

Historical Roots of the Deobandi Version of Jihadism and Its Implications for Violence in Today's Pakistan

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To understand the peculiar nature of extremist religious violence witnessed in recent history in Pakistan, the influence of Deobandi interpretation and its role in the indoctrination of young minds cannot be put aside. One of the explanations is state patronage of the specific school of thought that helped to achieve the grand objective of defeating the Soviets, through mujahideens who were trained and educated in Deobandi madrassas and followers of this school of thought. The 1953 anti-Qadiani movement declaring Ahmadis non-Muslim placed the foundation for the political mobilization of religious intolerance in the country. Later, the Jamat-e-Islami-led Nizam-e-Mustafa movement in 1977 against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government also contributed to the aggressive nature of religious extremism. However, the grandiose empowered and violent politics of ultraorthodox Sunni Islam based on the Deoband school started emerging post-1991, when it was not the old traditional Deobandis demanding "Islamization" in the state but new, violent groups—believers in a very narrow interpretation of religious text—declaring their political

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powers not in the parliament (because religious groups never received a significant number of votes in elections) but in society. This led to many unofficial alliances between local politicians (not really members of any religious party) and individuals from various militant organizations. Most of these empowered violent groups were Deobandis. Because of the alliance and political patronage, legislation for pluralism was rejected outright. It was only in 2007 that a major decision was taken to debate the Hudood Ordinances, and some of the laws regarding women were removed, including the right to be a full witness. Still the pressure was such that the legislators could not amend or discuss the blasphemy law, so it remains as it was when first inducted. It was only after 2008 that some major changes started taking place. However, a paradigm shift in terms of changing the national narrative towards religious extremism came only after the 2014 Peshawar APS massacre. The military action against the Pakistani Taliban as well as extremist religious groups affected the discourse about the role of religion in the country. However, the real change can only come when the state policy of not tolerating or accommodating a particular religious sect remains consistent, and, given the multisectarian religious dynamics, patronage of the Deobandi sect by successive regimes has been tantamount to creating cleavage in the religiously polarized society.

In recent history, particularly since the 1970s, countries with Muslim-majority populations have witnessed the rise of Islam as a political ideology, and militant groups using ultraorthodox Sunni ideology in different parts of the world, pressurizing the political forces in their domestic political showgrounds. The dominance of these religiopolitical forces has produced many questions, including about their relationships with conventional foundations. Over the years, societies with a Muslim majority have experienced infrequent religious revivalist movements that have placed emphasis on the need for the spiritual sanitization of the supporters, but militancy is definitely different from this renaissance and has extensive consequences. Violent Islamic extremism pursues “political objectives” and “provides [a] political response to today’s societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on re-appropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition”.¹ Violent Islamic extremism is therefore essentially a political phenomenon and by no means simply an Islamic one. The proponents of extremist ultraorthodox Islamic groups highlight explicit courses of action to improve their political power, and implement various strategies to declare themselves on the social and political plane. In sharp contrast to the fundamentalists, who are concerned first with the erosion of religion and its proper role in society, Islamists focus on

politicoeconomic interests.² For Islamists, “a true Islamic society—and flowing from this, a just, prosperous and strong one—is not simply comprised of pious Muslims; it requires an Islamic state or system”.³

In the subcontinent, the notion of puritanical Islamic values and preserving the religion from influences in a multireligious society was taken up by the Deobandi movement. Deobandism is a nineteenth-century Indian school of Islam that rose to prominence during the time of British rule in India, and it was always more severe and strict than the milder South and South East Asian Islam.⁴ Deobandis were very much politically dynamic; they did take part in mass movements, such as the Non-Cooperation Movement along with the Indian National Congress against the British Raj. In comparison with Barelvis, Deobandis were more active in the political domain. The three most important pillars of the Deobandi school of thought are based on the interpretation that a Muslim’s first loyalty is to their religion and only then to the country of which they are a citizen or a resident; that a Muslim recognizes only the religious frontiers of their *ummah* (community of Muslims) and not the national frontiers; and that they have a sacred right and obligation to go to any country to wage jihad to protect the Muslims of that country. These three points pertinently define the ideological obligation that followers of the Deobandi sect carry with them. Because of their political activism, Deobandis on the platform of JUH actively worked for the Khilafat Movement following the idea of the great Muslim *ummah*. Gandhi’s involvement added political importance but his endorsement was based on anti-British politics and not on a borderless religion-based nationalism. It is generally assumed that the politicization of religion and the role of the Deobandis started in the late 1970s with General Zia-ul-Haq’s Islamization process, but the split within JUH presents a different picture. Jamal Malik states in *Colonization of Islam* that

when *Jamiat e Ulema Hind* rejected the idea of Pakistan and other religious parties and scholars were also not in favor of a state for Muslims on western ideas, there was a group of Deobandi Ulema who supported the idea of Pakistan and they were present right from the beginning to support Islamization in Pakistan.⁵

So the Deobandis who supported the creation of a separate Muslim state already had an idea of a theocratic state which did not become a reality after independence and M.A. Jinnah came up with his idea of a Muslim state but not necessarily an Islamic one. It was only after Jinnah’s death

that the Deobandi members of the House managed to get the Objectives Resolution passed, and that paved the way for the Islamization process and a dominant role of Islam in Pakistan.

ARE DEOBANDIS INSPIRED BY WAHHABISM?

The term “Wahhabism” has connotations of an extreme or fundamentalist, pan-Islamic political agenda. It is commonly used by those who write about political Islamic movements as well as in the media around the world. Where a definition for Wahhabism can be found, it is usually a repetition of the same themes: “Saudi Arabia”, “Bin Laden”, “Ibn Abd al-Wahhab” and “purist Muslim”.⁶ Wahhabis believe in the Hanbali school of thought and Wahhabism is based on Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab’s teachings, which are followed by the House of Saud. These teaching are based on the Salafi school of thought, so all Wahhabis are Salafis but not all Salafis are Wahhabis. Salafism is widely practised in Saudi Arabia, and, because of its proselytization, followers of the Salafi school are found in many parts of the world with their intolerant, narrow interpretation of Islam. Salafism is an ultraconservative, orthodox movement based on the teachings of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyyah. The Salafi school is often divided into three categories: the purists (or quietists), who avoid politics; the activists, who get involved in politics; and the jihadists, who believe in taking action. Modern-day proponents of jihad in the form of violent action believe in the Salafi movement. They also believe the eighteenth-century scholar Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and many of his students to have been Salafis.

Although Saudi Arabia is commonly thought of as aggressively exporting Wahhabism, it is in fact Salafi teachings and indoctrination of different schools in the Sunni sect throughout the world but particularly in the Middle East, South Asia, South East Asia and Northern Africa. Saudi Arabia officially patronized many organizations and headquartered them its kingdom, but many of the guiding figures were foreign Salafis. The best known of these organizations was the Muslim World League, founded in Mecca in 1962, which distributed books and cassettes by al-Banna, Qutb and other foreign Salafi luminaries. Saudi Arabia successfully courted academics at al-Azhar University, and invited radical Salafis to teach at its own universities.⁷

King Faisal’s embrace of Salafi pan-Islamism resulted in cross-pollination between Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s teachings on tauhid, *shirk* (idolatry) and *bidat* (and Salafi interpretations of ahadith (the sayings of Muhammad)).

The juxtaposition of these two schools laid the foundation of contemporary political Islam in the Middle East as well as South Asia.⁸ The ideology has extended to young and old, from children's madrassas to high-level scholarship through books, fellowships and mosques.

The Deobandi are a Muslim religious revivalist movement that emerged in India in reaction to the apparent threat to Islam from many influences that include both Western colonialism and Hinduism. Like the Wahhabis, the Deobandis believe that certain Sufi-related practices—such as seeking the mediation of saints and being innovative—as un-Islamic. Also, like the Wahhabis, they give superiority to the jurisprudence of former Islamic scholars rather than that of later ones. The concept of jihad is also more open to the Wahhabi understanding and thought than the Sufi's conception of jihad. In present-day Pakistan, followers of the Deobandi school of thought, which include the Taliban and the Lashkar-i-Tayeba (LT), are heavily influenced by Salafi teachings that began entering the country in the mid-1980s, along with money that helped to build madrassas all over Pakistan.⁹ To say that Wahhabism and Deobandism are the same is factually incorrect but, in practice, violent political religious groups were found following the Wahhabi and Salafi school because both require Muslims to adhere to the original teachings with very narrow interpretations. Major violent Deobandi groups in Pakistan that have received funding from various Salafi groups include the LeJ, the SSP, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and Afghan Taliban in Pakistan.

Wahhabism, Ahl-e-Hadith and Able Sunnat

Within the Sunni doctrine, the Ahl-e-Hadith subsect established in the early twentieth century in India is the most conservative and strict. Enthused by an eighteenth-century scholar, Muhammad bin Wahhab of Saudi Arabia, Ahl-e-Hadith (commonly referred to as Wahhabis, or Salafis) came into existence as a response to the disparity between the Deobandis and the Barelvis. In 1906, Imam Ahmad Reza Khan of Bareilly advanced the teachings of the Barelvis, formally known as Ahl-e-Sunnat wa Jamaat.¹⁰ This was a flexible alternative to the strict path followed by the Deobandis. In contrast, the Ahl-e-Hadith movement went for a more orthodox and conventional approach. After 1947, the supporters and followers of the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought established three separate commissions to carry on their organizational work: one in India and two in the provinces of Pakistan.¹¹

In 1948 the Pakistan Markazi Jami'at-e-Hadith was founded in Lahore. The Nikhil Banga O Assam Jami'at-e-Hadith (All Bengal and Assam Jami'at-e-Hadith) formed in Calcutta in 1946 shifted its headquarters to a northern city in what was then East Pakistan. The Anjuman-e-Ahl-e-Hadith was formed in West Bengal in 1951, with the result that, two years later, the Ahl-e-Hadith movement renamed itself East Pakistan Jami'at-i-Ahl-e-Hadith. In 1956 its headquarters were shifted to Dhaka. Followers of the Ahl-e-Hadith school preserved their presence and remained visible in what was then West Pakistan, but they were organizationally weak. Until his death, Abdullahil Kafi al-Quareshi led the East Pakistan committee. Dr Abdul Bari, a university lecturer, assumed the leadership in 1960. After the independence of Bangladesh, like many other religious organizations, Ahl-e-Hadith disappeared from the public scene.¹²

In post-1971 Pakistan, the Jamiat Ahl al-Hadith gained a great deal from Saudi support, and it represents one of the most radicalized elements within the Sunni fundamentalist sects in Pakistan. Inspired by Sayyed Ahmad, it wanted to bring Islam back to the purity of the original faith according to the Qur'an and the ahadith. The Ahl al-Hadith have formally claimed to be distinct from the Wahhabis, but their beliefs and practices have much in common with the dominant creed of Saudi Arabia, and in Pakistan they are often referred to as Wahhabis or Salafis. While the Ahl al-Hadith insists that they do not follow any one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence, they have moved progressively closer to the Hanbali interpretation, which is also the basis of Wahhabi practices. Their interpretation of Islam is puritanical and legalistic, and they reject all manner of perceived deviations and "idolatrous" practices that they claim have crept into the other major traditions. While their numbers are believed to be small—one tentative assessment by the International Crisis Group places them at 6 percent of the Muslim population of Pakistan—they have exercised disproportionate influence and demonstrated a great capacity for violence in recent years.¹³

SHAH WALIULLAH'S LEGACY

In principle, Shah Waliullah was little different from his contemporary, Islamic thinker Muhammad bin Abd-al-Wahab (1703–1787) of Saudi Arabia, who had also launched an Islamic revivalist movement. Wahab, who is regarded as one of the most radical Islamists, has a range of followers in India. He "regarded the classical Muslim law as sum and substance of the

faith, and therefore, demanded its total implementation”.¹⁴ Waliullah also supported the rigidity of Wahab for strict compliance of Sharat (Islamic laws), and shariatization was his vision for Muslim India. He maintained that “in this area (India), not even the tiniest rule of that sharia should be neglected, this would automatically lead to happiness and prosperity for all”. However, his theory of the rational evaluation of Islam was only a sugar-coated version of Islamic fundamentalism for tactical reasons. Glorifying the history of Muslim rule as a triumph of the faith, Waliullah attributed its downfall to the failure of the community to achieve literal adherence to Islamic scriptures. His movement for Islamic revivalism, backed by the ideology of pan-Islamism, was for the political unity of Indian Muslims. However, his religiopolitical ideology created a permanent crack in Hindu–Muslim relations in the subcontinent. Subsequently, non-Muslims of the region viewed his political concept of Islam as an attempt to undermine the self-pride and dignity of integrated Indian society.

The religiopolitical theory of Waliullah was quite inspiring for Indian Muslims, including members of Wahhabi movement. It drew popular support from the ulema, who were the immediate sufferers from the declining glory of Muslim rule in the subcontinent. The popular support for his ideology “has seldom been equaled by any Muslim religious movement in South Asian subcontinent”.¹⁵ He was of the view that the lost glory of the faith could be restored if Muslims adhered to the fundamentals of Islam literally.

The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was a turning point in the history of Islamic fundamentalism in India. With its failure, Indian Muslims lost all hope of restoring Muslim power in India. However, successive ulema in their attempt to keep the movement alive turned towards the institutionalized Islamic movement. Some prominent founders of the Darul Uloom Deoband, such as Muhammad Qasim Nanauti and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, drew further inspiration from the religiopolitical concept of Shah Waliullah, as well as from Wahhabi ideology, and they set up an Islamic madrasa at Deoband in UP on 30 May 1866. It grew into a higher Islamic learning centre and in 1879 it assumed the present name of Dar-ul-Uloom (abode of Islamic learning). For the last 135 years, Dar-ul-Uloom, which was more of a movement than an institution, has been carrying the tradition of the Wahhabi movement of Saudi Arabia and of Waliullah of Delhi. Even Sir Sayid Ahmad drew inspiration from the tactical moderation of Islam from Wali Ullah in launching the Aligarh movement. The Muslim politics that we see today at Aligarh Muslim University are deeply influenced by the Islamic thought of Waliullah.

According to Dr Sayed Riaz Ahmad, a Muslim writer, the Muslim leaders, such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Abul A'la Maududi, who participated in the freedom movement were followers of the Wahhabi school and carried the tradition of Waliullah with slight adjustments. Thus the nostalgic appeal to Muslim fundamentalism had a direct or indirect influence from Waliullah on the overall psyche of Indian Muslims. Unfortunately, the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam by Waliullah gradually widened the gap of mistrust between Hindus and Muslims of the subcontinent.

The combination of the Islamic extremism of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and the religiopolitical strategy of Waliullah has become the main source of inspiration for the Islamic terrorism that we see today. So long as Muslim leaders and intellectuals do not come forward and re-evaluate the eighteenth-century interpretation of faith, any remedy for the resolution of ongoing emotional disorder in society is only a remote possibility. It is the social obligation of intellectuals to awaken the moral and economic strength of the entire society without any religious prejudice.

Niblock determined that the more conservative circles of Saudi Wahhabism had for a long time perceived an affinity between Wahhabism and the Deobandi movement, from which the Taliban sprang. Some Wahhabis, indeed saw the Deobandis as their closest equivalent in South Asia. On this basis, Saudi private and charitable funding had flowed to the madrasa run by the Deobandi movement in Pakistan since the 1970s.¹⁶ Wahhabism is deemed to have links with the Deobandi school of the Indian subcontinent and to have begun to infiltrate Western nations, including the UK. The purist Islamic perspective is seen to have influenced a large number of mosques within the UK, where hate speeches are allegedly delivered, in which curses are sought against the “enemies of Islam”, including Christians and Jews.¹⁷

The Tablighi movement's rapid penetration into non-Muslim regions began in the 1970s and coincided with the establishment of a synergistic connection between Saudi Wahhabis and South Asian Deobandis. While Wahhabis are indifferent to other Islamic schools, they single out Tablighi Jamaat for praise, even if they disagree with some of its practices, such as a willingness to pray in mosques that house graves. The late Sheikh 'Abd al 'Aziz ibn Baz, perhaps the most influential Wahhabi cleric of the late twentieth century, recognized the Tablighis' good work and encouraged his Wahhabi brethren to go on missions with them so that they could direct and give advice to them.¹⁸

Charles Allen in his study gives a detailed account of the rise of Syed Ahmed and his followers, especially in the mountains of the Khyber Pass. He writes:

“The internal zeal and remarkable success that attended the preaching of Sayyid Ahmad indicates an unusual personality. Reform of Muslim practices is a serious matter; and as it then engaged the attention of some of the best minds of Muslim India, so it still forms a matter of earnest concern for those advanced leaders of Muslim thought who would like to see Islam purged of all the hurtful, degrading, and un-Islamic practices that keep it from being fashioned on more rational and progressive lines. Since these reforming doctrines went right to the heart of the everyday life of Muslims in the villages of India, the approach of a “Wahabi” preacher was as likely to create a storm as to produce a following”.¹⁹

The Pushtun were already indoctrinated by the Wahhabi-influenced Deobandi school of thought. It was this group that was ready to take up the “holy war” against the infidel Soviets. Charles’ account further proves this. He writes

The influence of the so-called Wahabi Movement still continues in two directions; one is in the organizations that it has left behind and the other in the effects on the development of the larger orthodox group. Traces of the original community left by Sayyid Ahmad are still to be found on the North–West Frontier, as are also similar traces of the schools of Shari’at Allah and Karamat Ali found in Bengal; but the most vigorous line of descent goes by the name of the Ahl-e-Hadith “People of Tradition.”²⁰ He further states that “The leaders of the Ahl-i-Hadith sect declare that it is no way related to the founder of the Wahabi Movement of Arabia: but, however vigorously they may deny any connection, the spirit and the aims of this group appear to be identical with those of the Najdi reformer.”²¹

VIOLENT OR NON-VIOLENT? EXAMINING THE NATURE OF DEOBANDI ISLAM

The Deobandi movement can hardly be seen as having a clearly defined goal. Rather, it seems to have multiple objectives. It was to a great extent a conservative movement. The Deobandi ulema moved closer to politics and created the JUH in 1919. This occurred amid competition with other organizations that were politically active for the independence of India.

The prominent leaders of the JUH included senior Deobandi clerics, such as Maulana Mahmudul Hassan (1851–1920) and Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni (1879–1957), the latter being president until his death in 1957. The JUH's strategy was to adopt a non-violent approach against British rule in order to gain independence for India.²²

In 1914, Maulana Mahmudul Hassan, chancellor at Darul Uloom Deoband, conceived a movement for the liberation of India by which armed units would be deputed to organize the Pakhtuns of the tribal areas, and rally support in Afghanistan in order to destabilize the British Indian government and provide a convenient point for the Turkish army to open a new front against the British. The movement was rooted in the politics of anti-colonialism and pan-Islamism galvanized by the start of the First World War, but the founders of the movement highlighted the differences in their militaristic outlook and the politics of non-violent non-cooperation which dominated the nationalist Indian arena at that time.²³

The Deobandis formally subscribe to the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. They emphasize a puritanical interpretation of Islam that rejects the strong proclivities to syncretism that are characteristic of local, pre-Islamic and Sufi influences, which mark much of South Asian Islam. In 1919, Deobandi leaders created a political front, the JUH. The issue of the demand for the creation of Pakistan split the JUH, and so the JUI came into being under the leadership of Mawlana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani in 1945. The JUI united supporters of Partition, who lent their support to the dominant political group favouring the division of British India along religious lines: the ML. The JUI and a variety of Deobandi formations, including the Tablighi Jamaat, have been immensely influential both socially and politically in Pakistan, even as they have directly contributed to and shaped the course of sectarianism, extremism and militancy in, and exported from, the country.²⁴

RADICALIZATION IN PAKISTAN: ZIA REGIME, MUSLIM LEAGUE AND DEOBANDI ALLIANCE

The radicalization of the Deoband movement in Pakistan can be traced back to the policy of conservative re-Islamization instituted by General Zia-ul-Haq after his seizure of power in Pakistan in 1977. It was afterwards nurtured by the hardening stance of the Pakistani state and of the radical movements which shared the same enemies—namely, India, the communists and, to a lesser extent, the Shiites. However, the

“militants” in due course turned to autonomous action and imposed their own strategy.²⁵

After Pakistan was established as an independent Muslim state, it was further divided into many ethnic identities. The country was fragmented by the splits between the Sunni majority and the Shia minority. The Sunni doctrine was further divided into three main groups: Deobandi, Bareilvi and Ahli Hadith. Each of these doctrines has its own schools and mosques, and has generated its own political parties. The parties have spawned radical spinoffs, many of which have been active in jihadist violence. Such violence has been most closely associated with the Deobandi and Ahli Hadith groups, both of which have seen their influence expand since the mid-1970s. The Deobandi has been favoured by the Government of Pakistan, and the Ahli Hadith by Saudi Arabia.²⁶

Until 1979, the relation within Sunni doctrine (Deobandi, Bareilvi and Ahl-e-Hadith) and between Shia and Sunni remained friendly and calm. The first case of sectarian violence emerged in 1953, when the *Jamat-i-Islami* launched a violent campaign against the small *Ahmadiyya* community. The process of Islamization by *Zia-ul Huq* set free the forces of sectarianism and helped them to spread throughout the country. Following this, the civilian governments continued to exploit sectarian differences and used militant sectarian groups for their short-term benefit.²⁷

Being a minority, the Shia population maintained a low profile on the political scene in the early days of the country but later extended implicit support to the secularist PPP, led by *Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto*. In addition, the two major Sunni groups—Deobandis and Bareilvis—organized their political parties in the 1940s. The Deobandis, who were opposed to the establishment of Pakistan, formed the *JUH* in 1945, and broke away from their parent organization after 1947 to form the *JUI*, while the Bareilvis formed the *Jamat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP)* in 1948. The political influence of these parties was far more limited than their sectarian following. The election results of 1970 bear testimony to this fact—each secured only seven seats. In fact, the results demonstrated that religious or sectarian identity had very little political appeal to the Pakistani population. For instance, the non-sectarian Islamist political party, the *Jamat-i-Islami (JI)*, did not do well either: it won only four seats.²⁸ The Islamization process, with the strict and authoritarian implementation of Sunni laws by *Zia ul Haq*, also raised sectarian differences.

The growing strength of the Shia population bothered the Sunni conservatives as well as two regional powers: Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Iraq was

at that time engaged in a bloody war with Iran with the support of the West, especially the USA. For Saudis, the main challenge was to enclose the Iranian brand of Islamism within Iran by freezing the Sunni identity in countries around Iran and through building a “Sunni wall” around Iran.²⁹ Riaz Ali believes that “Saudis did this by providing funds to madrassas of the Ahl-e-Hadith in point of view of a counterbalance.”³⁰

Deobandis undertook immediate and aggressive action by founding the Sawad-e-Azam Ahl-e-Sunnat (Greater Unity of the Sunnis), and demanded that Pakistan be declared a Sunni state, and Shias as non-Muslim. In 1985, the Anjuman-e-Sipah-i-Sahaba (ASS, Society of the Army of the Prophet’s Companions), later to become the SSP, was formed in Punjab to encourage violence against the Shias as its main objective.³¹ The virulence of its expression and actions was unparalleled. The SSP, although apparently an independent organization, was strongly connected to the JUI until 1989. (The SSP entered into mainstream politics in 1990. The organization was renamed Millat-i-Islami after being banned in 2002.) Zia’s regime extended support to the SSP to deal with growing Shia political influence, making it an integral part of its anti-Iran policy at home, and engaging it in raising fighters for the War in Afghanistan. The SSP gradually spread to the southern parts of the province from its base in the central region.³²

The politicians associated with the Ahl-e-Hadith faction created a militant group in 1988, the LT (renamed Jamaat Dawa in 2002 after being banned by the government). The LT, which grew out of the Markaz Dawawal Irshad, comprised veterans of the War in Afghanistan and soon became engaged in violence both at home and in Kashmir. A spiral of violence was unleashed by the SSP and the LT. This resulted in a backlash from the Shia community: a militant group named the Sipah-i-Muhammed (SM, Army of Mohammed in Pakistan) was founded in 1991. As the SSP moved to the mainstream and was trying to tone down its violent rhetoric, a split occurred and some members formed a more aggressive organization, the LeJ, in 1994. The organization was named after Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, the founder of the SSP, to demonstrate that it is carrying on the work of Jhangvi, who was assassinated by his adversaries. By then the Barelvis had their own militant groups: Sunni Tehrik (ST) and the Anjuman Sipah-i-Mustafa (ASM). The Tehrik-i-Jafria Pakistan (TJP) was banned by the government in 2002 but then revived under the banner of Tehrik-i-Islam (TIP).³³

RELIGIOPOLITICAL SCENARIO

The advent of 1970 brought great changes with it. The former East Pakistan voted in favour of the pro-autonomy Awami league supporting Mujeeb ur Rehman. In West Pakistan it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's party that won the elections. The political confrontation on the transfer of power led to civil disturbance and chaos. The civil war in East Pakistan brought India into the picture, and the political crisis turned into the Indo-Pakistan War and culminated in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Najum Mushtaq in his paper "Islam and Pakistan" writes:

the idea of a nation based on religion, transcending ethnic diversity and bridging the geographic distance, fell apart. The leftover West Pakistan assumed the title of Pakistan. Refusing to learn the lessons of the post-independence 25 years, the framers of the new constitution led by Bhutto continued to play the religion card. The new constitution of Pakistan was full of Islamic content. General Zia ul-Haq, who toppled Bhutto in 1977, further strengthened these Islamic provisions. His 11-year rule coincided with the final decisive juncture in the Cold War: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S.-sponsored jihad led by Zia's Islamized Pakistan.³⁴

Mushtaq adds:

The Zia government introduced new laws based on ultra-orthodox Sunni interpretations of Islam and formulated Islamic rules and regulations for every institution. It thus subjected all sectors of society—from education to the media and from the cultural policies to official rules of business—to an Islamic code of conduct. Sectarianism flourished. This growing army of extremists in Pakistan fought the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad alongside the Arabs and Afghans and then served the cause of jihads from India to Bosnia to Chechnya. The next generation of the same mujahedeen groups is now the main protagonist in America's war on terrorism. The momentum of militancy created by Zia has continued after his demise in 1988. The semi-civilian rule of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto could do little to stem the tide of Sunni militancy which has taken a two-track approach to advance its cause: at home against the Shias and other minorities and internationally against western targets. During the Musharraf period many of them have turned against the military itself.³⁵

Murtaza Haider in his article published in *Dawn* explains

Whereas the population increased by 29 per cent during 1972 and 1981, the number of graduates from religious schools in Pakistan increased by 195 per cent during the same period. This resulted in an oversupply of graduates from religious schools who had limited employment prospects. The military and civil governments that followed the Zia regime also did little to address the dramatic increase in the number of *madrassas* and the students enrolled in such institutions. The number of *madrassas* jumped from 2,800 in 1988 to 9,900 in 2002. The Deobandi *madrassas* saw the largest increase during that period reaching a total of 7,000 institutions. In fact, the increase in the number of Deobandi *madrassas* was higher than the number of all other *madrassas* combined.³⁶

JIHAD-E-AKBAR TO JIHAD-E-ASGHAR: POLITICIZATION OF THE NOTION OF JIHAD

There is enough empirical evidence to support the idea that the zealous Islamization during the 11-year rule of General Zia conferred a specific religious tone on various social and political phenomena in that era. In a purely religious context, Jihad-e-Akbar (the greater Jihad) is about controlling one's ego and fighting against one's vices. Jihad-e-Asghar (smaller Jihad) is basically the last option where armed struggle against the enemy is allowed in certain circumstance. Unfortunately the emphasis of the Zia regime was Jihad-e-Asghar, encouraging armed struggle against the infidels (Communist), i.e., Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

DEOBANDI-TALIBAN NEXUS

The traditionalist Deobandi networks appeared to be playing an important and recognizable role in Afghanistan. Indeed, as a rule, Taliban networks stem from old or newly created Deobandi networks.³⁷ The Taliban are Sunni Muslims, influenced by the Deobandi school of thought. After 1947, at the time of independence and Partition, when the Muslim areas of colonial India were established as the separate state of Pakistan, the centres of Deoband learning shifted to the Pakistani cities of Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar. Afghans were a part of steady stream of scholars travelling to Deoband and later to Pakistani *madrassas* to receive the teachings of the Deobandi school. The Taliban were the heirs to this tradition.³⁸

Afghan students generally join Deobandi madrassas because of historical links between the Afghan ulema and the Dar Ul-Uloom Deoband madrassa in India. Even today the relationship between this madrassa and the Pakistani Deobandi movement is limited. Christophe Jaffrelot writes, “Under the generic term Deobandi one finds, in fact, different kinds of discourses and one cannot overestimate the education of their Ulema and the coherence of their ideology.”³⁹

Most of the Taliban ulema were educated in the NWFP (now KPK) during the war against the Soviets. In particular, the Darul Uloom Haqqaniyah in Akora Khattak, NWFP (KPK), has trained some of the most important cadres of the movement. There are strong links of solidarity between the ulema trained in this madrassa and its Taliban students. The ulema who are in control of the Taliban movement have a strong sense of group identity. Besides the presence of the Afghan Taliban, Pakistani madrassas are directly linked to the War in Afghanistan because participation in jihad is seen as a natural next step for its students. Most of the volunteers are Afghan but some Pakistani students also participate in jihad. The latter generally come from the NWFP and Baluchistan, and occasionally from Sindh or Punjab.⁴⁰

The post-1979 wave of jihadism and violent intolerance among the Deobandi groups has much to do with Jamia Uloom-e-Islamia (situated in Binori Town, Karachi). The school continues the tradition of Darul Uloom Deoband. It has been often described as the “fountainhead of Deobandi militancy” in Pakistan because of its role in helping to establish and sustain a number of jihadi organizations, including the HuM, the JeM and the SSP.⁴¹ A generation of former students has spread a web of similar jihadi madrassas across the country that pay allegiance to the Binori Town madrassa, and seek its guidance and support. The Jamia Uloom e-Islamia at Binori Town has worn the mantle of jihadi leadership since the days of the anti-Soviet jihad.⁴² Abdul Rasheed, a Binori Town graduate and founder of the Al-Rasheed Trust, and Binori Town leaders Shamzai and Yusaf Ludhianvi, helped to establish the Jaish-e-Mohammed in 2000, which is headed by Masood Azhar, a former Binori Town student and teacher. The SSP, the Deobandi militant organization which pioneered organized sectarian militancy country-wide, was also backed by the Binori Town madrassa. Such support is particularly important because it translates into the support of the Deobandi sect countrywide.⁴³

Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam-S and Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam-F

The JUH and JUI both look towards Darul Uloom Deoband for allegiance, though their political ideology differs from each other. As Barbara Metcalf explains

In the final years of colonial rule, a minority group among the *Deobandi Ulama* dissented from support for the secular state and the privatization of religion espoused by the Indian nationalist movement. They organized, instead, as the *Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam* to support the Muslim League and the demand for a separate Muslim state. In independent Pakistan after 1947 they became a minor political party led by *Ulama* and a voice in the on-going debate over the nature of the Pakistani state. Should it be the secular state presumably intended by its founders, or a state meant to be shaped in accordance with Islam? The JUI has never had more than minute popular support, and the content of the party's programs over the years, it is probably fair to say, has been a fairly simplistic call for the dominance of Islam in public life.⁴⁴

Like other Pakistani parties, the JUI has been subject to factional splits, joining together the personalities more than the issues, and there were perhaps half a dozen splits and reorganizations during its first half century.⁴⁵ Hence JUI was further divided into the Maulana Samiul Haq and Maulana Fazalur Rehman groups (JUI-S and JUI-F).

The increase in the number of madrassas in the 1980s corresponded with the arrival of almost 3 million Afghan refugees. The madrassas located along the frontier frequently provided the only education available to the immigrant boys. One school in particular, the Madrasa Haqqaniya in Akora Kathak near Peshawar, trained many of the top Taliban leaders. These sometime students (singular *talib*, plural *taliban*) were shaped by many of the core Deobandi reformist causes, all of which were further encouraged by Arab volunteers in Afghanistan. Ahmed Rashid, a longtime observer, says that the teaching was "An extreme form of Deobandism, which was being preached by Pakistani Islamic parties in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan."⁴⁶

SUNNI ORTHODOXY

The religious nexus that binds Deobandism and Wahhabism together had political aspirations during the Zia period:

The Wahabi school of thought is predominant in Saudi Arabia. However, it should be emphasized that a vast majority of Muslims in Pakistan do not adhere to either Salafist or Wahabi traditions. The Deobandis opposed the

formation of Pakistan on the lines of a modern nation-state and regard themselves as the main voice of Sunni Islamic orthodoxy in Pakistan. In their beliefs, particularly their emphasis on Sharia, the Deobandis echo many of the puritanical Sunni Wahhabi traditions of Islam.⁴⁷

The creation of the JUI in Pakistan made it socially relevant within the polity in the state:

The Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam (JUI) is the political organization of orthodox Sunni Muslim clerics and is led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who is the son of JUI's founder Maulana Mufti Mehmood. The Islamist JUI and Jamaat-i-Islami are also socially relevant—even if they are restricted to narrower ethnic and sectarian pockets—because their histories are linked to social and political developments in their areas of influence.⁴⁸

“Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, better known by its abbreviation, JUI is a hard-line Islamist party, widely considered a political front for numerous jihadi organizations ... pro-Taliban, anti-American and spiked with promises to implement Shariah, or Islamic law.”⁴⁹

The Deobandi school completely rejects Sufism (and its local Bareilvi version) and the rituals held at shrines. This has been witnessed in a number of incidents: the attack on the Bari Imam Shrine in 2005⁵⁰; the Sipah-e-Sahaba suicide attack on the shrine of Pir Rakhel Shah in the remote village of Fatehpur in Jhal Magsi District in Balochistan⁵¹; Haji Baba Turangzai's shrine in Safi tehsil in Mohmand Agency being taken over by 200 militants on 31 July 2007⁵²; the Lal Masjid incident in July 2007; the killing of 40 people in suicide attacks on Data Darbar Lahore in July 2010⁵³; the attack on Abdullah Shah Ghazi Shrine in Karachi in October 2010;⁵⁴ and many other examples of sectarian violence resulting from the intolerance and lack of acceptability of other schools by the Deobandis.

THE ROLE OF DEOBANDIS IN PAKISTANI POLITICS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC POLICY

The Deobandi parties played a major role in the legislative process of the period, augmenting an “Islamic” constitution of 1973 that had little to do with what Jinnah had imagined for Pakistan. Consequently, Zia introduced controversial Islamic legislation such as *Hudood* (Islamic codes), and other measures that included *zakat* (compulsory alms-giving), *ushr* (agricultural tax), Islamic banking, and blasphemy laws through a handpicked and non-party undemocratically “elected” *Majlis-e-Shura* (Parliament),

which gave indemnity to his actions that were illegal according to the 1973 Constitution.⁵⁵ The 1973 Constitution was contradictory to what Jinnah was propagating before independence. Murphy and Rashid Malik in “Pakistan Jihad: The Making Of Religious Terrorism” write:

In his efforts to promote an independent Muslim State, Jinnah was opposed by Muslim religious parties and groups namely *Deobandis* as well as the *Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam*, *Jamaat-e-Islami* and other religious oriented groups. They were the supporters of Congress’s notion of undivided and united India ... Jinnah’s vision of Pakistan as a tolerant, modern, Islamic democratic State was later hijacked by religious elements who found in the new State an opportunity to advance their causes along conservative religious lines. From within and outside the State, religion was thus being used as a tool in advancing the political motives of religious parties and groups. The constitutional debate, the role of religious minorities, Islamisation, and *Sharia* were some of the examples that explained such trends and tendencies, which partly contributed toward the rise of religious extremism.⁵⁶

In addition to the political activism of the Deobandis, the group played a major role in all spheres of political decision-making during the Zia era. Hussain Haqqani writes, “Islamists were appointed to important government positions in the judiciary, civil services, and educational institutions. Sharia courts were established to try cases under Islamic law, while Islamization was promoted through the government supported media.”⁵⁷

Zia raised a rhetoric of religion that plucked the masses’ hearts and pleased the ulema, who in return would provide him with an ideological justification and mbrella to rule. Dr Hasan Askari writes that, in the 1978 cabinet formation,

parties which accepted representation in the federal cabinet included Pakistan Muslim League (PML), *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-Islam* Pakistan (JUIP), Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP) and *Jamaat-i-Islami* ... However, this was the first time for the *Ulema* and other religious parties to be associated with power structure of the government. If one glances through the past record of the *Ulema* and religious parties, it appears that they had failed to win a substantial majority in any elections. Once in the government, they vehemently started advocating the establishment of a religious state bordering on theocracy rather than a modern democratic Islamic state. Such a point of view was helpful to the military government to sidetrack the demand of early Elections during 1979–85.⁵⁸

STATE PATRONAGE OF SUNNI ORTHODOXY

The Zia regime patronized Islamic groups to further the concept of jihad. The USA helped General Zia to sustain his foreign policy and as a result ensure the continuity of his regime. Though one cannot say that US support was the only factor in consolidating the regime, it certainly contributed to endorsing his policies through financial and diplomatic support. Dietrich Reetz in his work “Migrants, Mujahedin, Madrassa Students” writes:

It was particularly General Zia-ul-Haq who, with the express consent and encouragement of Western nations, and the U.S. in particular, politicized Islam to stabilize his own hold on power. During his reign several Islamic actors allowed themselves to be instrumentalized hoping to advance their own ideological objectives. This state intervention grossly “distorted” the Islamic field and created new players, institutions and concepts which later on acquired an identity and life of their own.⁵⁹

After Zia’s death and the resulting 1988 elections, Benazir Bhutto became Prime Minister of Pakistan. However, she was unable to alter the Islamic colour that her predecessor had given to the state, so she continued with most of his policies. “A major stumbling-block to the Bhutto government turned out to be the existence of the constitution as amended by General Zia-ul-Haq. An attempt by the PPP to have the constitutional changes of 1985 declared null and void by the Supreme Court, failed.”⁶⁰ This resulted in a number of political crises, including a rift between the prime minister and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan: and central authority versus provincial autonomy.

Under Nawaz Sharif’s government (1990–1993), the national conservative saw the continuation of the preceding Islamist policies. The period was marked by the Gulf crisis, with Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. The initial decision to send troops to Saudi Arabia was taken by the interim government of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. However, this decision was upheld by the incoming Nawaz Sharif government. The new government had found itself in a situation where the army chief had taken a position that was almost totally opposed to that of the government.⁶¹

SECTARIAN CONFLICT LEADING TO VIOLENCE

The real beginning of sectarian violence first ignited during the time of the Iranian Revolution and the Islamization process by Gen Zia in 1979. This was completely at odds with the ingredients of Zia's Islamization process because it was focused entirely on implementing Sunni laws and principles. Thus a rift took place between the two communities.⁶² The crucial moment in the Shia–Sunni radicalization was basically the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and General Zia's dissemination of zakat and ushr ordinances under Sunni Islamic law in 1980. This Sunni law was in conflict with the Shia laws, leading to a protest campaign by the Shia community against the decision. In the 1980s, sectarian politics was growing and it drastically shifted towards Shia–Sunni violence. As a result of pressure on the Shias in Pakistan due to Deobandi social and political empowerment, Shia activism in the country took a new turn as a reaction to Deobandi activism, which was locked on to declare all Shia as non-Muslims. In the 1990s there were many sectarian battles, especially in the northern areas of Pakistan, including Parachinar and Hangu. Sometimes the situation even looked like a civil war. Many hundreds of people were killed in these clashes and sometimes army and paramilitary forces were called to restore peace.⁶³ General Zia's government turned a blind eye to the Sunni (mostly Deobandi and Salafi) Afghan mujahideen and their local Sunni cohorts to cut down the Turi Shias of upper Parachinar for obstructing the use of their territory as a launching pad against the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.⁶⁴ It is on the record that in most of the sectarian violence the militant organizations of the Deobandi school of thought were involved.

POLITICS OF FATWA AND HATE SPEECH FUELLING SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

The Deobandis are not the only ones who issue fatwas, but their role has been quite confusing. There is no doubt that the religious edicts for individuals and organizations seeking legal opinion or Islamic legitimacy for their actions also fuels sectarian tension, the reason being the nature of the fatwas. While some requests for opinions pertain to personal matters, such as marriage and inheritance issues, most relate to matters of sect and creed. With online and print availability, the reach of such fatwas—particularly those about sectarian differences—to people is unrestricted. Most of the fatwas reveal a mediaeval mindset. Since madrassas compete

to win over members of rival sects, this intense intermadrassa competition fuels sociopolitical conflicts even within families and neighbourhoods in a city. According to International Crisis Group's research, the work of Yusuf Ludhianvi of the Binori Town madrasa is perhaps the most widely read among the Deobandi fraternity. His landmark work, *Ikhtilaf-e-Ummat aur Sirat-e-Mustaqeem* (Dissent in the Ummah and the Right Path), a critique of Barelvi, Shia, Ahle Hadith, Salafi and JI's Maulana Maududi's religious creed, is considered a masterpiece of Deobandi theology and is widely used. After examining Shia literature, Ludhianvi concluded that there was no doubt about the infidelity of Shias, and they were excluded from Islam: Shia'ism is a religion contrary to Islam. In fact, he propounded the same opinion about all Islamic sects other than the Deobandi. Similarly, the Deobandi extremists of the SSP and the LeJ revere Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, whose fiery speeches are an integral part of every activist's collection.⁶⁵

JIHAD WITHIN JIHAD: *COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND SHIFT OF POLICY OF JIHAD*

With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, there was a change in the internal and external dynamics of the region. Pakistan politically pressurized Russia to withdraw, alongside covertly supporting the Afghan Mujahideen in Afghanistan—also funded by the USA, which at last forced the USSR to leave Afghanistan. After the Soviet withdrawal, Pakistan had to face a number of external and internal threats and challenges. In these complex and uncertain circumstances, Pakistan was left alone in the middle to deal with all the issues.⁶⁶ After the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, a power struggle began between the mujahideen and Najibullah's government. Pakistani intelligence supported the mujahideen in overthrowing the government⁶⁷ but it was not until 1992 that this was achieved. The Soviet Union continued its support of Najibullah's government while the USA withdrew its support for the mujahideen.⁶⁸

FROM ANTI-SOVIET UNION TO ANTI-USA: THE AL-QAEDA-TALIBAN NEXUS

After 11 September 2001, Pakistan faced a difficult scenario. Owing to its continuous support of the Taliban, it was already facing condemnation from the international community. It had two options at that time: to side with the USA in the fight against Al-Qaeda, or to have pro-Taliban

policies and face international isolation and denunciation. Pakistan kept the notion of national interest and turned around its Taliban and Afghan policies.

In its shift following 9/11, Pakistan began to support the US-led coalition forces in their military operations inside Afghanistan. Since the US invasion of Afghanistan, the Pakistan military has been actively involved in hunting down Al-Qaeda members in the tribal belts of the country.⁶⁹ As a result, the Taliban has gradually reduced its dependence on Pakistan and has started looking for support elsewhere, including strengthening its ties with Osama Bin Laden. During the 1990s, Bin Laden established a camp in Jalalabad. He supported the Taliban financially and also sent many Arab-Afghans to take part in the Taliban's military operations, which it had started in the North.

The relations between the Taliban and the USA became worse, especially after the former offered refuge to Bin Laden. The events of 9/11 shook the whole world and Al-Qaeda was held responsible for arranging the twin towers attacks in particular. Thus in October 2001 the USA launched a military operation to crack down on Al-Qaeda.⁷⁰

The Tehrikeek-e-Taliban in Pakistan had sprung out of the residue of the mujahideen after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. These mujahideen formed a large number of groups in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir, and the TTP is also one of those factions.⁷¹ There is a strong argument about categorizing the TTP as takfiris. E. Sivan analysed the situation of Talibanization, emphasizing that the TTP has adopted the takfiri doctrine of Taqi ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, and revived by Sayyid Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb.⁷² The Islamic scholars consider the takfiris as "heretics of Islam".

DEOBANDIS' VIOLENT STRUGGLE TO PRESERVE THE POLITICAL STATUS OF PAKISTAN

Preserving the religious influence within the governing system of Pakistan has been an key aim among religious factions. This has in turn helped such entities to redeem their social and political objectives in the fluctuating political realm of the country.

The Deobandis, with increasing mushroom growth of their institutions all across Pakistan, have been struggling to maintain the same political edge in the system as mentioned above. This struggle, starting in the mid-1970s, initially to counter the Soviet influence in the country, developed

into an extreme form of struggle for Islamization and the eradication of other factions of non-Islamic religions. The Deobandis were heavily funded by national as well as international sources, and the general enmity between Shia and Sunni sects culminated in a disastrous and violent movement of power in the country.

Since the 1990s, with the advent of the War in Afghanistan and the intrusion of the Taliban in Pakistan, Deobandi groups have been known for their religious violent activities. Especially in areas such as KPK and Baluchistan, these groups gained power as well as a stronghold in the FATA. The TTP not only attacked the westerners but also the local people and the Shiite community. It was known to be largely supported by extremist religious groups established in Punjab, who were actively involved in Afghanistan and India as well. Groups such as the SSP and the LeJ have been the principal allies of Al-Quaida. They have provided weapons, recruits, finances and other resources to the Pakistani Taliban, and they were involved in violent attacks targeted at the militant FATA.⁷³ Another organization that has gained significant attention in religious politics is the JUI, which is further subdivided into different leaderships, most prominent of which are Mualana fazlur-Rehman and Maulana Sami-ul-haq's. The JUI has a strong hold on religious politics, especially in the regions of KPK and Baluchistan. It has had strong political support since the Zia regime and up until now has been capable of putting pressure on the establishment where needed.

In 1999 the JUI led a street protest against the Lahore peace process between Nawaz Sharif and the Indian Prime Minister, Vajpayee. The organization is rigorously devoted to imposing strict sharia law in the country and has condemned all efforts at secularization. Maulana Sami-ul-Haq (known as the Father of Talibans) has referred constantly to its agenda of a strict and binding Islamic sharia law.⁷⁴

These organizations, in the surge of maintaining political status and resisting sectarian supremacy, have aggravated the situation to create a more violent environment. Incidents in Karachi marked with the political hold of the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) speak of the horrors of sectarian divide and political unrest. The assassination of the governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, was a sorry tale of extremism etched in the roots of the society where he was assassinated by his own security guard, who was a staunch Sunni Muslim and declared that the governor made blasphemous comments against Islam and so was fit to be put to death.

The Lal Masjid incident (2007) was also an unfortunate event reflecting Islamic extremism and the extent of militancy in the country. A madrassa run by pro-Taliban leaders, Maulana Abdul Aziz and Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, who sought to overthrow the establishment of General Pervaiz Musharraf quite rigorously, came under attack from the government in its efforts to eliminate pro-Taliban terrorist factions. The issue remains under discussion between different scholars regarding whether it was strategic planning or a reaction to Islamic extremism. Pervez Hoodboy writes:

The *Lal Masjid* crisis is a direct consequence of the ambivalence of General Musharraf's regime towards Islamic militancy. In part it comes from fear and follows the tradition of appeasement. Another part comes from the confusion of whether to cultivate the Taliban—who can help keep Indian influence out of Afghanistan—or whether to fight them.⁷⁵

This series of organizations and incidents defines the violent political struggle of religious groups to maintain their status of political power. However, within this power struggle, sectarian violence and terrorist activities continue to threaten the national security of the country. Owing to their immense historical importance, seminaries such as Darul Uloom could today act as a constructive platform on which to debate the political, religious, economic and social challenges confronting Muslims in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and simultaneously to engage in dialogue with non-Muslims. Likewise, in order to retain their past glory, Deobandi scholars will themselves have to take the initiative to evolve and reform the institutional structures of their seminaries so as to creatively and effectively respond to the contemporary challenges facing South Asia's Muslims.⁷⁶ However, the continuous patronage and growth of the Deobandi institutes may cause the ongoing sectarian violence to intensify. It is only reasonable to suggest that such organizations need to be checked and controlled thoroughly in time to limit their contributions towards the fragmentation of society.

The current "Islamic identity" appears to be narrow and self-destructive rather than an overarching concept of *amn* and *salamti* (peace and security); it is more of a myopic view of Islam versus the rest of the world. Unfortunately Pakistan became the victim of strict and inflexible policies. It is not race, geography or problems associated with those factors that have defined these policies, as is assumed by some in Pakistan, but the

deliberate construction of a geopolitical situation, the formation of enemies, the creation of alliances and confronting others that has resulted in the problems that the country is now facing.

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