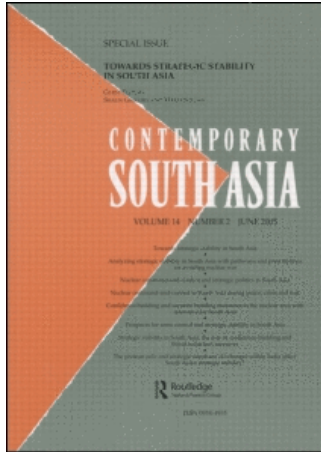


This article was downloaded by:[Fair, C. Christine]  
On: 6 March 2008  
Access Details: [subscription number 791261525]  
Publisher: Routledge  
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954  
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Contemporary South Asia

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:  
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713411866>

### The educated militants of Pakistan: implications for Pakistan's domestic security

C. Christine Fair

Online Publication Date: 01 March 2007

To cite this Article: Fair, C. Christine (2007) 'The educated militants of Pakistan: implications for Pakistan's domestic security', *Contemporary South Asia*, 16:1, 93 - 106

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/09584930701800446

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09584930701800446>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article maybe used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# The educated militants of Pakistan: implications for Pakistan's domestic security

C. CHRISTINE FAIR

**ABSTRACT** *This paper presents preliminary findings from a survey of 141 militant households in Pakistan, focusing on the background of slain militants in those households. The militants in the sample are well educated and are not predominantly emerging from Pakistan's religious seminaries as is often suggested. This essay considers Pakistan's policy options and constraints as Islamist militancy looms as Pakistan's single most important security concern. Given that militant groups in Pakistan have been state-sponsored actors, militancy will not go away until Pakistan makes a strategic decision to abandon the use of proxies as tools of foreign policy. However, in recent years, many of these once proxies have turned against the state. Effective policy measures to contain these groups are likely to elude the Pakistani Government, posing great risk to Pakistan, the region and the international community.*

## Introduction: riding the tiger

Pakistan was born an insecure state in 1947, inheriting territorial disputes with its neighbor to the west, Afghanistan, and its neighbor to the east, India. Despite the acquisition of nuclear weapons and despite episodic but intense security engagements with the United States and concomitant defense supply relations, Islamabad has been unable to wrest Kashmir from India through conventional military means or through diplomatic and political efforts. Pakistan has similarly been unable to normalize relations with Afghanistan. Islamabad's problems with Kabul are long-standing and stem *inter alia* from Kabul's refusal to recognize the Durand Line as the international border and its claims to Pashtun areas within Pakistani territory. Ostensibly *en lieu* of other options, Pakistan has relied upon a variety of militant organizations to prosecute its foreign policies in India, Indian-held Kashmir and Afghanistan for decades. This policy has been a calculated risk and has over the decades fostered a steady course of Islamizing and militarization

Correspondence: C. Christine Fair, Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention, United States Institute of Peace, 1200 17th Street, Washington, DC 20036, USA. E-mail: c\_christine\_fair@yahoo.com

of the state with deleterious consequences for the country, its neighbors and the international community.<sup>1</sup>

With the events of 11 September 2001, Pakistan joined the US-led global war on terrorism and began a committed crackdown on Al Qaeda members in Pakistan. In December 2001, Pakistan-backed militants attacked the Indian Parliament and precipitated a near-war crisis with India. This brought the international community to bare down upon Pakistan to cease and desist from supporting militant groups in Pakistan. Since late 2002, India and Pakistan have managed to sustain a low-level détente with regular engagements. Indeed, since 2002, Indian and international observers alike have acknowledged that infiltration from Pakistan into India has dramatically decreased.<sup>2</sup> With respect to its participation in the global war on terrorism, Washington routinely applauds Pakistan's efforts to capture and detain Al Qaeda operatives. Unfortunately, until recently, Pakistan had remained unwilling to crack down on Taliban operatives with Pakistan. With sanctuaries in Pakistan, the Taliban—once believed to have been defeated—regrouped and began operating with surprising efficacy in Afghanistan. In 2005, the Taliban introduced the suicide attack into its repertoire of violence in Afghanistan—a tactic that was unheard of in Afghanistan until recent years.<sup>3</sup> Given the increasing lethality of the Taliban in Afghanistan and known safe havens therein, Pakistan has come under considerable pressure to do more against Taliban and has even been accused of actively supporting the Taliban's efforts in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps in response to this mounting pressure, Pakistan has increased its military operations against the Taliban in the tribal areas throughout 2007 and it has confronted stiff resistance to these actions in the tribal belt and even in the settled districts.

With respect to its policy of employing these militants, analysts have long said that 'Pakistan is riding the tiger'—the implication being it will be difficult for Pakistan to disembark from this dangerous policy without dire consequences. Indeed, Pakistan is paying a heavy price for its efforts to reverse course of, or at least regain control of, its erstwhile proxies.<sup>5</sup> Deobandi groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have splintered in the wake of Pakistan's efforts to moderate the jihad in Kashmir and have begun targeting the state. Pakistan's security forces in the tribal belt and adjacent settled areas have come under numerous suicide attacks. Increasingly, Islamist violence has targeted the state right in its capital, demonstrated by the July 2007 Lal Masjid fiasco.<sup>6</sup> While many in Pakistan believe that Pakistan's army is fighting America's war, Pakistan's security managers know better. Pakistan is now fighting for its own internal cohesion and to establish the writ of law, which increasingly means contending with its former client Islamist militants.

As is well known, within Pakistan, there are many kinds of militant organizations that operate—or have operated in the past—with relative impunity despite the state's episodic efforts to ban key groups since 2001 and the growing recognition that Islamist militancy is the most significant risk to Pakistan's internal security. Rather than seeing them as one un-disaggregated mass of militants, it is useful to differentiate according to their political and religious objectives as well as

their sectarian affiliation. Groups that have traditionally focused upon Kashmir include Deobandi organizations such as Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen; Ahl-e-Hadith organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba; and those groups under the influence of the Jamaat-e-Islami such as Al Badr and Hizbul Mujahideen. Groups that have traditionally been sectarian in nature include the anti-Shi'a Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> Both are under the sway of the Deobandi organization Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami and funded by wealthy Arab individuals and organizations. There were also Shi'a sectarian groups who targeted Sunni Muslims and obtained funding from Iran, although these groups have largely disappeared.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note of course that many of these Deobandi militant organizations have overlapping membership and they also have strong connections to the Deobandi political party, the Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam.<sup>9</sup> Increasingly, Pakistani Islamist militants are self-referring as Taliban not only in Pakistan's Tribal areas, but also in the settled areas. The self-proclaimed Taliban supporters in Islamabad's Lal Masjid attest to the fact that Pakistan's self-acclaimed Taliban are not confined to the distant Pashtun belt.<sup>10</sup>

These various groups and their sympathizers pose grave risks to Pakistan's domestic security, as attested by the various attempts to assassinate Pakistan's President and Chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf as well Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and high-level military leadership such as the Karachi Corps Commander Lt Gen. Ahsan Saleem Hayat, the Minister of Interior Aftab Khan Sherpao, among others. Moreover, Pakistan has witnessed burgeoning sectarian violence and suicide attacks.<sup>11</sup> Not only do these groups imperil Pakistan, they also affect regional security, as demonstrated by the 2001–02 Indo-Pakistan military standoff.<sup>12</sup> This crisis demonstrated the ability of these groups—some of whom enjoy varying degrees of official and unofficial backing in Pakistan—to precipitate a larger conventional military crisis between India and Pakistan, both of whom are nuclear-armed. Pakistan's internal security environment imperils efforts to stabilize Afghanistan as well. Pakistan's territory serves as an important ground for recruiting, training and resourcing the Taliban insurgency inside Afghanistan, and many—but not all—of Afghanistan's suicide bombers were recruited and/or trained in Pakistan. Most disturbing are the reports that Pakistan's Interservices Intelligence Directorate is aiding the insurgents fighting in Pakistan both directly and indirectly.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, Pakistan's militant groups have been tied to various Islamist conspiracies in the United Kingdom, and many of the most important Al Qaeda operatives—including the 9/11 hijackers—all made their way to Afghanistan through Pakistan and many have even been arrested in Pakistan itself (e.g. Khaled Sheikh Mohammad, Ramzi Yousef, Faraj al Libbi, among others).<sup>14</sup> While Pakistan denies that its territory is a sanctuary for al Qaeda and Taliban elements, Pakistan continues to boast that it has captured more Al Qaeda elements than any other ally in the US-led Global War on Terrorism. Recently, Pakistan has shown an increased willingness to pursue some Taliban elements such as the March 2007 arrest of Obaidullah Akhund, and the July 2007 suicide of Abdullah Mehsood to evade arrest, which is a welcome change sought by Washington and NATO

operating in Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup> Despite the preponderance of militant organizations in Pakistan and their import for Pakistan's domestic security, regional security and even global security, relatively little is known about the members of these groups and the communities who support them.

Despite the importance of these militant groups to Pakistan's domestic security, very little is actually known about the various militants themselves operating in Pakistan, their motivation for joining their respective '*jihads*' (sanctified battles or purported 'holywars'), or the support that they enjoy within their family structures and within their community. In the absence of robust data and based upon highly selective interviews, many scholars have alleged that Pakistan's *madaris* (pl. *madrasah*) (religious schools) are the weapons of mass instruction that indoctrinate Pakistan's poor and prepare them to join the ranks of militant groups. It is also widely believed that Pakistan's militants are disproportionately poor, with little or no education and radicalized in Pakistan's sprawling *madaris*.<sup>16</sup> There have been relatively few systematic efforts to gather information about Pakistan's militants and even fewer systematic efforts to characterize the backgrounds from which they are drawn. Notable exceptions include work done by Mariam Abou Zahab as well as Mohammad Amir Rana.<sup>17</sup> However the latter's work tends to focus upon the groups not the individuals and their families. Another excellent militant ethnography was executed by Sohail Abbas, who interviewed some 517 militants. This impressive work focuses upon militants who fought with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Abbas had the opportunity to interview them while they were in jail.<sup>18</sup>

In an effort to garner some insights into the background, motivation and family structure of militants, Fair contracted a Pakistan-based research team to identify and survey 141 families whose male members became *shaheed* (martyrs) fighting in Kashmir and Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> Respondents provided extensive personal information as well as information about the *shaheed's* household and about the *shaheed* himself. They described the *mujahid's* (one who fights jihad) educational, work and family background as well as information about his recruitment, where he trained, served and died and basic information about the militant group he joined. This paper presents the results of the first level of analyses of these data and serves as an important reference point for subsequent analyses of these data. It is hoped that a better understanding of the militants, their motivations and their support structure will better enable Pakistan and the international community to devise policy interventions that will, over time, mitigate in such groups and community support for such volunteerism.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next section will detail methodological aspects of this survey and subsequent data analyses. The third section will detail basic information about the household and respondent in terms of geographical location, structure and size. This is important because it permits some benchmarking of our sample to Pakistan generally.<sup>20</sup> Analysis of respondent background is important because the heads of household have significant influence in household decision-making. The fourth section focuses upon the *shaheeds* themselves, detailing the relevant information about their education, work experience as well as information provided by the families about their

recruitment and service with the *shaheed*'s militant group. The final section of this paper will conclude with a number of policy-relevant implications of this study.

### Research design<sup>21</sup>

Fair commissioned a survey of 141 families in Pakistan under the auspices of the United States Institute of Peace, Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. Working with two team-leaders in Pakistan, the team fielded a comprehensive questionnaire to a convenience sample of families mostly concentrated in the two provinces of the Punjab and the Northwest Frontier Province. However, families from Sindh, Baluchistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir were also included. Table 1 compares the geographical distribution of the United States Institute of Peace convenience sample with that of the sample for the most recent census of Pakistan (1998). These data were collected over a period of approximately 8 months from 7 August 2004 to 12 April 2005 from families who had a male die in *jihad*, with a majority of the surveys conducted by the end of 2004. The survey instrument collected personal information about the respondent; for example, marital status, age, educational attainment (secular and religious), who in almost all cases was the male head of household. It collected detailed information about the household as well as the militant.

The instrument included questions about the militant, including where he obtained militant training; where he served and where he died; where and how he was recruited; his work and educational background; and his marital status at the time of recruitment and death. The nature of this sample obviously limits the generalizability of the findings.<sup>22</sup>

### Overview of household and respondent characteristics

The majority of respondents were concentrated in the Northwest Frontier Province (55%) and the second largest fraction of respondents came from the Punjab (26%). Using mother tongue as a proxy for ethnicity, 55% claimed Pashtu as their mother tongue, 13% claimed Punjabi, 12% claimed Urdu and 11% claimed Kashmiri. Small numbers also claimed Hindko, Saraiki and Pothwari. Table 1 underscores the degree to which our sample *does not* resemble the population distribution writ large in Pakistan.

The surveys respondents were typically married, male heads of household. Only 17 (12%) respondents attended a *madrassah*, among whom only 7% obtained a certificate (*sanad*) from the religious school. Generally, attaining such a certificate requires full-time attendance for at least 2 years. (The highest certificate requires 8 years of *madrassah* study.) This suggests that overall only about 4% of our respondents attended a *madrassah* full-time. It is worth noting the World Bank's overall estimates of full-time enrollments in Pakistan to be of this same order of magnitude (between 1% and 3%).<sup>23</sup> Among this sample, the prevalence of *madrassah* attendance does not appear to be substantively different from the intensity of *madrassah* utilization across most of Pakistan.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 1. Geographical distribution of the sample by province**

Region	Census (percentage of total population of 133 million)	Distribution of sample (percentage of total sample of 141)
Northwest Frontier Province	17,743,645 (13%)	78 (55%)
Federally Administered Tribal Areas	3,176,331 (2%)	–
Punjab	73,621,290 (56%)	37 (26%)
Sindh	30,439,893 (23%)	3 (2%)
Baluchistan	6,565,885 (5%)	5 (4%)
Islamabad	805,235 (1%)	–
Azad Kashmir	Not in Pakistan Census	18 (13%)

With respect to secular education, 27% had no formal education, 22% had less than a matriculation (aka ‘matric’ or 10th grade), 22% had a matriculation but less than intermediate degree (12th grade), 16% had an intermediate degree but less than a degree (14 years, the equivalent of a B.A.), and 13% had some sort of post-secondary education. More than one-half of the respondents were matriculates. According to the 1998 Census of Pakistan, 32% of males are matric graduates.<sup>25</sup> Compared with these national standards, the respondents in our sample are considerably more educated than the average Pakistani male. This finding undermines the common aphorism that *madaris* are the pathways to *jihad* and suggests the need to understand other important avenues of radicalization apart from the *madaris*.

We asked respondents to identify which interpretative tradition of Islam they embrace. (There were no Shi’a in our sample.) Sixty percent indicated that they are Deobandi, 22% indicated ‘Ahl-e-Sunnat’ (which means simply ‘Sunni’ and suggests an affiliation with Jamaat Islami), 11% indicated that they are Barelvi and 6% indicated Ahl-e-Hadith. While there are no reliable statistics on how representative these figures are of the nation overall, it is widely suspected that Barelvis are the majority in Pakistan.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Shaheed* characteristics**

Most surveyed households (70%, or 99 of 141 respondents) had only one *mujahid*, the vast majority of which served in Kashmir. (Because they could serve in more than one theatre, they need not total to 141.) Most militants died in Kashmir, to the best of the respondent’s knowledge. In general, they were young when they died. For the 124 *shaheeds* for whom we obtained age of death data, the youngest was 12 years and the oldest was 52 years of age. The average and median age of death was 22 years of age. The bulk of these fighters (79%) died between the ages of 17 and 25.

Respondents identified the group with which the first or only *shaheed* served and died (Tables 2 and 3). No respondent identified the anti-Shi’a sectarian

**Table 2. Location of where each *shaheed* served (percentage of sample)**

Mujahideen in household	Kashmir	Afghanistan	India
<i>Mujahideen</i> 1	122	36	1
<i>Mujahideen</i> 2	34	7	–
<i>Mujahideen</i> 3	11	3	–
<i>Mujahideen</i> 4	1	1	–
<i>Mujahideen</i> 5	–	1	–

**Table 3. Location where each *shaheed* was martyred (not all who served)**

Location	<i>Shaheed</i> 1	<i>Shaheed</i> 2	<i>Shaheed</i> 3
Kashmir	118	13	1
Afghanistan	18	0	0

organizations Lashkar-e-Jhangvi or Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan and, as noted, there were no Shi'a in our sample and thus there no members of Shi'a militant groups. The largest portion (57%) of the sample was comprised of Jamaat Islami-backed groups operating in Kashmir: 54 from Al Badr and 27 from Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. About one-quarter of the sample was affiliated with a Deobandi militant organization: 18 served with Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and six with Jaish-e-Mohammad. Ahl-e-Hadith groups accounted for 13%, with 13 from Lashkar-e-Taiba and five from Tehrik-ul-Mujahideen. The Jamaat-Islami dissident group with Deobandi and Wahhabi leanings, Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, accounted for another 6%, with nine *shaheed*. Barelvic accounted for a mere 2% of the sample, with two *shaheeds* from the Sunni Jihad Council and one from Tehreek-e-Jihad (see Table 4).

While it is reasonable to assume that persons join militant organizations of their own masliq (sectarian belief, such as Ahl-e-Hadith, Deobandi, Barelvi, Jamaat Islami), this is not always the case.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, some groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is Ahl-e-Hadith, engage in proselytization among Muslims to 'convert' them to the Ahl-e-Hadith tradition both through their '*jihad*' program and through their other social outreach programs such as health clinics, schools and *madaris*.<sup>28</sup> To determine how often recruits joined groups that are of sectarian tradition other than their own, we asked respondents whether the *shaheed* belonged to the group's masliq before joining. While the majority (78%) joined a militant organization of their own masliq, 16% did not. These do not sum to 100% because some respondents did not answer the question.

Respondents identified the places and means through which the *mujahid* was recruited. The largest fraction (35%) of *shaheed* was recruited into their organization through a friend. Mosques were identified as the place of recruitment for about one-quarter of the sample. *Tabligh*, or small itinerate proselytizing groups, accounted for 19% of the *shaheed*'s recruitment. *Madaris* and public

**Table 4. Militant organization affiliated with *shaheed***

Name of military organization	Distribution of sample (percentage of total sample of 141)
Al Badr (Jamaat-e-Islami)	54 (38%)
Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (Jamaat-e-Islami)	27 (19%)
Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (Deobandi)	18 (13%)
Lashkar-e-Taiba (Ahl-e-Hadith)	13 (9%)
Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (Deobandi and Wahabbi inclined)	9 (6%)
Jaish-e-Mohammed (Deobandi)	6 (4%)
Tehrik-ul-Mujahideen (Ahl-e-Hadith)	5 (4%)
Sunni Jihad Council (Barelvi)	2 (1%)
Tehreek-e-Jihad (Barelvi)	1 (1%)
Do not know	1 (1%)

schools each accounted for 13% of *shaheeds*. (No respondent identified private schools as the place of recruitment.) Relatives were identified as the means of recruitment for 9% of the *shaheeds*. (Twenty-eight respondents did not know or did not identify the means of recruitment.) In sum, this suggests that religious gatherings (mosques, *tabligu*) account for about 44% of the *shaheeds*' recruitment, 42% occurred through friends or family, and only 26% occurred through an educational institution (*madrassah*, public school). Respondents were also asked whether their *mujahid* was recruited through a public service or through some armed forces organization. No one identified these options.

Respondents provided considerable information about the *shaheed*'s education and work experience. On the main, the *shaheed*—like the respondents—are actually better educated than the average Pakistani. Only 6% had no formal education, 35% had some primary education but were not matriculates, 40% were matriculates but had not attained their intermediate degree (F.A.), 13% had their F.A. but not their B.A., and 6% percent had some sort of post-secondary education. In other words, some 58% of the *shaheeds* in sample were matriculates and of those many had obtained further education. When one considers that throughout all of Pakistan fewer than one in three males are matriculates, and when one considers further that the bulk of this sample was derived from the Northwest Frontier Province where educational attainment is among the lowest in Pakistan, the males in this sample are extremely well educated, again underscoring the need to interrogate common assumptions that Pakistan's militants are all uneducated, *madaris* products.

In addition to mainstream education, the survey also asked respondents about the *shaheed*'s *madrassah* attendance. Overall, fewer than one in four *shaheed* had attended a *madrassah* (23%). Of the 33 *shaheed* that attended a *madrassah*, 13 attained a religious certificate (*sanad*). This represents about 9% of the overall sample and 40% of all who attended a *madrassah*. The *sanad* attainment rate is double that for respondents. Such a direct comparison is not really possible,

however. As noted, there are four kinds of *sanads*. The lowest requires only 2 years (Thanviya-e-Ammah) and the highest (*Alimiyah*) requires 8 years. Without knowing which *sanad* the respondent and *shaheed* received, we cannot say definitely who attended *madaris* more intensively. Of those *shaheed* who attended a *madrasah*, the median years attended was 3 years. The vast majority (93%) attended 5 years or fewer.

Taken together, the *shaheed* in this sample are well educated and not preponderantly educated at a *madrasah*, although one-quarter of them were and nearly one in 10 obtained a *sanad*. Given that most served and died in Kashmir where operational requirements are demanding, one would expect these operatives to be reasonably well educated.<sup>29</sup> These data conform to other studies examining the relationship between human capital and ‘quality of terror’ perpetrated by militant groups.<sup>30</sup>

Respondents also provided information about the *shaheed*’s employment the year prior to his recruitment. Excluding the 33 persons who were in school the year before joining the militant group, one in four was unemployed. In contrast, throughout Pakistan between 2002 and 2006, the unemployment rate averaged somewhat below 8%; throughout the 1990s the average unemployment rate was slightly above 5%, and for the last half of the 1980s it was 3.3%.<sup>31</sup> By any measure, the unemployment rate of these males was quite high particularly given the fact that, overall, this was a very well educated sample. Those that were employed had a surprising variety of jobs that included working as shopkeepers, farmers, or day laborers, several were highly skilled and worked as doctors, paramedics, auto mechanics, and X-ray technicians. The high degree of unemployment or under-employment conditional on being relatively well educated is worth noting.

With respect to the *shaheed*’s marital status, both at the time of their death and at the time of their recruitment, and whether he had children, 20 of the *shaheed* (14%) were married at the time of their recruitment and one was separated. Nineteen (13%) were married and one was separated from his wife at the time of their deaths. Of those who were married, 15 (11%) had children. Eleven of the *shaheed* who were married (73%) had between one and four sons, and 12 (80%) had between one and four daughters.

## Conclusions

The militants in this convenience sample are, in the main, better educated than the average Pakistani. This should not be surprising as the terrorism literature has consistently found little or no direct connection between poverty and militancy. However, the Pakistani militant landscape is more complex than is generally considered; and, indeed, in Pakistan one *does* observe militants who are poor and poorly educated. For example, sectarian militants (not included in our sample) and some of Pakistan’s suicide attackers *do* come out of Pakistan’s *madaris*, especially in the tribal areas along the Pakistan–Afghanistan border. And many of Afghanistan’s suicide attackers are poor and recruited from Pakistan’s *madaris* in

the tribal areas.<sup>32</sup> It is likely that the relatively high degree of education held by the *mujahideen* in this sample reflect the outcome of group selection effects because most served and died in Kashmir where the operational environment is very challenging. Militant groups operating in Kashmir require reasonably high-aptitude persons to infiltrate, maintain operational security while preparing for the attack, and then to successfully launch attacks.<sup>33</sup> Had this sample included *mujahideen* who served in Afghanistan, where the operational environment is less challenging with respect to infiltration, operational security and attack execution, lower-aptitude persons and more persons with *madrassah* backgrounds may have been observed.<sup>34</sup> Not only are the militants in this sample well educated, they are woefully under-employed.

With respect to posited ties between educational venue, ideological indoctrination and militant recruitment, the near singular policy focus upon Pakistan's *madaris* is clearly misplaced. These data suggest that mosques, *tabligh* as well as friends and family are more important venues for militant recruitment and there has been relatively little policy attention focused upon these nodes. Moreover, only a minority of Pakistanis attend *madaris* (full-time) in contrast to public schools, which educate some 70% of Pakistan's full-time students.<sup>35</sup> Both religious and public school curriculum stand accused of fostering pro-*jihad* sentiments and intolerance.<sup>36</sup> Clearly, *madrassah* reform is not palliative and may not meaningfully curb militant recruitment *per se*.

This does not mean that *madrassah* reform is not necessary. Indeed, *madaris* and their teachers and administrators are important 'religious entrepreneurs' who issue *fatwas* (religious rulings or judgments) that may delegitimize or alternatively legitimize violence. They create religious leaders who may use their pulpits to justify the use of violence or peaceful means of conflict resolution. They also produce students who, in most cases, will go on to form families, and their *madrassah* experience may be critical to the ideological worldviews that they will embrace and foster within their families. Finally, a small number of *madaris* are important for militant groups operating in Pakistan and elsewhere as sources of personnel for their operations.

These realities dictate that Islamabad will have to employ various kinds of policy measures to contend with the various nodes of militant recruitment, including grass-roots-led *madrassah* reform, public school reform, job growth, law and order operations, and, in some cases where law and order options are not available (e.g. in the tribal areas), direct military action.<sup>37</sup>

The question that this study avoids is how much Pakistan's militant problem is *suis generis* versus state-sponsored. In many countries, militant activity exists beyond the effective control of the state, and indeed groups target the state itself. In this sense, militant groups are classical non-state actors that challenge the writ of the state. However, in Pakistan, the relationship between the state and the militant milieu is more complex. While many of these groups came into existence with the full support of the Pakistani security establishment and used to prosecute Pakistan's foreign policies in Afghanistan, India and Kashmir, many—but not all—are now beyond the effective instrumentalization

of the state. It is notable that Lashkar-e-Taiba (now Jamaat ul Dawa) has never targeted the state (and thus is likely within the state's control) while various Deobandi groups have splintered and have engaged in a variety of attacks including suicide attacks against apex military and civilian leadership; military targets such as convoys, barracks, outposts; as well as traditional targets such as sectarian and international entities. Notably, Harkat ul Jihad, Harkat ul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (among others) have all targeted the state, suggesting that, at least in some measure, they have slipped out of the effective control of the state. This is disconcerting because these groups have links to both the Taliban and al Qaeda.<sup>38</sup> Not only does this augur poorly for Pakistan's ability to provide for its domestic security, it forebodes ill for regional and international security as well. While the state may no longer exercise effective control over its erstwhile proxies, the state does not seem to have adequate coercive capacity to diminish their capabilities either, as the Lal Masjid fiasco attests.

Should Pakistan seek to roll back the climate of militancy that appears to be expanding in Pakistan, it will have to make bold steps. First, it must find a way to delegitimize those very groups and causes that the state has lionized and supported with all means for decades. Second, it must find means of strategically abandoning the very groups it worked so hard to assemble and mobilize. Pakistan will have to effectively execute a similar U-turn as it did against the Taliban in 2001. (Unfortunately, it is not obvious at this juncture whether or not Islamabad's U-turn against the Taliban was permanent.<sup>39</sup>) This will prove difficult for the average Pakistani who rightfully asks why groups in the tribal areas who were once valiant *mujahideen* are now branded terrorists.

For those groups that remain under the control of the intelligence agencies, Pakistan will face challenges demobilizing them. This demobilization may be fraught for those militants—observed here—who are well educated but who clearly lack employment opportunities and who have enjoyed the status of '*mujahideen*'. Moreover, once an individual has been recruited on the basis of their 'taste for violence', re-orienting them and re-inserting them into society may prove difficult.

While contending with the problem of militancy for those groups under the grasp of the Pakistani state will be difficult, apprehending those groups that have turned on their patron is an outright daunting task. While this was a predictable principle-agent problem, promulgating effective policy to dampen the allure of these groups may be beyond the capabilities of any government in Islamabad—be it military or civilian—in any near term time frame.

Indeed, in recent years Pakistan has done much to moderate or calibrate the '*jihad*' in Indian-administered Kashmir and beyond. (It appears as if, increasingly, Indians have taken up the charge as evidenced by the high degree of Indian involvement in the 2006 attack on the Bombay transport system.<sup>40</sup>) However, as President Musharraf has sought to delegitimize some groups and the violence they perpetrate and has even launched military operations against them—as evidenced in the tribal areas since 2004 and the Lal Masjid in 2007—the price has been high.

It remains to be seen whether Pakistan has concluded—as it should—that it is fighting its own war on terrorism or whether the state can return to the *status quo ex ante* and permit the militant groups a wide berth as long as they do not harm Pakistan's interests.

It is too early to tell which way Pakistan's strategic elite will go and this uncertainty will persist well after parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in early 2008 and indeed, well after President Pervez Musharraf's looming departure from politics. However, the international community must leverage all that it has through positive and negative inducements to encourage Pakistan's leadership to continue struggling against Islamist militancy and to decisively abandon the use of militants as a tool of foreign policy. The security of Pakistan, the region and the international community hinges upon Islamabad's cost-benefit calculus with respect to the utility of militancy groups, and key actors such as the United States are uniquely situated to affect these costs and benefits.

### Acknowledgements

The author thanks the team of Pakistan-based interviewers and managers who made this possible. The author also thanks the United States Institute of Peace for funding this work while the author was a Senior Research Associate at the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention.

### Notes and references

1. See Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington, DC: CEIP, 2005); and International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military* (Brussels, Islamabad: ICG, 2003).
2. Author interviews with Indian officials in New Delhi and Srinagar, India in August and September 2006, and author interviews with terrorism analysts in Pakistan in July 2007.
3. The first suicide attack that took place in Afghanistan occurred on 9 September 2001 when Arab suicide attackers killed Northern Alliance Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud. According to data collected by the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, there were no suicide attacks in 2002 and then two and three attacks, respectively, in 2003 and 2004. Unexpectedly, the incidents of suicide bombing escalated throughout 2005, ending with 17 attacks for the year. In 2006 there were 123 actual attacks and (as of 30 June) there were 77 attacks in 2007. See United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, *Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan: 2001–07* (Kabul: UNAMA, 2007). The author of this essay edited and co-authored that report.
4. Seth G. Jones, 'Pakistan's dangerous game', *Survival*, Vol 49, No 1, 2007, pp 15–32.
5. For a discussion of this 'moderated *jihād*' strategy, see C. Christine Fair and Peter Chalk, *Fortifying Pakistan: The Role of U.S. Internal Security Assistance* (Washington, DC: USIP, 2006).
6. In July 2007, Pakistani security forces launched Operation Silence to oust militants who had lodged themselves in Islamabad's Lal Masjid and associated *madrassah*, Jamiah Hafsa. For at least 6 months prior to the operation, 'students' engaged a variety of vigilante activities in efforts to enforce '*shariah*' (Islamic law) including attacking shops selling CDs, and capturing and holding hostages alleged prostitutes. They even held hostage several police officers. The Lal Masjid was a well-known redoubt of Deobandi militant activism with ties to groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad and sectarian groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. Operation Silence enjoyed brief support from the public, which came to believe the students-cum-militants had been allowed to challenge the writ of law for too long. However, as the 'civilian' casualty count rose and as the details of the execution of the operation became known, public outrage began to develop. A spate of suicide and other attacks throughout Pakistan ensued, allegedly in retaliation for Operation Silence. See, for example, Zahid Hussain, 'The battle for the soul of Pakistan', *Newsline*, July 2007, pp 20–26; Massoud Ansari, 'Fight to the finish', *Newsline*, July 2007, pp 28–34; and Massoud Ansari, 'Just another ISI node?', *Newsline*, July 2007, pp 34(a)–35.

7. Note that many of these groups have been proscribed numerous times only to re-emerge again. While we acknowledge that many of the groups now operate under new names, we have retained the names that are likely to be most familiar to readers.
8. Since the onset of sanguinary sectarian violence in Iraq and Iran's 2006 victory in Lebanon, it has been suspected that Iran may once again be involved in inciting anti-Sunni violence in Pakistan. Indeed, throughout 2007 Pakistan has seen a sharp increase in sectarian violence compared with 2006 or previous years. However, the overwhelming preponderance of those attacks has been perpetrated by anti-Shi'a militias. Thus, the allegations of Iran's involvement are not supported empirically at this point.
9. Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan–Pakistan Connection* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2004), p 3.
10. See C. Christine Fair, 'Militant recruitment in Pakistan: implications for Al-Qa'ida and other organizations', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol 27, No 6, 2004, pp 489–504.
11. According to data on sectarian violence in Pakistan collected and published by the Institute for Conflict Management (a New Delhi-based research institute), as of 10 September 2007 there have been 88 incidents of sectarian violence compared with 38 in all of 2006, 62 in 2005, and 19 in 2004. See Institute for Crisis Management, *Sectarian Violence in Pakistan*, last updated 10 September 2007, ([satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect-killing.htm](http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect-killing.htm)).
12. Andrew Winner and Toshi Yoshihara, 'India and Pakistan at the edge', *Survival*, Vol 44, No 3, January 2002, pp 69–86; and Sumit Ganguly and Michael Kraig, 'The 2001–2002 Indo-Pakistani crisis: exposing the limits of coercive diplomacy', *Security Studies*, Vol 14, No 2, 2005, pp 290–324.
13. Jones, *op cit*, Ref 4; Jason Straziuso, 'Taliban recruiting children for suicide attacks', *Associated Press*, 15 July 2007, ([news.lp.findlaw.com/ap/e/53/07-15-2007/f3640051b70e1c0a.html](http://news.lp.findlaw.com/ap/e/53/07-15-2007/f3640051b70e1c0a.html)); and Syed Shoab Hasan, 'Recruiting Taleban "child soldiers"', *BBC News Online*, 12 June 2007, ([news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/6731389.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6731389.stm)).
14. Lawrence Wright, *Looming Towers: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 2006); and Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2003).
15. Griff Witte and Kamran Khan, 'Arrest in Pakistan spurs hope of stronger effort', *Washington Post*, 3 March 2007, p A11; and Malik Siraj Akbar, 'Abdullah Mehsud blows himself up', *The Daily Times*, 25 July 2007, ([www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C07%5C25%5Cstory\\_25-7-2007\\_pg1\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C07%5C25%5Cstory_25-7-2007_pg1_1)).
16. See Abigail Cutler and Saleem Ali, 'Madrasah reform is key to terror war', *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 June 2005, (<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0627/p09s02-coop.html>); The International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Madrasahs, Extremism and the Military* (Brussels/Islamabad: International Crisis Group, 2002); Jessica Stern, 'Pakistan's jihad culture', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 79, No 6, 2000, pp 115–126; Jessica Stern, 'Meeting with the Muj', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol 57, No 1, 2001, pp 42–50; and Peter Singer, *Pakistan's Madrasahs: Ensuring a System of Education not Jihad* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2001).
17. See Mariam Abou Zahab, "'I shall be waiting for you at the door of paradise': the Pakistani martyrs of the Lashkar-E Taiba (Army of the Pure)", in A. Rao, M. Böck and M. Bollig (eds), *The Practice of War. The Production, Reproduction and Communication of Armed Violence* (Oxford/New York: Berghahn, forthcoming 2008), pp 133–158; Amir Mohammad Rana, *Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan [The Jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan]* (Lahore: Mashal Books, 2002). In English Saba Ansari (trans.), *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan* (Mashal Books: Lahore, 2004).
18. Sohail Abbas. *Probing the Jihadi Mindset* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2007).
19. The researchers associated with this effort requested to remain anonymous.
20. This was an oversight in the survey design. We should have asked whether the respondent was the head of household when the person undertook the decisions.
21. This essay only presents partial findings from this study. For all results from the survey, see C. Christine Fair, 'Who are Pakistan's militants and their families?', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol 20, No 1, January 2008, pp 49–65.
22. See, *inter alia*, Stern 2000, 2001, *op cit*, Ref 16; Singer, *op cit*, Ref 16; Robert Looney, 'A U.S. strategy for achieving stability in Pakistan: expanding educational opportunities', *Strategic Insights*, Vol 7, No 7, 2002, (<http://cc.nps.navy.mil/si/sept02/southAsia.asp>); International Crisis Group, *op cit*, Ref 16; and Christopher Candland, 'Religious education and violence in Pakistan', in Charles H. Kennedy and Cynthia Botterton (eds), *Pakistan 2005* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
23. Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, and Tristan Zajonc, *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan—A Look at the Data* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 8 February 2005), ([http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=667843](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=667843)). Using the Pakistani Integrated Household Survey, they found that full-time enrollments in madaris across Pakistan comprise less than 1% of all students enrolled full-time. When they correct for errors associated household data (e.g. undercounting *madrasah* students who are not

### C. CHRISTINE FAIR

- in households) and for population growth, they estimate about 3% of Pakistani children to attend *madaris* full-time.
24. For several caveats and discussion of the empirical limits of the World Bank study, this argument has been elaborated at length in C. Christine Fair, 'Militant recruitment in Pakistan: a new look at the militancy–madrasah connection', *Asia Policy*, Vol 1, No 4, summer 2007, pp 107–134.
  25. State Bank of Pakistan, *Handbook of Statistics on Pakistan Economy 2005*, chap 11 'Education and Health', ([http://www.sbp.org.pk/departments/stats/PakEconomy\\_HandBook/Chap\\_11.pdf](http://www.sbp.org.pk/departments/stats/PakEconomy_HandBook/Chap_11.pdf)). Also see Population Council, *Adolescents and Youth in Pakistan 2001–02: A Nationally Representative Survey* (New York/Islamabad: Population Council, July 2003), p 16.
  26. For a discussion of the relevant doctrinal differences, see Barbara D. Metcalf, *Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs* (Leiden: The International Institute for the Study of Islam, 2002), ([isim.nl/files/paper\\_metcalf.pdf](http://isim.nl/files/paper_metcalf.pdf)).
  27. Fair, *op cit*, Ref 10.
  28. Saeed Shafqat, 'From official Islam to Islamism: the rise of Daawa-ul-Irshad and Lashkar-e-Taiba', in Christophe Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan: Nationalism Without a Nation?*, (London: Zed Books, 2002/2004), pp 131–148.
  29. This argument has been elaborated at length in Fair, *op cit*, Ref 24.
  30. The phrase 'quality of terror' needs some explanation. Some groups are able to target high-value, high-opportunity cost targets very effectively, including hard military targets, heads of state, high-value civilian structures. These are examples of 'high-quality terror'. Other groups are only capable of pursuing low-value targets, which are typically soft targets such as markets, mosques, and so on. Some groups try to target high-value targets but do so ineffectively. An example of this would be Afghanistan's suicide bombers, which in nearly one-half of all cases only manage to kill themselves. For a lucid discussion of this issue, see Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, 'The quality of terror', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol 49, No 3, July 2005, pp 515–530.
  31. See data on Pakistan, *ECONSTATS*, ([http://www.econstats.com/IMF/IFS\\_Pak1\\_67R\\_\\_.htm](http://www.econstats.com/IMF/IFS_Pak1_67R__.htm)).
  32. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, *op cit*, Ref 3.
  33. For a thorough discussion of these selection effects, see Fair, *op cit*, Ref 24.
  34. The author conducted research on Afghanistan's suicide attackers for the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan from June to August 2007. The preponderance of suicide bombers in Afghanistan who come from Pakistan has come from *madaris* in the tribal belt. These suicide bombers—unlike these Kashmir-based militants—tend to be impoverished, extremely young (as young as 14 years old), impressionable, poorly trained with little or no education. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, *op cit*, Ref 3.
  35. Andrabi *et al.*, *op cit*, Ref 23.
  36. Tariq Rahman, 'Pluralism and intolerance in Pakistani society: attitudes of Pakistani students towards the religious "other"', revised 30 October 2003, paper presented at the *Conference on Pluralism*, held at Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization, 25 October 2003.
  37. For more discussion of this subject, see Fair, *op cit*, Ref 24.
  38. Zahab and Roy, *op cit*, Ref 9.
  39. Jones, *op cit*, Ref 4.
  40. Praveen Swami, 'Mumbai blast, a tragedy foretold', *The Hindu*, (<http://www.hindu.com/2006/07/12/stories/2006071208921100.htm>), 12 July 2006.