
Pakistan Army and Terrorism; an unholy alliance

Pakistan has been known for its perennial support of the Taliban in Afghanistan and other terrorist organizations in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir. The dramatic events of the terrorist attacks on the twin towers in the United States (U.S) on the 11th of September 2001 also referred to as 9/11, shook the tectonic plates of world politics, pushing Pakistan into being a focal point of global politics. Pakistan became the key strategic partner of United States' War on Terror; post the terrorist attacks, taking a complete U-turn in her traditional foreign policies towards Afghanistan and Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir, albeit temporarily under international pressure for heavy monetary gains. The country, in which sectarian groups targeting minority communities (Shias, Sufis, Ahmadis etc.) and Kashmir-focused groups confined their operations to Indian Administered Kashmir and the rest of India, has become a victim of its own holy war as a consequence of the 'unholy alliance' between the Inter Intelligence Services (ISI), Pakistan's powerful intelligence agency, military and self-styled religious scholars. This historic alliance has resulted in colossal rise of radical Islam being a factor in the country's proclivity to Islamic fundamentalism.

Jihadi Groups

There are several kind of militant groups operating in and from Pakistan that can be distinguished by their sectarian background (Ahl-e-Hadith, Deobandi, Jamaat-e-Islami etc.), and their areas of operation (Afghanistan, India, Pakistan). Their objectives may vary from overthrowing the Pakistani government, seizure of Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir or support of Afghan Taliban. It typically takes eighteen months for 'Mujahideen' to become fully functional.

"There are six stages to jihad training before a mujahid is deployed. The first stage, Tasis, is the indoctrination period, during which no military skills are taught. This is a period in which religious and sectarian fervour is instilled in the trainee, and the phase generally lasts one month. For example, Lashkar-e-Taiba will use this stage to convert recruits to Alh-e-Hadith teachings. Next is Al Ra'ad, a three-month period that continues the indoctrination period but also includes the trainees' introduction to military training. At the beginning of this stage, some groups like to take stock of their recruits and administer mental and physical tests to make sure the recruit is fit for a life of jihad. After these four months of spiritual conditioning and an introduction to light military activities, a six-month period of guerrilla training begins. Upon completion of this phase, Mujahideen can technically be put in the field, but only after writing their will and giving it over to the Ameer (a title of respect or nobility, usually meaning "commander") of the camp. However, should the trainee require more

specialized instruction, he will be sent on to Doshka and Jandla. The seven to ten-day Doshka training teaches the recruit to use handheld weapons. Not all Mujahideen go through the nine-month Jandla phase, which is considered the most difficult. During this training, the mujahid learns how to use automatic arms and to craft explosives. Thus far, only the facilities linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, and Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami have the resources to conduct this training, but other groups often use these facilities to train their own Mujahideen. The final two stages often depend on resources and the necessity of certain operations. For example, only the leadership of a jihadi group engages in Domela training, which teaches the handling of shoulder-fired weapons. Zakazak is also a rare form of training, because it involves familiarization with tanks, canons, and other heavy weaponry, to which many groups do not have access". - Amir Rana, Director of Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Authored A-Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan.

Corresponding to these characteristics, the following clusters of Islamist terrorist groups have been discussed below:

Al Qaeda (Pakistan) - Al Qaeda operatives who are based in Pakistan are largely non-Pakistani. They operate through networks of supportive Pakistani militant groups having strongest ties with Deobandi groups such as the Pakistani Taliban, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Al Qaeda has facilitated attacks within Pakistan and has planned international attacks. The objective of this terrorist group is the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate. The Internet is Al Qaeda's most dangerous weapon due to its global reach. They have killed more Americans than any other terrorist organization. In Afghanistan, they use Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and suicide IEDs, kidnappings, executions on video, Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPGs), mortars and rockets.

Taliban - Taliban is an Islamist group that emerged in Pakistan's Federally Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA) neighbouring Afghanistan and parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after 9/11. Their objective initially was to wage a war in Afghanistan against NATO forces though subsequently adopted other agendas, such as Islamization in FATA and absorbed sectarian tendencies. The Afghan Taliban emerged from Deobandi school of thought. In the Soviet-Afghan war, the Afghan Mujahideen used the term '*Punjabi Mujahideen*' to refer to militants from mainland Pakistan. When Pakistani groups started contributing to the insurgency in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir they were referred to as '*Afghan Mujahideen*', although most of the militants were from the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. In this context, it is not surprising that after the Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s, Pakistani groups there were tagged as Punjabi Taliban. Afghan and Pakistani tribal Taliban use the same term for them.

"There are several groups which proclaim to focus upon 'Kashmir Valley', that include, Jammāt-e-Islami (JI), Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Jais-e- Mohammad (JM) and Laskar-e-Toiba (LeT)" - Christine Fair- Associate Professor at the Center for Peace and Security Studies, within Georgetown University's Edmund A . Walsh School of Foreign Service

Jammat-e-Islami (JI) - JI is an Islamic political party, founded by a Muslim theologian and socio-political philosopher Maulana Abul Ala Maududi in 1941 in Lahore (British India). In 1947, it moved its operations to West Pakistan. It began with the principle that the primary struggle in the world was between Islam which was superior to any other accepted political system and unbelievers. JI strongly opposes capitalism, liberalism, secularism as well as economic practices like offering bank interest. Its objective is to make Pakistan an Islamic state, to be governed by Sharia Law (Islamic Law). Jamaat-e-Islami enjoys the support of a diverse cross section of Pakistani society, including students, unions, and professional organizations. Jamaat-e-Islami has also been linked to militancy. Their *'Rajakar fighters'* participated in the genocide of Bengali people led by the Pakistan Army in the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh. During the Zia-ul-Haq regime, these Rajakar members were recognized as official members of the Pakistan army, provided arms training to Aghan Mujahideen and raised funds from wealthy Arabs and local patrons. After Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan, JI turned its attention to Jammu and Kashmir, with the continued support of the ISI. Jamaat-e-Islami, however, wanted to maintain its distance from direct militant activities, identifying itself as more of a political-ideological movement. To distance itself, JI established groups dedicated solely to Jihad, the most prominent of which is, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.

Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) - Hizbul Mujahideen, was formed by a former Kashmiri school teacher Muhammad Ahsan Dar in 1989, committed to a campaign to unite Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan and Islamization of the socio-political and economic set-up, thereby establishing an Islamic Caliphate. HM follows the Jammat-e-Islami ideology, the group that also funds its activities. The affiliation with JI allowed HM militants to receive weapons training in Afghan camps until the Taliban seized power. HM is currently led by Syed Salahuddin, mainly comprising ethnic Kashmiris and Pakistanis of non-Kashmiri origin, affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami. It is headquartered in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir, and its size has been estimated at anywhere from several hundred to tens of thousands of members. HM remains one of the most influential groups in the Kashmir Valley as it recruits many of its members from this region. HM has established a network with operations in Pakistan Administered, Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir and in Pakistan.

"Much of the group's literature and teachings justify a nearly perpetual state of jihad and interpret all Muslim territory as subject to Muslim re-conquest in the broadest terms" – **'The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups', by Husain Haqqani.**

Pakistani officials believe that HM controls up to 60 percent of the Mujahideen operating in Kashmir and has been working alongside Lashkar-e-Taiba since 1997. As per reports, HM often works alongside other militant groups to provide local knowledge to the overwhelming Pakistani and foreign membership of other groups because of its ethnical Kashmiri cadres. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen is modelled after a highly structured army, very well organized militarily, with Indian security forces and politicians in Kashmir Valley being its primary target. It is one

of the only militant groups to assassinate high-ranking Indian personnel, including three Major Generals and several hundred officers of other ranks. It uses the subgroups Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba and Jamiat-e-Tulaba-e-Arabia to recruit students from universities and JI-affiliated *madrassas* (religious schools).

Despite its prominence, many splits have occurred over tactical disagreements and personal differences within HM. It is also believed that the ISI arranges the mergers and rifts in HM and in other groups as a divide-and-control strategy. Burhan Wani (now killed) and Zakir Musa are some of the popular terrorists associated with HM in the Kashmir Valley who openly support Islamic Rule (Sharia Law) and refer to Kashmir issue as an Islamic Struggle rather than a political issue.

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) - LeT is the most prominent Ahl-e-Hadith group operating in Pakistan and the Kashmir Valley and was founded in the Kunar province of Afghanistan. It is the militant wing of a large religious organization, Markaz Dawa-ul-Irshad, which was formed in the mid-to late 1980s by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Zafar Iqbal, and Abdullah Azzam. LeT is made up of several thousand members from Pakistan, Pakistan-Administered and Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir and veterans of the Afghan war, and initiated militant activities in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir in the early 1990s. LeT claims the largest militant network in Pakistan by maintaining 2,200 offices nationwide and around two dozen camps to launch fighters across the Line of Control (LoC) into Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir.

“Jihad also includes the right to avenge the loss of any land once under Muslim rule, including countries such as Spain. Therefore, Hafiz Saeed not only wants to unite Kashmir with Pakistan, but he also wants to see Pakistan become part of a Global Islamic State”-The True Face of Jihadis, by Amir Mir.

Lashkar-e-Taiba members have carried out major attacks against India with an objective to establish an Islamic Caliphate in South Asia and ‘liberating’ Muslims of Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir. Some Lashkar members have also been accused of carrying out attacks in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi, to mark its opposition to the policies of former President Pervez Musharraf. As of December 2008, U.S. intelligence officials believed that Pakistan’s intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), provided intelligence assistance and protection to LeT. In November 2008, it was Lashkar-e-Taiba that launched the dreaded terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Ajmal



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Amir Kasab, the only surviving gunman, when captured by Indian authorities, admitted that the attacks were planned and executed by the LeT.

The group receives donations from the Pakistani diaspora community of the Gulf States and the United Kingdom. It also receives financial support from Muslim NGOs and businesspeople from Pakistan and Kashmir.

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) - JeM was formed in January 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar, formerly an influential leader of Hark at-ul-Mujahideen (HuM). JeM was an effort to refresh the Jihad, avoiding the rifts that had emerged in other groups. JeM advocates a pan-Islamic ideology that is anti-West, anti-Jew with a primary objective of uniting Indian Administered Kashmir with Pakistan. Members of the JeM were the suspected perpetrators of the attack on the Kashmir Legislative Assembly on 1st of October 2001, killing thirty-one people. JeM, along with LeT, has been implicated in the attack on the Indian Parliament on 13th of December 2001, which killed nine people. JeM was among the groups implicated in the assassination attempts on President Musharraf in late 2003 after officials traced the phone numbers on the mobile phone of one of the suicide bombers. The group has also been linked to attacks against Christian Churches.

Omar Saeed Sheikh, a JeM leader, was sentenced to death for the murder of the American journalist Daniel Pearl in 2001. Although JeM's cadres are mainly Pakistanis and Kashmiris, Afghans and Arab veterans of the Afghan war are also in its echelons. The group's size is estimated at several hundred armed supporters. It has been reported that Maulana Azhar received heavy funding from ISI, the Taliban, and several other Sunni groups in Pakistan to establish JeM. Though JeM was outlawed by Pakistan in 2002, it splintered into Khuddam ul-Islam (KUI), headed by Azhar, and Jamaat ul-Furqan (JUF), led by Abdul Jabbar and continues to openly operate in Pakistan.

There are other smaller groups like Al-Umar, Al-Badr, Jamiat ul Mujahideen that follow the same ideology as HM, JeM and LeT. They aim for the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan and follow hard-line ideas like not allowing women to work or study.

Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP) - SSP is a leading Sunni Deobandi group in Pakistan, founded in 1985 by Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, Maulana Zia-ur-Rehman Farooqi, Maulana Eesar-ul-Haq Qasmi, and Maulana Azam Tariq. It is a splinter group from the predominant Deobandi political party in Pakistan, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam. This group was banned by President Pervez Musharraf in 2002 as a terrorist organization under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997. In March 2012, the government of Pakistan banned Sipah-e-Sahaba again. The Supreme Court of Pakistan removed this ban in November 2014. SSP aims to make Pakistan a Sunni State under a narrow interpretation of Hanafi Islam and establish an Islamic Caliphate. It aims to counter the Shia influence in Pakistan, which is supposed to have increased in the wake of the Iranian Revolution, urges government to officially declare the Shia a non-Muslim minority (much as it has done to the Ahmadi community since 1974). SSP also organizes anti-Shia rallies calling for the assassination of Shia leaders and for attacks on Shia worshippers. Between 3,000 and 6,000 activists are believed to be associated with this group, coordinated from close to 500 offices and branches throughout Punjab as well as from international

offices in countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Bangladesh, and the United Kingdom. It is widely considered one of the most powerful and influential sectarian groups in Pakistan. SSP opposes Pakistan's alliance with the United States since the 9/11 attacks. The Pakistani government made several attempts to repress sectarian violence by arresting SSP associates and threatening them to close the *madrassas* (religious schools) from which the group draws maximum members. However, since SSP *madrassas* were used by the government to train and support Mujahideen in Afghanistan and Kashmir, the government had no choice but to turn a blind eye to the subversive activities conducted by the SSP members. SSP benefitted as a result of being a hub of training for Pakistan's Kashmir campaign.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) - LeJ is the radical militant offshoot of the Sunni Deobandi sectarian group Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) formed in 1996 by Riaz Basra, along with Akram Lahori and Malik Ishaque. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is based primarily in Punjab and Karachi and seeks to further the SSP goals of marginalizing Shias and turning Pakistan into a Sunni State. Pakistani authorities have implicated LeJ in the July 2003 bombing of a Shiite mosque in Karachi, as well as bombings at two other Shiite mosques in Karachi in May and June 2004. It has been implicated in attacks on Christian and Western targets throughout Pakistan and in the January 1999 assassination attempt on former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The SSP and LeJ are reported to have very close links with the Taliban, as they fought alongside the Taliban militias in Afghanistan against the Northern Alliance. All three groups are closely linked in their fight against the Shias, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. A considerable portion of LeJ's funding is reportedly derived from wealthy benefactors in Karachi, Pakistan.

Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) - HuM was formed in 1985 by Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil as a splinter faction of Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HuJI). HuM broke with its parent organization due to internecine fighting, but it retained many of the goals of HuJI. These primarily include assisting the Afghan Jihad and expelling Soviet forces. The group reunited with HuJI in early 1993 for the sake of a consolidated effort on the Kashmir front. The merger lasted only four years, but under the leadership of Maulana Saadatullah Khan, attacks in Kashmir increased dramatically. This connection began to forge a pan-Islamic ideology that included the violent annexation of Kashmir to Pakistan, and armed struggle against non-believers, secular Muslim governments, and the West. Harkat-ul-Mujahideen is primarily focused on the conflict in Kashmir and is politically linked to the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) faction, a Deobandi religious organization. It is based primarily in Muzaffarabad and Rawalpindi and conducts trainings in Pakistan. Until late 2001, it also trained fighters in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan. The two most prominent training camps for HuM are located in Mansehra in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir respectively. HuM conducts insurgent and terrorist operations primarily in the Kashmir Valley, but members have also been found operating in Afghanistan. Over the years there has been a shift in demographics of recruits within HuM from *Madrassa* educated to young boys from public schools, that by 1995, members who did not have a *madrassa* education outnumbered those who received religious training. The strength of HuM is reported at several thousand-armed supporters

throughout Pakistan and the Kashmir Valley. Besides calls for donations through advertising and pamphleteering, it receives donations from wealthy patrons in the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, as well as from local donors in Pakistan and Kashmir.

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) - TTP is the Pakistani Taliban vis-à-vis the Afghan Taliban, which was formed in early 2004 in Waziristan, Pakistan by South Waziristan based Baitullah Mehsud who was killed in a U.S drone strike in August 2009. Baitullah Mehsud was succeeded by the fervently sectarian Hakimullah Mehsud. While the TTP is widely seen as a Pashtun insurgency, the Punjab-based groups like SSP/LeJ and other Deobandi groups are important components of this organization that provide suicide bombers and logistical support to TTP, thereby allowing it to conduct attacks throughout Pakistan, far beyond its territorial remit. Its stated goal is to overthrow the secular Pakistani government and establish a Taliban regime and the Islamic Emirate of Pakistan. There are reports stating that most of their support comes from many high-ranking (retired) officers in the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). TTP is specialized in Improvised Explosive Device (IEDs), suicide attacks, mass casualty bombings, mortars, rockets, assassinations, kidnappings, executions, raids, assaults and Internet operations.

United Jihad Council (UJC) - The United Jihad Council, also known as the Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC), is an umbrella organization of close to 13 jihadi outfits formed by Pakistan, and engaged in terrorist activities in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir. In the early 1990s, many terrorist outfits mushroomed in the State with the active support of Pakistan's ISI. In November 1994, in its efforts to ensure complete control on their Jihadi activities, Pakistan created an alliance of 13 leading Jihadi outfits called the Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC), currently headed by Syed Salahuddin, the leader of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.

This streamlined the distribution of resources like arms, ammunition, propaganda materials and communications. By 1999, three Pakistan-based outfits - Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Al Badr - were also moored in, taking the total number to 16. The Jihadi outfits which are the members of UJC are: Hizbul-Mujahideen (HM), Harkat-ul-Ansar, Tehrik-e-Jihad, Tehrik-ul-Mujahideen, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, Al Jihad, Al Umar Mujahideen, Jammu Kashmir Islamic Front, Muslim Janbaaz Force, Hizbullah, Al Fatah, Hizb-ul-Momineen, LeT, JeM and Al Badr Mujahideen. The sole objective of UJC in escalating Jihad in Kashmir is to incorporate it into Pakistan. The ISI is believed to be the major financier for UJC, albeit funds are also collected from donors in Punjab and Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir. It is for this reason that it has retained considerable support from official State machinery.

“All Kashmir militant organizations have announced that Pakistan is their ideal end goal.....the freedom fighters will surrender (Kashmir) to the Pakistani military and government. Jihad has been getting stronger.....the Mujahideens are getting organized now and attacking the Indian military strategically”- Manzur Shah, UJC Commander, 1994.

The UJC chairman, Syed Salahuddin, opines that it is in the interest of the Subcontinent that Kashmir goes to Pakistan as he feels that the majority of the people suggest this stance.

“The UJC also aims to bring unity among all the constituents of the conglomerate, plan a collective military strategy and formulate a common stand on national and international issues”- Syed Salahuddin, Chairman UJC- in an interview with Kashmiri Journalist Baba Umar of Tehelka.

Salahuddin has been regularly organizing conferences, media meets and issuing press releases, wherein he raises the issue of self-determination, asking India to vacate Kashmir and declaring, *“if India accepts the reality of the Kashmir issue there will be no need for an armed struggle, but if India continues to use its military against the people of Kashmir there will be no alternative to the gun”*. The headquarters of the UJC are located in Muzaffarabad (Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir) and its area of operation is mainly Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir.

The United States declared Syed Salahuddin a ‘*Global Terrorist*’ on 26th of June 2017 in Washington. Salahuddin issued a video message calling for a week-long protest to mark the first death anniversary of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani, who was killed by Indian security forces on 8th of July 2016, prompting the U.S. decision. The decision has been described by Pakistan as *“completely unjustified”*. Salahuddin urged the UN to implement its resolutions and give the Kashmiri people the right to vote on independence or a merger with Pakistan and led a rally in Muzaffarabad while praising Pakistan for its continued support in Kashmir.

ISIS Influence in Pakistan

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State (IS) and Daesh in Arabic, is a terrorist group that follows a fundamentalist, Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam. This group has been designated a terrorist organization by the United Nations.

ISIS originated as Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in 1999, which pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda and participated in the Iraqi insurgency following the 2003 invasion of Iraq by Western forces. ISIS gained global prominence in early 2014 when it drove Iraqi government forces out of key cities in its Western Iraq offensive. The group proclaims itself a worldwide Caliphate referring to itself as Islamic State (IS) and claims religious, political, and military authority over all Muslims worldwide. ISIS is widely known for presenting execution videos of both soldiers and civilians, including journalists and aid workers, and its destruction of cultural heritage sites. In Syria, the group conducted ground attacks on both government forces and opposition factions, and by December 2015 it held a large area in western Iraq and eastern Syria containing an estimated 2.8 to 8 million people, where it enforced its interpretation of Sharia Law. ISIS is now believed to be operational from 18 countries across the world, including Afghanistan and Pakistan.

ISIS has created an ideological space for itself in Pakistan by creating deep divisions between the existing militant Islamist groups, like the JuD, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, and TTP. ISIS has a number of followers, sympathizers, and links with many banned militant groups in the country. It has the capacity to disrupt and reconstitute local orders in potentially every Muslim-majority country by exploiting the idea of a transnational Caliphate. As per reports,

ISIS has made its way into the religious segments of the Pakistani society and many Pakistanis have ostensibly travelled to Syria to join the group. It is rather convenient for ISIS to gain transaction in Pakistan as it shares the common objective of establishing the transnational Islamic Caliphate with many violent and non-violent Islamist organizations in the country. The Taliban, sectarian outfits, and ISIS also share a sectarian ideology, with all three declaring that the Shiite community is *kafir* (non-believer); these groups have been consistently anti-Shiite and have targeted them through terrorist attacks. Some special reports have unveiled that sectarian groups like Jundullah and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have collaborated with ISIS in the country. In September 2014, three months after ISIS announced a global Islamic caliphate in Iraq and the Levant, their propaganda literature began to appear in Pakistan. A pro-ISIS booklet titled Fatah was distributed in Peshawar and North Waziristan, and graffiti in favour of the group was spotted in major Pakistani cities during ensuing months. It also makes widely use of social media in expanding its presence.



Picture Credits: dawn.com – Copyright AFP

In January 2015, ISIS announced the ‘*Islamic State of Khorasan*’, encompassing Afghanistan and Pakistan. There are more than 200 religious organizations operating on national and regional levels in Pakistan, with multiple agendas such as transformation of society according to their ideologies, enforcement of Shariah law, the establishment of a Caliphate, fulfilment of their sectarian objectives, and the achievement of Pakistan’s strategic and

ideological objectives through militancy. Hence, the rise of ISIS plays a very dangerous role, contributing to an already deteriorating political health of the country. Because of ISIS’ rise in the world, their “*achievements*” are inspirational to religious extremist and militant organizations in Pakistan.

[Afghan-Soviet War](#)

The Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 to support the Communist government in its conflict with anti-communist Muslim guerrillas and remained in Afghanistan till February 1989. In the period between December 1979 and February 1989, over 100,000 Soviet troops occupied Afghanistan. The Soviet leadership in Moscow, sensing an opportunity to create an idyllic dummy State between themselves and the growing Islamism of nations along its southern borders, was eager to assist the government in Kabul.

After a coup in 1978, People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan took power, Nur Mohammad Taraki was installed as the President and initiated an array of radical modernization reforms throughout the country which were disdained particularly by the orthodox rural population of the country. The government forcefully suppressed any opposition and arrested thousands, executing as many as 27,000 political prisoners. In retaliation, people organized themselves as armed groups (*Mujahideen*) and began their anti-government campaign; by April 1979, large parts of the country had turned into battle grounds. In September 1979, Taraki was overthrown and replaced by Hafizullah Amin as the new President. The uprisings,

along with internal fighting and coups within the government, impelled the Soviets to invade the country on the night of 24th of December 1979, sending in close to 30,000 troops and toppling the short-lived Presidency of People's leader Hafizullah Amin who was killed and replaced by Barak Kamal, the Soviet loyalist.

Thereafter in January 1980, Foreign Ministers from 34 nations of the Islamic Conference adopted a resolution demanding "*the immediate, urgent and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan*", while the UN General Assembly passed a Resolution protesting the Soviet intervention by a vote of 104–18. Afghan insurgents began to receive massive amounts of aid and military training in neighbouring Pakistan and China; by 1982 a sizeable Afghan population took sanctuary in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan.

In 1988 Afghanistan, Soviet Union, the U.S and Pakistan signed peace accords and the last Soviet soldier vacated Afghanistan in February 1989. The Afghan resistance would not have been as effective without Pakistani involvement which provided a conducive atmosphere that allowed the Afghan Mujahideen to organize military operations, with the Pakistan government becoming a channel for multinational arms deliveries to those fighting in Afghanistan. The geostrategic and domestic imperatives motivated Pakistan's leaders to pursue several objectives during the course of the war which witnessed Pakistan campaigning the Afghan resistance struggle and embrace its refugees. The possibility of facing a coordinated communist attack from Afghan and Soviet troops was a matter of concern for the Pakistani military planners, thereby making the removal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan an urgency. Their second objective was the early return of refugees to Afghanistan, since managing the burden of Afghan refugees left Pakistan dependent on more and more assistance of the international community. In many cases, the Afghan resistance groups and the community of refugees were held responsible for breakdowns of law and order in Pakistan thereby leaving an undesirable impact on their economy and society. The armed activities of the resident Afghans were carried out under the supervision and approval of the Pakistani authorities, who were also involved in the close monitoring of refugees and coordination of Afghan resistance groups based in Peshawar. The supply of arms was controlled by the ISI providing Pakistan a direct influence over the course of war.

Arms reached Pakistan by both ship and aircraft and were then trucked under military supervision to the border areas. The Mujahideen took delivery of weapons in Pakistan at small distribution centres under the control of individual Islamic Peshawar based groups which included Hizb-i Islami (Islamic Party led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar), Hizb-i Islami (Islamic Party led by Yunis Khalis), Jamiat-i Islami (Islamic Society led by Burhanuddin Rabbani), and Ittihad-i-Islami (Islamic Union led by Abdul Sayyaf) and, the three parties considered traditionalist, Mahaz-i-Milli (National Islamic Front led by Sayyid Ahmad Gaylani), Jibh-i Nejat-i Milli (Afghanistan National Liberation Front led by Sibghatullah Mojadiddi), and Harakat-e-Inqilab-e-Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement led by Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi).

Despite of some of its own fears, Pakistan had the option of not getting involved in the Afghan war but the temptation to do so was enticing. Apart from the supply of weapons

which elements of the Pakistani Army and refugee administration were conniving with members of the Peshawar organizations in the sale of weapons and relief supplies to parties outside the conflict, they received generous funds from the U.S making participation a lucrative business deal for the ISI and the Pakistani Army. The United States rewarded ISI handsomely as long as the resistance forces were able to put pressure on the Soviet military. Interestingly, the Pakistani President, General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, used the Afghanistan situation to help his military law regime subsist. As per observers, Zia's government would have not lasted so long without the war in Afghanistan and the international assistance that it attracted in the form of generous financial and diplomatic backing, especially from the United States. The total contribution for the decade from the U.S was roughly 2 billion USD and by early 1980's the funding received from Saudi Arabia was nearly 300 million USD. Zia used the status quo to project Pakistan as the defender of Islam against Soviet-sponsored communism which further strengthened his regime.

He promoted a political system guided by religious principles and traditions and called for criminal punishments in keeping with Islamic Law. He also insisted upon banking practices and economic activity that followed Islamic experience. With the withdrawal of the last Soviet soldier from Afghanistan after a decade long war with US-Pakistan backed Afghan Mujahideen, the weapon training camps were transformed by the ISI into indoctrination centres for Islamists who were later transported to the Kashmir Valley to replicate their Afghan success.

[Afghan Mujahideen and Kashmir](#)

As soon as the Soviet troops vacated Afghanistan in 1989 and the Soviet backed Afghan Communist regime fell apart, the United States of America lost interest and funding dried up. They left everything to Pakistan vis-à-vis Afghanistan. The Afghan Mujahideen who were not more than a mere "*equipment*", became Pakistan's inheritance. A section within the Pakistani establishment and ISI perceived this as an opportunity to support the political struggle that was taking roots at that time in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir. The recently unemployed Afghan Mujahideen were sent to Kashmir 1989 onwards where a political agitation (secular in nature) against India's alleged rigging of 1987 polls had gained momentum. Pakistan, that was determined to give this political movement a religious purpose and convert it into Jihad (holy war) sent the Afghan Mujahideen to Kashmir along with Pakistani volunteers supplied by Islamist Groups like LeT, JeM and LeJ to convert the ongoing movement into a religious war eventually facilitating merger of Kashmir with the Islamic State of Pakistan.

Pakistan used the same tactics and indoctrination that produced Mujahideen for fighting against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan which resulted in strong religious trumping and anti-India sentiment in the Kashmir Valley. The new religious warriors received the training on the same lines that ISI had earlier imparted to Afghan Mujahideen. Thousands of Kashmiri militants exfiltrated to Pakistan and Afghanistan underwent training in arms and guerrilla warfare, some of them later fighting alongside Afghan Mujahideen with pan-Islamic ideology binding them together and lending new dimensions to the ongoing militancy, originally a struggle for greater political rights. The insurgency in Kashmir was taken over by Islamist

radicals and foreign mercenaries as part of Pakistan's strategy. Though the strategy of Pakistan did not yield her a clean victory in Kashmir but it was successful in injecting a communal ideology, converting a political issue into a religious one, tampering with the social fabric and destroying the political and social cohesion between diverse ethnic and religious subgroups that once existed in Jammu and Kashmir, leaving it politically troubled for years to come.

"Whether or not Pakistan won anything in the two Jihads of 1980's and 1990's, many Pakistani Generals certainly became extraordinarily rich and politically powerful" –
Excerpt from 'Pakistan at Knife's Edge', by M.B. Naqvi.

The Soviet defeat in the Afghan-Soviet War created a surplus manpower (trained Afghan Mujahideen) which was redeployed in the Kashmir Valley and status quo proved to be a quintessential launchpad for 'Operation Topac' or 'Zia's Plan', a three-phase action plan for covert support to armed insurgency in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir, planned long back in 1984 in Pakistan.

Pakistan Military – ISI – Terrorist nexus

Pakistan's powerful intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has been covertly running the military intelligence programs in Afghanistan before it was invaded by Soviet Union in 1979. In the early 1980's, following United States Central Agency's (CIA) Operation Cyclone, a program to arm and finance the Jihadi warriors in Afghanistan. Pakistan systematically coordinated the conduit and distribution of arms and financial means to terrorist groups often the most retrogressive and extremist of the Mujahideen like the Hezbe Islami (HeI) of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. It was one of the largest and most expensive covert operations engineered by CIA, leaning heavily towards supporting militant Islamic groups working from safe havens in Pakistan favoured by the regime of Zia-ul-Haq.

The ISI's strategy at the time and with not much change, even in current date, can be summed up by what Pakistani dictator Zia ul-Haq told one of his Generals: *"Afghanistan must be made to boil at the right temperature"*. The Afghan Taliban was itself a creation of the ISI, and a de facto proxy by the time it took over Kabul in 1996. In 1999, Benazir Bhutto's Minister of Interior, Nasrullah Babar admitted it quite explicitly, pronouncing, *"We created the Taliban"*. Today, the Taliban is an assortment of militant outfits, of which the central leadership (Afghan Taliban) is thought to be in Quetta, Pakistan.

Post-Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and the collapse of the communist Najibullah regime in 1992, all Afghan political parties (except for Hikmatyar) agreed on a peace and power-sharing agreement, the Peshawar Accord, establishing the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Hikmatyar, who wanted to become the sole ruler of Afghanistan started a bombardment campaign against the capital city, Kabul, marking the beginning of a new phase in the war with the support of ISI and then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The ISI in conjunction with the Pakistan military provided financial, logistic, military and direct combat support to the Taliban until 9/11. It is widely acknowledged that the ISI has given the Afghan Taliban sanctuary inside Pakistan and supported the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan after 9/11, especially the Haqqani network, to carry out attacks inside Afghanistan, though Pakistan

officials deny this accusation. The ISI used the Taliban to establish a regime in Afghanistan which would be favourable to Pakistan, as part of their ‘*strategic depth*’ objectives. Since the creation of the Taliban, the ISI and the Pakistani military have given it financial, logistic and military, including direct combat support.

“The Haqqani Network is the most capable and dangerous insurgent organization in Afghanistan. The network’s current leader, Sirajuddin Haqqani, effectively organizes the tribal and insurgent groups of the southern part of Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas in ways consistent with the interests of the Pakistani government”. - **Institute for the Study of War, report of March 2012.**

A 2012 NATO study based on 27,000 interrogations of 4,000 captured Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters concluded that the ISI provided safe havens to the Taliban, monitored their movements, manipulated their fighters, and arrested those thought to be uncooperative. Al Qaeda is widely believed to still maintain camps in western Pakistan where foreign extremists receive training in terrorist operations.

Former Pakistani Army Chief General Ziauddin Butt (a.k.a. General Ziauddin Khawaja) revealed at a conference on Pakistani–U.S relations in October 2011 that according to his knowledge the then former Director-General of Intelligence Bureau of Pakistan (2004–2008), Brigadier Ijaz Shah (retd.), had kept Osama bin Laden in an Intelligence Bureau safe house in Abbottabad, Pakistan. General Ziauddin Butt said Bin Laden had been hidden in Abbottabad ‘with the full knowledge’ of Pervez Musharraf.



Tribal militias from Pakistan as prime candidates for Ghazwa-e-Hind. Picture Credits: dailymail.co.uk – Copyright AFP

Later, Butt denied making any such statement. Post 9/11 attacks U.S commandos killed Osama bin Laden while he was living in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

Pakistan has been a significant force behind the growth of Islamic radicalism and extremism in Jammu and Kashmir. The US State Department's report on Patterns of Global Terrorism, released in April 2001, specifically identified Islamabad as the chief sponsor of militant groups fighting in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir. The terrorist groups viz. HM, LeT, Al Badr, JeM, currently fighting in Kashmir, all of which benefit from Pakistani support. The ISI has specifically sought to replicate and transplant the success of the anti-Soviet Afghan campaign in Kashmir, exhorting young Mujahideen to participate in the conflict as part of the wider moral duty owed to Jihad (holy war). The assistance to the Mujahideen in Kashmir covers the ambit of training, logistics, financial and doctrinal support.

More than 100 insurgent weapon training camps have been identified in Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir, majority of which lie contiguous to the districts of

Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajauri and Jammu (of Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir). According to sources, the responsibility for managing and conducting the training falls under the jurisdiction of two sub divisional branches of the ISI namely Joint Intelligence Miscellaneous (JIM) and Joint Intelligence North (JIN). The Islamist-oriented military officers work in close collusion with the ISI by paying regular visits to the training camps and conducting training sessions on the fundamentals of guerrilla warfare and other war related techniques.

“Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Pakistani media Wednesday that some members of the Inter-Services Intelligence agency have a long-standing relationship with the Haqqani militant network. Officials have for years suspected the ties, which Pakistan denies”. - **Excerpt from A Voice of America Article, dated 20th of April 2011.**

Pakistan also plays a key role in funding these terrorist organizations. As per reports, the yearly expenditure of ISI towards the terrorist organizations runs between 125-250 million USD, covering salaries, cash incentives for high-risk operations and retainers for guides, porters and informers. Apart from training and funding the terrorist organizations, the ISI has fundamentally altered the dimensions of the conflict in Kashmir by transforming it to a movement being carried out by foreign militants on Pan-Islamic religious terms. Apart from the incessant involvement in terrorist activities in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir, ISI has been involved in running several military intelligence programs in India like supplying arms to insurgents in North-East India, supporting pro-Khalistan terrorist groups in Punjab and actively printing and supplying counterfeit Indian currency notes. They have allegedly been involved in terrorist attacks viz. 1993 Mumbai bombing, 2008 Mumbai attacks, known as 26/11 (LeT), attacks in Pathankot and Uri.

[9/11- US War on Terror - Pakistan's 'double game'](#)

On 11th of September 2001, 19 militants hijacked four airliners and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the twin towers, considered to be symbols of America's power and influence, of the World Trade Center in New York City. The third plane hit the Pentagon, the headquarters of the US Department of Defense just outside Washington, D.C., and the fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. The incident often referred to as 9/11 attacks resulted in mass death and devastation, killing over 3000 people, including more than 400 police officers and 343 firefighters. The attackers were Islamic terrorists allegedly financed by Osama bin Laden's terrorist organization Al Qaeda, in retaliation to United States support of Israel, involvement in the Gulf War and sustained military presence in the Middle East.

After the tragic events of 11th of September 2001, President George Bush launched an international military campaign declaring a worldwide '*War on Terror*' which would involve open and covert military operations, new security legislation and efforts to block the financing of terrorism.

“Every nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorist”- **President George Bush, United States, 2001**

Pakistan was declared as the 'front-line' State in America's War on Terror, owing to its geostrategic position and diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime. United States aimed at breaking the Pakistan-Taliban alliance and thereby isolating Afghanistan. For Pakistan, this association meant substantial economic dividends, military support and intercepting all Indian allegations to postulate Pakistan as a sponsor of terrorism, eventually boosting up its reputation in the international community. Taliban, the terrorist group whose liaison with Pakistan dates back to the era of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, included Afghan Mujahideen and Pashtun Tribesmen who underwent training in Pakistani *madrassas* (religious schools) well supported by Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI).

To support the cause of United States, Pakistan was instructed to intercept Al Qaeda operations in its territory and cut off all arms shipments and logistic support to Taliban. Pakistan was also asked intelligence sharing and immigration information and to eradicate all terrorist movements in Pakistan against US and its allies, provide harbours to the US aircrafts and territorial access for military and intelligence operations and blanket over-flight and landing rights for US planes. Consequently, the then President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf succumbed to all these demands, realizing that Pakistan would be incapable of sustaining an economic blockade, and decided to explore this new-fangled association with the U.S, which indisputably meant huge financial gains. Pakistan also feared that if they upset US, there was a remote possibility of India being chosen as an alternative option. President Musharraf's decision was reported by American Statesman; Collin Powell during the National Security Council meeting and admired by Bush in these words, *"It looks like you got it all"*.

To a layman, it may appear that a weak nation ended up in a situation; accidentally capitulating to the demands of the world's most powerful nation called the United States, fearing a violent and aggressive reaction. On the contrary, this was a well-thought out plan which offered a promise of military and financial gains, all in the interest of Pakistan. In the National Security Strategy document, President Bush stated that *"...United States shall remain committed to fostering economic liberalization as a tool toward combating terrorism"*, message intended for both Americans and its international audience. The document was indicative of the fact that political and moral support for the U.S' War on Terror would result in greater financial gains therefore greater economic prosperity.

U.S offered numerous political and financial rewards to Pakistan's regime after it joined U.S in its campaign against terrorism. On 23rd of September 2001, the US President Bush ordered the immediate lifting of sanctions against Pakistan that had been imposed for testing and acquiring its nuclear arsenal: the Symington Amendment (imposed in 1978), the Pressler Amendment (1990), and the Glenn Amendment (1998). Removing the Glen Amendment sanctions, as well as the other sanctions, allowed the Bush administration to reward Pakistan handsomely. A congressional bill proclaimed that, *"The President is authorized, for Pakistan and India, to provide assistance, enter into contracts, take actions in international financial institutions, sell, lease, or authorize the export of defense articles or defense services, authorize the export of dual-use items, or extend other financial assistance"*. This bill, made into law, allowed the President to continue dispensing a number of economic incentives to Pakistan.

“The United States promised Pakistan approximately \$1.2 billion in U.S. foreign assistance for 2002-2003, including development aid administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and more than \$600 million in cash transfers given directly to the Pakistani government to pay international debts. The United States also promised military and security aid for Pakistan to update and modernize its air force. This level of security and economic foreign assistance from the United States to Pakistan was the greatest amount of aid given since the end of the cold war. The United States agreed to reschedule a \$379 million bilateral debt through the Paris Club and to examine initiatives to reschedule other outstanding bilateral debt. This initial rescheduling lifted the Brooke sanctions imposed on Pakistan by the United States for failing to make its principal and interest payments on outstanding U.S. loans. The United States also agreed to support rescheduling Pakistan's \$12.5 billion bilateral debt with Paris Club members, of which \$2.9 billion was owed to the United States and \$5.3 billion was owed to Japan”. - **Bessma Momani-Senior Fellow Centre for International Governance (CIGI).**

Additionally, several trade concessions were granted to Pakistan with tariff and quota restrictions lowered on textile goods especially on cotton-yarn products imported from Pakistan. Other trade benefits given to Pakistan included allowing a considerable number of duty-free Pakistani goods to enter the United States under the General System of Preferences (GSP) program. The GSP applied to \$13.5 million in trade.

The United States also offered a political reward to Musharraf by legitimizing his autocratic military rule. In November 2001, upon Musharraf's visit, he was given a red-carpet treatment and the U.S. House of Representatives introduced a resolution stating, *“.....Musharraf had taken important steps in cooperation with the United States in combatting terrorism;..... pursued the return of Pakistan to democracy and civil society;.... [and] shown great fortitude in confronting extremists in Pakistan”.*

While Musharraf successfully gratified the United States, back home grievous criticism awaited him. There were demonstrations from extremists in favour of their Afghan brethren and Pakistan's intelligence agency was also divided on his decision. To win the support of the ISI in his favour, President Musharraf took a dramatic step by dismissing his intelligence Chief General Mahmood, and several of his lieutenants, pleasing the U.S with this decision. On 16th of September 2001, a Pakistani delegation was sent to Afghanistan in order to convince the Taliban to surrender Osama bin Laden to the U.S, though the mission failed in its task. In fact, it was informed that a delegation member, Mufti Shamzai, a renowned religious scholar of Pakistan encouraged Mullah Omar (Supreme Commander & Spiritual leader of Taliban) to wage Jihad against the U.S. Although Pakistan participated as a front-line State in the war on terror, initially in view of some national interests, it was reluctant to cut ties with the Taliban, which were nurtured, trained and supported by Islamabad in view of its Afghan specific policy.

Islamabad's ties to the Taliban were so strong and vital that throughout the initial phase of the 'War on Terror' campaign, General Musharraf and his cohort implored the United States to desist from decisively destroying Mullah Muhammad Omar's regime in Afghanistan, an objective that couldn't be secured. Pakistani leaders argued against all coalition military operations that would result in ejecting the Taliban's foot soldiers from their traditional bases in the south-eastern provinces of the country. These entreaties were also disregarded by the United States, and many Al Qaeda operatives infiltrated porous Afghan-Pakistan border and took refuge in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Musharraf accomplished the task of suppressing certain terrorist groups, but the approach was rather



General Kayani and US Admiral Mike Mullen. Picture Credits: Prospectmagazine.co.uk

selective. His government focused primarily on suppressing those Deobandi and Shia groups such as, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan and its members Lashkar-e-Jhangvi & Shia Therik-e-Jafria Pakistan and its descendants Sipah-e-Muhammadi, which were involved in bloodshed within Pakistani territory and whose objectives were out of sync with the military's perception of national interests.

Groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad and Harkatul-Mujahideen were treated differently for being groups that worked as a team with military and ISI units in their anti-India policies in Kashmir. These groups kept receiving financial support and training by the Pakistan army. In addition, the senior military officials had their own reservations about the Taliban as many members of the Taliban were Ghazali Pashtun, having profound linkages with the tribes of FATA. Pakistan military always avoided targeting the Taliban presence in FATA in order to avoid any kind of aggression at tribal level. Using the opportunities presented by the War on Terror, US-Pakistan security services systematically eliminated many sources of sectarian violence within two years of the campaign but its bias and selective approach towards some terrorist organizations led to the emergence of another Islamic militant group called, Pakistani Taliban, sympathetic and committed to Al Qaeda in its ideology and plans, and responsible for undermining government of Pakistan's writ in FATA, particularly waging a holy war against liberal elements within Pakistan. Musharraf used the war on terror to perpetuate his rule but as a consequence of the long and prolonged war and its selective approach, Pakistan is engaged in the struggle to save itself from destruction.

“Pakistan appears to be playing a double game of astonishing magnitude”- Excerpt from the report presented by Matt Waldman, a fellow at Harvard University.

Despite being well compensated, Pakistan wilfully remained neglectful of its commitment to root out Al Qaeda and Taliban cadres that continued operating from its territory, because of which US never looked at Pakistan as a trusted ally. However, it is undeniable that Pakistan

has lost many lives due to subversive activities of terrorism, in carpet bombings, military operations, U.S drone attacks and suicide attacks.

Terrorism in Pakistan

Pakistan's security situation has deteriorated post 9/11 attacks, despite its proclaimed commitment to the war on terror, and ongoing aid from United States. Paradoxically, Pakistan has become a sponsor of terrorism and an epicentre of terror, where unfortunately religion has a significant role to play. An array of terrorist groups in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir are supported by Pakistan; albeit myopically. The support is extended to these groups although they are allied with the very terrorist groups that fight the Pakistani State. In addition, many of the extremist groups sponsored by Pakistan are allied with Al Qaeda.

"Al Qaeda's old core is badly wounded but it still has powerful allies like the Pakistani Taliban that can serve as force multipliers". - Bruce Riedel, Former CIA Analyst

The Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) of Pakistan which is spread over 1,69,134 miles and runs in a narrow belt along the 1,454 miles border with Afghanistan, functions as a semi-autonomous region, under special laws designed and implemented by the British in 1901. The historical agreement in these areas was that in case of any kind of security issue, Pakistan government would approach the tribal leaders to allow them to handle it internally. No government has attempted to extend its constitution to FATA while failed governance in the region has contributed to Pakistan's insecurity, it being a congenial locale for militant groups to acquire a safe haven. Post 9/11 attacks Pakistani troops were stationed in this region searching for Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders pushed out of Afghanistan by U.S. troops. This interference was unwelcomed by the local leaders and led to unrest and fear across the country.

At first, the Wazirs elected to fight the Pakistan army; followed by the Mehsuds, who had previously been faithful to the army. By 2007, Mullah Nazir (leading militant, Pakistan Taliban) and Hafiz Gul Bahadur (leader, Pakistani Taliban) led a new formation called the 'Muqami Tehreek-e-Taliban' (Local Taliban Movement). This group aimed to protect the interests of Wazirs in North and South Waziristan. Nazir and Bahadur formed this group *"to balance the power and influence of Baitullah Mehsud (leader, TTP) and his allies"*. Conspicuously both Nazir and Gul Bahadur forged a pact with the Pakistan army whereby they would desist from attacking the Pakistan army and focus all their efforts upon ousting the U.S./NATO troops from Afghanistan and helping to restore the Afghan Taliban to power. Other tribal *Lashkars* (militias) also began forming to either challenge the Pakistan military or rivals. Some of the commanders began espousing the appellation of '*Pakistani Taliban*'.

Baitullah Mehsud's got killed in a drone strike in 2008 and Hakimullah Mehsud took over the TTP. It is believed that under Hakimullah, the TTP became more coherent intensifying its campaign of suicide bombings of Pakistani security and intelligence agencies. The campaigns against civilian targets became also more vicious. The people from Shia and Ahmedia community who are considered '*munafiqin*' (Muslims who spread discord in the community) became the primary target of terrorist bullets and many Sufi Shrines were attacked by the

TTP terrorists. Lahore's Datta Ganj Baksh was attacked in June 2010, followed by Abdullah Shah Ghaz Shrine in Karachi which was attacked in Oct 2010. In April 2011, suicide bombers assaulted a shrine dedicated to a Punjabi saint, Sakhi Sarvar, in Dera Ghazi Khan. In May of 2015, gunmen from a sectarian group operating under the name of Jandullah boarded a bus of Ismailis (a Shia sect) and gunned down close to 50 passengers. Jandullah was a confederate of the Pakistani Taliban and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in November 2014.

TTP remains an internal security threat to Pakistan, also implicated in the assassination of former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. Bin Laden and other senior Al Qaeda leaders were widely believed to be hiding in Pakistan which Pakistan staunchly denied till the time U.S troops found Bin Laden hiding in a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan and killed him on 2nd of May 2011. The Pakistani government's own past policy of supporting extremist groups makes it difficult to immobilize them now.

"The continuing presence of its leaders in Pakistan indicates that Al Qaeda has a congenial place to relocate itself, close to its former bases in Afghanistan"- Peter Bergen, Terrorism Expert, Washington Post.

Currently, the most prominent terrorist organizations supported by Pakistan are Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani Network; the Mullah Nazir Group, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, and Jaish-e-Mohammed. Pakistan perceives existential threat to its territory from India and this consideration has always influenced its foreign policy. Among the groups that are active in Kashmir, the most important and still supported by Pakistan, are Hizbul Mujahedin, Harkat-ul-Mujahedin, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Though Pakistan claims that most of the Jihadis who are active in Kashmir are Kashmiris, but in 2001, as per reports, out of the 2400 terrorists active in the Kashmir Valley alone, 1400 were Pakistanis or Afghans. The leader of Jaish-e-Mohammad, Maulana Masood Azhar, is from the Punjab province of Pakistan, while the leader of Harkat-ul-Mujahedin, Fazl-ur-Rehman Khalil, is a Pashtun from the KPK. According to some observers, as much as 80 percent of the membership of Lashkar-e-Taiba comes from Pakistan.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Pakistan, sceptical that the United States would ally with India, agreed to assist the United States as it invaded Afghanistan. As it fought terrorism in Afghanistan, Pakistan continued to sponsor terrorism against India. It supports terrorist groups in Afghanistan in order to deny Indian influence in its backyard, as well as to allow the nation to serve as a fall back in case of an (perceived) Indian invasion. Pakistan used Afghanistan as both a training and a recruiting ground



Attack on an army-run school in Peshawar, killing 141 people, 132 of them children on 16th December 2014. Picture Credits: BBC

for a host of Jihadist groups to foment insurgency in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir.

The Taliban's Quetta Shura, or supreme decision-making council, is believed to be based in the Pakistani city of Quetta. The Taliban's top leadership has been based inside Pakistan, according to some, with the knowledge and approval of the military and ISI. Mullah Omar, the Taliban's founder and first Amir (Chief), died in a Pakistani hospital near Quetta in April 2013. The Haqqani Network (HQN), a Taliban-affiliate is listed by the U.S as a *Foreign Terrorist Organization* for its support to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and thirteen senior HQN members are listed by the U.S as *Specially Designated Global Terrorists*; most of them including Sirajuddin, have been directly linked to Al Qaeda. Several top Al Qaeda leaders were killed in U.S counterterrorism operations while being sheltered by HQN. In Pakistan, the HQN is based in North Waziristan and has a presence in other Pakistani tribal agencies, such as Kurram. The Haqqanis run the notorious Manba Ulom madrassa in Miramshah, North Waziristan. Despite the HQN's overt links to Al Qaeda, the group remains among the favourites of Pakistan's military. When the Pakistani military conducts operations in FATA, it deliberately ignores the presence of HQN.

The Mullah Nazir Group is a Pakistani Taliban faction that operates in South Waziristan, listed as a *Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity* in 2013 by the U.S government. It is said to be running training camps, dispatching suicide bombers, providing safe havens for Al Qaeda fighters, and conduct cross-border operations in Afghanistan against the United States and its allies. The Pakistani military provided the Mullah Nazir Group with direct support when it clashed with rival members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Despite the Mullah Nazir Group's direct ties to Al Qaeda, Pakistan has viewed it as an ally in the tribal areas, and left it untouched when the Pakistani military launched operations that targeted the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan.

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), also listed as a *Foreign Terrorist Organization* by the U.S, shares Al Qaeda's goal of establishing an Islamic state in South Asia and beyond. LeT operates openly inside Pakistan and has offices throughout the country. Markaz-e-Taiba, its headquarters in Muridke near Lahore, is a sprawling complex that is used to indoctrinate future Jihadists before they are sent off for military training. This terrorist outfit is used by Pakistan to conduct attacks in India. The most prominent attack took place in Mumbai, India, when a suicide assault team fanned out across the city and targeted multiple locations, including a theatre, a train station, hotels and a Jewish center and killed 164 people in November 2008, because of which the attack is also referred to as 26/11. The Pakistani government refuses to crack down on this group, and not a single member of LeT, who has been implicated in the Mumbai attacks, has been prosecuted.

Harakat-ul-Mujahideen is yet another Pakistan-based Jihadist group that has been listed by the US as a *Foreign Terrorist Organization*. It operates in Pakistan, and engages in terrorist activity in Kashmir. HuM also operates terrorist training camps in eastern Afghanistan.

Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), a U.S *Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization* is supported by Pakistan's military because it is hostile to India. JeM was implicated along with the Lashkar-

e-Taiba as being behind the 13th of December 2001, attack on the Indian Parliament building in New Delhi. Pakistan has not acted against the group, despite its growing terrorist activities.

Pakistan's FATA is particularly worrisome, because its lawlessness has attracted militant groups in a countless variety. The hub of all terrorist activities emanates from the FATA regions that provide sanctuaries to the insurgents and terrorist groups operating against Afghanistan and coalition forces. The areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan are beset by terrorism and violent extremist activities. These areas have turned into a hub of terrorism where terrorists are recruited, trained and then used to weaken and destabilize regional governments. Post 9/11, new groups started to emerge, allegedly supported by various intelligence agencies and started destruction and annihilation of the youth, including the burning of schools in Pashtun areas.

The people fighting in tribal areas now are a mixed force of people from different countries and different nationalities like Chechens, Uzbeks, Uighurs from Xinjiang, Arabs, terrorists from the Central Asian Republics and the Punjabis. These foreign terrorists, that come from various countries, target diverse groups in the region and work against the governments while training the local Taliban. Uighurs are suspected of involvement in various explosions in which Chinese engineers have been killed. These groups are able to function in this region because on one hand the Taliban, during their rule, welcomed the entire foreign terrorist network to come and work for strengthening their government and on the other, Pakistan served as the safest route for foreign fighters to enter Afghanistan. Most of them come as tourists, businessmen and traders directly from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco, Algeria, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and even from Western countries.

Almost 80,000 troops have been deployed by the Pakistani government in the mountainous regions of the areas adjacent to the frontier line and various operations have been conducted in these areas, but till now, no significant improvements have been seen. Instead, terrorism has increased and militant militias have grown in the region. They are bringing more and more areas under their control and have strengthened their position. The Taliban, fundamentalists, extremists as well as their ally, Al Qaeda, that was thought once to be defeated in Afghanistan, are regaining more strength, reorganizing themselves and regrouping, are better equipped, tactically more sophisticated and better financed. In today's world, they are more capable in creating obstacles and hindering the reconstruction and rehabilitation process in Afghanistan.

[Religious extremism in Pakistan](#)

Pakistan shall continue to be a hot bed of Islamic militancy as long as the operative terrorist organizations resort to violence in the name of Islam and the public keeps showcasing acceptance to this phenomenon. Even after Pakistan's post-9/11 partnership with the United States, several Islamist groups continue to enjoy close ties with the State and popularity among certain sections of the public. Deobandi Ulema of the Jamiat Ulema Islam (JUI) participates in electoral politics while also describing Jihad as a sacred right and obligation while it keeps encouraging students of madrassas towards militancy. The Afghan Taliban,

drawing their ideology from Deobandi groups, held power in Afghanistan before 9/11 and have been a known ally of the Pakistani military and ISI.

The status quo is neither encouraging and nor does Pakistan seem to possess the capacity as well as the will to eradicate terrorism, as it is constrained by the overlapping of various terrorist groups and their memberships which have successfully operated within (and outside Pakistan), that too with the complicity of its Army and ISI; Pakistan cannot tackle the Pakistani Taliban and their sectarian collaborators while it still fosters the Afghan Taliban and other Deobandi groups, such as the Jaish-e-Mohammad, that operate in India. The terrorist groups, which draw inspiration from the religious groups in Pakistan have developed into *Frankenstein's Monsters* for both people and the State, coupled with selective approach of security agencies towards counter-terrorism which makes '*Peace in Pakistan*' or mellowing down of '*Pakistan sponsored terrorism*' in its neighbourhood a distant dream. The more because according to many in the Pakistan Army and ISI, terrorism still has an external utility in Afghanistan, India and Indian Administered Jammu & Kashmir.

Conclusion

Pakistan has been home to terror outfits of various kinds, which can be divided into several categories based on their ideological orientation, socio-political and economic objectives. The tactical training is essentially similar across all terrorist groups due to kindred objectives and similar battle environments, taking about eighteen months for a *Mujahid* to become fully functional. According to a database, there are more than 200 militant groups in the South Asian region, out of which over 50 prominent groups are based in Pakistan alone. The terrorist groups operational in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir campaign to unite it with Islamic State of Pakistan, while other groups aim at marginalizing the Shia community. The objective of Taliban adopted agendas of Islamizing FATA and absorbing sectarian leanings. HuM initially involved in Afghan Jihad to expel Soviet forces, later reunited with Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HuJI), endorsing a pan-Islamic ideology and annexation of Kashmir with Pakistan by engaging in violent means. TTP which receives its logistic support from better established terrorist organizations is involved in conducting violent attacks throughout Pakistan, aiming to overthrow the government and thereby establishing Islamic Emirate of Pakistan.

Paradoxically not only have these terrorist groups established their primary bases in Pakistan but they also receive active or passive assistance from the agencies entrenched within the security establishment of Pakistan. The assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007, several such attempts at Musharraf in 2003, Peshawar attack (2016), where gunmen linked to the Pakistani Taliban killed 150 people (majority of them children), advocate that apart from radiating terrorism to the world, these terror outfits pose a serious challenge to the security of Pakistan. The selective approach of security agencies towards the terror groups compels analysts to conclude that the majority of the attacks are carried out with the connivance (if not complete support) of the security agencies, otherwise responsible for preserving peace within the State. With the continued support from ISI there has been a proliferation of madrassas and training camps inside Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir to boost the

number of trained and indoctrinated fighters who could be infiltrated into Indian-administered territory.

Pakistan was a front-line State against the Soviet expansion into Afghanistan, with major resistance parties headquartered in Peshawar and Quetta. At all times Pakistan allowed itself to be the conduit between America and Afghanistan, facilitating the smooth supply of arms, with training camps set up in Pakistani territory against more than 600 million USD for humanitarian aid to Afghan refugees, 3 billion USD towards covert aid to the Mujahideen and more than 5 billion USD as bilateral aid to Pakistan and diplomatic opposition to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan specifically from United States.

“The main beneficiary of US money, the Pakistani military, has never won a war, but, according to “Military Inc.”, it has done very well in its investments: hotels, real estate, shopping malls. Such entrepreneurship, however corrupt, fills a gap, as Pakistan’s economy is now almost entirely dependent on American taxpayers”. - **Dr. Ayesha Siddiq, Pakistani military scientist, political commentator, an author and research associate at the SOAS South Asia Institute**

It received substantial financial aid from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries too. Pakistan’s active involvement in the war suited the United States as it allowed them to remain distant from the theatre of their own covert military operations.

Pakistan’s ISI and America’s CIA, had the joint responsibility of providing covert assistance to the Mujahideen throughout. During the course of the conflict, General Zia-ul-Haq exploited proximity with United States by promoting a political system along religious guidelines, strengthening his regime which would not have lasted without the war in Afghanistan and international assistance. After the withdrawal of Soviet troops, U.S lost interest in Afghanistan however Pakistan remained involved, as a consequence of which 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees still live in Pakistan who have driven up the crime rate. Afghan refugees are said to be involved in increased sectarian violence, drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime.

Struggling with derisory resources to manage the refugees and the Afghan Mujahideen, Pakistan embarked on a strategy to convert the secular and multi-cultural Kashmiri society into a hardcore Islamic one, on the lines of Afghanistan, through the fear of the gun. With the war of Afghanistan slowing down in 1989, vast network of training camps set up for Afghan Mujahideen were used as indoctrination centres of weaponing and training the Kashmiri youth who were exfiltrated to Pakistan and Afghanistan. By 1990, Pakistan had floated several terrorist organizations to escalate Islamic Jihad. ISI supported terrorist groups allowing several catastrophic acts of terror to take place in the Kashmir Valley and India.

ISI specifically sought to replicate and transplant the success of the anti-Soviet Afghan campaign in Kashmir, urging foreign militants to participate in the conflict as part of the wider moral duty owed to Jihad. Apart from being a major source of military and financial aid, Pakistan has risen to be a nucleus of religious indoctrination for the Kashmir conflict, thereby altering its dimensions, which in essence was a traditionally pacifist struggle for greater

political rights. Pakistan has relied upon non-state actors to orchestrate its foreign policy objectives in Kashmir since its inception in 1947 owing to its perceived existential threat from India, and continues to send militants across the Line of Control to keep them occupied in the neighbouring territory as there runs a continuous risk of these Kashmir specific terrorist groups finding their way back into the land of their sponsor.

"I heard stories from fellow mujahedeen who went to Kashmir for a stint. There was a feeling of pan-Islamism at the training camps and for many - including Afghans and Arabs fighting in Afghanistan - Kashmir was just another jihad around the corner"-
Wahid Muzhda, an Afghan political analyst and former mujahid who fought the Soviets during the 1980s.

Pakistan's relationship with the United States led 'War on Terror' has been highly ambivalent. On one hand Pakistan played a vital role in facilitating the U.S led intervention in Afghanistan shortly after 9/11 attacks; cooperated with the U.S. by providing access to its airspace, opening terrestrial routes into Afghanistan, providing harbours to the US aircrafts and territorial access for military and intelligence operations, though evidently against billions of dollars of aid from United States. Paradoxically, on the other hand Pakistan and its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) continued to remain staunch supporters of militant organizations including the Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Haqqani Network, and the Afghan Taliban. It remains an enigma how Osama bin Laden, who orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, was living in a city with three Pakistani Army regiments, less than a mile from the military academy without the cognizance of the State.

The explanation for this Pakistani ambivalence is their selective counter terrorism efforts and their characteristic focus on contention with India. Pakistan has long supported radical Islamist groups that are primarily concerned with Kashmir and India, which makes it hard for Pakistan to explain the distinction amid a 'good Muslim' extremist operative in Kashmir Valley and a 'bad Muslim Taliban' in Afghanistan, especially when both are viewed positively from a public standpoint. Also, it practically means a war against the people and country who were helped by Pakistan for about 22 years before 11th of September 2001. In the aftermath of Soviet Union's disintegration, Pakistan stood by the Afghan Taliban, because if it would decide to help its Pashtun brethren across the border in Pakistan, the Pakistani government would have found itself faced with its own very serious Islamist insurgency and lose control over radical religious groups. On the home ground, the Pakistan Army's intervention in FATA exclusively inhabited by the Pashtun (having tribal links with the Pashtuns of Afghanistan) has alienated the indigenous population, leading to social disruptions that have taken a significant toll on counter terrorism operations. At the same time, it was never in the interest of Pakistan to alienate the United States which besides several trade concessions, heavy arsenal and military assistance pumped millions of dollars into Pakistan; contributing majorly to her economy.

In response to United States, ensuring uninterrupted inflow of hefty funds, Pakistan adopted a two-faced counter terrorism strategy which may be referred to as *Pakistan's Double Game*, by systematically suppressing domestic groups that engaged in internal sectarian violence

and subverted critical State objectives. By contrast, terrorist outfits operational in the Kashmir Valley and rest of India were largely supported by Pakistan Army and their intelligence agencies. This duplicitous game has designated it as a conflicted ally in the War on Terror and caused Pakistan to emerge as the epicentre of global terror.

While Pakistan's role in supporting terrorist organizations and militarizing Kashmir dispute by giving it a communal flavour is undeniable, the United States' role in supporting the same in Afghanistan during Afghan-Soviet war (early 1980's) cannot be overlooked either. The United States is accustomed to using economic inducements as a form of temporary statecraft. Indirectly United States is also responsible for terrorism in the Kashmir Valley, as it covertly worked from safer havens in Pakistan.

Terrorism endured hysterical conversion in the Indian subcontinent post disintegration of Soviet Union and more so after 9/11 attacks, Pakistan being no exception. One of the most ominous trends in Pakistan has been the growing influence of the Jihadi groups which feel obligated to wage '*holy war*' against everything that they perceive as non-Islamic. Their objective could be anything from ousting the government, instigating terror attacks against Muslim and non-Muslim minorities or the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate.

Pakistan faces a brutal insurgency within its own boundaries that has espoused the Taliban name but is in many ways far more rejectionist and antagonistic towards the governing civilian authorities. There are separate but interrelated insurgencies posing a threat to peace and security within Pakistan: the sectarian Sunni jihad against Pakistan's Shia population, and the religious extremism which stands as a wall between Pakistan and development of any kind. Pakistan's ISI and military provided the Taliban with moral and logistic support in their self-styled struggle to ensure a friendly government in Afghanistan while local sectarian and non-sectarian groups formed alliances with ISIS. Taliban chose to host unsavoury guests, including Al Qaeda which by the later 1990's had been identified as a new-fangled threat to the United States' security. Post 9/11 attacks followed by United States led invasion of Afghanistan, leaders of Al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban, convoyed by other terrorist groups, fled to Pakistan and made its Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) their new breeding ground.

Pakistan is a nuclear power which paradoxically is suffering tremendously from attacks of domestic extremists and stands politically troubled and economically prostrate. The counter terrorism measures that Pakistan policy has followed so far are neither fully attainable nor are they suitable for the overall socio-political, economic stability of this country and the region. It is the extreme ideologies, leading to violence that need more attention than ambiguously bombing selected terrorist camps. Religion and radical Islam are major devices that bind these terror groups. They are driven by an idea that everyone is guilty for participating in *ungodly* (un-Islamic) practices; if innocents die during a terror attack, Allah (God) will bestow a rich compensation on them while the Mujahideen who die on the path of Allah become martyrs.

The fact that Pakistan still sees terrorist groups and terrorists differently is also one of the major bottlenecks. The Army along with the ISI still distinguishes between '*bad*' terrorists

(those who target Pakistani Security Forces) and ‘good’ terrorists (those who advance its strategic objectives vis-à-vis Afghanistan, India and Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir).

An alternative national narrative is required to fight terrorism at the ideological level as it seems to be entrenched in the national ethos of the country and large sections of its population. A narrative, that can only bolster if the country and its people realize that there is a risk of permanent state of instability and international isolation if Pakistan does not adopt a resolute policy towards all terror groups operating on its territory. The Pakistani society at large needs to realize the importance of the words of former US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton when she said, *“You can’t keep snakes in your backyard and expect them to only bite your neighbour”*.

There is an urgent need that the people of Pakistan, its politicians and the powerful Army stand on the same side in the fight against terrorism and set clear priorities. The ceaseless undermining of civilian authority by the military and its affiliated intelligence agencies remains a major challenge for the country and prevents any meaningful step towards social reforms in the country.

A change in policy and comprehensive consensus on terrorism have become prerequisites for the integrity, future and survival of the country. A diametrical change in approach will prove to be beneficial to the people of Pakistan; the actual stakeholders in this country.



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