

The Militant Challenge in Pakistan

C. Christine Fair

C. CHRISTINE FAIR is an Assistant Professor at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She can be reached at <c_christine_fair@yahoo.com>.

This essay seeks to historicize Pakistan's long-standing use of asymmetric warfare as an instrument to prosecute its foreign and even domestic policy objectives.¹ While the contemporary narratives suggest that Pakistan began using militants and Islamists as a tool of foreign policy after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, in fact, Pakistan's first dalliance with irregular warfare took place in 1947, soon after Pakistan became independent.² In prosecuting such conflicts Pakistan has relied upon irregular fighters and *razakars* (volunteers), as well as regular fighters drawn from the military, paramilitary, and intelligence agencies. These regular fighters usually were dressed "in mufti," or disguised as irregular fighters.

The first such asymmetric venture of 1947 at first involved support for mid-level officers in the army corps but later, as the conflict expanded into a full-fledge war, the entirety of the army became engaged.³ The employment of mujahedeen or regular troops disguised as such has been the fundament of Pakistan's denial and deception efforts to convince domestic and international audiences that these asymmetric operations were conducted by non-state actors, thereby conferring "plausible" deniability to shield the state from retribution. The problem with this strategy is that it has resulted in three wars in 1947-48, 1965 and 1999 as well as several "crisis slides" that have brought India and Pakistan to the brink of conflict.

This essay contends that while Pakistan's use of asymmetric warfare began in 1947, Pakistan was limited in its ability to expand the jihad beyond Kashmir with impunity until it acquired first a covert "existential" nuclear capability by 1990 and an

¹ See Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 172-205, 236-239. Curiously, Pakistan has long tolerated—if not at times passively promoted—anti-Shia groups and even Shia pogroms at different parts of its history. This in part due to efforts of Zia al Haq to promote Sunni Islam and to contend with a militarized Shia response sponsored by Iran. While Pakistan has episodically cracked down on these groups, because they have overlapping membership with key Deobandi religious institutions and with groups fighting in India/Kashmir and Afghanistan, Pakistan has been reluctant to put them down decisively. See inter alia Vali R. Nasr, "International Politics, Domestic Imperatives, and Identity Mobilization: Sectarianism in Pakistan, 1979-1998," *Comparative Politics*, 32, no. 2 (January 2000), 170-91; International Crisis Group. *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan: Crisis Group Asia Report no. 95* (Brussels, Islamabad; International Crisis Group, 2005), 12, 19-20. Also see A.H. Sorbo, "Paradise Lost", *The Herald*, June 1988, p. 31; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni Identities, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 32, (1998), pp 32:689-716.

² Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 15-48.

³ Shuja Nawaz, "[The First Kashmir War Revisited.](#)" *India Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Pages 115 -154, (2008).

overt nuclear capability in 1998. This argument both advances and complements the work of Paul S. Kapur,⁴ who focuses upon the Indo-Pakistan conventional crises that have been enabled by Pakistan's creeping nuclear umbrella. It does so, in part, by focusing upon the antecedent conditions of Pakistan's ability to expand the militant groups in terms of number, operational scope and geographical area of operations as well as Pakistan's contemporary Islamist militant landscape and the relationship that the state enjoys with these various actors.

The remainder of the essay is organized as follows. It first historicizes Pakistan's use of proxy elements since 1947. Next it turns to the various ways in which nuclearization facilitated Pakistan to dramatically expand the jihad deep into India beyond Kashmir with evermore bold and lethal attacks. The third section describes the contemporary militant landscape in Pakistan and the connections that exist among different militant groups and other supporting religious and political organizations. This section also considers, based nearly exclusively upon field research, the relationship that the army and intelligence agencies may have with these various groups. This article concludes with a brief discussion of the likelihood that Pakistan will ever develop the will—much less the capability—to strategically abandon militancy as a tool of foreign policy. The prognosis is gloomy. Given Pakistan's enduring security concerns about India and India's continued ascent, Pakistan is likely to rely ever more intently upon Islamist militant groups even while it continues to embattle those erstwhile proxies that are now turning their guns—and their suicide vests—upon the state and their former patrons.

Pakistan's Historical Use of Proxy Warfare

Most contemporary media and academic accounts assert that Pakistan first engaged in using militants as a tool to prosecute its foreign policy objectives during the anti-Soviet jihad when Pakistan, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and others helped build a massive Pakistan-based infrastructure to produce Islamist insurgents generally known as the mujahedeen. In most standard accounts, Pakistan subsequently redeployed these battle-

⁴ S. Paul Kapur, "Ten Years of Instability in a Nuclear South Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 71–94 (2008).

hardened operatives to Kashmir in 1990 when the Soviets formally withdrew from Afghanistan.⁵

In fact, Pakistan has relied upon non-state actors to prosecute its foreign policy objectives in Kashmir since its inception in 1947. In that year, the nascent state mobilized numerous *lashkars*, or tribal militias, from the tribal areas to invade Kashmir to seize it while the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, dithered on whether he would join India or Pakistan. These *lashkars* were supported by the Pakistan army. Had they not been side-tracked by their rapine violence and pillaging of villages en route, the *lashkars* may 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 he 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) within the early months of the two states' existence. That war ended on January 1, 1949 with the establishment of a Ceasefire Line (CFL) sponsored by the United Nations, which demarcated those areas under Pakistani and Indian control. The CFL was converted to the Line of Control (LOC) during the Shimla Accords, which concluded the end of the 1971 war.⁶

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, Pakistan's covert operatives judged that a wider indigenous insurgency could be fomented in Indian-administered Kashmir owing to a number of local events that transpired there.⁷ Pakistan's interest in *using* proxy war may have been piqued during insurgency-specific military instruction received by the U.S.

⁵ Alexander Evans, "The Kashmir insurgency: As bad as it gets," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 69-81.

⁶ For various accounts of this first Kashmir war, see Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords* (New York: OUP, 2008), especially pp.42-92, Shuja Nawaz, "The First Kashmir War Revisited," *India Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2008), pp. 115-54; Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 15-30.

⁷ On the 1965 war (a.k.a. "The Second Kashmir War), see Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords* (New York: OUP, 2008), especially pp.192-218; Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 30-50; Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.53-57.

military during the 1950s when Pakistan and the United States were formally in alliance to contend with the Soviet threat.⁸

While the U.S. was an important supplier of military equipment, Pakistan's military undertook an important doctrinal shift under American influence and tutelage. As Stephen Cohen has noted, Pakistan began intensively studying guerilla warfare and people's war in its engagement with the U.S. military. While the U.S. objective in imparting this instruction was to *suppress* such wars, Pakistan was keen to understand how to *launch* such wars against India or even to develop its own "people's army" as a second defense against India. While Pakistan proclaimed its support to these U.S. objectives, Pakistan sought this alliance to build up its armed forces to contend with its rising eastern adversary.⁹

With American assistance, Pakistan stood up a Special Forces unit in 1959. Pakistani professional military journals also began exploring "low intensity conflict," a concept and vernacular that Pakistanis still employ rather than counterinsurgency. Case studies were written on Yugoslavia, North Vietnam, Algeria, and China. Many of these studies concluded that guerilla warfare could be a "strategic weapon," a "slow but sure and relatively inexpensive" strategy that was "fast, overshadowing regular warfare."¹⁰

⁸ As numerous writers, noted below, have detailed, Pakistan agreed to the terms of the anti-Soviet alliance out of a dire need to rebuild its armed forces after partition in which Pakistan did not receive its fair share of moveable assets. Moreover, most of the fixed assets remained with India as they were located there. India was supposed to pay Pakistan to compensate it for these lost assets and it was to provide other financial resources. However, India soon reneged. The few trainloads of supplies that India did dispatch was full of obsolete equipment or other materials deemed undesirable by Pakistan. Because of British recruitment policies after the 1857 mutiny, there were no all-Muslim 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. Given that Pakistan and India came into being as adversaries, Pakistan felt an urgent need to build its weaker armed forces. Given India's alliance with Russia, Pakistan concluded that a formal military alliance with Washington was an expeditious means of doing so. See Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Armed Forces of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 25-29; Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 5-12; ; Hassan Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan: 1947-1997* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2000a), pp.35-81;136; Hassan Askari Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave, 2000b), pp.34-56, 62-65, 77,; Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp.17-178; and Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, pp.92-164.

⁹ Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington D.C.: Brookings, 2004), p. 105.

¹⁰ Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington D.C.: Brookings, 2004), p. 342. Cohen cites a few illustrative examples of these Pakistan military studies of low intensity conflict. Major S.A. El-Edroos (Frontier Forces Regiment), "A Plea for a People's Army," *Pakistan Army Journal*, Vol. 4 (June

Maoist doctrine in particular was appealing because of Pakistan's close ties to China and because that doctrine seemed most appropriate for Kashmir. Pakistan concluded that the prerequisite conditions for successful guerilla war in Kashmir were in place: a worthy cause, challenging terrain, a resolute and warlike people (referring to Pakistanis *not* 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 happened in 1947.¹¹

Likely inspired by its study of asymmetric warfare and rendered more desperate by U.S. military assistance to India during its 1962 war with China, Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar in 1965, named after one of the most valorized battles in Islam's history. (Other motivations also likely include a belief that India was weak following its defeat against China in the 1962 war and Pakistani confidence in its victory against India in a probing conflict in the Ran of Katchch.) Pakistani planners sought to ensure plausible deniability that regular forces were not involved. The bulk of each company of about 120 men was comprised of *razakars* and so-called mujahedeen. These *razakars* and mujahedeen were deliberately drawn from the 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 as did a small number of the elite Special Services Group commandos.¹² Groups of four to six companies were combined into units commanded by an officer with the rank of a major. Many of the locations at which the irregular fighters

1962), pp. 19-25; El-Edroos, "Afro Asian Revolutionary Warfare and Our Military Thought," *Pakistan Army Journal*, Vol. 4 (December 1962), pp. 35-41; Major Mohammad Shafi, "The Effectiveness of Guerilla War," *Pakistan Army Journal*, Vol. 5 (June 1963), pp. 4-11.

¹¹ Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, p. 105. Cohen cites Shafi, "Guerilla War," p.11.

¹² The Northern Light Infantry was inducted into the regular army in 1999 in part to reward it for its participation in the 1999 Kargil War and in part to properly 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), p. 21; Peter Lavoy, "Introduction: The Importance of the Kargil Conflict," in Peter Lavoy Ed. *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of Kargil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1-29.

were trained were later used to train mujahedeen for the Kashmir jihad launched in 1989.¹³

According to Praveen Swami, all told, Pakistan dispatched some 30,000 infiltrators during Operation Gibraltar 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, there are few reliable accounts about the actual number of infiltrators used during Operation Gibraltar. In Shuja Nawaz's account of this conflict, he cites one report of 15,000 irregular combatants at one engagement.¹⁴ While Operation Gibraltar failed to ignite the desired indigenous rebellion against India, it did succeed in precipitating the second conventional Indo-Pakistan conventional conflict: the 1965 war.¹⁵

While Pakistan sustained prolonged covert action in Kashmir, by the early 1970s it had also begun covertly supporting Islamist Pashtun militant groups in Afghanistan. (In the 1980s, it also provided extensive assistance to the Sikh ethno-nationalist insurgency in the Punjab.¹⁶) Contrary to conventional wisdom, this policy did not commence with the December 25, 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Rather, Pakistan began employing those dissident religious leaders who fled Afghanistan during President Daoud's tenure. Admittedly, Pakistan did this on a modest scale, taking care not to provoke punitive action from Afghanistan's protector, the Soviet Union. From at least 1973 onward, Pakistan began a policy of instrumentalizing Islamist Pashtun militias to prosecute its foreign policy objectives in Afghanistan with varying intensity of involvement.¹⁷

¹³ The most detailed account of this is given by Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad: The Covert War in Kashmir, 1947-2005* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.49-75. Swami used a number of classified Indian documents (which were subsequently declassified) obtained in his capacity as a journalist.

¹⁴ Nawaz, "[The First Kashmir War Revisited.](#)" p. 130. Nawaz too notes this figure with the caveat that it cannot be confirmed.

¹⁵ Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad*, pp. 60-62.

¹⁶ This is important to note because this insurgency had nothing to do with Muslim interests. Pakistan also stands accused of supporting ethnic insurgents in India's restive northeast.

¹⁷ See. Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington D.C.: CEIP, 2005), pp. 103-105, 167-68; Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 83-84; and Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Democracy in Afghanistan* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 79-81.

Clearly, the lineaments of Pakistan's Afghanistan policy predate the Soviet intervention and massive infusion of U.S. and Saudi funds. This is important to note because Pakistanis often opine that Pakistan was a victim of both U.S. exploitation to pursue its interests during the Soviet occupation and by U.S. abandonment of Pakistan once the Soviets withdrew.¹⁸ Regrettably, many U.S. policy makers and military personnel who engage with Pakistanis seem oblivious to this history as well.¹⁹

Pakistan intensified these activities with active support from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and others following the Soviet invasion. Pakistan argued for considerable U.S. military assistance, claiming that Pakistan's large-scale support of the anti-Soviet effort would render it vulnerable to Soviet military threat. During this period Pakistan dramatically expanded its armed forces, provided them with U.S. weapons systems and, under U.S. funding, further expanded the capabilities of its premier intelligence agency, the Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). And, in the service of the jihad, it employed religious institutions and parties, such as the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and the Jamiat-e-Ullemas-e-Islam (JUI), to raise a number of Pakistan-based militant groups to operate in Afghanistan and train Afghan militants who had sought refuge in Pakistan.

Pakistan preferred those Afghan militant factions that were Sunni Islamist, rather than Shia or secular, and Pashtun in ethnicity. This was a deliberate effort to ensure that Pashtun political aspirations would be channeled through religious – not ethnic – terms. This was motivated by Pakistan's long-standing discomfiture with Kabul's irredentist claims to Pakistan's Pashtun areas and by the activities of Pashtun nationalists in Afghanistan and Pakistan, who have episodically demanded a separate Pashtun state, often referred to as Pashtunistan.²⁰ With massive international support, the mujahedeen prevailed in ousting the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. This was an object lesson for

¹⁸ This narrative is deeply flawed. As noted, Pakistan had already begun pursuing such policies in Afghanistan. Pakistan benefited from its alliance with the United States in that it received weapons, cash, and training of the military and ISI. Moreover, Pakistan was allowed to continue receiving this support even though it had passed key nuclear red-lines which would have precipitated arms cut off had the Press Amendment not been passed. This is explained in considerable detail in C. Christine Fair, "Time for Sober Realism: U.S.-Pakistan Relations," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (April 2009).

¹⁹ While academic audiences may know this history, it has been my experience during years of interacting with U.S. government personnel—whether civilians or military—that are unaware of these facts. This lack of familiarity creates space for Pakistani interlocutors to argue that Americans have been fickle and perfidious and unreliable partners. I contend, and others may disagree, that this is an important part of Pakistan's rent seeking strategy towards the United States.

Pakistan: if mujahedeen in Afghanistan could defeat a nuclear-armed superpower, why could not a similar force succeed in Indian-administered Kashmir? While Pakistan's interest in launching and sustaining a guerilla war with India began as early as the 1950s, the mujahedeen success buoyed Pakistan's confidence in the utility of such war in Kashmir.

Since Pakistan had concluded that it could launch a more sustained proxy campaign in Kashmir – as opposed to episodic operations – it was enabled by another important factor. By the 1980s, the United States had determined that Pakistan had developed a nuclear weapons capability. Military aid to Pakistan could only be supplied through a presidential certification throughout the latter years of the anti-Soviet jihad. By 1990, President Bush declined to certify that Pakistan had not passed a nuclear threshold and was subject to military aid cutoff. From that point onward, Pakistan assumed that status of a covert nuclear power which would render any retaliatory conventional response to its jihad ever-more costly.²¹

A third factor that permitted Pakistan to expand the scale and scope of the Kashmir jihad was the surplus of battle-hardened jihadis from the Afghan conflict and the sprawling infrastructure to produce and train new militants that had been developed to support the Afghan effort. Thus, with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, Pakistan redeployed many of those mujahedeen to the Kashmir front and established training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan to train militants for the Kashmir theatre.²²

Initially, the Kashmir insurgency developed indigenously in response to India's mismanagement of the province. Several genuinely Kashmiri militant groups formed in

²⁰ Afghanistan rejects the de facto and de jure border, the Durand Line, that separates Pakistan from Afghanistan. The Durand Line was demarcated by the British in a treaty signed by the Afghan ruler, Abdur Rehman Khan, in 1893. Afghanistan argues that the treaty was signed under duress and furthermore that Pakistan was not a successor state to the British Raj. As such, Afghans argue that the treaty is void. International law does not support the Afghan position. See, among others, Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 48, 100, Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Democracy in Afghanistan* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 55-92; Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, pp. 160-168.

²¹ See discussion in C. Christine Fair, "Time for Sober Relations: US-Pakistan Relations", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (April 2009).

²² Alexander Evans, "The Kashmir insurgency: As bad as it gets," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 69-81.

response, some of which enjoyed Pakistani support. As some of these indigenous groups began espousing independence rather than union with Pakistan, and as several turned from violence towards political activism, the new coterie of Pakistan and Afghanistan-based groups directly competed with these older, more ethnically Kashmiri groups. After the introduction of these fighters under the nuclear umbrella, many indigenous, pro-independence Kashmir insurgents were eliminated by Pakistan-based group such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and a raft of Deobandi groups like Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami. By the mid-1990s, the conflict had been over-run by several Pakistan-based militant groups who were prosecuting Pakistan's agenda of weakening India and wresting Kashmir from it.²³ At present, only one set of militant groups are largely Kashmiri in ethnicity, Hizbol-Mujahideen and related factions such as al Badr. All of the other groups are dominated by Punjabis and Pashtuns from Pakistan.²⁴

The most lethal of these militant groups are adherents to the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith interpretative traditions. These groups were and are hostile to the heterodox, syncretic, Sufistic form of Islam practiced by Kashmiris in the valley. These Pakistan-based militant groups sought to fight Indian forces on behalf of Islamabad, but they also sought to convert Kashmiris to these more orthodox interpretative traditions. Whereas Kashmiri indigenous militant groups were loathe to destroy their sacred shrines, these foreign militants showed little compunction about doing so.²⁵

Moreover, these groups also engaged in considerable excesses in pursuit of their [prosyletization](#) efforts, such as attacking papers that declined to publish their propaganda or employ women, throwing acid on women's faces, discouraging families from sending

²³ See *inter alia* Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad*, pp. 163-186; Evans, "The Kashmir insurgency: As bad as it gets;" [Arif Jamal](#); *Shadow War: The Untold Story of Jihad in Kashmir* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2009), pp.131-178; Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2008), pp. 38-41, See also Sumit Ganguly, "A Mosque, A Shrine, and Two Sieges," in C. Christine Fair and Sumit Ganguly Eds. *Treading on Hallowed Ground: Counterinsurgency in Sacred Spaces* (New York: Oxford, 2008), pp.66-88.

²⁴ See C. Christine Fair, "Who Are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2008) and C. Christine Fair, "Militant recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for Al-Qa'ida and Other Organizations," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 27(6) (November/December 2004).

²⁵ See *inter alia* Alexander Evans, "The Kashmir insurgency: As bad as it gets," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 69-81; Sumit Ganguly, "A Mosque, A Shrine, and Two Sieges," in C. Christine Fair and Sumit Ganguly Eds. *Treading on Hallowed Ground: Counterinsurgency in Sacred Spaces* (New York: Oxford, 2008), pp.66-88.

their girls to school, insisting that females abandon traditional Kashmiri veiling practices in favor of *burqas* and *nikab* (face covering).²⁶ The extent of the dissatisfaction with Pakistan is evidenced by a 2002 poll conducted by A.C. Nielson 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-dominant district of Jammu). That poll found almost no support in Kashmir, much less in Jammu, for unification with Pakistan.²⁷

Pakistan in Afghanistan

While Pakistan became ever-more embroiled in its proxy war in Kashmir, Pakistan sustained its focus on an array of Pashtun Islamist groups in Afghanistan well after the disappearance of direct Soviet and American intervention. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the country was engulfed by a sanguinary civil war in which various warlords fought for control over post-occupation Afghanistan. To achieve a reasonably stable Afghanistan whose leadership was positively disposed towards Islamabad, Pakistan concentrated its attention and patronage on a Pashtun militant faction, Hizb-e-Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.²⁸ Pakistan hoped that Hekmatyar would secure a corridor to Central Asia that would begin in Peshawar, continue through Jalalabad and Kabul, stretch onward to Mazar-i-Sharif, and finally reach Tashkent. Kabul remained the choke point in this passageway. Islamabad also hoped that Hekmatyar would recognize the Durand Line as the international border.²⁹

Later, under Benazir Bhutto and with the guidance of her interior minister General Nasrullah Babar, Pakistan concluded that Hekmatyar could not deliver a stable

²⁶ Fair fieldwork in Kashmir in fall 2002. Also see Human Rights Report, “*Everyone Lives in Fear: Patterns of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir*,” September 2006. <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india0906web.pdf>. That report details the atrocities of both the Indian security forces as well as the militant groups.

²⁷ “Kashmiris Don’t Want to Join Pak: Survey,” *The Times of India*, September 27, 2002. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/articleshow?articid=23409600>.

²⁸ During the Soviet jihad, Pakistan backed seven Pakistan-based militant groups, six of which were Pashtun dominated. Burhanuddin Rabbani’s Tajik-dominated Jamiat-i-Islami was the only non-Pashtun group supported by Pakistan. See Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2002). Ch. 4, 81-110.

²⁹ This discussion draws from C. Christine Fair, “Pakistan’s Relations with Central Asia: Is Past Prologue,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 2008), p. 201-227.

Afghanistan friendly to Islamabad, much less a corridor to Central Asia and formal recognition of the Durand Line as the de jure border. Pakistan re-optimized and shifted its patronage towards the newly-emergent Taliban and, from 1994 to 2001, Pakistan provided military, diplomatic, and financial assistance to the Pashtun Taliban movement.³⁰

The Taliban also failed to deliver much of what Islamabad had hoped to accomplish. The Taliban government, while able to provide a highly contested form of security, lacked international legitimacy and increasingly became an international pariah due to its indulgence in embarrassing activities. Examples of such activities included destroying the Bamiyan Buddhas, aligning with al Qaeda, and drawing international attention for the mistreatment of women. Moreover, the Taliban continued to harbor sectarian terrorists and criminals that Pakistan wanted to prosecute, despite Pakistan's repeated requests that they be remanded to Pakistani authorities.³¹

Over time, some of Pakistan's security elite began to see the Taliban more of a liability than an asset for Pakistan, especially after 1998 when al Qaeda organized the simultaneous attacks on two American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania purportedly from Afghanistan. The United States retaliated by showering Afghanistan and mistakenly a suspect pharmaceutical factory in Sudan with cruise missiles, targeting al Qaeda facilities near Khost. The strikes helped consolidate Mullah Omar's commitment to Bin Laden despite earlier reservations about his guest. During that strike, the Pakistan militant group, Harkat-ul Mujahedeen, said that five of its members were killed who were training there.³² While differences of opinion emerged between the Taliban and some of Pakistan's strategic elites, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States rendered Islamabad's residual support for the Taliban untenable.³³ Pakistan was faced

³⁰ This discussion draws from C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Relations with Central Asia: Is Past Prologue," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 2008), p. 201-227.

³¹ See discussion in C. Christine Fair, *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with India and Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2004).

³² This discussion draws from C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Relations with Central Asia: Is Past Prologue," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 2008), p. 201-227. Also see Chidanand Rajghatta and Kamal Siddiqui, "Pak cries foul over US revenge strike," *Indian Express* (22 August, 1998). indianexpress.com/res/web/pIe/ie/daily/19980822/23450784.html.

with the stark option of abandoning them and joining the war on terrorism or becoming the target of the same.³⁴

As is well-known, Pakistan's U-turn on the Taliban appears to have been short-lived.³⁵ Some analysts, such as Ahmed Rashid, postulate that Pakistan recommitted itself to the Taliban in light of perilous U.S. decisions in Afghanistan including: permitting the Northern Alliance to take Kabul despite assurances to the contrary; relying upon Northern Alliance warlords to provide security while the United States maintained a light footprint; failure to secure desirable levels of Pashtun representation in the new interim government; and under-representation of Pashtuns in the ranks and officer corps of the police and army. Importantly, Pakistan believes—or at least claims—that these conditions still hold despite massive improvements. Other factors that motivate Pakistan's policies towards the Afghan Taliban and Afghanistan include the stated desire in 2005 that the United States should step down as NATO steps up, which was tantamount to the international community withdrawing. Of particular concern is the expanded presence of India throughout Afghanistan as well as Iran and Central Asia. Pakistan assessed that soon Afghanistan would be “abandoned” again by the international community, but rendered pro-Indian and anti-Pakistani.³⁶ Such thinking justifies Pakistan's sustained commitment to the Afghan Taliban even while it struggles with an

³³ Despite repeated requests (and indeed payments of cash and vehicles) by Saudi Arabia, and later by Pakistan, the Taliban refused to hand over Bin Laden. Indeed, while the Taliban may have been dubious of Bin Laden initially, the 1998 US missile strikes against him cemented the alliance between Taliban and al Qaeda leadership. This relationship persisted and strengthened in subsequent years putting Pakistan in an ever-more difficult position. Pakistan came under renewed fire for supporting the Taliban after they destroyed the world heritage site, the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001. ‘Reporters see wrecked Buddhas,’ *BBC News* (26 March, 2001). news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1242856.stm.

³⁴ See account in Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire* (New York: Free Press 2006), p. 201. Also see in C. Christine Fair, *The Counterterror Coalitions* and C. Christine Fair, “Pakistan's Relations with Central Asia: Is Past Prologue.”

³⁵ Seth G. Jones, ‘Pakistan's Dangerous Game’, *Survival* 49/1 (Spring 2007) 15-32.

³⁶ Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, pp. 86-91, 240-261; [David W. Barno](http://www.usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20071031_art006.pdf), “Fighting “the other war” counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan, 2003- 2005,” *Military Review*, Sept-Oct, 2007. http://www.usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20071031_art006.pdf. This 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 Lt. Gen David Barno who served as the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2005.

incipient – albeit inchoate – insurgency of its own by forces self-described as “Pakistani Taliban.”

Islamabad continually expresses its concerns about the region again being “abandoned” by the United States and the international community. According to this professed concern, Pakistan worries that the Afghan Taliban will grow in strength from their successful vanquishing of international forces, enter Pakistan and pose a threat to the state. In some measure, this stated concern should be read with 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 February 2010 recent arrest of Mullah Baradur in Pakistan. (As discussed below, the Pakistan arrested him because he sought a separate dispensation with President Karzai independent of Islamabad’s equities).

Second, it is the view of this author that contrary to Chief of Army Staff’s public statements, that the Pakistan prefers that the international military forces again depart from Afghanistan. During numerous interviews with Pakistani army and intelligence officers during the summer of 2010, the vast majority of officers explained to this author that the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan was directly responsible for Pakistan’s internal security challenges as typified by the Pakistan Taliban. Moreover, these officers were nearly unanimous that when the United States departs Afghanistan, Pakistani militant groups will cease targeting Pakistan because it would no longer be in a military alliance with the United States in prosecuting the American war in Afghanistan. These officers further noted that when the United States leaves, India will have less freedom of movement and Pakistan will be able to re-exert control over Afghanistan, which the army still sees as a potential client rather than a neighbor.³⁷

Based upon interviews with Indian interlocutors in the summer of 2009 and the spring of 2010, India indeed is contemplating withdrawing when and if international forces began leaving Afghanistan. India’s contingency planning has been further catalyzed by President Obama’s pronouncement that the United States will begin

³⁷ Author interviews with Pakistan army officers in the Makin Valley in South Waziristan, Razmak in North Waziristan, 11th Corps Headquarters in Peshawar, officers at the Anti-Terrorism Training Center near Mangal dam in July 2010. The author was also briefed by various analysts of the ISI also in July 2010.

transferring security and governance responsibility to the Afghans beginning in August 2011, consonant with conditions on the ground permitting such a safe transfer.³⁸

Whether General Kayani's public views or the private views of the officers who spoke with this author are more reflective of Pakistan's strategic assessment, Pakistan profits tremendously from the benefits (financial, political and diplomatic), which it has accrued from again being a front line state in securing American and international security objectives. This presents Pakistan with a serious motivation to wanting the United States and its partners to remain engaged in the region. Whether the United States remains militarily engaged in Afghanistan with a heavy footprint or whether the United States scales back its military mission, Pakistan is well positioned to gain from either outcome.

Asymmetric Conflict under the Nuclear Umbrella³⁹

While Pakistan has a long history of using Islamist militants as proxies, Washington's determination that Pakistan had crossed nuclear red lines in the late 1980s enabled Pakistan to expand the jihad in scale, scope, territorial range, and ferocity. Being declared an overt nuclear power allowed Pakistan to prosecute this policy with increasing impunity with evermore confidence 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 being proscribed for having acquired extra-legal nuclear weapons. Since India essentially became an overt nuclear power following its first explosion of nuclear devices in 1974, any conflict between the two could comprise a conflict between two nuclear-capable adversaries.⁴⁰

³⁸ Author interviews with analysts and retired Indian officials in April 2010 and August 2009. Various Indian positions on its future options are summarized in C. Christine Fair, "India in Afghanistan, part I: strategic interests, regional concerns," Af-Pak Channel, ForeignPolicy.com, October 26, 2010 and C. Christine Fair, "India in Afghanistan, part II: Indo-U.S. relations in the lengthening AfPak shadow," Af-Pak Channel, ForeignPolicy.com, October 27, 2010.

³⁹ This section is drawn from Fair's reworking and updating sections of an earlier RAND publication, 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).

⁴⁰ P.R.Chari believes that the evidence that the pre-1999 crises were imbued with a nuclear dimension. See P.R. Chari, "Nuclear Crisis, Escalation Control, and Deterrence in South Asia," Working Paper, The Stimson Center, Washington D.C., 2003. http://beta.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/escalation_chari.pdf.

However, Pakistan became even more aggressive following the 1998 Indian and Pakistani reciprocal nuclear tests. It pushed the envelope of its asymmetric strategy by launching a limited incursion in Indian-administered Kashmir 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 1998 and the attainment of overt nuclear weapons status.⁴¹

In that limited aims conflict, often referred to as “the Kargil Conflict”, Pakistan employed the Northern Light infantry disguised as civilian irregular fighters variously called *razakars* or mujahedeen. It is likely that the Chief of Army Staff at the time, General Pervez Musharraf, began planning for this operation in the fall of 1998 when Pakistan’s then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and India’s then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee undertook the historical “Lahore Peace Process.” That process culminated in a historic visit to Lahore by Vajpayee in February 1999, who was widely within and without India as a Hindu nationalist. During that visit, Vajpayee surprised the publics of both India and Pakistan when he finally acceptance of the legitimacy of the Pakistani state at an important landmark commemorating Pakistan’s independence, the Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore.⁴²

While Pakistan had limited territorial aims, the use of the mujahedeen cover was a part of its denial and deception strategy that pushed the envelope in Pakistan’s use of low intensity conflict under the nuclear umbrella.⁴³ Kargil caused some analysts to reconsider their evaluation that nuclearization of the subcontinent would have a stabilizing impact.⁴⁴

However, Hagerty contends that between 1987 and 1990, India began increasingly treating Pakistan like a nuclear power both due to Pakistan’s heightend nuclear signaling and due to the way in which Washinton treated Pakistan vis-à-vis its nuclear program. See Devin T. Hagerty, *The consequences of nuclear proliferation: lessons from South Asia* (), pp. 117-132.

⁴¹ See Tellis et al. *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella*; Paul S. Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent: Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 115-140; C. Christine Fair, “Militants In the Kargil Conflict: Myths, Realities, and Impacts,” in Peter Lavoy Ed. *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of Kargil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 231-257.

⁴² Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. xxiv; Dennis Kux, *India-Pakistan negotiations: is past still prologue?* (Washington D.C.: USIP, 2006), pp. 41-42.

⁴³ Fair, “Militants In the Kargil Conflict: Myths, Realities, and Impacts.”

Kargil exemplified what has been called the “stability-instability paradox.”⁴⁵ The notion turns on the dual assertions that nuclear weapons can stabilize security competition between two adversaries and foreclose a major war while at the same time enabling if not provoking conflict at the lower end of the conflict spectrum because nuclear weapons confer immunity against escalation.⁴⁶

The Kargil conflict underscored the importance of nuclear weapons to Pakistan’s strategy in Kashmir and India and amply illustrated the destabilizing aspects of nuclearization of the subcontinent. In particular, Pakistan’s possession of these weapons was a critical *precondition* that enabled the planning and execution of Kargil since nuclear weapons ostensibly provided security against a full-scale Indian retaliation.⁴⁷ This immunity had two dimensions. First, Pakistan’s nuclear assets deterred both Indian conventional and nuclear threats. 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 as an enabler of low intensity conflict.⁴⁸ Pakistan also conceded this understanding publicly: in April of 1999, General Pervez Musharraf, who was then Chief of Army Staff, announced that even though nuclearization rendered large-scale conventional wars obsolete, proxy wars were likely.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ For a discussion of proponents of this view, see Neil Joeck, *Maintaining Nuclear Stability* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997), Adelphi Paper, 0567-932X.

⁴⁵ See Glenn Snyder, “The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror,” in Paul Seaburry, ed. *The Balance of Power* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1964), pp. 185-201; ; Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 19-22.

⁴⁶ Michael Krepon and Chris Gagné, “Introduction.” in *The Stability-Instability Paradox: Nuclear Weapons and Brinkmanship In South Asia* ed. Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne (Washington D.C.: Stimson Center, June 2001).

⁴⁷ Tellis et al. *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella*.

⁴⁸ Timothy Hoyt, “Kargil: The Nuclear Dimension.” Paper presented for the Kargil Book Project Conference, Monterey, CA, May 30-31, 2002. DRAFT, cited with permission.; Tellis et al, *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella*.

⁴⁹ “Pak defence strong, says army chief,” April 19, 1999 cited in Timothy D. Hoyt, “Politics, proximity and paranoia: the evolution of Kashmir as a nuclear flashpoint,” *The India Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3, July 2003, pp. 117-144. See also statement of Musharraf in April 1999 cited in the Kargil Review Committee, *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: SAGE, December 15, 1999), pp. 77.

While Kargil may have been the first conventional conflict under the nuclear umbrella, the most brazen use of asymmetric and proxy warfare in Kashmir and beyond happened after 1998, consistent with the notion that nuclearization has both enabled if not emboldened Pakistan's use of militancy. Attacks since 1998 include *inter alia* the 1999 LeT attack on a security forces establishment collocated in New Delhi's tourist attraction, the Red Fort; the 2001 JM attack on the Indian Parliament; the LeT massacre of army wives and children in Kaluchak; various bombings by LeT and affiliated groups throughout India, including the 2006 and 2008 attacks in Mumbai.⁵⁰ It would appear that with the development of first a covert and then an overt nuclear capability (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 Landscape⁵¹

Prior to General Pervez Musharraf's acceptance of the U.S. ultimatum to join the U.S.-led global war on terrorism in September 2001, Pakistan's militant landscape could be meaningfully segregated by the group's sectarian orientation, its theatre of operation, and its ethnic constitution. For example, there were militant groups (askari tanzems) that traditionally focused on Kashmir, including the Deobandi groups of Jaish-e-Mohammad and Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, as well as Ahl-e-Hadith organizations such as Punjab-based Lashkar-e-Taiba. While these groups are often referred to as "Kashmiri groups," this is a misnomer as they have few ethnic Kashmiris among their ranks and most do not operate exclusively in Kashmir. Indeed LeT and JM have long operated throughout India, and Deobandi groups have in recent years begun operating in Pakistan. Both LeT and several Deobandi militant groups have also been operating in Afghanistan

⁵⁰ Fair advanced this argument in Angel Rabasa et al. "The Lessons of Mumbai," Rand Occasional Paper, 2009. http://rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP249/. See also Fair, "Leader-Led Jihad in Pakistan."

⁵¹ This section draws from C. Christine Fair, "Pakistani Attitudes Towards Militancy and State Responses to Counter Militancy," written while the author was a Luce Fellow at the University of Washington in 2009. This paper is forthcoming in an edited volume by James Wellman. C. Christine Fair, "Who Are Pakistan's Militants and Their Families?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2008) and C. Christine Fair, "Militant recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for Al-Qa'ida and Other Organizations," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 27(6) (November/December 2004).

against U.S., NATO, and Afghan forces.⁵² In contrast, other “Kashmiri groups” are operating under the influence of the Islamist political party Jamaat-e-Islami such as al-Badr and Hizbul Mujahadeen, which tend to be comprised of ethnic Kashmiris and have retained their operational focus upon 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).⁵³ Both of these anti-Shia 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 also have overlapping membership with other Deobandi militant groups, including the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban among others, all of which have strong connections to the JUI.⁵⁴ In the past, Shia sectarian groups were also lethally active. These groups targeted Sunni Muslims and obtained funding from Iran, although these groups have largely disappeared.⁵⁵

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 micro-emirates of *sharia* within large swathes of the Pashtun belt. Despite recent and popular characterization of the Tehreek-e-Taliban 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.⁵⁶ Indeed, the

⁵² 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 on March 11, 2009.

⁵³ Many of these groups have been proscribed numerous times only to re-emerge. Many now operate under new names. This essay uses the names which are likely to be most familiar to readers.

⁵⁴ Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection* (London: C. Hurst, 2004); C. Christine Fair, “Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for Al-Qa’ida and Other Organizations,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 27 (November/December 2004): 489–504.

⁵⁵ Since the onset of sanguinary sectarian violence in Iraq and Iran’s 2006 victory in Lebanon, it has been suspected that Iran may once again be involved in inciting anti-Sunni violence in Pakistan. Indeed throughout 2007 Pakistan has seen a sharp increase in sectarian violence compared to 2006 or previous years. However, the overwhelming preponderance of those attacks has been perpetrated by anti-Shia militias. Thus, the allegations of Iran’s involvement are not supported empirically at this point.

⁵⁶ Long-time observer of militancy in Pakistan, Mariam Abu-Zahab, strongly discounts the claims 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 and leadership circumscribed by this boundary. Thus she discounts the most capacious claims that the TTP is a coherent organization running

media often describe the TTP as an umbrella organization for nearly all anti-Pakistan Islamist militants in South and North Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur and Darra Adamkhel tribal regions as well as the settled districts of Swat, Buner, Upper Dir, Lower Dir, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, Mardan and Kohat. Indeed, militants from these areas also claim to be affiliated with the TTP. However, Rahimullah Yusufzai, a leading Pakistani journalist and expert on the TTP, rubbishes these assertions and contends that the organization is hardly coherent, much less disciplined.⁵⁷

Jones and Fair agree. Drawing from the work of John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, they describe the TTP's constituent groups as comprising a system of loose networks.⁵⁸ These networks tend to be dispersed and varying in size; however, the various nodes can communicate with each other and, to some degree, coordinate their campaigns.

Officially the TTP came into being formally in late 2007, when several Pakistani militant commanders announced that they were operating under the banner of the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP or the Pakistani Taliban Movement) under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. (Baitullah Mehsud 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 Baitullah Mehsud and forged the Shura Ittehad-ul-Mujahiden. The alliance was short-lived and collapsed nearly as soon as it was announced.⁵⁹

the length and width of the Pashtun belt. This has view has been buttressed by field interviews in Pakistan in February and April, 2009.

⁵⁷ [Rahimullah Yusufzai](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=5169&tx_ttnews[backPid]=167&no_cache=1), "A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part One – North and South Waziristan," *Terrorism Monitor* Volume, Vol. 6, No. 18, September 22, 2008. Available at [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).

⁵⁸ John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1997), p. 280; Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010), p. 24.

⁵⁹ See Hassan Abbas, "Increasing Talibanization in Pakistan's Seven Tribal Agencies," *Terrorism Monitor* Vol. 5, No. 18 (September 27, 2007), pp. 1–5; Hassan Abbas, "A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan" *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 2008, pp. 1-4; Syed Shoaib Hasan, "Profile: Baitullah Mehsud," *BBC News*, December 28, 2007. Available at

Following the death of Baitullah Mehsood, TTP leadership announced amidst some discord that Hakimullah Mehsood would succeed him.⁶⁰ The TTP has been surprisingly coherent under the leadership of Hakimullah Mehsood and during his tenure the TTP has actually intensified its suicide campaign against Pakistani security and intelligence agencies.⁶¹ Since his assumption of control, the TTP's campaigns against civilian targets became ever more vicious. The TTP has singled out Shia and Ahmedis who are considered "munafiqueen" (those Muslims that spread discord in the Umma) and "murtad" (liable to be killed) respectively. Important Sufi shrines have not been spared either.⁶² This focus no doubt reflects Hakimullah's long-time association with the sectarian terrorist group, Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan.⁶³

However, prior to the official consolidation of the TTP, several militant commanders came to prominence providing the necessary conditions for the formalization of the TTP network. Nek Mohammad Wazir (from the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe in Wana, South Waziritsan) was perhaps the first Pakistani militant to assume some degree of prominence. He battled the Pakistan army following its spring 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7163626.stm. 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 as he dispatches fighters to Afghanistan. Gul Bahadar has had a number of differences with Baitullah Mehsood. It is not clear what this alliance means for Pakistan or for the U.S. and allies in Afghanistan. See Saeed Shah, "Taliban rivals unite to fight US troop surge," *The Guardian*, March 3, 2009. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/03/taliban-pakistan-afghanistan-us-surge>.

⁶⁰ Zahid Hussein, "Hakimullah Mehsud named as new Pakistan Taleban leader," *TimesOnline.com*, August 23, 2009. Available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6806809.ece>.

⁶¹ Pak Institute for Peace Studies, "Pakistan Security Report 2009," January 2009. Available at http://san-pips.com/index.php?action=ra&id=psr_list_1, "Hakimullah Mehsud," *New York Times*, April 29, 2010. Available at http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/m/hakimullah_mehsud/index.html; "Pakistan Blast Sharpens Concern on Taliban," April 1, 2010. Available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/jan-june10/pakistan_01-01.html.

⁶² Since 2005, Pakistani militants have launched more than 70 suicide attacks against Sufi shrines killing hundreds. Attacks have intensified in recent years. Lahore's prominent Datta Ganj Bakhsh—perhaps the most important Sufi shrines in the Punjab was attacked in late June 2010. See Owais Tohid, "In Pakistan, militant attacks on Sufi shrines on the rise," *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 5, 2010. Available at www.csmonitor.com/.../In-Pakistan-militant-attacks-on-Sufi-shrines-on-the-rise. Sabrina Tavernese, "Suicide Bombers Strike Sufi Shrine in Pakistan," *The New York Times*, July 1, 2010. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/world/asia/02pstan.html>.

⁶³ Mansur Khan Mahsud, "Who is Hakimullah," Af-Pak Channel, ForeignPolicy.com, April 29, 2010. Available at http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/04/29/who_is_hakimullah.

South Waziristan offensive at U.S. urging. He fought the Pakistan Army to a standstill and compelled the army to ratify its own defeat with a peace deal, known as the Shakai Accord. The agreement was finalized on terms that were entirely set by Nek Mohammad. For example, the signing ceremony was held in Shakai, his own stronghold. On the occasion, the 11th Corps Commander, Lt. Gen Safdar Hussain, publicly garlanded Nek Mohammad. This event was heavily covered in Pakistan's media and thus conferred upon him widespread legitimacy that he did not enjoy before the accord.⁶⁴ Baitullah Mehsud rose to prominence after Nek Mohammad's death when he also forced the Pakistan army to concede defeat and ratify it as the Sararogha agreement in February 2005.⁶⁵

In North Waziristan, Hafiz Gul Bahadur became the amir (commander) of the Pakistani militancy there. However, Bahadur is now a pro-Pakistan militant commander opposed to Hakimullah and his predecessor and focuses exclusively upon US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. In fact, during the winter of 2007-2008, Bahadur refused to cooperate with Baitullah Mehsud when the latter was under attack by the Pakistan army. Bahadur 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.⁶⁶

As the above discussion suggests, several militant emerged well before the Pakistan Taliban formally announced its existence under Baitullah Mehsud's leadership. Arguably, the various militant movements in Pakistan began to gain prominence coincident with – or even precipitated by – the Pakistani military operations in FATA at the urging of the United States. Several Pakistani analysts contend that the onset of U.S. strikes in FATA first by conventional air platforms and later by un-manned aerial

⁶⁴ See interview with Rahimullah Yusufzai about this incident available at *Frontline: Return of the Taliban*, October 3, 2006. Available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban/militants/mohammed.html>.

⁶⁵ Ismael Khan, "Baitullah Mehsud, Pakistan's biggest dilemma," *The Dawn*, December 31, 2007. Available at <http://www.dawn.com/2007/text/nat10.htm>.

⁶⁶ [Rahimullah Yusufzai](#), "A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part One – North and South Waziristan," *Terrorism Monitor Volume*, Vol. 6, No. 18, September 22, 2008. Available at [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).

vehicles (drones) catalyzed the insurgency.⁶⁷ Specifically, they pinpoint the October 2006 U.S. drone strikes in Damadola, Bajaur to eliminate Ayman al-Zawahiri in an al Qaeda-affiliated madrassah in Chingai village in Bajaur as the most important event that spawned the suicide attacks against security forces in FATA and NWFP.⁶⁸

This madrassah in Chingai was run by the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammad (TNSM), a Sunni militant outfit founded by Sufi Mohammad. Mohammad dispatched 8,000 volunteers into Afghanistan to fight the Americans and Northern Alliance in support of the Taliban during Operation Enduring Freedom. While Sufi Muhammad was jailed, his militant son-in-law, Mullah Fazlullah took over the organization. Sufi Mohammad's deputy, Maulvi Liaquat, died 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 forces by the means by which militants were targeting Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq. He furthered that "We will carry out these suicide attacks soon." The angry mob assembled at his speech raised their voices in support.⁶⁹

While the so-called Talibanization of the tribal areas was initially limited to North and South Waziristan, the phenomenon next spread to Bajaur. Pakistani Taliban next

⁶⁷ While drone strikes were at first infrequent, they have become more routine. Between August 2008 and April 1 2009, there were at least 30 drone strikes which may have killed as many as 300 people. While the political leadership complain about this, it is widely believed that the targeting of militants in FATA is done with the tacit knowledge and input from the Pakistan army, public displays of outrage notwithstanding. See "Many killed in 'US drone Attack,'" *BBC News*, April 1, 2009. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7975871.stm. Also see Tom Coghlan, Zahid Hussain, Jeremy Page, "Secrecy and denial as Pakistan lets CIA use airbase to strike militants," *The Times*, April 17, 2009. Available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article5755490.ece>.

⁶⁸ Imtiaz Gul, *The Al Qaeda Connection: The Taliban and Terror in Pakistan's Tribal Areas* (London: Penguin/Viking, 2009, pp. 95-96); "Islamabad Links Suicide Bomber To Madrasah Attack," *Radio Free Europe*, November 8, 2006. Available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/pakistan/2006/pakistan-061108-rferl01.htm>; K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan: A Chronology of Recent Affairs," Congressional Research Service Report, December 18, 2006. Available at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rs21584.pdf>, p.2.

⁶⁹ See Massoud Ansari and Behroz Khan, "Air force officers held for attempt to murder Musharraf with rockets," PakistanDefense.com, May 11, 2006. Available at <http://www.defence.pk/forums/strategic-geopolitical-issues/2745-paf-personnel-busted-assasination-attempt.html>. See also Bill Roggio, "Aftermath of the Bajaur Airstrike," *The Long War Journal*, October 31, 2006. Available at http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2006/10/aftermath_of_the_baj.php.

surfaced in areas that had previously been peaceful, such as Mohmand agency, Orakzai, and Kurram. They also emerged in the frontier areas of Bannu, Tank, Kohat, Lakki Marwar, Dera Ismil Khan, and Swat. Throughout the summer of 2007, the Frontier Corps and the Frontier Constabulary battled the Pakistani militants associated with the TNSM, which seized the Swat Valley in late October.⁷⁰

Militant groups under various local leaders have effectively exploited socio-economic grievance; failures of the state to provide services such access to rule of law and justice; and frustration with the corruption-riven colonial-era governance structures in the FATA. The Pakistani Taliban in Swat reportedly pursued a system of redistributive justice wherein they seized the lands of wealthy landowners (Khans) and rewarded landless peasant who even signed up to support the Pakistan Taliban active there.⁷¹ Similarly, militant commanders in the FATA have pressured the political agents to provide services without requisite payment of bribes. They have established functional – if draconian – police functions and dispute resolution. The much-maligned *qazi* courts (courts run by Islamist jurists) which were to be established in Swat required the addition of new *qazis* (Islamic jurists) should their case load exceed 150 cases. No such provision exists in the mainstream courts. The Pakistani Taliban also established “love marriage bureaus” to solemnize “love marriages.” This has the advantage of appealing to youth who resent forced marriages and ameliorates the economic requirement of young men to pay large bride prices.⁷²

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.⁷³ Despite its ostensible recent coinage, the term “Punjabi Taliban” has a long

⁷⁰ C. Christine Fair, “Pakistan Loses Swat to Local Taliban,” *Terrorism Focus*, 4(37) (2007).

⁷¹ See Jane Parlez, “Landowners Still in Exile From Unstable Pakistan Area,” *The New York Times*, July 27, 2009. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/28/world/asia/28swat.html>. Also see Sartaj Khan, “Imperialism, religion and class in Swat,” *International Socialism*, Issue: 123, June 24, 2009. Khan was expanding upon an earlier article, “Behind the Crisis in Swat,” *The News*, , November 27, 2008, available at <http://www.khyberwatch.com/forums/showthread.php?2295-Update-on-Swat!/page48>. For a vigorous countervailing view see Farhat Taj, “No Class War in Swat,” *The News*, December 18, 2008. Available at <http://www.khyberwatch.com/forums/showthread.php?2295-Update-on-Swat!/page49>.

⁷² Author fieldwork in Pakistan in February and April 2009 (Peshawar, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore) and August 2010 (Peshawar, Mingora, Islamabad, Lahore).

⁷³ See Sabrina Tavernise, Richard A. Oppel Jr. And Eric Schmitt, “United Militants Threaten Pakistan’s Populous Heart,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2009. Available at

and complex history. Since 2009, it has acquired significant political importance.⁷⁴ 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 for the same reason as some Punjabis prefer to attribute the threat to Pakistan to the "Pashtun other," who are often characterized in stereotypical terms such as "uncivilized," "war-like," and "violent," among others.⁷⁵

Pakistan's political leaders have also sought to deploy 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 to groups such as SSP and LeJ, which is driven by electoral considerations. The PML-N Punjab Chief Minister, Shahbaz Sharif, accused Interior Minister Rahman Malik of using the term to foment conflict between provinces. Shahbaz Sharif further argued that Rahman Malik's use of the term along with "Punjabi terrorist" was tantamount to condemning of the people of Punjab.⁷⁶

While it is tempting to view this as a new theatre or even as a future locus of Talibanization in the heartland of the Punjab, these sites of militancy across Pakistan are inter-related. Punjab-based groups such as the Deobandi Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM) are components of the TTP and conduct attacks on behalf of the TTP. In fact, the so-called Punjabi Taliban groups form the back-bone of the TTP and have played an important role in attacking Sufi, Shia, Ahmedi and other civilian targets in the Punjab in particular.⁷⁷

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/14/world/asia/14punjab.html>. See also Hassan Abbas, "Defining the Punjabi Taliban Network," *CTC Sentinel*, Volume 2, No. 4, (April 2009), pages 1-4.

⁷⁴ Rahimullah Yusufzai, "The discourse on Punjabi Taliban," *The News*, July 6, 2009. Available at <http://www.cssforum.com.pk/general/news-articles/36007-discourse-punjabi-taliban-rahimullah-yusufzai.html>.

⁷⁵ 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,'" SANA.com, June 4, 2010. Available at <http://www.sananews.net/english/2010/06/04/rehman-malik-asserts-he-used-no-term-like-%E2%80%98punjabi-taliban%E2%80%99/>.

⁷⁶ Rahimullah Yusufzai, "The discourse on Punjabi Taliban."

⁷⁷ Bill Roggio, "Suicide bomber kills 60 at mosque in Pakistan's northwest," *The Long War Journal*, November 5, 2010. Available at

In addition to the above noted Pakistani groups, Pakistan also hosts elements of the Afghan Taliban, with *shuras* in Quetta, Peshawar, and Karachi.⁷⁸ The Afghan Taliban remain focused on ousting foreign forces in Afghanistan, overthrowing the Karzai regime, and restoring their role in governing Afghanistan. Pakistani territory is also used by al Qaeda. Al Qaeda 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, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad among numerous others) have been arrested in Pakistani cities.⁷⁹

Since late 2001 and 2002, many of Pakistan's militant groups – particularly those of Deobandi background – have splintered or have reoriented in terms of targets and tactics. Many of the Deobandi groups are tightly allied to the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban and are increasingly aiming their resources at the Pakistani state even though some elements within these same groups continue to enjoy various levels of formal and informal state support. Their targets included President Musharraf as well as other high-value military and civilian leaders. Al Qaeda leaders continue to operate and plan attacks from the tribal areas, including Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu al-Yazid. Recent executed and pre-empted attacks attest to these linkages (such as *inter alia* the foiled 2010 European attack planned in North Waziristan, the disrupted plan to attack U.S. and German targets in 2007, the preempted transatlantic plot in 2006 as well as the successful July 2005 attack in London). All of these conspiracies had connections to Pakistan's tribal areas and sponsoring militant networks.⁸⁰

http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/11/suicide_bomber_kills_40.php.

⁷⁸ See, *inter alia*, Senator Carl Levin, "Opening Statement of Senator Carl Levin, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on Afghanistan and Pakistan," February 26, 2009. Available at <http://levin.senate.gov/newsroom/release.cfm?id=308740>; Ian Katz, "Gates Says Militant Sanctuaries Pose Biggest Afghanistan Threat," *Bloomberg News*, March 1, 2009. Available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aehmlRXgKi2o&refer=home>; Barnett R. Rubin. "Saving Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2007. Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070101faessay86105-p0/barnett-r-rubin/saving-afghanistan.html>.

⁷⁹ See comments made by National Intelligence Director John Negroponte cited in "Al-Qaeda 'rebuilding' in Pakistan," *BBC News Online*, January 12, 2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6254375.stm; K. Alan Kronstadt, U.S.-Pakistan Relations (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2008). Available at <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/115888.pdf>.

⁸⁰ Jones and Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*, p. 31.

The Pakistani polity was late to embrace Pakistan's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. Since 2007, public opinion work in Pakistan demonstrated that Pakistanis generally and overwhelmingly supported peace deals with militants and professed belief that they would secure peace, despite consistent evidence to the contrary. Equally, Pakistanis remained opposed to the Pakistan army undertaking military offensives against Pakistan's own militants. These trends remained more or less constant until April of 2009. However, public opinion dramatically changed course in the late spring 2009 when the Taliban broke their "sharia-for-peace" deal in Swat and over-ran Buner. Polling results in May 2009 and July 2009 suggest that the public remained opposed to peace deals and were increasingly supportive of military action.⁸¹ Polling by the Pew Foundation in April 2010 found that some of these gains may be slipping. Pew found that while most Pakistan remain worried about Islamist extremism, concerns have waned since 2009. (Because Pew's questions and a sampling approach differed from those used by the other polls cited herein, these various results are not strictly comparable.)⁸²

Pakistani Support for the Militants?

Implicit in the various U.S. policies towards Pakistan that seek to compel Pakistan to cease support for militant groups is the assumption that Pakistan can do so if it mustered the requisite will. It is far from obvious that these assumptions hold in entirety. It is useful to put forward several propositions about the degree of both state support for various groups as well as an assessment of the Pakistani state's ability to control and/or counter the various groups. This assessment draws overwhelmingly from the author's fieldwork in Pakistan (including discussions with military, intelligence and civilian

⁸¹ C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Own War on Terror: What the Pakistani Public Thinks," *Journal of International Affairs*, forthcoming Fall/Winter 2010.

⁸² Pew Global Attitudes Project, 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 IRI polls or 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 percent) while only one in three Pakistanis live in urban areas.

officials as well as journalists and analysts) over several visits since 2000 as well as extensive interactions with U.S. officials about Pakistan over the same period. Readers alone can determine whether they accept or reject these various conjectures.

Pakistan's intelligence agencies and army tend to segment the country's militant market into a variety of groups over which the state has varying degrees of control. Pakistan is widely assumed to wield significant influence over the Afghan Taliban, including the North Waziristan-based network of Jalaludin Haqqani. Pakistan exerts this control by holding Taliban families hostage in Pakistan to ensure compliance. However, since 2001, the Afghan "Taliban" have changed with the consistent turnover of mid-level commanders.⁸³

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.⁸⁴ Pakistan is struggling to cultivate influence among the evolving Afghan Taliban elements even while it seeks to control elements of Mullah Omar's "Quetta Shura." (While the Afghan leadership council retains this moniker, its key leaders have long taken up residence elsewhere such as Karachi.⁸⁵) Pakistan worries that members of the Quetta Shura may seek a separate dispensation with Afghan President Karzai that does not recognize Pakistan's equities. Exemplifying Pakistan's efforts to counter such moves, Pakistan captured Mullah Baradar in February 2010 because he was negotiating with Karzai independently of Islamabad.⁸⁶

U.S. analysts tend to believe that Pakistani agencies also have a reasonably tight control over the Lashkar-e-Taiba. That said, LeT has developed proxies in India

⁸³ 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/Hurst, 2008), pp. 81-96.

⁸⁴ Thomas Ruttig, "How Tribal Are the Taliban?" Afghanistan Analysts Network, June 24, 2010. Available at <http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/uploads/20100624TR-HowTribalAretheTaleban-FINAL.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Ali K. Chisti, "The Karachi Project," ForeignPolicy.Com, November 3, 2010. Available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/11/03/is_pakistan_finally_cracking_down_on_al_qaeda.

⁸⁶ Dean Nelson and Ben Farmer, "Hamid Karzai held secret talks with Mullah Baradar in Afghanistan," *The Telegraph*, March 16, 2010. Available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7457861/Hamid-Karzai-held-secret-talks-with-Mullah-Baradar-in-Afghanistan.html>.

(principally through the Indian Mujahideen) and has cultivated logistical bases in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Nepal (among other countries).⁸⁷ Some LeT cells within India are to some degree independent of LeT's headquarters in Muridke, according to U.S. and Indian officials.⁸⁸ It should be noted that the LeT has *never* attacked foreign or domestic targets within Pakistan and its literature remains vehemently pro-state.⁸⁹

At the other extreme is the afore-mentioned milieu of Deobandi groups. Pakistan's ability to control the various groups appears variable and tentative at best. Perhaps the Bahawalpur-based network of Masood Azhar's Jaish-e-Mohammad is under the tightest control from among the Deobandi groups. Pakistani analysts explained to this author in July 2010 that the army is keen to continue supporting Masood Azhar because he has remained adamantly pro-Pakistan and has demurred from attacking the state. Azhar demonstrated his pro-Pakistan 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 government.⁹⁰ Reportedly Azhar informed the ISI of these conspiracies. Pakistani analysts argue that as long as Azhar can maintain the coherence of his following in the Punjabi, they are less likely to join the ranks of the TTP. However, as is well known, elements of JM split from Azhar and launched attacks against foreign and domestic targets in Pakistan.

Other, albeit intimately inter-related, Deobandi groups such as the network of commanders under the umbrella of the TTP and its various constituent parts are beyond

⁸⁷ C. Christine Fair, "Students Islamic Movement of India and the Indian Mujahideen: An Assessment," *Asia Policy*, Vol. 9 (January 2010), pp. 101-119 and [Animesh Roul](#), "Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Strategy of "Encircling" India," *Terrorism Monitor Volume*, Vol. 8, No. 38 (October 2010). Available [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).

⁸⁸ Author discussions with U.S. military, state and intelligence officials throughout 2010 (and before) as well as Indian intelligence officials during meetings in April 2010.

⁸⁹ LeT's ideology is best explained in its pamphlet *Hum Kyon Jihad Kar Rahen Hain* (Why Are we Waging Jihad, translated by the author). This pamphlet is widely available in Pakistan and has been published over many years from Muridke. An exposition of this text is the subject of forthcoming work by the author.

⁹⁰ 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, Bradford University, February 2008, pp. 28-31. Available at <http://spaces.brad.ac.uk:8080/download/attachments/748/resrep1.pdf>.

the grasp of the state as evidenced by their sustained attacks within Pakistan. The military and the ISI have tried to manage its 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.⁹¹ 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 success over differing time horizons.⁹²

Unfortunately, the prognosis for Pakistan's ability—much less will—to degrade these groups in any significant way is not positive. Despite Pakistan's seeming dedication to combating some elements of the TTP which target the state, Pakistan will likely remain unable to eliminate even those groups it views as the enemy because of the enduring problem of overlapping membership between the vehemently anti-state components of the TTP and the other Deobandi groups that Pakistan still views as assets (e.g. JM, the Haqqani network, the Afghan Taliban among others) for the anticipated future battle against India, be it in India or Afghanistan.

Sustaining the Jihads

Given that Pakistan has been able to sustain numerous militant groups in the service of various covert campaigns, it must enjoy some degree of sustained public support even if in small numbers.⁹³ One possible reason for Pakistan's ability to sustain this level of support for various militant campaigns over six decades is the fact that jihad

⁹¹ See Rahimullah Yusufzai, "The Emergence of the Pakistani Taliban," *Jane's Information Group*, 11 December 2007. Available (with subscription) at www8.janes.com and [Rahimullah Yusufzai](#), "A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province. 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. Available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/talibanleaders.html>.

⁹² These deals and military efforts are detailed extensively in Jones and Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*, pp. 33-84.

⁹³ 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.," (Washington D.C.: USIP/PIPA, January 7, 2008).

as a concept of religiously sanctioned conflict is old and enduring in South Asia historically and in the areas that are now Pakistan and Afghanistan specifically. Ayesha Jalal contends that Balakot, located in the district of Mansehra in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province, 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. Scholars consider this the only genuine jihad to establish Muslim supremacy in South Asia. Their gravesites have since become sacred sites 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."⁹⁴

This association of Balakot with the jihad in the 1990s was mobilized when Pakistan established militant training camps there for those groups raised to operate in Kashmir and the rest of India.⁹⁵

More generally, popular consciousness in Pakistan is strewn with "collective myths and legends of jihad based on selective representation of history."⁹⁶ The Pakistani state itself has nurtured a public discourse that is anti-India, anti-Hindu, pro-jihad using Pakistani public and military schools, a variety of media, as well as public celebrations of national events.⁹⁷ Thus, it seems likely that one of the reasons why Pakistan has been able to successfully sustain various proxy wars is that it has marketed them as jihad, which enjoys considerable legitimacy in Pakistan and elsewhere in South Asia.

⁹⁴ Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2008), p. 61

⁹⁵ Jalal, *Partisans of Allah*, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁶ Jalal, *Partisans of Allah*, p. 20.

⁹⁷ K.K. Aziz, *Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks used in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1998); A.H. Nayyar and Ahmed Salim, *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan-Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics* (Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2003); Iftikhar Ahmed, "Islam, Democracy and Citizenship Education: An Examination of the Social Studies Curriculum in Pakistan," *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, Vol. 7, No. 1, December 15, 2004.

Indeed, considerable polling work demonstrates that Pakistanis indeed exhibit some degree of support of 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. We found that militarized jihad sustains considerable support among Pakistanis. We asked respondents 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?" The plurality (44.6 percent) indicated that they believed that "Jihad is both a personal struggle for righteousness and protecting the Muslim Ummah through war." Nearly equal numbers of respondents (one in four) indicated that "Jihad is solely a personal struggle for righteousness" or that "Jihad is solely protecting the Muslim Ummah through war." (Some six percent indicated that they didn't know and another 1 percent declined to answer.) Clearly a large majority of Pakistanis embrace militant dimensions of jihad in principle.⁹⁸ (See Figure 1 below.)

[Insert Figure 1 about Here]

Even among those Muslims who embrace militant notions of jihad, there is some debate as to who has the proper authority to declare militant jihad be it a Muslim government or an individual or other non-state actor. (This is one reason why some Muslims reject Osama Bin Ladin's arrogated right to declare jihad.) We asked respondents who they believe can use military force to protect a Muslim country or Muslim Ummah in the name of jihad be it a Muslim state/government, individuals and non-state organizations or both. The plurality (43 percent) believed that this is a prerogative of the state. The next largest group (35 percent) thought that both government and non-government actors can do so. Seven percent believed that only non-state actors could do so. This suggests that 42 percent believe that non-state actors can legitimately invoke jihad to protect Muslims. (Another 16 percent either did not know (14 percent) or did not answer (2 percent).⁹⁹ (See Figure 2 below.)

[Insert Figure 2 about Here]

⁹⁸ See C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, Jacob N. Shapiro, "Islam, Militancy and Politics in Pakistan: Insights from a National Sample," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22, No. 44 (October 2010).

⁹⁹ Fair, Malhotra, and Shapiro, "Islam, Militancy and Politics in Pakistan."

Ostensibly, different views about the nature of jihad (personal, military, both) may be associated with varying views about who has the right to wage jihad (individuals, states, both). To explore this possibility, we cross-tabulated the variables about the nature of jihad and the authority to wage jihad. Surprisingly, beliefs about jihad do not predict beliefs about authority. Both respondents who believe it is a strictly personal or strictly military struggle were more likely to believe only governments can wage jihad. Those who believed in the dual nature of jihad were most likely to believe jihad can be waged by both state and non-state actors.

When we examined levels of support across the Kashmiri groups, the Afghan Taliban, Al Qa'ida and the sectarian groups, we found that the Kashmiri groups consistently enjoyed the highest level of support consistent with decades-long state-promoted narrative that this is a legitimate “jihad.” The Afghan Taliban closely followed, against consistent with the state narratives about the positive role of the Afghan Taliban in that country and their greater legitimacy currently in Taliban. Pakistan continues to assert a largely inaccurate claim that Kabul is dominated by the former Northern Alliance, which Pakistan views as an Indian proxy. While this was true in the interim government, with subsequent elections this claim is no longer sustainable. In contrast, the sectarian groups and Al Qa'ida enjoyed considerably less support consistent with a lack of state-promoted narratives about the positive contributions of these organizations.¹⁰⁰

In 2007, the author in conjunction with the Program on International Policy Attitudes surveyed nearly 1,000 urban Pakistanis in face-to-face interviews. That effort found that support for militant groups was generally very low and most large minorities and even majorities believed that the militant groups operating in Pakistan posed a large and important threat to Pakistan's interests. While substantial majorities also repudiate the tactic of attacks on civilians in general, including those directed against India by Pakistani extremist groups. Indeed two thirds (66%) said such attacks were either “never justified” or “rarely justified.” Only 15 percent called such attacks “sometimes” or “often” justified.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Fair, Malhotra, and Shapiro, “Islam, Militancy and Politics in Pakistan.”

¹⁰¹ See C. Christine Fair, Clay Ramsay, and Steve Kull, Pakistani Public Opinion on Democracy, Islamist Militancy, and Relations with the U.S., USIP/PIPA Working Paper, January 2008. Available at <http://www.usip.org/resources/pakistani-public-opinion-democracy-islamist-militancy-and-relations-us>.

However, when respondents were then asked whether specific types of attacks were sometimes or never justified, support for some militant actions was clearly evidence among small but important minorities. For example, 64 percent said “Attacks conducted against government institutions (like the national Parliament in Delhi and state assemblies)” were never justified while another 15 percent believed that such attacks were “sometimes justified.” While 67 percent indicated that “attacks in India on families of Indian military personnel” were never justified; 13 percent said they were sometimes justified. Similarly, while 68 percent condemned “attacks conducted against Indian targets like subways, stock exchanges, and tourist sites,” another 12 percent said these attacks were sometimes justified. Thus on balance somewhat more than one in ten respondents though these attacks were justified in some measure.¹⁰²

While support for specific groups operating against specific targets is low among respondents, many Pakistanis believe their country has an obligation to protect Muslims in Kashmir and elsewhere, consistent with Pakistan’s national narrative both as the home of South Asia’s Muslims and an explicit goal of “liberating occupied Kashmir” from India. We asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: “Pakistan has a moral obligation to protect Muslims anywhere in South Asia.” Sixty-six percent agreed (36% strongly); only 21 percent disagreed (13% strongly).¹⁰³

We asked those who agreed were then asked: “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?” Fifty-one percent of the whole sample thought Pakistan should use only peaceful means; only 12 percent thought Pakistan should use any means, including force. Thus overall, 72 percent rejected the idea that Pakistan should use force beyond its own territory in defense of Muslims.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² See C. Christine Fair, Clay Ramsay, and Steve Kull, *Pakistani Public Opinion on Democracy, Islamist Militancy, and Relations with the U.S.*, USIP/PIPA Working Paper, January 2008. Available at <http://www.usip.org/resources/pakistani-public-opinion-democracy-islamist-militancy-and-relations-us>.

¹⁰³ See C. Christine Fair, Clay Ramsay, and Steve Kull, *Pakistani Public Opinion on Democracy, Islamist Militancy, and Relations with the U.S.*, USIP/PIPA Working Paper, January 2008. Available at <http://www.usip.org/resources/pakistani-public-opinion-democracy-islamist-militancy-and-relations-us>.

¹⁰⁴ See C. Christine Fair, Clay Ramsay, and Steve Kull, *Pakistani Public Opinion on Democracy, Islamist Militancy, and Relations with the U.S.*, USIP/PIPA Working Paper, January 2008. Available at <http://www.usip.org/resources/pakistani-public-opinion-democracy-islamist-militancy-and-relations-us>.

Conclusions and Implications

This essay has argued that Pakistan's use of militancy as a tool of foreign policy is not new and, in fact, dates back to the early weeks of statehood. Pakistan's ability to field sustained militant campaigns with significant degrees of public support is likely tied to the historical and social milieus of jihad, which has long been understood as a legitimate mode of militarized conflict in the areas which now comprise Pakistan.

Thus, Husain Haqqani, currently Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, cogently argued that the reliance upon 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."¹⁰⁵ While Pakistan had long instrumentalized Islam to strengthen Pakistan's identity by building an ideological state and by pursuing Islamization, the state "gradually evolved into a strategic commitment to jihadi ideology."¹⁰⁶

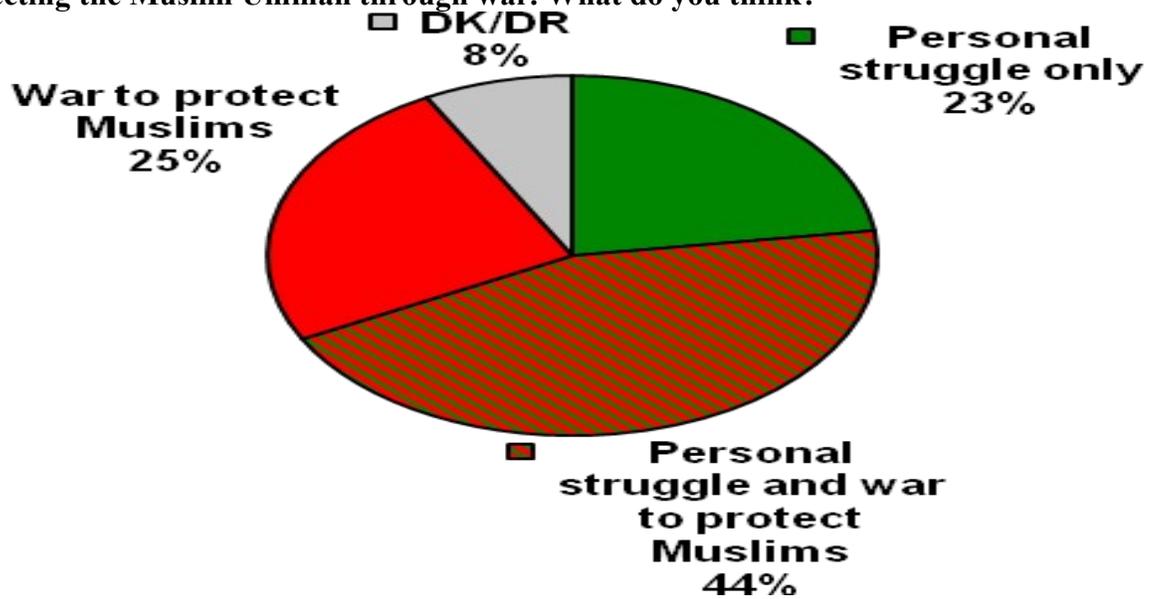
Critically, the acquisition of nuclear capabilities has both enabled and emboldened Pakistan to pursue such strategies with increasing confidence that doing so will be cost free or, that in the event of Indian retaliation, the international community will readily mobilize to diffuse the conflict. Pakistani security elites therefore appreciate that nuclearization is an important enabling condition for its continued reliance upon "jihad" throughout India even as India continues to expand its conventional –and strategic – capabilities.

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

¹⁰⁵ Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington D.C.: CEIP, 2005), p. 2.

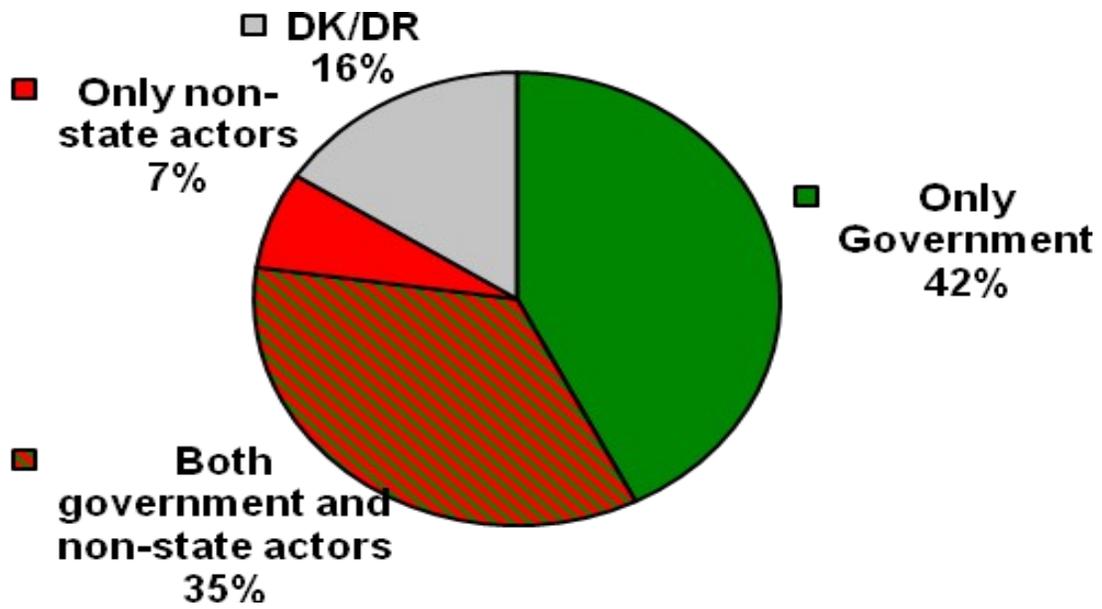
¹⁰⁶ Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, p. 3.

Figure 1. Jihad is a personal struggle for righteousness. Others say jihad is protecting the Muslim Ummah through war. What do you think?



Note: In-house tabulations, weighted.

Figure 2. Who Can Use Military Force To Protect A Muslim Country Or Ummah?



Note: In-house tabulations, weighted.