Counter Narrative: The Missing Link in Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Strategy

A Monograph

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14. ABSTRACT

   Pakistan is grappling with the duo of religious extremism and terrorism. The country has suffered the most to terrorism due to both its geographic location and policy decisions that it made in the past. Ever since assuming the status of a frontline state in the US-led war on terror, more than 80,000 Pakistanis have died in terrorist acts while the national exchequer has suffered a colossal loss of more than $123 bn. Despite their manifestly gruesome behavior, the ability of the terrorists to retain the support and affiliation of a segment of the society is an ironical fact. It shows the effectiveness of the terrorists' narrative and their ability to appeal to the citizens as well as some political elites. Besides the terrorists' ability, it is also the inability of the state and its institutions to formulate a coherent counter narrative, or exploit the prevailing one. The terrorists skillfully tailor their narrative to not only appeal to broader Islamic narrative but also find traction with regional and national narratives, developed by Pakistan and assisted by the United States and Saudi Arabia in the backdrop of the Afghan Jihad from 1979 to 1989.

   Pakistan is fighting the monster it jointly created with the United States and Saudi Arabia, since 2001, but its counter-terrorism efforts have largely remained focused on the kinetic use of force. Extensive military operations have successfully eliminated terrorist safe havens, which they once enjoyed. However, the lack of a scientific and systematic approach to defeat religious extremism on ideological grounds, which lays at the root of the problem, have prevented Pakistan from translating its military successes into a long term national narrative. The prevailing master national narrative that the terrorists exploit, is the outcome of a well-orchestrated process (1979-1989) and can only be undone or modified through an equally effective, if not more efficient, narrative building process. To be effective, any new or alternative official narrative will have to consider this master narrative. Only the stories, archetypes, and forms that fits the plot will be effective. Imposing new narratives on the assumption that our narrative is superior to that of the terrorists because it is true, has not and will not work. Correctness or truthfulness of the story are far less important than the way it is told. The terrorists' narrative is more successful than that of the government, despite being false and malicious. The inherent falsehood and wickedness in the terrorists' narrative can, however, be exploited by shaping the nation's perception of the truth in the right direction. A systemic and broader approach is needed which considers larger societal aspects, accounts not only for the future aspirations, but is also rooted in the realities of the past and present.

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Abstract

Counter Narrative: The Missing Link in Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Strategy, by MAJ Anwar Habib, Pakistan Army, 60 pages.

Pakistan is grappling with the duo of religious extremism and terrorism. The country has suffered the most to terrorism due to both its geographic location and policy decisions that it made in the past. Ever since assuming the status of a frontline state in the US-led war on terror, more than 80,000 Pakistanis have died in terrorist acts while the national exchequer has suffered a colossal loss of more than $123 bn. Despite their manifestly gruesome behavior, the ability of the terrorists to retain the support and affiliation of a segment of the society is an ironical fact. It shows the effectiveness of the terrorists' narrative and their ability to appeal to the citizens as well as some political elites. Besides the terrorists' ability, it is also the inability of the state and its institutions to formulate a coherent counter narrative, or exploit the prevailing one. The terrorists skillfully tailor their narrative to not only appeal to broader Islamic narrative but also find traction with regional and national narratives, developed by Pakistan and assisted by the United States and Saudi Arabia in the backdrop of the Afghan Jihad from 1979 to 1989.

Pakistan is fighting the monster it jointly created with the United States and Saudi Arabia, since 2001, but its counter-terrorism efforts have largely remained focused on the kinetic use of force. Extensive military operations have successfully eliminated terrorist safe havens, which they once enjoyed. However, the lack of a scientific and systematic approach to defeat religious extremism on ideological grounds, which lays at the root of the problem, have prevented Pakistan from translating its military successes into a long term national narrative. The prevailing master national narrative that the terrorists exploit is the outcome of a well-orchestrated process (1979-1989) and can only be undone or modified through an equally effective, if not more efficient, narrative building process. To be effective, any new or alternative official narrative will have to consider this master narrative. Only the stories, archetypes, and forms that fit the plot will be effective. Imposing new narratives on the assumption that our narrative is superior to that of the terrorists because it is true has not and will not work. Correctness or truthfulness of the story are far less important than the way it is told. The terrorists' narrative is more successful than that of the government, despite being false and malicious. The inherent falsehood and wickedness in the terrorists' narrative can, however, be exploited by shaping the nation's perception of the truth in the right direction. A systemic and broader approach is needed which considers larger societal aspects, accounts not only for the future aspirations, but is also rooted in the realities of the past and present.

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Acronyms

Af-Pak	Afghanistan-Pakistan
AQAP	Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM	Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
AQIS	Al Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GWOT	Global War on Terror
IBO	Intelligence Based Operation
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISIS	The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JI	Jamaat-e-Islami
JUI	Jamiat-e-Ulema e Islam
LEAS	Law Enforcement Agency
NACTA	National Counter Terrorism Authority
NAP	National Action Plan
NISP	National Internal Security Policy
NSC	National Security Council
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
PTI	Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaaf
PPA	Protection of Pakistan Act
SSG	Special Services Group
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union)

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Section One: Introduction

December 16, 2014, seven terrorists affiliated with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) stormed an army run school for children at Peshawar, north-west Pakistan. Once inside the school, the terrorists went on a rampage of killing and started indiscriminate shooting with their automatic assault rifles at the students and staff. A military operation involving the elite Special Services Group (SSG) of Pakistan army was launched to handle the situation. A quick and effective response from both the military and police commandos, helped in saving the lives of approximately nine hundred and sixty people of then roughly eleven hundred present on school campus that day. The commandos were able to kill all the seven terrorists in a gun battle, successfully preventing a hostage situation from happening. The terrorists, however, were able to kill 145 people including 132 students (age eight to eighteen years), ten members of the staff including the school Principle, and three SSG commandos.[1]

The incident was one of the hundreds of terrorist acts that the Pakistani nation has faced over the last decade and a half as the country has been at war with terrorism, ever since the declaration of the Unites States (US)-led Global War on Terror (GWOT) after 9/11. However, this was different. The barbarity and brutality of the attack changed the national mood. It apparently unified the so far divided opinion on both the nature of terrorism and the type of government response required to deal with it. Even the so-called terrorists and extremists' apologists were shocked and demanded action.[2] Many believed it to be a crisis grave enough to

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[1] Sophia Saifi and Greg Botelho, "Taliban School Attack: 145 Killed in Pakistan Siege," *CNN*, December 17, 2014, accessed September 10, 2017, http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/16/world/asia/pakistan-peshawar-school-attack/index.html.

[2] Carmen Fishwick, "Peshawar school massacre: This is Pakistan's 9/11 – now is the time to act," *Guardian*, December 19, 2014, Accessed September 10, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/19/peshawar-school-massacre-pakistans-911.

result in a paradigm shift in the government's counter-terrorism policy as well as public opinion.[3] The government responded by promulgating a twenty-point National Action Plan (NAP), for eradicating terrorism from the country. The NAP though initially hailed, received constant criticism for focusing again on the kinetic aspects and ignoring the ideological, and narrative aspects of the counter-terrorism fight altogether.[4]

Terrorism became an existential threat for the country as terrorist outfits not only controlled a significant territory along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, but went on an unchecked rampage of terror all across the country for almost a decade. The Pakistan army, after waging a war for more than fifteen years, successfully liberated the areas under terrorists' control and broke their organizational efficacy. The war cost Pakistan heavily both in terms of blood and treasure. More than 80,000 Pakistanis died in terrorist acts while the national exchequer suffered a colossal loss of more than $123.1 billion. Citizens bore the majority of the losses, as more than half of the fatalities are civilians.[5] Despite their manifestly gruesome behavior, the ability of the terrorists to retain the support and affiliation of a segment of the society is an ironical fact.

This irony is the apparent effectiveness of the terrorists' narrative and their ability to appeal to not only common citizens, but also some political elites in the context of popular electoral politics. Besides the terrorists' ability, it is also the inability of the state and its institutions to formulate a coherent counter narrative, or exploit the prevailing one. The confusion or division in opinion in the society about the terrorist organizations is manifested in their view of the Taliban. While most consider them terrorists, few still believe that too many of the Taliban

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[3] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1-65.

[4] Ume-Farwa, "National Action Plan: The Need for a National Narrative," Issue brief for Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, February 11, 2016, accessed September 15, 2017, http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Final_IB_Ume-Farwa_dated_11-2-2016.pdf.

[5] Israr Khan, "Pakistan suffers $123.1 bn losses in terror war," *NEWS International* (Islamabad)*,* May 26, 2017, accessed September 6, 2017, https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/206709-Pakistan-suffers-1231-bn-losses-in-terror-war.

are 'good people,' only demanding a just system; they are "our misguided brothers," but brothers nevertheless. The effective strategy of profusely building religion into the terrorist narratives gives it the potential to emotionally reverberate with the audience. They know that their audience has been conditioned on an intellectual diet of state-sponsored messaging, in the backdrop of the Cold War and its manifestation in the region during the 1970s and 1980s. War on terror is also a war of ideas, and our lack of focus as such, has manifested in the state's failure to eliminate terrorism in all its manifestations despite tremendous military successes.[6]

Pakistan was a traditional South Asian society where the mystic and pacifist Sufi version of Islam dominated the discourse from the beginning. Its center of spiritual gravity was mainstream and moderate. Religion was traditionally a matter of cultural habit rather than the present day obsession. Pakistanis as a whole were practicing Muslims who "wore their religion lightly, without compulsion, public obsession, or vigilante enforcement."[7] But that would change, and change permanently. This paradigm shift in the socio-religious behavior of Pakistan goes back to a deliberate narrative construction process, built in the context of Soviet Union (USSR)-Afghan war. The General Zia-ul-Haq regime, the military dictator of Pakistan (1977-88), with the active financial and technical support of the United States and Saudi Arabia, orchestrated a successful insurgency in Afghanistan. The insurgency was wrapped in a religious flag, with a view to garner popular political support across the Muslim world in general and Pakistan in particular. The resultant polarization of the society was never addressed through an equally coherent effort, resulting in the provision of breeding grounds for terrorist ideology.[8]

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[6] Muhammad Feyyaz, "Why Pakistan Does Not Have a Counterterrorism Narrative*," Journal of Strategic Security* 8, no. 1 (2015): 63-78, accessed September 5, 2017, http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol8/iss1/5/.

[7] Pamela Constable, *Playing with Fire: Pakistan at War with Itself* (New York: Random House, 2011), 135.

[8] John R. Schmidt, *The Unravelling: Pakistan in the Age of Jihad* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 67-77.

The Cold War in Afghanistan, branded 'Afghan Jihad' in Pakistan, resulted in the mushrooming of extreme right-wing militant organizations like Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami and Harkatul-ul-Mujahideen in the early 1980s. These groups grew into powerful small armies over time and started wielding political power, through their affiliated politico-religious parties. The government in Islamabad was weary of their clout well before 9/11, but could not risk antagonizing them in the interest of stability. 9/11 and the resultant US invasion of Afghanistan changed the geo-strategic landscape of the region. Pakistan joined the US-led international coalition as a front line state in the GWOT. The terrorist organizations modified their narrative and declared the government of Pakistan and particularly the army as US puppets, working against the interests of Islam and Jihad. The military dictator and his regime were unfortunately too busy in managing the electoral politics of the country to their advantage, while the extremists' propaganda and narrative building went unchecked. The failure to counter this narrative, or offer an alternative one had far-reaching and devastating effects for the national well being as well as security in the coming decades.[9]

Narrative, in the context of counter terrorism in Pakistan, is mostly related to a mere telling of a story or mechanisms associated with storytelling. Narrative as a mechanism for creating, expressing, and absorbing ideologies is mostly ignored. Narrative provides historical and social construct to events by placing them in time and space, which in turn shapes perceptions. These subjective opinions become universal truths as they are passed from one generation, or group, to the next. These become collective reference points for making meaning of messages. Narratives are used in order to legitimize various versions of a perceived truth.[10]

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[9] Hassan Abbas, Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America's War on Terror (New York: East Gate Book, 2005), 217-236.

[10] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 19, 48, 51-53.

Ideas and ideologies have traditionally played a key role in shaping the identity of Pakistan as a nation. The menace of terrorism and religious extremism that the country is facing today, has rightly been described as an existential threat to the country as it hits the core of the national ideological construction. Neutralization and countering the extremist narrative are therefore an inalienable part of the overall counter terrorism strategy in Pakistan. The alternative narrative paradigm for Pakistan should not only counter the extremist paradigm, but should also be acceptable to the people. This needs to be done in a scientific and systematic manner. An in depth analysis of the evolution of the problem might provide useful insight to the way forward.[11]

Military operations have eliminated all of the terrorist safe havens over the last sixteen years. However, despite these spectacular military successes, the menace of terrorism and religious extremism is not yet over. The terrorists' ideology and their radical, and extremist religious narrative still resonate with a segment of the society. It is in this backdrop that that this monograph will endeavor to answer the question: why is the terrorist organizations' narrative still effective in attracting the support of a segment of the Pakistani society and some political elites?

Besides answering the aforementioned primary question, the research will also explore the historic evolution of this narrative in Pakistani society and what is its relevance to today's operational environment; the failure of the government of Pakistan to give an alternative narrative to the nation contributed in the success of terrorists' narrative; and alternatives available to the government to counter extremist and radical religious narrative.

The monograph builds on the working hypothesis that the counter terrorism efforts of Pakistan remain focused on kinetic military operations without requisite efforts to counter terrorist ideology. This enabled the terrorist narrative to attract support from segments of the society and political forces. This further exacerbates the ineffectiveness of military operations as

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[11] Fatima Sajjad, "Countering Extremists' Narrative in Pakistan," *National Defense University Islamabad Journal* (2015): 75-94, accessed September 15, 2017, http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/ndu-journal/NDU-Journal-2015/04-Countering-Extremists-Narratives.pdf.

the sole instrument of eradicating terrorism. The prevailing national narrative that the terrorists exploit, is the outcome of a well-orchestrated process and can only be undone or modified through an equally effective, if not more efficient, narrative building process.

This monograph uses a combination of two research approaches: theoretical analysis and chronological case study. Using the existing primary and secondary sources, the monograph aims at clarifying the substance of the narrative and construct a cognitive framework for its critical analysis. Having established this theoretical base, the author uses this lens to examine the case study of the evolution of terrorists' narrative in Pakistan, and the reasons for its popularity in some segments of the Pakistani society. While doing so, the focus primarily remains on two important historical landmarks; first being the former USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 till its withdrawal in 1989 and secondly the situation of the country in the post 9/11 world.

The monograph further researches the role of the state in shaping this narrative in the context of the peculiar geo-strategic environment of the time under deliberation. It also examines the subsequent failure of the state to offer an alternative narrative and its consequences. The research explores the counter terrorism strategy of Pakistan with focus on finding out the reasons of its ineffectiveness, in ideological domains. The monograph recommends a way forward, based on the loopholes identified in the counter terrorism policy of Pakistan. The research does not offer a narrative or counter narrative, but rather aims at exploring the reasons of the popularity of terrorists' narrative. It traces back the evolution of jihadi narrative in Pakistan in the historical context and explore its exploitation by terrorist organizations. The monograph offers the importance of understanding the narrative, in order to counter it effectively and its relationship with the effectiveness of Pakistan's overall counter terrorism policy, including the kinetic military operations.

The research findings and conclusions are validated by evaluating them through the lens of theoretical framework primarily focusing on the tenants of the phenomenon of narrative and its dynamics in specific cultural context as its criteria. Though the theoretical framework is built on a

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multitude of scholarly sources, for the purpose of standardization, H. Porter Abbott's *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, and Dr. Steven R. Corman's *Understanding the Role of Narrative in Extremist Strategic Communication* provide a standard source for definitional purposes. More importantly, the author aims at hypothesizing that the solution lies in the problem itself. The terrorists' narrative can be annulled through the same framework that was used in building it in the first place.

Literature from a multitude of primary, secondary, and scholarly sources is used for developing the case study. For investigating the first period under consideration (1979-1989), reliance is primarily on secondary sources. A number of Pakistani as well as US authors, ranging from academics and historians to diplomats and government officials, are explored as both countries played important roles in shaping the narrative landscape of the region. Hassan Abbas, Ayesha Siddiqa, Ayesha Jalal, Pamela Constable, and Ian Talbot are few of the major authors whose texts are used during the research. All of these authors have reported or investigated the evolution of a specific narrative in Pakistan from 1979 to 1989 from different perspectives and have drawn different conclusions. Majority of them however agree on the mechanism employed and the role that different national and international players played during this evolution. To compare and contrast this emergent narrative with the original one, a number of primary resources like the speeches of the Founder of the Nation and debates in the first constituent assembly of Pakistan are also consulted.

Literature for the second time period (2001 to present) being relatively new, comprises a number of important primary sources beside academic and scholarly work. Policies, memos, speeches and statements of the national leadership of both United States and Pakistan, and biographies of President Pervez Musharraf and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates are used for gaining firsthand knowledge of the process and rationale of decisions made and actions taken at the highest levels. These decisions and actions are then analyzed through the works of authors like Zahid Hussain, Abbas, Christine Fair, and Bob Woodward, to name a few. The common

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theme found among these and many other scholarly sources is the consistent absence of focus of Pakistani authorities on ideological and narrative domains, while formulating their counter-terrorism strategies. Majority agree on the success of kinetic application of force in eliminating terrorist safe havens, but unanimously stress the importance of dealing with extremist ideology, that lays at the root of terrorism. In the end a number of secondary and primary sources like the text from Al Qaeda strategist Abu Bakr Naji, are used to compare and contrast terrorist narrative with the official narratives, in the context of Pakistan's master national narrative.

Organized into five sections, section one of the monograph sets the stage for subsequent research by introducing and framing the problem. It also lays important landmarks for subsequent exploratory journey in the form of research questions, working hypothesis, and research methodology. Section two establishes the analytical lens through which the problem of terrorism and religious radicalism in Pakistan are analyzed subsequently. It sets a theoretical foundation by exploring scholarly literature to define and understand the nature and role of Narrative. Section three traces the historic evolution of terrorist narrative in an erstwhile progressive and moderate Pakistani society. Section four encompasses the security situation in the country post 9/11. It deals with the Pakistan's role in the GWOT and its repercussions. Finally, Section five analyses the narrative landscape of Pakistan and draws pertinent conclusions for future courses of action.

Section Two: Narrative and the Role It Plays

The academic literature uses the terms like story, narrative, and discourse interchangeably, most of the time. Narrative, like other subjects of humanities and unlike natural sciences, favors individual scholarship and unique analysis over the generalization of ideas. This fact alone is sufficient, though not the sole reason, why there are "as many narrative theories, as there are theorists out there."[12] This monograph though discusses the theories and concepts from a number of literary sources of both humanities as well as natural sciences for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, using the H. Porter Abbott's definition for standardization.

Abbot defines narrative as, "the representation of a *Story* (an event or series of events) . . . and consists of two main components: the story and the narrative discourse." He further defines the Narrative Discourse as, "the story as narrated, that is the story as rendered in a particular narrative." He argues against using the term plot to illustrate the concept of this discourse, but it can be misleading as the terms 'plot' and 'story' are often used interchangeably. The story is defined as "… a chronological sequence of events involving entities." Stories, in order to be stories must have a beginning, middle, and end, and allow for "apprehension of movement in time." Discourse is defined as, "something that takes place between meanings, narrative, and competing narratives. Due to the dialogic nature of narrative, competing narratives generate discourse that further results in their refinement through continuous feedback of one narrative to another."[13]

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[12] Steven Corman, "Understanding the Role of Narrative in Extremist Strategic Communication," in *Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific Methods and Strategies,* ed. Laurie Fenstermacher, and Todd Leventhal (Washington, DC: NSI Inc., September 2011), 36, accessed September 20, 2017, https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/95226/ucounterviolentextremismfinalapprovedforpublicrelease28oct11.pdf.

[13] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 237-238.

The peculiarity of "story" and "the story as narrated" implies the presence of a story without its narrative presentation. The same story can be narrated in more than one way and messages or actions using the same set of events, no matter how well presented, may not resonate or convey meaning if they are not relevant to the intended audience given their own narrative and self-understanding.[14]

Dr. Steven Corman distinguishes between narrative and story by defining the story as, "a sequence of events, involving actors and actions, grounded in desire (often stemming from conflict) and leading to an actual or projected resolution of that desire." Narrative, on the other hand is defined then as, "--- a system of stories that share themes, forms, and archetypes."[15] Following figure illustrates the interplay of stories, themes, and archetypes in a narrative discourse.
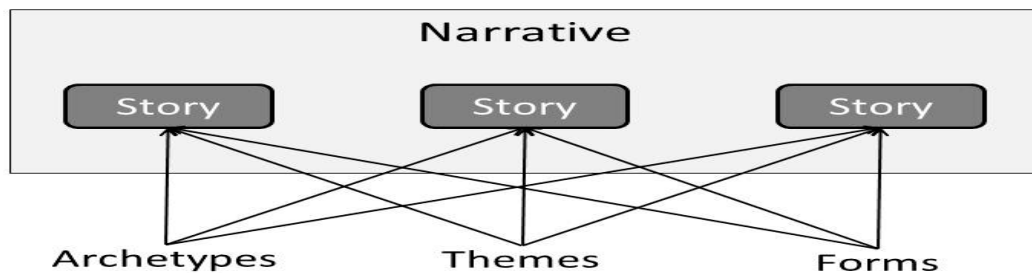

Figure 1. Narrative Elements. Corman, *Understanding the Role of Narrative in Extremist Strategic Communication*, 37.

Corman further stresses that every story in a narrative need not have exactly the same characteristics; however, they relate to one another through recurring archetypes, themes and forms that relate within a logic. Through this interplay, the narrative creates a unified whole that is greater than the sum of its parts and provide meaning through a plot. Archetypes are the general characters like the hero, villain, and the victim that are commonly found in all stories and

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[14] Abbott, The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative, 237-238

[15] Corman, Understanding the Role of Narrative in Extremist Strategic Communications, 36-37.

continuously recur in a particular narrative. Forms are the standard structural patterns on which stories are based, having typical characters, actions, and sequences.[16]

Themes are subjects like issues or questions that recur in a narrative through implicit or explicit references. Themes and Motifs are the two most commonly used repetitions in narrative. They are often used interchangeably but in the context of narrative, theme is abstract and motif is concrete. Corman has termed this concept of constant repetitions in themes and forms of stories as Master Narrative,[17] Abbot, however, called them the Master Plot. Master Plots are the stories that are told over and over in myriad forms. These connect and exploit a culture's deepest values, wishes, and fears. These recurring stories answer the important questions of identity, values, and the understanding of life at both individuals and societal levels. Individuals and cultures use master plots as reference points for processing any new information. This result in over-reading or under-reading of certain narratives and sub-consciously bringing them in conformity with an existing master plot. People connect their thinking about life to a number of master plots, consciously or unconsciously. These master plots have such rhetorical impact that people give credibility to only those narratives that are structured by it.[18]

Narratives are significant due to their omnipresence as universal phenomenon. They assist in understanding, and largely dictate that how an individual creates meaning and correlates time and events. It also provides the context in which an individual sees himself in relation to his environment. Every human and socially constructed entity communicates utilizing narrative format. "Narrative is international," argues Roland Barthes, "trans historical, transcultural: it is

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[16] Corman, Understanding the Role of Narrative in Extremist Strategic Communications, 38.

[17] Jeffry Halverson, H. Goodall, and S. Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 13-14

[18] Ibid, 37; Abbot, The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative, 46, 236.

simply there, like life itself."[19] Rationality of the narrative prevents the individual events from making sense on their own. They bear meaning only as a constituent element of an overall narrative.[20]

Psychologists, behavioral and neural scientists alike have stressed the *story's* function as a communication medium and archival system. In ancient times, well before writing existed, humans relied on story and on storytelling to convey and archive essential histories, concepts, facts, beliefs, and attitudes. The story-creating/understanding region of the human brain is linked from before birth into a fixed neural net (Neural Story Net), tasked with interpreting incoming experiential information by making story-based assumptions and inferences. Based on these, it restructures, reinterprets, selectively alters or ignores pieces of the information and argument. This process occurs before the information reaches the conscious mind, thereby feeding it the highly processed, self-created, and story-based version of the original information.[21]

Narrative's role is, "a simple unifying, easily-expressed story or explanation that organizes people's experience and provides a framework for understanding events."[22] Narrative offers a structure through which a shared sense of time encompassing past, present, and future is achieved. During crises, people look for simple truths and clear directions to bring meaning, order

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[19] Roland Barthes and Lionel Duisit, "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative," *New Literary History* 6, no. 2 (Winter 1975): 237-272, accessed October 21, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/ stable/pdf/468419.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A22a869a03f0a1b2ede624 4f0399f85da.

[20] Mona Baker, "Narratives of Terrorism and Security: Accurate Translations, Suspicious Frames," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 3, no. 3 (2010): 347-364, accessed October 20, 2017, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17539153.2010.521639?scroll=top&needAccess=true.

[21] Gregory Seese and Kendall Haven, "The Neuroscience of Influential Strategic Narratives and Storylines," *IO Sphere* (Fall 2015): 33-38, accessed October 20, 2017, http://www.academia.edu/ 16385149/ The_Neuroscience_of_Influential_Strategic_Narratives_and_Storylines; Kendall Haven, *Story Proof: The Science behind the Startling Power of Story* (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2009); Kendall Haven, *Story Smart: Using the Science of Story to Persuade, Influence, Inspire, and Teach* (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2014).

[22] David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency," *IO Sphere* (Summer 2006): 29-35, accessed January 10, 2018, EBSCOhost.

and structure into their lives. In these critical moments, the narratives based on ideology and beliefs (like religion, nationalism, race etc.) start playing their role and help in explaining the world to desperate souls and minds by recycling the comforting old myths instead of hard scientific evidence.[23] Narratives play a pivotal role in the evolution of societal culture. Human nature, both biologically and psychologically need to organize their daily experiences of incipient feelings of pain, desire, pleasure, and fear into a story. Such a sustaining narrative, when established in the minds of a considerable number of people, evolves into culture.[24]

The interwoven trinity of rhetoric, symbolism, and myth has underpinned most strategic communication. To be effective however, rhetoric must 'resonate' with attitudes and feelings within the target. Great rhetoric is substantially a co-production between sender and receiver. Symbols condense 'meanings' of things and events and are endowed with multiple meanings. Narratives reside within the societal structure of the myths instead of facts. Interestingly though, as new myths can be invented so can the old myths be re-created.[25]

Literature from both humanities and natural sciences amply highlights the role of narrative as a primary framework for making sense of events across time and space. Narrative provides the basic framework through which both individuals and cultural groups interpret information and form opinions. Narratives on the other hand are stories narrated within an overall plot. Due to the evolutionary biological characteristics of human brain, story is the most convenient form of communicating and archiving information. Narratives play an instrumental role in shaping perceptions and providing context. Narratives shape the social perception of

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[23] Alex Schmid, "Al-Qaida's Single Narrative and Attempts to Develop Counter-Narratives: The State of Knowledge," The International Centre for Counter Terrorism (ICCT), The Hague, January 2014, 3, accessed September 21, 2017, https://www.icct.nl/download/file/Schmid-Al-Qaeda's-Single-Narrative-and-Attempts-to-Develop-Counter-Narratives-January-2014.pdf.

[24] Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 1.

[25] Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction* (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 65.

reality, which in turn dictates human behavior.[26] The dialogic nature of the narrative implies the importance of understanding the existing narrative before a new one can be formulated. The study and understanding of narrative can be a key to understanding why certain people behave in a particular manner. Measures attempted to change the behavior of a particular individual or a social group, should thus be subsequent steps, preceded by the analysis of the prevalent narratives.

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[26] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Doubleday, 1966).

Section Three: The Evolution of Terrorists' Narrative in Pakistan
(1979 -1989)

> Now you are free . . . you are free to go to your temples . . . you are free to go your mosques or whatever your religious place may be . . . it is personal affair of everyone . . . it has nothing to do with the business of state . . . You may belong to any religion or caste or creed . . . that has nothing to do with the business of the state . . . We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state . . . you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.[27]

—Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah
First Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan

Pakistan was envisioned to be a liberal democratic country by its founders at the time of independence in 1947. After seventy years of its independence, the interplay of a myriad of factors resulted in a country where the murderer of thousands of his compatriots and a proclaimed terrorist Hakimullah Mehsud is celebrated as a *Shaheed*.[28] The discourse of the past seventy years also resulted in a country where more than 100,000 people turned up for the funeral of Mumtaz Qadri, a bodyguard turned murderer of the then Governor of Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan, on murky *Blasphemy* allegations. These two incidents and the people they represent, are a very small segment of the society. Munawwar Hassan venerated the dead terrorist leader, but his political party, the Jamat-e-Islami, has only three seats in a three hundred and forty-two-member National Assembly of Pakistan. Likewise, 100,000 is also a small portion of a population

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[27] Government of Pakistan, *The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates*, Karachi. vol. 1, no. 2 (Karachi: The Manager of Publications, 1948).

[28] The word "Shaheed" synonymous to Martyr, is loosely used to venerate a person who has died for a noble cause, ideally the cause of Islam. Scholars argue that it is a misinterpretation of the word, Shaheed in Quranic sense means, a person who lives one's entire life according to the highest principles propounded by Islam and is prepared to lay down one's life in a manner that testifies to the same principles. In that case, God may decide to include the person in the group of Shaheeds. For details see Khalid Zaheer, "Definition of a Shaheed," *Dawn,* November 22, 2013, accessed October 29, 2017, https://www.dawn.com/news/1057801.

of two hundred million. However, from the standpoint of the founder's vision, the Pakistani nation has undertaken a remarkable transformational journey over the last seventy years.[29]

Dr. Ayesha Siddiqa argues that Pakistan's linkage with a primordial religious identity set the basis for religious extremism and subsequent national narrative that the country is suffering today. Later events contributed a great deal in Pakistan's drift towards deeper shades of religious polity and radicalism, the use of religious identity set the pace at the start. Siddiqa has identified three distinct stages that a society experiences as their national narrative starts moving away from secularism. In the first, the 'pre-radicalism stage,' the linking of religion with the polity for the purpose of national identity sets the stage for ensuing social and behavioral changes. Depending on the response from the political or social system to a particular ideological narrative, the society moves to the second stage of 'latent radicalism.' The prevalent political, social, and religious narratives shape the nature and extent of this support. Last stage in this transformational journey is 'active radicalism,' that in time becomes the source of violence.[30]

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[29] Syed Munawar Hassan, the then Jamat-e-Islami (a rightwing political party) chief called Hakeemullah Mehsud (Amir of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan [TTP], a terrorist organization), a *Shaheed*, after he was killed in a US drone strike on November 1, 2013. Hassan's remarks were out-rightly condemned by all the major segments of the society. In an unprecedented move, the powerful military spokesperson declared the remarks "painful and unfortunate." The military also demanded an immediate apology from the political leader in these strong words, "The people of Pakistan, whose loved ones laid down their life while fighting the terrorists, and families of shuhada [martyrs], of armed forces, demand an unconditional apology from Syed Munawar Hassan for hurting their feelings." For details see Jon Boone, "Pakistani army blasts Islamist party leader for calling Taliban chief 'martyr'," *Guardian,* November 12, 2013, accessed October 29, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/12/pakistan-army-taliban-hakimullah-mehsud-martyr. Mumtaz Qadri was a police commando and part of the squad deputed for the security of the Governor Punjab, Salman Taseer. He murdered the Governor with his service rifle on January 4, 2011. The Governor was falsely accused of Blasphemy. Qadri was sentenced to death by an Anti-Terrorism Court. He was executed on February 29, 2016, after the Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld the sentence. For details see Jon Boone, "Thousands at funeral of Pakistani executed for murdering governor," *Guardian,* March 1, 2016, accessed October 29, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/01/funeral-pakistani-mumtaz-qadri-executed-salmaan-taseer.

[30] Ayesha Siddiqa, "A Hybrid Theocracy," in *Democratic Transition and Security in Pakistan,* ed. Shaun Gregory (New York: Routledge, 2016), 27-28.

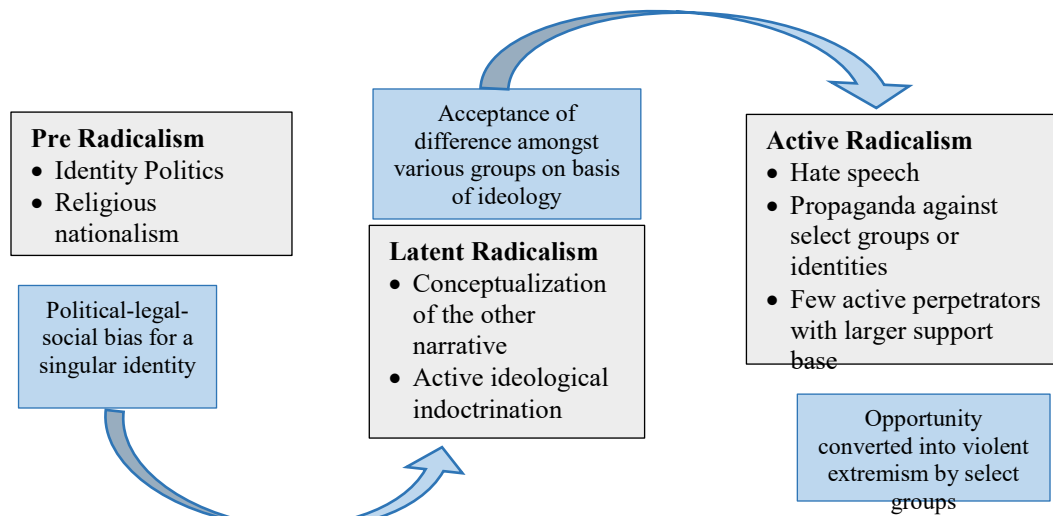The figure below explains this transformational process in a graphic manner.

Pre Radicalism
- Identity Politics
- Religious nationalism

Political-legal-social bias for a singular identity

Acceptance of difference amongst various groups on basis of ideology

Latent Radicalism
- Conceptualization of the other narrative
- Active ideological indoctrination

Active Radicalism
- Hate speech
- Propaganda against select groups or identities
- Few active perpetrators with larger support base

Opportunity converted into violent extremism by select groups

Figure 2. Three phased process of a State's radicalization. Siddiqa, *A Hybrid Theocracy*, 28.

Ideological narratives, especially religious narratives have proven to be extremely difficult to bridle. They tend to get out of control and adopt more extremist values. Uri Ram traces the dominant national narratives and the rise of extremism in Israeli social system to the same phenomenon. Ram explains the interaction between religion and the state through an analytical framework comprising four heuristic modules of different blends of nationalism and religion-ism:

- Strong Nationalism/Weak Religion-ism - dominant and energetic secular nationalism like France and Ata-Turk's Turkey.

- Strong Nationalism/Strong Religion-ism - creates a kind of indissoluble mesh of 'religious nationalism' like Irish Catholicism, Palestinian Hamas, and Israeli-Jewish Block of Faithful.

- Weak Nationalism/Weak Religion-ism - a polity which is not founded upon strong pre-political, primordial national or religious communal identity, but is rather constitutionally or contractually oriented like the Unites States

- Weak Nationalism/Strong Religion-ism - pre-modern and pre-national cultures, in
  which religion was pervasive as a communal identity as was the case of Diaspora
  Judaism. Presently, this combination can represent a type of communal 'post-
  nationalism' or a transnational fundamentalism like AL Qaeda, ISIS, and Taliban.[31]

The application of Ram's model in parallel with Siddiqa's model can logically map the
broad contours of Pakistan's transformational journey. Siddiqa posits that Pakistani society
underwent transformation in three stages, adopting different narratives in each stage to arrive at
the present stage. This social transformation took place alongside changes in the polity and nature
of the state. The resultant radicalism of the society may not create violence itself, but it is a key
driver for violence and terrorism.[32]

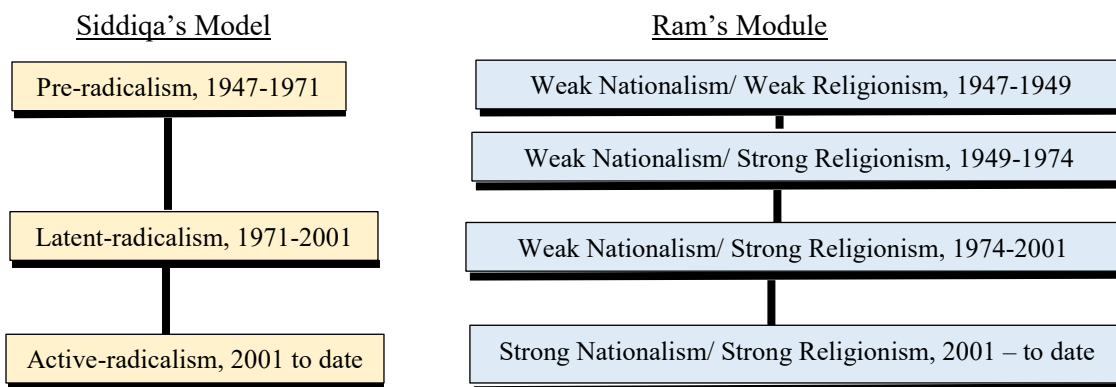| Siddiqa's Model	Ram's Module
Pre-radicalism, 1947-1971	Weak Nationalism/ Weak Religionism, 1947-1949
	Weak Nationalism/ Strong Religionism, 1949-1974
Latent-radicalism, 1971-2001	Weak Nationalism/ Strong Religionism, 1974-2001
Active-radicalism, 2001 to date	Strong Nationalism/ Strong Religionism, 2001 – to date

Figure 3. Pakistan's socio-political-religious transformation. Siddiqa, *A Hybrid Theocracy*, 29.

Religion and nationalism were mixed up and used to varying degrees by successive
administrations in Pakistan, right from its creation. The ruling elite used what they considered to
be a suitable mixture of nationalism, secularism, and religion-ism, whatever assisted them in the
pursuit of political objectives. This utilization of religion, though, never resulted in religious

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[31] Uri Ram, "Why Secularism Fails? Secular Nationalism and Religious Revivalism in Israel,"
International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 21, no. 1–4 (December 2008): 57-73, accessed
October 30, EBSCOhost.

[32] Siddiqa, *A Hybrid Theocracy*, 24-56.

fanaticism, but nonetheless made religion a vital component of the national and political narrative. This discourse became all the more significant in the Cold War milieu. The ideologically charged environment of the Cold War further intensified the religious-secular-nationalist debate in Pakistan.[33] Coupled with this ideologically charged environment was the perpetual threat that Pakistan faced from its archrival India in the east, an unstable and mostly hostile Afghanistan in the west, and the permanent Kashmir conflict in the north. The geography not only shaped regional threat perceptions but also gave Pakistan imminence at the world stage during the Cold War. This resulted in the start of a process that generated a national narrative of religious involvement and emotional attachment.[34]

Pakistan was dismembered in 1971 as India invaded its eastern wing, already embroiled in a bitter and bloody civil war. The reins of the government of the rest of the Pakistan fell into the hands of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto is the personification of the inherent dichotomies in the nature of Pakistani society, manifested in one person. Son of feudal landlord, educated at Berkley, Oxford, and a barrister at Lincoln's Inn, he pursued a populist political agenda with strong socialist imprints, and became the champion of Islamization of the polity when he came into power. For the first time, Islam was made the state religion and many religious provisions were inserted into the constitution he advocated for the country.[35]

Bhutto being a shrewd politician, understood the prevalent national narrative in the country. Religion became a powerful rallying symbol for a nation that was passing through identity crises after the debacle of East Pakistan. A skilled player of street politics and a populist

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[33] Fatima Sajjad, "Countering Extremists' Narrative in Pakistan," *National Defense University Journal* (April 2015): 75-94, accessed July 25, 2017, http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/ndu-journal/NDU-Journal-2015/04-Countering-Extremists-Narratives.pdf; Ziad Haider, *The Ideological Struggle for Pakistan* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010).

[34] Hasan Askari Rizvi, Pakistan and the Geostrategic Environment: A Study of Foreign Policy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 1-8.

[35] Zahid Hussain, The Scorpion's Tail (New York: Free Press, 2010), 50-52.

leader, he fully appreciated the street power of rightwing political and religious parties. To earn

their favors in electoral politics, he gave in on his socialist agenda and made numerous

concessions in the legal and constitutional framework. The decision to formally define a

'Muslim' in the constitution turned the state into the direction of a religious polity and made

religion the very business of the state and government. The assumed power of the state not only

empowered it to define the individual's faith but also to shape a national narrative of religious

biases and perception. It will be this very narrative, used by the next government of a military

dictator to sow the seeds of the menace that has plagued Pakistan in the recent past.[36]

General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's martial law, a third for the country as a whole, proved

monumental in shaping Pakistan's national narrative, whose tremors are felt still today. Being

from a conservative Islamic family himself, he took it upon himself to develop a national

narrative that resulted in enhanced prestige of the religious outfits and a sweeping Islamization of

the government and society. Zia[37] claimed that he had a God-given mission to purify and cleanse

Pakistan and propagate the power of Islam in any way he could. In reality his attempts to

Islamicize the citizenry were to legitimate his military regime by tapping the repertory of Islam.

Appeal to the religion carried additional force as it resonated with the national narrative,

providing him the pretext to usurp power in the first place. He embarked on a program of

Islamization of national narrative, with Islamization of the education system, and making

mandatory courses in selective Islamic teachings at all levels, besides revision of promulgation of

new Islamic laws. These laws were liberally used to suppress political dissent and against anyone

opposing the regime.[38]

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[36] Ayesha Jalal, *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2014), 206-209; Hussain, *The Scorpion's Tail*, 50-52.

[37] People in Pakistani culture are addressed or called with their first name, not with their last name, as is the case of Western and American cultures.

[38] Hussain, The Scorpion's Tail, 53.

In December 1979, the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan to keep the faltering communist regime intact. It forced the United States to embrace the outcaste Pakistani dictator as their only option because it had already lost its old ally in the region, the Shah of Iran. This partnership became one of convenience as the United States was pursuing a fourfold Middle East policy in the region, of preventing Soviet expansion, promoting stability in the region to ensure safe transport, assuring ease of access to affordable oil, and to protect Israel.[39] Pakistan on the other hand was alarmed at the Soviet presence on its western borders. Coupled with hostile India, in the east, this became an existential crisis. This US-Pakistan partnership to wage Jihad in Afghanistan for purely geo-strategic reasons, would go a long way to shape the social narrative that will give birth to radicalization, militancy, and terrorism.[40]

The deal between the United States and Pakistan divided the responsibilities to fight the holy war in Afghanistan. Pakistan would organize, train, and equip the mujahedeen, and the United States would pay for it. The Saudis promised to match the United States offer of USD 3.2 billion, dollar for dollar. The Chinese and Egyptians also promised to help out. Painting the Afghan insurgency in religious colors by declaring it a Jihad served two purposes. First, it portrayed the insurgents as someone motivated by religious zeal and acting on their own, having nothing to do with the United States and Pakistan. Secondly, it supported a narrative of presenting the insurgents' positive image to the domestic and international (Muslim world) audience. The religious narrative was an instant success as it fitted within the overall narrative. The master narrative or plot of Muslims being oppressed by an infidel power gained obvious traction with the invasion of Muslim country. The resonance of this new narrative with the master narrative was vital for garnering political and material support, as well as recruitment of both the local and

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[39] David Lesch, *1979: The Year That Shaped the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2001), 120-122.

[40] Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 267.

international fighters. In reality, the insurgency started as a patriotic opposition to the Soviet occupation, it became more and more religious in its outlook as time passed and the religious narrative gained traction with the wider audience.[41]

The insurgency remained a localized affair initially, as most of the fighters were recruited from inside Afghanistan. As the war enlarged, the more than three million Afghan refugees, those who migrated to Pakistan to evade war, became the major recruitment pool. But as the 'Jihad' narrative overshadowed the 'insurgency' narrative, it did not take long for the outsiders, harboring a more globalist agenda to enter the fray. The Saudi theologian Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, a staunch disciple of Syed Qutb, the Saudi billionaire Osama bi Laden, and the radical Egyptian physician Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri were a few among the notable ones. Azzam's treatise, *Defense of the Muslim Lands,* that he wrote shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, implored Muslims all over the world to undertake jihad to liberate Afghanistan and Palestine from infidel rule. This set the stage for a global narrative of jihad, totally ousting the nationalistic and patriotic narratives of the Afghan insurgency. Unable to see or peer far enough into the future, the United States was very favorable this development as the Saudi sponsored radical Islamists from the Middle East and beyond flocked to Pakistan and started settling the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) along Af-Pak border. Though these imported fighters made a very small percentage of the total number of mujahedeen being organized, trained, equipped, and managed by the United States-Pakistan-Saudi Arabia troika, their gathering nonetheless became a significant historical event.[42] This was the first significant coming together of revolutionary

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[41] Schmidt, *The Unravelling,* 69-70.

[42] The Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, in a number of televised interviews and a congressional testimony acknowledged the role that the United States and Pakistan governments of the time played in shaping the narrative, that resulted in religious extremism and terrorism. For details see, South Asia News, "Hillary Clinton speaks out about US links with Taliban," (video), April 28, 2009, accessed November 3, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2CE0fyz4ys; also see, "Afghanistan Taliban - Clinton We created the problem to fight against Soviet Union.mpg," (video), June 8, 2011, accessed November 3, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9riC3944m8.

radicals from across the Islamic world, a phenomenon that would in time give birth to Al Qaeda and make the FATA region of Pakistan one of the most dangerous in the world.[43]

The expansion of war required greater number of recruits, and these would come from the religious seminaries, the *Madrassas.* The ever-increasing demand for reinforcement on the frontlines resulted in the mushrooming growth of these madrassas along the Af-Pak border. The aim was to create a belt of religiously motivated students who would willingly fight the Jihad against the Soviet Union. A suitable Jihadi narrative was therefore developed through suitably tailoring the curriculum of the courses taught in these seminaries. There were 870 madrassas in Pakistan established between 1947 and 1975. This number grew exponentially, and more than 1700 new madrassas were established during the Afghan Jihad, mostly between 1977 and 1988.[44] These seminaries not only provided the breeding ground for mujahedeen, but also became important centers of political power in the new national narrative dominated by religious factors. Saudi Arabia, being the main financier, wielded unmatched powers to shape the curriculum and export their version of Islam, the *Wahhabism*. The United States and Pakistan, though, shortsightedly but happily, favored the enterprise as it helped against the bigger menace of communism.[45]

Patronization of the radical clerics, running a vast Madrassa network, continued partly to keep the domestic support base intact for sustaining the regime, and partly to ensure the availably of fodder for the holy war in Afghanistan. These clerics with their vast madrassa network became

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[43] Schmidt, *The Unravelling*, 72-73; The US President Barrack Obama while announcing his Afghanistan Policy in March 2009, declared the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan as "the most dangerous place in the world." For details see, Laura Rozen, "Obama announcement on Afghanistan and Pakistan policy," *Foreign Policy,* March 27, 2009, accessed October 31, 2017. http://foreignpolicy.com /2009/03/27/obama-announcement-on-afghanistan-and-pakistan-policy/.

[44] Saeed Shafqat, "From Official Islam to Islamism," in *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* ed. Christophe Jaffrelot (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributers, 2002), 138-139.

[45] Abbas, Pakistan's Drift into Extremism, 112-115; also see George Grile, Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003).

the 'devout bourgeoisie,' and formed the backbone of Zia regime's support base. In return, they were given greater autonomy over the madrassa network, unprecedented political clout, and funding for running their enterprises. They presided over the recruitment and organization of Jihadi outfits, fighting in Afghanistan. The state's patronage to wield political power coupled with the potential of their militant wings, transformed these socially downtrodden clerics to power brokers, with in the span of a decade.[46]

The success of the first ever Islamic Revolution by Shias in Iran in 1979, strongly resonated with the Shias and Sunni of Pakistan alike, as the Zia regime was in the process of developing a national narrative of Islamization. Emboldened by the recent success of Iranian revolution, the Shia community of Pakistan started asserting the validity of their own religious interpretations, albeit in stark contrast to the dominant Sunni narrative.[47] The revolutionary regime in Iran, not happy with the Pakistani dictator for being an ally with the United States, and for supporting the Shah in his struggle against the revolution, actively supported the Pakistani Shia community in the pursuit of their political goals. The Arab block's support to the Sunni outfits, led by the Saudis, resulted in the regional conflict being fought on Pakistani streets. The influx of all kinds of weapons for Afghan Jihad resulted in the 'Kalashnikov Culture,' imprinting militancy on Pakistani politics, especially among the religious groups. It turned the sectarian conflict bloodier and transformed militant organizations into paramilitary ones. The resultant socio-political narrative was one that "combines ideological puritanism with communal exclusivism. As this narrative kept finding ways to resonate with the demands of vested political,

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[46] Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 110-113; Muhammad Azam, "Religious Behaviors in Pakistan: Impact on Social Development," Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies Report, September 2015, accessed November 1, 2017, http://www.pakpips.com/ download.php?f=147.pdf; also see Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

[47] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shia and Sunni Identities," *Modern* Asian *Studies* 32, no. 2 (1998): 687-716, accessed November 2, 2017, https://www.zmo.de/Dietrich/Sectarianism.pdf.

social, and criminal interests, it became entrenched in the overall national narrative of Pakistan."[48]

The perpetual conflict in Kashmir has been another significant determinant in shaping both the foreign and domestic policies of successive governments in Islamabad. In 1989, the long-standing Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan took a new turn with the outbreak of an indigenous Kashmiri uprising against India which was sparked by blatant election rigging in the 1987. Most of the analysts, including Indian writers, describe it as an indigenous revolt with generational, political, economic and religious roots. Professor Suamantra Bose calls this period of the Kashmir struggle as the 'intifada phase.' Pakistan saw an opportunity in the indigenous popular insurrection against the state power. Though indigenously started, Pakistan's support for the Jihad in Kashmir was instrumental in sustaining the independence movement in Kashmir. Over a period of time, many pro-Pakistan groups like Lashkar-I-Taiba and Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen became as prominent in the Kashmir jihad as the largely Kashmiri Hezb-ul-Mujahedeen. This arrangement ensured the relevance of many militant groups and the continuation of the narrative long after the Jihad in Afghanistan was officially over.[49]

The Jihad in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 was successful in defeating the USSR and ending the Cold War. It nonetheless was orchestrated at the cost of a moderate domestic social fabric of Pakistan and developing a national narrative of religious extremism. The Jihad narrative was successful because it was not only intelligently nested in the national master narrative but also resonated with the wider Muslim narrative of 'invasion, oppression, and persecution at the

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[48] S. Vali R. Nasr, "Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan," in *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* ed. Christophe Jaffrelot (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributers, 2002), 85-109.

[49] Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 108 – 109, quoted in Shabana Fayyaz, "Pakistan Response towards Terrorism: A Case Study of Musharraf Regime," (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2010), 99, accessed September 17, 2017, EBSCOhost; Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan*, 166.

hands of infidels.' The master national narrative was in turn tweaked by the skillful use of historic, religious, and socio-cultural symbols and rhetoric for sustaining a dictator's regime. The narrative was successful in achieving its immediate goals, but at a devastating cost in the longer run. By the end of the year 2000, Pakistan was home to fifty-eight religious parties and twenty-four armed religious militias, popularly known as Jihadi groups. Many of these groups had localized agendas restricting themselves to Afghanistan or Kashmir. Few, nonetheless, comprising mostly the 'outsider' mujahedeen, still had global agendas, whose actions and the subsequent reactions would largely shape the nature of the world, that we live in today.[50]

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[50] Shafqat, From Official Islam to Islamism, 133; Constable, Playing with Fire, 135.

Section Four: War on Terror - The Reign of Terror
(2001 to present)

The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 shocked and jolted the entire world. The event not only resulted in a paradigm change in the global geo-strategic landscape, but also sent down tremors in the security calculi around the world. Within hours of the fateful and unfortunate incidents, the administration at Washington had concluded that Osama bi Laden's Al-Qaida, operating from Taliban's Afghanistan was behind the attacks. Representing both the US national mood and resolve, President George W. Bush outlined the nature and extent of the American response in his address to the nation the same day. He also hinted at the future of Pakistan supported Taliban regime in Afghanistan when he declared, "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."[51] The administration also recognized the centrality of Pakistan, irrespective of whatever is to come ahead and how the strategic developments will unfold in the future. The combination of this mood, resolve, and recognition made Collin Powell, the Secretary of State, declare to the meeting of National Security Council (NSC) the same night that, "We have to make it clear to Pakistan and Afghanistan, this is show time."[52]

The General Pervez Musharraf regime's decision to join the US-led GWOT as its frontline state was a watershed moment in Pakistan's internal security and foreign policies.[53] The decision itself has been the subject of a large-scale debate in Pakistan. One narrative asserts that

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[51] US White House, Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush, 2001 – 2008. 58, accessed November 3, 2017, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf.

[52] Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 32.

[53] Ironically, Pakistan has been ruled by US backed military dictators during all the significant happenings of its 70-year history: Field Marshal M. Ayub Khan during the 1965 Indo-Pak war; General A.M. Yahya Khan during the 1971 east Pakistan debacle; General M. Zia ul Haq during the fateful decade of Afghan Jihad (1977-1988); and General Pervez Musharraf at the time of 9/11 and subsequent war on terror (1999-2008).

the US government coerced (some would say bullied) Pakistan to abandon its long time strategic posture by demanding, "you are with us or against us, there is no grey area,"[54] and by threatening Pakistan to be, "Bombed back to the Stone Age."[55] The other narrative was that the decision was taken through a 'dispassionate' analysis, in the best interest of the country. Some of these interests being the security of strategic assets (the nuclear capability), prevention of an India-US nexus, safeguarding the Kashmir cause, avoid a hostile regime in Kabul, and defeat the domestic religious extremism with the technical and financial support of the United States.[56]

Debating the reasons and/ or the soundness of the decision are not the subject of this monograph. It is the existential consequences of the decision to join the GWOT and the manner in which it was executed, that will be elaborated here. The decision itself in the first place was not institutional, rather a decision made by a military dictator. The Corps Commanders, National Security Council members, and hand-picked political advisers were consulted only after the decision was taken beforehand. As Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad rightly highlighted that, "No matter how necessary or justified the policy turnaround was, it only showed the ad-hoc and arbitrary nature of the decision making process in Pakistan on national security and foreign policy issues during the days following 9/11. This was also reminiscent of many earlier policy decisions, including the one of — inventing and then recognizing and supporting the Taliban regime."[57] The

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[54] Owen Bennet Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 2.

[55] Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 201.

[56] Ibid, 201-203; President Pervez Musharraf, in a televised address to the nation highlighted five reasons to offer his full cooperation to the United States: Secure Pakistan's strategic assets; Safeguard the cause of Kashmir; Prevent Pakistan from being declared a terrorist state; Prevent an anti-Pakistani government from coming to power in Kabul; and Have Pakistan re-emerge politically as a responsible and dignified Nation. Quoted in Ahmed Faruqui, *Rethinking the National Security of Pakistan: The Price of Strategic Myopia* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), xviii-xix.

[57] Shamshad Ahmed, "Foreign Policy of Pakistan and Policy Making Process," in *Foreign Policy Making: A Case Study of Pakistan,* ed. Moonis Ahmer (Karachi, Department of International Relations, 2009), 63; Fayyaz, *Pakistan Response towards Terrorism*, 133.

knee-jerk decision making process augmented the appeal of terrorists' narrative and sent the course for events to come.

Pakistan having joined the US-led coalition as a front line state in the war on terror, its army and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) started operations against Al-Qaida and other foreign militants operating in the country as part of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom. Pakistan provided extensive land, air, and seaport accessibility, as well as a host of other logistical and security-related provisions. In early 2002, Pakistan's security forces began conducting operations against militants and their support networks in FATA along the Af-Pak border. But as the war in Afghanistan spiraled into a lengthy and messy campaign, several indigenous extremist movements began to develop on the Pakistani side of the border. When Pakistan expanded its scope of operations, these extremist movements continued to develop across FATA and adjoining areas and resorted to terrorism as their response to government policies.[58]

The Musharraf regime also initiated a number of domestic policies to curb religious extremism. Riding on the success wave of the US invasion in Afghanistan, the government in Islamabad went ahead and banned a number of militant organizations like Jaish-i-Muhammad, Lashkar-i-Taiba, and many more. Musharraf's theories of 'Enlightened Moderation' and 'Pakistan First' were in stark contrast to the prevalent dominant narratives of 'Religious Extremism' and 'Global Jihad'. Though there were vigorous voices of dissent, still the majority of the Pakistanis supported Musharraf's domestic campaign against religious extremism. This apparent effectiveness and popularity of the campaign not only emboldened Musharraf, but gave

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[58] Christine Fair and Seth Jones, "Pakistan's War Within," *Survival* 51, no. 6 (December 2009 – January 2010): 161–188, accessed November 10, 2017, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00396330903465204.

him a false sense of legitimacy.[59] His remarks in a televised policy speech made to nation on

January 12, 2002, reflected the mood in the power corridors of Islamabad when he declared:

> The day of reckoning has come. Do we want Pakistan to become a theocratic state? Do we believe that religious education alone is enough for governance or do we want Pakistan to emerge as a progressive and dynamic Islamic welfare state? . . . Look at what this extremist minority is doing. They are indulged in fratricidal killings . . . Mosques are being misused for propagating and inciting hatred against each other's sects and beliefs . . . The extremist minority must realize that Pakistan is not responsible for waging armed Jihad in the world.[60]

A severe public backlash was expected, particularly from the rightwing groups in the

wake of Pakistan supporting and facilitating a US invasion of a brotherly Islamic country. The

LEAs were however, very successful in controlling the street protests. These street protests have

been a traditional coercion tool in the hand of right wing extremist politico-religious parties for

quite some time. The government's ability to prevent the traditional street power brokers from

flexing their muscle was unprecedented and many considered it a welcome sign. In hindsight, the

calculus however proved to be very shortsighted, as has been the traditional trademark of all the

Pakistani military dictators and their policies in the past. The entire focus of the government

apparatus was on hard power alone, the kinetic use of force in countering terrorism. While the

LEAs were winning on the streets and normalcy appeared as the order of the day, the state was

trailing far behind on ideological grounds and was losing on the narrative battlefield.[61]

Mullah Umar declared defiance and resolve against the invasion and the call for the

erstwhile popular Jihad in Afghanistan, once again against an infidel invading power, albeit a

different one from the last time, in support of the Mujahedeen/ Taliban resounded from the

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[59] Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire*, 143-153, 275-283; Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*, 222-224; The Economist, "Bridging the great divide," May 30, 2002, accessed November 11, 2017, http://www.economist.com/node/1159444.

[60] Abbas, Pakistan's Drift into Extremism, 224.

[61] Ibid, 223.

mosques in Pakistan. Readership of Jaish-e-Muhammad affiliated magazine *Zarb-e-Momin* and

that of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen's *Al-Hilal* became an all-time high. These and many others were

filled with emotional appeals for donations in cash for aid to 'Afghan Victims of American

Terrorism.' The state's failure to focus on this vital aspect of their anti-terrorism and anti-

extremism campaigns not only led thousands of Pakistanis cross into Afghanistan to fight Jihad

alongside Taliban, but raised the popularity of Taliban and Al-Qaeda leadership, developing a

national narrative that questioned the basic intent behind the actions that the government was

taking. The war on terror was labelled an American War, wherein the state of Pakistan and its

security forces were merely American pawns and puppets. This stripped all the subsequent

measures by the Pakistani authorities of their legitimacy, the most important aspect of any

population centric initiative.[62]

Pakistan's strategy to fight terrorism on its soil as a 'frontline state' and 'major Non-

NATO ally' of the United States might have been the right path for dozens of reasons. The

application of the strategy however proved counterproductive on a minimum of three counts. First

and foremost was the ideological domain. Taliban had angered Islamabad by refusing to give up

Osama bin Laden, so choosing America over the Taliban was not very difficult. Many,

particularly the intelligentsia, also considered it a golden opportunity to reclaim the country from

the jaws of religious extremists. Rolling back, the ideological narrative, developed over the

preceding decades through a systematic process, was easier said than done. The application of

force, without requisite narrative building, backfired as the regime was charged of treachery and

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[62] Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (1999): 379-408; Douglas Frantz, "A Nation Challenged: The Mood; Support for bin Laden is Still High in Pakistan," *New York Times,* October 22, 2001, accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/22/world/a-nation-challenged-the-mood-support-for-bin-laden-is-still-high-in-pakistan.html?rref=collection%2Fbyline%2Fdouglas-frantz&action=click&contentCollection=undefined&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=86&pgtype=collection; Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*, 223.

collusion with the United States against the Mujahedeen brethren in Afghanistan. Many saw war on terror as a derivative of American interests in the region.[63]

The second aspect was the distrust and questionable reliability of their US friends, that was somewhat enshrined in the collective psyche of Pakistani society. Most Pakistanis had no love for Taliban, even far less for Al Qaeda, but they did not believe the American commitments either. They were apprehensive of joining the US led coalition, not on some ideological grounds, rather they saw a fourth betrayal by the Americans on the cards. The earlier three being first, the US sanctions and suspension of critical military aid during the 1965 war with India. Second the failure to prevent the disintegration of the country in 1971, despite guarantees and promises. Finally, the United States leaving Pakistan high and dry after the Soviet withdrawal to deal alone with the mess in Afghanistan and its over three million refugees, its parallel drug and weapon economy, but above all the religious zealotry – the most poisonous of all the legacies of the Afghan Jihad.[64]

The third aspect that made the Pakistanis skeptical of joining the US war on terror on non-religious grounds was the Indian actions in the post 9/11 scenario. Instead of welcoming and facilitating the Pakistan's U-turn on its policy on militancy and distancing itself from religious extremist, the Indian government resented its elevation as a major Non-NATO ally. On the behest of its government, the Indian media tried to directly implicate Pakistan in the 9/11 attacks, despite the fact that none of the attacker had any links to Pakistan, whatsoever. The Indian narrative was successful to link the freedom struggle in Kashmir with the events in Afghanistan, but it

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[63] Jalal, The Struggle for Pakistan, 324-325.

[64] Robert M. Gates, *Duty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 343; Steven R. Weisman, the award winning American journalist and author covered Pakistan for *The New York Times,* during the 1980s. He not only has a strong sense of this feeling of betrayal but also is well familiar with its historic background. He comprehensively sums it up in his Editorial Opinion, written for The New York Times on the eve of US invasion of Afghanistan. For details see, Steven Weisman, "On the Front Lines in the Global War against Terrorism," *New York Times,* September 21, 2001, accessed November 20, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/21/opinion/editorial-observer-on-the-front-lines-in-the-global-war-against-terrorism.html.

embittered the public opinion in Pakistan for the war on terror as a whole. Seeing the Indian narrative successfully ride the wave of global sentiments against terrorism to shape the world opinion about the freedom struggle in Kashmir, Pakistani opinion saw this, in conjunction with Indian involvement in Afghanistan, as discreet parts of a grand design against Pakistan. Growing skepticism, leading to outright opposition to the government policies of joining the war on terror was the natural outcome.[65]

Pakistan joined the war on terror despite all the aforementioned domestic misgivings. As the US military operations in Afghanistan unfolded and the Taliban regime in Kabul fell without much ado, thousands of Taliban fighters (both Afghan and Pakistani nationals) crossed over to the FATA region of Pakistan. After the fall of Tora Bora in December 2001, Osama bin Laden along with some three thousand Al Qaeda fighters also crossed over. The militants rightly expected a welcoming shelter on three counts: the centuries old social code of "Pashtun-Wali" of the FATA people force them to shelter anyone who asks for it, even their enemies; the region had become a hub of religious extremism and militancy due to decades of Afghan Jihad; and bin Laden could buy the poverty stricken people with his generous payments for shelter and food.[66]

Pakistan not only launched a massive military operation in the FATA but also went hard after the Al Qaeda in the mainland. The security forces were successful in capturing hundreds of Al Qaeda operatives including the big catches like Abu Zubaidah, Ramzi bin al Shibh, and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad. The Musharraf regime though rightly confident of suppressing the terror

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[65] Immediately after the 9/11 and the US announcement to bring the perpetrators to justice, the Indian media went on a frenzied campaign of linking Pakistan with the terror attacks. The cooked up stories were based on interviews with the unknown representatives of the Northern Alliance, a traditional anti-Pakistan group whose leader Ahmad Shah Massoud was assassinated two days before 9/11. They even implicated the direct personal involvement of the Director General of Inter Services Intelligence. For a glimpse of this media campaign see, Manoj Joshi, "India helped FBI trace ISI-Terrorist links," *The Times of India ,* October 9, 2001, accessed November 20, 2017, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-helped-FBI-trace-ISI-terrorist-links/articleshow/1454238160.cms; The News, "Indian Media Tries to Implicate Pakistan," October 13, 2001, quoted in, Jalal, *The Struggle for Pakistan*, 418.

[66] Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 122; Hussain, *The Scorpion Tail*, 25-27.

enterprise through the application of force, failed to appreciate the terrorists' dominance of the narrative landscape. The terrorists appealed to a decades old narrative of 'Jihad against the Infidels' (ironically developed jointly by the United States and Pakistani government in the 1980s) and found immediate traction for being resonant with the national and regional master narrative. They conveniently replaced USSR with United States and declared the US invasion of Afghanistan as a "war against Islam," as was done at the time of USSR's invasion of Afghanistan. The Northern Alliance backed by the United States, came to power at the expense of majority Pashtuns, resulted in heated anti-Americanism in the tribal territories due to ethnic affiliations.[67]

The ideological, religious, and now ethnic affiliations in play; a cluster of militant organizations mushroomed in the ideologically fertile border regions of Af-Pak. In order to appeal to legitimacy on the existing narrative field, these groups have been associating themselves with the Taliban in Afghanistan by calling themselves Pakistani Taliban. Since 2004, these groups operated in their respective specific geographic regions or *agencies* as they are locally known, along the Af-Pak border. In late 2007, many of these militant commanders merged their outfits under the command of Baitullah Mehsud, and formed the TTP.[68]

Talibanization, though mainly started in the twin tribal agencies of South and North Waziristan, quickly spread to not only other tribal agencies, but mainland districts of Swat and Buner too.[69] The amount of territory it controlled and the popularity they enjoyed within a segment of the society, the terrorist group rang alarm bells all over the world beside Islamabad.

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[67] Hussain, *The Scorpion Tail*, 29-31.

[68] Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Own War on Terror: What the Pakistani Public Thinks," *Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2009): 39-55.

[69] Muhammad Amir Rana, "The Taliban Consolidate Control in Pakistan's Tribal Regions," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, June 15, 2008, accessed November 29, 2017, https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-taliban-consolidate-control-in-pakistan%E2%80%99s-tribal-regions.

As a reaction to Pakistan Army's operation to evict the militants from these areas and particularly the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) fiasco of July 2007, the TTP and its affiliates declared a war on the state of Pakistan. The army and other security forces were declared equally infidels for being allies with the United States.[70]
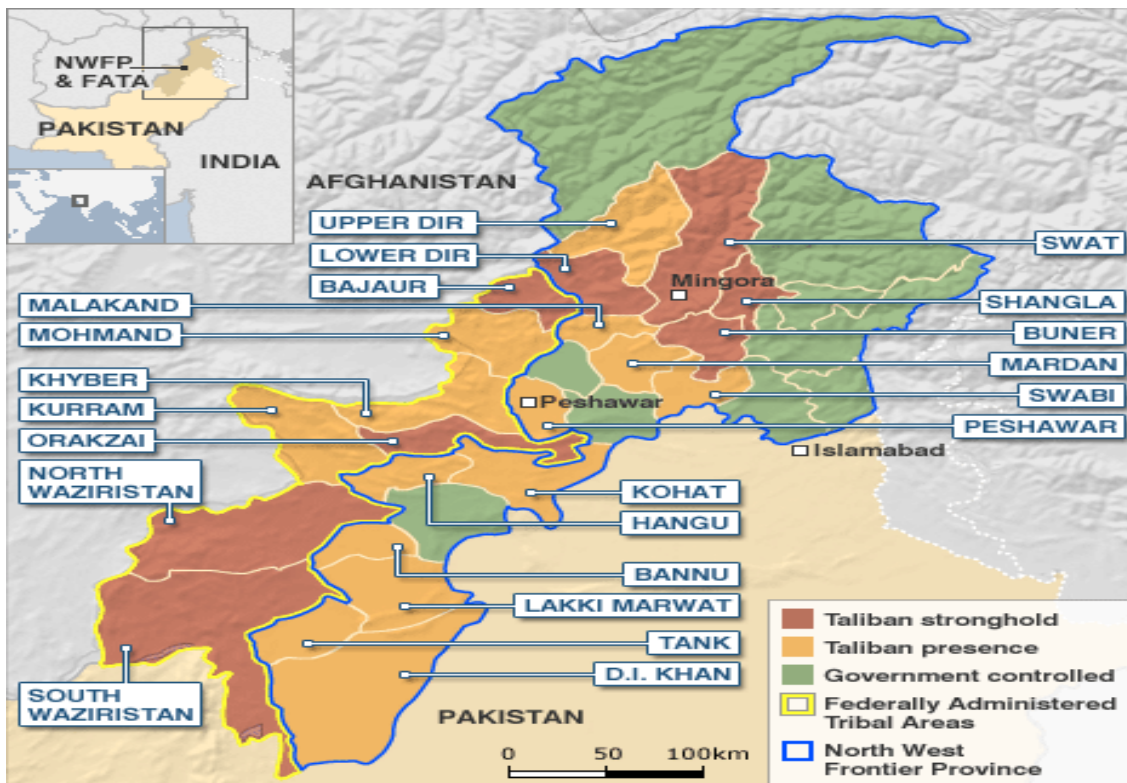

Figure 4. Taliban control of the territory in north-west Pakistan prior to military operation (The North West Frontier Province has been renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2010). "Pakistan conflict map," *BBC News,* last updated June 22, 2009, accessed November 29, 2017, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8046577.stm.

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[70] Lal Masjid (the Red Mosque) in Islamabad, along with its affiliated madrassas, one each for males and females, was run by two brothers, Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid Ghazi. Both the clerics were very critical of the Pakistani support to the United States in the war on terror. The government inaction emboldened the clerics and formed the 'Virtue Squads' to enforce moral standards. The government belatedly decided to deal with the issue with force and the military operation to forcefully evacuate the complex on July 10, 2017 resulted in a fire fight. The operation resulted in the death of more than a hundred people, mostly madrassa students. Ayman al Zawahiri, the Al Qaeda number two, released a videotape the day after and urged the faithful to take up Jihad against the Pakistani state. For details see Schmidt, *The Unravelling*, 145-165.

The mayhem of death and destruction that followed the Taliban and Al Qaeda's declaration of war on Pakistan was unprecedented in both its magnitude and ferocity. Responding to the military operation in their strongholds, the terrorists widened the conflict zone by conducting activities across the width and breadth of the country. To coerce the government and get concessions, the terrorists targeted markets, mosques, churches, schools, and universities without any discrimination besides hitting the security forces all across the country. Bomb blasts, suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) explosions, and target killings of the opponents have resulted in thousands of deaths. The decade between 2004 and 2013, when terrorism saw its peak in the country, is estimated to have caused more than 80,000 deaths alone.[71] Table 1 below illustrates the details.

Table 1. Summary of deaths as result of direct terrorist acts in Pakistan, 2003 – 2014

Serial	Category	Number of Deaths
1.	Civilians	48,504
2.	Journalists	45
3.	Civilians killed by US Drones	416 – 951
4.	Security forces	5,498
5.	Militants	26,862
6.	Total	81,325 – 81,860

Source: Lühr Henken, "Overview: Pakistan," in *Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 years of the War on Terror*, ed. Jens Wagner, Physicians for Social Responsibility, March 2015, accessed November 25, 2017, http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/body-count.pdf, 83.

Pakistan's economy is another aspect adversely affected by terrorism. The one and a half decade of terrorism and the war on terror has left the country's infrastructure in rubbles. The poor security situation has not only resulted in a marked reduction in foreign investment but more importantly, has damaged the local business and trade. Since joining the war on terror, the economy of this developing country suffered a whopping $123.1 billion cost on account of loss of economic opportunities and damage to the country's infrastructure. This huge loss is forty-one

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[71] Lühr Henken, "Overview: Pakistan," in *Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 years of the War on Terror*, ed. Jens Wagner, Physicians for Social Responsibility, March 2015, accessed November 25, 2017, http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/body-count.pdf, 81-83.

percent of the country's total economy size, as Pakistan's current GDP volume is $304 billion.

On average, every year Pakistan suffered losses of $7.7 billion, more than the country's total

expenditures on education, health and other social safety schemes.[72] The official Pakistan

Economic Survey 2014-15, of the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Pakistan, shows a

glimpse of these colossal economic losses.

Table 2. Estimated losses to Pakistan's economy due to War on Terror

Serial	Financial Year	US Dollars in Billions	Pak. Rupees in Billions	% Change
1.	2001-2002	2.67	163.90	-
2.	2002-2003	2.75	160.80	3.0
3.	2003-2004	2.93	168.80	6.7
4.	2004-2005	3.41	202.40	16.3
5.	2005-2006	3.99	238.60	16.9
6.	2006-2007	4.67	283.20	17.2
7.	2007-2008	6.94	434.10	48.6
8.	2008-2009	9.18	720.60	32.3
9.	2009-2010	13.56	1136.40	47.7
10.	2010-2011	23.77	2037.33	75.3
11.	2011-2012	11.98	1052.77	-49.6
12.	2012-2013	9.97	964.24	-16.8
13.	2013-2014	6.63	681.68	-33.5
14.	2014-2015 (Nine months only)	4.53	457.93	-31.7
	Total	**106.98**	**8702.75**	

Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, "Impact of War in Afghanistan and Ensuing Terrorism on Pakistan's Economy," *Annex-IV to Pakistan Economic Survey 2014-15*, 279-280, accessed November 28, 2017, http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_15/ Annex_IV_War_on_Terror.pdf.

Pakistan army and other LEAs are engaged in a protracted war with terror. The army

alone has conducted more than a thousand large and small scale military operations to regain the

control of FATA and other areas under Taliban control. The army has successfully dismantled the

terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens along the Af-Pak border region after committing more than

170,000 soldiers for the last sixteen years, albeit at a heavy cost in both blood and treasure.[73]

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[72] Israr Khan, "Pakistan suffers $123.1 bn losses in terror war," *NEWS International*, May 26, 2017, accessed September 6, 2017, https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/206709-Pakistan-suffers-1231-bn-losses-in-terror-war.

[73] Lieutenant General Khalid Rabbani, Commander 11 Corps, commanding all Pakistani forces along the Pak-Afghan border as quoted in Shahid Ahmed Afridi, *Pakistan's Counterinsurgency: Military and*

Joint Operation Zarb-e-Azb, has not only cleared the notorious and rugged terrorist stronghold of North Waziristan, but also enlarged the scope of operation to mainland Pakistan. Joint intelligence based operations (IBOs) with police and other civilian LEAs have been successful in eliminating the terrorists' material support and financial network. There is a substantial drop of terrorist activities in the country.[74] Despite these stunning military successes, the war is far from over as a segment of the society still considers Taliban to be fighting for a just cause. Terrorists still find people who willingly shelter and facilitate them to conduct their loathing activities.[75]

Pakistan's counter terrorism effort has come up a long way and matured over the last decade and a half, through the lessons learned in the school of hard knocks. Though Pakistan has had tremendous military successes in its war on terror in the physical domain, the ideological or narrative aspect of the war is still rhetorical at best. There is no evidence that the authorities have adopted a professional approach to develop a counter or alternative narrative to deal with belief systems that resonate with the terrorist narrative. However, there have been some haphazard civilian or non-military responses along the way. These non-military responses largely comprised the engagement and legislative measures.[76] The ideological confusion created in the minds of

Civilian Approach (Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, 2016), accessed November 29, 2017. http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2-shahid_ahmad_afridi_SS_Vol_36_No.3_2016.pdf; Also see Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan's Internal Security Challenges: Will the Military Cope?" Issue Brief, the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, August 2013, accessed November 29, 2017, http://www.ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/IB230-Gurmeet-Pakistan.pdf.

[74] Luqman Saeed, Shabib Haider and Roger Martin, "Historical Patterns of Terrorism in Pakistan," *Defense & Security Analysis* 30, no. 3 (2014): 209-229, accessed November 29, 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2014.921450; also see Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index," 2016, 28, accessed November 29, 2017, http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf; also see US Department of State, "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism: Annex of Statistical Information*, 2016," accessed November 29, 2017, https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272241.htm.

[75] Dawn, "Punjab CM announces arrest of Lahore suicide blast facilitator," last updated February 17, 2017, accessed November 29, 2017, https://www.dawn.com/news/1315347.

[76] Naeem Ahmed, "Pakistan's Counterterrorism Strategy and its Implications for Domestic, Regional, and International Security," Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'homme – White Paper - 59, January 2014, accessed December 4, 2017, https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00937552/document.

people about the very legitimacy of the war on terror, through a well-orchestrated narrative; ultimately provide space for the Taliban to continue their reign of terror.[77]

The dominance of extremist narratives in Pakistan's social identity is by no means a foregone conclusion. Religious extremism and sectarianism are the root causes of the social construct that resonates with and supplements the terrorist narrative. It is another mistake that extremism has traditionally been viewed as an isolated phenomenon. In reality, it is only the end of a continuum and unless the continuum is addressed, we cannot deal with the issue in a holistic manner. The state institutions, politico-religious parties, and anyone else who had been defining their societal and political agendas in religious terms, had played an important role in this continuum. The national discourse since 2001 has so far failed to dislodge religious extremism from the mainstream cultural space of Pakistan. It would definitely require an equally, if not more rigorous effort to undo this narrative, than the one that shaped it.[78]

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[77] Feyyaz, Why Pakistan Does Not Have a Counterterrorism Narrative.

[78] Farida Shaheed, "The occupation of mainstream cultural space in Pakistani society by politico-religious parties and groups" (paper read in National Conference – Extremism, Its Impact on Society: Implications for Women, National Commission on the Status of Women, August 18-19, 2009), accessed November 30, 2017, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08b7ced915d3cfd000d56/ Shaheed_Occupation_of_cultural_space_in_Pak_NCSW.pdf.

Section Five: Narrative and Counter Narrative Landscape of Pakistan

Pakistan's arduous endeavor to get rid of the menace of terrorism has largely been military specific. Pakistan army has been the architect as well as the executioner of counter terrorism strategies in the country right from the outset. The army has traditionally played this role partly due to its hold on the national security policies and partly due to the ineptness of the elected political leadership. The military nonetheless has achieved unparalleled and unprecedented successes in rooting out the terrorist strong holds and dismantling their organized networks. The terrorists, once controlling a large territory and knocking on the doors of Islamabad, are no more a coherent militant force capable of threatening the state. The successful military operations have not only eliminated terrorist safe havens from the FATA, but also seriously dented their logistic and material support networks in the urban centers. The violence has not merely reduced in the country; it has dropped by three quarters in the last two years.[79]

The official expression of the counter terrorism strategy, the twenty-point NAP, followed the two earlier versions of the same strategy. A sixty-four-point National Internal Security Policy (NISP) approved in February 2014 and the federal law, the Protection of Pakistan Act (PPA) of July 2014. The NISP was focused on a relatively long term and wholesome approach, and suggested constructive policy prescriptions. It envisioned the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) to lead and coordinate the national counter terrorism effort. PPA on the other hand, sought quick fixes such as empowering the LEAs including the army and police. Most of the twenty points of the NAP stress the implementation of existing laws. It however does mention the much needed reforms in the areas like madrassa education, criminal justice system,

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[79] Peter Oborne and Sabin Agha, "Pakistan is winning its war on terror," *The Spectator,* December 31, 2016, accessed December 4, 2017, https://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/12/pakistan-is-winning-its-war-on-terror/; Anas Abdullah, "Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Campaign: A Need for Re-evaluation," Center for Strategic and Contemporary Research, Islamabad, February 16, 2017, accessed December 4, 2017, https://cscr.pk/explore/themes/defense-security/pakistans-counter-terrorism-campaign-need-re-evaluation/.

governance in FATA, issues related to Internally Displaced Persons and Afghan refugees, more importantly, all stake holders taking the ownership of war on terror.[80]

The success of both military and non-military approaches (the former more than the later) notwithstanding, terrorism is far from over in Pakistan. Terrorists still find it convenient to appeal to and impress their ideas on a certain segment of the society. The nation is still grappling with the basic questions of defining religious extremism and terrorism. There is no master national narrative on the nature and legitimacy of the war on terror. The army proclaims the war on terror to be the nation's war of an existential nature and seeks public support. Major political parties on the other hand, have a number of times declared it to be an American war. These views are not only shared by rightwing parties like Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Jamiat-e-Ulema e Islam (JUI-F), but also by mainstream political parties like the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaaf (PTI). This willfully created confusion has not only hampered the effectiveness of Pakistan's counterterrorism strategy but also resulted in a vacuum in the national narrative space, being skillfully and gainfully exploited by terrorists of all hue and color.[81]

The effectiveness of terrorists' narrative is rooted in its emotional resonance that extremists manage to generate in their Pakistani audiences. The resonance is in turn rooted in the narratives that were developed and deployed in the establishment of Pakistan and in subsequent historical events. It is through the exploitation of Pakistan's master narrative that forty-one percent of the Pakistanis believed suicide attacks to be sometimes justified. This number fell

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[80] International Crises Group, "Revisiting Counter-terrorism Strategies in Pakistan: Opportunities and Pitfalls,", Report number 271, July 22, 2015, accessed December 5, 2017, https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/revisiting-counter-terrorism-strategies-pakistan-opportunities-and-pitfalls; Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, *"National Security Policy: An Analysis,"* Discussion Paper, March 2014, accessed December 5, 2017, http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/NationalInternalSecurtiyPolicy_AnAnalysis.pdf; The National Assembly of Pakistan, *Protection of Pakistan Act – 2014*, accessed December 5, 2017, http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1404714927_922.pdf.

[81] Ume-Farwa, *National Action Plan*; Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan (Interior Minister and leader of PML-N), Imran Khan (Head of PTI), Syed Munawar Hassan (Head of JI), and Maulana Fazal Rehman (Head of JUI-F) as quoted in Ahmed, *Pakistan's Counterterrorism Strategy*, 15.

down to nine percent by 2007, largely due to the public's personal suffering at the hands of suicide bombers. Still others, who might not agree with the tactics employed, are very sympathetic to the declared goals being pursued by these terrorist organizations.[82]

The case of Al Qaeda is a classic example of the terrorist organizations' understanding and application of the narrative science. Being a global organization, the Al Qaeda has a global narrative built around the central theme of American-Zionist-Crusaders war against Islam. The major component stories of this master narrative are: the war against Islam; Muslim rulers are agents of the West; Israel - a humiliation and an injustice; jihad in order to achieve justice; self-sacrifice – a way to victory; and finally, the need to restore the Al Qaeda's version of Islamic rule to end injustices and the sufferings. This global narrative has regional variants, suitably adjusted and promulgated by Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Al Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS).[83]

Applying either the Corman or Abbot's explanation of the structure of narrative, Pakistan figures prominently in the master narrative of Al Qaeda, as both an *Archetype* and *Form*. The country is mentioned numerous times in the audio-video messages and statements of both Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. In a 2004 strategic document 'Management of Savagery', Al Qaeda identified Pakistan along with Jordan, Nigeria, and North Africa as regions with the right kind of circumstances; that will facilitate the group's takeover of these countries for subsequent

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[82] Fair, Pakistan's Own War on Terror: What the Pakistani Public Thinks.

[83] Valentina Bartolucci, and Steven Corman, "The Narrative Landscape of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb," Report no. 1401, Center for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University, April 28, 2014, accessed December 5, 2017, http://csc.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/csc1401-aqim-narrative-landscape.pdf; Open Source Center, Monitor 360, and Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, "Master Narratives, Al-Qaeda Master Narratives and Affiliate Case Studies: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," Special Report, September 2011, accessed December 5, 2017, https://www.scribd.com/document/96802547/Al-Qaeda-Master-Narratives-and-Affiliate-Case-Studies-Al-Qaeda-in-the-Arabian-Peninsula-and-Al-Qaeda-in-the-Islamic-Maghreb.

global jihad. Al-Zawahiri himself has documented his desire to wage jihad in the future by joining resources of the nuclear-armed Pakistan and the oil rich Caspian region.[84]

Al Qaeda, while building its narrative for Pakistan, departs from its popular rhetoric of American-Zionist-Crusaders framework and instead grounds it in the historical master narrative of partition of British India and the issue of Kashmir. This narrative depicts Pakistan, having been created for the service of Islam, has been hijacked by corrupt western backed rulers. It has evolved into an un-Islamic State that functions on the basis of an un-Islamic constitution and diseased political system that contravenes the fundamental dictates of sharia. Supporting the holy warriors against the puppet regimes is therefore in the service of Islam itself. This narrative also sees the Pakistan Army, having allied with United States in its war on terror, as the vanguard of crusaders and therefore a legitimate target in jihad. To appeal to national emotions of Pakistan and create resonance with its master narrative, it also links India with Zionists and hence the war in Kashmir as part of a global jihad.[85]

The TTP has numerous similarities with Al Qaeda, but they also maintain individuality by focusing more on the national landscape than the international. This narrative goes an extra mile and declares the state and institutions of Pakistan out right as an un-Islamic, murderous enemy. Being a US protégé, the government does not represent the people's sentiments. While declaring themselves the knights of Islam, Taliban declare members of the LEAs as apostates. The war on terror is crusaders plot to persecute Muslims and the Pakistan army is likewise complicit in persecuting the tribal Muslims of FATA. Again suiting the narrative to the tribal

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[84] Youssef H. Aboul-Enein, "Ayman Al-Zawahiri's Knights under the Prophet's Banner: The al-Qaida Manifesto," *Military Review* (January/February 2005): 83-84, accessed December 6, 2017, EBSCO Host; Abu Bakr Naji, *Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Umma Will Pass*, trans. William McCants (John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, May 2006), accessed December 6, 2017, https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/abu-bakr-naji-the-management-of-savagery-the-most-critical-stage-through-which-the-umma-will-pass.pdf.

[85] Feyyaz, Why Pakistan Does Not Have a Counterterrorism Narrative.

tradition of *revenge,* Taliban present themselves to be fighting to revenge their tribal brethren against the Pakistan Army.[86]

This brief exploration of the Al Qaeda and Taliban's narratives around Pakistan shows that terrorist organizations have succeeded in popularizing their rhetorical vision because they understand Pakistani narratives and have developed stories that their intended audience will want to believe. Meanwhile, counter-extremism efforts by Pakistani authorities focus on generating messages they believe to be 'right' from their own viewpoints. This is a manifestation of the far greater power of metaphors and stories than ideas. Knowing the right stories are less important than from knowing how and how well to tell them: what to leave out, what to fill in, when to revise and when to challenge, and whom to tell or not to tell.[87]

The master narrative that the state built over time, presenting Pakistan as an experiment in the service of Islam and its army as the guardian of that Islamic identity, substantiates the terrorists' narrative. It is the manipulation of this national narrative that safeguards the terrorist from adverse public opinion blowbacks. In contrast, the counter-extremist efforts often ignore Pakistani narratives altogether, preferring instead to push out messages that present a reality from the point of view of the producers rather than from the intended consumers. They have consistently ignored that 'truth' is always subjective and interpretation dependent.[88]

The state's previous efforts to counter terrorist narrative did not produce the required results, largely due to its lack of understanding the master narratives. These narratives were mainly built on the concepts of 'Enlightened moderation' and 'violent extremists obstruct,

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[86] Feyyaz, Why Pakistan Does Not Have a Counterterrorism Narrative, 70-71.

[87] Joseph Davis quoted in Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 617-618.

[88] Amil Khan, "Pakistan and the Narratives of Extremism," United States Institute of Peace, Special Report - 327, March 2013, accessed December 7, 2017, https://www.usip.org/publications/2013/03/pakistan-and-narratives-extremism.

whereas western partnership promotes development.' Another aspect of the effort has been the anti-terrorist rhetoric by key national figures, government, armed forces personals, and anti-Taliban clergy, during the run up to major military operations. An alternative course of action would be to use the elements of the plan to build resonance around narratives that obtain a greater traction. The way extremists exploit Pakistan's master narratives, the government must identify the narratives that can be used to best construct a potentially alternative rhetorical vision.[89]

Islam is the master narrative in Pakistan for all practical purposes and any effort in developing an alternative narrative will invariably involve it. Madrassa reform figures to be a vital aspect in this regard. Madrassas played an instrumental role in developing the prevalent national narrative and have the capacity to play an equally important role in the provision of an alternative one. It is for this basic reason that madrassa reform made the core of every counter terrorism strategy in the country. Undoing the amendments in the educational curriculum, made during the 1980s will be another step in the same direction. To have traction with the existing master narrative, the alternative narrative needs to be brought to the public sphere in a carefully articulated way. The role of religious clergy besides media cannot be overstated. As seen in the past, mere truthfulness of the narrative is not sufficient to be effective. It needs to resonate with the prevalent master narrative, which as explained in figure two of this monograph, was developed through a sequential and systemic manner. The same process has the potential to be reversed. It, however, entails broadening the scope of the counter terrorism efforts, encompassing aforementioned larger societal aspects, beside pushing forward 'true' messages and narratives.[90]

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[89] Khan, *Pakistan and the Narratives of Extremism*; Irfan Ahmed Malik, "Islam, Terrorism and the Strategy of Enlightened Moderation," (master's thesis: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), accessed December 7, 2017, http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA437501.

[90] Abdul Rauf Iqbal, and Sobia Raza, "Madrassa Reforms in Pakistan: A Historical Analysis," Research & Analysis Papers*, Institute for Strategic Studies, National Defense University Islamabad 2015, accessed December 7, 2017, http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/issra-paper/ISSRA_Papers_ Vol7_IssueI_2015/05-Madrassah-Reforms-in-Pak.pdf.

Conclusion

Past policy decisions and its geographic location have caused Pakistan to suffer the most to terrorism. After assuming the status of a frontline state in the US-led war on terror, terrorism became an existential threat for the country. The war has cost Pakistan heavily both in terms of blood and treasure. More than 80,000 Pakistanis have died in terrorist acts while the national exchequer has suffered a colossal loss of more than $123 bn. Majority of the losses have been born by the citizens as more than half of the fatalities are civilians. Despite their manifestly gruesome behavior, the terrorists still enjoy the support and affiliation of a segment of the society and certain political figures.

The terrorists' ability to avoid any public opinion backlash despite killing them shows the ultimate effectiveness of their narrative. They skillfully tailor their narrative to not only appeal to broader Islamic narrative, but also find traction with regional and national narratives. The state of Pakistan developed a national narrative in the backdrop of the Afghan Jihad. The narrative was built through a systematic approach, and woven into the existing national narrative. Other global and regional powers particularly the United States and Saudi Arabia also invested heavily in the process to achieve their cold war objectives. The extremist elements that the world is at war with now, were ironically an important tool in the implementation of that narrative. Using their intimate knowledge of the nature of this narrative, terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and the Taliban have exploited it fully to their advantage.

The counter terrorism strategy of Pakistan has been kinetic in nature and focused largely on the application of military power. The success of these military operations in eliminating terrorists' safe havens cannot be long lasting without equally effective efforts in ideological and societal domains. Few efforts have been made to defeat the terrorists' narrative. The war on terror is therefore far from over despite the tremendous achievements of kinetic military operations. The

terrorists' cause still attracts the support of some people. Religious extremism and sectarianism are the root causes of the social construct that resonates with and supplement terrorist narrative.

The case of Pakistan in two different time periods, 1979 to 1989 and 2001 till to date, is an excellent example of the significance of narrative. It demonstrated how effectively the authorities were able to shape the emergent narrative, when a systematic approach was adopted and the prevalent master narrative was taken into account. In the second instance they not only failed, but produced counter effects instead, when the administration tried to impose a narrative on the nation. Any new narrative, to be effective, has to be developed using a scientific approach and with due regard for the master narrative. Only the stories, archetypes, and forms that fits the plot will be effective. The assumption that our narrative is superior to that of the terrorists because it is true, has not and will not work. Correctness or truthfulness of the story told are not important for its effectiveness, the way it is told is significantly important though. The terrorists' narrative is more successful than that of the government, despite being false and malicious. The inherent falsehood and wickedness in the terrorists' narrative can, however, be exploited by shaping the nation's perception of the truth in the right direction. This would in turn entail taking a systemic and much broader approach, which considers larger societal aspects and not only accounts for the future aspirations, but is also rooted in the realities of the past and present. This, however, does not mean to replace the existing messaging or the application of force, rather it should be designed to supplement each other.

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