

# A Mecca for Militants

## An Examination of the Development of International Terrorism in Peshawar, Pakistan, 1970-2010

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*This paper is an examination of the beginnings of global terrorism in Peshawar, Pakistan—a modern region of violence and militancy. This city has been a major proponent in one of the most problematic global issues of this era, international terrorism. Examining the environment in which this type of militancy began and what incurred is vital to understanding how to assuage the issue as it stands today and how to further the development of peaceful conditions in the future. The development of this center of violence is examined through analysis of the city's modern history. By delving into the social, political and economic issues that plagued the city from 1970 to the turn of the century, one may see what factors created this disparate area of corruption. Analysis of this time frame indicates that irresponsibility on behalf of international super powers such as the U.S., India, Russia, and Saudi Arabia is a central cause behind Peshawar's militant issues. Although local factors played a vital role in the extrapolation of militancy, this dissertation will focus on the global factors because by understanding these it is possible to avoid the further development of international violence. This is an argument that militancy does not develop solely because of inherent cultural tendencies but also because of the intrusion of international dilemmas and dogma, and should be addressed accordingly.*

There are environments in which the violent aspects of human nature flourish, places where human empathy fails. These spots gain a reputation for their militancy, radicalism and corruption. They sport drug trade and support criminals. They are centers of violence that come to be known for their political unrest and low living standards. Certain dynamics will always play into the development of violence within cities. These incidents breach ethnic boundaries and political ideologies. These centers of violence worsen and grow through a convoluted mixture of neglect and evocation on the international scale. They are locations that attract the criminal degenerates of the modern world, corrupting the nation that hosts them and spreading their networks and influence throughout the global sphere.

Peshawar is not a singular player in the spread of violence within city centers but is an exemplary city to show this development. It has been the home to such international terror threats as Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban. It has spread its militant fundamentalism internationally. The factors that will be laid out momentarily will show what has caused such extreme violence in this city, and that what will be examined

here can be applied to any city of its kind. Any city on a frontier that is confronted by culturally dissimilar and competitive super powers, corrupt government, environmental instability or neighboring anarchy may be compared to Peshawar. It is an allegorical city that shows the extensive neglect and evocative circumstances that were developed by local and international communities.

Peshawar is not the only city in which international terrorists made their beginnings but it is a city in which it is so prevalent and so disconcerting that it may not be ignored. There are multitudinous layers in the city throughout which the inner workings of violence spread. It spread internally by way of Pakistan's corrupt government, education centers, and inadequate infrastructure development. It was enflamed internationally from the anarchy of Afghanistan and its previous communist fall as well as the infiltration of Western, Middle Eastern and South Asian ammunition, topped off by the antagonism from India in the bloodthirsty battle for Kashmir.

Militancy truly became an integrated political, cultural, and economic force within Peshawar during the 1970s. Therefore the examination will begin there. It will address the

internal factors such as population rates, political development, and education within Pakistan while following the international affairs such as the war against communism in Afghanistan, the Kashmiri jihad, American influence upon the area and the inevitable rise of the Taliban.

### THE LAY OF THE LAND

Salmon rooftops and gritty sandstone walls creep up the dark green craggy hills surrounding Peshawar. Minarets pierce through the dry desert clouds. Crumbling gates, where the outer limits once were, now give stature to the rickety overflowing marketplaces of the city. Vivid reds and mustard yellows paste the walls of city slums, becoming diminutive as they contrast with the distinguished peaks towering behind them. The city sits precariously upon the foothills of these crags, clinging in futility to existence. Looking down upon the sprawl of rooftops and roads it could almost be Salt Lake. The city ekes out daily life just as American Westerners did in generations past, but this city is not in the American West. It is within the Northwestern Frontier of Pakistan. It is not pushed up against the Rocky Mountains but against the lofty mountains bordering Afghanistan.

Through Peshawar cuts the most trafficked roadway into Afghanistan, the Khyber Pass, otherwise known as the Grand Trunk Road (Ridder, 2001). Winding through some of the most treacherous terrain in South Asia, this road was once seen as a vital organ of the Silk Road Trade. Today it is less of a cultural avenue than a black-market trade of arms, drugs, and armaments.

The road makes its way through a winding mountainous region between the two nations leading directly to Kabul, the unstable capital of Afghanistan. To the east the Grand Trunk Road shoots towards Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. It is the major artery connecting these two central hubs of government and commerce. Since Peshawar falls on the eastern slopes of the mountainous pass, anyone making the trip from Kabul to Islamabad has to take the Grand Trunk Road through Peshawar. In the past century Peshawar has felt the brunt of change rolling through the Khyber Pass from the north on its way down to the capital. The Grand Trunk Road provides a major connection for supplies, ideas, cultural influence, and political encroachment as well.<sup>1</sup>

South of Peshawar is one of the most dangerous, unstable regions on the planet. The Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) is an unregulated region that is supposedly under Pakistani control, but local tribe leaders hold true power in the region. The tribes have encroached upon city

boundaries for centuries and no overarching state government has managed to overcome them. Today FATA is home to large numbers of the Taliban as well as prominent Al Qaeda figures, most notoriously Osama Bin Laden<sup>2</sup> (Ridder, 2001).

Kashmir looms over Peshawar's northern boundary. Kashmir cements the three-pronged front of cultural and political confrontation of which Peshawar is the center. Within this predicament Peshawar must deal increasingly with the turmoil of Afghanistan, the savagery of the FATA and the violence of Kashmir. This unique location between these three major contention areas (Afghanistan in the east, the FATA in the south, and the disputed Kashmiri area to the north) has caused external issues to exacerbate the internal challenges of poverty, overpopulation, and rising political unrest.<sup>3</sup>

### THE RISE OF SHARI'A

Political contention rose throughout the 1970s in Peshawar paralleling a time of major government corruption and instability in Pakistan. By examining the lineage of Pakistani prime ministers from 1970 to present day, one gets a bird's eye view of how the Islamization of government within Pakistan affected Peshawar's internal issues, extrapolated the external factors, and instigated the rise of militancy within the city center.

This development of Islamic law began in August 1973 with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had just been inaugurated as the Prime Minister of Pakistan (Hussain Z., 2007). Thinking that an extension of governmental power into domestic politics was needed to control the tumultuous country, he started expanding the power of Pakistan's Inter-service Intelligence (ISI). The problem is that the ISI is the lifeblood of Pakistan's military. They already enjoyed jurisdiction over a vast array of government programs including the nuclear armament program, international relations, and homeland security, so giving them power over the domestic arena was analogous to passing the crown from the sedated king to the overzealous general.

Having begun as a branch of intelligence service to promote stability during the upheaval of British rule and the birth of Pakistan in 1947, the ISI grew in force and power to become the underlying nervous system of Pakistani government (Chengappa, 2000, 1857-1878). During the end of the 1970's the already powerful ISI, under Bhutto's rule, became the Big Brother of Pakistan. They had a hand in almost every

<sup>1</sup>The Northwestern Frontier in which Peshawar is located is dominantly of Pashto heritage, which gives the Pakistanis a major tie to the Afghani population across the boarder, who share the same ethnic bond. Peshawar was once revered as the center for Pashto music and arts, a cultural gathering place for the deeply rooted ethnicity of the region. These ethnic ties will later create a widely held acceptance of Afghan refugees, many viewing them as brothers by heritage (Ridder G. R., 2001, 151.)

<sup>2</sup>Bin Laden is speculatively within Southern Waziristan, which is a village within FATA (Ridder G.R., 2001).

<sup>3</sup>The city itself has become overpopulated in recent decades, doubling from 1.1 million occupants in 1981 to over 2 million by the turn of the century (Korson, J. H., 1993). contemporary problems in Pakistan. Boulder, Colorado, USA: Westview Press. The city sits atop the Iranian Plateau. It has had major growth without the ability to spread out causing urban regulatory degradation within the water system and road system.

aspect of foreign and domestic politics, including government-sponsored militancy in Kashmir as well as wiretapping and surveillance of citizens who might be categorized as opponents of the state (Byman, 2005). To complement the ISI's rule Bhutto tried to unite Pakistan under an Islamic nationalist ideology to give the nation a sense of identity, but instead of uniting the nation, it actually heightened sectarian divides and fueled radical religious movements. This paranoia and extensive military control was felt heavily in Peshawar where sects of Islamists tended violently to point out faith differentiations. Markets became filled with discontented, paranoid citizens walking with one eye over their shoulder looking out for ISI spies and fundamentalists with a glint in their gaze. Militancy, both sectarian and state sponsored, became a norm within Peshawar during this period (Markham, 1977). Citizens expected to be brutalized because of their faith. Whether they were a Sunni who fell into a Shi'a market or Shi'a child in a Sunni school, violence became the anticipated consequence.

Bhutto became increasingly more dependent on the powerful crutch of the ISI and was finally overthrown via a military coup in July 1977. By then the ISI truly controlled Pakistan and with their excessive power came excessive suppression. Unable to even retain a semblance of influence over the ISI, Bhutto fell under the force that he had given such free reign, letting the ISI's leading general, Zia ul-Haq, seize power becoming the unelected Prime Minister of Pakistan. Flushed with power he immediately imposed martial law. He shut down any remnants of a democratic system and strived for a full-throttle Islamic state. He finished what Bhutto had begun within the political arena, which was the development of Islamic law. The ISI gained control rapidly with Shari'a (Islamic law) imposed upon the legal system, media and military. Their iron grip put Pakistan on the fast track towards becoming an Islamic state (Gregory, 2007).

The implementation of Shari'a widened sectarian divides in Peshawar as the government began to form Islamic laws with unavoidable bias in favor of Sunnis. This was a logical political stratagem as Sunnis are the majority population of Pakistan but it proved detrimental to smaller demographic groups including the Shi'a populace (Moten, 2007). The law's implementation gave certain sects a sense of legal justification in their sectarian violence towards minorities. Organized sectarian militancy rose in Peshawar throughout the 1980s as sects took root trying to defend or rebel against the bias of the new Sunni Islamic government. A mass-sectarian consciousness permeated the city<sup>4</sup> (Riikonen, 2007).

Bombings began within the city. Shi'a citizens were targeted like clay pigeons as they made their way through the city markets and overcrowded alleyways, being smashed to smithereens more and more frequently. Non-action became the most common "official" way of dealing with this sectarianism in Pakistan because it was the least biased form of

addressing the issue. The violence and lack of government intervention heightened tension and fear in major cities such as Peshawar where Muslims came from a range of Sunni and Shi'a sub-sects who tended to clash heatedly with one another. These sects were thrown into a continuous cycle of violence fueled by the growing hatred between holders of differing Islamic views.

The cycle of violence between sectarian subsets of Islam was proliferated by the Iranian Revolution of 1979. As the Shi'a minority in Peshawar feared for their lives, the massive force of Shi'as in Iran revolted and gained rule over their nation. This gave Pakistani Shi'a's courage (Lewis, 1979). Eager for political action, violent Shi'a organizations began forming in Peshawar in response to the stifling Sunni front. Militant groups like TNFJ (Movement for the Implementation of Shi'a Jurisprudence) and its Sunni counterpart SSP (Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan) created an Islamic proxy-war on the northwestern frontier, where jihadists could come and fight on their home front (Riikonen, 2007).

The escalation of crime and violence within the city caused a paradox for the citizens of Peshawar. They became increasingly dependant on the ISI to maintain control while fearing them more as an unlawful unchecked power source. The instability of the system was a major factor in the rise of citizen-formed coalitions responding to a lack of formal government. Many conditions that are characteristic of militancy can be seen in Peshawar during this period: the repressive attitude of the state, the intensity of the forms of Islam circulating the area, and a general attitude of political unrest without any outlet for action (Crenshaw, 1990).

#### A COMMUNIST TWIST

Across the Pakistani border, just northwest of Peshawar, Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 (Grau, 2007). They entered under the claims that they were protecting the Afghani Government from foreign forces.<sup>5</sup> Leonid Brezhnev, the aged and infirm Soviet General Secretary, came to rescue Afghanistan from the "freedom Fighters" (mujahideens). These mujahideens were Afghani citizens battling against the oppression of communism.

The mujahideen insurgents had quickly become favorites of anti-communist powers in the global community, such as the United States. They were passionate citizens fighting for the right of self-rule, and what fight do Americans like better than a fight for freedom? America, who saw any fight against communism as an obligatory American fight for freedom, decided to help these militant jihadists battle this foreign power in the good fight against communism. They decided that they would supply these fundamentalist Islamists with

<sup>4</sup>This was helped by the orthodox Sunni public education system.

<sup>5</sup>The (*Democratic Republic of Afghanistan*) DRA's shaky control of the state had been reflecting poorly upon their communist counterparts in the North so the Soviets decided to stabilize the situation by strengthening the DRA and conducting missions against mujahideen insurgents who were trying to take control Afghanistan.

supplies, weapons, and money to stop the spread of the Iron Curtain regime.

“Insurgency Poses Growing Threat To Afghanistan’s Pro-Soviet Rulers” ran across newspaper headlines around the globe in 1979 (NY Times 1991). This small cry for freedom had become an international issue because what had been a losing battle for freedom in the far-flung land of Afghanistan between Islamists and Communists had turned into a proxy war between democracy and communism. The U.S. stuck itself directly in the middle of a situation of which they had very little cultural understanding. America helped the mujahideens fight the “good fight” against communism without understanding the implications of a jihad. Although freedom is grand, when it involves stepping upon the toes of a foreign culture it can become contentious and that is just what happened.

This relationship between the mujahideens and the U.S. began the biggest covert collaborative operation in modern history. The ISI and other Pakistani officials saw the fall of the communist regime in Afghanistan as beneficial because it could lead to better trade relations with Afghanistan. They were willing to do whatever they could to help boost their struggling economy, so they decided to help the U.S. get communism out of Afghanistan. They gave Peshawar over to the CIA and Afghan fighters as an outpost for training, supplying and recruiting fighters for the warfront in Afghanistan.

This was fundamentally irresponsible behavior on the part of the U.S. and Pakistan. The seed of militancy in Peshawar truly began with the CIA, led by Stansfield Turner, and the ISI as they helped Islamic jihadists in Afghanistan battle communism (CIA, 2002). The ISI trained, supplied and held contact with the mujahideens while the CIA supplied weapons and funding. The CIA and the ISI could not enter Afghanistan so they bunkered down in the closest proximate city, Peshawar. The Grand Trunk Road became the super-highway of counter insurgency supplies providing jihadist freedom fighters with stinger missiles, machine guns, ammunition, and an array of other weapons. Peshawar’s black market grew exponentially as the proxy war escalated and more arms, funds and supplies came through daily. CIA and Saudi funding for the ISI created a full-on parallel military government structure in Pakistan that controlled all aspects of government without even a semblance of civilian rule (Ridder, 2001).

This new relationship between the militant fighters in Afghanistan, the ISI, and the CIA formed a dialogue centered on the Islamic orientation of the mission. The ISI trained guerillas indoctrinating them with Islamic ideals. These guerillas came to see the fight against the Soviets as a jihad in the name of Allah against foreign ideologies. The USSR gave jihadists around the world a common goal. Islam had to take down communism. This new idea centered on the shift of their fight into the public sphere (Hussain Z., 2007). The jihad was no longer seen as a domestic struggle but rather as a fight of Muslims from all nations against oppressive

Western ideals, “a Jihad for the liberation of Afghanistan from infidel rule” (Shay, 2002 89). This dialogue began in Peshawar. Militants flocked to the volatile Islamic stronghold from around the globe to support this new form of jihadism.<sup>6</sup>

#### AN INFLUX OF ISSUES

This call to Jihad brought over 35,000 Muslim warriors to Peshawar from 1979 to 1989 (Hussain Z., 2007).<sup>7</sup> With this influx came an abundance of domestic issues that permeate the city to this day. Criminal and sectarian violence rates rose, education became the site of militant training, Afghan refugees flocked across the border, and illegal trade exponentially grew.

Paranoia permeated Peshawar as militants and refugees flooded the city. The conflict that had begun earlier between Islamic sects became exacerbated by the culture of violence that was spawned from CIA and jihadist influence. Citizens were no longer safe to walk the cobbled streets of their own city. A once pulsating marketplace now supported more black market trade than fresh produce and congregations of foreign mujahideens were more likely to be seen perusing the merchandise than mothers with their children.

This instability stimulated the growth of anti-American sentiment within Peshawar. Out of frustration and a lack of personal safety Peshawar citizens began to form jihadist movements of their own based on the successes of the Afghan Mujahideens. Anti-Sunni, anti-Shi’a, anti-democratic, and anti-Indian militancy sprang up all over Peshawar. The goals of these nascent terrorist organizations ranged from the liberation of Kashmir to the installation of a Pashto government in Afghanistan. Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Haratiat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), and Harkat-al-Jihad-al-Islami (HJI) were just some of the terrorist organizations born during this period, reaping the benefits of government-funded militancy and CIA based training<sup>8</sup> (Hussain Z., 2007).

The education system within Peshawar had become radicalized by the militant upsurge in the city as well. Throughout the 1980s madrasas that promoted militancy and

<sup>6</sup>One of the supporters of this newly birthed international jihad was Osama Bin Laden. Bin Laden formed what would later become Al-Qaeda during the Soviet war as an international service office that recruited and dispatched Islamic volunteers for the holy war. This organization, based in Peshawar, spanned 50 nations in 1988 and even ran the Al Kafach Center in Brooklyn, New York. Over the course of the decade Al-Qaeda helped the USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and other supporting nations spread the worldwide call to jihad against the Soviet’s and their puppet regime in Afghanistan (Alexander, 2009).

<sup>7</sup>Over 30 Afghani mujahideen organizations were active within the city, gaining support and supplies before crossing the border for the holy cause. Most of these were extremist Sunni branches promoting full Islamic law (Shay, 2002).

<sup>8</sup>Also, over the past decade weapons allocated to the freedom fighters had begun to come into the hands of Pakistani criminals. By 1989 one fourth of Pakistani weaponry was of USA or Saudi origin (Korson, 1993).

the Islamic jihad sprung up all along the Afghan-Pakistan border. This was catastrophic for the northwestern frontier's youth who saw madrasas as the only escape from their economically disadvantaged situation within the poverty-stricken region. The system served two causes: it brought starving youth from all over the Afghani and Pakistani countryside to Peshawar for a chance to be fed, clothed, and housed for free, and it indoctrinated them with a militant mindset. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the CIA promoted this mindset as well as other nations that were actively supporting state-sponsored militancy (CIA, 2002).

These madrasas became militant recruiting centers where children were taught the Quran alongside radical theories about Islamic Jihad. The extremism fostered there was a major cause of the fundamentalist attitudes that permeate Peshawar to this day. An entire generation of Pakistani Muslim youth was taught that death in the name of Allah against the infidels was the greatest good they could hope to achieve. Because of this indoctrination Peshawar became a mass producer of suicide bombers, mujahideens, Taliban, and Al Qaeda members for the next decade.<sup>9</sup> The schools provided a haven for fundamentalist ideology as well as impoverished and displaced Afghani and Pakistani youth.

Students were not the only Afghans fleeing their homeland. Post Soviet invasion, two million refugees entered the Peshawar region swelling the population eight fold (Hussain S. A., 1993).<sup>10</sup> The influx of refugees was hospitably received in the Northwestern frontier region where there was a large populace of Pakistanis with Pashto heritage. The UN High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) created 350 camps of 10,000 inhabitants in the Peshawar region (Korson, 1993). These camps overcrowded city centers, spread into the unregulated FATA region, and caused innumerable infrastructural issues for the Pakistani and local Peshawar government. Peshawar citizens complained of inflated housing prices, a rise in the illegal trade of opium, and an overall degradation of law within the city (Korson, 1993). In Peshawar, the refugees' presence heightened the crime rate, the tension between sectarian groups, and enrollment in madrasas, militant involvement, and illegal trade.

<sup>9</sup>Darul Uloom Haqqania is a prime example of the militant-breeding ground in Peshawar. One of the largest institutions in all of Pakistan this madrasa is notoriously known as the "cradle of the Taliban." Darul Uloom is a fundamental Sunni school funded by Saudi oil money and USAID. USAID had the University of Nebraska-Omaha print textbooks to hand out in Afghanistan and Pakistan during the Soviet invasion. These texts promoted extreme jihadism. They taught the importance of the Jihad and math side-by-side. Students learned to count by numbering off dead Russians and Kalashnikov rifles (Ottaway, J. S., 2002). The school sits only 29 miles outside of Peshawar in the town of Akora Khattak. It is one of thousands of madrasas that ring the Peshawar area. Most of them are conveniently located next to the Afghani border and attract copious amounts of Afghani students fleeing from the war-torn nation. In 1985 sixty percent of Darul Uloom students were Afghans (Hussain, Z., 2007)

<sup>10</sup>This was 20% of the overall refugee insurgence into Pakistan during the 1980s (Korson, 1993).

By the end of the 1980s the heroin trade and addiction had vastly increased in Peshawar. There were over one million heroin addicts in Pakistan and labs had begun to spring up all over the city centers (NY Times, 1989). The bulk of rising production came from ramshackle labs strung across the contentious Afghan-Pakistan border region (Kaufman, 1989). Using the instability of the FATA region as a trade route and base camp, growers, traders, and smugglers worked within Peshawar in a rising grey market free of fear. This trade created an underground upsurge in the Peshawar economy in which conspicuous money, which could not enter the legitimate economy, began to expand and circulate within illegal markets. Crime lords and militants lived off the fat of illegal trade while decent citizens could not afford to feed their families as most legitimate trade left the city.

Peshawar had become known as a criminal super-center. If one had opium to trade, it could be done in Peshawar. If one was trying to find a militant Islamist cause to join, they could find it in Peshawar. The city was internationally notorious. It was where one stopped before a suicide bombing in Afghanistan. It is where one went to get a first-hand education on the inner workings of militancy. To get a CIA-approved stinger missile one went to Peshawar. The city was a beehive of activity because of the battle next door. It was so close to the anti-Soviet fight that when the Soviets fell they pulled the city down with them.

#### THE ANARCHICAL FALL

The Soviet Union fell two years after the Geneva Accord was signed.<sup>11</sup> The USSR dissolved on December 31, 1991, and with its disintegration came the death of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Any semblance of security disappeared within Afghanistan. With the nation's disintegration rose coalitions of mujahideens struggling for a seat of power in the birth of the new Islamic state. Chaos reigned as freedom fighters from all over Afghanistan and Pakistan made their way to Kabul to gain control of the capital. Peshawar watched as hoards of militants left the city in hopes of gaining power across the border (NY Times, 1991).

The vacuum of power in Afghanistan paralleled the end of military law in Pakistan. Within Pakistan civil rule had been re-instated after General Zia was killed in a mysterious plane crash in 1988. The next Prime Minister was Benazir Bhutto.<sup>12</sup> The election of Bhutto created the first civilian government in over a decade. A civilian government should have

<sup>11</sup>The Geneva Accord was the first sign that the DRA and the USSR were finished. The 1988 Geneva Accord was at its core an agreement affirming Afghanistan's right to self-determination, right to be free from foreign intervention, and the right of their refugees to return home safely. It was a bilateral pact between Pakistan and the DRA with the U.S. and the Soviet Union as guarantors. The agreement promised to end the CIA's support of mujahideens as well as Pakistan's ability to provide them sanctuary (Grau, 2007).

<sup>12</sup>She was the first female prime minister to be elected in the Muslim world.

meant that the ISI would have less control. It should have stopped the madrasas from teaching violence and it should have curbed the state supported militancy that thrived in Peshawar. It did not. Instead it created major tension between the ISI and the government (Hussain, 2007).

Bhutto fought to take control of the nation through the ISI but failed just as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had before her. Faced with the new weak neo-democratic system the ISI gained immense power over Bhutto in order to push its agenda of militancy and Islamization. They took control of relations with the U.S., the nation's nuclear program as well as Pakistani-Afghani-India border policies (Hussain Z., 2007). This new period of ISI power helped state sponsored militancy rise as well. In Peshawar, madrasas continued to preach rather than teach, the black market blossomed, and militants no longer fighting the communists found a home.

The jihadists, who had just defeated the Soviet Union and had no desire for power, came in mass exodus back through Pakistan.<sup>13</sup> Militants liked Peshawar because it provided access to a major black market and recruiting centers like Darul Uloom. It lacked coordinated governmental control and at times was almost as unregulated as the FATA tribes that lay south of the city. Militants came to the city because their jihad was over and they needed somewhere to regroup (Huntington, 1996). Peshawar hosted a continual influx of international jihadists because of this. For a passionate jihadist, in the post-Soviet Middle East, Peshawar wreaked of corruption opportunity and freedom.

Al Qaeda settled itself into Peshawar, post-Soviet fall, as well (Hussain Z., 2007). Displaced from their fight against the infidels these holy fighters found themselves congregating at the frontier city looking for a continuation of the jihad. While in Peshawar and the surrounding area Al Qaeda received support and funding from the ISI in return for help later on with their militancy plans in Kashmir<sup>14</sup> (Hussain Z., 2007). Throughout the 1990s Al Qaeda and other militant organizations<sup>15</sup> would grow vigorously in the northwestern frontier due to their support from Pakistani government sources (NY Times, 2002).

Kashmir became the opportune location from which to continue the fight against the infidels (Hussain Z., 2007), an outlet for the build up of militant energy overflowing from the Afghanistan border. "In Afghanistan in the 1980s, jihadist cadres came from the ranks of motivated Islamists across the world who were prepared to die for the cause, as well as kill communists. The Spirit saw its continuation in Kashmir, which became one of the world's hottest Islamic Jihad spots" (Shay, 2002, 122). By trying to take land back from Pakistan, India appeared to have instigated battle against Islam.<sup>16</sup> India found itself on the black list of the jihadists. Those who were not seeking power in Afghanistan came from Kabul to Kashmir rolling across the Grand Trunk road through Peshawar on the trail of the infidels. In Peshawar they were fueled by ISI support and the remnants of anti-Soviet supplies. Al Qaeda jumped to action as well as hundreds of other militant organizations. The ISI's orthodox Islamist policy spread jihadist fever as jobs and opportunity ran low in the economically despondent northwestern frontier.<sup>17</sup> Youth in Peshawar turned to the jihad because their religion, government and education all pointed firmly in that direction. With no opportunities at home they rushed across northern Pakistan to the cease-fire line of Pakistani-Kashmir (Ziring, 2009). Madrasas began to produce militants in hordes, fresh from their extremist studies itching for the jihad. Peshawar was lifted out of its jihad-less funk and the city felt the vigor of a new battle on the rise.

While relations between India and Pakistan grew increasingly hostile so did U.S.-Pakistan relations. In August of 1990 Benazir Bhutto lost the office of Prime Minister on claims of corruption. Her America-friendly politics and weak pseudo-democratic rule did not appeal to larger governmental powers in Pakistan. The Islamic Democratic Alliance (ISA) took control instead and put Nawaz Sharif in office as Prime Minister (NY Times, 1990). With more government backing, the ISI began strengthening its covert operation in Kashmir and embarked upon an illegal nuclear weapons program. This program frightened the U.S., causing it to put a stop to all American aid in Pakistan<sup>18</sup> (Greenhouse, 1992).

Not only was aid withheld from the struggling nation but the CIA's support was suspended as well. It was the end of a decade-long bond between the ISI and the CIA. Pakistan accused the U.S. of abandoning them after the fall of the Soviets. Having supported the U.S.'s freedom fighters and the displaced Afghan refugees for so long, one would expect some sort of respite for Pakistan, but it was not so. Peshawar and the surrounding frontier began to suffer from the absence of fresh weapons, funding, and aid from the foreign superpower. The

<sup>13</sup>There was an influx of Uzbeks, Chechens, and Sudanese militants that settled within the FATA region finding the ambiguity of it quite appealing. More prominent militants fled to Peshawar (Shay, 2002).

<sup>14</sup>The ISI saw Al Qaeda as a valuable asset for its future militant plans. Other Pakistan-based militant groups, such as HuM, provided Al Qaeda with safe houses, false documentation, and sometimes manpower (Hussain, S. A., 1993).

<sup>15</sup>There were thousands of militants that were not aligned with an organization who found their way to the northwestern frontier. All of the displaced militants called themselves the Afghan Alumni. They were a global coalition of militants with no political ties to the now fragmented Afghanistan. They fought solely for Allah and would follow the holy war wherever it led. Thousands of these alumni congregated in Peshawar searching for the next jihad. They went to Peshawar to join prominent groups like Al Qaeda who were on their way to the next front of the battle (Shay, 2002).

<sup>16</sup>This disputed region between Pakistan and India is just northeast of Peshawar. In the early 1990s tensions rose between the two nations as they strove to gain control of the territory.

<sup>17</sup>Economic incentives to join the jihad included a salary of 3,000-6,000 rupees in return for state sponsored jihad service.

<sup>18</sup>The 1990 arms cutoff law prohibited all U.S. support to non-peaceful nuclear programs.

already-criminally ravaged economy plummeted, sending citizens to the streets to starve. Anti-American sentiment began to rise. These militants had conquered the USSR and were now returning from victories in Kashmir, full of hubris and the fever for war. Citizens of the city felt abandoned by the Western power, militants felt confident of their supremacy over the Western power, and a rising sense of injustice prevailed throughout the city.

A poignant fear of malnutrition permeated the refugee camps in Peshawar.<sup>19</sup> Reduced food aid prompted thousands to flee and enter into bonded labor under the thumb of Pakistani traders (Kelsey, 1991). Even more refugees left the camps for the city forcing wages in Peshawar lower still (Frontier Post, 1991). The same year that 20,000 Afghan refugees were laid off work was the year that the AIG (Afghan Interim Government) ministries closed, creating an unbearable burden upon the city's already collapsing system. "Authorities became concerned that the local economy could not in the future support the disproportionately young, poor uneducated refugee population that would soon grow into a restless mass prone to crime and violence and unable to find jobs" (Korson, 1993 54)

In a state of such deprivation it is no surprise that violence, black market trade, and extremist attitudes flourished above the better sides of human nature. The inability of Pakistan and Afghanistan to stabilize after their support systems fell apart was like that of a sand castle inevitably crumbling under the rhythm of forces larger than itself. Its decay was reflected in the fear and chaos of Peshawar. There were power-hungry militants at one another's throat, terrorists lost without a jihad to follow, food scarcity, and an endless trail of refugees entering the city. But this era did not end. The early 1990s continued the trend of crime, hatred, and militancy in Peshawar.

#### THE RISE OF THE GOOD THE BAD AND THE TALIBAN

An untimely dismissal took place in April of 1993. Prime Minister Sharif was kicked out of office on the basis of corruption and mismanagement (Edward, 1993). World Bank Vice President Moeen Qureshi came to fill the vacancy until a national election could be held. Qureshi held the post for less than a year but instigated more proactive reform than any above mentioned Prime Minister. Most importantly, he

purged the ISI of all mujahideen supporters, leaving almost 11,000 members disbanded<sup>20</sup> (Gargan, 1993). He aimed to satisfy Washington by removing the ISI's involvement with mujahideen organizations in Kashmir and Afghanistan as well as restoring some discipline to the renegade military wing.

The dispatching of 11,000 militants from the government should have been a good deed but it took a rather ugly turn. These outcast militants logically made their way from the capital to Peshawar. They were looking for a way to continue the jihad, which they had begun within the government, on their own. They would ravage the city until an outlet for their energy could be found, letting their anti-government sentiment to simmer dangerously. Benazir Bhutto was reinstated as the militancy began to boil, but Bhutto let them be because she had learned her place. She left the ISI and the fundamentalists in peace, so as to maintain control of the rest of the nation. The ISI mentality went unchanged in part due to her lack of authority. The "reformed" agency would gain control of Pakistan once again with the help of an unforeseen ally, the Taliban (Shay, 2002).

The term Taliban stems from the Pashto word Talib, which means religious student or student of the madrasa. These militants, true to their name, rose from the schools lining the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (Shepherd, 2000). The Taliban had started as a student militia in Darul Uloom Haqqania, the "university of jihad," right outside of Peshawar (Hussain Z., 2007). Bred on Kalashnikov rifles and sectarian hatred some of these students were to be the fighters in Kashmir who shed the blood of thousands. Some of these students would be the tyrants of Afghanistan and some would eventually be the terror of the Western world. They were born and raised and trained to become terrorists right outside of Peshawar, next to the FATA tribes and the Afghani refugees. They were victims of all the violence and poverty and corruption of the Pakistani frontier. They had witnessed the end of U.S. aid and had felt hunger and deprivation because of it. Perhaps this is why they continue to haunt the region to this very day causing death and strife and pain for citizens across the globe in the battle against the Western world.

The Taliban seem to hold birthrights over Peshawar. They have more control over the city, to this day, than the Pakistani government would like to admit. After the rise of the Taliban, Peshawar became more analogous to Afghanistan than to any Pakistani city.<sup>21</sup> Citizens followed the restrictions forbidding women from the public sphere and adhered the stifling religious laws. It was a welcome change from the unruly militant anarchy that had presided previously. Citizens were once again at home in their own city. It may

<sup>19</sup>The aid cutoff stifled the supply of \$700 million to Pakistan. The end of U.S. aid exacerbated Peshawar's domestic problems. With funds dwindling the frontier region became painfully aware of the help that had been extracted from them. PVOs (private volunteer organizations) began to shut down. Peshawar based ACBAR, which represented 58 foreign and Afghan non-governmental relief organizations, was forced to suspend all activities in 1991 after intense mujahidin fighting and looting occurred within their offices (Korson, 1993). Funding for relief supplies began diverting most of its support to other nations. The reconstruction and rehabilitation programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan were suspended indefinitely, the wheat supply was cut by 25% and relief centers were shutting down by the hundreds (Frontier Post, 1991).

<sup>20</sup>He tried to help repair the disparate Pakistan by providing relief from the economic blight and ending state supported militancy. He made public all of the past officials pork barrel policies and partisan gift giving, listing all the real estate and tax exemptions from both Bhutto and Sharif's reign (Gargan, 1993).

not have been a humane rule but it created more semblance of stability than had been seen within Peshawar in decades. Peshawar was a fantastic support system for the Taliban but it was not the only Pakistani tie that the Taliban enjoyed, for they were also in close relation with the ISI. "The Taliban, a rebel band of fighters chiefly composed of inexperienced but courageous Islamic students, has achieved stunning battlefield successes in Afghanistan's conflict. Numerous interviews indicate that officers from Pakistan's mysterious intelligence agency are aiding the Taliban." (Dahlburg, 1995, 1)

The ISI had long supported the mujahideens in their crusade for an Islamic state but as the Taliban gained power the ISI began to see them as a political ally who could provide them with strategic and economic support<sup>22</sup> (Hussain Z., 2007). Once again providing radical militants with arms and supplies, the ISI began a new friendship with the Taliban. Based in Peshawar these new ISI allies would gain information, supplies and tactical support before heading off to the Afghanistan battleground (Hussain Z., 2007).

Benazir Bhutto left office for a final time in October 1996 under the claims that her government was, "incompetent, corrupt and defiant of executive restraints on administrative power" (Burns, 1996, 2) Following her dismissal the Taliban seized the Afghanistan capital, Kabul, and strategically began to establish control throughout the rest of the nation.<sup>23</sup> With Pakistan in a yearlong power vacuum and the Taliban right across the border, the ISI became more extensively involved in supporting the new militants and Peshawar became their stronghold. As the ISI-Taliban tie strengthened, the road to Kabul became continuous caravan of arms, supplies, and jihadists. With great volition, the Pashto madrasa students, refugees, FATA tribes, and Sunni militants of Peshawar began supporting the Taliban, giving them strong northern frontier ties.

<sup>21</sup>In 1993 three-dozen members of the Taliban Islamic Movement began to raise their voice against the unjust rule of infighting mujahideens in Southwestern Afghanistan. Led by Mullah Mohammed Omar they took it upon themselves to cleanse the region of the corrupt mujahidin commanders (Hussain, Z. 2007). Leaving behind Peshawar, they raced across the border to take control of Afghanistan. They were seen as a passionate force of stability for the nation. They were a coalition with strong values and a firm hand who could control the unyielding nation with its tribes and tumultuous cities.

<sup>22</sup>In 1995 Islamabad decided to support the rising Taliban, which led to the inevitable involvement of the ISI (BURNS, J. F. 1996).

<sup>23</sup>In 1997 Madrasas in Peshawar closed for students to participate in the Taliban's holy war for Afghanistan. For months students helped the Taliban in the definitive battle at Mazar-i-Sharif. The battle cemented the Taliban's stronghold over the nation and soon there after they became the overarching rulers of all of Afghanistan. Citizens in Peshawar felt a special affinity for the Taliban, which is why they sent their students to help them in the crucial battle. The Taliban had been raised within the Peshawar region and were also Pashtos. These ties escalated Peshawar's involvement with the Taliban.

The new power began to spread across the Afghanistan boarder gaining control in the unruly FATA as well as Peshawar, inevitably trying to spread into the northwestern frontier (Schmidle, 2009). Peshawar's militant organizations like the Sunni sectarian group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) became closely associated with the Taliban through trade connections from Kabul to Peshawar. Discussions between the organizations began to revolve around the Talibanization of Pashto areas in Pakistan, like Peshawar, that were historically more culturally associated with Afghanistan. The Taliban began to gain strategic depth in Pakistan through ties with Pashto Pakistani regions. They used these ties to create a gateway for militants into Afghanistan who would help them cement their control over the region (Schmidle, 2009).

The voraciousness of the Taliban threatened neighboring Pakistan and Afghanistan. Old Soviet supporters were hung from lampposts in the middle of Kabul. Women became akin to property under the new Islamic regime. The Taliban maintained control with violence and a chilling sense of fear. This foreboding presence permeated Peshawar as Nawaz Sharif took office as Prime Minister for his final time in 1997. The tensions between the two nations could be felt vibrating throughout Peshawar as the government failed to control militancy and the increasing Talibanization within the city (NY Times, 1997).

Sharif heightened military control to try to stave off the Taliban's influence over Pakistan but with ISI support and funding from Al Qaeda, the Taliban flourished. Enrollment in madrasas alongside sectarian militancy rose in Peshawar. This paralleled the disintegration of women's rights and end of civilian rule within the city. The Taliban pushed their way into Peshawar by gaining control of the black market, the FATA region, and the local government with a mixture of help and ignorance from the ISI (Schmidle, 2009). The turn of the millennium found the city on the frontier at a breaking point. Peshawar was overburdened by violence, growth, poverty, land degradation, crime, and now a pressing foreign power that would bring this hub of jihadism into the international limelight.

## CONCLUSION

Reasonably, anti-American sentiment flourished in Pakistan during the 1990s. The Western world's infiltrating ideology and invasive culture, paired with the cold shoulder they had given the poverty-stricken nation, proved to be strong stimuli for the next jihad. Militants deeply held these sentiments as the fight brewed against the unjust Western forces. All the hate and violence that had been accumulating in Peshawar throughout the 1980s would rise in retaliation against the West throughout the 1990s, when global terrorists came into existence.

Osama Bin Laden began to support the Taliban in 1996. The terrorist had finally been kicked out of Sudan under pressure from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. He moved Al Qaeda



headquarters to the freshly conquered Afghanistan and by supporting the Taliban gained sanctuary in the Islamic state (Shay, 2002). With a newfound freedom Al Qaeda began to recruit extensively within Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan. They called upon the madrasas and militant groups of Peshawar for support. Hordes of Peshawar's jihadists began to join Al Qaeda in the fight against the Western world.

Bin Laden spread the tentacles of Al Qaeda across the globe. While based in Afghanistan he recruited militants for his crusade against the infidels from Egypt, Bosnia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and even Britain (Shay, 2002). Peshawar lay in the background of this rising force. Throughout Al Qaeda's rise, Pakistan was still sending support from the ISI, still supporting the Taliban on the northwestern border, still recruiting children for the holy cause and housing the displaced Afghan citizens who dared not return home in Peshawar.

Al Qaeda developed beyond Peshawar and Pakistan into the global sphere within the span of a decade. The first attack by Al Qaeda was carried out in Aden, Yemen, killing two Australian tourists. They then bombed the World Trade Center in 1993. They were responsible for a car bomb outside Riyadh in 1995. They attacked U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. They made a strike against the USS Cole in Yemen during 2000, and on September 11, 2001, they murdered thousands of American citizens. Al Qaeda executed the most devastating attack against the United States in modern history. Killing nearly 3,000 civilians, September 11 was the final step for Al Qaeda in the transition from a guerilla force into international terrorists (Moyers, 2007). This acceleration of events shows the evolution of Al Qaeda from its origin as a guerilla force within Afghanistan and Pakistan to a rapidly spreading terrorist network to its present state as an ideological movement (Stern, 2003).

Peshawar has proven impressively resilient and a wonderful example to learn from. It illustrates the ability of human nature to persevere against the most horrendous conditions known to man and it indicates what must not be done in the future. The city was put under so much pressure from corrupt government, economic disparity, sectarian disputes, overpopulation, unstable education, and foreign military/cultural invasion that it is miraculous that it still stands today. The city was forced to reach its boiling point. The hate and crime that had plagued Peshawar for decades finally burst out. The poison in the city simmered to the surface and overflowed into the global sphere. One can learn from Peshawar that global terrorism is at least partly a product of the pressures caused by intense international conflict setting its footprint upon an unstable region.

Peshawar birthed the Taliban. Its citizens supported Al Qaeda from the beginning. Peshawar became the Mecca for militancy, but are its citizens at fault? Clearly, this city atop the Iranian Plateau is not inherently evil. Peshawar accumulated the perfect mixture of foreign and domestic corruption, heated religious beliefs, and economic calamity. It is a creation wrought not only by Pakistan government and extrem-

ists but from the hands foreign policy from the United States, the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and other nations as well.

By examining Peshawar one can see a rising trend in global cultural conflict. External cultural identities pressed in upon the region, necessitating retaliation. In their perception, the residents of Peshawar (Sunnis and Shi'as, refugees and students of madrasas alike) were pressured by Western culture, religion, and ideals causing them to react. Acknowledging the demanding complexities of their situation when considering foreign policy may help avoid great violence. Peshawar reacted against the stifling flow of violence and the clash of civilizations that beleaguered the city. If the Soviet Union had understood that not every state was made for communism, or if the U.S. would have fully grasped the implications of giving stinger missiles to hateful militants, or if Pakistan and India could hold a respectful conversation, then the globe might not be dealing with the nihilism of international terrorists. It is easy to see in hindsight where each nation took a misstep. Peshawar reflects these mistakes in its economic, social and governmental instability. The city is not singular in misfortune but rather a city among throngs of cities affected by this irresponsibility. In an age of global interaction, cultural conflict is becoming more prevalent and it can be seen in its true blood red nowhere more intensely than Peshawar. These new global dynamics of cultural intrusion must be acknowledged by foreign nations as they interact with one another or there may be a new precedent set in the bacterial evolution of global militancy.

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