



Yossef Bodansky
*Articles on Pakistan-sponsored
Terrorism in Kashmir*

YOSSEF BODANSKY

ARTICLES ON PAKISTAN-SPONSORED TERRORISM IN KASHMIR

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2.0 PAKISTAN'S KASHMIR STRATEGY

by Yossef Bodansky

Kashmir is unique among all the crisis points along the Indo-Pakistani border in that a marked escalation of the fighting -- both insurgency and regular -- is virtually inevitable before any effort for a peaceful solution can succeed. The primary reasons is the extent of the ideological commitment and self-interests of several of the key players involved.



For Islamabad, the liberation of Kashmir is a sacred mission, the only task unfulfilled since Muhammad Ali Jinnah's days. Moreover, a crisis in Kashmir constitutes an excellent outlet for the frustration at home, an instrument for the mobilization of the masses, as well as gaining the support of the Islamist parties and primarily their loyalists in the military and the ISI.

The ISI has a major interest to continue the crisis. Back in the 1970s, Pakistan started to train Sikhs and other Indian separatist movements as part of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's strategy for forward strategic depth. Pakistan adopted the sponsorship of terrorism and subversion as an instrument to substitute for the lack of strategic depth and early warning capabilities. The Pakistani sponsored terrorists and the Pakistani intelligence operatives in their ranks would be able to warn Pakistan of any impending Indian invasion, and then launch a guerrilla warfare against the Indian Army even before it reached the border with Pakistan. Therefore, sponsoring separatist subversion has become a crucial component of Islamabad's national military strategy.

During the 1980s, the ISI completed a vast training and support infrastructure for the Afghan resistance that was also used for the training and support of other regional groups. There was a corresponding ideological development in Indian Kashmir. Since 1984, virtually suddenly, the prevailing popular sentiments in Indian Kashmir was that "Islam is in Danger," and that sentiment, rather than nationalism, began mobilizing the youth.

The timing of the change was not spontaneous. Hashim Qureshi, the founder of the nationalist JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front] recently recalled how "in 1984 ISI Generals and Brigadiers approached me with the offer: 'get us young people for training from the Valley so that they could fight India on return.'" When he refused, Qureshi explained, his struggle was taken over by the ISI who installed Amanullah Khan. "It is tragic that so-called nationalist Amanullah Khan and some of his supporters started the present struggle in Kashmir in league with the ISI. A man with common intelligence can understand that any movement started in a Muslim majority area with the help of Pakistani military intelligence will eventually mean religious struggle." Qureshi stressed that by 1993 "Amanullah proved that he was an agent of the ISI" having sacrificed the nationalist liberation struggle in Kashmir on the altar of Islamist politics. Qureshi himself had to flee Pakistan and seek political asylum in Western Europe. Meanwhile, by the late-1980s, with the war in Afghanistan slowing down, the vast network of training camps for Afghan Mujahideen was transformed by the ISI into a center of Islamist terrorism throughout South Asia, as well as the melting pot of the world wide Islamist Jihad. This transformation concurred with an active ISI program "to initiate full-fledged subversion in Kashmir Valley" that is still escalating. At first, the ISI's assistance to the Kashmiri Islamists was funnelled through Gulbaddin Hekmatiyar's Hizb-i Islami, thus providing Islamabad with deniability.

Islamabad increases its support for Islamist terrorism in Kashmir because there is a genuine whole hearted commitment to Jihad among the Kashmiri terrorists and their international volunteers. Moreover, the ISI transformed its major paramilitary command into a major political force as a direct result of their increase of support for terrorism in India. Presently, there is a need for a mission use for the ISI's

numerous paramilitary and Afghan forces, as well as an institutional interest in preserving the political clout that comes with these operations. Islamabad finds a task for the ISI's vast Pakistani and Afghan cadres previously involved in sponsoring the Jihad in Afghanistan but who are now no longer needed, that would keep them away from domestic politics and power struggles. Indeed, the escalation of terrorism and subversion since the early 1990s is considered a part of the ISI's implementation of a long-term program.

Iran considers an escalation in the Jihad for the liberation of Kashmir a key for the assertion of strategic prominence of the Tehran-led Islamic Bloc, as well as a demonstration of its regional power position. In order to expedite the implementation, the Iranians are utilizing a sacred mission, that is, liberating the area of Ayatollah Khomeyni's roots, as a rallying point. The extent of agitation and indoctrination of Iranian, Afghan, Kashmiri, Indian, Pakistani and other volunteers in the special forces and terrorist training camps in Iran makes it impossible to call off such a Jihad for any reason.

Similarly, the Armed Islamic Movement, as well as several Saudis, Gulf Arabs, and other supporters of Islamist causes, put Kashmir high on their list of jihads to be fought. Indeed, Kashmir is mentioned in lists of sacred goals recovered in Israel (MAMAS), Algeria (FIS), Sudan, Egypt, to name but a few examples. Kashmir is a high priority objective because of the firm belief in the possibility of success. It is an easy campaign to wage for logistical considerations because of the presence of numerous cadres and large weapon stockpiles in Afghanistan and Pakistan. AIM's operations are closely coordinated in Tehran and Khartoum.

All of these states and organizations have large, highly trained and well equipped forces. Virtually all of these forces have not yet been committed to the Kashmiri Jihad. The sole attempt for mass mobilization, in 1992, was stopped by the Pakistani authorities for fear of Indian retaliation. However, Islamabad desperately needs an external challenge for its own domestic political reasons, ranging from diversion of popular attention away from the domestic collapse to finding "something to do" for the ISI and the military other than meddling in politics. Islamabad would receive massive financial assistance from Iran, Saudis and Gulf Arabs, as was the case during the Afghan war, if there is a jihad to be waged. Kashmir is the only viable option. Moreover, even if Islamabad is reluctant to move, many of the irregulars -- Pakistanis, Afghans, Kashmiris and Arab 'Afghans' -- will eventually start the escalations on their own with a nod and a wink from the ISI and the military, thus dragging the supporting powers -- themselves already bound by their declaratory commitments -- into the rapidly escalating crisis.

Presently, Pakistani officials repeatedly vow to "liberate" Kashmir, or enforce the recognition of "Muslims' rights" in the Valley, even at a risk of a major crisis. This rising militancy of Pakistani officials is far from being empty rhetoric. Islamabad uses the escalation in Kashmir as a cover for the overall expansion of the terrorist training and support system for operations in Central Asia and elsewhere in the world. In order to escalate their Islamist Jihad, the ISI established in the early 1990s the Markaz-Dawar, a center for world wide Islamist activities. Mulavi Zaki, the center's spiritual leader, told the trainees that their destiny was to fight and liberate "the land of Allah from infidels" wherever they might be. The commanders and instructors are AIM members, primarily Ikhwan from Algeria, Sudan and Egypt. Most of them had fought for more than a decade in Afghanistan.

In early 1992, with world attention paid to their presence in Peshawar area, some of these 'Afghans' were transferred to Azad Kashmir where new camps were being built for them by the Pakistani Army. By early 1993, there were over 1,000 'Afghan' Mujahideen in the Markaz-Dawar alone. Following the completion of advance training, they are being sent to Kashmir, Algeria and Egypt.

Since mid 1993, despite Islamabad's claims to the contrary, the main offices of the Islamist terrorist organizations remained functioning in Peshawar. The series of "raids" by police since October 1992 had resulted in the transfer of some of the 200 hard core terrorists specifically wanted by the West to facilities near Jalalabad, just across the Afghan border. In principle, the reports of mass deportation of 'Afghans'

from Peshawar by the Pakistani government were baseless. In the fall of 1993, an Arab 'Afghan' with first hand knowledge confirmed that "Pakistan pushed them out of the door only to open a window for them to return and they come and go as they wish in Peshawar."

In the summer of 1993, the ISI had in the Markaz-Dawar another force of some 200 Afghans -mainly Jallaluddin Haqqani's people from the Khowst area -- that operated under direct ISI command and were earmarked for special operations in Kashmir. According to Muhammad Fazal al-Hajj, a PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] terrorist captured in southern Kashmir in the summer of 1993, additional 'Afghans' and Afghans were being prepared by the ISI for the forthcoming escalation. At least 400 'Afghans' and Afghans were known to being organized in one camp, where they were trained by the ISI to augment and provide quality core of leadership for the Kashmiri Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. There was a corresponding expansion of advance preparations of Islamist terrorists for operations in forward bases in Kashmir. Some 600 terrorists, about half of them veteran 'Afghans' and Afghans, were already at the final phase of their training.

Ultimately, many Arab volunteers continue to arrive in Peshawar almost every day. The main Ikhwan facility is the Maktaba-i-Khidmat originally established by the late Shaykh Abd Allah Azzam and now run by his successor Shaykh Muhammad Yussaf Abbas. It still processes the volunteers for AIM. At present, however, many of the volunteers are then dispatched to the numerous training camps run by Arab 'Afghan' militants inside Afghanistan. The ISI continues to provide the weapons and expertise. In July 1994, Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan, the prime minister of Pakistani Azad Kashmir, acknowledged that "there are a number of elements from various nationalities who participate in the Jihad." He identified most of them as "Arab 'Afghans'."

Meanwhile, the Government of Afghanistan also increased its support for terrorist training and preparations. This growing direct involvement is important because the main operating bases for the ISI's operations in Central Asia are in northern Afghanistan. In the aftermath of the fall of Kabul, many Arab 'Afghans' returned to Peshawar where they were organized by the Pakistani government to support various Islamist causes in concert with Iran and Sudan. Many of them returned to Afghanistan as quality forces and personal guard details. For example, Ahmad Shah Massud maintains some 70-80 Arab 'Afghans' in southern Kabul for special tasks, from "help" in political purges to fighting Gulbaddin Hekmatiyar.

In early December 1993, during a state visit to Pakistan, the Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Maulana Arsalan Rahmani, elaborated on Kabul's perception of the Islamist struggles world wide, and especially in south and central Asia. He hailed Afghanistan's active support for Islamist armed causes world wide and stressed that "we don't consider this support as intervention in any country's internal affairs." Maulana Arsalan Rahmani admitted that Afghanistan was providing military assistance to various insurgencies because "we cannot remain aloof from what is happening to the Muslims in occupied Kashmir, Tajikistan, Bosnia, Somalia, Burma, Palestine and elsewhere.... We are not terrorists but Mujahideen fighting for restoring peace and preserving honor."

He acknowledged that Afghanistan also played a major role in a recent major development among the Islamist organizations fighting in Indian Kashmir, namely, the merger of the Harakat ul-Jihad Islami and Harakat ul-Mujahideen into the potent Harakat ul-Ansar. This support for the unity was but part of the active support given by Afghanistan to the Islamist fighters in Kashmir, Tajikistan, and Bosnia. "There are about 8,000 members of Harakat ul-Ansar who are supporting the Kashmiri struggle against Indian occupation," Maulana Arsalan Rahmani stated.

In early 1995, the Harakat ul-Ansar was maintaining offices in most Pakistani cities, as well as training facilities in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It expanded its global reach in support for Islamist causes. "Ours is a truly international network of genuine Muslim holy warriors," explained Khalid Awan, a Pakistani member. "We believe frontiers could never divide Muslims. They are one nation and they will remain a

single entity." Harakat ul-Ansar are known to be fighting in Kashmir, the Philippines, Bosnia, Tajikistan, and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the ISI continues to provide the terrorists with new weapons. In the summer of 1993 the Kashmiri Mujahideen were provided with long range and powerful missiles –U air missiles of Afghan War vintage. At that time, the Kashmiri and ISI crews were being trained in the use of these missiles in Pakistani Kashmir.

Subsequently, there has been a marked expansion of smuggling of quality weapons from Pakistan into Kashmir as of late 1993. There has been a corresponding change in the terrorists' tactics, introducing hit and run strikes by highly trained and well equipped detachments. Among the new weapons now used in Kashmir are 107mm rockets, 60mm mortars, automatic grenade launchers (Soviet and Chinese models), modification of 57mm helicopter rocket pods with solar-powered sophisticated timing devise for delayed firing barrages of rockets, and LAW-type tube-launched ATMs (Soviet and Chinese models). A threshold was crossed in the spring of 1994, when the ISI began providing the Kashmiri Islamists with Stinger SAMs. Indian security forces captured a Stinger on 30 April 1994.

As of the fall of 1993, the Kashmiri terrorists also began using sophisticated communication systems including small radios (including systems with frequency hopping, selective broadcast, digital burst communications, etc.) and collapsible solar-panels for reload systems, as well as frequency scanning devise for detecting and homing on military-type broadcasting. All the communication systems are of NATO/US origin, with some components made in Japan.

All of these systems had been used by the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, having been provided via the ISI. There has been a large increase in the quantities of small arms provided to the Kashmiris, including Type 56 ARs (PRC AK-47s), several types of machine guns, long-range sniper rifles, pistols and RPGs, all of Soviet and Chinese makes. Some of the Kashmiri terrorist began carrying highly specialized weapons such as pen-guns for assassinations.

The ISI 'Afghan' and Kashmiri forces also assist the flow of weapons and expertise to the Sikhs in the Punjab. The main weapon depots for this new surge in subversion and terrorism are in Baramulla and Kupwara area of the Kashmir Valley, where ISI-trained Sikhs run the depot. In addition, there is a key depot for the Bhindranwale Tier Force of Khalistan in Singhpora. The source of these weapons are two Hizb-ul-Mujahideen officials known to the Sikhs as Al-Umar and Fiaz Ahead.

In early 1994, the ISI already had a force of 2,000-2,500 highly trained mujahideen assigned for Kashmir, including Kashmiris, Arab 'Afghans' and Afghans. The key force includes 1,000 Pakistani (inc. Pakistani-born Kashmiris), 500 Afghans, as well as numerous Saudis, Egyptians, Sudanese, Algerians, Nigerians, Jordanians, Palestinians and other foreign volunteers. Their main training bases are in Peerpanjal range area. By the spring of 1994, when the weather permitted the resumption of large-scale terrorist operations, the ISI controlled mujahideen, most of them non-Kashmiri 'Afghans', were already firmly in control of the escalation. Some of these ISI-mujahideen ultimately operated as the Al-Mujahideen Force, ostensibly a "Kashmiri grass-roots" force with allegiance to Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan. In April-May alone, some 400 of these 'Afghans' were infiltrated into Kashmir. Shaykh Jamal-Uddin, an Afghan mujahid recently captured in Kashmir insists that the ISI-sponsored Islamist forces already in Indian Kashmir are larger. "There are several thousand Afghans/'Afghans' in the Valley," he stressed. The ISI-sponsored mujahideen operate mainly under the banners of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Harakat ul-Ansar. Several highly trained Afghans and Sudanese operatives were infiltrated into the Valley to assume command over key networks of these operations, as well as impose Islamism on the local population. The summer of 1994 was a fundamental turning point in the conduct of the Pakistan-sponsored Jihad in Kashmir. The change did not take place on the battlefield. In order to ensure its tight dominance over all aspects of the escalating Islamist Jihad in Kashmir; Islamabad organized the 13 leading Islamist organizations into the United Jihad Council [Muttahida Jihad ('council - MJC] under the leadership of

Commander Manzur Shah, the leader of Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, and under the tight control of the ISI. Among the member organizations: Harakat ul-Ansar, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, Al-Jihad, Al-Barq, Ikhrwan-ul-Mussalmin, Tariq-ul-Mujahideen, and all other Islamist militant organizations. The declared objective of the escalating Jihad is to join Pakistan.

In early June 1994, Commander Manzur Shah declared that the sole objective of the escalating Jihad in Kashmir is to incorporate it into Pakistan. "The declarations of all Kashmiri militant organizations have announced [that] Pakistan is their ideal and goal.... The freedom fighters will surrender [Kashmir] to the Pakistani military and government." Commander Manzur Shah stressed that "the Jihad has been getting stronger... The Mujahideen are getting organized now and are attacking the Indian military strategically." He admitted that Indian Kashmiri Muslim leaders were assassinated or attacked in order to prevent them from reaching an agreement with the Indian government. "Wali Mohammed would not have been assassinated and the caravans of Farooq [Abdullah] and Rajesh Pilot would not have been attacked if the climate was conducive to political action."

Meanwhile, a campaign of assassinations was launched in order to eliminate the Kashmiri civic leadership that opposed the escalation of the Jihad. On 20 June 1994, Islamist terrorists assassinated the Kashmiri scholar Qazi Nissar Ahmed. He was kidnapped a night before and pressured to endorse the anti-India Jihad. He refused and was killed. A key member of the assassination squad was Fayaz Ahmad Mir a.k.a. Abu-Bakr of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Ahmed was the 17th Kashmiri Muslim scholar and civic leader to be assassinated by Islamists for refusing to join the anti-India struggle.

Thus, by the fall of 1994, the ISI was already successful in consolidating control over the Islamist armed struggle in Kashmir. The ISI can now ensure that key operations and major escalation in Kashmir will serve the strategic and political priorities and interests of Islamabad.

This marked escalation in the ISI's support for the Islamist insurgency and terrorism in Kashmir is a direct by-product of Pakistan's national security policy and grand strategy. Ms. Bhutto has repeatedly emphasized the centrality of the annexation of the entire Kashmir for the long-term development of Pakistan. The new rail-line that will connect Karachi and Central Asia must pass through Indian-held Kashmir to be engineeringly and economically effective. Ms. Bhutto's Islamabad considers the opening of the road to Central Asia by using Pakistan as the region's gateway to the Indian Ocean as the key to the growth of Pakistan's commercial activities. Kashmir is also Pakistan's true gateway to the PRC and into Central Asia -- the path of the new Silk Road. And there lies the future and strategic salvation of Pakistan. Indeed, Islamabad expresses its support for "the liberation of Kashmir" in more than words. ISI support for Islamist terrorism and subversion in Kashmir continues to grow. In recent months, there has been a noticeable improvement in the professional skills of Islamist terrorists operating in Kashmir -- the result of the more thorough training received in ISI-run camps in Pakistan. There is also an increase in the deployment of high quality Afghans, Pakistani Kashmiris, and Arab 'Afghans' into Indian Kashmir in order to bolster the local terrorist organizations. Increasingly using sophisticated and heavy weapons recently supplied by the ISI in Pakistan, these expert terrorists carry out quality operations. The quality of the weapon systems available to the Kashmiri insurgents crossing over from Pakistan also continue to improve. Islamabad is fully aware of the extent of its active support for subversive operations inside India, and considers it a tenet of its regional security policy.

Pakistan knows that the active pursuit of the current Kashmir strategy may lead to an escalation of the face off with India. Islamabad is ready to deal with this eventuality while increasing its all out support for the Kashmiris. Indeed, Pakistani officials are raising the ante of Islamabad's Indian strategy. In mid February 1995, a Foreign Ministry spokesman warned that "if India carries out another aggression and war breaks out between Pakistan and India, it would not be a war of a thousand years or even a thousand hours but only a few minutes and India should not be oblivious to the potential devastation." (The "thousand year war" is a reference to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's statement of the extent of Pakistan's commitment to a struggle with India.) Other Pakistani officials were quick to clarify the statement. They

stressed that the statement "warned India not by implication but in clear terms that the next war will only last a few seconds and will bring inconceivable destruction and devastation. This clearly indicates that the Pakistani Government has bravely displayed its nuclear capability." The officials added that "Pakistan is really in a position to strike a heavy blow against India through its nuclear capability."

What is most significant in both the spokesman's statement and the subsequent clarifications is their context. The strategic logic of using the nuclear factor to offset any deficiencies in conventional military power has been the cornerstone of Pakistan's nuclear strategy. Recently, a more assertive element was first introduced to the nuclear strategy by Islamist politicians. The overall Pakistani strategic confidence has been expressed in brinkmanship statements coming out of Islamabad since the fall of 1993. For example, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the Jamaat i-Islami Chief Senator, urged the Bhutto government "to declare Jihad on India to save Kashmir Muslims from total annihilation." There is no other way to resolve the crisis, he declared. "Let us wage Jihad for Kashmir. A nuclear-armed Pakistan would deter India from a wider conflict," he stressed. Thus, the statement of mid February 1995 confirms that the Bhutto Government has indeed adopted the strategy and policy outlined by the Islamists.

As the spring of 1995 draws near and the weather improves, the ISI is about to unleash a new cycle of terrorism and subversion. Considering the extent of the training, preparations, and organizational effort invested in the Kashmiri Islamist insurgency during the last few years, it is safe to assume that the fighting in the Kashmir will escalate markedly in the coming year. Numerous additional highly trained and well equipped Mujahideen, many of them professional special forces and terrorists, will join the fighting in Kashmir and will even expand the struggle into the rest of India. They already have in place extensive stockpiles of weapons as well as large sums of money to sustain and support their Jihad. Their primary mission, however, will not be the liberation of Kashmir but rather furthering the strategic interests of Islamabad and Teheran.

3.0 ISLAMABAD'S ROAD WARRIORS

by Yossef Bodansky

Using the ISI's skills at running covert operations and irregular warfare -- skills honed and proven during the 1980s in the war in Afghanistan -- Islamabad has launched a major campaign to consolidate control over the Silk Road's traditional gateways to China. Fully aware of the major strategic importance of the regional transportation system, Islamabad sees in its control over these key segments of the regional road system the key to its future and fortunes.



Beijing's present and near-future grand strategy considers the revival of the Silk Road as a primary regional strategic entity. The on-land transportation system -- stretching along the traditional Silk Road -- is of crucial significance to the consolidation of the Trans-Asian Axis -- Beijing's key to global power posture and strategic safety. The PRC's self-acknowledged naval inferiority reduces the strategic use of the Indian Ocean, thus only increasing the importance of the on-land lines of communications -- the Silk Road -- for the consolidation and enhancement of the Trans Asian Axis.

The Silk Road is actually a set of primary axes of transportation through the heart of Asia. The principal axes run in parallel between the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and the heart of China -- roughly from east to west and vice versa. A set of auxiliary axes, roughly perpendicular to the principal axes, feed into the Silk Road from the heart of Russia or from the shores of the Indian Ocean. The primary choke point of the Silk Road and its gateway into China is the Taklamakan Desert. West of the Taklamakan Desert are the strategic cities of Kashi (traditional name Kashgar) and Yarkand -- both in Xinjiang in western PRC. Several axes of transportation -- both the principal axes traversing through the Balkh and Pamir mountains (to-day's northern Afghanistan and Tajikistan respectively) as well as a feeder axis from the Indian Ocean through the lower Himalayas (today's Pakistan and Indian Kashmir) -- converge on Kashi and Yarkand, from where they proceed into the Chinese interior.

Essentially, whoever controls the access roads to Kashgar and Yarkand controls the gateways to China on the Silk Road.

There is only yet another overland gateway into China -- the brand new and fragile Karakoram Highway. Twisting through northern Pakistan along a narrow corridor and precarious mountain passes, the Highway enters into western China where it feeds into Kashi (Kashgar) and the traditional roads encircling the Taklamakan Desert. Work on the Karakoram Highway started in 1967. A passable road was completed only in 1978, and fully opened for traffic in 1986. The Karakoram Highway was a tremendous engineering feat of the PRC. More over, the mere existence of the Karakoram Highway is a strategic breakthrough for Beijing and Islamabad because it broke the isolation of both Pakistan and the PRC, ensuring a corridor between them that can withstand blockade even during most intense warfare. Islamabad considers the Karakoram Highway as a symbol and manifestation of the unique Sino-Pakistani relationship and strategic unity of purpose. Recently, Islamabad expands this theme to include the emerging Silk Road. For example, Pakistani officials stressed in late December 1993 that "the role of China in the construction of the Silk Route has made the bilateral relations as strong as the Karakoram Highway."

Thus, fully aware of the crucial importance of the regional road system to the strategic survival of all powers -- both superpowers and aspirant powers -- Islamabad sees in the road system through the region -- particularly the western approaches to the Silk Road and thus the PRC -- the key to its future and fortunes.

The Pakistani strategic calculation is that if Pakistan is the dominant or hegemonic power over the western gateways to China -- a crucial component of both the Silk Road (actually) and the Trans-Asian Axis (strategically, metaphysically) -- Islamabad will be in a position to exert influence over the entire Trans-Asian Axis. Such a position, reinforcing Pakistan's already unique position as the linch-pin between the PRC and the Tehran-led Islamic Bloc, will enable Pakistan enjoy economic and political benefits in the process way beyond what it could have hoped to gain on the basis of the country's objective economic, scientific-technological, and population posture, and even the realistic future potential. Essentially, the Pakistani strategic logic behind the drive to control the western gateways to China is to transform Islamabad's strategic position as the linch-pin between the Islamic Bloc and China into a tangible reality on the ground.

Sophisticated as the Pakistani strategic grand design may be, it nevertheless confronts a very grim reality -- the tracks of road Islamabad is determined to control, or at the very least secure hegemony over, happen to be on the sovereign territory of Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and India. However, this reality does not seem to deter or restrain Islamabad. Therefore, in pursuit of these objectives, the ISI has recently launched a relentless drive to ensure that local Islamist irregular forces -- most of them already Pakistan's proteges for they are sponsored by the ISI -- will control all key roads and axes in order to create a regional dependence on Islamabad to ensure safety of traffic -- in other words, recognize Islamabad's hegemony over the western gateways of China.

Recent ISI operations in Afghanistan can be considered the trend setter. The accumulating Afghan experience of the ISI convinced Islamabad of the strategic importance of roads and provided precedents for using state-controlled irregular warfare -- like the Afghan mujahideen forces -- as strategic instruments for state policy. By the mid 1990s, the ISI would support major campaigns of its protege forces in order to ensure Islamabad's control over strategic sites and assets.

The key event has been rise of the Taliban as controllers of the Qandahar-Herat and Qandahar-Kabul roads. Decisions made in Islamabad between late October and early November 1994 concerning means to achieve Pakistan's control over key roads in Afghanistan would drastically change the character of Afghanistan, and the region as a whole.

By 1994, in pursuant of Islamabad's self-perceived role as the road junction for commerce and transportation between Central Asia and the Indian Ocean, itself part of Islamabad's role in the Trans-Asian Axis doctrine and the revival of the Silk Road, the ISI embarked on an ambitious program to consolidate de-facto control over the Kushka-Herat-Qandahar-Quetta highway. This road is the only strategic artery in relatively good shape that can be rebuilt and carry massive convoys with relative ease. It should be remembered that the Dostam-Massud and ISI-Tajikistan fighting have all but closed the Termez-Salang-Kabul highway.

Thus, Pakistan embarked on an ambitious project to repair the most damaged sectors of the Kushka-Herat-Qandahar-Quetta highway in Afghanistan. Work began by tribal contractors with long-established contacts with Pakistan. However, in order to ensure Pakistan's actual control over this vital road, the ISI began subverting local leaders and chieftains by making deals with them (giving weapons and money, providing outlets for Helmand Valley drugs, etc.).

Ultimately, this program proved to be the unintended culmination of a lengthy and multi-faceted process begun already in the early 1980s in the Qandahar area. At first, ISI-sponsored Islamist mujahideen purged the local pro-Royal Pushtun tribal leadership. In the late 1980s, this purge led in turn to a series of assassinations of local elders and chieftains. Then, in the last days of the Communist regime, the Jowzjani-led WAD [Afghan Intelligence] special forces destroyed the substitute tribal leaderships pushed in by the ISI in order to ensure Kabul's hold over the strategically vital Qandahar and Afghanistan's southern regions. By the time the Jowzjani effort collapsed with Najib's Kabul, the region's indigenous leadership was already completely destroyed.

Consequently, in 1994, the ISI found only "the bottom of the barrel" to deal with. Deals were struck with aspiring war-lords and drug-dealers pretending to be mujahideen commanders. These newly empowered leaders turned on the population and abused their power and special relations with Pakistan -- still Afghanistan's sole gateway to Western goods.

Within a few months, the situation exploded, and a new force emerged on the scene -- the Taliban. The recognized leader of the Taliban is Mulawi Mohammed Omar from Qandahar. He is a veteran Pushtun mujahideen commander turned religious student. The legend of his rise to a leadership position is indicative of the socio-political motivation of the Taliban movement as a whole.

In the fall of 1994, the legend goes, the Prophet Muhammad came to Mulawi Mohammed Omar in his dream and told him to cleanse his tribe from a sinful oppressive warlord. This ISI-installed "local commanders" was notorious for rapes and pillaging. After receiving permission from his Mullah, Mulawi Mohammed Omar organized a force of 50 comrades, all former mujahideen who had served under him in the 1980s. He then assassinated the warlord, delivering a kind of "people's justice."

Following that, Mulawi Mohammed Omar distributed the warlord's confiscated property to the poor and needy of the Qandahar area. Subsequently, Mulawi Mohammed Omar established a local religious leadership to administer the distribution of the wealth. He accepted the warlord's weapons and fighters into a fledgling religious movement under his command. The new command would be known as the Taliban -- students of religious schools -- in honor of the origin of its leaders.

Reality is more mundane and strategically important. The Taliban emerged as a result of a calculated organization and activation of Islamist Pushtun forces then sponsored jointly by Tehran and Islamabad. As the legend goes, the hard core of the Taliban are indeed Pushtun religious students and young Islamist clergy. Many of them are veterans of the war, and all are graduates of training camps and higher schools in Iran and Pakistan. They are both nationalist and Islamist. They indeed were eager to rebel against the corrupt ISI-installed warlords and crime-bosses. However, until they began receiving support from the ISI they were unable to do anything. Then, once empowered, they initially established themselves in the Qandahar area where the destruction of the long-established tribal royalist leadership left a void yearning to be filled. The Taliban's first success -- the seizure of Qandahar in November 1994 - is considered the beginning of their campaign.

Thus, although portrayed as a spontaneous grassroots movement, the Taliban are actually the result of a strategic turning point in Tehran and Islamabad. Significantly, their initial rise in the fall of 1994 was made possible because it coincided with a profound reevaluation of the situation in the region in both Islamabad and Tehran. Both governments now accepted the reality of the collapse of the Afghan state. They could no longer escape the realization that, ultimately, all the regional states would fracture to a certain degree along ethno-nationality lines. It should be stressed that for the last decade such a change was the Soviet objective, and this evolution is indeed the lasting historical impact of the war in Afghanistan.

Now, in the late fall of 1994, both Tehran and Islamabad concluded that it was imperative for their respective intelligence services to consolidate a certain degree of control over the regional ethno-political dynamics in order to preserve the power position of their respective governments. Southern Afghanistan would be the first stage. And so, after the Taliban's initial success in stabilizing Qandahar in mid November, and the unquestionable popular support they were enjoying, Islamabad was ready to negotiate with Tehran the next moves.

However, it was only by mid December 1994, that the Taliban "proved" to the ISI that they were fully aware of Islamabad's strategic interests and regional priorities. By then, the Taliban were moving westward into the Helmand Valley, killing the drug lords associated with both Hekmatyar and the ISI. The "spark" happened when a local Hekmatyar commander blocked and hijacked a Pakistani 30-truck convoy

on its way to Central Asia in order to compel the ISI to do something about the Taliban. However, the ISI "hinted" to the Qandahar elders that the warlord was a fair game. Immediately, a 2,500 strong force of Taliban materialized out of the blue in Qandahar. Well equipped and well led, this Taliban force took on the Hekmatyar warlord and freed the convoy. Significantly, the Taliban did not extract any booty from the convoy, and even retrieved loot from local villages and returned it to the convoy. The incident proved to Islamabad conclusively that they could indeed do business with the Taliban.

Consequently, in late 1994 and early 1995, Islamabad "saw the light." The ISI began assisting the Taliban in a massive way, providing new Kalashnikov assault rifles, large quantities of ammunition, training, logistics, etc. Indeed, in a meeting in Islamabad in December 1994, Hekmatyar complained to then ISI chief Lt.Gen. Javed Ashraf about the ISI's growing assistance to the Taliban. At the same time, the ISI was closely monitoring the increasing flow of Pakistani-Pushtun volunteers to join the Taliban. Significantly, the Taliban's emerging political religious leadership was made of proteges of the Pakistani (and increasingly regional) Jamiat-i-Ulema-Islam under the leadership of Maulana Fazlur Rahman. By mid 1995, the Jamiat-i-Ulema-Islam is increasingly an umbrella organization for a dozen smaller Islamist organizations including some of the most violent in Pakistan.

Indeed, there was a dramatic increase in the size of the Taliban. By mid December, 3,000-4,000 religious students moved from madrassas in the NWFP across the border to join the Taliban. By early January 1995, a flood began. Most Taliban come from Sunni madrassas in Pakistani Baluchistan, from the Afghan refugee camps established in mid 1980s by the ISI to alter the demographic character of unruly Baluchistan. By February 1995, the Taliban forces reached some 25,000, predominantly Pushtuns. There were also over a thousand Tajiks and Uzbeks from the Jowzjani special forces sent to Qandahar in the last days of Najib's regime. These troops would not only add military skills and expertise, but would soon open channels of communications to Dostam, their former commander, to build cooperation with NIM (National Islamic Movement forces of General Abdul Rashid Dostam).

By February 1995, the Taliban forces were deployed at the gate of Kabul. In late February, they pushed Hekmatyar from his stronghold in Maidan Shahr (30 km south of Kabul) and closed on Charasiyab, Hizb-i-Islami's main point of shelling Kabul. Gulbaddin Hekmatyar and a few close aides had to flee Charasiyab, leaving behind their entire arsenal and stockpiles. A series of subsequent setbacks in fighting with Rabbani's forces in the Kabul area and a brief but dramatic rift with Tehran (including the assassination of Iran's most favorite Afghan mujahideen commander), did not change the overall strategic posture of the Taliban.

The Taliban are presently controlling about one third of the territory of Afghanistan and spreading. Some of their elements reached western Afghanistan and had a few skirmishes with Ismail Khan's people before Iranian mediators negotiated a deal that includes a virtually unlimited use of the road between Herat and Kushka. Consequently, the Taliban secured for Pakistan control over the sole non-Iranian route between the Indian Ocean and Central Asia -- the Herat-Qandahar-Quetta segment of the Kushka-Herat-Qandahar-Quetta highway -- the road Islamabad has been yearning for dominance over.

Emboldened and wisened by the accumulating experience in Afghanistan, the ISI moved quickly to transform and modify some of its key subversion and terrorism sponsorship programs from a mere attrition of hostile governments to also include an effort to establish control over the strategic axes of transportation.

This evolution of the strategic character of ISI clandestine operations is best reflected in recent transformation of the ISI-sponsored Islamist terrorism in Indian Kashmir.

Pakistan did not "discover" the Kashmir issue as a result of the revival of the Silk Road. Pakistan has always coveted Kashmir. Since the late 1940s, all Pakistani governments considered India's control over large parts of Kashmir the unfinished component of the legacy of Jinnah. However, in recent years there

has been a profound transformation of the Pakistani-supported armed struggle in Kashmir. Initially, as of the mid 1980s, there has been a gradual Islamicization of the Kashmiri forces -- a phenomena reflecting the growing importance of, and dependence on, Pakistani training and supplies. Then, as of the early 1990s, there has been a marked intensification of the ISI's direct involvement in, and control over, these operations.

This evolution of the ISI's direct involvement in the conduct of terrorist operations inside Indian Kashmir was a direct reflection of a profound change in Islamabad's strategic approach to the Kashmir question. As of late 1993, Mrs. Bhutto has been stressing the centrality of the annexation of the entire Kashmir for the long-term development of Pakistan. This strong position was based on Islamabad's perception of its vital interests as a key player in the PRC's Trans-Asian Axis design. It did not take long for Islamabad to realize that opening Central Asia by using Pakistan as the gateway to the Indian Ocean could become the key to Pakistan's economic growth.

However, engineering studies on potential routs for a new rail-line to connect Karachi and Central Asia concluded that if such a line is to be viable from economic point of view -- both costs of construction and of operations -- it must pass through Indian Kashmir. By the fall of 1993, Islamabad had to confront the reality that Pakistan's true gateway to the PRC and into Central Asia -- the path to the future and strategic salvation of Pakistan -- was passing through Indian Kashmir.

Islamabad is not willing to accept the situation where its vital strategic life-line passes through the territory of its arch-nemesis -- India. As New Delhi began discussing the possibility of elections in Kashmir -- a process that would legitimize Indian sovereignty over Kashmir -- it became imperative for Islamabad not only to destabilize the area to the point of postponement of the elections, but to escalate the armed struggle to reach a point that would compel an Indian withdrawal. Considering the crucial importance of Indian Kashmir to Islamabad's emerging vital interests, Islamabad can see no substitute to the annexation of this area to Pakistan. Thus, the ISI has embarked on the relentless escalation of terrorism throughout Kashmir.

It is this strategic consideration that has had such a major effect on the conduct and intensity of the armed struggle in Indian Kashmir. Consequently, the ISI is not only the sponsoring and guiding force behind the escalation, but the ISI increasingly participates directly in the fighting. Particularly as of the spring of 1995, the ISI has assumed direct control over the key operations in Indian Kashmir in order to ensure the strategic outcome of events. Most of these covert operations are conducted by loyal foreigners, including Afghans and Arabs, in order to ensure a semblance of deniability.

This strategic aspect of the Pakistani involvement in Kashmir is best manifested in the evolution of the Islamist terrorist and subversion struggle in the region. The increased ISI presence, including taking over key operations, has both operational and strategic meaning. At the operational level, there is a distinct "Afghanization" of the struggle -- key operations are conducted by forces comprised of Afghans and Pakistan-born Kashmiris, as well as an assortment of Arab 'Afghans.' Their introduction in growing numbers should not be perceived merely as a reaction to the growing effectiveness of the Indian security forces.

Indeed the terrorist organizations most active in Kashmir are almost totally manned by foreigners -- mainly Afghans and Pakistani Kashmiris. Harakat-ul-Ansar, the largest Kashmiri group with forward headquarters in Muzaffarabad, and Markaz Dawa al Irshad, the militant wing of Lashkar-e-Tayeba with headquarters in Muridke near Lahore, have very few Indian Kashmiris in the ranks of their elite fighters. Another active organization -- Al-Barq -- is comprised of a mix of Indian Kashmiris, Afghans and Pakistani Kashmiris. Further more, both Markaz Dawa al Irshad and Al Barq are closely associated with Jamiat-i-Ulema-Islam of Pakistan under the leadership of Maulana Fazlur Rahman. All together, there are well over 5,000 foreign mujahideen in the ranks of the Kashmiri Islamist organizations -- most of them from

Pakistan (non-Kashmiris), Afghanistan, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon and Bahrain. The thousands of mujahideen born in Azad (Pakistani) Kashmir are not counted here.

The key Islamist terrorist operations in Kashmir since the spring of 1995 testifies to this trend: On 10 May 1995, on the Muslim holiday Id-al-Zuha, Islamist terrorists burned down the 14th century shrine to Sheikh Nooruddin Wali (Kashmir's patron saint that is revered by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) and the adjoining Khankah mosque in Charar-e-Sharief, some 18 miles southwest of Srinagar, Indian Kashmir. The buildings were torched in the middle of a clash with Indian security forces initiated by the Islamist terrorists.

Already in early March, a force of about 150 terrorists was identified in the area and surrounded by the Indian security forces. They withdrew into the compounds in Charar-e-Sharief where they held for more than two months, maintaining radio communications with their base in Pakistan. Apprehensive about the dire ramifications of damaging the sacred mosque and shrine, the Indian forces besieged the compound but did not attack it. The eruption of fighting and fire on May 10 must have been instigated on order from Pakistan for there was no irregular activity on the Indian side.

The terrorist force was comprised of some 150 mujahideen of Harakat ul-Ansar, Hizb ul-Mujahideen, and al-Fatah Force under the command of Mast Gul (an Afghan national). In Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, the headquarters of ISI-sponsored Mujahideen, Sardar Basharat Ahmed Khan of Harakat ul-Ansar acknowledged that many of the mujahideen in Charar-e-Sharief were actually Pakistani nationals, some not even Kashmiri. He explained that "40 or 42 of the mujahideen killed belong to Harakat ul-Ansar and 26 of them hailed from Azad Kashmir and Pakistan."

The incident was clearly intended to spark a wider confrontation in Kashmir, primarily in order to prevent the elections New Delhi had scheduled for the summer.

Moreover, on August 1, Mast Gul returned to Muzaffarabad to a hero's welcome by a cheering crowd of several thousands. He had withdrawn into Azad Kashmir with about 100 terrorists in late July. "I will take revenge for Charar-e-Sharief's desecration by Indian forces," Mast Gul told the crowd. He vowed to continue fighting until Kashmir's "freedom."

Qazi Hussain Ahmed, the head of the Jamiat-i-Ulema-Islam party, accompanied Gul in his triumphant return, describing him in a fiery speech as a living symbol of Kashmir's Jihad. The mere presence of Qazi Hussain Ahmed is of importance. As of April 1995, in his capacity as the leader of Islamic Jihad of Pakistan, Qazi Hussain Ahmed was nominated by the leadership of the Khartoum-based Armed Islamic Movement (AIM) to be in charge of a terrorist headquarters and regional center in Karachi that is responsible for Islamist activities (training, equipping, operational support, etc.) in Pakistan (including Indian Kashmir), Afghanistan, and Albania (including Kosovo).

Meanwhile terrorism continued in Kashmir. On July 20, a major bomb blast left 17 dead and over 40 wounded in Purani Mundi (Jammu). It was a sophisticated bomb concealed in a auto-rickshaw that blew up in middle of crowded street. Then, on July 26, a second bomb exploded in Jammu city, wounding 12. Both bombs were made of RDX, and their mechanism was similar to previous bombs attributed to ISI-trained terrorists. Indeed, the on July 27, Harakat ul-Ansar claimed responsibility for the two bombs in Jammu.

Starting early August, there was further escalation with the launching of attacks and raids on Indian Army camps in Kashmir. At least one camp in Bhadarva was temporarily seized by the mujahideen, long enough for them to remove weapons and ammunition. Meanwhile, Hizb ul-Mujahideen forces conducted diversionary raids in the area, further complicating the security forces' ability to react to the raids. In these operations, the attackers were using tactics taught by the ISI in the late 1980s for similar type of raids against Afghan government facilities in eastern Afghanistan. Indeed, Harakat ul-Ansar, that claimed

responsibility for these attacks, acknowledged that many of the commanders and mujahideen killed in the operations against Indian Army camps were Afghan and Pakistani volunteers.

By now, Kashmir was already at the height of a still lingering crisis -- the kidnapping and holding of Western tourists.

Starting July 4, a shadowy group of 12-15 terrorists abducted numerous Western tourists the Lidder Valley area, about 32 kilometers from Pahalgam. Some of the tourists were released and one succeeded to escape, leaving six in captivity. The group identified itself as Al-Faran, and demanded the release of 22 commanders of all Kashmiri terrorist organizations currently in Indian prisons. It subsequently modified the demand to only 15 leaders. The Kashmir hostage crisis reached a new level on August 13 when Al-Faran beheaded a Norwegian hostage and then dumped his head and body. New threats for the safety of the remaining hostages and renewed demands for the release of the jailed terrorist leaders were issued by Al-Faran.

Al-Faran seems to be the cover name of the Islamist elite force that carried out the kidnapping of the tourists. There are indications that Al-Faran members are connected with the Harakat ul-Ansar. The kidnapping detachment is comprised of 16 terrorists -- twelve from Azad (Pakistani) Kashmir, two from Afghanistan, and two Indian Kashmiris who act as guides. The terrorists were equipped with sophisticated weapons and modern communications equipment. They seem well organized and enjoying pre-installed strong logistical support at each of their hide-outs. Moreover, Moulana Fazlur Rahman was approached by the UK in effort to negotiate with the kidnapper and was even granted visa for a "private" visit to India. This alone confirms the general leaning of the Al-Faran. As discussed above, the Taliban, another protege group of Rahman, is closely associated with the ISI.

The infusion of foreigners -- mainly Afghans, Pakistani Kashmiris and 'Afghans' -- into the ranks of the Kashmiri Islamist terrorists, including key positions in the leaderships of what is being presented as a genuine national liberation struggle, has altered the character of this armed struggle. Irrespective of the true aspirations of the Muslim population of Indian Kashmir, the armed struggle currently waged in their name has very little to do with their fate and future. Through the ISI's manipulations, Islamabad has transformed the Kashmiri struggle into a drive for Kashmir's unification with Pakistan and away from the origins and indigenous quest of the popular struggle -- a quest for Kashmiri self-determination and independence from both India and Pakistan. This is only natural considering that Islamabad's primary objective is to make Kashmir Pakistan-controlled so that the key transportation routes can be built in order to feed into the Silk Road.

Perhaps the most audacious outgrowth of the ISI's Afghan operations is the Islamist surge into Tajikistan in order to consolidate control over segments of the Silk Road itself.

The roots of the ISI operations in Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan can be traced to Islamabad's efforts to ensure that their protege at the time -- Gulbaddin Hekmatyar -- took over Kabul following the collapse of the Communist regime.

Back in the spring of 1990, the ISI established its "Afghan" Takhar Regiment. This unit was some 2,000-2,500 troop strong. It was the most tightly controlled "Afghan" unit, and the best equipped. Ostensibly, this unit belonged to Hizb-i-Islami Gulbaddin Hekmatyar and had been prepared by the ISI for resistance operations near the Soviet border. The troops were provided with the most comprehensive military training given to Afghans. Resistance sources described this unit as being turned into "a conventional army" by the ISI. In early April 1990, the force was virtually combat ready and ISI expected to commit this Afghan Army to battle within a month, once the mountain passes leading into Badakhshan were completely open.

These ISI-controlled mujahideen constitute the core of the Afghan force currently supporting the Islamist insurgency in Central Asia.

However, by now the regional strategic priorities have already changed. With the growing chaos in Central Asia, it was imperative in Beijing to prevent the emergence of neither a pro-Moscow nor a nationalist regime in Tajikistan. Beijing is dead set against having a Moscow-dominated regime on its border considering the nationalist fervor of the new Russian elite. Further more, Beijing is apprehensive about the spread of Central Asian quest for Islamic self-identity across the border into the volatile Xinjiang. The best way to reduce the threat of both developments is to destabilize any future Tajik government. The ensuing escalation of special and terrorist operations from northern Afghanistan into Central Asia, sponsored by the ISI but serving Chinese interests, can be seen as further development and expansion of the mutual long-term strategic cooperation and close working relations between the services of the two countries.

The major escalation in the Islamist involvement in Tajikistan started in late 1990. Vladimir Petkel, the Chief of the Tajik KGB, stressed that "subversive activities against Tajikistan have been stepped up," and that he feared "an outburst of subversive activities in local areas." The KGB correctly identified this outburst of violence as the beginning of a regional surge. "There are no grounds for complacency in the present situation in Central Asia. The situation is deteriorating and confrontation is growing," Petkel warned.

The ISI was soon identified as the driving force behind this campaign. Anatoli Beloyusov, Deputy Director of the KGB, warned that the "strengthened influence of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism" in Tajikistan was "directly linked to increased activities by Pakistani special services." He described a Pakistani "Program M" intended to "destabilize the socio-political situation in the USSR's Central Asian republics." In the summer of 1991, Moscow had "incontrovertible evidence" that the ISI was creating "an armed Afghan opposition" in order to infiltrate and subvert Soviet Central Asia. Beloyusov explained that "schools have been set up in Afghan settlements near the border to give religious and military instructions to young Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmens." Once ready, these men were being dispatched to carry out "hostile activities against the USSR."

During the early 1990s, the ISI consolidated the support and training infrastructure, launching a major new effort in the camps in Afghanistan, as well as Peshawar, to recruit veteran fighters for the Jihad in Tajikistan. This campaign was given the aura of an all-Islamic campaign sponsored by the Armed Islamic Movement (AIM). Indeed, the ISI-sponsored operations in Central Asia were run by Muhammad Ibrahim al-Makkawal. He is an Islamist Egyptian and former colonel in the Egyptian Army who arrived in Pakistan in 1989, and had been operating a humanitarian organization in Peshawar as a cover. In 1992-93, al-Makkawal had been to all the Central Asian states as well as Kashmir to personally study the conditions in these important theaters of the Islamist Jihad, as well as inspect and oversee the operations of his people. In the summer of 1993, al-Makkawal insisted that he and 10-12 Egyptian Islamists under his command stayed in Pakistan only for training, and that actual fighting of the Jihad was carried out from and on hostile territory.

The civil war that erupted with fury in Tajikistan in early 1993 was a revival of old tribal rivalries hijacked by the Islamists who, by providing weapons, expertise, and leadership, became the dominant force. The ISI and its Arab 'Afghans' were crucial to this manipulation and transformation of the war in Tajikistan. The problem in Tajikistan was only intensifying, stressed a high ranking Russian diplomat. He warned that Russia's "future relations with Iran and Pakistan will depend on whether these states take into account Russia's interests in Central Asia, above all Tajikistan." He diplomatically identified the countries responsible for the escalation of subversion in Tajikistan, explaining that "Tajik Islamists undergo training in Afghanistan, a country much influenced by Pakistan and Iran."

Indeed, the Islamist forces continued to expand. The headquarters of the Tajik Islamists is in Taloqan, Afghanistan. The forces of the Tajik Islamists are aided by Afghan and Arab 'Afghans,' as well as the Afghan government. These bases in Afghanistan are key to the Tajiks organization, arming and training. The Afghans infiltrate hundreds of highly trained fighters into Tajikistan from their bases in Afghanistan. For example, Abu-Salman, a veteran Saudi 'Afghan' is the commander of a Tajik Islamist commando operating deep inside Tajikistan. Ahmad Shah Massud is a key supporter of the Tajiks and has a special headquarters near their center to closely oversee their activities and ensure support. In Kunduz, Pakistani assistance is channelled through Gulbaddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami. In early 1993, about 1,000 Tajiks were being trained at any given time at the Kunduz camps alone, mainly the Imam Shahib camp. Other training camps are at Chah-i Ab and Khuajagar, both north of Taloqan. Money comes from Arab Islamists in Saudi Arabia and Gulf states via Pakistan. In early 1993, French relief officials described "significant Arab presence in Kunduz."

By the fall of 1993, a growing number of Arab 'Afghans' were very active in northern Afghanistan in providing support for the Islamist subversion in Tajikistan. Most important are the Arab 'Afghans' operating in the Mazar-i Sharief, Takhar and Tashqurghan areas in northern Afghanistan where they have training camps to support Islamists not just in Tajikistan, but in Central Asia and Indian Kashmir. Of note are the camps for Tajik Islamists who fight for Abdol Ghafur. The most important camps are in Imam al-Bukhari (former military air base) and Bagh Sharkat, both near Kunduz. The Afghans, Arab 'Afghans' and their Tajik mujahideen operate together, conducting joint raids deep into Central Asia beyond Tajikistan. These offensive raids at time include more than 500 Tajiks led by dozens of Arab 'Afghans.' Weapons and ammunition are received from Pakistan via Hizb-i-Islami of Gulbaddin Hekmatyar and Ittihad-i-Islami of Rasul Sayyaf. Iran, Sudan, and Pakistan directly finance the 'Afghan' Islamists and their camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In late 1993, Tajik Islamists with active support from Arab 'Afghans' planned at least two major spectacular sabotage operations that were prevented in the last minute by Russian Special Forces operating under the 201st MRD's Kulyab regiment. The first operation was an attempt to place three truck-bombs driven by suicide drivers under the massive Nurek Hydroelectric Power Station. The operation was prevented when the Russians ambushed and shot the drivers to death on approach to the dam. Had the trucks exploded as planned, the ensuing wave would have been 86 meters high, 53 kms wide and 1,385 kms deep. Over 2,000 villages and seven cities in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenia would have been flooded. A member of this terrorist network, captured by the Russians, disclosed active preparations to blow up by a suicide truck the nitrogen mineral fertilizer plant near Yavan. This operation would have led to mass poisoning and death of people all over the region.

The failure of this audacious attempt could not reverse the escalation in terrorism in Tajikistan. Other terrorist operations, though less spectacular, were successful. It was not by accident that the most important operations in this cycle were against axes of transportation. For example, on 26 November 1993, a powerful bomb derailed the main train between Termez (Afghan border, Uzbekistan) and Khalton (Tajikistan). The bomb exploded near Kurgan-Tyube (Tajikistan). The terrorists came from the direction of Afghanistan. In early 1994, Tajik security officials were bracing for spectacular terrorist operations, to be carried out by "a kind of 'fifth column' opposition exists in the Tajik capital and its suburbs numbering many hundreds." They added that recently, "Tajikistan's special services got hold of a coded message from representatives of the so-called irreconcilable opposition in Afghanistan recommending that terrorist acts against the Tajik leadership be stepped up."

By now, it was becoming clear that the Tajik Jihad was also being transformed into a component of a regional Jihad sponsored by the ISI and employing members of a joint mixed pool of mujahideen. In early December 1993, during a state visit to Pakistan, the Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Maulana Arsalan Rahmani, admitted that Afghanistan was providing military assistance to various Islamist insurgencies because "we cannot remain aloof from what is happening to the Muslims in occupied Kashmir, Tajikistan, Bosnia, Somalia, Burma, Palestine and elsewhere. ... We are not terrorists but

Mujahideen fighting for restoring peace and preserving honor." He acknowledged that Afghanistan also played a major role in the consolidation of the potent Harakat ul-Ansar. This support for the unity was but part of the active support given by Afghanistan to the Islamist fighters in Kashmir, Tajikistan, and Bosnia. "There are about 8,000 members of Harakat ul-Ansar who are supporting the Kashmiri struggle against Indian occupation," Maulana Arsalan Rahmani stated.

In early 1994, there was a growing volume of evidence that the ISI was running the various insurgency and terrorist campaigns as part of a single master plan. For example, in mid February 1994, the Indian security forces captured two senior ISI operatives inside Kashmir. Sajjad Afghani Khan and Mohammad Massud Azhar are both veterans of the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Mohammad Massud Azhar is also a veteran trainer and organizer, long involved in preparing expert cadres in ISI camps in Pakistan for operating in hostile and challenging environments such as Kashmir, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. For example, Azhar organized a force of 50-60 ISI-controlled Pakistani operatives that are still conducting special operations in Tajikistan under the banner of Nahza Islam.

As with the other ISI-sponsored regional insurgencies, the strategic decisions in Islamabad were quickly manifested in armed operations inside Tajikistan. Starting the winter of 1994-95, there has been an escalation in the pressure on the Russian-led Border Guards along the Afghan-Tajik border. The new escalation went beyond the on-going intensification of infiltration efforts. Recent operations reflect distinct growing professionalism of the Tajik mujahideen. Not by accident, the Tajiks were employing tactics quite similar to these of the ISI-sponsored elite Afghan mujahideen units in the late 1980s. However, Russian security officials noted that a growing number of the Afghan "mujahideen" they were now encountering along the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border were too young to have been combat veterans of the war in Afghanistan. Instead, they were trained only recently, mainly in camps in either northern Afghanistan or Pakistan.

Indeed, there is a large Islamist force being organized in northern Afghanistan on the Tajik border. In the spring of 1995, according to Russian experts with on-site experience, there were some 12,000 mujahideen in northern Afghanistan alone. They were divided between two main groupings of 5,000-6,000 men each -- on the Kulyab (Khatlovskiy) Axis and on the Badakhshan Axis. The main Tajik bases are near Kalay-Kuf, Nusay, Bakharak, and Fayzabad. Other Tajik centers are co-located with the key Afghan facilities in Badakhshan. Moreover, the major local Afghan mujahideen forces, a total strength of some 14,000 men -- including Abdul Basir Khaled's 29th Infantry Division, and also major detachments under the command of Khironmand, Bakhadur, Zabeed Vadud, Abdul Kadyr and a number of other lesser commanders in Afghan Badakhshan -- actively support the Tajik Islamist forces. Indeed, the Tajik mujahideen routinely rely on, and get assistance from, several thousand Afghan mujahideen on the Kulyab Axis. It should be remembered that the key Afghan forces -- both regular and irregular -- in the area are under the control of General Dostam who has reached several "understandings" with the ISI on co-existence and cooperation in the pursuit of common objectives.

In the spring of 1995, mujahideen reinforcements were redeployed, with additional arms and ammunition delivered, on the Vanch-Yazgulem Axis. This axis was being transformed into the main axis in mujahideen operations. The deployment of a significant mujahideen detachment was completed on the same Ishkashim Axis from the Bakharak area, the site of a Tajik major training center in northern Afghanistan. As with the Kashmiri Islamist armed struggle, the growing involvement of the ISI was immediately followed by a noticeable infusion of foreign "volunteers." In the spring of 1995, the Afghan Mujahideen were joined by a large number of Arab fighters -- both veteran 'Afghans' and younger volunteers. All of them are well trained members of numerous radical militant Islamist organizations, many of which are very active in toppling governments in their home countries (such as Egypt and Algeria), that have offices and camps in Peshawar and other Pakistani cities. These Arabs arrived in the camps in northern Afghanistan in an organized fashion from Pakistan, bringing with them large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and other equipment. Additional Arab volunteers and supplies continue to arrive from Peshawar. Moreover, the Arabs have been receiving very large sums of money, originating in Arab states,

via Pakistan. This money is used for the escalation of the Tajik Jihad -- mainly training, arming and in effect controlling Tajik and Afghan detachments.

Russian experts point to the great impact the Arabs and Afghan mujahideen have on the quality of the "Tajik" forces. "High morale-fighting spirit, an excellent state of training, especially for the conduct of partisan warfare, all the more so in mountainous terrain, are a distinguishing trait of the Afghan mujahideen and the volunteers from other Muslim countries. Lately, the level of training of the detachments of the Tajik opposition has increased dramatically."

The consequent escalation of the Jihad in Tajikistan reached a point that Russian experts already point to the greater strategic ramifications. One Russian expert, Semen Bagdasarov, stressed that "he who even nominally does not control Gornyy Badakhshan [an area where the ISI-sponsored mujahideen are most active] does not control all of Tajikistan. At the same time, one can say without any exaggeration that the withdrawal of the [Russian] border troops from Tajikistan -- this is a geo-political catastrophe both for the states of Central Asia and also for Russia."

Most threatening is the intensifying wave of Islamist special operations and terrorist strikes -- operations where the ISI's hand has been most distinct. By mid 1995, the emerging leadership of the high quality Tajik mujahideen was the Movement of the Islamic Revival of Tajikistan (DIVT). Its rise to prominence can be attributed directly to the conduct of an increasingly sophisticated, well organized, and tactically sound campaign of "diversion and terrorism," to use the definition of Russian military intelligence. The DIVT forces enjoy solid support and logistical system, especially a steady supply of ammunition and weapons.

The most important DIVT commander is identified as "Tajik Mujahideen Commanding General R. Sadirov" whose earlier activities are behind the present expectation for a marked escalation. Back in mid January 1995, Russian military intelligence warned that "[on] Sadirov's order, a terrorist group consisting of 40 guerrillas who underwent special training in Pakistan is prepared to cross the [Amu Daria] river onto the territory of Tajikistan. It is assumed that they will operate in the central areas of Tajikistan and in Dushanbe with small teams of 3-4 men." Analysis of the training received by this group suggested a major rise in audacious terrorist operations, particularly assassinations as well as attacks on, and neutralization of, key roads and axes of transportation.

Indeed, in the early summer, mujahideen special forces deep inside Tajikistan, most likely Sadirov's ISI-trained detachments, were becoming audacious. For example, on June 12 they assassinated Col. Izatullo Kuganov -- the commander of a Tajikistan SPETSNAZ unit and a close political ally of President Emomali Rakhmonov. It was a highly professional job done with an assault rifle from a very close range, leaving no traces of the assassins. This assassination is not an isolated case, but rather the first of a trend. Russian intelligence has learned that the Pakistan-trained elite mujahideen have been instructed that "they should destroy first of all Russian officers." This, the Tajik Islamist leadership is convinced, will bring about a collapse of the Russian support for the Government of Tajikistan. Should this happen, the road will be open for a militant Islamist surge into, and throughout, Central Asia.

Pakistan's terrorism sponsoring activities along the Silk Road are both an instrument of Islamabad's regional strategy and an expression of its apprehension of domestic crisis. By the summer of 1995, fully aware of the ramifications of the ISI's escalating operations, Islamabad is wavering between self-confidence in a vastly improved strategic posture and fear of a strategic backlash that will, in turn, greatly exacerbate an already tenuous internal situation. Therefore, the crisis environment emanating from the ISI's regional activities serves to both divert the public's attention from domestic crisis to an external threat, as well as bolster the government's own self-confidence. Moreover, Islamabad is increasingly apprehensive about the unstable regional posture the ISI is essentially creating, and especially backlash from neighboring states, friends and foes alike, whose regional interests are adversely affected by the ISI's activities. Consequently, the Islamabad is committed to further escalating the ISI's

terrorism sponsoring operations along the Silk Road in order to improve and secure Pakistan's own posture in the vital gateways to China at all costs and in any regional environment.

Taken together, these ISI-sponsored insurgency and terrorism along the western gateways to China are therefore strategic developments of grave ramifications. The PRC is increasingly apprehensive about the revival of Islamist sentiments, including a fledgling armed struggle in Xinjiang, and a growing Russian influence over the former Soviet states of Central Asia. Considering its global strategic orientation, Beijing is happy with the Pakistani subversion of these states and the ISI's confrontation with crawling Russian influence. Beijing is most satisfied with the fact that these Pakistani operations serve the PRC's regional interests without getting the PRC actually involved or even implicated in the covert operations or use of force. Moreover, the net result of these ISI-sponsored covert operations is a further increase in the Chinese influence and consolidation of anti-West posture along the Trans-Asian Axis.

Thus, these ISI terrorism sponsoring operations in Afghanistan, India, and Tajikistan are yet another manifestation of Islamabad's determination to increase the importance of its role as the linch-pin of the Trans-Asian Axis. Pakistan is determined to become a power to be reckoned with by its mere control over choke-points, not achievements or economic capabilities. The sponsoring of terrorism and subversion by the ISI is presently Islamabad's primary and proven instrument in this great endeavor.

4.0 PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR BRINKMANSHIP

by Yossef Bodansky

The growing tension along the Indo-Pakistani border bodes the possibility of a major regional crisis and even war. Starting mid February 1996, there has been an escalation in cross border shelling and other clashes directly involving the armed forces of both Pakistan and India. Artillery and small-arms duels are becoming increasingly intense, lasting a few hours at a time. More over, the border sectors where clashes take place are expanding southwards, now including both the hot and contentious northern border sectors such as Kashmir and the glaciers as well as the usually quiet border zones in Punjab.

The potential danger lies in the Pakistani strategic context of these clashes. Islamabad manages the escalation of the current crisis in accordance with a strategy in which issuing a nuclear ultimatum constitutes the key to Pakistan's ability to unilaterally contain the crisis at the desirable level. Islamabad is convinced that the mere threat of approaching the nuclear threshold will prevent India from seizing the strategic initiative and military dominance of events, permitting Pakistan to escalate the crisis at will without the fear of meaningful Indian retribution. Given the penchant of Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad for brinkmanship and crisis generation as a deviation from domestic collapse, the escalatory potential of the present cross border clashes is already a most dangerous situation.

Significantly, this Pakistani nuclear doctrine -- the use of a nuclear ultimatum as an instrument of unilaterally containing Indian retribution -- has been pursued by all governments in Islamabad since the early 1990s. Already on August 23, 1994, during a visit to Kashmir, Nawaz Sharief, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, declared that Pakistan was a nuclear power. "I confirm Pakistan possesses the atomic bomb," he stated. He then warned India that an attack on Pakistan could trigger a nuclear war. Further more, Nawaz Sharief anticipated an escalation of the crisis over Kashmir because of India's refusal to surrender Kashmir to Pakistan.

Nawaz Sharief is perhaps the most authoritative Pakistani to confirm the nuclear power status of Pakistan, but he is not the first. The importance in Nawaz Sharief's statement is that it compels Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad to be more forthcoming and honest about Pakistan's evolving nuclear build-up and national strategy. Indeed, most important is the recent evolution of the Pakistani nuclear strategy as its arsenal kept growing.

The current world view of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto's Islamabad is a direct continuation of the vision of her father -- Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. The political vision of Mr. Bhutto was crystallized as a historical legacy of the 1971 dismemberment of Pakistan. The new Pakistan must base its policy on Islamic character and look westwards -- to the Hub of Islam -- for identity and belonging. He considered Central Asia an extension of the non-Arab Muslim World that Pakistan would bring with it to the Hub in order to expand its non-Arab component. The active support for the armed liberation struggle in Kashmir was defined by Mr. Bhutto as a major way of proving and demonstrating Pakistan's commitment to Islamic solidarity and values. Extremely close strategic relations with the PRC, including Beijing's strategic guarantees and assistance in the development of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, were considered the foundations of Islamabad's ability to deter an inevitable clash with the US and a possible war with India. Mr. Bhutto stressed that the US is inherently hostile to Islam because it refused to accept the drastic changes in world order advocated by the Muslims. Indeed, Mr. Bhutto's military nuclear effort was motivated as much by the determination to deliver the Islamic Bomb that would make Pakistan a Muslim World leader, as by the need to counter-balance India's military nuclear program. The validity of these principles has been stressed repeatedly by Mrs. Benazir Bhutto as of the fall of 1993.

Pakistan was looking into the acquisition of nuclear weapons since the early-1960s. After Pakistan's defeat in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto vowed to retain a strategic balance with India, including the development of nuclear weapons, at any cost. "If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own. We have no alternative," he said in 1965. But it took the humiliating defeat of 1971, when Indian forces occupied Eastern Pakistan and transformed it into an independent Bangladesh, to truly commit Pakistan to the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Mr. Bhutto assembled Pakistan's leading scientists in a tent in Multan in January 1972 where he delivered a passionate speech about the shame of defeat and how imperative it was for Pakistan to have nuclear weapons. Bringing up what seemed a note of caution, Mr. Bhutto pointed to a higher objective when he explained that "this is a very serious political decision, which Pakistan must take, and perhaps all Third World countries must take one day, because it is coming." Pakistan was thus committed to a national crash program to have an Islamic Bomb.

The Pakistani nuclear weapons program really took off in 1974 when Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan returned to Pakistan from Europe and convinced Mr. Bhutto that he could build him a bomb within 6-7 years and a logical budget. Moreover, in 1976, Mr. Bhutto secured the PRC's agreement to support the Pakistani military nuclear program with expertise, ranging from scientific and technological assistance all the way to actual weapon-design know-how. Using Chinese weapons' technology, Dr. Khan laid the solid foundations of the Pakistani nuclear weapons.

General Zia ul-Haq rose to power in the 1977 military coup. It was during his 11-year tenure that Pakistan became a nuclear power and defined a coherent nuclear strategy. The military that seized power in 1977 was opposed to the nuclear weapons program, fearing the impact of the drainage of resources. However, there was a widespread recognition that nuclear weapons were Pakistan's only viable deterrence against an Indian conventional onslaught. Some strategists even urged the recapture of Kashmir under a nuclear umbrella. Zia became committed to the nuclear option as a last resort instrument to save Pakistan "with whole world against him," an argument made by Agha Shahi, then the Foreign Minister.

Moreover, Zia saw in the acquisition of nuclear weapons a key instrument to break Pakistan's isolation and transform it into the leader of the rejuvenating Muslim World. In July 1978 he outlined his perception: "China, India, the USSR, and Israel in the Middle East possess the atomic arm. No Muslim country has any. If Pakistan had such a weapon, it would reinforce the power of the Muslim World." Unfolding events, and especially the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, brought Pakistan's fledgling nuclear doctrine back down to earth. In early-1980, President Zia ul-Haq learned from Dr. Brzezinski that the US had no intention to commit forces to defend Pakistan in case of a Soviet invasion. As Pakistan's involvement in the war in Afghanistan was growing, Islamabad's doubts as to the validity of an alliance with the US were also mounting. The primary strategic role of the Pakistani nuclear weapon became a measure of last resort, a symbolic trip wire against massive assaults by the USSR and India. It was therefore imperative for Pakistan to quickly establish nuclear deterrence.

Pakistan had nuclear weapons potential in 1987, and operational nuclear weapons since 1988. At first, Pakistan stuck with Zia's doctrine of relying on nuclear weapons as the last resort key to Pakistan's survival against India and the USSR. However, at the same time, Zia ul-Haq's pan-Islamic world view was expressed in the willingness to facilitate and expedite other Islamic, primarily Iran's, nuclear weapons program, but not at the expense of, or as part of, Pakistan's own strategic weapons programs. It was through its close cooperation with Iran, that Pakistan also assisted other radical states including Libya and North Korea.

However, in the early-1990s the Pakistani national strategy was integrated into the Trans-Asia Axis dominated by Beijing and the Islamist Bloc dominated by Tehran. This was a result of a major strategic decision in Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad. The Pakistani negotiations with India on mutual reduction of tension, held between January 1989 and January 1990, were conducted against a strongly held assessment of the

Pakistani military and intelligence elite that a major clash with India was inevitable and imminent. In February 1990, General Mirza Aslam Beg, then the Pakistani Chief of the Army Staff, went to Tehran to discuss Iran's becoming Pakistan's primary regional ally, at the expense of relations with the US, if not confrontation with Washington. Gen. Beg returned from Tehran "greatly reassured." "With the support from Iran promised me, we will win in case of war over Kashmir," he declared.

Soon afterwards, Pakistan began a game of brinkmanship through the escalation of border clashes in the Siachen Glacier area and in Kashmir. Pakistani active support for the Islamist insurgency in Kashmir increased markedly. The near-war appearance of a major Indian military exercise not far from the Pakistani border startled the Pakistani High Command, reminding them of the possibility of a massive Indian reaction to the Pakistani provocations. At the same time, the border clashes and the insertion of terrorists into Indian Kashmir continued to escalate.

Islamabad then decided to prevent an Indian retaliation by invoking the nuclear card. As tension grew and war seemed inevitable, Pakistan hastily assembled at least one nuclear weapon during the nose-to-nose confrontation with India in 1990. This led to a hasty intervention by the US and other Western powers, pressuring both New Delhi and Islamabad not to escalate their confrontation. The new Pakistani nuclear strategy proved successful. Thus, the crisis of 1990 was a watershed event in Pakistan's national strategy. Nuclear weapons were no longer considered merely a trip-wire of last resort in case of a major invasion of the country. Instead, nuclear weapons now became a key to Islamabad's assertive strategy of escalation of the struggle in Kashmir under a nuclear umbrella restraining Indian retaliation.

In 1991, Islamabad considered the New World Order advocated by the US, and especially in the call for non-proliferation, a strategic threat to its independence. "The New World Order does not allow any country in the Third World except the American surrogates to possess nuclear weapons." Fully aware that no single country can confront the US on its own, Islamabad stressed the growing significance of nuclear and military cooperation with other radicals as a profound issue of confrontation with the US. Islamabad acknowledged that "the People's Republic of China and North Korea have been ... supplying Iran, Pakistan, and other Muslim countries with medium-range missiles and nuclear technology for peaceful purpose." This cooperation now served as the source of strength for Islamabad defiance against US pressures, for any alternative would be detrimental to the future of Islam. "If Pakistan surrenders before the Americans now with respect to the nuclear programme, there will be no limit for such a surrender; because the Americans endeavor to demolish Pakistan's military power and make her a banana republic so that the Muslim World should be enslaved by the US-imposed world order."

It was in the context of this strategic perception that the Pakistani military nuclear capabilities were finally admitted officially. On 21 October 1991, Pakistan, for long a known yet not acknowledged nuclear power, crossed the line and created a precedent. In a Karachi meeting, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of the Pakistani bomb, officially acknowledged that Pakistan was a nuclear power. "It is a fact that Pakistan has become a nuclear power and is at present concentrating on manufacturing sophisticated arms to fulfil its requirements," Dr. Khan stated. Subsequently, the nuclear factor has become a clear and critical factor in the Pakistani national strategy, especially vis-a-vis India and the US.

By the early 1990s, Islamabad was convinced that a major show down with India, ostensibly over Kashmir, constitutes the key to Pakistan's new position as the linchpin of the PRC-dominated Trans-Asian Axis and the Tehran-led Islamic Bloc both within that Axis and world wide. Pakistan and its allies are convinced that any setback for India, no matter how symbolic, will result in New Delhi becoming isolationist. This, in turn, will expedite the consolidation of the Trans-Asian Axis. The decisive crisis aimed at transforming India will be instigated in the form of an escalation of the Islamist terrorist struggle in Kashmir. Mrs. Bhutto is confident that Pakistan's growing nuclear capabilities will shield these assertive policies.

Moreover, according to Beijing's strategic assessment in 1993, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was considering India as "the greatest potential threat" for the PRC itself, because the implementation of the PRC's Trans-Asian Axis strategy and the then planned surge toward the eastern Indian Ocean endanger

India's vital interests and thus might very well lead to a military clash. The PLA stresses that they "see India as a potential adversary mainly because India's strategic focus remains on the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia." Therefore, it is imperative for Beijing to divert India's strategic attention away from the Chinese strategic surge from the east, both on land and in the ocean.

Since the formulation of this Chinese strategy in the early 1990s, this strategic diversion has been the role of Islamabad. Pakistan is thus instigating a major defense challenge to India from the west, ranging from subversion and terrorism, to a major military build-up. The aggregate effect of the Pakistani strategy should be a growing tension along the Indo-Pak border that would compel New Delhi to neglect blocking the PRC's regional surge until it is too late to reverse the new geo-strategic realities in Asia. Starting 1995, the PRC has already embarked on a strategic surge aimed at consolidating control over the Strait of Malacca and the eastern Indian Ocean. Under such conditions, the importance of the Pakistani strategic diversion from the west is mounting, as reflected in Islamabad's growing militancy and self-confidence.

Meanwhile, the overall Pakistani strategic confidence was already expressed in brinkmanship statements coming out of Islamabad since the fall of 1993. For example, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the Jamaat I-Islami Chief Senator, urged the Bhutto government "to declare Jihad on India to save Kashmir Muslims from total annihilation." There is no other way to resolve the crisis, he declared. "Let us wage Jihad for Kashmir. A nuclear-armed Pakistan would deter India from a wider conflict," he stressed. In early November 1993, Pakistani media began publishing leaks from Government officials and Kashmiri Muslim leaders about active preparations by the Indian military to invade Pakistan. Such an attack will be carried out with the blessing of the US, the officials stressed. The nuclear card is presented as the key to Pakistan's security.

Mrs. Bhutto is fully aware of her country's nuclear potential because she serves as the chairperson of the National Nuclear Command Authority [NNCA]. The NNCA "determines the state of readiness" of the Pakistani nuclear weapons, and, with Mrs. Bhutto's "hand on the button," authorizes their launch through the Army's Joint Operations Centre. Gen. Beg disclosed in April 1994 that Pakistan already has "the F-16s, Mirages and the M-11s [ballistic missiles] which we are now getting from China that can carry [nuclear weapons]." Moreover, Pakistan's own "missile programme" is developing "a delivery system with a very effective, accurate guiding system provided on the missiles."

Called the Anza-11, this ballistic missile is a Pakistani derivative of the Chinese M-11. In mid July 1994, Pakistani officials confirmed that the development of the Anza-11 is being accelerated "with Chinese assistance." Visiting Pakistan's nuclear enrichment facility in Multan, Mrs. Bhutto warned of accelerating "missile race" in the region, and assured that the PRC would provide Pakistan with all the necessary technology and know-how to cope with the new strategic challenge. Meanwhile, Pakistan continues to deploy and install M-11 SSMs in the vicinity of its border with India.

During 1994, several loyalists of Mrs. Bhutto from the ranks of the military and intelligence intensified their demands for a more assertive stance on nuclear issues. In June, Gen. Hamid Gul, the former Chief of ISI, publicly urged Islamabad to conduct a nuclear test in order to clearly demonstrate the quality and might of the Pakistani nuclear weapons. He believes that such a test will galvanize the Pakistanis to support Islamabad in its pursuit of several national goals and challenges, the liberation of Kashmir being the most important, and will restrain the US from interfering in this endeavor. Gul points out that it is imperative for Pakistan to make a clear choice between its continued association with the US, and the pursuit of its vital interests along with Iran and the PRC, whom he identifies as "the closest friends of Pakistan."

Gul stresses that the establishment of a declared nuclear posture will determine this transformation. "By exploding the bomb, we will not only destroy the impression of our being submissive to the United States, but will be able to pull back our friends." Islamabad's failure to take a sterner public stand on the

pursuit of its joint strategy with Iran and the PRC already threatens the security of Pakistan. Islamabad now gives a false impression of a Pakistan restrained by the US, which, in turn, can encourage India to retaliate for the Pakistani involvement in Kashmir. "Our military feels that its defense needs are in danger because of the failure of our foreign policy." Only the establishment of an unambiguous nuclear deterrence can reverse this trend, Gul concluded.

Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad reacts to the challenge. In early August, N.D. Khan, the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and other Pakistani senior officials stressed repeatedly that Pakistan will not curtail its nuclear program irrespective of mounting US pressure. Instead, the High Command announced that Pakistan has embarked on a major build-up of sophisticated weapons, including missiles, in order "to deal with any emergency in the context of India's aggressive designs." Mrs. Bhutto was briefed on this emergency massive program and "agreed in principle to meet the requirements of the Pakistani Army on an urgent basis." Indeed, Pakistani officials later confirmed that Islamabad has resolved "to manufacture [ballistic] missiles and strengthen its defense."

In mid August 1994, the President of Pakistan, Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari visited the Pakistani Air Force [PAF] base in Sargodha, home of the F-16s, to inspect the major exercise called Saffron Bandit - 94. In a speech to the PAF officers, he tied together the current military build-up and the crisis in Kashmir. Leghari assured his audience that "the government is fully aware of the defense needs of the country and will equip its Armed Forces with sophisticated weapons for the defense of the motherland." Leghari reiterated Islamabad's "full support to the Kashmiri people despite Indian threats" and stressed his "confidence that Pakistan can meet any threat" resulting from this strategy.

Despite several halfhearted and not convincing denials by senior Pakistani officials that Pakistan has nuclear weapons, in early 1995 the extent of the Pakistani military nuclear effort and capabilities were being clarified. By now, 1994-95, Pakistan had between 15 and 25 nuclear weapons, each about 20kt strong. Some of these weapons are fully operational and the rest stored in parts. Some of these disassembled nuclear weapons would require only several hours of assembly to become fully operational. These weapons are small enough for delivery by Pakistan's known platforms -- F-16 fighter-bombers and M-11 ballistic missiles. The main storage and maintenance site of the Pakistani nuclear weapons, particularly the weapons at a 'screwdriver level', is located at the 'ordnance complex' in Wah -- a top secret and exceptionally guarded facility. Pakistan's final assembly and arming, forward operational storage, and weapons loading installations are located in the Chagai Air Base. The Pakistanis also maintain a forward weapons' storage site at Sargodha Air Base for air deliverable weapons. However, it is not clear whether operational weapons are being kept there permanently.

Further more, the Pakistani weapons production infrastructure reached maturity. In early 1995, the annual production capacity was estimated at between six and twelve nuclear weapons, each about 20kt strong.

In the summer of 1995, despite the adverse publicity and Western political pressure, the Pakistani military nuclear program was accelerating. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan reaffirmed that Islamabad was not slowing down, let alone halting, his various nuclear programs and projects. On the contrary, he anticipated "further developments" in the Pakistani nuclear effort. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan was so upbeat because the PRC began the delivery of 5,000 ring magnetrons -- a crucial component in large-scale Uranium enrichment process and key to the refinement of bomb-grade Uranium -- to the A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories in Kahuta -- the center of the Pakistani military nuclear research effort. Deliveries were completed by the end of 1995. Once the new enrichment system is fully operational, Pakistan will be able to markedly increase its annual refinement of enriched Uranium, and hence the number of annual weapons production and/or the strength of its new nuclear weapons. Even though Islamabad insists that the A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories in Kahuta is an academic/civilian institution, in early 1996 Islamabad formally and publicly renewed Dr. Khan's public service contract for three more years in order

"to utilize his talent for programmes designed to thwart threats to national security due to recent developments across the border."

Pakistan has also intensified its work on a new generation of Plutonium-based weapons, using know-how provided by the PRC, Iran and North Korea. Such close cooperation in nuclear development is not surprising. The PRC was the primary source of technology and know-how for Pakistan's first generation of Uranium-based nuclear weapons in the 1980s. Since the late 1980s, Iran also closely cooperated with the Pakistani nuclear effort. As of the early 1990s, Iran shared with Pakistan Iraqi data Tehran acquired directly, and from Hussayn al-Sharistani who resurfaced in Iran in 1991, after the Gulf War, and has since visited Pakistan. Iran and the DPRK run several strategic weapons joint programs, including the development of Plutonium-based nuclear warheads, using clandestinely delivered Chinese technology and sub-systems. Plutonium-based warheads of the type used by the PRC and its allies are about 50kt strong, and can fit on M-11-type ballistic missiles. Considering the current technological level and weapons operability among Pakistan's allies, a Pakistani Plutonium weapons should be expected soon. Further more, Pakistan is running an elaborate program of acquisition of nuclear materials and technologies via the Russian, especially Chechen, Mafiya. Presently, these widespread acquisition efforts from western and eastern Europe, as well as the former Soviet Union, already contribute to shortcuts, acceleration, and expediting of the emergence of a second generation of Pakistani nuclear weapons. Their main contribution, however, is in the development of a solid production capacity for the Pakistani advanced nuclear weapons in the next decade.

Meanwhile, the nuclear strategy of Mrs. Bhutto's Pakistan was being refined and better defined. Islamabad was now convinced that only nuclear deterrence can prevent an Indian offensive from defeating the Pakistani Army. In June 1995, sources close to Mrs. Bhutto stressed the centrality of the nuclear component to Pakistan's overall war-fighting capabilities: "Only in the presence of a nuclear deterrent can the Pakistani Army feel strong and stable. Confronting India with conventional weapons, especially when these weapons have been provided by a superpower like the United States, would not only be difficult, but would be tantamount to inviting danger as well."

In the fall of 1995, Islamabad interpreted the partial lifting of the Pressler Amendment by passing the Brown Amendment in the US Senate as Washington's affirmation of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal. In the aftermath of the US Senate vote, sources close to Mrs. Bhutto explained: "America now understands that our nuclear programme is not negotiable."

Soon afterwards, numerous Pakistani leaders repeatedly reinforced the new tenet -- that nuclear weapons were the sole guarantor of Pakistan's security as threatened by the specter of Indian aggression and military attacks. In early October 1995, the Pakistani Senate called in several retired but highly respected senior officers and officials -- former foreign ministers Agha Shahi and Abdul Sattar, Gen. (ret.) Iftikhar Ahmad Sarodi, Air Marshal (ret) Zulfikar Ali Khan, Gen. (ret.) K.M. Arif, Lt.Gen. (ret.) Hamid Gul, Air Marshal (ret.) Ayaz Ahmad Khan, and Shireen Mazari (foreign policy expert) -- to express their opinions about Pakistani nuclear strategy. Their unanimous statement stressed that "nuclear deterrent is essential for national security." "Pakistan cannot match India in strength of armed forces and the best solution is the nuclear deterrent which Pakistan must maintain to keep India away," elaborated one speaker (not further identified by the Senate). Another speaker also stated that "nuclear weapons are essential for the country" and that "a conventional military is not enough to fight a war against India." In mid December 1995, former Army Chief, Gen. Aslam Beg, urged Mrs. Bhutto to "activate and accelerate" Pakistan's military nuclear program in order to maintain nuclear "deterrence at high pitch." Meanwhile, during 1995, particularly once the Brown and Pressler Amendments issue was resolved, Pakistan increased its preoccupation with the acquisition of long-range delivery systems. Significantly, special attention has been paid to developing first strike capabilities against strategic objectives at the deep rear of India.

Presently, Pakistan's highest priority is the acquisition of the latest aircraft the PRC can offer. The first program is the swift acquisition of FC-1 fighters as replacement not only for the ageing F-6s and F-7s, but also for the F-16s in fighter missions. A joint Chinese-Pakistani program, the FC-1 is primarily a high performance fighter. Islamabad believes that having large numbers of FC-1s in service will free the remaining F-16s to deep strike missions, including with nuclear weapons should the need arise. The FC-1 is expected to become operational before 2000.

However, the F-16/FC-1 option is only an expedient short-term arrangement. Islamabad is determined to acquire dedicated high performance deep strike aircraft. The first priority of the Pakistani Air Force is the B-7 -- the PRC's long range high performance strike aircraft -- equipped with air to surface missiles. However, the PLA is facing problems with the B-7, particularly a slow production rate of only two aircraft per month. Considered the backbone of the PLA long-range anti-shipping strike force, it is unlikely that Beijing will authorize the B-7 for export for as long as the most basic operational requirements of the PLA are not met.

In the meantime, both the PLA and the Pakistani Air Force are looking at variants of the Russian Su-27 as a substitute. Having closely examined the Russian Su-27, Pakistan decided against direct purchase because of fear of competition with India -- a veteran client of Soviet/Russian weapons -- and because Moscow insisted on the sale of defensive interceptors only. Therefore, Pakistan is most interested in the acquisition of PRC-built Su-27s which are supposed to have multi-mission capabilities, including deep strikes or fighter escort for deep penetrations by B-7s. Russia sold the PRC production licence for the Su-27 only in early 1996, and it will take about a year before the first aircraft comes off the production line. Further more, since Moscow requires advance notification and approval of exports to third parties, a speedy delivery of Su-27s to Pakistan is not likely.

Meanwhile, Pakistan continues to pursue long-range ballistic missiles. Pakistan's own Hatif programs are progressing slowly. Looking for longer ranges, Islamabad is most interested in the Iranian Tondar-68 since it is on the verge of operational service.

The Iranian Tondar-68 is based on Chinese and North Korean technology, including samples for testing and reverse engineering. Tehran's ultimate objective are two versions of the Tondar-68, the first with a range of 1,200-1,500 km, thus capable of reaching Israel from launchers inside Iran, and a second with a range of some 2,000 km to establish regional hegemony. The Tondar-68 is a two-stage missile -- a Zalzal-300 (an Iranian derivative of the Chinese M-11) installed on top of the Iran-700 (itself a derivative of the North Korean NoDong-1). In March 1991, Iran test fired the basic Tondar-68 SSM over the Semnan desert. In the first test launch the missile flew more than 700 km, and in the second more than 1,000 km. These test launches are believed to have been of prototypes of the basic system (Iran-700) and a complete multiple-stage (Tondar-68 made of Iran-700 and Zalzal-300) respectively. Subsequently, in 1992, the PRC provided Iran additional advanced technology for expediting the development and production of these intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Isfahan.

Islamabad is convinced that it can field an improved version of the Tondar-68 once the basic Iranian missile becomes fully operational. Islamabad has already been assured that the PRC is willing to provide Pakistan with advanced guidance for the upper-stage -- which is a modification of the M-11, or, in Pakistan's case, of the Anza-11.

However, the most important recent development in the Pakistani nuclear posture is the vibrant debate about nuclear strategy and capabilities, particularly the articulation of a very basic issue -- the reason for the sudden fear of an impending Indian attack. Most recent reports of Indian strategic developments -- from new test launches of ballistic missiles to reported preparations for a nuclear test originally leaked by the Clinton Administration -- while worrisome for Islamabad, have nothing to do with the now openly dreaded Indian conventional offensive. What Islamabad really fears is an uncontrolled, perhaps even unplanned, escalation of a confrontation in Kashmir into a major Indo-Pakistani war. Considering the

growing direct involvement of the Pakistani intelligence and military in the escalating Islamist subversion and terrorism in Indian Kashmir, it stands to reason that New Delhi might resort to counter-escalation -- such as cross-border strikes against terrorist safe-havens -- that, in turn, will lead to an escalatory cycle all the way to a major Indo-Pakistani war.

Indeed, in January 1996, Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad considered such a scenario the most viable threat to Pakistani national security. At the same time, Islamabad continued to raise the overall tension along the border with India. The newly appointed Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Jehangir Karamat, visited his forces in Kashmir. He emphasized the deteriorating military situation in the area. "Such a situation demands a high state of preparedness to face any eventuality," he told local officers. The Pakistani growing anticipation and apprehension are real. Toward the end of January, a special commission chaired by Gen. Jehangir Karamat submitted a special report on the future needs of the Pakistani Armed Forces, stressing strategic and regional aspects as the key to future weapons' procurement and long-term planning. Meanwhile, Islamabad ordered "extraordinary" response to reports of India's preparations for a nuclear test, as well as missile test-launching and possible deployment. Pakistan's High Commissioner (Ambassador) to India, Riaz Khokhar, was recalled for consultations on "the situation emerging from India's stockpiling of dangerous weapons and the threat of Indian aggression."

This apprehension, while genuine, does not prevent Islamabad from markedly intensifying its active participation in Islamist subversion and terrorism in Kashmir, as well as in a terrorism campaign at the heart of India. The reason is that Islamabad has higher priorities. Some of these very close to Mrs. Bhutto, as well as several circles within the Pakistani leadership, primarily Islamist senior officials in the national defense and intelligence services, consider such an escalation a major asset in domestic politics. Reviving tensions with India provides them with an external threat and an excuse to mobilize the Pakistani masses around the government. Pakistan is facing a major domestic crisis -- rampant corruption, crime and terrorism, as well as the virtual collapse of government services.

Therefore, Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad is convinced that the policy of brinkmanship -- reaching a near-crisis posture with India -- will suffice to achieve their political objectives in Pakistan. These advisers of Mrs. Bhutto who advocate brinkmanship are convinced that even in the case of unplanned escalation, the Clinton Administration will intervene to prevent a real war from breaking out. However, the Islamist senior officials in the national defense and intelligence services insist on improving Pakistan's nuclear deterrence as the key to restraining India. They are convinced that only a Pakistani first strike capacity will be able to deter India from a military reaction to the Pakistani provocations and ostensible preparations for war.

These officials are most apprehensive about a scenario whereupon New Delhi will interpret Pakistani mobilization -- intended as a "signal" in the brinkmanship policy for Pakistani domestic purposes -- as actual preparations for war. India may then launch a conventional preemption against Pakistani forces concentrated and forward deployed during the brinkmanship and near-war phases. Pakistani Islamist senior officials are convinced that the Pakistani Armed Forces will collapse if such an Indian offensive is allowed to develop fully. Given the mounting internal pressures inside Pakistan, the first signs of defeat might very well cause a popular eruption and the self-destruction of Pakistan. Therefore, it is imperative for Pakistan to acquire long-range nuclear strike capabilities in order to contain and deter any potential Indian reaction to the mounting provocations, escalating terrorism, and overall policy of brinkmanship. Taken together, Islamabad is pushing South Asia into a most unstable situation fraught with great dangers. Presently, in early 1996, the Islamist circles of power in Islamabad continue to increase their sponsorship of terrorism and subversion in India, while hyping the fears of an Indian offensive for domestic political needs inside Islamabad. Anticipating and sponsoring a major escalation of Islamist terrorism and subversion in Kashmir in the spring, once the weather improves, Islamabad is increasingly apprehensive about the potential Indian reaction to the escalatory spiral.

Consequently, by late January 1996, the much dreaded and anticipated Indian offensive has become a self-fulfilling prophesy. Reports of Indian rocket attacks on a mosque in Forward Kahuta led to cross border clashes initiated by locally-based Pakistani Army units. These clashes now provided Islamabad with another confirmation of its warnings of a possible Indian aggression and war. The Pakistani Foreign Minister warned that India would pay "heavy price" for the alleged rocket attack. He further threatened New Delhi with dire ramifications for the anticipated Indian "attacks" on Pakistan. Several retired senior officers echoed this sentiment, anticipating a war with India.

However, in early February, Islamabad sought to dampen the calls to arms. Pakistani Defense Minister, Aftab Shaban Mirani, ruled out a Pakistani initiation of war with India over the rocket incident. He nevertheless stressed the overall growing threat of a war with India, and alluded to "countermeasures" Pakistan can employ in reaction to further Indian aggression.

Meanwhile, there has been a major evolution in Islamabad's articulation of the Indian threat facing Pakistan. In accordance with Pakistan's growing role in the Tehran-led Islamic bloc, Islamabad now presents Pakistan as being at the forefront of the defense of the entire Muslim World against Indian conspiracies, machinations, and aggression. Pakistani diplomats and senior officers throughout the Muslim World warn host governments that India has developed "big power obsession" that constitutes danger to all -- particularly Iran and the states of the Arabian Peninsula.

Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad is urging an all-Muslim response to the growing regional threat from India. The Indian oppression of Muslims in Kashmir, Islamabad stresses, is only the beginning of a Hindu onslaught on Islam. "Since India is against the World of Islam," explained a Pakistani official, "it is the duty of the Muslim Ummah [nation/community] to forge unity among its ranks, to pool its resources, and to turn itself into an impregnable fortress to counter the threat of Hindu imperialism." The mere adoption of this strategy clearly reflects the growing power and influence of the Islamist circles in Islamabad. These circles are committed to enhancing Pakistan's active participation in the regional surges of both the Beijing-led Trans-Asian Axis and particularly the Tehran-led Islamic bloc.

Indeed, there has been a concurrent change in the Pakistani strategy. In the second half of February 1996, there was an escalation in cross border shelling and other clashes directly involving the armed forces of both Pakistan and India. Duels of artillery and small arms fire have since expanded and become increasingly intense, some lasting a few hours at a time. In late February, Islamabad accused the Indian armed forces of sporadic and intentional attacks on Pakistani military and paramilitary patrols in several spots along their long border. Islamabad put special emphasis on the clashes in Punjab, away from the regularly hot spots in Kashmir and the glaciers. Islamabad now warns about the dire strategic-political ramifications of these clashes as well as the inevitable escalation in cross border violence.

The escalation of the cross-border clashes has echoed in heated rhetoric coming from Islamabad. On February 18, Mrs. Bhutto warned that "Pakistan today is standing at the crossroads endangered with chauvinistic designs of our neighbor, India, which poses a threat to all the countries in this region. Pakistan cannot remain idle in this situation." Mrs. Bhutto is determined to stay the present course despite the growing Indian threat, stressing that Pakistan is "fully capable of overcoming internal as well as external threats being faced by Pakistan today." Alarmed by the popular ramifications of the mounting tension, Islamabad tried to dampen the notion of crisis. On February 25, Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani claimed that Islamabad did not anticipate "immediate threat of war from India." However, Islamabad is most worried about the escalatory potential of the continued escalation along the Indo-Pakistani border. Still, Mr. Mirani stressed that Pakistan will continue its current strategic and political course despite the potential dangers.

Islamabad's present strategy of crisis inducing and brinkmanship is well calculated. Seeking to divert the attention of the population away from the internal near collapse of the country, Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad sees a window of opportunity for an external crisis in the period surrounding the Indian elections.

Islamabad believes that the compounding effect of the current corruption scandal that is shaking the entire Indian establishment will prevent New Delhi from competent crisis management as well as making correct and bold decision in case of major escalation. Moreover, Mrs. Bhutto's close confidants are convinced that given US President Clinton's support and sympathies, Pakistan now has better conditions for inducing a crisis with a likelihood of an American intervention on their behalf in case of a negative conflagration.

Further more, the timing of the Pakistani escalation seems to be affected by larger strategic considerations, far beyond the concurrent dynamics in Indo-Pakistani relations. Given its all out commitment to the role of a linchpin in the consolidation of the Beijing-led Trans-Asian Axis, Islamabad cannot but conduct its own strategic dynamics within the confines of, and in reference to, Beijing's grand strategic considerations.

Since 1993, Pakistan has had a crucial role in the PRC's strategic contingency plans. The PLA considers India as "the greatest potential threat" for the PRC itself, because the implementation of the PRC's Trans-Asian Axis strategy endangers India's vital interests and thus might very well lead to a military clash. The PLA stresses that they "see India as a potential adversary mainly because India's strategic focus remains on the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia." Therefore, for the PRC to further its strategic surge westward both in the heart of Asia and on the spaces of the Indian Ocean, it is imperative for the PRC to divert India's strategic attention away from the Chinese strategic surge.

The role of Pakistan in the Chinese grand design is instigating this strategic diversion. Pakistan should create a major defense challenge to India from the west -- using a myriad of instruments ranging from subversion to a major military build up. According to the PRC's strategic designs, the aggregate effect of this Pakistani strategy should be a growing tension along the Indo-Pakistani border that would compel New Delhi to concentrate on meeting the Pakistani challenge as a national priority, and thus neglect blocking the PRC's westward surge until it is too late to reverse the new geo-strategic realities in Asia. Given the latest developments in East Asia -- the PRC's policy of military brinkmanship regarding Taiwan and the Spratly Islands -- the Chinese aspect of Islamabad's strategic decision making cannot be ignored. Both the on going escalation along the Indo-Pakistani border and the rhetoric about a regional war should thus be examined in the context of Beijing's grand strategy. Pakistan is one of the PRC's closest allies that has special strategic relations to the point of the PRC's expediting, if not facilitating, the Pakistani acquisition of nuclear weapons. Therefore, it is inconceivable that as Beijing is increasingly immersed in such a milestone strategic surge and crisis, Islamabad remains not involved, not even marginally, in the unfolding global dynamics.

On the contrary, as the PRC's surge keeps accelerating, and the regional crisis surrounding Taiwan and the Spratly Islands growing to the point of a possible war, it is imperative for Beijing to both divert attention from its preparations for war as well as actively prevent intervention by US forces arriving from the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. An Indo-Pakistani crisis, let alone a war, is a key component in such a strategic diversion. In view of Islamabad's own interest in an external crisis as a key for the survival of the Bhutto government, Pakistan is an eager and willing participant in instigating and escalating this regional crisis. Moreover, Islamabad's belief in the magic powers of a Pakistani nuclear ultimatum to stop any Indian conventional counter-escalation, makes assertive nuclear brinkmanship the dominant factor in the approach to, and concept of, crisis management in Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad.

Ultimately, Mrs. Bhutto's policies are clearly presented as the continuation of her father's message, especially Pakistan's claim for a role in the leadership of the Third World, and the crucial importance of close alliance with the Muslim World for Pakistan's national security. Both Bhuttos have considered anti-American populism as a very important political asset. Pakistani officials point out that by and large, the tenets of Islamabad's national policy and strategy are inherently anti-American -- be it the strategic alliance with the PRC, or the close special relations with Iran, Iraq, Libya, and the Muslim World as a whole. "The Pakistani people are Muslims with a firm faith in their religion. They cannot break up their

traditional friendship with these countries for US happiness and aid," the officials stressed in the summer of 1994.

Thus, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto continues to personally lead Pakistan into becoming a key and active component in a major global axis aimed at confronting the US and reducing its influence. It is under Mrs. Bhutto that Pakistan increases its participation in the strategic alliance with the PRC and Iran, as well as raises the profile of the confrontation with the US and India. Nuclear deterrence is considered Islamabad's primary shield against an Indian reaction to, let alone retaliation for, the escalation of provocations in Kashmir and increasingly along the Indo-Pakistani border. It is through this growing tension with India that Islamabad's commitment to the role of linchpin of the Beijing-led Trans-Asian Axis is presently manifested. Moreover, Islamabad increasingly considers brinkmanship to the point of a growing threat of war with India a primary instrument of ensuring Arab and Muslim support for Pakistan. Under such crisis conditions, Mrs. Bhutto's Islamabad is convinced, only the specter of Pakistani strategic nuclear strikes can ensure the containment of India, compelling New Delhi into self-restraint in the face of mounting provocations and subversion. Therefore, rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, Mrs. Bhutto will only accelerate and expand the Pakistani military nuclear program.

5.0 PAKISTAN, KASHMIR & THE TRANS-ASIAN AXIS

by Yossef Bodansky

Kashmir is unique among all the crisis points along the Indo-Pakistani border in that a marked escalation of the fighting -- both insurgency and regular -- is virtually inevitable before any effort for a peaceful solution can succeed. The primary reasons is the extent of the ideological commitment and self-interests of several of the key players involved.

For Islamabad, the liberation of Kashmir is a sacred mission, the only task unfulfilled since Muhammad Ali Jinnah's days. Moreover, a crisis in Kashmir constitutes an excellent outlet for the frustration at home, an instrument for the mobilization of the masses, as well as gaining the support of the Islamist parties and primarily their loyalists in the military and the ISI.

The ISI has a major interest to continue the crisis. Back in the 1970s, Pakistan started to train Sikhs and other Indian separatist movements as part of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's strategy for forward strategic depth. Pakistan adopted the sponsorship of terrorism and subversion as an instrument to substitute for the lack of strategic depth and early warning capabilities. The Pakistani sponsored terrorists and the Pakistani intelligence operatives in their ranks would be able to warn Pakistan of any impending Indian invasion, and then launch a guerrilla warfare against the Indian Army even before it reached the border with Pakistan. Therefore, sponsoring separatist subversion has become a crucial component of Islamabad's national military strategy.

During the 1980s, the ISI completed a vast training and support infrastructure for the Afghan resistance that was also used for the training and support of other regional groups. There was a corresponding ideological development in Indian Kashmir. Since 1984, virtually suddenly, the prevailing popular sentiments in Indian Kashmir was that "Islam is in Danger," and that sentiment, rather than nationalism, began mobilizing the youth.

The timing of the change was not spontaneous. Hashim Qureshi, the founder of the nationalist JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front] recently recalled how in 1984 ISI Generals and Brigadiers approached me with the offer: 'get us young people for training from the Valley so that they could fight India on return.' When he refused, Qureshi explained, his struggle was taken over by the ISI who installed Amanullah Khan. "It is tragic that so-called nationalist Amanullah Khan and some of his supporters started the present struggle in Kashmir in league with the ISI. A man with common intelligence can understand that any movement started in a Muslim majority area with the help of Pakistani military intelligence will eventually mean religious struggle." Qureshi stressed that by 1983 "Amanullah proved that he was an agent of the ISI" having sacrificed the nationalist liberation struggle in Kashmir on the altar of Islamist politics. Qureshi himself had to flee Pakistan and seek political asylum in Western Europe. Meanwhile, by the late-1980s, with the war in Afghanistan slowing down, the vast network of training camps for Afghan Mujahideen was transformed by the ISI into a center of Islamist terrorism throughout South Asia, as well as the melting pot of the world wide Islamist Jihad. This transformation concurred with an active ISI program "to initiate full-fledged subversion in Kashmir Valley" that is still escalating. At first, the ISI's assistance to the Kashmiri Islamists was funneled through Gulbaddin Hekmatiyar's Hisb-i-Islami, thus providing Islamabad with deniability.

Similarly, the Armed Islamic Movement, as well as several Saudis, Gulf Arabs, and other supporters of Islamist causes, put Kashmir high on their list of jihads to be fought. Indeed, Kashmir is mentioned on lists of sacred goals recovered in Israel (HAMAS), Algeria (FIS), Sudan, Egypt, to name but a few examples. Kashmir is a high priority objective because of the firm belief in the possibility of success. It is an easy campaign to wage for logistical considerations because of the presence of numerous cadres and

large weapon stockpiles in Afghanistan and Pakistan. AIM's operations are closely coordinated in Teheran and Khartoum.

Presently, Pakistani officials repeatedly vow to "liberate" Kashmir, or enforce the recognition of 'Muslims' rights in the Valley, even at a risk of a major crisis. This rising militancy of Pakistani officials is far from being empty rhetoric. Islamabad uses the escalation in Kashmir as a cover for the overall expansion of the terrorist training and support system for operations in Central Asia and elsewhere in the world. In early 1992, with world attention paid to their presence in Peshawar area, some of these 'Afghans' were transferred to Azad Kashmir where new camps were being built for them by the Pakistani Army. By early 1993, there were over 1,000 'Afghan' Mujahideen in the Markaz-Dawar alone. Following the completion of advance training, they are being sent to Kashmir, Algeria and Egypt.

In early 1995, the Harakat ul-Ansar was maintaining offices in most Pakistani cities, as well as training facilities in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It expanded its global reach in support for Islamist causes. "Ours is a truly international network of genuine Muslim holy warriors," explained Khalid Awan, a Pakistani member. "We believe frontiers could never divide Muslims. They are one nation and they will remain a single entity." Haraka ul-Ansar are known to be fighting in Kashmir, the Philippines, Bosnia, Tajikistan, and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the ISI continues to provide the terrorists with new weapons. In the summer of 1993, the Kashmiri Mujahideen were provided with long range and powerful missiles -- Sarq missiles of Afghan War vintage. At that time, the Kashmiri and ISI crews were being trained in the use of these missiles in Pakistani Kashmir.

As of the fall of 1993, the Kashmiri terrorists also began using sophisticated communication systems including small radios (including systems with frequency hopping, selective broadcast, digital burst communications, etc.) and collapsible solar-panels for reload systems, as well as frequency scanning devise for detecting and homing on military- type broadcasting. All the communication systems are of NATO/US origin, with some components made in Japan.

The summer of 1994 was a fundamental turning point in the conduct of the Pakistan-sponsored Jihad in Kashmir. The change did not take place on the battlefield. In order to ensure its tight dominance over all aspects of the escalating Islamist Jihad in Kashmir; Islamabad organized the 13 leading Islamist organizations into the United Jihad Council [Muttahida Jihad Council - MJC] under the leadership of Commander Manzur Shah, the leader of Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, and under the tight control of the ISI. Among the member organizations: Harakat ul-Ansar, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, Al-Jihad, Al-Barq, Ikhwan-ul-Mussalmin, Tariq-ul- Mujahideen, and all other Islamist militant organizations. The declared objective of the escalating Jihad is to join Pakistan.

In early June 1994, Commander Manzur Shah declared that the sole objective of the escalating Jihad in Kashmir is to incorporate it into Pakistan. The declarations of all Kashmiri militant organizations have announced [that] Pakistan is their ideal and goal.... The freedom fighters will surrender [Kashmir] to the Pakistani military and government." Commander Manzur Shah stressed that "the Jihad has been getting stronger.. The Mujahideen are getting organized now and are attacking the Indian military strategically." He admitted that Indian Kashmiri Muslim leaders were assassinated or attacked in order to prevent them from reaching an agreement with the Indian government. 'Wali Mohammed would not have been assassinated and the caravans of Farooq [Abdullah] and Rajesh Pilot would not have been attacked if the climate was conducive to political action."

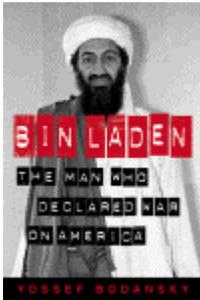
Meanwhile, a campaign of assassinations was launched in order to eliminate the Kashmiri civic leadership that opposed the escalation of the Jihad. On 20 June 1994, Islamist terrorists assassinated the Kashmiri scholar Qazi Nissar Ahmat. He was kidnapped a night before and pressured to endorse the anti-India Jihad. He refused and was killed. A key member of the assassination squad was Fayaz Ahmad Mir a.k.a.

Abu-Bakr of Hkb- ul-MuJahideen. Ahmad was the 17th Kashmiri Muslim scholar and civic leader to be assassinated by Islamists for refusing to join the anti-India struggle.

This marked escalation in the ISI's support for the Islamist insurgency and terrorism in Kashmir is a direct by-product of Pakistan's national security policy and grand strategy. Ms. Bhutto has repeatedly emphasized the centrality of the annexation of the entire Kashmir for the long-term development of Pakistan. The new rail-line that will connect Karachi and Central Asia must pass through Indian-held Kashmir to be engineeringly and economically effective. Ms. Bhutto's Islamabad considers the opening of the road to Central Asia by using Pakistan as the region's gateway to the Indian Ocean as the key to the growth of Pakistan's commercial activities. Kashmir is also Pakistan's true gateway to the PRC and into Central Asia -- the path of the new Silk Road. And there lies the future and strategic salvation of Pakistan. Pakistan knows that the active pursuit of the current Kashmir strategy may lead to an escalation of the face off with India. Islamabad is ready to deal with this eventuality while increasing its all out support for the Kashmiris. Indeed, Pakistani officials are raising the ante of Islamabad's Indian strategy. In mid February 1995, a Foreign Ministry spokesman warned that "if India carries out another aggression and war breaks out between Pakistan and India, it would not be a war of a thousand years or even a thousand hours but only a few minutes and India, it would not be a war of a thousand years or even a thousand hours but only a few minutes and India should not be oblivious to the potential devastation." (The 'thousand year war' is a reference to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's statement of the extent of Pakistan's commitment to a struggle with India.) Other Pakistani officials were quick to clarify the statement. They stressed that the statement "warned India not by implication but in clear terms that the next war will only last a few seconds and will bring inconceivable destruction and devastation. This clearly indicates that the "Pakistani Government has bravely displayed its nuclear capability." The officials added that "Pakistan is really in a position to strike a heavy blow against India through its nuclear capability."

What is most significant in both the spokesman's statement and the subsequent clarifications is their context. The strategic logic of using the nuclear factor to offset any deficiencies in conventional military power has been the cornerstone of Pakistan's nuclear strategy. Recently, a more assertive element was first introduced to the nuclear strategy by Islamist politicians. The overall Pakistani strategic confidence has been expressed in brinkmanship statements coming out of Islamabad since the fall of 199 . For example, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the Jamaat-i-Islami Chief Senator, urged the Bhutto government "to declare Jihad on India to save Kashmiri Muslims from total annihilation." There is no other way to resolve the crisis, he declared. "Let us wage Jihad for Kashmir. A nuclear-armed Pakistan would deter India from a wider conflict," he stressed. Thus, the statement of mid February 1995 confirms that the Bhutto Government has indeed adopted the strategy and policy outlined by the Islamists.

6.0 BOOKS BY YOSSEF BODANSKY



[bin Laden](#)

Written by [Yossef Bodansky](#)

Trade Paperback, 464 pages

September 2001

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