

THE WORLD POST

A PARTNERSHIP OF THE HUFFINGTON POST AND BERGGRUEN INSTITUTE

Edition: US ▼

Like 6.2M

Follow

US EDITION

INDIA

BRASIL

U.K.

MAGHREB

JAPAN

DEUTSCHLAND

CANADA

KOREA

FRANCE

ESPANA

ALL SECTIONS

Prescription Glasses
STARTING AT \$6⁹⁵



SHOP NOW

ZENNI

AdChoices

Pakistan's War on Scholars

🕒 02/24/2016 03:14 pm ET | Updated Feb 24, 2016

469



Like 1.9K

**C. Christine Fair**

Associate professor, Georgetown University; Author, Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War



ILYAST VIA GETTY IMAGES

Pakistan's [military and intelligence agencies are waging a nasty war](#) on U.S.-based scholars whose writings and public statements undermine cherished narratives promulgated by the army that has dominated Pakistan's governance for most of the state's existence. These agencies aim to intimidate, discredit, and silence us. Their tools are crude and include: outright threats; slanderous articles in Pakistani papers and other [on-line forums](#); an army of trolls on twitter and other social media who hound us; and embassy officials who attend and report on our speaking events on Pakistan. But we are lucky to be in the United States: Pakistan's khaki louts [disappear, kidnap and/or kill their critics within Pakistan](#)

My own experience with Pakistan's harassment techniques began in May of 2011 when I received an email threatening me with gang-rape by an entire regiment. I had received a grant from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies to complete

AdChoices

Zip Code

Get a Quote

AdChoices

FOLLOW HUFFPOST

research for my book "Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War" and had intended to spend the summer of 2011 in Islamabad and Lahore. As I already had a valid, multiple-entry visa they could not use visa denial as an instrument of coercion to influence my writings before my planned visit. So, they tried to intimidate me with this threat of physical harm.

“

My own experience with Pakistan's harassment techniques began in May of 2011 when I received an email threatening me with gang-rape by an entire regiment.

At first, I was incredulous that this email was sent by the "[deep state](#)" and I did not immediately call off my travel. Serendipitously, my flight to Dubai was cancelled. While I rebooked my travel, Pakistan's then ambassador Husain Haqqani reached out to me to tell me simply "You have to cancel your trip. The crew cuts are after you." Other embassy officials told me privately that the ISI distributed a circular about me at the Pakistan embassy. One officer asked me "You are in trouble. What did you do?" I was sickened by the situation. Officials from the embassy were, and presumably are, not allowed to meet with me.

When I confronted Brigadier Butt, the then ISI station chief at the Pakistan Embassy and Defense Attaché --it became clear that he was personally angry with me because he had seen or had heard about my book proposal from a small number of persons who had seen it. He said that he felt let down because the army had [given me considerable access](#) yet I was writing, what he called, an [anti-army book](#). I explained to him that I was doing my job by being willing to go to Pakistan through various grants--despite the security environment--to hear their side of the story. I also told him that granting interviews to scholars is not [tantamount to buying scholars](#)

Since 2011 I have inspired several "planted" stories that have appeared in Pakistani papers and obscure blogs alike. These artless rants would be amusing if they were not dangerous. On one occasion, an article actually gave information about where I was staying in Pakistan which was a clear intent to cause me harm or signal the ability to cause me harm.

“

On one occasion, an article actually gave information about where I was staying in Pakistan which was a clear intent to cause me harm or signal the ability to cause me harm.

In the fall of 2014, two videos were circulated about me that had the imprimatur of



HuffPost

Like 6.2M

WorldPost

Like 743K

HUFFPOST NEWSLETTERS

Get top stories and blog posts emailed to me each day. Newsletters may offer personalized content or advertisements. [Learn More](#).

Subscribe!

SUGGESTED FOR YOU

?

- 1. [Fmr. Prisoner: Clinton's Call For New Iran Sanctions Put Hostages 'At Risk'](#)



a month ago [live.huffingtonpost.com](http://live.huffingtonpost.com/HuffingtonPost.com) [HuffingtonPost.com \(AOL\)](#) politics

- 2. [Florida Governor Embarrasses Himself, And America, On National TV](#)



the army's media-management organization, the [ISPR](#). The videos included (not very danceable) sound tracks which were taken from ISPR-produced entertainment. Since these videos were published on Youtube, which is banned in Pakistan, the obvious audience of these productions was Pakistanis outside the United States. (Both of these videos have since been removed.).

In early February, *The News*, [published an article](#) that alleged that I have nefarious links with Baloch insurgents. The Baloch are an ethnic group in Pakistan which [resists inclusion into the state](#) and its reliance upon Islam as a tool to blunt Baloch ethnic aspirations. Pakistan's security forces have waged five waves of [brutal military oppression](#), sometimes with U.S. weapons systems, which has been widely decried by [international](#) as well as [Pakistani human rights organizations](#).

Despite these [well-documented abuses](#)--which includes disappearances, torture and murder by Pakistan's security forces--the United States has not levied [Leahy Sanctions as required by U.S. law](#). The ISI has worked tirelessly to [keep its actions in Balochistan a dark secret](#).

“

If Pakistan's armed forces and intelligence agencies are afraid of a few scholars, how can they confront Pakistan's real enemies who are the hordes of terrorists it once nurtured but who have turned their guns and suicide vests against their erstwhile patrons?

So why did Pakistan write such an article about me? I have several suspicions. First, I was included on a successful National Science Foundation grant to study the Baloch conflict. Second, as a part of this study, I have reached out to Baloch dissidents to hear their side of the story. Third, I tweet about the tragedy in the state and encourage my government to [apply applicable laws](#) and [deny security assistance to those units involved in these abuses](#). Fourth, there will be a publication emerging from this effort. Since I cannot go to Pakistan, what was the intent of the essay? Ultimately, I believe it was coarse attempt at bullying me by targeting my employer and jeopardizing my job security and trying to cast aspersions upon my credibility within U.S. government agencies. According to the article:

It is not clear if Georgetown University was aware of Ms Fair's plan to meet the leader of Baloch dissidents. It further remains to be seen if US authorities would take notice of Ms Fair's contacts with such leaders. Her penchant for aggressive attacks on Pakistan that goes beyond inciting violence is not a secret.

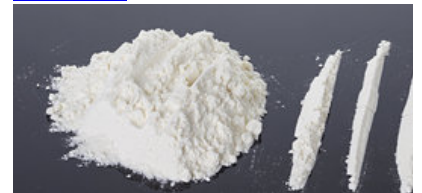
2 hours ago [huffingtonpost.com](#)
[Wow.com Jonathan Cohn](#) Jonathan Cohn muslim

- 3. [Koch Funded Group: 'Bernie Sanders Is Right'](#)



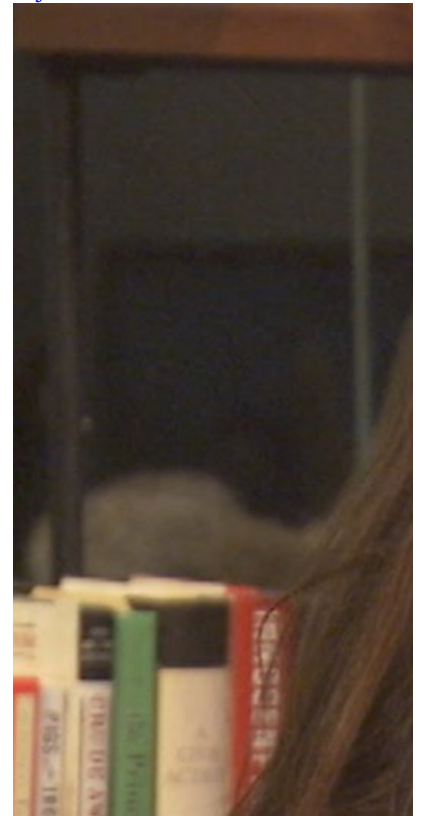
22 hours ago [huffingtonpost.com](#)
[NationalJournal.com Christina Wilkie](#) Christina Wilkie Bernie Sanders

- 4. [Colombian Woman Arrested With Over 2 Pounds Of Cocaine Hidden In Her Breasts](#)



19 hours ago [huffingtonpost.com](#)
[Wow.com Jesselyn Cook](#) Jesselyn Cook cocaine smuggling

- 5. [One Filmmaker's Mission To Humanize Women Who Wear The Hijab](#)



3 weeks ago [live.huffingtonpost.com](#)
[HuffingtonPost.com \(AOL\) mariam](#)

- 6. [North Korea Threatens All-Out Offensive Against U.S.](#)



Ultimately, this propaganda failed to produce the institutional outrage that Pakistan's deep state intended.

Another recent attempt to malign me and several of my colleagues [was published](#) in the *Pakistan Observer* in mid-February. This piece was written by a former Pakistan air force group captain and "TV Talk Show Host" named [Sultan M Hali](#). Hali's musings are widely available on the internet and they invariably defend the ISI and the army while protesting criticisms about Pakistan's long-standing policy of using Islamist militancy under its nuclear umbrella as tools of foreign policy. He, like countless retired Pakistan service personnel, populate Pakistan's print, radio and televised media as a part of the [deep state's discourse construction](#) and message managing efforts. In fact, Pakistan's intelligence agency, [the ISI, has a media management wing](#) dedicated to such efforts.

In this piece, Mr. Hali maligns my fellow colleague, [Irfan Nooruddin](#) (whose name he misspells) as a "highly biased scholar of Indian origin." Professor Nooruddin's work on electoral politics in India is well-regarded and cannot be characterized as "highly biased." (It should also be noted that he does not even write on Pakistan.) For Mr. Hali and the Pakistani deep state he defends, Professor Nooruddin's ethnicity is the basis of this dubious charge: it is rank, racist xenophobia at its worst. What did Professor Nooruddin do to elicit this slander from this amanuensis of the deep state? He had the hubris to host Ambassador Husain Haqqani who discussed his newest project titled "Reimagining Pakistan" at Georgetown under the auspices of the [India initiative](#) that Professor Nooruddin heads.

Mr. Hali, who did not attend the event, was riled that the event "featured Pakistan's most loud critics [sic] n the town including Christine Fair and Hussain Haqqani." While Mr. Hali did not attend the event, [Mr. Bilal Hayee](#) did. In fact, Mr. Hayee is a frequent monitor of such events where he takes note of who attended and what was said by whom. This has a chilling impact upon freedom of speech of students and persons of Pakistani origin and he, and his colleagues at the embassy, know it.

Mr. Hali furthered that Georgetown has established an India initiative with "US \$10 million of which large part is known to have come through the Indian Diaspora while part of it has been funded by US administration." To say that this is a blatant lie is an understatement: the India initiative is extremely modestly funded. Hali opined that "Contrary to the natural objective of fostering closer partnership between US and India, Georgetown," the event was really an opportunity to malign and defame Pakistan.

Mr. Hali also used this missive as an opportunity to criticize [Farahnaz Ispahani](#) who recently wrote a [devastating book](#) on the plight of Pakistan's minorities. Hali, upon trivializing the well-documented abuses that Pakistan's religious minorities routinely endure, made much of Ms. Ispahani's book discussion at a well-regarded Indian think-tank called the [Observer Research Foundation](#) (ORF). He claimed erroneously that the ORF is funded by Indian intelligence and suggested that Ms. Ispahani, and her husband Ambassador Haqqani, are paid stooges of Indian intelligence. It should be noted that ORF is supported by the [Reliance group](#) rather than the Indian government.

Pakistan's [boorish campaign of slander](#) against scholars and journalists whose work discomfits the deep state has even drawn the attention of Pakistani bloggers who have expressed concern about the ham-handed approach adopted by the military and intelligence media handlers. In 2011, even Ejaz Haider, a well-known pro-establishment journalist, questioned this role of the military and intelligence agency after the high profile killing of a journalist named Syed Saleem Shahzad. The chief suspect is Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI. In the wake of that tragedy, Haider [wrote of ISA media operations](#):

What is this Media Management Wing of the ISI? What right does this wing have to invite journalists for 'tea' or ask anyone to file a story or file a retraction? The inquiry commission should also look into the mandate of this wing and put it out to pasture.

However, there is little chance of Pakistan doing so.

In addition to poorly-written "filed stories" festooned with calumnious fiction, Pakistan's military and intelligence agency [trains](#) a menagerie of bots and trolls who harass persons like me on Twitter and Facebook and to promote and defend the state, including its terrorist assets.

Whereas the Pakistani government incentivizes scholars to watch what they write and say about Pakistan by holding visas and official meetings hostage, I was declared "Persona Non-Grata" long ago and cannot get a visa. Without such leverage, the Pakistani deep state hopes that all of this harassment and haranguing will coerce me into silence. But the ISI should know this: I will write. I will not be silenced by their brutish antics.

If Pakistan's armed forces and intelligence agencies are afraid of a few scholars and their facts and key boards, how can they confront Pakistan's real enemies who are the hordes of terrorists it once nurtured but who have turned their guns and suicide vests against their erstwhile patrons? With apologies to [Monty Python](#), I will continue to write in their *specific* direction.

[C. Christine Fair](#) is an associate professor at Georgetown University and is the author of [Fighting to End: The Pakistan Army's War of War](#) (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Follow C. Christine Fair on Twitter: www.twitter.com/cchristinefair

MORE: [Pakistan](#), [Acceptance & Inclusion](#), [Freedom Of Speech](#), [Pakistan Army](#)

FOLLOW WORLDPOST



GET THE NEWSLETTER

Subscribe!

YOU MAY LIKE

Sponsored Links by Taboola

The World Was Not Ready For The Gown She Wore

StyleBistro

Cable TV Is Dying in 2016. Here's What Comes Next

The Motley Fool

37 Rare Photos Seen For The First Time Show A Different Side Of History

Daily Bananas

8 Poisonous Foods We Commonly Eat

DailyHeathRemedies.com

The Top 6 Reasons Kate Hudson's New Activewear Is A Game Changer

Fabletics

10 Underrated Netflix Movies You Owe It To Yourself To Watch

Digital Trends

CONVERSATIONS

17 Comments

Sort by Top

Add a comment...

**Gary Roth**

Pretty much everyone knows that the Pakistani puppet government is corrupt, as is its military, which actually runs it. Their atrocious human rights record is also well-known. No secrets revealed here.

Like · Reply · 12 · Feb 24, 2016 7:12pm

**Reza Khan** · Unisa - The University of South Africa

Every word written here by Prof Faire is true. The Pakistani state and more correctly the Punjabi dominated army,isi and establishment is a Fascist state.It hounds and kills minority Baluch,Pashtun and others and deprive them of their human rights and withhold all economic privileges in an Apartheid manner. It is responsible of spreading war and terrorism in the Pashtun and Baluch areas and systematically kills it non Muslim minorities. Why the US sold this murderous Punjabi establishment eight F16 is beyond irresponsible and allowing more massacre of innocent Baluch and Pashtun. The US should s... See More

Like · Reply · 7 · Feb 25, 2016 5:44am

**Peter Glass** · Seattle University

Reza Khan, it should be absolutely clear why the US sold the F-16s to the Pakistani military. It is simply that they value the profits of US defense firms more than the lives of Pakistani minorities. (Please note, I use the term "defense" euphemistically).

But meanwhile,America does kinda have a problem with the Pashtuns i think. Is it not true that Taliban are pretty much an outgrowth of the Pashtun tribe? And is it also not true that the Taliban played host to Bin Laden and fostered the growth of al

Taliban played host to Bin Laden and fostered the growth of al Qaeda? So there are some things that need to be taken into account.

This is rather a total mess. It would be best if the US took the same approach as the Chinese and simply refused to engage with the internal politics of Pakistan as well as Afghanistan, Baluchistan and all the other *stans, but the US government seems to be entirely incapable of not involving itself in the politics of other peoples.

Pity, that.

Like · Reply · Feb 25, 2016 9:52am



Reza Khan · Unisa - The University of South Africa

Peter Glass Sir, maybe you are not aware that the Pashtun people are a nation of nearly 70 million people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the global diaspora. Taliban is the creation of Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistani intelligence agency (ISI). They include among others, Pashtun Arabs, Tajik, Hazara, Punjabis, Uzbeks and Chinese. The Pashtun nation are a victim of Pakistani Punjabi establishment's use of Terrorist to create mayhem and influence in neighbouring Afghanistan and India and to keep the Pashtun and Baluch divided and from depriving them of their legitimate human rights demands ins... See More

Like · Reply · Feb 25, 2016 3:30pm · Edited



Billy Wolf · DeVry University - Phoenix Campus

Peter Glass "F-16s to the Pakistani military" Are they the ones with worm hole? A transmittable code that makes them drop out of the sky like rocks?

Like · Reply · Feb 25, 2016 3:20pm



Shakir Husain

The height of intellectual dishonesty being that Dr. Fair conveniently forgets to mention that her book is available at every bookshop in Pakistan.

Like · Reply · 9 · Feb 25, 2016 3:58am



Cameron Morris · Owner at Revolve Integrated Business Solutions

That does nothing to disprove her accurate representation of the radical Pakistani "government".

Like · Reply · 2 · Feb 25, 2016 11:35am



Sam Saussy

The height of intellectual dishonesty is when your government's intelligence agency has a media management division.

Like · Reply · 1 · Feb 26, 2016 1:18am



Nazar Rabi · Owner at Self-Employed

the west or the usa dont understan wall the pakistani intelligence army are making mony out of usa or west calling pashtuns taliban or terrorist but who created taliban wear was osama bin laden caught and killed wear was he hiding he was hiding next to pakistani army base... so the truth is the pakistan army are taking money from usa or west at the same time using pashtuns brainwashing them against the west using islam name and all so the pakistani army are taking mony from the arabs too and this give the pakistani army are power too to divide pashtuns..so pakistani army and intelligence are not jus killing one bird with stone they are killing 3 or 4 bird with a stone..

Like · Reply · 1 · Feb 26, 2016 7:29pm



Sridhar Kaushik

Ms Fair has gone on record saying American diplomats do not spend enough time in Pakistan to learn about the Army's devious ways. She spent several years. Army, ISI usually would assign a young Army colonel or somebody in that rank to diplomats. These people are well briefed and say exactly what they are told. Consequently, Americans never learn anything about Pakistan except what

has been told them by these Pakistanis.
 Ms Fair was different.
 She heard what was told but could also see for herself what the reality was.
 And the reality was very different.
 AS per own words, she went to visit one m... See More

Like · Reply ·  1 · Feb 25, 2016 10:48pm



Ranjit K. M. Nair · President at World Institute for Advanced Study CPFS

We must live in hope that some day Pakistani civil society will be strong enough to resist totalitarianism and the founding myth of the 'two-nation' theory which has caused so much damage. If Christine Fair's book is available in bookshops across Pakistan, that is surely to be welcomed. Blackmailing the US has been Pakistani policy for long and nobody has any illusions on that count. The sad fact is that terrorism is pretty close to the trigger and much harm will result if the jihadis are allowed to live out their fantasies.

Like · Reply · Feb 25, 2016 3:12pm



Imad Khan · Voice Network Engineer at BrennanIT Australia

Ms Fair is well know for her Anti-Pakistan propagandas. Just check out this article on her

<http://www.mwcnews.net/.../anal.../41702-christine-fair.html>

Like · Reply ·  4 · Feb 24, 2016 9:31pm · Edited



Sridhar Kaushik


Yes, the anti-Pakistani stance has a basis. She has spelt it out clearly in this article. Are you sleeping or what?

Like · Reply ·  3 · Feb 25, 2016 10:07am



Imad Khan · Voice Network Engineer at BrennanIT Australia


Sridhar Kaushik Did you read the article from the link that i posted, or were you sleeping?

Like · Reply ·  1 · Feb 25, 2016 3:25pm



Eqbal Khan · Works at Law Firm San Francisco

Sridhar Kaushik, In your hatred towards Pakistan you have nothing good to say about that Country. We know US's new love affair with India and subsequent propaganda onslaught against not only Pakistan but also anything and everything Islamic or remotely connected to the religion.
 India has been waging propaganda war on Pakistan since 1947. Just one example here: Louis Dupree, Anthropologist, wrote that the issue of Pushtunistan was coined by Indians working for Radio Kabul. So, this propaganda war started in 1947 and now new players are jumping on the bandwagon, this article is continuation of the same.

Like · Reply ·  1 · Feb 26, 2016 1:28pm



Michael Alapaki · Western Washington University

Pakistan's senior officers might lose millions--or even their lives--if their work is criticized, so I'm not surprised they're willing to discredit, harm, or even kill a critical author.

Like · Reply · Feb 25, 2016 4:42am



Mazloom Yaar · Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Much of the details we already know, probably situations are worse than that for journalists. you have left with only one narrative, the one cherished by military.

Like · Reply · Feb 25, 2016 2:43am



Eqbal Khan · Works at Law Firm San Francisco

Just one point madam. You say "...I have nefarious links with Baloch insurgents..."

Why not use this occasion to deny it? You assert an accusation, whether its true or not, but then you do not deny the same. Why?

Why Money is distributed Pakistan, lot of money, by foreign interests to cultivate their own version of events. Do you deny that?

cultivate their own version of events. Do you deny that?

This article is yet another example of waging war on Pakistan. You do not write with your heart you write for a goal and purpose and that purpose is not fair analysis but to influence the reader.

Furthermore, You write nothing about India and Bangladesh. Well, probably your version of Indian and Bangaldesh is that those two Countires are heavens for scholars.

Like · Reply · Feb 26, 2016 12:09am · Edited

Load 7 more comments

 Facebook Comments Plugin

[Advertise](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) |

Copyright © 2016 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. | "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

Part of HuffPost on HPMG News