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Pakistan's Sectarian Violence: Between the "Arabist Shift" and Indo-Persian Culture

At the start of a new millennium, India and Pakistan signify a virtual inversion of what their founding fathers Mohandas Gandhi and Muhammed Ali Jinnah stood for. In India, Gandhi's legacy of non-violence and Muslim inclusivism has been largely displaced by communal violence and the rise of the very kind of Hindu fanaticism that gunned him down in 1948. In Pakistan, Jinnah's vision of a democratic Pakistan, where religion was to be a personal matter that had "nothing to do with the business of the state,"¹ has been eclipsed by frequent military takeovers and a rising spiral of sectarian violence unprecedented in the subcontinent's history. Indeed, in many ways both India and Pakistan are like mirrors to each other, where an internal critique of one virtually amounts to that of the other. This is poignantly reflected in Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Jagmohan's critique of an India "that had gone astray almost in every sphere of life" under "unprincipled and irresponsible" political parties and leadership because its "foundational planks are missing."²

1. Muhammed Ali Jinnah's speech at the inaugural session of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly, 11 August 1947.

2. Jagmohan, *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Allied Press, 1992). For a fuller account of Jagmohan's critique, see pages 618–28.

Whatever Jagmohan's notion of the missing planks in Indian polity, this paper argues that besides other factors, Pakistan's sectarian violence is partly rooted in the eclipse of an Indo-Persian cultural matrix³ that historically constituted a "foundational plank" of the subcontinent's Muslim identity. Moreover, the eclipse of this matrix since the subcontinent's partition into the independent states of Pakistan and India in 1947 has been marked by the ascent of an "Arabist shift"⁴—the tendency to view the present in terms of an imagined Arab past with the Arab as the only "real/pure" Muslim, and then using this trope of purity for exorcizing an "unIslamic" present. Consequently, the Arabist shift lost the eclecticism and intellectuality that were the basis of a creative South Asian Muslim identity, and this has led to a hardening in the understanding of Islam as a result of imagining Pakistanis in Arabist terms.

The Arabist shift touched new heights through a convergence of General Zia-ul Haq's politically motivated Islamization of Pakistani state and society and the U.S.-sponsored *jihad* in Afghanistan on the one hand, and the fallout of the Iranian revolution, the Kashmir dispute, and uneven development on the other. Such a convergence was also boosted by romantic notions of an Arab-centric popular imagination as indeed the ground realities of multiple economic interests. For example, in a romanticized notion of Pakistan's breakup in 1971, the secession of Bangladesh is seen as a consequence of the failure to adopt Arabic as a

3. The founding moment for the Indo-Persian cultural eclecticism may be located in the eleventh century when the city of Lahore in the Punjab province emerged as a major center of Persianate culture. Persian became the administrative language of successive Indian rulers even as it sparked a cultural efflorescence through a synthesis of Sufism with a multicultural Indian society. See Muzaffar Alam, Françoise Nalini Delvoye and Marc Gaborieau, eds., *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 24. Also see Suroosh Irfani, "Globalization and Marginality: Between the Blindfolded Bull and Burning Boats," in Suroosh Irfani, Durre Ahmed and Eric Winkle, eds., *Inside Islam: Politics, Gender and Culture* (Zed Books, forthcoming).

4. As used here, the "Arabist shift" is traced to the onset of the Indian Wahabi movement in the early nineteenth century. Unlike their more rigid Arab counterparts, leaders of the Indian Wahabi movement such as Syed Ahmed Barelvi were radical Sufis representing a degree of spiritual eclecticism of the Indo-Persian cultural matrix. This is borne out by Barelvi's promotion of the four main Sufi orders in India and his frequent references to Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273), the icon of Persianate mysticism—a standpoint at a far remove from the sectarian-militant Wahabi-Deobandi groups operating in Pakistan today. For Barelvi's Sufism, see Marc Gaborieau, "Sufism in the First Indian Wahhabi Manifesto: Siratu'l mustaqim by Ismail Shahid and Abdul Hayy," *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, 149–64.

national language; whereas cooperation in defense-related areas at the level of the state has been augmented by joint Pak-Arab business ventures that include partnership by "political" families, such as the family of the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. There has also been a huge increase in the remittances of Pakistani expatriates from the oil-rich Arab states.⁵ Moreover, the Arabist shift is also underscored by the fascination of many Pakistanis and especially the religio-political groups with Talibanic Islam—generally seen as a slide toward a tribal, anti-intellectual and misogynist view of Islam promoted by a narrow interpretation of the Quran. And although the Taliban is not Arab, Talibanic Islam is a vigorous manifestation of the Arabist shift, of which Osama bin Laden has become the icon par excellence in Pakistan today.

Shia-Sunni violence in Pakistan, then, is drawing upon "a generation of social upheaval" and a failure of domestic and foreign policies in a minefield that Pakistan has been turned into by the internationalization of jihad and the unresolved Kashmir issue. Such violence is also spawned by a cultural imaginaire of religious triumphalism and a failure to evolve inclusive forms of Muslim subjectivities in a globalizing moment—a crisis of identity summed up in the Arabist shift.⁶

The discussion that follows, therefore, touches upon three interconnected strands of history, culture and politics underpinning the sectarian/religious violence today: Where a historical contextualization of the Shia-Sunni issue suggests that religious/sectarian violence in Pakistan has assumed different modes at different historical junctures. Moreover, not only are the modes of religious violence (both sectarian and jihadi, where sectarian = Shia-Sunni confrontation; jihadi = liberatory struggle, holy war) interconnected, they also are equally a result of a crisis in cultural identity as well as of concrete economic and political factors. And finally, the linkages between national political exigencies and the imperatives of international politics indicate that Pakistan's internal scene cannot be understood independently of U.S. and Indian policies vis-à-vis Afghanistan and Kashmir.

5. Remittances from expatriate Pakistanis for the year 2002–2003 are expected to top \$3 billion, of which remittances from Arab countries (primarily Saudi Arabia and the oil-rich Sheikdoms) are estimated to account for three-quarters of the amount. See *Dawn*, 4 October 2002, 16.

6. For the dynamics of the Arabist shift at the level of popular culture and its relation to religious violence, including attacks by armed Wahabi-Deobandi militants on *qawalli* musical concerts, see Irfani, "Globalization and Marginality."

Shia and Sunni Islam

WHILE BOTH THE SHIAS AND SUNNIS share the fundamental premises of Islam—belief in Divine unity (*touhid*), the Prophet Muhammed and the Quran—the crux of their differences is rooted in the question of succession and leadership of Muslims after the Prophet died in 632. Shias hold that the leadership (*imamat*) of the community was the exclusive prerogative of the prophet himself, and after him, resided with his descendants, the *ahl e bayt*. In the Shia view, the prophet's son-in-law Ali should have succeeded him, and they claim that the prophet had in fact designated Ali as his successor. They are, then, the Shias (partisans) of Ali, or Ali's party. Sunnis, however, believe that it was up to the people to elect a leader on the basis of their own judgment. Consequently, Muslims elected Abu Bakr, a companion (*sahaba*) of the prophet as the first caliph of the Islamic state.

However, Shias follow a line of religious leadership emanating from Ali, whom they regard as the first *imam* (or successor). In all, there are twelve imams in the Shia lineage, the twelfth imam, Mehdi, is believed to have gone into occultation, and he will appear at the end of the world as a messiah. The prophet's grandson Hussein was the third imam, who was martyred in the desert of Karbala by the army of the tyrant ruler Yazid because of his refusal to yield to Yazid's demand for political allegiance. The cosmic thematics of the struggle between truth (Hussein) and falsehood (Yazid) were thereby factored into the tragedy of Karbala, where Hussein's memory as a martyr of justice is revered by Shias and Sunnis alike. The invocation of a discourse of martyrology by many Shias and Sunnis, as indeed their veneration for Ali for his humanity and valor, often blurs the sectarian divide at the emotional and psychological levels. A case in point is Tipu Sultan, ruler of the Indian state of Mysore, whose death in 1799 while defending his capital against the British made him a national icon of the Indian freedom struggle. Invocations to Ali were inscribed on the arms of Tipu, who attributed his victory over the British in the battle of 1783 to Ali's intercession.⁷ Indeed, so high was Tipu's veneration for Ali that it gave rise to the notion of his being a Shia,

7. Kate Brittlebank, *Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain: Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 44.

"though such an interpretation seems simplistic in the Indian context of spiritual eclecticism."⁸

Iran is the world's only Shia majority Muslim state, and as a channel of cultural osmosis has given rise to an influential Shia minority in the subcontinent, even though the first Shias who settled in Sind during the ninth century were of Arab origin.⁹ Moreover, it is generally believed that the Mughal emperor Humayun (d. 1557) was soft on the Shias out of gratitude to the Persian king who helped Humayun regain his throne after being chased out of India by the warlord Sher Shah Suri in 1540. Humayun spent part of his long exile as a guest of Shah Thamasp of Persia, a Shia,¹⁰ and after his return to India in 1555, many more Iranians migrated to the subcontinent and made it their home.¹¹

The Shia-Sunni divide, however, remained a source of simmering tension during the Mughal rule, and by the turn of the nineteenth century had "developed into full-scale polemical warfare, each side accusing the other of being heretics and infidels."¹² Such a development, however, was part of an intense debate regarding Muslim social and religious institutions at a moment marked by the ascent of British power and erosion of Mughal authority, as indeed the contestation of growing Shia appeal by a newly emergent Sunni reformist movement that got identified with the puritanical Wahabi movement in Arabia led by Abdul Wahab (d. 1792), the ideological father of the House of Saud. Even so, tension between the Shias and the Indian Wahabi

8. Ibid., 43. Tipu also used to participate in the *ashura* procession that Shias traditionally take out on the tenth of the Islamic month of Muharram to commemorate Imam Hussein's martyrdom. However, such participation by the Sultan might have also had the objective of ensuring peace during Muharram, the month when Shia-Sunni tensions often lead to violence, mainly because of purist Sunni objections to the "innovative" rituals of Shia processions.

9. K. R. Malkani, *The Sindh Story* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1984).

10. Abraham Eraly, *The Great Mughals* (New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 1997), 107.

11. That this Indo-Persian political affinity/expediency of the Moghul era has been subsumed by the Arabist shift today is reflected at several levels: If Humayun the Moghul king spent a part of his exile as a guest of the Persian monarch, the exiled former premier Nawaz Sharif is lodged today in a Jeddah palace as a guest of the Saudi king, while former prime minister Benazir Bhutto has chosen Dubai as home base for her self-exile. Such an opening of Pak-Arab channels at elitist levels of the state, government and society was also paralleled by the influx of Arab volunteers in Pakistan during the period marked by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan to 9/11.

12. Syed Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shah abd'l Aziz: Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihad* (Canberra: Marefat Publications, 1982), 3.

movement was somewhat diluted by the Wahabi jihad against Ranjit Singh, the Punjab ruler who gained notoriety by converting Lahore's Badshahi mosque into the stables of his army.

The moving spirit behind the Indian Wahabi movement was the charismatic Syed Ahmed Barelvi (d. 1831), who remains an icon of Islamic revivalism in terms of a Wahabi-Deobandi¹³ nexus, the dominant force of Islamic orthodoxy in Pakistan and Afghanistan today. The avatars of such a nexus dominating Pakistan's religio-political landscape include the various factions of the mainstream Sunni Deobandi *Jamiat Ulema Islam* (JUI) and several other sectarian and militant groups generally seen as Deobandi-Wahabi organizations, such as the *Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan* (SSP), *Lashkar-i-Jhangvi* (LJ), *Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat Muhammadi* (TNSM), *Harkat-ul-Mujahideen* (HM), *Lashkar-e-Toiba* (LET), and *Jaish-e-Muhammed* (JEM), besides many splinter factions. The main Shia religio-political groups are the *Tehrik Nifaz Fiqh-i-Jafaria* (TNFJ) and *Tehrik e Jafaria Pakistan* (TJP), besides the well-organized *Imamia Student Organization* (ISO) that predates both and was formed in 1972. The main militant Shia force is the *Sipah-i-Muhammed Pakistan* (SMP), now split into different factions.

Sectarian Violence in Pakistan

THE ANTI-AHMADI RIOTS OF 1953

The first sectarian trouble in Pakistan arose during the month of Muharram in 1950 in the city of Hyderabad in Sindh, in which nine *mohajirs* (migrants) who had come to Pakistan from India after 1947,

13. The term Deobandi refers to the ulema trained at the Deoband seminary in India as well as those who follow a conservative orthodoxy identified with Deoband. After the uprising for Indian independence was crushed in 1857, Muslims were roughly divided into two groups: those who cooperated with the British and moved on with the world by opting for modern education, symbolized by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's reformist movement and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental college he founded at Aligarh in 1878, and those who held back, refusing to have any truck with the British rulers, and who founded the seminary at the city of Deoband in Uttar Pradesh in 1867. Deobandi seminaries dominate the religious landscape in Pakistan's Northwestern Province and Baluchistan. One of the biggest Deobandi centers is the Binori Masjid seminary in Karachi, where Mulla Omer and Osama bin Laden reportedly first met in 1989, under the tutelage of the seminary's chief, Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai, thereby sealing the Deobandi-Wahabi-Afghan linkage. See Khalid Ahmed, *Pakistan: The State in Crisis* (Lahore: Vanguard, 2002), 45.

were killed by police firing. While the violence was rooted in a rumor that a Sindhi Shia had kidnapped a Sunni mohajir child during the ashura procession, the daylong disturbances that it gave rise to had strong underpinnings of *mohajir-maqami* (local Sindhis) tensions.¹⁴ However, the first major sectarian agitation that gripped the country was the anti-Ahmadi movement in 1953, which led to the imposition of martial law in the Punjab for the first time. The army had to be called in to control the riots that had erupted in Lahore following a virulent campaign against the Ahmadi community led by the *Jamaat-i-Islami* and *Majlis e Khatme Nabuwwat*, a Sunni pressure group.¹⁵ Leaders of the 1953 agitation wanted the Ahmadis to be declared a non-Muslim minority, arguing that in claiming to be a messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (who founded the Ahmadiyya movement in late nineteenth century) had violated a basic tenet of Islam that holds Muhammed to be the last prophet of God. They also demanded the removal of Zafrulla Khan, an Ahmadi who was Pakistan's foreign minister, and a ban on the employment of Ahmadis in government service.

Martial law was imposed after rioters in Lahore had gone on a rampage on 5 March 1953, burning two post offices, eight buses and a police station, besides shooting dead a deputy superintendent of police. Firing by police left ten persons dead and seventy-four injured, and there were eleven more fatalities before normality was restored¹⁶ on 9 March after hundreds of activists who had barricaded themselves in mosques surrendered—as many as 597 of them in Lahore's Wazir Ali mosque alone.¹⁷ The three religious leaders who led the movement (including Maulana Mauddudi, head of *Jamaat-i-Islami*) were tried by a military court and given the death sentence, later commuted to life imprisonment under international pressure, especially from Muslim countries like Egypt.

That the anti-Ahmadi agitation was tacitly supported by the Punjab chief minister Mumtaz Daultana to divert attention from "the disastrous effects of the [government's] haphazard economic policies"¹⁸

14. Oskar Verkaaik, "May 1990 and Muharram 1950: Two Cases of Political Violence in Hyderabad Pakistan," *The Eastern Anthropologist* 53 (2000).

15. The pressure group arose from the *Majlis-i-Ahrar* (which had campaigned against the Ahmadis since the 1930s), after the Ahrar dissolved itself following Pakistan's creation in 1947.

16. *Pakistan Times*, March 6 and 14, 1953.

17. *Ibid.*, March 9 and 10, 1953.

18. *Ibid.*, Editorial, 15 March 1953.

was borne out by the labor unrest that followed on the heels of the agitation, and also by an unprecedented budget deficit. Indeed, the anti-Ahmadi movement became a pretext for the ouster of Prime Minister Khawja Nazimuddin amid accusations that he had mishandled the crisis because of his sympathies for the Islamic parties.¹⁹ However, it was not until 1974 that the campaign against Ahmadis achieved its primary objective, when Pakistan's national assembly unanimously passed a constitutional amendment designating the Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority.

By the mid 1980s, however, the focus of sectarian politics had shifted to Shia-Sunni violence amid an atmosphere marked by Shia activism and a Sunni extremist demand for declaring Shias a non-Muslim minority. Such a demand, however, was bound to be self-defeating because notwithstanding Shia-Sunni differences, Shias are generally regarded as part of the mainstream Muslim community, especially in the subcontinent where Shias were rulers of the various Indian kingdoms and states, including Awadh, Bijapur, Golconda, Rampur and Hyderabad. Moreover, some of the best-known leaders of Pakistan had Shia background, such as Muhammed Ali Jinnah and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, while the presence of Benazir Bhutto and Abida Hussein in the current political scene shows that at the level of national politics, the Shia-Sunni divide tends to become virtually irrelevant.

Shia-Sunni Violence: The Tribal and Urban Scene

THE SCALE, INTENSITY AND PATTERN of organized sectarian violence in Pakistan today are in sharp contrast to the anti-Ahmadi movement of 1953, where public rallies and street processions went on for several months before culminating in the Lahore riots. Moreover, the ongoing Shia-Sunni violence is also marked by differences along the tribal-urban divide. In the cities of Parachinar and Hangu in the tribal northern areas, sectarian strife has at times virtually taken the form of a tribal civil war, with the army and paramilitary forces having to be called in to restore order. For example, Parachinar, a city of five hundred thousand inhabitants and capital of Kurram Agency bordering Afghanistan, was torn by sectarian clashes on 5 September 1996, following an incident of

19. Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1999), 141.

wall chalking by sectarian students. Confrontation between rival student groups escalated into nine days of sectarian war, in which some two hundred people were killed and many more injured.²⁰ While the army moved in and took control of Parachinar, "free use of missiles, mortars, and rocket launchers forced residents of several villages to take shelter in nearby mountains."²¹ There were also reports of missile attacks from the Paktia province of Afghanistan bordering the strife-torn area, hitting the Shia villages of Paiwar, Kharlachi, Burki and Bughdai in the upper Parachinar.²² As the army recovered illegal weapons in Parachinar during a house-to-house search²³ after it clamped a curfew, Interior Minister General Naseerullah Babar publicly expressed his dismay in the national assembly for the government's failure in protecting people because "two neighboring countries (Iran and Afghanistan) were fighting their war in Pakistan."²⁴ He also blamed the religious schools as "the main cause of bloodshed in Parachinar,"²⁵ and regretted that the government had given land to the two countries for building their madrassas.²⁶ Even so, General Babar was only partly right in attributing disturbances to Iran and Afghanistan and their madrassas, given that the tactical use of the sectarian factor in this strategic region had been perfected by General Zia-ul Haq during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan: in 1986, for example, General Zia allowed the Sunni Afghan mujahideen and their local Sunni supporters to mow down the Turi Shias of upper Parachinar for obstructing the use of their territory as a launching pad against the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.²⁷

20. *Dawn*, 19 September 1996. The number for fatalities given by *Nawae Waqt* (14 September 1996) is one hundred. The inconsistency is often due to the exaggeration of numbers by Shia and Sunni combatants, who tend to inflate the casualties each side has inflicted on the other.

21. *Dawn*, 13 September 1996.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Dawn*, 15 September 1996. While General Babar regretted the role of Afghanistan and Iran in Pakistan's sectarian war, leaders of the Parachinar chapter of the religio-political group *Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat* accused the government for the sectarian clashes for its failure to stop the "supply of arms and ammunitions to the rival faction from India." See *Dawn*, 13 September 1996.

24. *Dawn*, 16 September 1996.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Khaled Ahmed, "When the State Kills," *Friday Times*, September 2001.

The Parachinar²⁸ paradigm of sectarian violence marked by the use of heavy weapons by both sides, support of Afghan settlers and Taliban for the local Sunnis, and the deployment of the army for restoring order, has been replicated in several other clashes in the tribal areas. In March 1998, sectarian violence erupted in the city of Hangu, eighty kilometers from Peshawar, after a procession of hundreds of Shias celebrating the traditional Iranian new year (the spring solstice, *naurooz*) came under indiscriminate fire, because “the procession was taken out despite opposition from Sunni militant group, the supreme Sunni council.”²⁹ Ten people were killed and twenty-five were injured as the violence spread to the nearby villages following the failure of the paramilitary forces to restore order. Army units, therefore, were called in from the Kohat garrison, but the Shahukhel village near Hangu was razed to the ground by armed tribal lashkars of the Sunni Orakzai tribe, whose arsenal included locally made anti-aircraft guns.³⁰ While the district administration eventually brokered a ceasefire between the two warring groups using the mediation of a local *jirga* besides Shia and Sunni *ulema* flown in from Peshawar, the ceasefire was all too precarious. The city was gripped by sectarian violence in the following years, and most recently again on 2 March 2001, when three Shia shopkeepers were gunned down in the main bazaar by militants of the anti-Shia SSP, who had come all the way from Punjab for the act. The shooting took place while the district administration was negotiating with local Shia and Sunni leaders as to how to ensure peace during the upcoming *naurooz* celebrations later that month. In this particular case, then, it was not so much a local incident that sparked the clashes but the extension of SSP death squads to the tribal areas. By killing the Shias in Hangu, the militants were exacting revenge for

28. Parachinar sums up the dynamics of sectarian violence in Pakistan's tribal areas. Demographic pressures and a rising population have exacerbated the crises of an area where the presence of an effective Shia minority is routinely challenged by Afghan settlers and local Sunnis, and where the power of the tribal elders has been weakened by extremist young militants well trained in the use of sophisticated weapons. Moreover, given the virtual absence/inaccessibility of government schools, children are indoctrinated in sectarian hatred at an early age in the Shia- and Sunni-run madrassas. See Robert Kaplan, “The Lawless Frontier,” *Atlantic*, September 2000.

29. *Dawn*, 22 March 1998.

30. *Dawn*, 23 March 1998 (editorial) and 26 March 1998.

the execution of SSP leader Haq Nawaz in Punjab's Mianwali jail, where Haq Nawaz was hanged on 28 February 2001 after an eleven-year-long trial for the murder of Sadek Ganji, the director of the Iranian cultural center in Lahore. As the government had taken hundreds of SSP activists in the Punjab into preventive custody prior to the execution, SSP militants took their revenge in the far northern city of Hangu.³¹

In urban Pakistan,³² however, Shia-Sunni violence has mostly become a contest for body counts among rival sectarian death squads, claiming 1,287 victims between 1990 and 2002.³³ Initially, the violence was restricted to target killing of sectarian leaders and activists, teachers and students; then followed attacks on police patrols, jail superintendents, high-ranking government officials and judges carrying out investigations against sectarian terrorists. By the mid-nineties, worshippers in mosques and mourners in cemeteries were also included among the soft targets of sectarian gunmen, besides bureaucrats and businessmen, Iranian diplomats, construction engineers and military cadets in the cities of Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi and Multan. By the start of the new millennium, doctors were also added to the sectarians' death list—the militants believed that "a doctor presented a strategic target because of the publicity his killing generated."³⁴

To be sure, a defining moment in Shia-Sunni radicalization was the Iranian revolution in 1979 and General Zia's promulgation of *zakat* (wealth tax) and *ushr* (farming tax) ordinances under Sunni Islamic law in 1980. As these laws conflicted with Shia law, General Zia's move triggered the first mass demonstration, when thousands of Shias turned out in Islamabad and demanded the repeal of these

31. The daily *Aaj*, 2 March 2001. Also see Rahimullah Yusufzai's report in *The News*, 4 March 2001.

32. The start of urban violence may be dated to the killing of the Sunni Wahabi leader Alama Ehsan Zaheer in Lahore in 1987, and the Shia leader Alama Arif al-Hussaini in Peshawar in 1988. Zaheer was head of the religio-political party *Jamiat Ahle Hadith* (JAH), while Hussaini was head of TNFJ.

33. The figure is for Pakistani cities and does not include the tribal areas. More definitive data for the Punjab, the hotbed of sectarian violence, are furnished by the Crime Investigation Department of the province. It gives the number of people killed in 1,106 incidents of sectarian violence between 1990 and 2001 as 776—of which 546 were murdered by the Sunni and 230 by Shia militants. See *The News*, 18 May 2002.

34. *Newsline*, August 2001, 40.

ordinances. The protest gave birth to TNFJ (Movement for enforcement of the Jafaria [Shia] Law) as a new force in Pakistan's politics.³⁵ TNFJ's emergence also marked a radical shift in the intra-Shia scene as the center of gravity of Shia politics, traditionally associated with big landlords, shifted to the Shia ulema and the younger militant groups. The increasingly confrontational and aggressive posture of TNFJ, however, led to a Deobandi Sunni backlash that took the form of *Anjuman-i-Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (ASSP)*, or Association of the Soldiers of the Prophet's Companions of Pakistan, founded in 1985 by Deobandi ulema and former members of JUI. The organization was later renamed as Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), or Soldiers of the Prophet's Companions. With its alleged Saudi support augmented by Iraqi money and domestic donations, besides the money from extortion, robberies³⁶ and kidnappings, SSP emerged as a well-funded extremist outfit and joined the ranks of religious parties that were becoming like "'monsters' in terms of material resources, fire power, and the pressure they could exert on policy matters."³⁷

Further radicalization of sectarian militancy occurred in 1994 after a group of younger Shia militants broke away from the mainstream TNFJ that they accused of being too conservative in protecting the Shias and founded the Sipah-i-Muhammed Pakistan (SMP), or

35. TNFJ arose out of the Federation of Shia Ulema and the support of the Shia Imamia Student Organization. Though still in the political arena under the leadership of Alama Hamid Moosavi, it has lost much ground to the TJP, a breakaway group formed in 1993 by Alama Sajid Naqvi and the major Shia organization in Pakistan today. In 1998, another Shia organization by the name of *Shura e Wahdat* was formed with a view of representing all Shia groups and factions under one umbrella.

36. A report by the special branch of the Punjab police points to the involvement of religious activists in unlawful activities and also notes that criminals wanted by the police often took shelter as workers of religious organizations. See Azmat Abbas, *Sectarianism: The Players and the Game* (Lahore: South Asia Partnership-Pakistan, 2002), 21. SSP leaders claim that rather than Arab states, their sympathizers give them financial assistance. However, intelligence sources have alluded to the secret visits of SSP leaders to the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad, as well as indirect contacts between them. See Imtiaz Gul, *The Unholy Nexus: Pak-Afghan Relations under the Taliban* (Lahore: Vanguard, 2002), 100.

37. *The Herald*, May 2000, 53. In March 2001, the chairman of the SSP supreme council, Maulana Zahid Mahmood Qasmi (son of late SSP founder Ziaul Qasmi), announced the dissolution of the supreme council after accusing the SSP leadership of political indifference and embezzlement of Rs.10 million of party funds. At the same time, Qasmi announced that he had now joined the *Jamiat Ulema Islam* (Ajmal Qadri) as its secretary-general. See *The News*, 11 March 2001.

Soldiers of Muhammed.³⁸ The high point of SMP's terrorism was the January 1997 bombing of the Lahore high court where an SSP leader, Ziaur Rehman, arrested earlier by the police during an anti-terrorist raid, was being taken for a hearing.³⁹ The bombing killed the SSP leader, a journalist, and twenty-two police constables. Retaliation by SSP was swift. Hundreds of enraged activists set ablaze the Iranian cultural center in Lahore on 19 January, and the Iranian cultural center in Multan the following month, killing seven employees of the center, including its director.

Responsibility for these attacks was claimed by Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LJ), Jhangvi's Soldiers, an SSP faction formed by the former SSP information secretary Riaz Basra and named after Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, a founding SSP member whose murder in February 1990 had led to the revenge killing of Sadek Ganji that Basra had masterminded. And although Basra was arrested after Ganji's murder, he was allowed to escape⁴⁰ and base himself in Afghanistan, where he trained militants for the war against Shias in Pakistan, as well as for killing members of the Afghan opposition in Peshawar. Indeed, the ideological symbiosis of SSP and LJ with Mulla Omar's Taliban was amply demonstrated during the reported participation of the SSP and LJ militants in the massacre of Shias in Mazare Sharif, after the mainly Shia city was captured by the Taliban on 8 August 1998.⁴¹ The killing of Iranian diplomats and officials in Pakistan was replicated in Mazare when nine Iranian diplomats were executed by the Taliban after the

38. During an interview in 1996, the commander-in-chief (*salar e ala*) of *Sipah-i-Muhammed* claimed that he had as many as fourteen thousand members in Pakistan, offices in other countries, and had even seen action in Lebanon along with two hundred other Pakistani Shias. SMP's aim, he added, was to work for an Iranian-style revolution that could put an end to all foreign interference in Pakistan. See "Ghulam Reza Naqvi, Salar e Ala," *The Herald*, October 1996, 57. However, late in 1996, SMP split into two factions after a bloody infighting in its leadership. Internal rifts, penetration by pro-government elements, and the turning against SMP by the local Shias in the SMP stronghold of Thokar Niaz Beg, a Lahore suburb, enabled the police to launch one of its most spectacular anti-sectarian operations: it broke through SMP defenses in Thokar Niaz Beg and converted the SMP headquarters into a police station with the help of the locals.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Basra's protectors are said to have included powerful politicians, such as the Punjab chief minister Manzoor Wattoo who "stage managed" his escape (see Abbas, *Sectarianism*, 13) as well as "rogue" elements of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, the ISI (see *The Herald*, December 2001, 20).

41. *The Herald*, September 1998, 32.

Iranian consulate was captured—an act that Iran held Pakistan responsible for and that led to the first ever anti-Pakistan demonstration in Teheran.

Context for Shia-Sunni Radicalization

PAKISTAN'S SLIDE INTO SECTARIAN VIOLENCE may be seen as the upshot of several intertwining factors, including domestic politics, regional upheavals and the Cold War. In this respect, the late president General Zia ul-Haq's coup d'état against Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government in 1977 stands out as a marker in the domestic front. Lacking any political constituency or a social base of his own other than the army, Zia launched his Islamization drive to carve out a constituency for himself, even if that meant spawning new sectarian and ethnic groups and co-opting the religio-political parties. Among the latter was the Jamaat-i-Islami, a party that had historically stood in opposition to the creation of Pakistan and had been roundly rejected by the people in successive elections. However, its alliance with Zia enabled the party to dig inroads for its totalitarian brand of Islam that reflected the ideas of its founder, Maulana Maaddudi. Without a hint of irony, the humorless Maaddudi promoted an Islamic state where "no one can regard his affairs as personal and private... [because] an Islamic state is a totalitarian state."⁴² Moreover, Maaddudi shunned democracy and freedom of thought even as he admired the Nazi and Fascist parties for having achieved power "through deep faith in their principles and blind obedience to their leaders."⁴³ Inevitably, the alliance of Zia's military dictatorship with the Jamaat and the mosque stirred up primordial passions, even as it empowered the semi-literate mullas as commissars of the state and distributors of its largesse through zakat (wealth tax) funds to the poor. Moreover, in rural areas the mullas became collectors of the ushr (farming tax) and this changed their status by turning them into instruments of local government.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the government's decision to provide zakat funds to madrassas led to their mushrooming growth, even as their

42. Maulana Maaddudi, "Political Theory of Islam," quoted in K. K. Aziz, *Pakistan's Political Culture* (Lahore: Vanguard), 265.

43. *Ibid.*, 261.

44. Abbas Rashid, "The Politics and Dynamics of Violent Sectarianism," in Zia Mian and Iftikhar Ahmed, eds., *Making Enemies, Creating Conflict: Pakistan's Crisis of State and Society* (Lahore: Mashal, 1997), 36–37.

graduates became cadres of the religio-political parties and functionaries of the various government-funded institutions.

At the same time, the internationalization of the Afghan jihad turned Pakistan into a frontline state and the center of what Eqbal Ahmed has aptly termed as Jihad International Inc.⁴⁵ By funneling billions of dollars into a jihad that mostly favored Afghanistan's Wahabi Sunni parties like Gulbuddin Hikmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami over others, the canker of Shia-Sunni sectarianism was transposed on the Afghan jihad; the idea was to marginalize Iran in a post-Soviet Afghanistan that was to be dominated by forces friendly to their U.S.-Saudi-Pakistani benefactors. Moreover, local and regional patronization of the madrassas and jihadi training camps "and support for groups like Taliban and al-Qaeda by elements of the Pakistani state and society were crucial in transforming the Shia-Sunni conflict in to a parallel supra national, supra ethnic sectarian conflict."⁴⁶

To be sure, if the Cold War gave General Zia a shortcut to legitimacy and recognition on the international front, the social fallout of modernization as marginalization, unemployment and alienation gave sectarianists a shortcut to political power on the domestic front. This is borne out by the case of Jhang in central Punjab, home base for SSP and LJ and one of the few cities with a substantial Shia minority. The Shia community has traditionally dominated Jhang, given that most of the larger landlords are Shias. However, over the years the influence of shopkeepers, traders and transporters, as well as migrants from East Punjab and some industrialists, had steadily increased.⁴⁷ In this changing social configuration, politics was articulated in the form of sectarianism, and an active sectarian identity was superimposed on "an existing divide between the landed elite and the middle and lower middle classes."⁴⁸ In the absence of secular and socialist parties in the political landscape, as had been the case with Pakistan in the 1960s and 70s, the contest for access to resources and status, therefore, was framed in terms of confrontationist sectarian identities, especially among the young who were "readily swayed by

45. Eqbal Ahmed, *Roots of Religious Violence in Contemporary Pakistan*, 10. See Eqbal Ahmed on google.com.

46. Iftikhar H. Malik, *Islam, Nationalism and the West: Issues of Identity in Pakistan* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 119.

47. Rashid, "Violent Sectarianism."

48. Ibid.

simplistic ideas and quick to embrace an identity in which they felt more secure.”⁴⁹

Moreover, according to SSP’s “creation myth,” the organization was formed by maulanas Jhangvi, Ziaur Rahman Farooqi, Israrul Haq and Azam Tariq on their own and without any prompting by outside influences. However, a recent study drawing on independent sources and the record available with the Punjab police shows that SSP was in fact created by a group of businessmen from Jhang, “and Maulana Jhangvi was invited to join only because they wanted to use the religious factor to fulfill their political ambitions.”⁵⁰ Consequently, Jhang’s leading businessman Sheikh Yousaf was elected as a member of the Punjab Assembly with SSP support in 1985, as was Mian Abid, an industrialist.⁵¹ Moreover, the SSP’s formation in 1985 is also significant as it coincided with the year that non-party elections were held under General Zia’s rule. Indeed, Maulana Jhangvi launched a virulent anti-Shia campaign “with the sole agenda of defeating Abida Hussain,” a Shia politician of national standing, but Jhangvi lost when he contested against her for a national assembly seat in 1988.⁵² Even so, SSP emerged as a mainstream political party because of its aggressive appeal and support from other Wahabi-Deobandi religious groups. It even joined into electoral alliance with Benazir Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), as well as the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), and was given two ministerial positions in the cabinet of the Punjab Chief Minister Arif Nakai. Clearly, extremism and sectarianism had homed into mainstream politics as a legitimate player.⁵³

Sectarianism after 9/11

THE ONGOING CRACKDOWN against sectarian outfits and al-Qaeda suspects has shown that in operational terms, “many of the sectarianists were part-time jihadis and vice versa.”⁵⁴ This is borne out by the linkages of sectarian terrorists belonging to SSP and LJ with jihadi

49. Ibid.

50. Abbas, *Sectarianism*, 11.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid. Such legitimacy is also underscored by continuing Saudi support for Wahabi-Deobandi sympathizers of SSP, a case in point being the appointment of SSP member Tahir Ashrafi as advisor for religious affairs to the Punjab governor “on the intervention of the Saudi government.” See page 13.

54. *The Daily Times* (editorial), 1 July 2002.

groups like HM and JEM in the kidnapping and murder of journalist Daniel Pearl in January 2002.⁵⁵ Sheikh Omer, sentenced to death in July for masterminding Pearl's kidnapping and execution, was a member of JEM, while the militants who led the police to the graveyard where Pearl was buried were members of SSP and LJ. Moreover, the terrorists who are said to have confessed to carrying out Pearl's execution and are in police custody now are LJ militants.⁵⁶ Also, the linkage of members of SSP, LJ, HM, and JEM with al-Qaeda's Egyptian, Iraqi, Saudi and Yemeni operatives has been unearthed following a joint operation of the FBI with Pakistani agencies in Karachi. As the drive against terrorism inside Pakistan picks up and meets with success, it is becoming clear "that the proliferation of jihadi organizations was in fact a result of 'strategic handling' and the never ending feuding that went on with these rather loosely organized outfits. Osama bin Laden dealt with almost all of them as one Deobandi-Wahabi consensus that drove the jihad in Afghanistan and Kashmir."⁵⁷

To be sure, the relationship of SSP and LJ with jihadi groups, Taliban and al-Qaeda, predates September 11. Aspects of such a relationship had come to light following LJ's failed assassination attempt against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on 3 January 1999, when a bomb planted under the Raiwind Bridge that Nawaz Sharif's motorcade was to pass blew up prematurely. The three LJ militants later arrested for involvement in the bombing had received training in Afghanistan, and one of them was a trainer himself in a camp run by HM, the militant group active in Kashmir.⁵⁸

At the same time, the symbiotic relationship of SSP and LJ with the mainstream religio-political organizations, such as the various factions of the JUI and its madrassas, suggests the religiosity and aspirations that sectarian subjectivities exemplify run through sections of the mainstream religious groups as well. Moreover, Shia-Sunni violence thrived not only because of the sectarian groups' nexus with jihadi and mainstream Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also because of

55. *The Friday Times*, 21 June 2002, 5.

56. *Dawn*, 5 August 2002.

57. See Khaled Ahmed, "The Achievements of Harkatul Mujahideen," *The Friday Times*, 2-8 August 2002, 10. Ahmed also notes that HM chief Fazalur Rahman Khaleel took his boys to Afghanistan to fight on the side of al-Qaeda and the Taliban: "Sixty-three of his warriors were killed before the Taliban were routed, Khaleel returned safely and is living in Islamabad."

58. Abbas, *Sectarianism*.

a degree of support from Saudi Arabia and Iran, as indeed the protection extended to the various sectarian leaders by influential politicians and hard-line government officials, including elements of the ISI.⁵⁹

Clearly, the destructive impact of sectarian violence goes far beyond its body count,⁶⁰ or the number of hard-core terrorists in the country.⁶¹ Indeed, the danger that sectarian violence poses to Pakistan is not only because of the presence of sectarian groups per se, but also a complicit religious culture that underpins the networking of terrorist groups and the mainstream religio-political parties in the country and beyond. Such a symbiosis of subjectivities on the one hand and organizational networking of extremist groups on the other is virtually blurring the boundaries between “extremist” and “mainstream” in the Islamist spectrum.

For example, if the JUI (Fazal-ur Rahman faction) allowed SSP’s leader Riaz Basra to contest the 1987 national elections as its candidate, both the JUI (F) and the Jamaat-i-Islami joined SSP in an effort to prevent the death sentence awarded to SSP’s Haq Nawaz (for his role in murdering Sadik Ganji) from being carried out. These Islamic parties reportedly went to the extent of demanding that if it was not possible for General Musharraf’s government to pardon Haq Nawaz, he should be exiled like Nawaz Sharif⁶² to Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, both the extremist outfits and the mainstream religio-political groups look up to bin Laden as a “hero of Islam.” This is borne out by the reaction of the religious parties alliance calling itself *Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal* (MMA), United Action Assembly,⁶³ to the

59. *The Herald*, December 2001, 20.

60. The worst year of sectarian violence was 1997, when two hundred people were killed and one hundred and seventy-five injured in ninety-seven incidents. A crack-down by the Punjab government brought down the average annual sectarian fatalities and incidents to around seventy and thirty, respectively. While there was a marginal decrease in sectarian violence under the military government, the teaming up of sectarianists with al-Qaeda operatives and the jihadi militants has given the whole issue a new turn.

61. According to LJ leader Akram Lhori arrested in June 2002, there are one hundred and fifty LJ militants in the country. (*The Nation*, 2 July 2002). As for the SMP, it has been considerably weakened by infighting, penetration of security agents and the drying up of funding by Shia contributors who believe that militancy has undermined Shia security. See Zaigham Khan in *The Herald*, September 1998, 29 and 48.

62. *The Herald*, March 2002.

63. The six parties are JUI (F), JUI (Samiul Haq), Jamaat-i-Islami, Markazi Jamiat e Ahle Hadith, Jamiat Ulema Pakistan (Noorani), and the Shia party TJP.

government ads carried in the national print media in June 2002 portraying bin Laden and his al-Qaeda associates as "religious terrorists." The ad carried pictures of Osama, his key lieutenant, and sixteen other al-Qaeda associates and local militants wanted for attacks on foreign targets in Karachi. Reacting to the ad at a public gathering, JUI's information secretary repeated his party's position that "Osama is a hero to the Islamic world and the Musharraf government would not get any sympathy by branding him a religious terrorist."⁶⁴ On his part, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, head of the Jamaat-i-Islami termed the Osama ad as part of an international conspiracy in which "Pakistan's government had sided with the Zionists' agenda."⁶⁵ He went on to argue that "bracketing of Islamists with terrorists [was] a Zionist conspiracy because Islam is fast spreading in Europe and America."⁶⁶ Such lionization of Osama is even more vigorous in the tribal areas. For example, following the shoot-out in July between the police and four Uzbek al-Qaeda militants near Kohat in which all the Uzbeks were killed, scuffles broke out between pro-al-Qaeda demonstrators and the police over claiming the bodies of the slain terrorists. The government eventually removed the bodies to Peshawar for secret burial, even as the spot where the terrorists fell was turned into a shrine by the locals.⁶⁷

Inevitably, such glorification of al-Qaeda terrorists by a Talibanic Pakistan has a corollary among the "Vedic Taliban"⁶⁸ in India, where Hindu policemen who participated in the massacre of Muslims in the recent pogroms in Gujarat were glorified as heroes.⁶⁹ Clearly then, such a melding of subjectivities of religious violence across Pakistan and India suggests that the radicalization of the Arabist shift in Pakistan and of "Vedic Taliban" in India are two sides of the same cultural problematic: the eclipse of the subcontinent's eclecticism of which the Indo-Persian matrix was a prime expression.

64. *The Nation*, 2 July 2002.

65. *Ibid.*

66. *Ibid.*

67. *The News*, 12 July 2002. See also Rahimullah Yusufzai, *Newsline*, July 2002, 62.

68. Mukul Dube, "The Vedic Taliban," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18 May 2002.

69. See Pankhaj Mishra, "We Have No Orders to Save You: State Participation and Complicity in Communal Violence in Gujarat." A Report by Human Rights Watch. *New York Review of Books*, 15 August 2002. According to the report, "the police led the charge, using gunfire against Muslims . . . a key BJP state minister was reported to have taken over police control rooms on the first day of the carnage, issuing orders to disregard pleas for assistance from Muslims."

Conclusion

PAKISTAN'S ROLE IN THE U.S.-LED WAR against terrorism and its rethinking of the jihadi networks are becoming a bone of contention in a country where the imperatives of domestic security and cultural identity in the context of U.S. military presence in Afghanistan are weighed down by connotations of a "war between Islam and America"—the slogan being used by the religio-political opposition for framing its stance vis-à-vis the Musharraf government in the October elections. To be sure, President Musharraf's aligning of Pakistan with the United States in the war against terrorism has both undercut and radicalized the Arabist shift. This is reflected by a defiant flaunting of bin Laden as a primordial Arab and Islamic hero by the religio-political groups and the MMA, especially in terms of their opposition to Musharraf and his "secular" government and supporters. A case in point is the full-page ads that appeared in the Karachi daily *Ummate Muslima* praising bin Laden as a "holy warrior and a lion of God whom the 1.4 million American army has failed to capture and subdue." The ads appeared on July 2 and 4 in retaliation to the government's ads of June 30 depicting bin Laden as a terrorist.⁷⁰ Seen in the context of a general radicalization of the religio-political right, some of whose elements are threatening that "power can be taken from the army by force,"⁷¹ there is an urgent need to look at the war against terrorism in terms of a comprehensive campaign on multiple fronts: social and economic, educational and cultural, political and security. Indeed, the crackdown against the terrorists of today should be accompanied at the same time by a battle for the hearts and minds of the people for preempting the terrorists of tomorrow. After all, if there are thousands of Pakistanis dying to fight America, there are thousands of others dying to live in America, as indeed a great many more who see the present crisis as a battle for Pakistan's survival as a sovereign and moderate state.

To conclude, Pakistan's Shia-Sunni violence has come a long way from the killings of sectarian leaders, religious teachers and activists,

70. See *The Friday Times*, 19 July 2002.

71. *The Herald*, May 2000, 52. Such a confrontationist stance marks an unprecedented radicalization of the religio-political parties against the army, inasmuch as until recently the religious right's rhetoric was mainly against the secular elements and "the hateful NGOs," rather than the army itself.

through the target killing of government officers, members of security forces, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, innocent civilians in mosques and cemeteries, to a launching pad for a war against Westerners following the Taliban's rout in Afghanistan. Even so, it seems the use of politically inspired religious violence in the country has not entirely eclipsed a pacifist Indo-Persian culture: For example, unlike Pakistan's Afghan-Arabs who pay homage to al-Qaeda terrorists, the villagers near Murree stood in the way of terrorists who were fleeing after attacking a Christian missionary school on 8 July 2002, and this led the terrorists to blow themselves up following the example of their Arab role models. However, in addressing the problem of Shia-Sunni violence in terms of the escalation of its scope and interpenetration with other religio-political forces in the country and outside, the following points need to be considered.

1. Despite the tribal "civil wars" and sectarian death squads, by and large Shia-Sunni violence lacks grassroots support. Indeed, as a product and response to the larger dynamics of modernization, the internationalization of jihad, the standoff over Kashmir and an Arabist shift in cultural imagination, religious extremism stands to subvert Pakistan much like Jihad International subverted Afghanistan, even as Afghanistan was attempting to modernize with Soviet support. The decentering of power in Pakistan—in the form of militarization of the religio-political strata, the fragmentation of militant and terrorist groups, and their interstitial nexus with sections of the mainstream Islamists—is in some ways a corollary of the atomization of Afghanistan and crumbling of the Soviet Union. Hence, stabilization of Afghanistan and support for Pakistan (economic, security) merit the same kind of sustained involvement by the United States that won it the Cold War. In this sense, economic development of the region should amount to a preemptive security policy internationally.⁷²

72. Such an approach toward regional and global risk management largely depends on how the United States views and conducts the war against terrorism: as a unilateral project to secure strategic geopolitical positions, or as an attempt that ensures other countries have a stake in the international system through equitable international trade, democratization of international institutions, and so forth. See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "War on Terrorism: 9/11 and Globalization from Below," *The Daily Times*, 11 July 2002.

2. In a globalizing moment where the local and the global are increasingly intertwined in an interdependent world, forms of religious violence cannot be wished away in isolation from the historical and political contexts giving rise to them—be it Afghanistan after the Cold War/Taliban, Palestine under Israeli occupation, or Kashmiri aspiration for self-determination. A long-term solution of Pakistan's sectarian and religiously inspired violence within the country and beyond, is therefore contingent upon a radical improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations. This will make it possible for Pakistan to focus more on internal security and also to evolve a more inclusive Muslim identity rooted in the Indo-Persian culture. However, given the tension and mistrust between India and Pakistan, it is imperative that while the two countries address the Kashmir question, they should also evolve multilateral cooperative mechanisms with the United States and the UN on the issues of education, development and culture for promoting and preserving peace and security over the long haul.
3. The crackdown by President Musharraf's government against sectarian and other militant groups has partly helped in breaking the organizational structure of the sectarian groups. At the same time, this has led to a sectarianist infusion into other extremist and mainstream Islamic groups for a "decisive battle between Islam and America."⁷³ Such a radicalization of the Islamic forces has given rise to an unprecedented defiance on part of the civil society's religio-political strata against the army. In such a context, it is vital for the army and the political parties to reach an understanding for power sharing.⁷⁴

73. Terming the forthcoming elections as "a war between Washington and Medina," MMA chairman Maulana Noorani called on his supporters at a meeting on 25 July in Islamabad to "expel the U.S.-backed secular elements from the country" by electing a religious leadership. See *The Nation*, 26 July 2002. Its rhetoric notwithstanding, MMA's primary target is to win 10 percent of the seats in the next parliament to enable it to assume a "kingmaker's role" in a fractious political scenario. See Ibne Nasim, "MMA—The Force to Reckon with?" *Weekly Independent*, 25–31 July 2002.

74. As the results of the October 2002 elections showed, MMA exceeded its own expectations by winning twice as many seats (fifty-two), even though it polled only 11.10 percent of the votes. By comparison, the PML (Nawaz) won fourteen seats despite polling more votes (11.32 percent), whereas the People's Party got the highest number of votes (25.01 percent) with sixty-two seats, and the pro-Musharraf PML (Quaide Azam) won seventy-seven seats with 24.81 percent of the vote. See *Dawn*, "PPP Got Highest Number of Votes," 18 October 2002, 16.

In the absence of a comprehensive campaign against terrorism that also addresses its root causes and aims for the hearts and minds of the people, the explosion of a tribal warrior culture masquerading as religious extremism in Pakistan could well mark a quantum leap in the destabilization of the region and the world.

Sectarian violence was rife in Pakistan in the 1980s and early 1990s. Besides, on the downhill, the present decade is experiencing continuation of sectarian skirmishes in various pockets of Pakistan-Karachi, Kurram, Jhang, Quetta etc. Religious scholars, lawyers, doctors, government officials, educationist, other professionals, shopkeepers, students, and vendors, all have been targeted in one way or the other due to sectarian differences. The ongoing sectarian skirmish is dividing the already divided population of Pakistan with dangerous ramification. It can be rightly put into writing that co Sectarian violence in Pakistan refers to attacks and counter-attacks against people and places in Pakistan motivated by antagonism toward the target's sect, usually a religious group. Targets in Pakistan include the Sunni, Shia, Sufi, and the small Ahmadi, Hindu and Christian religious groups. As many as 4,000 people are estimated to have been killed in Shia-Sunni sectarian fighting in Pakistan between 1987â€”2007. And since 2008 "thousands of Shia" have been killed by Sunni extremists according to the The boundary between India and Pakistan was Kashmir dispute has been the main cause of drawn by a British lawyer Cyril Radcliffe.⁴ The direct or indirect of all major conflicts between British colonial regimeâ€™s departure had the two countries with the exception of the catastrophic consequences. As a result, some Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, where conflict three million people lost their lives and originated due to turmoil in East Pakistan. seventeen million were compelled to leave their Religion and Conflict: The Islamic homes.⁵ foundation of Pakistan Therefore, the India-Pakistan conflict All