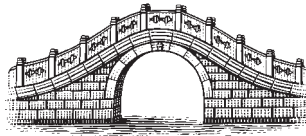


Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: A New Look at the Militancy-Madrasah Connection

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NOTE ≈ This presentation is drawn from a forthcoming monograph by the author that explores the connections between education and militancy in Pakistan, to be published by USIP Press in late 2007. The author is grateful to Vali Nasr, as well as to the two anonymous reviewers who provided very useful feedback on earlier versions of this draft. The views expressed here do not represent those of the United States Institute of Peace.

KEYWORDS: PAKISTAN; TERRORISM; MILITANCY; MADARIS; U.S. POLICY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study presents a new framework to expedit the connections between Pakistan's religious schools (*madaris*) and militancy in Pakistan and beyond.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Contrary to popular belief, *madrasah* students are not all poor and madaris are not categorically tied to militancy. Madaris—along with mosques and public proselytizing events (*tabligh*)—are, however, “gathering” places where militant groups, religious ideologues, and potential recruits can interact. Religious leaders of some madaris issue edicts (*fatwas*) that justify the use of violence, and a small number of madaris are used for militant training. Limited evidence suggests that madrasah students more strongly support jihad than those of public or private schools—but public school students, who comprise 70% of Pakistan's enrolled students, also have high levels of support for violence.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- With respect to intelligence collection and analysis, asking whether or not madaris produce militants is the wrong question. Querying the educational and other characteristics of key *tanzeem* (militant group) operatives, while keeping in mind the impacts of group efforts to select for desired skills and capabilities, will inform counterterrorism efforts more effectively.
- A number of implications are pertinent to U.S. policy toward Pakistan and the threat posed by Pakistan-based terrorism to U.S. interests:
 - The U.S. can act unilaterally against known militant madaris only at great cost to other objectives (e.g., Musharraf's safety); Pakistan will cooperate in this regard only with varying degrees of commitment, limited capability, and diminished respect for rule of law and human rights.
 - Pakistan's entire education system requires comprehensive reform; such reform may be beyond Pakistan's capability and there may be only limited scope for the United States to help. Increased participation by multinational organizations and demand for accountability by all partners are required to complete this daunting task. The costs of failure are too high to countenance.
 - Because efforts to restrict the supply of terrorism have rapidly diminishing margins of return, interventions to reduce demand for terrorism are needed.
 - Madaris merit continual observation as they may contribute both to the demand for terrorism and to the limited supply of militants. For the same reasons, Pakistan's public school sector deserves much more attention than it currently enjoys.

Ever since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Pakistan's *madaris* (pl. of *madrasah* or "seminary") have attracted the attention of policymakers in the United States and elsewhere. Pakistan's *madaris* are posited both to be incubators of militants in Pakistan and to be responsible for creating communities of support for militancy in Pakistan, South Asia, and beyond. Consequently, the United States and other countries have strongly encouraged Pakistan's president, General Pervez Musharraf, to reform these institutions and close down those *madaris* for which there is evidence of links to militant groups, or *tanzeems* as they are known in Pakistan.

Consonant with the perceived threat posed by these religious schools, the popular, academic, and policy literatures on Pakistan's *madaris* have expanded. These analyses have produced contradictory findings. While several prominent authors have argued that *madaris* are critical to militant production in the region and beyond,¹ others have cast doubt upon these claims, noting that few known militants have had *madrasah* backgrounds.² This essay argues that the extant literature likely has overestimated some risks associated with Pakistan's seminaries while underestimating or even failing to identify more empirically supportable threats associated with Pakistan's educational landscape. This disparity has arisen in part because analysts have tended to ask the wrong questions, focusing narrowly upon the disputed connections between *madaris* and militancy and failing to discriminate adequately across different militant organizations, which have their own distinct personnel requirements.

This essay seeks to reframe the policy debate surrounding the role of *madaris* in the production of militants in Pakistan and elsewhere. The main argument is that analysts must examine the human capital requirements of specific *tanzeems*, taking into consideration the objectives, tactics, theatres, and "quality of terror" produced, as well as the preferred "target recruitment market" of each particular group in question. Necessarily, this implies that some groups pose more risks than others, based on the scope of their operations, ties with other organizations (e.g., al Qaeda, Taliban), reach (local

¹ See Abigail Cutler and Saleem Ali, "Madrasah Reform Is Key to Terror War," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 27, 2005; "Pakistan: Madrasahs, Extremism and the Military," The International Crisis Group (ICG) Asia Report, no. 36, July 29, 2002; Jessica Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (2000): 115–26; Jessica Stern, "Meeting with the Muj," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 57, no. 1 (January/February 2001): 42–50; and Peter Singer, "Pakistan's Madrasahs: Ensuring a System of Education Not Jihad," Brookings Institution Analysis Paper, no. 14, November 2001.

² See Peter Bergen and Swati Pandey, "The Madrasa Scapegoat," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 117–125; Christopher Candland, "Religious Education and Violence in Pakistan," in *Pakistan 2005*, ed. Charles H. Kennedy and Cynthia Botterton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 230–255; and Alexander Evans, "Understanding Madrasahs," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 1 (January/February 2006), 9–16.

vs. global), and lethality of operations pursued (suicide terrorism vs. bazaar attacks). Such an analytical approach is more agile and affords more nuanced conclusions about the connections between education and militancy and about concomitant policy implications. Such an approach does not seek static answers to the madrasah question; rather, this approach permits analysis to evolve as groups develop their objectives, targets, theatres, and indeed the quality of terror that they can perpetrate.

This approach permits the following conclusions. First, groups that operate in more challenging terrains, assail hard targets, or attack targets that are either high-value or for which opportunity costs of failure are high are less likely to use militants that are exclusively madrasah trained than are groups that operate in easier areas of operation and engage either soft targets or targets with low opportunity costs of failure. Second, considering the prospect that madrasah education could confer some operational benefits—as in sectarian groups—madrasah graduates may be preferred in some operations. In other words, madrasah graduates may be suitable for some kinds of attacks but not for others. Third, even if madrasah students are more inclined towards jihad, a given militant group may not select madrasah students if the group has other, more desirable candidates to recruit. Militant groups could become more dependent upon madrasah students over time if militant recruitment standards change or if the militant recruitment market changes. Fourth, madaris produce religious entrepreneurs who justify violence and contribute to communities of support. Madrasah graduates also may build families that support some kinds of violence and may be the schools of choice for such families. In sum, this analytical framework suggests that madaris merit continual observation as they may contribute both to the demand for terrorism and to the limited supply of militants. For the same reasons, Pakistan's public school sector deserves much more attention, however, than that sector currently enjoys.

The remainder of this essay is organized as follows.

- ≈ pp. 111–116 reviews the literature, laying out the various claims about madrasah enrollments, numbers of madaris, madrasah students' socio-economic backgrounds, and—finally and perhaps most importantly—reviews the literature arguing for and against the connections between militancy and madaris
- ≈ pp. 116–120 looks very carefully at the various analyses of the presence (or lack thereof) of madrasah products in militant groups
- ≈ pp. 120–124 lays out a new analytical framework drawing from this complex and multidisciplinary literature

- ≈ pp. 124–128 revisits the connections between madaris and militancy through this new analytical optic
- ≈ pp. 128–134 draws out the policy implications of this approach

THE GREAT MADRASAH DEBATES

As noted above, despite the proliferation of studies of Pakistan's madaris, many important questions persist. First, scholars have vigorously disagreed about the number of madaris and the penetration of madaris in the educational market. In the popular press, an array of reports suggested that anywhere from 500,000 to two million children are enrolled in Pakistan's madaris, without any clarity about the level, intensity, or duration of madrasah attendance.³ The most influential—yet still incorrect—accounting of the penetration of madaris in the educational market was offered by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in 2002. Relying upon interview data to obtain estimates of madrasah students, the ICG claimed that some one-third of all students in Pakistan attend madaris; however, those estimates were derived from an erroneous calculation that, when corrected, yields estimates that vary from 4–7%.⁴ This miscalculation is regrettable because the report is otherwise very illuminating.

In 2005 Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Khwaja, and Tristan Zajonc published a study (hereafter referred to as the Andrabi study) that employed

³ For a comprehensive inventory of the various popular press accounts of madrasah enrollments, see Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Khwaja, and Tristan Zajonc, "Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data," John F. Kennedy School of Government Working Paper, no. RWP05-024, March 2005; and Wadad Kadi and Victor Billeh, eds., "Islam and Education—Myths and Truths," special issue, *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3, August 2006. Also see Saeed Shafqat, "From Official Islam to Islamism: The Rise of Daawa-ul-Irshad and Lashkar-e-Taiba," in *Pakistan: Nationalism Without a Nation?* ed. Christophe Jaffrelot (London: Zed Books, 2002/2004). Shafqat reports that up to two million students attend madaris in Pakistan.

⁴ "Pakistan: Madrassahs." In that report, the authors claimed that one-third of students attend madaris, having obtained this figure by dividing the total number of students attending madaris (estimated to be between 1 and 1.7 million children, as the minister for religious affairs, Dr. Mahmood Ahmed Ghazi, reported to the ICG) by the total number of all students enrolled (obtained by adding the total number of students enrolled in primary schools, as the Ministry of Finance reported in its 2002 Economic Survey, and the total number of madrasah students). The ICG erroneously used 1.992 million as the total number of children enrolled in primary schools. Taken together $[(1)/(1 + 1.992) = 0.33]$, these figures suggest that at least 33% of all children of primary school age attend madaris. The ICG should have used 19.92 million for the number of children enrolled in primary school. Correcting this figure, one obtains only 4.7% $[(1)/(1 + 19.92) = 0.04]$ as the lower bound. Using 1.7 million as the enrollment for madaris suggests that 7% are enrolled in madaris as the upper bound. The ICG amended the report in July 2005 only after publication of the Andrabi et al. study of 2005, which first identified this source of error. Furthermore, it is far from obvious that this is the correct method to calculate madrasah penetration. This math presupposes that madrasah education is comparable only to primary-level education, an assumption that may not be justified.

data both from household-based economic surveys (Pakistani Integrated Household Surveys, or PIHS, from 2001, 1997, and 1991) and from the 1998 Pakistani census⁵ as well as from household data collected in 2003 in three districts in the province of Punjab. The Andrabi study, without adjusting for bias in the data, calculated that madaris enjoyed a market share of less than 1%. That is, among all students enrolled in school full time, less than 1% attend madaris. In contrast, the study found that public schools account for nearly 70% of full-time enrollment and private schools account for nearly 30%.⁶ It should be noted that the Andrabi study asked only about the kind of school utilized, not about the kind of education obtained. The Andrabi study did not adequately consider the fact that religious education is not the exclusive purview of madaris. Indeed religious education takes place in public schools, under private tutors, in part-time mosque schools, and even in various kinds of private schools.

Because household-based surveys exclude some potential madrasah students (e.g., orphans and homeless children) and are somewhat dated, Andrabi, Das, Khwaja, and Zajonc adjusted their estimates accordingly for excluded groups and population growth. Accounting for these biases, they estimated generously that 475,000 children might attend madaris full time, less than 3% of all full-time enrollments.⁷ The Andrabi study's upper estimates are on the same order of magnitude as the ICG's corrected figures, suggesting that madaris do not enjoy the market penetration that is widely believed.

Another serious caveat to the Andrabi study is that the data the study employed excluded various important areas of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and protected areas of the Northwest Frontier Province

⁵ While these household surveys are well-accepted instruments among economists at the World Bank and other prestigious institutions, others in the area studies and other qualitative fields have criticized these instruments as too deeply flawed to be used for serious analysis. For an example of such claims, see the 2005 revised ICG report: "Pakistan: Madrassahs," footnote 6a. For a critique of the 1998 Census, see Anita M. Weiss, "Much Ado about Counting: The Conflict over a Census in Pakistan," *Asian Survey* 39, no. 3 (July–August 1999): 679–93.

⁶ Andrabi, Das, Khwaja, and Zajonc, "Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan."

⁷ *Ibid.*

(NWFP), where madrasah enrollment could be much higher.⁸ The Andrabi study presented evidence that this may be the case: intensity of madrasah enrollment was highest along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, reaching 7.5% of enrollments in the district of Pishin. This raises the possibility that intensity of madrasah utilization could be just as high if not higher in all or parts of the FATA. For these reasons, the study could have underestimated madrasah utilization, particularly in areas such as the FATA and restricted areas of the NWFP. The Andrabi study did not make any attempt to correct estimates for this exclusion, likely because there is little empirical base upon which such correction could be attempted.

A second area of empirical discord surrounds the number of madaris in Pakistan. In 2000 Jessica Stern claimed that there were 40,000–50,000 madaris in Pakistan; in 2001 Peter Singer suggested an amount of 45,000, albeit with dubiety about this figure. The *9/11 Commission Report*, citing Karachi's police commander, claims that there are 859 madaris educating more than 200,000 youth in Karachi alone.⁹ In contrast, official Pakistani sources estimate that there were fewer than 7,000 madaris in Pakistan's four provinces in 2000.¹⁰ Unfortunately, there are no definitive data sources in place to reconcile these different claims until Pakistan's Ministry of Education completes its planned census of all educational institutions in Pakistan.

Yet a third area of empirical concern is the socio-economic backgrounds of madrasah students. Conventional wisdom holds that madaris are the resort of the poor students; yet this claim rests uneasily upon the various robust

⁸ In 1991 for example, the PIHS sample frame completely excluded the FATA, Kashmir, military restricted areas, the districts of Kohistan, Chitral, Malakand, and protected areas of the NWFP. It also excluded households that were entirely dependent upon charity for their sustenance. For the 1991 wave, Pakistan's Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that about 4% of Pakistan's population was excluded from the sampling frame. See "Basic Information: Pakistani Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) 1991," The World Bank, December 1995 ~ <http://www.worldbank.com/lsm/country/pk91/pk91.pdf>. In contrast, in the 2001 wave, the PIHS sample universe consisted of all urban and rural areas of all four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the FATA, and the Northern Areas as defined by the Provincial Governments. It excluded military restricted areas and protected areas of the NWFP. In total, the sample frame excluded about 2% of Pakistan's total population. Information on educational choices, however, is not available in these sensitive areas. See "Sample Design of Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) 2001–02," Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics, March 2005 ~ http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/fbs/statistics/pihs2000-2001/pihs2001-02_6.pdf. See also Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics, "Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) Round IV: 2001–2002: Basic Education" ~ <http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/fbs/statistics/pihs2000-2001/pihs2000-2001.html>. In 1998, a limited set of questions for the Pakistan Census was used in areas such as the FATA. The short form of the census instrument does not permit a comparable analysis for FATA.

⁹ See Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," 115–26; Stern, "Meeting with the Muj," 42–50; Singer, "Pakistan's Madrassahs"; and *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2004), 367.

¹⁰ Saleem Mansoor Khaleel, *Deeni Madaris Main Taleem* [Education in Religious Schools], Institute for Policy Studies, 2002, 145.

studies of student socio-economic background that utilize 2001 PIHS data. **Table 1** shows the income breakdown of student families for public schools and madaris. Perusing the data in Table 1 underscores the simple fact that madrasah students are not generally poorer than those students in public schools. It is true that 43% of madrasah students come from the poorest households (defined as those with annual incomes less than 50,000 Pakistani rupees [Rs], or U.S. \$865 in 2001 dollars¹¹), compared to only 40.4% for those in public schools; however, more madrasah students (11.7%) than public school students (3.4%) come from Pakistan's wealthiest families (those with incomes of Rs 250,000 [\$4,325] or greater). In fact, more than one-quarter of madrasah students come from Pakistan's wealthier families (those with incomes of at least Rs 100,000 [\$1,730]) compared to only 21% of students in public schools.¹²

Further discounting the theory that madaris are schools of last resort, the Andrabi study found that of all the households that use madaris (full time) for at least one child, fewer than one-quarter use madaris for all of their children. Instead, the vast majority of madrasah households adopt a mixed strategy to educate their children, using public and even private schools for some children in addition to a madrasah for at least one child.¹³ This strategy suggests that parents choose madaris for reasons other than poverty or the paucity of other options.

Differences in estimates of the inventory of madaris, the numbers of madrasah students, and claims about madrasah student background stem from a variety of factors such as differing sampling units used by different researchers (household-based surveys versus interviews with Pakistani officials), varying and inadequate definitions of madaris and how they differ from the ubiquitous informal "mosque" schools (which impart only primary

¹¹ Since this survey was released in 2001, all figures have been converted into U.S. currency using January 1, 2001 as the reference date. Unless specified otherwise, all converted figures are in 2001 dollars.

¹² For benchmarking purposes it is useful to note that the mean household income in Pakistan, according to the 2001 PIHS, is Rs 93,684 (\$1,620). When looking at income by quintiles, 40% of Pakistan's families earn Rs 80,664 (\$1,395) or above and 20% have incomes in excess of Rs 136,320 (\$2,358). Quintiles for this wave of PIHS data are available in "Household Integrated Economic Survey Round 4: 2001-02," Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics, April 2003, 1 ~ <http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/fbs/statistics/hies0102/hies0102t11.pdf>. The cut-off point for annual income for the first (i.e., lowest) quintile of household income is Rs 52,692 (\$911). This means that one-fifth of surveyed families in the PIHS have annual incomes at or below Rs 52,692 (\$911). The cut-off for the fifth quintile is Rs 136,320 (\$2,358). This means that of the sample of PIHS households 25% have an annual income of Rs 136,320 (\$2,358) or greater. Breaking down annual income into quintiles demonstrates that the vast majority of Pakistani households (60%) earn between Rs 52,692 and Rs 136,320 (between \$911 and \$2,358).

¹³ Andrabi, Das, Khwaja, and Zajonc, "Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan."

TABLE 1

*Distribution of School Enrollment in Pakistan
by Education System and by Income (%)*

Annual Income (Rs)	Public Schools	Madaris
< 50,000	40.4	43.0
50,000–100,000	38.1	29.7
100,000–250,000	18.1	15.6
> 250,000	3.4	11.7

Source: Table derived from analysis of PIHS 2001, compiled and published in Social Policy and Development Centre, *Social Development in Pakistan: Annual Review 2002–03: The State of Education* (Karachi, Pakistan: SPDC, 2003), 160, table 7.2 \approx <http://www.spdc-pak.com/publications/sdip2003.asp>.

Islamic education),¹⁴ over-reliance on one kind of data with little or no effort to check against other data sources,¹⁵ and, finally, deficiencies in the way in which madaris are registered by the state and how the state stores those registration data.¹⁶

Finally and perhaps more importantly, debates persist over the connections between madaris and militancy. With great certainty, some scholars and government agencies alike have posited the linkages between madaris and militancy in Pakistan and beyond.¹⁷ Other analysts have written exculpatory articles suggesting that madaris do not significantly contribute to

¹⁴ Madaris are distinguished from other religious schools by the fact that madaris provide, in part or in full, instruction for the “*alim* course.” This course of study eventually produces *ulama* (pl. of *alim*), or religious scholars. The *alim* course is in four phases, each denoted by a certificate, or *sanad*. Upon obtaining the terminal *sanad*, *Allimiyah*, an individual is considered to be an *alim* and can pursue further specialization. Thus madaris should be distinguished from *maqasid*, or mosque schools, that teach only *nazira-e-Quran* (proper recitation of the Quran) or even *Hifz-e-Quran* (memorization of the Quran).

¹⁵ See Stern, “Pakistan’s Jihad Culture,” 115–26; Stern, “Meeting with the Muj,” 42–50; Singer, “Pakistan’s Madrassahs”; and Robert Looney, “A U.S. Strategy for Achieving Stability in Pakistan: Expanding Educational Opportunities,” *Strategic Insights* 7, no. 7 (2002) \approx <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/sept02/southAsia.asp>.

¹⁶ Prior to 1993, madaris registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1890. After 1993, madrasah administrators were no longer permitted to do so. These registrations, which often were not maintained or updated, are held within local government offices. As such, there is no database that can easily be accessed. One would have to physically collect this information from local government offices, an onerous task which few researchers outside of Pakistan could expect to do.

¹⁷ See Stern, “Pakistan’s Jihad Culture,” 115–26; Stern, “Meeting with the Muj,” 42–50; Singer, “Pakistan’s Madrassahs”; *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 367; and “Pakistan: Madrassahs, Extremism, and the Military.”

militancy or have not been observed to do so beyond a handful of well-known and notorious madaris with historical connections to jihad.¹⁸

How does one resolve the various claims and counter-claims about the linkage between madaris and militancy in Pakistan and beyond? Indeed, much of the ancillary inquiries about the number of madaris, their market share, and the characteristics of their students are rendered moot if indeed the madaris pose no real security threat. If madaris are not “instruments of mass terrorist instruction,” then interest in these institutions and debates about their numbers and penetration would arguably be arcane. The next section of this essay seeks to reconcile these claims and counter-claims in an effort to identify the most important contemporary security challenges posed by madaris.

EVIDENCE FROM “SUPPLY-SIDE” STUDIES: EXCULPATING MADARIS?

Against the vocal assertions that madaris are “instruments of mass instruction” and comprise an essential element of militant production in Pakistan and elsewhere, several scholarly articles as well as editorial pieces have sought to add a corrective view to the madrasah policy fixation. At first blush, many of these studies can be called “supply side” because of their purported focus on the characteristics of militants who supply labor to militant groups. One recent example is afforded by Peter Bergen and Swati Pandey, who examined the backgrounds of 79 terrorists involved in five of the worst anti-Western terrorist attacks (e.g., the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1998 bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa, the September 11 attacks, the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings, and the London bombings in July 2005). Bergen and Pandey found madrasah involvement to be rare and further noted that the “masterminds” of the attacks all had university degrees.¹⁹

Bergen and Pandey’s findings comport with the earlier conclusions of Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova as well as those of Claude Berrebi, who studied the attributes of suicide terrorists and found that suicide terrorists generally tend to have educational levels that exceed the societal mean and are less likely

¹⁸ See Bergen and Pandey, “The Madrasa Scapegoat”; Candland, “Religious Education and Violence in Pakistan;” Evans, “Understanding Madrasahs;” and Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 61–98.

¹⁹ Bergen and Pandey, “The Madrasa Scapegoat,” 117–125.

to live in poverty relative to the average person.²⁰ Bergen and Pandey's findings also comport with those of forensic psychiatrist Marc Sageman, who compiled profiles of 172 "Salafist jihadists" that have targeted foreign governments or their people. Upon analyzing these collected profiles, Sageman's study found that terrorists are less likely to be poor and undereducated than are other individuals in the societies from which they are drawn.²¹

These conclusions—that actual militants do not tend to be undereducated or to come from madaris—at first blush conflict with the findings of other prominent researchers, such as Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, who do find evidence (albeit not necessarily in Pakistan) that higher income and educational attainment should reduce the risk of political violence, principally by increasing the economic opportunity costs of participation in rebellion and other forms of violence.²² These findings also conflict with those of Jessica Stern, whose interviews with madrasah students led to the conclusion that those students do indeed contribute to tanzem manpower in Pakistan.²³ These ostensible differences between the work of Collier and Hoeffler as well as Stern, on the one hand, and the various supply-side studies, on the other hand, can be explained to a great extent by the recent work of Ethan Bueno de Mesquita.²⁴

Bueno de Mesquita's theoretical models suggest that terrorist groups, like other employers, impose standards of quality in their recruitment efforts and pick the most qualified person for the intended mission, subject to whatever resource constraints the organization faces. Here quality refers to human capital endowment or aptitude. Thus "high quality" means a person who is above average in human capital endowment or aptitude. This does not suggest that tanzems require sophisticated human resources tools to make these determinations. Rather, tanzem recruiters, like other conventional employers, may rely upon proxies for quality to evaluate a candidate. These proxies include the recruit's educational background, previous employment,

²⁰ Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, "Education, Poverty, Political Violence and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" NBER Working Paper, no. 9074, July 2002; Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, "The Economics and the Education of Suicide Bombers," *The New Republic*, June 2002; and Claude Berrebi, "Evidence about the Link Between Education, Poverty and Terrorism among Palestinians," Princeton University Industrial Relations Sections Working Paper, no. 477, September 2003.

²¹ See Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 61–98.

²² Paul Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (December, 2000): 838–852; and Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," World Bank Policy Research Paper, no. 2355, May 2000.

²³ Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," 115–26; and Stern, "Meeting with the Muj," 42–50.

²⁴ Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "The Quality of Terror," *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (July 2005): 515–530.

and the recruit's reputation or standing in a community. Recruiters may also assess the recruit through personal interaction.²⁵ Tanzeems can pick higher-quality candidates as long as there are more persons willing to join a group than there is actual need for additional personnel. In other words, as long as supply exceeds demand, groups can select on quality. Pakistani tanzeems are likely to be able to impose quality standards because most of them require cadres that number in the hundreds or at most in the thousands. Under prevailing conditions in Pakistan, willing supply of militant labor likely exceeds the demand tanzeems have for labor.

Assuming that tanzeems utilize their human and other resources rationally, they will match personnel to specific operations in accordance to both the skills of the operative and the requirements of the mission. One would expect higher-quality persons to be assigned to targets that are high-value or for which the opportunity costs of failure are high. Given the availability of more qualified candidates, a madrasah student likely would not be the target market for many tanzeems unless the student also attended a public school or is otherwise numerate and literate. Notably, some madaris in Pakistan do combine religious curriculum with secular subjects and could produce competent militant candidates.²⁶ A madrasah product may be selected and even preferred by tanzeems if the individual confers particular operational benefits, such as Islamist and Islamic legitimacy, among fellow operatives or among the communities in which they operate.

During economic downturn, more high-quality individuals may become unemployed or underemployed. When a person's employment status is adversely changed, the opportunity costs imposed by participating in terrorism (or other illegal activity for that matter) are diminished relative to opportunity costs for the same person during better economic times. This may result in a higher proportion of high-quality potential militants during economic downturn compared to times of economic growth. By comparison, lower-quality persons have fewer opportunities in either good or bad economic conditions. Therefore, the difference in opportunity costs for participating in terrorism during times of economic downturn is less dramatic for persons of lower quality than for persons of higher quality. While both low-quality and high-quality persons may be available and willing potential recruits, tanzeems

²⁵ For a discussion of militant recruitment in Pakistan and the different venues in which demanders and suppliers of labor may interact and evaluate each other, see C. Christine Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for Al Qaeda and Other Organizations," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27, no. 2 (November/December 2004).

²⁶ See C. Christine Fair, "Religious Education in Pakistan: A Trip Report," USIP, March 2006 ~ http://www.usip.org/events/2006/trip_report.pdf.

that impose recruitment standards select high-quality individuals from among the available source of willing manpower. Not only is this, in part, what Bueno de Mesquita means by “quality of terror,” but it also likely explains why observed militants tend to be better educated relative to the communities from which they are recruited.²⁷

Turning to studies that are ostensibly “supply-side,” it becomes clear that the data analyzed by Sageman, Berrebi, Bergan, and others reflects the effect of militant groups’ selection for the best candidate, also known as “selection bias.” Consequently, these studies exposit the characteristics sought by tanzems and the kind of recruits they are able to obtain under prevailing recruitment conditions. These supply-side studies cannot make any substantive claims about the characteristics of all persons who want to join a tanzem because their data sets include only those who have successfully joined one. Furthermore, many of these supply-side studies include militants who successfully executed an attack or who were caught in the act. This methodology imposes further sample bias by excluding those who failed to carry out an attack or whose attacks failed before anyone could have observed their preparations.

It is difficult to rectify these biases because aspiring or failed militants are rarely observed. It may be the case that poor, uneducated persons or madrasah products are disproportionately interested in becoming militants. Groups need not hire such individuals, however, if “higher quality recruits” (i.e., those who are more educated or accomplished in other jobs and pursuits) are available. In the case of Pakistan, even if madrasah students were more interested in joining these groups, tanzems would not necessarily have to accept them when more desirable candidates were available. It is therefore not reasonable to conclude that madaris are exculpated because their students fail to be accepted by tanzems under current recruitment conditions.

If this reasoning has any validity, substantially increasing education and employment opportunities may not altogether diminish the ability of tanzems to operate because tanzems can lower their recruitment standards. Such interventions may, however, reduce the quality of terrorists

²⁷ Higher-aptitude persons may be more likely to turn to terrorism when the economy is weak and jobs are in short supply. When the economy is good, high-quality persons generally have access to lucrative jobs relative to their low-quality counterparts, and the cost of leaving a good job in order to participate in a terrorist movement is relatively high. That helps explain why engineers and other technical persons with a history of underemployment get involved in terrorism. They are both available and desired by terrorist organizations, particularly during periods of economic stagnation and downturn. See Bueno de Mesquita, “The Quality of Terror,” 515–30; and Christine Fair and Husain Haqqani, “Think Again: Sources of Islamist Terrorism,” *Foreign Policy Online*, January 30, 2006.

available to organizations and concomitantly the quality of terrorist attacks that these organizations can perpetrate. Expanding such opportunities may also diminish the support the militancy enjoys among the populations from which tanzeems recruit and from whom they draw ideological and material support.²⁸

MADRASAH-MILITANCY CONNECTIONS: A NEW APPROACH

The foregoing discussion suggests a different way of approaching the purported militancy-madrasah policy problem. Rather than asking whether or not madaris produce militants, this essay suggests that analysts should ask where particular kinds of militants are produced under prevailing conditions specific to the group in question, such as the group's theatre of operations, targets, and objectives as well as the quality of terror the group wishes to produce.

Turning specifically to Pakistan, there are dozens of militant organizations that can be categorized along several axes, including:

- sectarian lines, both between Shia and Sunni and among different Sunni groups (e.g., Ahle-e-hadith and Deobandi)
- political affiliation (e.g., Jamaat Islami and Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam)
- primary theatre of operation (e.g., Afghanistan, India, and Indian-administered Kashmir)
- ethnicity of recruits (e.g., Kashmiri and Pashtun)
- tactics (e.g., high-risk mission, sectarian strike, suicide attack, and low-quality market bombings)
- targets (e.g., Pakistani leadership, sectarian foes, Indian military, and Pakistani civilians)
- connections to other organizations (e.g., al Qaeda and Taliban)

By way of illustration, one can compare the operations of groups who primarily operate in India and Indian-administered Kashmir—for example, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)—to those of Deobandi sectarian groups—for example,

²⁸ There has been no work to date examining how these factors affect the support that militancy enjoys among populations at least in part because there is inadequate information to permit such analysis. Fair and Shepherd attempted to perform this analysis using data collected from the Pew Global Attitudes Survey, but that data set was inadequate for the task. See C. Christine Fair and Bryan Shepherd, "Research Note: Who Supports Terrorism? Insights from Fourteen Muslim Countries," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (January 2006), 51–74.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP).²⁹ LeT is primarily interested in “liberating” Kashmir from India; this has increasingly entailed operations deep within India (e.g., the 2001 attack on Delhi’s Red Fort and the 2006 Mumbai metro assault). LeT cadres, many of whom cross into Indian-administered Kashmir at the high-altitude Line of Control (LoC), must be capable of enduring rigorous and demanding physical conditions. Militants must also carefully evade the extensive Indian counter-insurgency grid. Because militants are inserted in groups along with porters and guides, one incompetent militant puts several missions at risk and jeopardizes high-value human assets such as porters and guides.³⁰ Once inserted, the LeT operatives must maintain operational security and prepare for operations. This often requires the operative to have some linguistic talent; Indians can quickly detect persons who have lived in Pakistan by their use of particular Punjabi and Urdu phrases and Pakistan-specific vocabulary. Pashto is rarely spoken in India, except by those who have settled in India from Afghanistan, and the use of Pashto may expose a person’s origins. Put simply, militant commanders have an incentive not to dispatch lower-quality recruits for such missions.

During fieldwork in Kashmir in 2003, this author had the opportunity to peruse militant field notebooks that contained, along with other important mission details, detailed (often in English) instructions for building improvised explosive devices with openly available materials. Such content suggests that these individuals are literate, numerate, and capable of working out mathematical proportions.³¹ Notably, these are not skills taught at typical madaris. Finally, LeT operatives tend to engage hard targets (e.g., Indian military, police, and intelligence operatives) in demanding high-risk missions.

In contrast, LeJ militants operate in Pakistan itself, where language requirements are not constraining. Getting to the theatre is obviously much easier for LeJ than for LeT. Note that LeJ tends to target civilians in markets and Shia mosques with low-end tactics such as grenade tosses. LeJ and a related anti-Shia organization, Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan, have also engaged both in

²⁹ LeT was banned and quickly reformed under the name of Jamaat ul Dawa. Since the group is most commonly known by the moniker LeT, this essay uses that name. The same is true for Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. This group, too, has been banned several times only to reform under new names.

³⁰ See Ilyas Khan, “The Waiting Game,” *Herald* (Pakistan), July 2003; and Ilyas Khan, “Business as Usual,” *Herald* (Pakistan), July 2003.

³¹ For a photograph of these manuals, see Peter Chalk and C. Christine Fair, “Lashkar-e-Taiba: At the Vanguard of the Kashmiri Insurgency,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* 14, no. 11 (November 2002), 14–18.

suicide operations and in operations against Shia human and religious targets. In fact, these sectarian groups are responsible for the development and use of this tactic in Pakistan against Shia targets. Notably, in recent years LeJ has “repurposed” in FATA, where it has been involved in suicide attacks against Pakistani security forces.³² Important to note is that, in general, LeJ attacks soft or low-value targets and conducts operations for which opportunity costs of failure are low.

Analysis of these different group-specific details suggests that few LeT operatives are madrasah products;³³ madrasah products are unlikely to become operatives unless they also either attended a public school or confer particular advantages to LeT. LeT—or any group for that matter—could use low-quality recruits from madaris or elsewhere for missions against soft targets, low-value targets, or targets with low opportunity costs. LeT is not currently known, however, for these kinds of operations.

In contrast, LeJ operations tend to be less sophisticated, with the exception of the recent spate of suicide attacks in FATA against Pakistani security forces. This suggests that in principle LeJ could employ madrasah products if others were either not available or not considered appropriate for ideological reasons. In fact, given LeJ’s sectarian mission, students with some madrasah background may be preferred to those without madrasah experience, all things being equal. For more important operations (e.g., suicide operations against high-value or hard targets), better-qualified operatives may be desirable. It would be wrong to assume that all suicide attacks require high-aptitude recruits. Many sectarian suicide attacks involve soft or low-value targets (e.g., Shia mosques and religious processions) for which lower-quality recruits may suffice—provided that they are both adequately resolved to complete the mission and capable of ensuring operational security. It is also wrong to assume that all LeJ attacks against Pakistani security forces are “hard” in the sense that many troops in FATA are not the Pakistan regular army; rather, they include personnel from the Frontier Constabulary and other less-competent paramilitary outfits.

Is there any evidence that this framework for analysis is more appropriate than contemporary approaches to the madrasah-militancy connection? Unfortunately, extant research on militancy and education and Pakistan has

³² Officials from the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan claim that LeJ and others perpetrating suicide attacks in Afghanistan have ties to madaris in FATA. Author discussions in October 2006.

³³ This essay uses the term “madrasah product” in preference to “madrasah graduate” because few students actually graduate from madaris with any certificate. Only a very small percentage completes the alim course.

not proceeded along these lines as the literature review suggests. Review of LeT's mission and other activities does, however, buttress this reasoning. LeT was founded in 1987 by Zafar Iqbal and Hafiz Saeed, both professors from the Lahore University of Engineering and Technology, and an Arab scholar, Abdullah Azam, from the International Islamic University in Islamabad.³⁴ Hafiz Saeed has emerged as the current leader of the LeT. Perhaps reflecting Saeed's personal background, his organization has propounded jihad and modern education alongside Islamic education, with the goal of producing "a reformed individual who is well-versed in Islamic moral principles and the techniques of modern science and technology, to produce an alternative model of development and governance."³⁵ Saeed has argued that jihad and modern education are intertwined and has reminded Muslims that when they "gave up Jihad, science and technology also went into the hands of others."³⁶

Regarding LeJ, some scholars have found connections between madaris and sectarian violence although no conclusive evidence has yet been analyzed for these purposes.³⁷ For example, Saleem Ali's study of madaris and sectarianism—while inconclusive—does suggest that sectarian violence is more likely to occur in localities where madrasah penetration is highest.³⁸ Anecdotal information derived from February 2006 interviews indicates that Pakistan government officials and religious scholars alike believed that madaris are culpable for the extensive sectarian violence that pervades Pakistan.³⁹

To address the need for robust analysis of militancy and human capital formation in Pakistan, in 2004 this author commissioned a convenience sample of the families of 140 militants in Pakistan. The instrument collected

³⁴ Azam was killed only two years after the organization was formed in a bomb blast in Peshawar.

³⁵ See Shafqat, "From Official Islam to Islamism," 141–42.

³⁶ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁷ See Christopher Candland, "Religious Education and Violence in Pakistan."

³⁸ Saleem H. Ali, "Islamic Education and Conflict: Understanding the Madrassahs of Pakistan," August 2005 \approx <http://www.uvm.edu/~envprog/madrassah.html>. Ali's study, while having potential important insights for this essay, does also have unfortunate limitations that the author does not acknowledge in his exposition. The critical problem is his sample structure. Despite the technical level of discussion in this study, the data set is derived from convenience samples, not scientifically constructed samples. In Pakistan, scientifically constructed samples are a luxury. The author fails, however, to reflect upon how the limitations of his data restrict the generalizability of his central claim that concentration of madaris is positively correlated with sectarian violence. To make this claim robustly, the study requires a random sample inclusive of at least four kinds of areas characterized by high madrasah concentration (MC)/high sectarian violence (SV), high MC/low SV, low MC/low SV, and low MC/high SV. Instead this study relies upon areas that all have high sectarian violence and high madrasah concentration. Thus the study has inadequate variation in the two metrics that the author seeks to correlate.

³⁹ See Fair, "Religious Education in Pakistan."

detailed information about the militant's group affiliation, work and educational experience, and other relevant personal background as well as detailed household information. Preliminary analysis of the data does support this analytical framework and finds that militants in the sample are overwhelmingly not madrasah products and indeed are better educated than Pakistanis generally. The author is currently overseeing several quantitative analyses of this data set.⁴⁰ This framework is worth considering, however, both because of the importance of the research topic and because the framework does seem to resolve some of the extant disputes over the connections between madaris and militancy. For this reason alone, this approach merits consideration.

RETHINKING THE MADARIS-MILITANCY CONNECTION

As noted, various studies of militants' backgrounds marshal little evidence of madrasah involvement in militancy. This is likely due to various selection effects, including not only the organization's own recruit selection process but also the analysts' inclusion criteria. By design, most studies of militant characteristics will certainly tend to include the more capable militants and exclude the less competent ones. Since no extant datasets collect information on persons who aspire to be terrorists, the aspiring population's characteristics cannot be observed. Thus it is important not to discount lower-qualified persons in militant operations simply because extant studies do not observe them, and the interest of the people in joining *tanzeems* should not be precluded due to various sample biases. Moreover, while under optimal recruitment conditions, *tanzeems* likely have the luxury of making selections based on quality; should the market for high-quality recruits shrink, groups can rely upon less-qualified labor, perhaps including madrasah students.

Is there any evidence that suggests, as is often believed, that madrasah students have a greater interest in jihad than students of other kinds of institutions? While no nationally-representative survey of Pakistani youth of all educational sectors has addressed this issue, the existing limited evidence suggests that madrasah students indeed have a greater taste for jihad than students in other educational streams. Tariq Rahman's path-breaking work provides important insights into the relationship between the kind of education a person receives, on the one hand, and attitudes toward and

⁴⁰ See Victor Asal, C. Christine Fair, and Stephen Shellman, "Consenting to Jihad" (paper presented at the 148th Annual International Studies Association [ISA] Convention, March 1, 2007).

support for militancy in Pakistan, on the other. Rahman administered an attitudinal survey to 488 tenth-grade students in Urdu medium public schools and English medium private schools and to their equivalent in madaris.⁴¹

Rahman inquired about their views toward open war with India, support for various jihadi groups, and the utility of peaceful means to resolve conflicts. Rahman also asked students whether they favored equal rights for Pakistan's religious minorities (Ahmediyas, Hindus, and Christians) and for women.⁴² Rahman administered a similar survey to the students' teachers as well.⁴³ The aggregate responses for questions asked of students and teachers are given in **Table 2**.

Rahman's results demonstrate that madrasah students are consistently more likely to support war with India and the use of militants in Kashmir and are less likely to support equal rights for Pakistan's minorities and women. Private school (English medium) students, on the other hand, were more likely to support peaceful outcomes and minority and women's rights. Public school students, however, resemble their madrasah counterparts in some measure. Across all schools types, teachers tended to be less amenable to peaceful solutions and minority rights than their students, although there were exceptions. In public schools, preference for outright war and jihadi groups was lower and support for peaceful measures was higher among teachers than among students. Public school teachers were, however, less likely than their students to espouse equal rights for minorities and women. Madrasah teachers were not only more likely to prefer open war and to back jihadi groups and less likely to support peaceful methods than their students but also less likely than their students to embrace equal rights for women and minorities. Surprisingly, private school teachers demonstrated less preference for peaceful solutions, higher support for jihadi groups, and lower levels of approval of equal rights for women and minorities than did their students.

⁴¹ Because formal madrasah education (the Alum course or Dars-e-Nizami curriculum) starts after completion of Mutavasatta, tenth-grade equivalent madrasah students are older than their counterparts in Urdu and English medium schools.

⁴² Tariq Rahman, "Pluralism and Intolerance in Pakistani Society Attitudes of Pakistani Students towards the Religious 'Other'" (paper presented at the conference "Pluralism in Muslim Contexts," organized by Agha Khan University-Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization, Karachi, October 25, 2003), PDF version (Last revised October 30, 2003), 29 ~ <http://www.aku.edu/news/majorevents/ismconf-tr.pdf>.

⁴³ In addition to asking the students and teachers specific questions about their points of view, Rahman collected basic information about each student (age, class, and gender) and teacher (gender, educational level, and the subjects taught). From both faculty and students, he obtained parental employment information (e.g., rank, title, occupational status, salary, and income) for both parents, where applicable. Few students actually provided this income information, with most indicating that their mothers do not work; thus, for students, this income information was not available.

TABLE 2

*Student and Teacher Identification
of Pakistan's Priorities (% of total)*

Should the following be a priority for Pakistan?		Madrassah		Urdu Medium		English Medium	
		S	T	S	T	S	T
Take Kashmir away from India by an open war	Yes	60	70	40	20	26	26
	No	32	22	53	70	65	65
	Don't know	8	7	7	10	9	9
Take Kashmir away from India by supporting jihadi groups to fight the Indian army	Yes	53	59	33	19	22	38
	No	32	27	45	68	60	51
	Don't know	15	11	22	13	17	11
Support Kashmir cause through peaceful means only (i.e., no war or sending jihadi groups across LOC)	Yes	34	30	76	85	72	60
	No	55	67	18	10	19	34
	Don't know	11	4	6	5	9	6
Give equal rights to Ahmedis in all jobs, etc.	Yes	13	4	47	27	66	43
	No	82	96	37	65	9	37
	Don't know	5	0	16	8	25	20
Give equal rights to Pakistani Hindus in all jobs, etc.	Yes	17	15	47	37	78	62
	No	76	85	43	58	14	26
	Don't know	7	0	10	5	8	12
Give equal rights to Pakistani Christians in all jobs, etc.	Yes	18	19	66	52	84	82
	No	73	78	27	42	9	11
	Don't know	8	4	9	6	8	8
Give equal rights to men and women as in Western countries	Yes	17	4	75	61	91	78
	No	77	97	17	33	6	14
	Don't know	6	0	7	6	3	8

Note: S = Student responses; T = Teacher responses.

Source: Table derived from data presented in Tariq Rahman, "Pluralism and Intolerance in Pakistani Society Attitudes of Pakistani Students Towards the Religious 'Other'" (paper presented at the conference "Pluralism in Muslim Contexts," organized by Agha Khan University-Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization, Karachi, October 25, 2003), PDF version (Last revised October 30, 2003), 29 ~ <http://www.aku.edu/news/majorevents/ismconf-tr.pdf>.

This finding is significant given that analysis of the PIHS data suggests that public schools capture 70% of the full-time educational market. Thus one of the conclusions that can be drawn from this work is that even if they may not contribute significantly to the pool of observed militants, Pakistan's

madaris may foster support for terrorism within families and communities; Pakistan's public schools, however, do so as well.⁴⁴

Important to note is that, as with other studies, Rahman's survey also suffers from data limitations. While it is easy to attribute the observed attitudinal differences to the type of school attended, it is also possible that these attitudes reflect the student's family background and family values. In other words, madaris may not create pro-militancy students; rather pro-militancy families may choose to send their children to madaris. This may be the case because parental choice of school type reflects family attitudes, with more liberal parents preferring private schools and more conservative parents preferring madaris, all else equal. If this is true, the observed attitudes of children in those schools may be just as much a product of the children's family environments as they are of the school environment.⁴⁵ The 2005 Andrabi study informs this question obliquely: recall that the study found that about three-quarters of the families that use madaris for at least one child use other kinds of schools for their other children. Presumably, if families choose madaris for primarily ideological motivations, it is to be expected that they would send all of their children to madaris. While the majority of madrasah families do not fit this description, one-quarter of madrasah households do.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, as noted above, the Andrabi study's analysis rests upon the assumption that religious education happens only in madaris, which is not the case. In fact, just as Pakistan's public school curriculum includes Islamic studies (*Islamiyat*), many schools run by private foundations include Islamic studies as well (e.g., the very popular and extensive Iqra Rozatul Itfal Trust chain of schools, Iqra Medina, Iqra Ryazul Itfa, and Iqra Jannatul Itfa).⁴⁷ Not clear in the household surveys is how families would categorize private Islamic schools.

Although not diminishing the value of these various studies, these empirical limitations must be kept in mind because of their policy implications:

⁴⁴ There may be other problems associated with madaris that are beyond the scope of this inquiry. Apart from the above-noted concerns about madrasah views on minorities, women, violence, jihad, and militant groups, allegations are rife that sexual abuse and other forms of physical abuse are rampant in madaris. See Brian Murphy, "Pakistan Activists, Parents Want Investigation of Sex Abuse in Islamic Schools," September 15, 2005 ~ <http://www.pakistan-facts.com/article.php?story=20050918205752898>; and "Boy Killed over Pakistan School," BBC News Online, September 24, 2005 ~ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4278770.stm. Some Pakistani officials interviewed by this author over recent years express concern that the madrasah environment is not conducive to creating Pakistani citizens. In addition to abuse, the officials noted issues related to gender, particular interpretations of Islam, and sectarian worldviews imparted by madaris. These are all important issues that require further analysis.

⁴⁵ To untangle these different sources of causality, Tariq Rahman would need to have interviewed the household members.

⁴⁶ Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Khwaja, and Zajonc, "Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan."

⁴⁷ Author fieldwork for this study in February 2006. See Fair, "Religious Education in Pakistan."

simply switching children from one medium to another (e.g., madaris to private schools) may not produce meaningfully different worldviews. While not providing conclusive proof of causality, Rahman's work does suggest that students in public schools and religious schools are more inclined than students in private schools to support jihad against India and even open war with India. Thus Rahman's survey suggests that both religious and public schools may contribute to the communities of support that Islamist militancy enjoys in Pakistan.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Extant research finds that madrasah products are not well represented in the ranks of the observed Islamist militants, most likely due to the efforts of tanzems to select for quality among their operatives. Because of these selection effects, it would be wrong to conclude simply that madaris do not contribute to the problem of Islamist militancy in Pakistan. This essay contends, however, that while analysts currently do not observe madrasah products in tanzems for many theatres, madrasah products could become more desirable should group objectives, tactics, or preferred theatre change—or if the recruitment market changes. Nor can it be ruled out that, for some groups, some level of madrasah background may confer operational benefits (e.g., the Taliban and LeJ).

Critically, madaris—along with mosques and public proselytizing events (*tabligh*)—likely are important gathering places where tanzems, current militants, religious ideologues, and potential recruits can interact. Some madaris may be important because their religious leaders issue edicts or rulings (*fatwas*) that justify the use of violence. Equally important, some religious leaders issue fatwas against specific kinds of violence. Indeed, some madaris are also known locations for militant training.⁴⁸ Limited data also support the contention that madrasah students have a somewhat greater interest in jihad than those of public schools. Yet public school students—who comprise 70% of Pakistan's enrolled students—also show comparable levels of support for violence. These factors underscore the need both to focus on the human capital requirements of specific groups and to learn where these

⁴⁸ On October 30, 2006, two missile strikes rocked the Zia-ul-Uloom madrasah in Chinagai (Bajour Agency), a known training center for militants based in Pakistan but operating against U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan. See C. Christine Fair, Nicholas Howenstein, and J. Alexander Thier, "Troubles on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border," USIP, December 2006 ≈ http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2006/1207_pakistan_afghanistan_border.html.

groups' operatives are produced rather than focusing narrowly upon madaris, which appear to capture a small share of Pakistan's educational market.

This analysis suggests two interrelated sets of recommendations and implications. The first is the more germane for intelligence collection and analysis and follows more directly from the framework promulgated herein. The second set pertains to U.S. policy toward Pakistan and the threat posed by Pakistan-based terrorism to U.S. interests. For this second set, any recommendations are more tenuous at least in part because the central argument of this paper is that current U.S. policy has been informed by impoverished data and analysis. Thus data collection and analysis must precede policy formulation.

Implications for Intelligence Collection and Analysis

Rather than arguing that madaris do or do not produce militants; analysts should collect background data on the operatives of key tanzeems, keeping in mind the impacts of various forms of selection effect. Examination of shifts in militant backgrounds over time may provide invaluable information about the recruitment market that groups face and, concomitantly, insights about the level of support they enjoy. For example, it is useful to note that in recent years LeT operatives have tended to engage in lower-quality terror attacks (e.g., throwing grenades at tourists) rather than prosecute high-risk missions against Indian security forces, for which LeT is infamous. Holding constant the counter-insurgency capabilities of the Indian security forces, this development may be an important signal that the recruitment market for LeT has softened, that support for LeT in Kashmir has diminished, or that Pakistani security forces are circumscribing LeT's activities.⁴⁹

Such data collection and analyses are imminently possible, as Marc Sageman's collection of militant backgrounds suggest, but require greater exploitation of regional materials such as the Pakistani media to populate sophisticated databases for analyses. While many terrorism databases exist, they tend both to exclude information about militant background and to rely on international accounts rather than local media accounts. Efforts to extract, organize, and analyze these kinds of data will allow analysts to capture trends in the quality of terror that groups are capable of producing, detect

⁴⁹ In August and September 2006 the author met in Srinagar and in Delhi with Indian political and intelligence officials who maintain that LeT attacks in Srinagar have changed substantially. Since 2005, LeT has been less likely to mount high-risk missions against hard targets, instead using young men to throw grenades at soft targets such as tourists.

changes in the optimal or preferred backgrounds of their operatives, and identify recurrent nodes in militant recruitment (e.g., particular madaris, mosques, personalities, universities and technical institutes, and gatherings of known groups). This information is needed to ensure that counter-terrorism policies are effective and concentrate resources on the right institutions and organizations.

Even the most comprehensive data collection on militants, tanzeems, and their operations comprise only one part of the analytical puzzle. Efforts to better understand the supply of militancy will, at best, confer tactical advantages in that they may identify a particular set of institutions that are pivotal to militant recruitment or training efforts. States can eliminate this cluster of institutions, but an effective tanzem will evolve replacements. Unfortunately, this applies a form of selection pressure that forces groups to innovate continually in order to survive state efforts to neutralize them. Supply-side interventions, while having tactical import, also may have strategic diminishing margins of return because such efforts may bolster the popular support that these groups enjoy, creating better recruitment and funding environments for the groups.

Thus, a second, accompanying analytical effort that focuses upon the characteristics of persons who support militancy or militant groups is needed. Military recruitment studies consistently find that “influencer” attitudes about enlistment and the military’s public image are important determinants of a young person’s decision to enlist.⁵⁰ Drawing from these robust findings, perhaps Pakistani influencer (e.g., parents, relatives, friends, and mentors) attitudes about militancy, particular tanzeems, and their missions may also affect the propensity of Pakistani youth to join tanzeems. Understanding the determinants of this support may create opportunities for strategic communications or other policy interventions to affect the standing of these groups, their missions, and their causes or to engage those segments of the population where support is most intense.

Robust exposition of who supports terrorism requires the fielding of tailored data-collection instruments using nationally representative samples

⁵⁰ For this reason, the Department of Defense funds the collection and analysis of massive amounts of data to predict recruitment shortfalls or excess supply. See for example Bruce R. Orvis, Martin T. Gahart, and Karl Schutz, *Enlistment among Applicants for Military Service: Determinants and Incentives* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1990); Bruce R. Orvis, Narayan Sastry, and Laurie L. McDonald, *Military Recruiting Outlook: Recent Trends in Enlistment Propensity and Conversion of Potential Enlisted Supply* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996); and Bruce R. Orvis and Beth J. Asch, *Military Recruiting: Trends, Outlook, and Implications* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001).

in key countries, such as Pakistan, to track trends in influencer attitudes.⁵¹ Collecting these kinds of data is possible, affordable, and necessary in order to understand where support for terrorism resides. Pew, Gallup, and Zogby all have massive data collection underway in countries of interest. Unfortunately, these studies tend to fail not only to ask questions that would permit the sort of analysis this framework calls for but also to dedicate adequate resources to ensure proper rural representation. The ability of these studies to conduct polls that do include questions about support for terrorism, however, is encouraging and suggests that such efforts are feasible.⁵²

Implications for U.S. Policy Toward Pakistan and Beyond

As the foregoing discussion indicates, to draw expansive policy recommendations based upon this framework would be premature and indeed inappropriate. The current U.S. preoccupation with madaris was based on impoverished empirical grounds and, regrettably, has precluded identification of other potential threats to Pakistan and to U.S. interests in Pakistan. It is possible, however, to proffer a few policy implications with some degree of justification.

The first pertains to those madaris with known ties to militancy. Pakistani authorities do know of key madaris with links to militancy. In many cases the

⁵¹ These data elements should include important information about the respondent and the household, including family sectarian background (Deobandi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Bareilvi, Shia, etc.), degree of respondent and family religiosity, ethnicity and mother tongue, locality (urban or rural, province), political activism of the family and respondent, household size, numbers of sons and numbers of daughters, family connections with various political and militant Islamist organizations, and, of course, information about utilization of educational institutions (both secular and religious).

⁵² START (the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland) has begun a multi-country study that includes Pakistan. This data set will represent a vast improvement over current data sets and should both allow exposition of the characteristics of supporters of militancy and permit evaluation of the levels of support for specific tanzems, campaigns, targets, and objectives. The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) is affiliated with START and is coordinating the above-noted Pakistan survey. That instrument has not been tailored to Pakistan because it will be fielded in numerous Muslim countries. This author is working with PIPA to develop a Pakistan-specific instrument as a follow-up to the START effort. This new instrument will build off of the author's commissioned militant survey and the author's other work on support for terrorism. To date, only three studies have sought to posit the correlates of support for terrorism in key countries. Two utilized data from the Pew Global Attitudes Survey, and the third employed data collected by the Gallup Organization. Using different models and data, the three teams came to a similar conclusion: individuals who feel threatened are more likely to support terrorism than those who do not. See Fair and Shepherd, "Research Note: Who Supports Terrorism?"; Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "Correlates of Public Support for Terrorism in the Muslim World," USIP Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention Working Paper, forthcoming; and Dalia Mogahed, "The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Moderate vs. Extremist Views in the Muslim World" Gallup World Poll Special Report, November 13, 2006 ~ http://media.gallup.com/WorldPoll/PDF/GALLUP+MUSLIM+STUDIES_Moderate+v+Extremist+Views_11.13.06_FINAL.pdf.

United States is also aware of such madaris, as the November bombing of a madrasah in Bajour attests.⁵³ The ongoing data collection efforts described above will identify other less-known madaris with such a role as well. While some madaris are notorious (e.g., the November 2006 Zia-ul-Uloom bombing in Chinagai), U.S. ability to act against them is frustrated by several factors. First, the United States takes unilateral action in Pakistan very hesitantly and only with solid intelligence out of a concern for Pakistan's domestic stability generally and President Musharraf's standing in particular. Second, despite its engagement with U.S. counterparts and despite massive infusion of funds and other resources, the Pakistan Army remains incapable of mounting effective counter-insurgency in FATA and elsewhere.⁵⁴ Moreover, in FATA there is no police capability, and throughout Pakistan police forces tend to be corrupt, poorly trained, and in some cases linked to militant groups.⁵⁵ Third, Pakistan and the United States may not entirely agree on the need to close down specific madaris and associated militant training camps, particularly those more closely associated with groups operating in Kashmir and in India. This lack of agreement is unfortunate because many Deobandi groups overlap in membership and, once trained, a recruit can operate elsewhere with adequate resources and support.

Thus, there is immediate need to target these known madaris with linkages to militancy in Pakistan and beyond. The means to do so, however, are dependent both upon Pakistan's commitment to and capability in targeting specific madaris and upon U.S. risk acceptance toward unilateral action (e.g., the 2005 and 2006 Bajour strikes). Washington will have to work harder to align Pakistan's interests with those of the United States, perhaps making increasing use of negative inducements rather than relying upon positive ones. The United States has been unwilling so far to take such steps.⁵⁶ Elsewhere the United States may have to act alone and find ways of managing the fallout. Where possible, Washington should persuade Pakistan to pursue

⁵³ Officials from both the U.S. military and United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) interviewed by this author confirm that U. S. and Pakistani authorities are aware of specific madaris; however, U.S. operations in Pakistan are constrained, and Pakistani security forces are limited in their effectiveness in FATA.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of Pakistan's limited military capabilities and the trade-offs of law-and-order operations versus intelligence and militancy approaches, see Fair, Howenstein, and Thier, "Troubles on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border."

⁵⁵ See C. Christine Fair and Peter Chalk, *Fortifying Pakistan: The Role of U.S. Internal Security Assistance* (Washington D.C.: USIP, 2006), 9–43.

⁵⁶ Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 1 (Washington, D.C., 2007–08) ≈ <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-1> is an important exception. See in particular "Sec. 1442. Pakistan."

law-and-order approaches to closing down suspected madaris and arresting persons with ties to terrorism. This action can occur only where there are viable and capable police forces that are not infiltrated by the militant groups. While the bad news is that operating against these madaris and associated camps is hard, the good news is that they are few in number.

A second set of implications stems more generally from what the data suggests about education and militancy. Limited evidence suggests that both public school and madrasah students tend to support jihad, tanzeems, and war with India, and are more intolerant toward Pakistan's minorities and women. Thus, if Ethan Bueno de Mesquita's model is correct, creating educational and employment opportunities may not put an end to militancy because tanzeems can recruit from lower-quality groups. In the long term, however, these kinds of interventions may diminish the quality of terror produced, rendering tanzeems a mere nuisance rather than a menace to regional security. This would be a positive development.

The problem with school reform and employment generation efforts is not only that they may be beyond Islamabad's capability and resolve but also that there may be no feasible scope for U.S. or international efforts to persuade Islamabad to make meaningful reforms on its own. Yet the United States and its partners must make such attempts because the opportunity costs of inaction or failure are simply too high in this unstable, nuclear-armed country facing considerable internal security challenges. The United States may be best served, however, by working with multilateral organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to implement needed curricula reform, school expansion, and job creation.

Thus far, Washington's efforts to goad Pakistan into reforming its public and religious educational sectors have fostered suspicions in Pakistan about U.S. "colonial intentions" and may have the perverse incentive of encouraging parents to increasingly turn to religious schools of various kinds.⁵⁷ Any efforts toward education reform must be based upon a solid understanding of the determinants of parental decisions to enroll their children in school, the type of school to be used for particular children, and the attributes of education that Pakistanis esteem and seek out—including

⁵⁷ During interviews with analysts, government officials, and parents in Pakistan, interlocutors expressed concerns that the United States is seeking to de-Islamify Pakistan's educational systems. These fears are well-founded. Author interviews with high-level officials in the U.S. Department of State confirmed this objective.

religious instruction.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, this has not been the case with respect to U.S. educational reform programs in Pakistan under the aegis of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), despite the fact that the literature on educational economics in Pakistan is well developed and accessible.⁵⁹

However the international community acts, it must demand accountability in Islamabad while setting attainable benchmarks over a reasonable period. Although this is a difficult charge, without dedicated efforts to ensure that Islamabad pursues corrective courses of action, Pakistan will likely default on its commitments to human development as it has done in the past.

The third set of policy recommendations stem from the data collection prescribed above. As argued, there may be diminishing margins of return to supply-side interventions aimed at deterring militant groups from recruiting, training, and operating. Demand-side interventions to diminish public support for militancy, however, remain underutilized at least in part because there have been so few efforts to understand the determinants of this support. Yet questions of education and militancy are only a small subset of concerns that should animate efforts to diminish public support for militancy. Extant analyses of correlates of public support for terrorism suggest that policymakers will have to do better at crafting strategic communications campaigns and, more problematically, identifying and addressing root causes of support for terrorism, which may include U.S. policies in key theatres. As this essay has striven to show, Pakistan's madaris are likely to be insignificant factors in these efforts. ♦

⁵⁸ Forthcoming work by this author details the determinants of parental choice with particular focus upon preferences for some degree of religious education. To accommodate preferences of parents who want their children to garner employable skills while also obtaining religious instruction, new private schools have entered the educational market to provide secular and religious education simultaneously. In other cases, famous madaris have opened public and even private schools, teaching secular subjects in an Islamic environment. See Fair, "Religious Education in Pakistan."

⁵⁹ This assessment derives from author interviews with persons at USAID and the U.S. Department of State. Officials and analysts interviewed by this author were unaware of the extant literature. Matthew J. Nelson reports a similar set of findings in his recent research. See Matthew J. Nelson, "Muslims, Markets, and the Meaning of a 'Good' Education in Pakistan," *Asian Survey* 46, no. 5 (September/October 2006), 690–720.