

# Running to Disaster

## Part I – Roots of Radicalization

Briefing Paper  
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## REPORT AUTHOR

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## ABOUT COMMANDELEVEN

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Running to Disaster is a multi-part study from [CommandEleven](#) digging deep into:

- Radicalization
- The roots of terrorism
- What has failed
- What needs to be done
- How we get there

Intrinsic to this study is the assigning of responsibilities for Pakistan to move forward as a nation, meaning that roles will be defined for all stakeholders with defined objectives.

## INTRODUCTION

As an observer, if your belief tells you that terrorism started with al-Qaeda attacking the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001 or the attack on the US embassy in Beirut, your understanding of the background is incomplete.

This is something that must be understood.

Terrorism is the organic by-product of the radicalization of the Muslim world that started with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. When a massive group of people is motivated, mobilized and armed for a specific objective, the global diaspora cannot blame the victims, it must place the blame on those who designed the blueprint for this cancer.

Sadly, what was really happening wasn't taken seriously in terms of mid or long-term potential effects of a short-sighted strategy that has devastated the world. For the United States, they saw a way to defeat their Cold War enemy without the war ever coming near their shores. The decisions made in the US Congress, US Senate, the Pentagon, the CIA, and, ultimately, The White House during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan have repeatedly detonated across this globe, in various forms of conflict, all under a single ideology.

An informed leader would have taken immediate measures to reverse the strategy employed during the invasion when the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan in February 1989. An informed leader would have taken immediate steps to correct the ideology of warfare that had been forced upon a people. An informed leader would not have closed their eyes for decades, allowing the problem to spread, inflame and engulf the globe.

Post 9/11 many uninformed leaders came forward to tell their versions of the story, always sprinkled with the salsa of "democracy" and "freedom," in the end, the problem not only remained but was exponentially expanded.

There are no informed leaders, just personally motivated ones. Personally motivated because they are not concerned with the body counts on foreign soil nor concerned with the body counts of their own military.

The problem is not the terrorism, but the radicalization that no one wishes to realistically conquer.

Pakistan has been caught in the middle. Unable to control the rapidly spreading violent ideologies and unable to achieve a comprehensive victory against terrorist groups, Pakistan became the target of the international community without understanding where the real problem begins, or how to solve it.

*Pakistan's opportunities are limited only by Pakistan's inability to understand, and sometimes refusal to do, what needs to be accomplished to achieve those opportunities.*

That's the honest position that Pakistan has yet to understand or accept, which has made a comprehensive victory against radicalization and terrorism impossible. While Pakistan has seen significant success against terrorism, it has not been able to achieve any real progress in permanently eliminating the problem.

Understanding Pakistan's long-running struggle with radicalization and terrorism takes a great deal of historical context, mixed with an understanding of quiet alliances between jihadi

groups and political parties, and getting a grasp on the radical madrassa culture in Pakistan, which has spread very quickly throughout the country since the time of the first Afghan war with the Soviet Union, during the martial law government of General Zia-ul-Haq. Pepper all of this with every institution attempting to grab some share of the power model. And above it all, sits the Pakistan military and intelligence services to manage it all.

75 years of Pakistan's history, at every level, is the embodiment of Albert Einstein's quote: **"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."**

For any Pakistani, or Western analysts/observer, to grasp what Pakistan struggles with daily means understanding the intricate and intertwined relation of the factors we've defined above.

Many erstwhile analysts, journalists, and observers would like to start the conversation from General Pervaiz Musharraf's martial law from 1998-2007, which would be incorrect. 2001 onwards was the maturation and fruition of what was sown during the Soviet invasion and nurtured for Pakistan's "strategic depth," turning against Pakistan itself.

You must become a student of history, not a party to the rumor mill for political point scoring or transference of blame, to find solutions to national problems.

Where Pakistan stands today is a conglomeration of mistakes, missteps, and strategic blunders from all segments of the corridors of power, along with tactical influence from foreign governments and intelligence agencies, whose sole interest is destabilizing Pakistan.

Former US Secretary of Defense, [James Mattis](#), in his book [Call Sign Chaos](#), said this about Pakistan:

"Pakistan was a country born with no affection for itself. Upward mobility and self-enrichment were the key drivers, and there was an active self-destructive streak in its political culture, in the sense that everyone is working for themselves at the cost of the collective good and the state."

That blunt fact must be accepted by every Pakistanis before any real conversation can be initiated on effectively countering any problem the State of Pakistan faces, especially the terrorism problem, and eliminating the feeder pond of radicalized madrassas and masjids that pump ready fighters into the stream.

It's the blunt fact because this is exactly what foreign governments and intelligence agencies leverage to destabilize Pakistan, and Pakistanis have yet to realize they are the catalysts that drives the instability.

As a nation, we need to stop talking about hybrid warfare and 5<sup>th</sup> generation warfare, those objectives were achieved in Pakistan decades ago.

Since the 1980s, Pakistan has been a victim of cognitive warfare. Decades. Kinetic warfare is expensive in both capital and weaponry leading to the highest expense – the loss of human life.

Cognitive warfare requires two things:

1. A connection to the packets of information or someone who relays information packets
2. A mind that has been attacked from all sides, plagued with every day tensions and looking for any way to have a better life

Today, your mind is the battlefield, not the ground you stand on. When they can conquer your mind, they have conquered your principles, and you have allowed them to mold your character, thoughts, and reactions to their will.

Keep that in mind as you read further.

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## BACKGROUND

Much like a perfect storm, the events that exploded post-9/11 in Pakistan, were set in motion decades previously. Prior to the United States led Global War on Terror, Pakistan's problem with extremism was sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia groups, that radically changed with a simple phrase – "We'll bomb you back to the Stone Age."

It is foolish to debate the geostrategic significance of Pakistan, which also makes it a target for foreign regimes and domestic Non-State Actors (NSA) hoping to destabilize the region.

Whether it is Afghanistan, India, China or the Central Asian States, Pakistan is at the center of every geopolitical debate and the target of every intelligence agency to keep it from gaining strength or stability.

To achieve any of Pakistan's growth or economic objectives, it must first reel in the massive problem of radicalization and terrorism, which affects law and order, investment security and economic opportunities.

*One does not exist without the other, nor can one survive without the other.*

Additionally, it must be understood that Pakistan must be willing and able to make difficult choices that propel growth to a peaceful, inclusive Pakistan, rather than struggle with the same decades old problems than enable international enemies to paint Pakistan as a pariah state.

Pakistan saw close to 82 terrorist attacks from 2001-2007, but the uptick in the domestic war started after the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) captured international headlines with their terrorist activities in the center of Islamabad. Once the operation against the mosque was completed, it launched the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Pakistan's nemesis for almost three decades now.

The nation's own history has not been kind or forgiving of mistakes. As stated above, a true embodiment of repeating the same steps and expecting different results.

Whether the discussion starts with what Pakistani people say in their drawing rooms, Field Marshal Ayub Khan's Better Democrats model, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's industrialization of industries, General Zia-ul-Haq's decade of Islamization, Nawaz Sharif's numerous corruption models, or the military's continuous, unneeded involvement in national discussions, the result is that Pakistanis continue to suffer, driving them to more and more radical options.

*Repeating the same steps, expecting different results without changing anything.*

Pakistan must define where the country needs to go, how it will get there and what sacrifices need to be made to reach the objective.

Defining developmental objectives for Pakistan should not be tied to an elected government. Democratic governments, while announcing numerous initiatives, rarely able to deliver due to their own rampant corruption. Many developmental projects in rural areas are delivered by foreign Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), who are operating from an agenda that will not benefit Pakistan, while gathering intelligence and building relationships with the most neglected areas of Pakistan.

For a nation that is globally known as one of the most charitable, it is surprising that charity has yet to be funneled domestically towards projects that would normally be done by foreign NGOs.

Elected governments, thus far in Pakistan, have done well at making themselves independently wealthy and prosperous, but have not given the same to the people who continue to vote for them in hope of something better. No, the people have been used as stepstools, and sometimes human shields, to climb to positions of power.

Since the “new” government was installed, we have seen Pakistan become more politically radicalized, the economy has taken a dramatic turn towards default, as inflation grows and the Pakistan Rupee continues to devalue.

While the nation was already entrenched in the economic problems, peace talks with the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) collapsed in December 2022, leading to the TTP announcing they would again wage war on Pakistan.

### **This is what Pakistan struggles with today.**

Since the TTP walked away from the negotiating table, there has been a significant uptick in guerilla warfare against security forces, and acts of terrorism against law enforcement agencies, as well as civilians, who facilitate either the armed forces or the police.

Pakistan’s forward progress starts when it controls law and order situation to encourage foreign investment and offer economic opportunities to the people of Pakistan.

As stated in the introduction, the blame for today’s Pakistan cannot be laid at the feet of any single institution, entity or individual.

Where Pakistan stands is due to decades of inaction against a cancer that is eating Pakistan from within. For decades, rather than extracting the tumor and allowing Pakistan to recover and progress, every stakeholder has kept a hands-off approach to real problem solving.

This should not be taken to mean that initiatives have not been implemented, they become politicized. Once politicized, the value to the people is lost and the hardship is increased, again pushing them to more violent and extreme options.

Where has Pakistan show the intent or the initiative to fight the problem of radicalization, which started in 1979?

As we ask that question, we must also ask where has the international community shown the initiative to fight the problem of radicalization?

The people of Pakistan becoming the tool in the hands of manipulators, whose interests has never been the benefit of the country or its people. That’s the power of cognitive warfare mixed with radicalization.

Achieving a solution to Pakistan’s radicalization and terrorism problems hinges on the seriousness of 6 key stakeholders, with a specific roles and responsibilities:

- The People of Pakistan
- Political parties and elected governments



## A CommandEleven Briefing Paper

- Military, intelligence, para-military, and law enforcement agencies
- Establishment/DMG/CSS Officers
- Judiciary
- Religious parties, Auqaf Department, Madrassas and Masjids
- Media organizations/influential personalities

The analysis will cover the roles of each stakeholder and provide objectives that will bring achievable and lasting success for Pakistan in the war against radicalization and terrorism.

## THOSE WHO FOSTERED THE CULTURE BURNING PAKISTAN

The international community has, and does, play a significant role in the radicalization of the Muslim world.

While the West continues to pass the blame of radicalization to the Muslim countries and the radical imams that preach extremism, we still remember the “J for Jihad.”

The Soviet invasion into Afghanistan in 1979 began the involvement of foreign governments and intelligence agencies to significantly increase radicalization.

To most observers, Pakistan’s radicalization originated through the madrassa system that was leveraged during the time of the mujahideen, which today is the feeder pond for all terror groups operating globally.

After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the United States, in coordination with regional partners, such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan launched Operation Cyclone, to support the Afghan mujahideen resistance to the Soviet occupation.

*That would be partially correct.*

This was the public face that was fed to the world, while a more sinister covert operation was initiated.

The military operation was well known but most are still unaware of the significant expenditures by the American government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide educational materials and textbooks to mujahideen parties and Afghan children from 1986 to 1994.

These books were developed and published by the University of Nebraska – Omaha (UNO) with the specific intent to encourage violent resistance to Soviet forces in Afghanistan by shaping the educational program of Afghan youth.

USAID invested US\$50 million on “The Alphabet of Jihad Literacy” between 1986 and 1994:

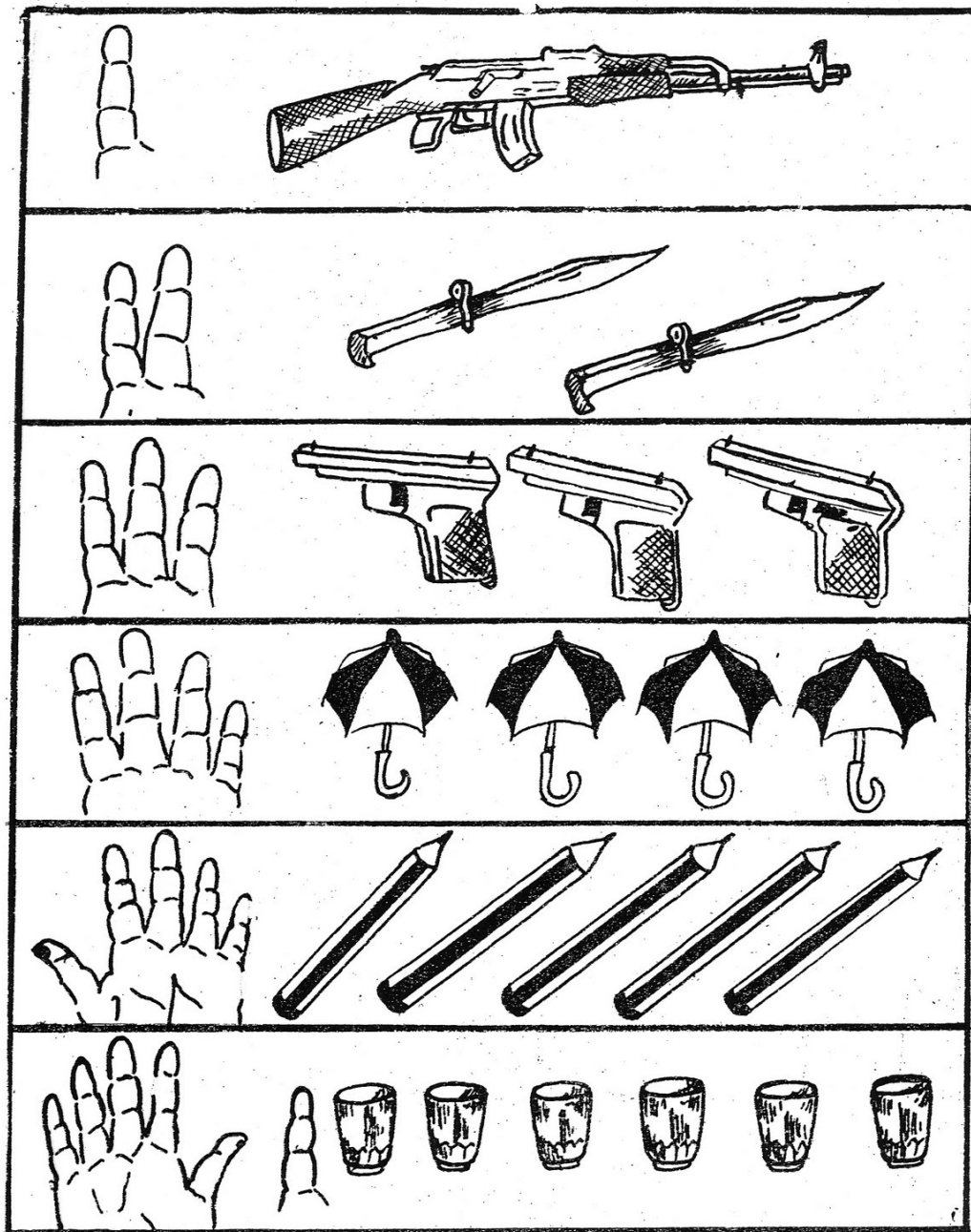
- to develop and publish the educational materials and textbooks to mujahideen parties and Afghan children
- to fund the establishment of the Education Sector Support Project (ESSP)
- the ESSP would coordinate with the mujahideen parties to form the Education Council of the Seven Party Alliance (ECSPA), comprised of the education presidents of each party
- the ECSPA would also setup the Educational Center of Afghanistan (ECA).

ESSP documents, produced by UNO, describe the American intervention in the Afghan education system as a direct counter to the “Sovietization” of Afghan education. The stated goal was to replace Marxist and secular educational materials.

Through the same networks used to funnel weapons to mujahideen, UNO oversaw the distribution of educational kits of textbooks and other materials, funded by the USAID grant to schools across Afghanistan and the refugee camps on the Pakistan border.

However, the content of these textbooks blatantly promoted jihad, militancy, and violence through language and imagery. The textbooks included clear messages aimed at evoking

hostility and promoting violent retribution against occupiers of Afghanistan, designed to teach children to read and basic mathematics simultaneously emphasizing weapons, killings, jihad, and Islamism.



The distribution and management of the educational materials was the sole discretion of the ECA. USAID documents detail in which ESSP school materials were distributed, their mujahideen party affiliation and the total number of students. The schools the ECA supplied were both within Afghanistan and “cross-border schools” in the refugee camps on the Pakistan border.

Many of these “schools” were madrassas, religious schools often funded by Saudi Arabia or wealthy Arab families, that provided a direct pipeline of radicalized fighters to the mujahideen.

Since the US’s policy was geared to strengthening the mujahideen and these textbooks secured an endless pipeline of followers.

At that point, the US was not looking at the long-term effects of this program, which is globally felt today in the forms of the Afghan Taliban, [the Islamic State](#) (IS), Hezbollah, al-Qaeda (AQ) and the numerous terror groups that take their inspiration and direction from these three groups.

In 2007, the Taliban spent US\$1 million to setup schools in Southern Afghanistan with the 1980s mujahideen curriculum.

How widespread was the reach of the USAID’s “The Alphabet of Jihad Literacy” program?

In the [1992 UNO/ESSP Annual Report to USAID](#), Thomas Gouttierre, the head of the Center of Afghanistan Studies at UNO, explained that

“some 1180 schools inside Afghanistan, 1031 refugee schools in Pakistan, logistical and professional support for curriculum development, teacher training, and monitoring through the ECA.”

As per the same report, for grades 1-6, 2.3 million textbooks were distributed to ECA schools and another 6.7 million textbooks were distributed to non-ECA and refugee schools.

These textbooks have been reprinted by various foreign aid and terrorist organizations, including the Taliban and Islamic State to reinforce their violent beliefs.

**American taxpayer dollars paid for the Taliban, al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and every other terrorist group that originated or is inspired by any of these three groups.**

[Dana Burde](#), professor of international education at New York University, in her book [Schools for Conflict or for Peace in Afghanistan](#), described the educational content as

“teaching bias or hatred toward a particular group, fosters discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes and behaviors, which contribute to the underlying conditions for conflict... curriculum content that glorifies war, militancy, and the use of force is likely to increase normative support for violence and militancy more generally.”

She continues,

“By propagandizing Afghan children with themes for violence Islamism for anti-Soviet objectives, American policymakers put their military and foreign policy goals over the well-being of Afghan youth by laying the groundwork for future conflict through shaping the psychology of an entire generation of Afghans toward violence.”

In his “*A’ is for Allah, J’ is for Jihad*” article in World Policy Journal, Craig Davis translated some of the textbooks.

In the first-grade language arts textbooks, [the alphabet was taught](#) with the following:

Ti is for topak (rifle) – Javed obtains rifles for the Mujahideen

Jin is for Jihad – Jihad is an obligation. My uncle went to the jihad. Our brother gave water to the mujahid.

Dal is for din (religion) – Our religion is Islam. The Russians are the enemies of the religion of Islam.

Zhi is for muzhdih (good news) – The mujahideen missiles rain down dew on the Russians. My brother gave me good news that the Russians in our country taste defeat.

Shin is for Shakir – Shakir conduct jihad with the sword. God become happy with the defeat of the Russians.

Zal is for zulim (oppression) – Oppression is forbidden. The Russians are oppressors. We perform jihad against the oppressors.

[This textbook was used to teach first-graders Pashto](#). In the primer, eight of the 41 letters of the alphabet containing references to guns, swords, and defending the homeland against infidels.

Primary school math textbooks had the same message. A third-grade math textbook teaches subtraction with the following problem:

“One group of mujahideen attacks a group of 50 Russian soldiers. 20 Russians were killed. How many Russians fled?”

A fourth-grade math textbook has this problem:

“The speed of the Kalashnikov bullet travels at 800 meters per second. If a Russian is at a distance of 3200 meters from the mujahid, and that mujahid aims at the Russian’s head, calculate how many seconds it will take to strike the Russian in the forehead.”

Joe Stephens, in his March 2002 Washington Post article, [“From US, the ABC’s of Jihad,”](#) describes:

“In the twilight of the Cold War, the United States spent millions of dollars to supply Afghan schoolchildren with textbooks filled with violent images and militant Islamic teachings, part of covert attempts to spur the resistance to the Soviet occupation.

These primers, which were filled with talk of jihad and featured drawings of guns, bullets, soldiers, and mines, have served then as the Afghan school system’s core curriculum. Even the Taliban used American-produced books.”

[Yahia Baiza](#), in his 2013 book [Education in Afghanistan](#), stated the following:



The primarily objective behind the war curriculum for resistance education was to habituate and bring up children right from class one of the primary level with anti-Soviet, anti-communist hatred, love for violence, war, killing in the name of ‘*jihad*’, ‘patriotism’ and ‘love for mother land’. Perhaps the most shocking of all was the fact that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and its implementing partner the University of Nebraska at Omaha developed the curriculum for the refugee children and those outside the state’s control inside Afghanistan. They did it in consultation with the resistance leaders. It was a clear violation of human rights and children’s rights for sound and non-violent education. As an example, the Pashto language and mathematics textbook for Pashto, speaking children of year one of primary level, starts with a message of hatred against the Soviet Union and the ruling PDPA. It describes them as aimless communists who commit inhuman and savage deeds, such as mass killing, looting, burning of houses, farmers’ harvests, and destruction of holy mosques and other places of [religious] respect, using of poisonous gases, etc. (De Afghanistan de Mujahidinu Islami Etihad 1989: ii). Below is an example from this first-year language textbook from which children were taught the Pashto alphabet:

He shared the following examples:

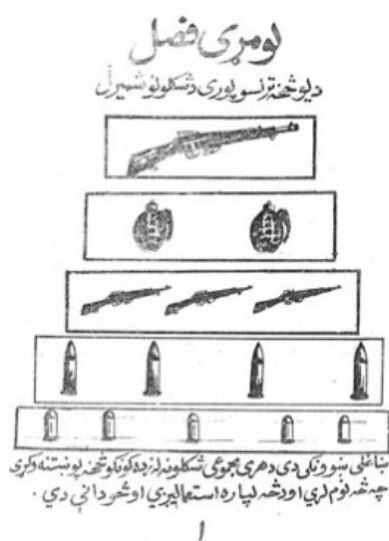
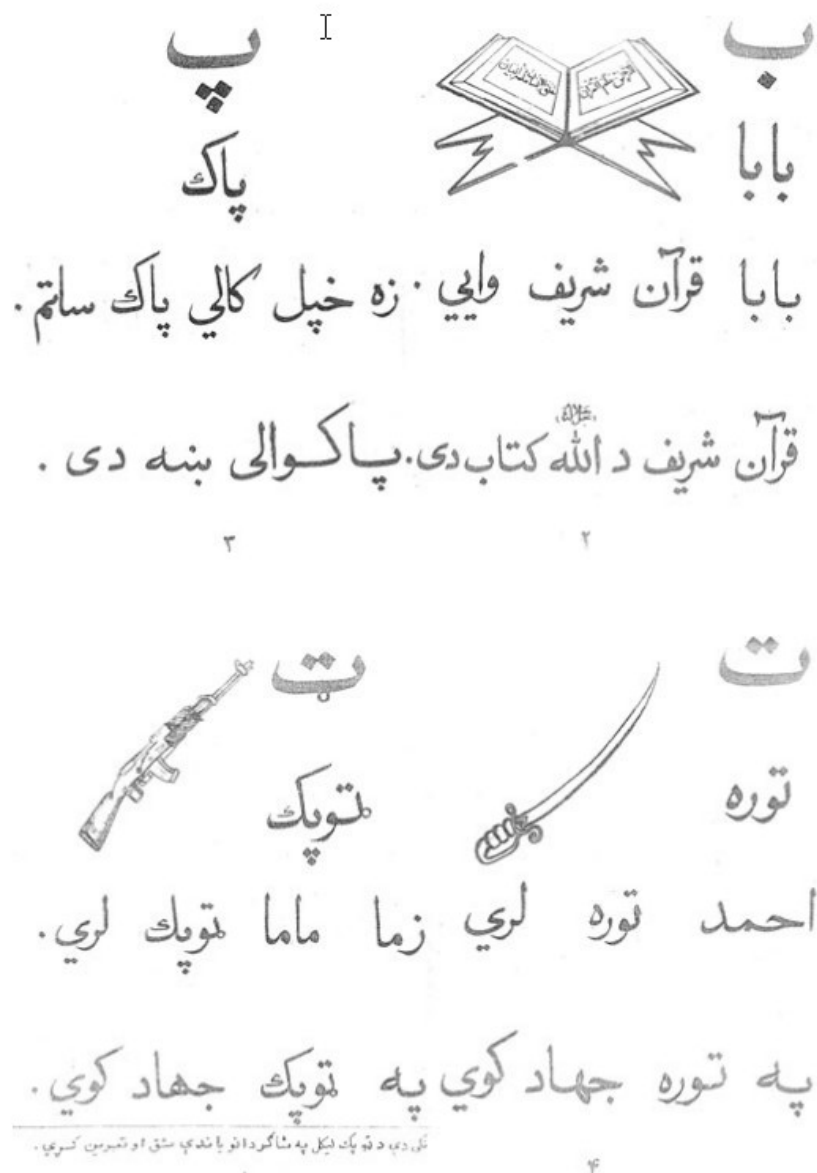


Figure 6.2 Example of resistance education textbook. Translation of the Pashto text beneath the illustration: Respected teacher, please ask learners about the name, purpose of use, and number of the above images (De Afghanistan De Mujahidinu Islami Etihad 1989b: 1)

And another example from his book.

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After reaping the successes of creating, inspiring and educating the global jihadi, [in February 2002](#), United States foreign aid workers launched a “scrubbing” operation in neighboring Pakistan to purge all references to rifles and killing from the books.

Doug Pritchard, a representative of a Canadian Christian non-profit group, who visited Pakistan as part of the operation to review and scrub the primers, said

“We were quite shocked. The constant image of Afghans being natural warriors is wrong. Warriors are created. If you want a different kind of society, you have to create it.”

Another aid workers, who reviewed an unrevised 100-page textbook, counted 43 pages containing violent images and passages.

After the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the United Nations' education agency, UNICEF, began preparing to reopen Afghanistan's schools, using new books, developed with the assistance of 70 Afghan educators and 24 private aid groups. In January 2002, UNICEF started printing the new textbooks for many subjects, but also arranged copies of the old, unrevised USAID books for other subjects, including Islamic instruction.

Within days, the Afghan interim government announced it would continue to use the old USAID-produced textbooks for the core school curriculum, with the UNICEF books only used as supplements.

In 2002, the US used part of the US\$ 296 million Rebuilding Afghanistan aid package to reprint the old books, purging the violent references.

Of the 200 titles originally created by UNO and USAID, only 18 were reprinted, which were mostly Islamic instruction books.

At the end of 2002, UNICEF claimed they had only 500,000 copies, of the millions in circulation, of the "militarized" version.

In 2002, the nearly four million textbooks entering Afghanistan, and millions more enroute, taught verses from the Holy Quran and tenets of Islam. President George W. Bush even had the outright audacity to state in one of his weekly radio addresses:

"...the books being trucked to Afghan schools would teach 'respect for human dignity, instead of indoctrinating students with fanaticism and bigotry.'"

It is a great thing when the man who is solely responsible for the prison in Guantanamo Bay, the enhanced interrogation techniques employed to "gather intelligence," the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, should be lecturing others about the "respect for human dignity."

It was also no surprise the university responsible for radicalizing the region was again given the contract to provide "revised textbooks and teacher training kits," with interim President Hamid Karzai and first lady Laura Bush present at the announcement.

USAID showed their "good intentions" for the Afghan people by removing their logos and any mention of the US government, said USAID spokeswoman Kathryn Stratos. She continued

"It's not USAID's policy to support religious instruction, but we went ahead with this project because the primary purpose is to educate children, which is predominantly a secular activity."

In an [interview with National Public Radio \(NPR\)](#), Burde said:

"Picture yourself in the mid-80s. Preventing and countering Soviet expansion was a single-minded focus in the United States and across the West. After the balance of power shifted and the Shah of Iran was overthrown, there was an enormous amount of suffering among the Afghan people, and an exodus of epic proportions, like the Syrian refugee crisis. There was a lot of outpouring of support on both the right and the left for Afghans struggling against the Soviet occupation.



As part of this war effort and consistent with the spirit and goals of the time, the alphabet of jihad literacy tried to solidify the links between violence and religious obligation.”

She further said:

“When you look at really intolerant, biased content, whether the books, or those in Germany pre-World War II, or in Rwanda before the genocide, all of these things condition people toward ideas, stereotypes, biases, and I think that’s clear that it has some influence on underlying conditions for conflict.”

Mia Bloom, a terrorism expert at Georgia State University, said

“It exposes children to violence in a routine and daily fashion so it ceases to be shocking and normalises violence.”

Bloom is part of the [Georgia State University Minerva research project](#) on children and extremism to track apps, textbooks, and other macabre Islamic State learning tools. She stated that her team had already found 35 Islamic State textbooks easily downloadable and ready to use in the dark corners of the Internet.

Through American taxpayer dollars, United States foreign policy, the Pentagon, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the mujahideen were created, the children’s minds poisoned to war instead of peace, and an endless war, by making radical and violent textbooks became core staples of Afghan and Pakistani madrassa education, despite the consequences on childhood development and the future stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a countries.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

Pakistan has struggled with the problem of radicalization first through religion, then through politics and various color revolutions, since the first days of Pakistan's existence as a nation.

That is something that no one can deny.

Whether it be the various religious groups unwilling to tolerate differences in interpretation of the Holy Qur'an to the hatred spawned violence, killing members of "rival" religious groups, innocent bystanders, and law and security enforcement personnel, Pakistan has been divided. And the division hasn't been healthy for Pakistan since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan war ended in 1988.

It is impossible to believe that any military can ever defeat a terrorist group, insurgency, or movement. The military can denigrate the ability to operate, but the final resolution must be come at the negotiating table, once all the tools are removed from their grasp. The military can force them to retreat, incapacitate their ability to fund and train, but they will never be able to defeat terrorism comprehensively.

Ideologies cannot be defeated by bullets. They can only be defeated with better ideas.

## RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM

Attaching the terms radical, extremist or terrorist have become an everyday task for Pakistan's media pundits. The problem has never been declaring someone anti-state, it's been acting against those who are active, funding and facilitating in the Non-State Actor (NSA) insurgency groups, as well as those who promote their message across the Internet, and personally to friends and acquaintances.

The problem has also been not finding a clear methodology to handle each of these groups, because their differences are crucial to defeating the ideology.

Since the launch of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, Pakistan had achieved great success in *militarily* defeating the terror groups operating from Pakistan's soil against Pakistan itself, but hasn't been able to achieve any success against the ideology that radicalized them.

It must be understood that there is no military solution to the ideology itself, that must be achieved by the government, judiciary, and bureaucracy, with the assistance of media organizations and think tanks to craft a narrative that answers the radicalization message, while working with intelligence operatives to neutralize those who are continue to covertly support, facilitate, and finance these activities.

Radicalization is a process used to pull individuals from mainstream society into a dark world that believes they alone have the right to judge and punish those who don't share their beliefs or objectives.

Radicalization trains someone to believe in extreme social and political solutions that are not shared by the majority in a community.

This radicalization process can begin, or bear fruit, at any age, income class or educational level, as we learned from the Safoora bus attack in Karachi. The attackers came from strong family backgrounds, no financial limitations and education at some of the top institutions in Pakistan.

This is today's terrorist, who we failed to believe could exist, recognize, counter, or neutralize.

The radicalization process entails the selective use of verses from the Holy Quran, brutal punishments for errors, fire-brand imams and mujahid coming to speak or teach, perceived societal and government failures to motivate at-risk individuals to give up on the national system and adopt an aggressive stance.

This aggressive stance manifests itself through hate inspired speeches and propaganda materials, violent protests that demand the nation be taken to a Sharia-based form of government and judicial system, violence directed towards rival religious groups, and violence against innocent civilians, including minorities.

All these methods are against Pakistan's laws, and Islam's teaching itself.

## UNDERSTANDING THE MISTAKES

Islam was the principal element behind the mobilization of masses during the Pakistan Movement under Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The Two Nation Theory was the indicator of Muslim nationalism in India while the Islamic ideology was the motivational force behind it.

Pakistan's journey clearly demonstrates the shift from the Two Nation Theory and nationalism to the Islamic ideology and theology.

Jinnah's Muslim League provided a political party for the integration of Islamic ideology with political interests. This mixture was never acceptable to the fundamentalists of India, although they later joined the Pakistan Movement as a pressure group.

Jinnah in his inaugural speech on 11th August, 1947, clearly stated that religion would be the private affair of the individual and stressed equality and freedom of religion in Pakistan.

While this was the original spirit for the creation of Pakistan, the religious groups that partnered with the Muslim League dedicated themselves to declaring Pakistan an Islamic state.

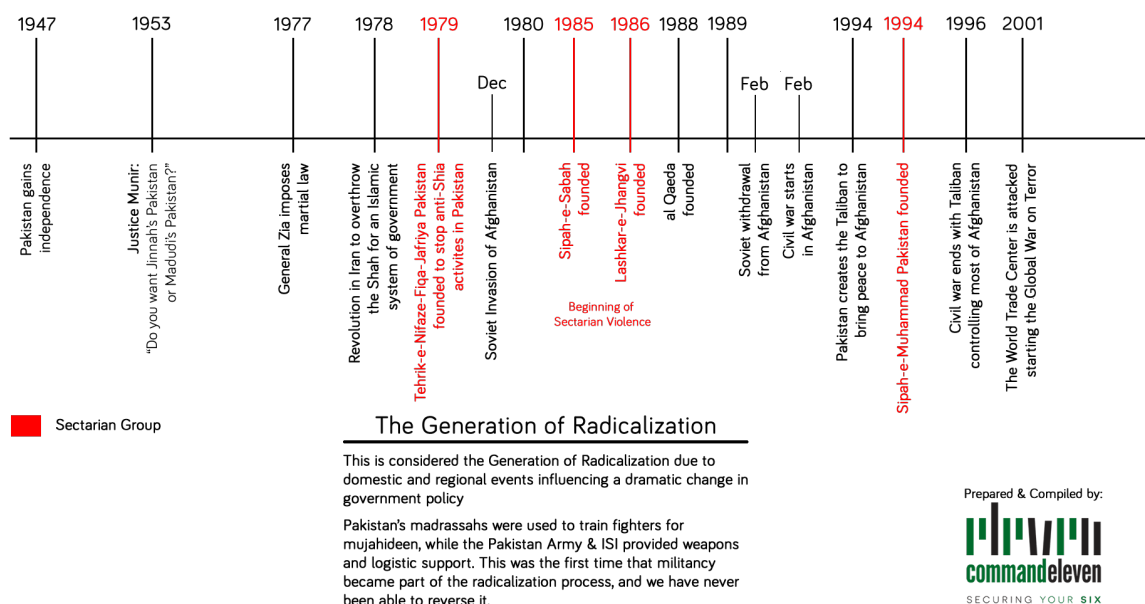
This debate shaped the Objective Resolution on 7 March, 1949 to draft an Islamic Constitution.

It was Justice Muhammad Munir's commission in 1953 that clearly identified the struggle within the nation's fabric - **“That the object (of the agitators) was to establish a religious state. it was neither in Quaid-e-Azam's mind nor in that of Allama Iqbal's.”** Leading many people to state that the father of Islam in Pakistan was not Quaid-e-Azam, but Maulana Sayyid Abdul Ala Maudoodi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI).

This was the foundational brick placed in the radicalization of Pakistan.

After the Constitution of 1956, which was considered the first compromise between the liberals and the conservatives, the fundamentalists created political parties to attain positions in the State.

General Zia's era is considered as the most crucial phase for the study of extremism.



In his totalitarian regime, the fanatics and fundamentalist groups acquired power and resources they never had access too, to thrust their agenda and challenge the power of the state in future.

The nexus between extremists and the State ended with the effectiveness of the former. The undue support to the religious groups and parties gradually undermined the role of State and emerged as the driving and principal actors in all decisions and policies of the State.

As matter of fact, the tussle between the people and the fundamentalists was going on since independence, but Zia's era is held solely responsible for Islamization of Pakistan. He used Islam as a tool for the legitimization of his autocratic military rule. He had accomplished the task that he became responsible of strengthening Jihadi elements. The fundamentalists and their elements had nothing to do with the golden teachings of Islam, instead they used Islamic injunctions to legitimize their aggressive moves of controlling different segments of society and components of power.

The Islamic agenda of Zia administration was entrusted with political expediency.

Zia's administration brought an alliance with the military actively supporting politicians and political parties. The Ameer-e-Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Mian Muhammad Tufail was General Zia's uncle; making Jamaat-e-Islami became more vocal and effective in this era. While the religious parties were gaining more control in Pakistan, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided the institutional, financial, and tactical support from Arab nations, wealthy Arab families, and global superpowers.

Prior to the invasion, these parties and groups were vocal but there was no trend of militancy in them. However, the alliance against the Soviet invasion, the doorway to militancy was permanently opened.

These groups were given agendas and resources with the financial incentives.

The amalgamation of money, politics, power, and religion brought havoc in the region. Both Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and CIA trained thousands of Pakistanis and Arab

volunteers to become part of the Mujahideen, who would later become diehard Jihadis. This training induced both homicidal and suicidal tendencies within the structure of Jihadis. Madrasahs and religious institutions in Pakistan were used as nurseries for the breeding fighters for the Jihad.

The engineers of this strategy probably were unaware of the fact that once this trend was established, it would become fatal for generations for decades and decades.

While repeating General Zia-ul-Haq's name as the driving force, it should also be clear that many of Pakistan's pundits and politicians also locked arms with the General, including Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the deposed 3-time Prime Minister of Pakistan and leader of his own faction of the Pakistan Muslim League.

It was Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, speaking at a death anniversary rally for General Zia, where he said –

*“I will carry on General Zia's vision for Pakistan.”*

As a nation, Pakistan has suffered at every level for mistakes in managing national issues, which became international issues.

Not understanding these same Mujahideen and their violent ideology could one day turn against Pakistan was never considered, nor was any strategy developed for reviewing and reversing the potential fallout.

Since the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan, Pakistan has been overtaken by the violent ideology that continues to be taught in its madrassahs. The ideology that takes an underprivileged child and uses their shortcomings to motivate them towards violence continues to drive militants and jihadis to self-proclaimed jihads in Pakistan, in the region, and around the world.

The disenfranchised Pakistani diaspora, armed militant groups, radicalized madrassas and mullahs, networks of donors and deep-pockets, and relationships with intelligence, both foreign and domestic, became a significant part of Pakistan's continued, and deepening, radicalization.

The militants that were created during the Soviet invasion grew into two groups, which have inspired thousands of like-minded groups around the world – *al-Qaeda*, the international terrorist group founded by Osama bin Laden and the *Taliban*, based in Afghanistan, the realized result of what violent religious radicalization could achieve.

This was while there was only newspapers and TV.

Now, there is the Internet to facilitate terrorist groups spreading their message of violence without every meeting a single person, distributing videos that recruit individuals, training and educating their believers with materials on bomb-making, attack methods, and lone-wolf attacks, taking terrorism to dramatically more brutal and individualized level.

The Internet successfully reached the individual, who shared the ideology, but didn't have access to the terrorist groups. The Internet expanded the audience and increased recruitment beyond anyone's expectations, while motivating them to act where they were. They didn't need to come to Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria.

Today's terrorist is no longer waiting for approval from some commander. No, today's terrorist is an individualized weapon, with a fuse burning and the detonation location, capacity, and carnage unknown. An active sleeper cell unknown to even their own family.

While the creation of Afghanistan against the Soviet Union achieved its goal of pushing back the Red Army, neither the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or the thousands of individuals, organizations, universities, and countries that were party to the creation of this havoc, have any realistic plan to reverse the plague that has spread across the globe, without using weapons, which further radicalizes the population.

Radicalization cannot be stopped by military force alone.

Rather, military force further emboldens it against the State, when there is nothing offered in return. Most of those being recruited as fighters come from poor backgrounds, where families could not meet their daily requirements. If the State is unable to offer immediate economic and developmental incentives, the problem of radicalization grows exponentially and belief in the State disappears.

## CONCLUSION

Terrorism is the organic by-product of the radicalization of the Muslim world that started with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. When a massive group of people is motivated, mobilized and armed for a specific objective, the global diaspora cannot blame the victims, it must place the blame on those who designed the blueprint for this cancer.

But this cancer was not self-inflicted, as the world would like to portray. Pakistan was purposely infected, along with Afghanistan, during the Soviet invasion to fully radicalize society that it would be easy to instigate conflict, easy to manipulate, and, most of all, easy to control.

Since the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan and being a frontline partner against the United States' ultimate Cold War rival, Pakistan was sanctioned, military support was withdrawn, the people were made to feel manipulated and used further increasing radicalization opportunities, and terrorism exploded upon the world.

In the next part of this series, CommandEleven will be linking radicalization with the organic transformation to violent conflict within Pakistan's borders and the rise of international terrorism.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

“Running to Disaster” was written and researched by Syed Khalid Muhammad, Director General – CommandEleven.

Khalid has significant field operational experience with terrorism, extremism, and insurgencies, and specific insights on the Afghan Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP), and other groups operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

## ABOUT COMMANDELEVEN

CommandEleven is a private intelligence firm, based in Pakistan, with assets, analysts, and researchers offering apolitical analysis on topics such as security, geopolitics, defense, and espionage. CommandEleven’s intelligence covers Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kashmir.

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