

**TERRORISM: A SERIOUS THREAT TO TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS
THEORY AND PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN**

Muhammad Ahmed Qadri^{*}

The term terrorism has been used and misused from many different perspectives by many different peoples for many different ends be they political, social or religious. As an “ism,” it has no agreed upon definition, however undoubtedly extreme fear (the meaning of “terror”) is its core element both as a cause as well as an effect. Because fear is a basic human emotion, its abuse is as old as humanity itself. However the modern context has become brutally deadly due to the invention of weapons of mass destruction which have amplified the damage inflicted multifold.

The term itself has become a weapon of psychological as well as physical war. The contemporary usage of the term is very specific. Today, terrorism is the cheapest method of waging war. Hence countries are routinely waging proxy wars against each other. Terrorism has become a great weapon for the support of psychological war against countries.¹ Terrorism has a long history which reflects aggressive behavior and a destructive attitude towards world peace.

^{*} Muhammad Ahmed Qadri, Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi

¹ K.R. Gupta ,Global Terrorism, Atlantic Publishers ,Delhi, 2004 p.2

In 1923, Communists attacked the US embassy. In 1980, the German Right Wing attacked the waiting room of a railway station in Bologna, Italy killing 80 people. In 1995, Oklahoma City USA was attacked by federal government opponent Timothy McVeigh causing 169 casualties. Indira Gandhi the Prime Minister of India was killed by her own Sikh bodyguards while in 1991 Rajiv Gandhi Prime Minister of India was shot dead. Yitzhak Rabin, PM of Israel in 1995 was killed by Yigal Amir who was from the Jewish school of thought. Apart from a few examples we also see in the USA, 4 Presidents were assassinated and 4 Presidents escaped assassination attempts. We cannot ignore as a reference Air India Boeing 747 Kanishka which was flying from Montreal, Canada to Delhi. It was attacked by Sikh Terrorists where 328 died. Tamil tigers cannot be ignored from the scenario of extremism or terrorism. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam killed hundreds of civilians and armed forces in Sri Lanka.² These references are just a few examples from the history of terrorism. And most recently the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York on Sept 11, 2001 destroyed 2900+ lives of US citizens and non-citizens. Osama Bin Laden of Al-Qaeda was declared responsible for the terrorist actions even though there was no hard evidence connecting the two as is clear from FBI's "Ten Most Wanted Fugitives" webpage on Bin Laden which makes no mention of 9/11.

September 11 changed the face of international politics and also the mindset of nations and scholars.³ The Madrasa (Religious Schools) system of the Muslim world in general and in Pakistan in particular came into focus due to the connection of the attacks with Al-Qaeda. These traditional Islamic schools have existed throughout history, and were at one time vibrant centers of learning such as the Madrasa Nizamiya in Baghdad during Islam's Golden Age. The Madrasas of today are however nothing but a pale silhouette of history. Furthermore many have become harbingers of hard line ideology which is alien to the essence of Islam.⁴

Afghanistan and Pakistan are the traditional Islamic cultures. They have similar Islamic roots however differ in significant areas. Afghanistan and Pakistan have a Sunni Muslim Hanafi majority. Sunni Muslim with reference to Hanafi means connection to the same religious Muslim jurist Imam Abu Hanifa Noman bin Thabit Az Zooti who is noted for Islamic jurisprudence. Religiously both countries have similarities but are very different in culture in many ways. Pakistan and Afghanistan are very different in political culture but due to the Khyber Pukhtoon Khuwa (KPK) province of Pakistan there is a visible relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Religiously and politically Afghanistan witnessed growth of Islamist revivalism particularly among a group of young educated Afghans. Ghulam Muhammad Niazi, Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar were among the pioneers in the Islamist movement. Most of them were moved to Pakistan after Daoud's regime came down in the mid-1970s. The emergence of the Islamist movement led by Rabbani, Hikmatyaar and others in Afghanistan came in

² Deepak Rao and Semma Rao, *Terrorism: A Comprehensive Analysis of World Terrorism*, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 2004, pp.48-4

³ Muhammad Ahmed Qadri, *Western Perception of Islam and Global Terrorism*, Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center, California, USA, p.32

⁴ Muhammad Ahmed Qadri, *The Role of Religio-Political Elite of Pakistan*, Karachi 1987, p.55

handy for Pakistan to pressurize the Daoud regime and acquire a foothold in this region. The Jamat-e-Islami of Pakistan acted as the conduit to provide aid to the exiled Afghan Islamists. The main reason for cooperation between Afghan and Pakistani religio-political leadership was their religio-political thought. They were followers of either the Deobandi or Wahabi belief or Salafi Movement in Egypt by Jamaluddin Afghani. All beliefs were the pure outcome of the well known Arab scholar, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab Najdi. Pakistani political leadership welcomed these leaders from Afghanistan due to their abiding by the same school of thought and outlook towards Jihad (ready towards holy war) which superseded all other considerations. This outlook towards military jihad as a political weapon equating suicide bombings to martyrdom was a new ideology that came forth from Abdul Wahab Najdi and his followers. It deviated drastically from the historical code of conduct taught by the pious scholars of Islam during its eleven centuries of rich intellectual and spiritual legacy which does not allow the harming of animals, plants, women, children, the elderly or any innocent person who has not agreed to participate in war. The only type of war that Islam allows is one that is overtly declared (usually in defense, protection or removal of oppression) and conducted under the guidance of the political Caliph which according to mainstream Sunni Islam was capitulated in 1924 with the end of the Ottoman rule.⁵ These Islamists however sought to regain by whatever means necessary what they thought was the lost dignity of the Muslim world that occurred during the colonial era. Therefore Wahabism from within and Colonialism from without created the fertile breeding ground for military jihadists whom vested interests did not hesitate to exploit.⁶

The USA found in these Islamists a handy tool to contain the Soviet Union influence in Afghanistan. In different regimes of Afghanistan, Afghan Mujahideen established themselves and Afghanistan was turned into an open theatre in the cold war games of super powers with Pakistan acting as the conduit for channeling the US-Saudi financial, material and military supplies to the Afghan Mujahideen.⁷

Some scholars agree that this was a turning point in the history of the region which introduced the Kalashnikov culture, Islamist extremism and trans-border terrorism. But the other school of thought argues that it was the necessity of the time and the requirement of world politics to stop USSR'S policy of authoritarianism. Despite these schools of thought in the post-Cold War period which witnessed the demise of USSR and the establishment of an Islamic state and the rise of Talibaan, Afghanistan remained at the centre stage of regional and international politics. With the Tajiks and Uzbeks gaining greater political influence, Pashtuns feared a loss of power which led to further polarization between the Pashtuns and other ethnic groups.

It was in these circumstances that the Taliban, students of Madrasa and militia comprising mostly of the young Pashtun students of the Islamic Madrasas run by Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam of Pakistan headed by Molana Fazlur Rehman a well-known Deobandi (influenced by Wahabi Movement of Saudi Arabia) was successfully setup by

⁵ Islam Aur Siyasat, Mian Waheed Akhter, Lahore 2011, p.66

⁶ Khaliq Abdalla, The philosophy of Islam, Surrey, BC, Canada, 2010, p.77

⁷ K.R. Gupta, Global Terrorism, Atlantic Publishers, Delhi, 2004, p.82

Pakistanis. This movement influenced Pakistani Culture and the mindset of the youth.⁸ There was gradual change - the young men were happy to sport a beard, going to Islamic Madarsas, and the Hijab culture was adopted by women willingly. Madarsas were the place where youngsters were receiving basic education of Islam with reference to their fundamental responsibilities as well as their role in the community for the Islamic revolution. Their mindset was changed and they were brought to the Islamic School to be a part of Mujahideen and ready for socio-political change.⁹ The psychological analysis of such Madarsa students reveals that they were not familiar with the world politics and the contemporary requirements of society. Very interesting point must be noticed that the psycho-political Muslim moment started with a view to invite different Muslim schools of thought to bring a noticeable change in character building and unity among Muslim groups but the Movement launched by Deobandi group had created political alliance in the scenario of Pakistan. For example, Molana Shah Ahmed Noorani who was a Sunni Muslim Sufi declared head of such alliance (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal) but in actual sense Wahabi Ulema from Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam and Jamat-e-Islami were the actual power behind the screen who controlled the floating socio-political norms of Pakistan. There was a great alliance and transmission between Afghani and Pakistani Taliban dynamics and they were commanded by a single authority either by Al-Qaida or Wahabi Movement by the Shura (The consultative body) though the Taliban and Osama bin Laden and his network were actively engaged in promoting the message of their Movement. Osama bin Laden expanded his moment throughout South Asia, Central Asia, and South East Asia and also in the West for quite some time. It was only after the suicidal terrorist strikes on World Trade Centre and Pentagon on September 11, 2001, that is the commercial and military nerve centers of the United States, which resulted in the collapse of the Twin Towers of the WTC with thousands of casualties, that the United States and its Western allies realized the severity of the challenge posed by bin Laden, Al Qaeda and the Taliban.¹⁰ There is a great debate about the incident of September 11, 2001 inside USA, West and among Muslim countries. The major issue is all about responsibility. Who is the main culprit behind the screen? Without getting into a debate it is proved that extremism and the usage of the name of Islam for political ambitions has given a free hand to the interest articulated groups in the world to fulfill their malicious desires to disrupt peace of humanity.

Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have monarch systems and want to assure USA and its allies that they are not pro activist and they reject such extremism and actions. In response to such support for the USA, they need USA's support for their monarchy. The major issue for the Muslim world is how to remove the stereotype which has created a gulf between the United States and its allies. Pakistan which is practically a hub of war on terror is facing serious challenges by the extremist groups which operate for different purposes. They consider Pakistan as a paradise of crime due to obvious reasons and geo-political situation. Every day Pakistan's political, economic and peace situation is deteriorating. Gen (R) Parwez Musharraf who was considered a great supporter of USA had to leave Pakistan due to his decisions and especially attack on

⁸ Hameed Akhter, Article on Islam and Politics, Nashrah Circle, Karachi 2011, p.5

⁹ Haider Moosani, In search of Identity, The Miracle, Surrey, BC, Canada, July 17, 2010

¹⁰ K Warikoo, Afghanistan The Challenge, Pentagon press, New Delhi, 2007, p.10

Red Mosque (Laal Masjid, Islamabad) was taken very seriously by the majority of Pakistani nation.¹¹ It was a turning point to start more powerful suicidal attacks. The operation by Pakistan Army and other forces in former NWFP presently Khyber Pakhtoon Khuwa (KPK) is also a great reason for such a reaction by the Mujahideen or Taliban. The Drone attacks on the Pakhtoon people who are mostly considered pro-Taliban had completely changed the mindset of the Pakhtoon as they have very close ties with each other. It must be noticed that the KPK is not only the zone for extremist Muslim groups but it has a large number of enlightened progressive Muslim political groups. These groups are categorically against the Taliban like Mr. Wali Khan's secular political Party named Awami National Party (ANP). ANP formed a government in KPK. It may be very important that the ANP group has also supporters from different sects of Islam although it is a secular political party. ANP and Lashkar, another large pressure group in KPK, has importance in KPK against Taliban or Militant Muslim Extremist and also Sunni Muslim Sufi groups. Many of the leaders from ANP, Lashkar and Sufi groups were killed due to cold war between these groups. Interactions between Afghanistan and Pakistan by the extremist groups have significantly changed the political behavior of Pakistan.¹²

Pakistan, a multi-dimensional political state has a large number of political parties which is also a major cause of aggressive political behavior and support for ethnic as well as religious political groups. Formation of such ethnic or religious groups has formed their own militia wing sometime called Thunder Squad or Ansaar. Operational extremist groups based on their own religious schools of thought have destroyed national as well as international peace and tolerance. Secular political parties work for all groups according to their political manifesto. But they are still under the influence of sectarian rather than political behavior. Every political party has sectarian pressure groups inside the party. A prime example is the statement of the Vice President of the Pakistan People's Party (the ruling party of Pakistan), a prominent leader, Dr. Zulfiqar Mirza clearly mentioning that "I am proud to be a Shia and a leader." Every political party has its own militant wing to guard its leaders and ruin the opposition. The political culture of Pakistan has established an authoritarian school of thought with severely embossed negative effects on it. Religion is being used as a tool or skill by politicians. They know the tactic to utilize religion for their own interests. The smugglers, drug traffickers, criminal groups, black mailers, underworld, international criminal personalities, some media anchors and international agencies as well as local agencies are very much involved in disrupting the local peace of Pakistan which is creating serious repercussions upon international peace. All is done due to their vested interests. The above mentioned interest articulated groups are well connected with different operational active networks.

Pakistan is noted for their generosity in donation in the name of Islam. Due to ignorance and less awareness of crimes most of the Pakistanis have high expectations from such political or social workers who construct mosques, hospitals, schools or any other welfare institutions. Pakistan's general voters realize that they have no access to their

¹¹ Harwant Singh, Islam and Humanity, Canada Times, BC, Canada, May 14 2011

¹² Ibid.

leader but they are compelled to vote for him due to sectarianism, threat for life and job, selfish attitudes etc. Feudal lords are also playing a vital role to support such extremist elements in the name of Islam or social work.

Islamists mostly live in Madarsas and work for their own sect. They consider themselves as the only “pure” Muslim and rest of the world of Islam as Kafir (infidels/unbelievers) or against Islam. This puritanical view in their minds justifies why the other group can be killed. There are so many injunctions or justifications in support of killing the opposition. The books of the Wahabi, Bareilvi, Shia, Ahle Hadis, Hizbut Tahreer, Hizbullah, Al Ansaar, Al Akhwaan, Hizbul Mujahideen, Hizbul Akhwaan are the best references to find out the realities and differences among extremist Muslim groups.¹³ Thousands of people have been killed in the Mosques or Imam Bargah (Shia prayer’s place) during prayer through suicide bombing. Pakistan and Afghanistan may be the best example for the world to look at their cultural ties as well as their visible differences in world politics. Afghani Government has been supporting India which is a secular and natural rival of Pakistan. It means sometime religion does not unite them for support of each other. But interestingly Afghani Jihadist who are also from the same root support Pakistani extremist due their vested interests.

One can not negate the fact that International movements based on extremism is not a new idea as referred earlier but looking into the roots of such extremist behavior would reveal that such groups were organized under the umbrella of International intelligence agencies. Taliban was organized by the international agencies against USSR.

Pakistan’s political scenario is very different as compared to other Muslim countries but religion and coordination between religio-political leaders is very common and strong. Pakistan’s Jamat-e-Islami which is a very significant religio-political Party has very strong ties with Al-Afghani’s school of thought. Looking into the approaches or methodologies it is obvious that Jamat-e-Islami follows the same rules of political games which were followed by its predecessors. Jamat has its own youth wing. The youth circle is trained for religious movement and they are ready to fight against evil powers.¹⁴ They are very strong from school level to University level. Their communication, organization and administration is a role model for the secular political parties as well as youth groups. Syed Abul Aala Maududi (d. 1979) the founder of Jamat-e-Islami (The Islamic Party) was very much influenced by Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Hasan Al Banna, Qutub Shaheed etc. The Jamat-e-Islami has the same psyche and mind set as the Taliban in the Afghanistan. Jamat-e-Islami believes that a woman has no right to an independent life outside her family, that a special tax (jizya) must be levied on the religious minorities in order to force them to embrace Islam, that the Hindus are a corrupting influence in Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Gulf, that the present Pakistani Constitution should be abrogated and a Caliphate set up in Pakistan. Their other beliefs include that the Madarsa graduates should become Qazi or Judge, photography is the greatest evil produced by science and can be used

¹³ D.P. Sharma, *The New Terrorism: Islamist International*, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation New Delhi 2005, p.86

¹⁴ For further details please refer to the literature of Jamat-e- Islami and official organ the daily Jasarat newspaper

only for identification. Taliban and Jamat-e-Islami consider photography as evil because according to them it has made men and women aware of each other's physical attraction. They also believe that Arabic should be the only language of communication etc. Jamat-e-Islami's motto is permanent Jihad to set up an Islamic empire extending from Myanmar to Afghanistan and from Sri Lanka to Tajikistan.¹⁵

Analysis of the above references would make one conclude that Islam does not deal with reality or it creates an anomic group in the society. It is obvious and natural to think this but the above mentioned ideas are revelatory of the extremist nature of the religious party/parties or religious scholars and reeks of the same material that the other extremist movements above are all about. All of this is the result of the lack of understanding of the true spirit of Islam and the shunning of over 1000 years of scholarship where truly enlightened Muslim scholars have beautifully dealt with complex issues of modern life.¹⁶ The major problem with the situation is extremism not only among militant groups but also between Muslim and Non-Muslim scholars. The scholars especially from India and Pakistan should realize that both of them are nuclear powers and a slight mistake may take the region into hell and worse conditions than Hiroshima. It is very true that extremist groups from the Muslim community due to various reasons are very significant, active and known. It has been observed that the international community is facing serious challenges in world politics especially due to suicide attacks, guerilla war and terror against the international community. International Community in the light of the assurance of UN charter must redress its plan of action and should look into the matter. USA is the uni-polar power to help the world in general and Pakistan and Afghanistan in particular. The hate rate against USA and the Western world is very high in the International Muslim community which is in immediate need of attention by the real international powers. The Western world in general and the USA in particular need to re-evaluate their stance on Israel, and genuinely further the two-state solution with equal rights for Palestinians. The plight of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza has been a source of great pain for Muslims and all peoples of conscience and the powers that be must address this if they are to see true world peace. Again USA which announced its "War on Terror" has great responsibilities with reference to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Bin Laden's death, drone attacks in Khyber Pukhtoon Khuwa and continuous red alerts have not solved the problems. The world has entered the Third world war without any announcement. Pakistani and Afghani Taliban and their communication network are still very powerful. No one is safe in either country.¹⁷ The international intelligence agencies must see the ground realities. The moment Pakistan announced "War against Terrorism" it is facing multi-dimensional challenges. The international community almost failed to understand the ground realities and difficulties of Pakistan. Two times attacks in India have created wrong impressions about the image of Pakistan.¹⁸ The media warfare was started to create a lobby against Pakistan. The neighborhood must understand the hurdles and challenges of the region and should

¹⁵ Hayes, Laura. Who are the Taliban? Afghanistan's ruling faction, 1996-2001 USA, 2001, p.33

¹⁶ Muhammad Ahmed Qadri, Western Perception of Islam and Global Terrorism, Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center, California, USA, p.102

¹⁷ Dr. Shams Jilani, Aalami Akhbaar, London, January 17, 2011

¹⁸ Ibid.

extend a helping hand to curtail the expansion of extremism. Extremists have no religion or ideology. They have their own agenda and psyche. If it was a good act supported by the Pakistani Government and nation it would have occurred in other countries as well. Why have thousands of innocent people been killed in Pakistan? Hundreds of soldiers and officers from Pakistan Army and other forces have given their lives to stop terrorism.¹⁹ It could be stated that they are few who want to drive the world according to their vested interests. They are psychologically anomalous or mentally off balance people.²⁰

Conclusion: The above mentioned facts were described in a very concise manner. The aim of the explanation of facts is an attempt to realize today's world peace order. Who is responsible for such a critical condition? How wrongly international agencies with the help of local agencies have made a socio-political set up for their own interests? Who ignored the importance of peace, respect for humanity and tolerance among nations? Who is responsible for creating the hate rate among religious communities? In order to answer these serious questions one has to be impartial, composed and honest. The alarming situation created by extremists and interest articulated lobbies have created an environment of fear which has resulted in anxiety and depression. Pakistani new born babies are coming to this world along with debt and psychological disorders. International community should help Pakistan and Afghanistan to beat the challenges. NATO forces are not the solution to the issues. The terrorist threat is not restricted to Pakistan or Afghanistan. It is a serious threat across the nations which may destroy many nations. The scholars throughout the world should guide their governments to restore world peace and overcome terrorism. This is the time to realize that misuse of power will create more terrorists and take away mental peace. Here are few suggestions which may help the international community to minimize the threat of terrorism:

- 1 Political stability should be sought in both Pakistan and Afghanistan which would create world peace.
- 2 Political Economy should be strengthened by the UNO or other countries which will bring satisfaction to the countries.
- 3 Frequency of Interfaith dialogue should be increased.
- 4 Pakistani and Afghani Intellectuals must be heard and read.
- 5 Exchange of scholars program should be more frequent among nations with reference to beat the challenges of extremism.
- 6 There must be a subject about Peace, Tolerance and Intercultural Communication in academia.
- 7 Special programs for peace and respect for the nations should be initiated in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- 8 There must be a faculty facilitation program which will help out nations.
- 9 Pakistani and Afghani universities should be helped by Academic, Research and Financial means.
- 10 Enlightened Muslim scholars should be invited into the Universities of North America and the West.

¹⁹ International media and local media is witnessed to the statement

²⁰ Mark Davie, Canada Times, Surrey, BC, June 17,2010

- 11 There must be a world syndicate of those scholars who are working on peace, tolerance and terrorism.
- 12 Research work produced from Pakistani or Afghani Universities should be circulated among the students of social sciences and community.
- 13 Political science associations must make a panel of the scholars who may present their research work on humanity, solidarity and respect for all religions.
- 14 Developed countries should support youth awareness programs at the University level in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- 15 There must be intellectual guidance for the governments to understand the international scenario.
- 16 There must be increased interaction between scholars of Social Sciences from Pakistan and Afghanistan which is the need of the time.
- 17 Extremist writings which create hate rate by the scholars should not be appreciated or welcomed.
- 18 Respect for religion and culture should be promoted to create harmony among nations especially for holy books, holy signs and holy places.
- 19 We must remove stereotypes from our society.
- 20 International seminars, conferences and other activities must be organized by the Universities to create awareness among youth and other community members.