

RECENT TRENDS IN SUICIDE ATTACKS

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Suicide attacks happened in many countries in the last decade. However, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel/ Palestine, Sri Lanka and Pakistan are the most infamous regions for having frequent suicide attacks. This gory phenomenon is wrapped in massive controversies. From definition to the reasons behind them, everything is an enigma to unravel. Mainstream media and ideologies supporting and rejecting the motives of suicide attackers have left little room for objective analysis. This paper attempts to delineate the motives behind the suicide attacks by differentiating the prevailing socio-political situations in the different regions, specifically Pakistan. After looking at the number of attacks in different regions, internal dynamics, political and religious beliefs of the groups responsible for carrying out such attacks, this paper concludes that frequent attacks are being carried out in the regions which are occupied by foreign forces, the regions which have a movement for independence and the regions which wanted to separate from some other countries. In addition, the paper also addresses the issue of how suicide attacks and attackers are different in Pakistan from rest of the regions. The differences and their causes are discussed.

Keywords: suicide attacks, organizations, religious beliefs, foreign forces

Suicide attack is the burning issue of the burning world. Whereas media highlights any incident that happened whether in Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan, incidents, attempted incidents or even suspected incidents of suicide attacks in the Western World come on TV screens more quickly with more factual and speculated details combined with a particular approach of analysis.

The study of this gory phenomenon has been considered complex and a difficult job due to a number of reasons. Most significant among these are the political differences on the issue, which keep the horizon clouded and objective scientific analysis mitigated. The biggest problem in the whole debate

on terrorism (suicide terrorism included), is its definition as no internationally agreed upon definition exists so far.

Gordon (2004), while summarising the ongoing struggle within the Western academia to define terrorism has found that a search through Sociological Abstract database using the keywords 'terrorism and definition' yield five records during the coverage years of 1963-85, and 23 records during the period 1986-2001 (Gordon, 2004). This suggests how chronic this conflict around the definition is. Secondly, one can notice that with more political crises on the horizon (Hezbollah's attacks started in 1983, first Intifada in 1987), the numbers of records have also increased correspondingly.

In 1988, Schmid and Jongman found 109 definitions of terrorism while collecting material for their monumental book, *Political*

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Terrorism. CIA redefines terrorism each time a new president is elected (Gordon, 2004).

This clearly depicts the political meddling in defining and analyzing the issue. Ahmad (1998) identified this difficulty even before 9/11 in one of his presentations at the University of Colorado. His main argument about exclusion of state approved terrorism from the definitions is still valid. No definition has yet called killing of innocent, non-combatant civilians by armies of recognized states as state terrorism.

The discussions around suicide attacks are more complex and multifarious. Firstly, it is always presented as an exclusively Muslim phenomenon. Secondly, there is a difficulty and/or unwillingness in understanding the political motives behind it. Thirdly, there is a mistaken approach to paint all incidents of suicide attacks with the same brush after ignoring the regional differences. Fourthly, there are no records or data being kept for any objective analyses. Fifthly, there is a governmental inability and or unwillingness to investigate and or make the outcome of investigations public. Sixthly, the perpetrators of suicide attacks are being increasingly elusive, indefinable and indiscernible. Most of the time no one takes responsibility and objectives also remain unknown.

Pape (2005), a leading expert on suicide terrorism defines it as the most aggressive form of terrorism, pursuing coercion even at the expense of angering not only the target community but neutral audiences as well. What distinguishes a suicide terrorist is that the attacker does not expect to survive the mission and often

employs a method of attack (such as car bomb, suicide vest, or ramming an air-plane into a building) that requires his or her death in order to succeed. In essence, suicide terrorists kill others at the same time they kill themselves (Pape, 2005).

Situation is more grave and intricate in the Muslim world in general and Pakistan in particular. Even before the invasion into Afghanistan and Iraq, the US bought enough hatred for being meddling into internal affairs of the Muslim World, supporting Israel against Palestinians and enforcing a tight control over the resources. Majority of Muslims liked and supported the activities of organizations like Al-Qaida, when it targeted the US and allies. However, they had to change the views when these organizations started killing the Muslims as well in Iraq, Afghanistan and in Pakistan. Pakistan, in particular, is the epicentre of debates on the role, functions and future of these organizations. The religious clerics from all sects declared them as un-Islamic. However, the scholars, political leaders and analysts have distinctively different views about these attacks. Mainly, contradiction is around the view that the phenomenon is the result of the US and allies invasion into Afghanistan and Iraq and that the perpetrators are resisting against imperial and Anti-Muslim agenda of the US.

These "terrorist" groups were formed, funded, trained and equipped by the US to fight against USSR in late 1970s. Now after being betrayed and abandoned, they have turned against their architects. The perpetrators are religious fanatics and want their specific form of religious rule to be implemented all

across the world. Whosoever disagrees and resists, deserves the death (*wajib-ul-qatl*). One can detect the breadth of divergence among these views. Because of the huge disagreements on the diagnosis, there are understandable difficulties in evolving a consensus on the solution.

Chronology of Suicide Attacks

As Pakistan is one of the regions having difficulties with suicide attacks, it seems necessary to outline the history of such attacks in historical and regional context, so we can see the new trends emerging in Pakistan.

Sicarii

Experts on terrorism (Bloom, 2005; Bongar, 2007; Pape, 2005; Peterson & Hamblin, 2004) considered the Jewish Zealots or *Sicarii* struggle against the Romans from 66- 73 AD as the starting point of terrorism and suicide terrorism. Peterson and Hamblin (2004) distinguished Zealots from *Sicarii* and have described their targets when the Romans occupied the Jerusalem in the first century.

Some fifty years later, the *Sicarii* reappeared under the leadership of the religious teacher Menachem, grandson of Judah. The Jewish high priests of the day were seen as collaborators with the Romans, and it was therefore permissible, according to the *Sicarii*, to use violence to remove such illegitimate rulers and free the people of God from their wicked domination. The *Sicarii* began agitation and started becoming prominent when they began to use murder, kidnapping and terrorism to

support their cause. Ironically, their efforts were not mainly directed against the Romans but against Jewish collaborators such as priests of the temple, groups as Sadducees, Herodians, and wealthy elites who had profited from working with the Romans. The *Sicarii* would hide short daggers under their cloaks, mingle with crowds at the great festivals, murder their victims, and then disappear into the crowd during the ensuing panic. Their most successful assassination was that of the high priest Jonathan. (Peterson & Hamblin, 2004).

From the details on *Sicarii*s movement we can easily infer that their basic inspiration was religious. Their leader belonged to a religious ancestry and had a religious appeal and goal. Their targets were the occupiers, collaborators and civilians. If we look at the organizational structures, ideology and objectives set by the perpetrators of suicide attacks, particularly in Iraq and Pakistan, we find patterns showing huge similarities with *Sicarii*s.

Assassins

An Ismaili sect, wrapped in a lot of mysteries remained involved in carrying out suicide missions in the 11th and 12th centuries. They have been named differently, *Hashshashin* (as they, reportedly, used to be addicted to cannabis) and Assassins in the modern Western academia. Some Muslim scholars would prefer using the name of *Asasiyun*, meaning people who are faithful to the *Asās*, meaning "foundation" of the faith (Emadi, 2005). This sect was known to kill people from different groups. The Assassin himself, having struck down his assigned victim, made no attempt to

escape, nor was any attempt made to rescue him. On the contrary, to have survived a mission was seen as a disgrace (Lewis, 2003).

Japanese Kamikazes

In the World War II (from October 1944 to August 1945) the aviators of Japanese Air Force targeted allied navel force by crashing their aircrafts into ships. They used their fighter planes as bombs instead of dropping bombs. According to reports, more than 3000 Japanese soldiers died in these missions (Bloom, 2005). Experts (Pape, 2005) believe that they were not terrorists as they were part of a campaign of a recognized army of a recognized country and targeted the soldiers, not the civilians. Same strategy has been adopted by Russians and Germans in the World

War II (Bloom, 2005) but they are not considered as suicide attackers. However, Kamikazes keep appearing in the list of suicide attackers.

Suicide Attacks in Recent History.

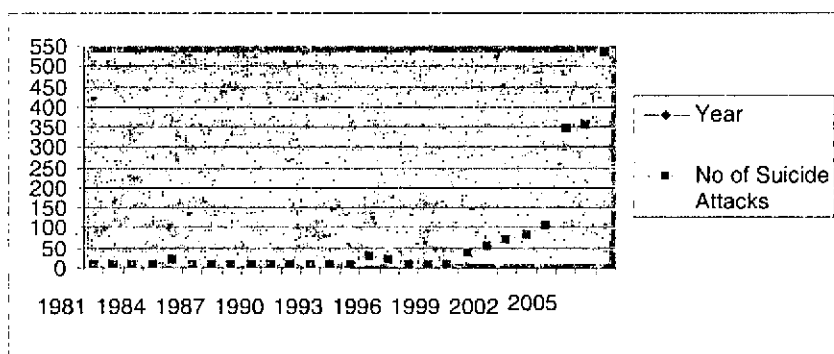
In the recent history, the rise in the number of suicide attacks is unprecedented. Moghadam (2009) noted that suicide missions rose significantly since 1981, from an average of 7 attacks a year in 1980s and early 1990s to 535 attacks in 2007 (Figure 1). Pape's data on suicide attacks gives more details in the regional context (Table 1).

Hezbollah

This Lebanon based organization was formed after the Israeli invasion in 1982. The US, Australia, Canada, UK and Israel consider it a terrorist organization although it is a parliamentary organization as well.

Figure 1

Number of Suicide Mission, 1981 - 2007



Source: Moghadam, 2009.

Table 1
Suicidal Attacks 1983-2003

Time Period	Group	Ideology	Target	Number of attacks
1983-1986	Hezbollah	Islam	US, France, Israel	36
1990-2001	LTTE	Hindu/Secular	Sri Lanka	75
1994-1997	HAMAS	Islam	Israel	18
1995	BKI	Sikh	India	1
1996-1999	PKK	Islam/Secular	Turkey	14
1996	Al-Qaeda	Islam	US & Allies	21
2000	Chechens	Islam/Secular	Russia	19
2000	Kashmiris	Islam	India	5
2000	Palestinian	Islam/Secular	Israel	92
2003	Iraqi Rebels	Unknown	US & Allies	20
Attacks not part of organized campaigns				14
Total Number of Attacks				315

Source: Robert Pape, 2005.

After 2006 war, Lebanon's new Cabinet unanimously approved Hezbollah's status as an armed organization and accepted its right to fight for occupied lands in August, 2008. In the Lebanese parliament at the moment, Hezbollah and its allies have 11 members in a cabinet of 30. Hezbollah's main contribution is its extensive network of social services, which runs hospitals, schools, programs for social developments and very organized media cells. A report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2006) states Hezbollah's popularity in Lebanon's regions marked by lowest annual and average incomes because of its strong social support network.

Detailed study of attacks by Hezbollah has proved it as organization of those who resented and reacted to the Israeli invasion. Hezbollah has been accused of some

incidents of terrorism (Table 2). However, the organization kept on denying any activity outside of Lebanon. It also did not claim responsibility of any suicide attack after November 20, 1986.

Tamil Tigers (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam LTTE)

The political/ ethnic conflict which resulted in the formation of LTTE and its military activities started since the independence of Sri Lanka from the British rule in 1948. According to 2001 census of Sri Lanka, Sinhalese (Buddhist by faith) are 82% of the total population while Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils (Hindu by faith) together form 9.3% of the total population (Madurapperuma, 2001). Majority of Tamils settled in the northern and eastern regions called as Tamil Eelam.

Table 2

Suicide Attacks (1983-1986) Carried out by Hezbollah.

Total Attacks	36
Attackers	41
Names Known	37 (90%)
Gender	31 men 6 women
Average Age	21.1 years
Marital Status	39 single

Source: Robert Pape, 2005.

In 1972, Sinhalese changed the constitution, name of the country from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, and language from English to Sinhala and declared Buddhism as country's religion. The government also started settling Sinhalese into Tamil regions (Pape, 2005). This ethnic conflict combined with the tendency to overpower Tamils contributed to forming LTTE in 1976, and Velupillai Prabhakaran (1954-2009) became its leader. Major targets of suicide attacks by LTTE have been army, police and government officials (Table3). Indian involvement in the formation of LTTE and then funding, training and equipping it, has been highlighted by many sources.

The New York Times reported on June 5, 1987 that Indian Air Force airdropped 25 tons of food

and medicine in the Tamil region when it was under siege by Sri Lankan Army. After a successful negotiation between Indian and Sri Lankan governments, India withdrew her support for LTTE, which annoyed the latter and resulted in Rajiv Gandhi's assassination through a suicide attack. An Indian court held LTTE and its leader Prabhakaran responsible for Gandhi's assassination (Rediff India Abroad, 1998).

Palestinian Organizations

Pape (2005) and Hafez (2006) mentioned four Palestinian organizations which carried out or claimed responsibility of suicide attacks against Israel from 1994 to 2009.

Table 3
Suicide Attacks Carried Out by LTTE (2001-2009)

Year	Target	Number of Attacks
2001	Army & Police	4
2002	Police Station	0
2003	Sri Lankan Navy	0
2004	Sri Lankan Navy, Army	1
2005	Personnel	2
2006	Naval Ship, Bus	8
2007	Ship, Officials, S. Forces	12
2008	Army, Officials	13
2009	Army, Officials	12
Total		52

Source: Robert Pape, 2005

Pape (2005) mentioned four Palestinian organizations as responsible for carrying out suicide attacks against Israel.

1. HAMAS
2. Palestinian Islamic Jihad
3. Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigade
4. Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

Sometimes it is difficult to pin point the organization responsible for suicide attacks against Israel as more than one organization would claim one attack. It is also likely for these organizations to have joint missions. That is why it is difficult to ascertain the responsibility.

HAMAS

There are several hypotheses about HAMAS's formation. The most prevailing and popular is PLO's and Yasir Arafat's corruption and failure to deliver. But some experts on Palestine believe that it was Israel who created HAMAS to out-balance Arafat, and to give a religious colour to a regional conflict. An expert on the Middle East, Hassane Zerouky (2002) in his

widely circulated article, titled as "HAMAS is a creation of Mehsud" blamed Israel. The HAMAS was allowed to reinforce its presence in the occupied territories. Meanwhile, Arafat's Fatah Movement for National Liberation as well as the Palestinian Left was subjected to the most brutal form of repression and intimidation.

Zerouky (2002) is not the only one; Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert debated in the foreign affairs and defence committee of Israeli Parliament in 2007 and blamed Binyamin Netanyahu of directly contributing to strengthening the HAMAS movement by releasing the movement's founder, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, during his term as prime minister. Netanyahu established Hamas, gave it life, freed Sheikh Yassin and gave him the opportunity to blossom (Jerusalem Post, 2007).

HAMAS's founders, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, offered Israel a truce in January 2004, for establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, and restoring Palestinians' "historical

rights". Israel not only dismissed their offer but killed Yasin in March 2004 and Rantisi in April 2004 through target assassinations.

After defeating Arafat's Fatah in 2006 elections, HAMAS showed its popularity and vote bank in Palestinian territories. Ismail Haniyeh was nominated as the Prime Minister. However, President Mahmoud Abbas dismissed him from office on 14 June 2007 after he had been rejected by the Israel and the US (BBC, 2007). HAMAS carried out its first suicide attack against Israel in April 1994.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is a smaller militant organization. It has opted for no role in politics, activities of social welfare or in any diplomatic negotiations with Israel. PIJ carried out its suicide attack on November 1994 (Pape, 2005).

Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigade (AMB)

Though it is not very clearly identifiable, majority of experts believe in AMB being the military wing of Yasir Arafat's Fatah. Despite the political conflicts between Fatah and HAMAS, AMB did keep doing joint ventures with HAMAS. AMB has almost no involvement in any other activity

other than the military one. AMB carried out its first suicide attack on December 22, 2000.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

PFLP is an offshoot of Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) founded by Dr. George Habash in 1953. Dr. Habash (1926-2008) was a Palestinian Christian who became a refugee after his home town Lydda was attacked and occupied by Israeli forces in 1948. He witnessed the expulsions and the hardship his people had to suffer because of Israelis.

The PFLP is guided by Marxism-Leninism and, together with other left-wing Palestinian organizations, claims to be struggling to build a working-class party. Habash viewed the "liberation" of Palestine as an integral part of the world Communist revolution. The PFLP advocates armed insurrection and perpetrates media-oriented attacks, particularly the hijacking of planes, to bring the Palestinian cause to public attention.

The PFLP has its strong hold in Palestinian territories like Ramallah, Al-Bireh and Bir Zeit and in the suburbs of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. In the 2005 municipal elections, its candidates won the mayor-ship of Al-Bireh, Ramallah and Bethlehem.

Table 4

Flash Points of Suicide Attacks (2002- February 2010)

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Iraq	0	20	68	144	103	375*	100*	100	12
Afghanistan	0	2	4	8	50	72	62	103	13
Pakistan	2	2	8	3	10	58	60	89	16
Sri Lanka	0	0	1	2	8	6	13	12	0
Chechnya	2	2	8	3	0	1	1	5	0
Israel	44	25	14	7	4	1	1	0	0

Al-Qaida

After looking at the history of Al-Qaida and its operations since its inception, it would be fair to say that this organization is very loose in its structure but very rigorous and robust in its ideology. The start of Al-Qaida was actually a new chapter in the history of organizations responsible for carrying out suicide missions. No other organization before Al-Qaida went beyond its geographical boundaries and had an international agenda. The term "Global Jihad" is used to denote its ideology. Their struggle is on behalf of a cause, not a people or nation. Their war is with the ideologies of the West and in particular with those among the Ummah who have adopted Western ideologies and infidelities (Fettweis, 2009).

Abdel Bari Atwan (2006), after quoting from Ayman Al-Zawahiri's book *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, described Al-Qaida's description of its enemy against whom it is waging a holy war.

According to these sources, the Western forces have adopted a number of tools to fight Islam including:

1. The United Nations

2. Friendly rulers of the Muslims

3. Multinational corporations

4. The international communications- a data exchange system

5. International news agencies

6. International relief agencies, which are used for espionage, proselytizing, coup planning and the transfer of weapons.

This list seems incomplete as Al-Qaida has targeted Muslims masses and Muslims believing in different interpretations of Islam than them. In February 1998, Usama Bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Abu Yasir Taha, Sheikh Hamza and Fazlur Rahman issued a *fatwa* or a joint decree on "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" (Oliveti, 2001). This document elaborates concepts and targets of their armed struggle. Al-Qaida has its own definition of Jihad and martyrdom which many Muslim jurists disagreed with (Atwan, 2006; Qadri, 2010). That may be the reason of joining Al-Qaida by the people who share that particular form of Islam. Al-Qaida has been involved in carrying out suicide missions and other forms of military activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Saudi

Arabia, UK, USA, Spain and Yemen.

Iraqi Organizations

The first suicide attack on Iraqi soil was carried out on March 22, 2003 (Pape, 2005) just after the American led invasion into the country (Table 4). Suicide missions in Iraq are very different in many aspects from rest of the regions known for such occurrences. Firstly, for the first time in the history of suicide attacks it became really hard if not impossible to ascertain which group has carried out an attack for what purpose. , Hafez (2007) gave a list of 56 organizations which did take responsibility of attacks from time to time (Table 5). However, if the number of subgroups, which would operate under these 56 big groups, is counted the total number reaches to 180. That may well be the reason of Iraq's witnessing more attacks than any other region in the known political history of mankind. In 2007, there were 375 attacks in Iraq, which makes an average of more than one attack every day. The

real irony is that no one keeps the record of these attacks. Iraq went different in the following aspects:

1. Number of attacks is higher than any other region
2. Number of organizations involved is more than any other region.
3. Number of attacks, where no organization would claim responsibility, is higher than any other region. Rather it is contrary to other regions, where more than one organization would claim responsibility.

Celebrating attacker's martyrdom, which is popular in other regions, is not observed in Iraq, the reason being that a high percentage of attackers are foreigners. Nobody can come to know about their identity and ideology.

Attackers in Iraq have been more lethal in causing damage. In a series of suicide attacks on 14th August 2007, more than 500 people were killed (Reuters, 2007).

Table 5
Nationalities of Known Attackers in Iraq

Country	Number of Attackers	Country	Number of Attackers
S. Arabia	44	Italy	8
Kuwait	7	Iraq	7
Syria	6	Libya	3
Jordan	3	Belgium	2
France	2	Spain	2
Egypt	2	Lebanon	1
Tunisia	1	Morocco	1
Britain	1	Turkey	1
Unknown	11	TOTAL	102

Source: Hafez 2007

In some incidents, a second attack was carried out immediately following the first one to prevent rescue teams from taking injured to the hospitals thereby raising the death toll.

Many attacks have been carried out against other sects, Mosques, Mausoleums, sacred places and religious festivals.

Taliban

After Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan in the early 1989, the militias fighting against the Russian Army started fighting each other to control different parts of the country. With the implicit and explicit help of some countries, army and intelligence services, the students (Talibs) of religious schools of a particular sect of Muslims were organized in 1994 to become a militia (Gasper, 2001) which was called Taliban. Within next two years, Taliban were able to run a massive military campaign and captured Afghan capital Kabul in September, 1996. As soon as they came to power, they implemented their own brand of Sharia Law in the areas under their control (Rashid, 2000). They have been supported by the religious schools in Pakistan in terms of ideology and human resource (Rashid, 2000).

In 2001, the Taliban were asked by the US to hand over the perpetrators of 9/11 attacks. On their refusal, Taliban were attacked by the NATO forces on October 7, 2001. Taliban leaders went on hiding; some of them were captured; however, they started resisting the foreign occupation, and it is still ongoing. Taliban had been fighting the occupation since 2001 but the first suicide attack from them came

in February 2003. Afghanistan witnessed the first suicide attack on September 9, 2001, when Ahmed Shah Mehsud was killed in a suicide attack. However, it is still unclear who was behind that attack. Suicide attacks carried out by Taliban also set some new trends.

In Afghanistan, insurgents started recruiting intellectually disabled and mentally disordered individuals, as well as drug addicts and children to carry out suicide attacks. In a National Public Radio (NPR) interview, Afghan pathologist Dr. Yusef Yadgari claimed that 80% of suicide attackers in Afghanistan have physical and mental disabilities (NPR, 2007).

In the same report, NPR interviewed Christine Fair, co-author of a UN report on suicide attacks in Afghanistan, about the pattern of attacks. Fair's conclusion is that the average number of mortalities in Afghan attacks, 3 per attack, is far less than attacks elsewhere; 12 per attack (NPR, 2007).

A high number (43%) of suicide attacks have been noted in which the attacker himself was the only one to die. Two reasons have been inferred for their failure. Firstly, Afghan attackers, contrary to Iraqis, try to attack 'hard' targets like occupying armies, police and government officials. They try not to attack civilians. Secondly, the ineptitude of recruits in carrying out suicide attacks (James Town Foundation, 2007).

United Nations Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy and Williams both have confirmed the recruitment of children for suicide attacks in Afghanistan. This

report explains the situation regarding the recruits in Afghanistan. It also indicates the lack of dedicated attackers in Afghan cadres. Such a situation has happened for the first time in history of suicide attacks (United Nations Statement, 2009)

Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistan

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is the name many small groups adopted in different parts of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). In October 2007, they got united in Mohmand Agency and named themselves as Tehrik-e-Taliban. On December 2007, another group announced its formation with the same name (Abbas, 2008). Afterwards, Tehrik-e-Taliban became an umbrella organization with Baitullah Mehsud as its *Amir*. Abbas (2008) has inferred TTP's five point agenda through different demarches issued from time to time.

1. Enforce Shariah, unite against NATO forces in Afghanistan and perform "defensive Jihad against Pakistan Army".
2. React strongly if military operations are not stopped in Swat District and North Waziristan Agency.
3. Demand the abolishment of all military checkpoints in the FATA area.
4. Demand the release of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) Imam Abdul Aziz.
5. Refuse future peace deals with the government of Pakistan.

Many of the Jihadists recruited by the TTP, as by Islamic extremism generally in Pakistan, were

originally trained and 'indoctrinated' by the CIA, to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. As Mullah Nazeer Ahmad, *Amir* of Taliban Mujahideen in South Waziristan remarked, militant Islam in this region as elsewhere is 'CIA from start to finish, as it led a "Western crusade to save the gods of Wall Street"' (Valentine, 2009). Most of the suicide attacks in Pakistan were linked to TTP or it has claimed the responsibility of.

Suicide Attacks in Pakistan

Pakistan witnessed the first suicide attack targeted at Egyptian embassy in Islamabad in November 1995. There was no war on terror, no drone attacks, no ISI-Taliban rift and no NATO presence in Afghanistan at that time. On March 17, 2002, a Church in Islamabad was attacked where High Commissioner of Sri Lanka was targeted. Targeting local Christians or the Sri Lankan High Commissioner makes very remote or no connection with NATO invasion in Afghanistan. Since 2002 till to date the rise in the frequency is quite evident (South Asia Terror Portal, 2002).

Bajoria (2010) has described the ideological classification of groups involved in various forms of terrorist activities in Pakistan. There have been a total of 235 suicide attacks in Pakistan from 2002 to 2010 (Table 6). They are sectarian, anti-Indian, Afghan Taliban, Al-Qaeda and its affiliates and the Pakistani Taliban. Since the groups in Pakistan are toeing a diversified ideological agenda, they have a wide variety of targets.

Table 6

Details of Suicide Attacks in Pakistan (2002-February 2010)

Year	Pun	Sin	Bal	NWFP	AJK	Total	Sect
2002	1	1	0	0	0	2	0
2003	1	0	1	0	0	2	1
2004	4	2	0	1	0	7	5
2005	2	1	0	1	0	4	3
2006	0	2	0	5	0	7	2
2007	12	1	4	39	0	58	1
2008	13	1	1	46	0	61	3
2009	20	1	2	65	2	89	5
2010	0	2	0	13	1	16	2
Total	53	11	8	170	3	235	22

* Source: Figures are compiled from news reports and are provisional information.

Note: Pun = Punjab, Sin = Sindh, Bal = Balochistan, NWFP = North West Frontier Province, AJK = Azad Jammu Kashmir.

Pakistan: Setting New Trends

After reviewing the functioning of organizations carrying out suicide attacks in different regions of the world, situation in Pakistan emerges as very distinct in many aspects. If we take regions where suicide attacks happen very frequently, one can classify them into two distinct categories. One, where there are movements for freedom, like in case of Palestine and Sri Lanka. Second, the regions where there is foreign occupation, like in Iraq and Afghanistan. Though there are attacks in the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and India, but they are far less in frequency and in the extent of damage.

Like Iraq, suicide attackers in Pakistan have no single agenda to run or a specific group to target. From masses to mosques, from security forces to clerics of other sects, from children to religious processions, a wide range of people have remained the targets. Other regions, like Israel and Sri Lanka, targets of suicide attacks were known and predictable and were relevant in the political crisis of the

particular region.

Hezbollah and Tamil Tigers were very careful in choosing their targets. In the recent times, Taliban in Afghanistan don't target civilians unnecessarily. But attackers in Pakistan and Iraq have been quite reckless. Majority of the killed and injured are civilians and have no connection with the political crisis whatsoever.

Pakistan and Iraq share another aspect of suicide attacks. In both the countries a significant number of attacks have been carried out against other Muslim sects. Mostly Shia Muslims remained the target, on two occasions; Barelvi Sunnis were targeted as well. No attack has yet been carried out against Deobandis, Wahabis or Ahl-Hadith sects of Muslims.

There are different hypothesis being discussed as the etiological factors of suicide attacks in Pakistan. The most raised and seemingly potent one is the American presence in the region. As we have seen, suicide attacks in Afghanistan were not carried out until February 2003, i.e., two years after American

led NATO attacks on Afghanistan started. Pakistan had its first attack on 19th November 1995. Second prevalent hypothesis is the phenomenon of drone attacks on militants in the North Waziristan and the tribal areas of Pakistan. This also seems less plausible as the first drone attack was carried out in June 2004. Pakistan is the only country in the world where one cannot attribute suicide attacks with one well defined and definite reason.

In other regions, except Iraq, suicide attackers would make their intentions, objectives and demands known to their targets and to the world. They also would claim responsibility of attacks. Pakistan and Iraq are the two countries where responsibilities are claimed very seldom. There are only inferences drawn in Pakistan's case, no consistent demands are known yet from the horse's mouth.

Unlike other regions, hardly any suicide attacker's death has been celebrated. Palestinians, Hezbollah and Tamil Tigers were very particular in this regard. But Pakistani attackers, along with their Afghan and Iraqi counterparts, are very laid back in this aspect. At least in the public domain, nobody knows the identities of suicide attackers in these three countries. Dhanu, Rajiv Gandhi's killer, remained as a legendary hero up until LTTE was alive. Similarly, Palestinians have been celebrating the martyrdom of even women, Wafa Idris and Andalib Suleiman, for instance (both carried out suicide attacks in 2002) till to date (Victor, 2004).

Masses in Pakistan neither support American foreign policy nor Pakistan's involvement in the "war

on terror". However, the perpetrators of suicide attacks don't enjoy the mass support either. Even a group of leading religious scholars from all major sects issued a verdict on 14th October 2008, in which they declared suicide attacks as forbidden in Islam. Another leading cleric issued a detailed verdict declaring suicide attack's prohibition in Islam (Qadri, 2010). However, a recent meeting of leading Deobandi clerics in Lahore "shied away from condemning suicide bombings" (Daily Dawn, May 2010).

Pape (2005) linked the ideology of different groups with female participation in suicide attacks. He argued that religiously more radical groups did not engage women in this business. According to his data, for example, Al-Qaida never employed a woman to carry out suicide attacks. There is no news about a woman carrying out a suicide attack in Afghanistan. But a change in this regard was witnessed in Iraq. Suicide attacks against Shias in Iraq were carried out by women which proved to be very lethal and damaging. In Pakistan, after the incident of Lal Mosque in 2007, suicide attacks were being expected by female students, but it did not happen. Pakistan, till to date, has seen only two attacks carried out by women.

In October 2008, a Shia member of Parliament was attacked in Bhakkar. Initially it was considered as a sectarian attack. But after investigation it turned out to be a monetary dispute (Gledhill, 2008). One party involved in the dispute hired the services of an explosive expert and a suicide attacker after paying twelve hundred thousand rupees to a tribal leader. Though it is not clear, but the attacker seemed to

be unaware of the real motive of the perpetrators. This is a unique incident in the known history of suicide attacks. This incident has few indications of the situation in Pakistan.

Suicide attacker can be unaware of the real motives of the group. The groups brain wash and lie to their cadres. The cadres have little or no knowledge of group's motives and agendas. Money can be one of the motives for the group. If a tribal leader can organize a suicide attack why cannot any intelligence agency of any country do so; for that matter.

The organizations in Pakistan are not comparable with other organizations responsible for carrying out suicide attacks in other regions, for several reasons. Majority of organizations represent a group of masses. HAMAS is an elected political party in Palestine. Hezbollah, PFPL and Al-Aqsa Brigade, all take part in popular electoral politics. LTTE was representing the sentiments of Tamil population of their region. The organizations in Pakistan never claimed the mass support. Electoral politics is considered as prohibited in their interpretation of Islam. Same is the case in Iraq. Most of the attackers are foreigners and don't

have any popular support from the public

Almost all organizations, except Pakistani and Iraqi ones, take part in social welfare services in their regions and have very consistent and well known structures. The hierarchy of their structure is well known to the world outside. Their sources of income, their affiliations with international players, their responses to different events in the world and their contacts with the media,

though quite selective in some cases, are well known to the world.

Other organizations recruit their cadres on the basis of shared national and political objectives. Iraqi and Pakistani cadres share purely religious objectives, which is to implement their brand of Islam. This may be the reason that all Pakistani and majority of Iraqi organizations are joined by the people of one particular sect of Muslims.

Conclusion

Pakistan is the only country in the world suffering from very frequent and destructive suicide attacks without having the reasons which other regions experiencing the same difficulty are generally characterized with. The suicide attackers and their organizations are not comparable with most other regions. The most distinctive feature of this phenomenon in Pakistan is its elusiveness. Describing the situation with definite reasons behind it is very difficult, if not impossible. That is why reaching to the solution always looks very grim and gloomy.

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