslim state/government, nonstate actors, or both can employ military force to protect a Muslim country or the Muslim ummah in the name of jihad, a plurality (43%) said that this is a prerogative of the state alone. The second largest group (35%) indicated that both government and non-government actors can do so, whereas only 7% believed that nonstate actors can wage jihad on their own. Taken together, 42% of respondents affirmed that nonstate actors can legitimately invoke jihad to protect Muslims, while another 16% either did not know (14%) or did not answer (2%).⁸⁷ **Figure 2** shows the results of the survey question.

⁸⁵ K.K. Aziz, *Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks Used in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1998); A.H. Nayyar and Ahmed Salim, eds., "The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan-Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics," Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Report, 2003; and Iftikhar Ahmed, "Islam, Democracy and Citizenship Education: An Examination of the Social Studies Curriculum in Pakistan," *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 39–49.

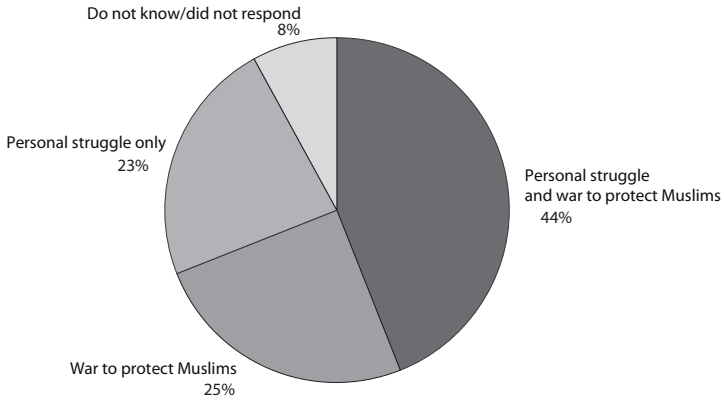
⁸⁶ See Fair, Malhotra, and Shapiro, "Islam, Militancy, and Politics in Pakistan."

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

FIGURE 1

Opinion of Jihad

Question: Some say jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim ummah through war. What do you think?

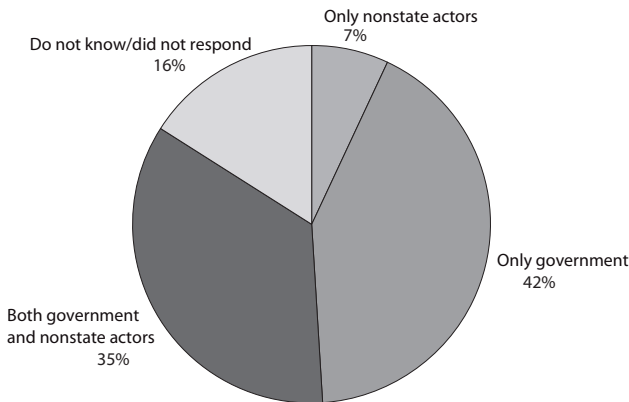


Source: Fair, Malhotra, and Shapiro, "Islam, Militancy, and Politics in Pakistan."

FIGURE 2

Opinion on the Use of Force

Question: Who can use military force to protect a Muslim country or ummah?



Source: Fair, Malhotra, and Shapiro, "Islam, Militancy, and Politics in Pakistan."

It is possible that variation in views about the nature of jihad (personal, military, or both) may be explained by variation in views about who has the right to wage jihad (states, nonstate actors, or both). To explore this possibility, the surveyors cross-tabulated the variables about the nature of jihad and the authority to wage jihad. To much surprise, respondents' beliefs about jihad do not predict beliefs about who has the authority to declare jihad. Both respondents who believe jihad is a strictly personal or strictly military struggle were more likely to believe that only governments can wage jihad. Those who believe in the dual nature of jihad were most likely to believe that jihad can be waged by both state and nonstate actors.

When examining levels of support for the Kashmiri groups, the Afghan Taliban, al Qaeda, and the sectarian groups, the team found that the Kashmiri groups consistently enjoyed the highest level of backing among Pakistanis. This is consistent with decades of state-promoted narratives that proclaim Kashmir to be a "legitimate jihad." The Afghan Taliban closely followed in public support, which also is consistent with state-sponsored narratives about the positive role of the Taliban in Afghanistan since the mid-1990s, as well as with the state's current position that the Afghan Taliban should enjoy greater legitimacy to govern Afghanistan than the U.S.-backed Karzai government. Pakistan continues to assert the largely inaccurate claim that Kabul is dominated by the former Northern Alliance, which Pakistan views as an Indian proxy. While this was true during the interim government, with the subsequent elections, this claim is now simply false. Finally, the sectarian groups and al Qaeda enjoyed considerably less support, reflecting a lack of state-promoted narratives about the positive contributions of these organizations.

In 2007 the author, in conjunction with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), surveyed nearly one thousand urban Pakistanis in face-to-face interviews. Data from this survey suggests that support for militant groups was overall very low, with a majority of respondents indicating that the groups operating in Pakistan posed a large and important threat to Pakistan's interests. Substantial majorities repudiated the tactic of attacks on civilians in general, including those directed against India by Pakistani extremist groups. Indeed, 66% of respondents said that such attacks were either never or "rarely justified, and only 15% called such attacks sometimes or often justified.⁸⁸ While 64% said "attacks conducted against government institutions (like the national parliament in Delhi and state assemblies)" were never justified, 15% believed that such attacks were sometimes justified. Whereas 67% indicated

⁸⁸ See Fair, Ramsay, and Kull, "Pakistani Public Opinion."

that “attacks in India on families of Indian military personnel” were never justified, 13% said they were sometimes justified. Similarly, although 68% condemned “attacks conducted against Indian targets like subways, stock exchanges, and tourist sites,” 12% said that these attacks were sometimes justified. On balance, this survey found that more than one in ten respondents believed that these various attacks were justified in some measure.⁸⁹

While support for specific groups operating against specific targets was low among respondents, many Pakistanis believe that their country has an obligation to protect Muslims in Kashmir and elsewhere, consistent with Pakistan’s national narrative as being the home of South Asia’s Muslims and having an explicit goal of “liberating occupied Kashmir” from India. Asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that “Pakistan has a moral obligation to protect Muslims anywhere in South Asia,” 66% of respondents agreed (36% strongly) and only 21% disagreed (13% strongly).⁹⁰ The survey next asked those who agreed with the previous assertion the question, “To protect Muslims in South Asia, do you think Pakistan should use any means, including force, or do you think Pakistan should only use peaceful means?” Use of any means was endorsed by 12% of respondents, whereas 72% rejected the idea that Pakistan should use force beyond its own territory in defense of Muslims.⁹¹

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This article has argued that Pakistan’s use of Islamist militancy as a tool of foreign policy is not new and in fact dates back to the early beginning of statehood. Pakistan’s ability to field sustained militant campaigns with significant degrees of public support is likely tied to the historical and social milieu of jihad, which has long been understood as a legitimate mode of militarized conflict in the areas that now make up Pakistan. Thus, Husain Haqqani, Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States, has cogently argued that the reliance on militancy “is not just the inadvertent outcome of decisions by some governments (beginning with that of General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq in 1977), as is widely believed.”⁹² While Pakistan instrumentalized Islam in order to strengthen national identity by building an ideological state and by

⁸⁹ See Fair, Ramsay, and Kull, “Pakistani Public Opinion.”

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, 2.

pursuing Islamization, the state gradually made a “strategic commitment to jihadi ideology.”⁹³

The acquisition of nuclear capabilities has critically both enabled and emboldened Islamabad to pursue strategies such as support for insurgents and proxy warfare with increasing confidence that doing so will be cost-free or that, in the event of Indian retaliation, the international community will readily mobilize to diffuse the conflict. Pakistani security elites, therefore, appreciate that nuclearization is an important enabling condition for Pakistan’s continued reliance on jihad throughout India even as New Delhi continues to expand its conventional—and strategic—capabilities.

Given the varying levels of support for militant groups within Pakistan’s public, military, and intelligence agencies, it is doubtful that Islamabad will be willing to abandon the strategic use of militancy as a tool of foreign policy and contend with the emergent militant threat ravaging the country and the region. Unless the United States and its partners can fundamentally change the way that Pakistan assesses its cost-benefit calculus toward India or find some means of ameliorating Pakistan’s neuralgic fears of India, the international community has few choices but to prepare for the worst. ◆

⁹³ Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, 3.

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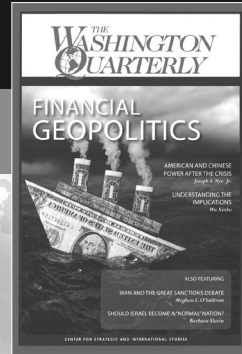
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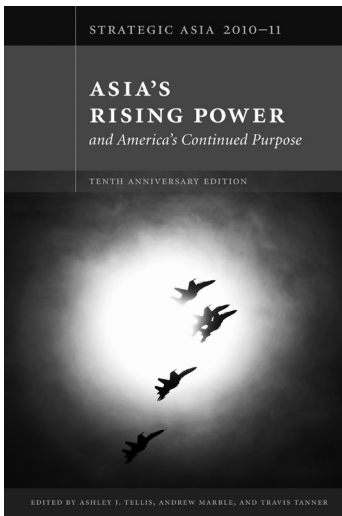
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The National Bureau of Asian Research • September 2010 • 356 pp
Paper • 6x9 • ISBN 978-0-9818904-1-8 • \$34.95 (paperback) • \$19.95 (PDF)

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