

Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis

Volume 5, Issue 4
April 2013

Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Engagement:
New Frontiers in Combating Terrorism

ROHAN GUNARATNA

Reconciliation in Afghanistan:
The Pakistani Factor

HALIMULLAH KOUSARY

Bangladesh in the Run-up to Elections:
Walking a Tightrope?

IFTEKHARUL BASHAR

Peace Talks with the Pakistani Taliban:
Challenges and Prospects

ARSHAD ALI

The Expansion of Sectarian Conflict in Pakistan

ABDUL BASIT

Drifting Apart? Indo-Lanka Relations Examined

MANOJ HARJANI



INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH
S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University

Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Engagement: New Frontiers in Combating Terrorism

Rohan Gunaratna

There is now a greater awareness among governments of the need to invest in creating new terrorist rehabilitation and community engagement programs and in sustaining existing ones. With support from governments, NGOs, community organizations, and the private and academic sectors, terrorist rehabilitation and community engagement programs are likely to double worldwide in the coming decade.

The Context

Most governments continue to fight terrorism using a “hard” approach involving kinetic and lethal methods. They use intelligence to detect terrorist attacks during planning and preparation, law enforcement to investigate and charge terrorists at home, and the military to combat terrorism abroad. While the “hard” approach may be effective, it is not the most efficient approach to take. It help governments fight operational terrorism in the short term, but cannot stem the tide of ideological extremism, the precursor of terrorism.

This is because individuals can become radicalized by extremist ideology even in the best

of circumstances. Contemporary terrorist groups are adept at harnessing modern communication platforms to reach out beyond their existing supporters and sympathizers. Enabled by the internet and social media, they not only engage people within the countries they operate in, but also diaspora and migrant communities abroad. Both terrorist and government activities – especially inappropriate responses by governments to terrorist events – generate sympathy and support for terrorism by polarizing communities ethnically and religiously.

The polarization of communities increases their vulnerability to terrorist propaganda, often leading to the steady development of mistrust, suspicion and prejudice between them. To prevent terrorist



Detainees in Libya undergoing a rehabilitation programme, 2010.

Photo credit: ICPVTR Libya Study Visit Team.

propaganda from radicalizing vulnerable communities, governments must therefore invest in community engagement, taking care to focus on the very communities that terrorists claim to represent. Working together with a range of organizations, governments can create platforms both to counter extremist ideology and promote moderation.

Furthermore, the criminal justice and prisons systems in most countries are designed for deterrence and punishment, not prevention and rehabilitation. Terrorists detained using the “hard” approach can become more radicalized in prison and use the opportunity to radicalize other prisoners. In this way, the “hard” approach undermines itself because prisons then become a breeding ground for new recruits when hardcore extremists are detained and not managed properly by prison authorities.

Detained terrorists have also shown their resourcefulness while in prison by writing books and leaflets, cementing their place in terrorist iconography to earn the status of a hero worthy of respect and emulation by the next generation of terrorist recruits. Unless terrorists in custody change their views, they will continue to pose an enduring threat to public safety and security both whilst being in custody and once released. There is thus an urgent need for proper prison management to prevent ordinary criminals from being radicalized and for the implementation of custodial rehabilitation to de-radicalize detainees. Custodial rehabilitation must also be followed by community rehabilitation initiatives, where it is paramount for engagement programs to prepare the ground for successful reintegration of the rehabilitated beneficiary.

But for this “soft” approach involving terrorist rehabilitation and community engagement to be successful, it has to be multifaceted, facilitated by a long term public-private partnership, and led by creative and innovative individuals. Investment must be focused in three key areas. First,

prevention, so that individuals will not embrace extremist ideologies that transform them into terrorists; second, rehabilitation for terrorists, and third, examination of issues exploited by terrorists so that they can be addressed and the terrorist groups’ membership and support base can be eroded. Governments will also need to involve the private sector so that programs will have the means to create job opportunities for rehabilitated inmates and detainees ready for reintegration back to society. The participation of various segments of society would make citizens into stakeholders and governments can share the burden of security with those who benefit from it.

Current Developments

Terrorist rehabilitation and community engagement are emerging as indispensable tools in contemporary counterterrorism practice. Working together with military, law enforcement and intelligence services, governments in several countries have built rehabilitation and community engagement programs that have also involved community partners, NGOs, and the private and the academic sectors.

Rehabilitation programs in Egypt, Algeria, Libya and Yemen are now defunct, and the programs in Iraq, Uzbekistan, Colombia, Spain and Indonesia are ad-hoc. Structured programs are present in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore. There is a need for ad-hoc programs to evolve into structured programs and for structured programs to be sustained in the long term. Some of the more crucial challenges faced by current rehabilitation programs include monitoring recidivism, managing the transition for detainees ready to be reintegrated back into society, and staying on top of the ever-changing terrorist narratives to counter them effectively when attempting to de-radicalize detainees.

Community engagement programs have emerged in varied forms and with different areas of focus. This diversity has proven above all that



Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, addressing delegates of the International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Resilience held in Singapore from 26-27 March 2013.

Photo credit: ICRR Media Team

there is no easily identified common approach and that every country looking to formulate a community engagement program must develop its own path aided by the best practices identified in other programs. Political will to bring stakeholders together and provide coordination to community engagement efforts has been a key challenge facing many countries. However, there are encouraging signs with initiatives being made by countries with functioning engagement programs to share their experiences and cooperate with other countries on seeding new programs where they are most needed.

In fact, a call to establish rehabilitation and community engagement programs worldwide received overwhelming support at the two-day International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Resilience (ICRR) in Singapore on 26-27 March 2013. Organized by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) and Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG), the conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Hsien Loong. Around 500 delegates from 24 countries participated, including both practitioners and scholars. The conference marked a decade of RRG's success in providing religious counseling for Singapore's Jemaah Islamiyah detainees and featured panels that looked at where global counterterrorism efforts stood today and the

challenges rehabilitation and community engagement programs will face going forward.

The partnership between RSIS and RRG which began when the latter was formed in April 2003 can serve as a model for other countries to build on. Encompassing collaboration in research and publication and building of networks both within and outside Singapore, the RSIS-RRG partnership has been able to make a significant contribution to the realm of counter-ideology and promotion of moderation.

In the coming decade, governments and their partners should look to dismantle the conceptual infrastructure of terrorists in parallel with their work towards reducing the immediate threat stemming from terrorists' operational infrastructure. Such an effort will require a concerted strategy at both the community level and in detainee and prison settings. It will involve diverse partnerships creating robust community engagement programs to counter extremist ideology upstream and rehabilitation programs to de-radicalize terrorists and extremists downstream.

—
Rohan Gunaratna is Head, ICPVTR and Professor of Security Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

Reconciliation in Afghanistan: The Pakistani Factor

Halimullah Kousary

The Taliban will continue to pose a challenge to reconciliation in Afghanistan while it enjoys the support of Pakistan.

When comparing Afghanistan today with Afghanistan during the Taliban regime, one will discover many indicators of economic, social and cultural resuscitation. Today, there are over eight million Afghan children, two and a half million of them girls, going to schools across the country and the economy stands at \$20 billion, having grown from \$2 billion in 2001. Most importantly, Afghanistan successfully held two presidential and parliamentary elections and is preparing for the third in 2014 and 2015. But one challenge for Afghanistan remains, and it is the Taliban. The Islamist force is a serious threat to moderate nationalists in Afghanistan and also to Pakistan, yet it enjoys Pakistani support.

Almost 12 years into the US-led war against the Taliban, military victory has been elusive mainly due to the shift of attention to Iraq in 2003 and Pakistan's continued support for the Taliban. The US' involvement in Iraq allowed the fragmented remnants of the Taliban regime (1996-2001) to

reorganize while Pakistan fostered them and ensured their sustainability in fighting against NATO and the Afghan government. NATO, after exhausting all possible military measures to defeat the Taliban, opted to back the Afghan government's overture to the Taliban for reconciliation. The Taliban, however, remains uncompromising and belligerent. Why?

When the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was underway in 1989, the then Afghan nationalist government also tried to bring mujahideen leaders (the "Peshawar Seven") to the negotiating table but did not succeed due to Pakistan's role as a spoiler. President Najibullah proposed forming a national unity government with the mujahideen and called on Pakistan to facilitate this political solution to the 10-year war. The "Peshawar Seven", however, with a nod from Pakistan, unanimously rejected the proposal and demanded the dissolution of President Najibullah's government. The result



Afghan security forces at the site of a suicide attack by the Taliban in Jalalabad coinciding with a visit to the country by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

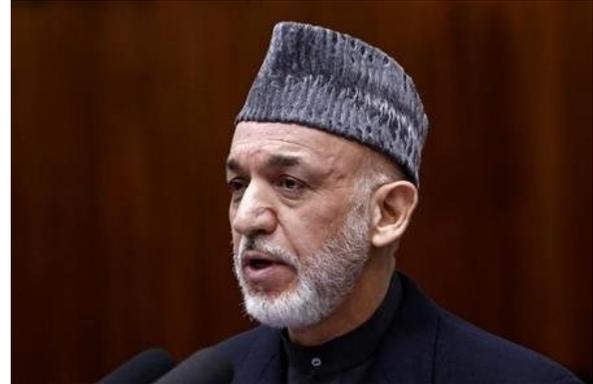
Photo credit: Reuters
<http://news.yahoo.com/taliban-suicide-bombers-kill-five-afghan-police-kerry-053550409.html>

was a decade-long civil war and the emergence of the Taliban in 1994. Pakistan nurtured and supported the Taliban in pursuit of its interests in Afghanistan and the Taliban's downfall in 2001 was a strategic blow to Pakistan as it led to the establishment of a moderate-nationalist government across the border endorsed by the international community.

The incumbent Afghan government is now confronting a similar situation to that of the 1990s because Pakistan is once again hindering rather than facilitating the Afghan reconciliation process. Though NATO assures it will not abandon Afghanistan, it is nevertheless pulling out troops from the country with the Quetta Shura standing firm on its preconditions of: 1) the full and unconditional withdrawal of NATO forces, 2) dissolution of the incumbent government and 3) amendments to the Afghan constitution. By showing zero flexibility on such unpalatable preconditions, the Taliban apparently have no intention of reconciliation and power-sharing but want to buy time until the NATO withdrawal is complete to try to reinstate the Islamic Emirate as it was from 1996 to 2001.

A major catalyst for the Taliban to remain belligerent and struggle for complete control is Pakistan's incessant support. Pakistan no doubt holds leverage through which it can coerce the Taliban into serious reconciliation with the Afghan government. But that is not the endgame Pakistan wants to witness in Afghanistan; instead what it appears to want to achieve is a military solution of such a nature where the Taliban are the winners, or a negotiated government setup in which the Taliban must hold the most power and be in the driving seat. The Taliban appear evasive as any political settlement will certainly culminate in a moderate-nationalist regime in Afghanistan. Pakistan also shows no willingness to go for a moderate nationalist government in Afghanistan, its aversion grounded in its fear that such a regime will resist Pakistani hegemony and plans of strategic depth which, if the Taliban are

in power, will be safe. Pakistan also assumes that the Taliban have little or no interest in the Pashtunistan issue and the Durand Line, and that they are the ideal tool to defuse these points of contention.



Afghan President Hamid Karzai was in Qatar in March 2013 to enlist the Gulf state's assistance in mediating with the Taliban.

Photo credit: Mohammad Ismail, Reuters

<http://news.yahoo.com/afghanistans-karzai-qatar-taliban-talks-focus-134115125.html>

Probable Repercussions

Pakistan's friendly policies towards the Afghan Taliban are shaped only by the interests in fostering them while there seems to be no serious thought by Pakistan with respect to the other risks they pose. The Taliban is now as much a Pakistani phenomenon as it is an Afghan one. Both the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, however, seem to be more loyal to their agenda of imposing a strict Shariah-based governance system in the broader region than to Pakistani interests vis-à-vis Afghanistan. The very fact that Islamists in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan commonly treat the Pashtunistan issue and the Durand line as trivial is because of their broader agenda, which is the restoration of the Caliphate that recognizes no boundary in the Muslim lands. The ultimate objective of Islamist movements including the Taliban (both Afghan and Pakistani) is to unite Muslim nations into the Caliphate and their first step towards it is the establishment of

Islamic Emirates. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) members already refer to themselves as the Force of the Islamic Emirate in South and North Waziristan while recent remarks by two top TTP leaders referring to overthrowing the Pakistani government and imposing Shariah explain how their organization and its ilk are struggling to expand to the rest of Pakistan.

An Afghanistan in the grip of the Taliban would serve to reinforce Talibanization in Pakistan. In addition, the Pakistani Taliban realize that even if there are elements in Pakistani society hostile to their agenda of establishing an Islamic Emirate, they face no lack of sympathizers. A vast network in the form of seminaries, religious parties and Sunni sectarian outfits spread across Pakistan are generally in favor of the concept of the Islamic Emirate and the Caliphate.

However, there is still a surprising misreading of the Pakistani Taliban entertained by the Pakistani establishment and intelligentsia that Talibanization in Pakistan is inextricably linked to the ongoing war in Afghanistan. They dismiss it as a future threat to Pakistan and still see their strategy of supporting the Afghan Taliban as a viable course of action. But for Afghans, one thing is clear – empowering Islamists and undermining moderate nationalists in Afghanistan would have terrible consequences and Pakistan will be the worst hit. If today the Afghan Taliban warn that nationalism will not rescue Afghan leaders and that President Hamid Karzai is on the road leading to Ariana Square where President Najibullah's dead body was hung in public in 1996, it would not come as a surprise if tomorrow the Pakistani Taliban stands in Minar-e-Pakistan, replicating the Afghan Taliban and deciding the fate of Pakistan's nationalist leaders.

Halimullah Kousary is an Associate Research Fellow with ICPVTR based in Kabul.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor

Dr. Arabinda Acharya

Associate Editor

Manoj Harjani

For inclusion in the CTTA mailing list, please email your full name and the name of your organization with the subject "CTTA Subscription" to Kelvinder Singh at the following address: iskelvinder@ntu.edu.sg

Disclaimer

The views presented in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect or represent the views of the editors or the organizations to which the editors and authors are affiliated.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis is open for contributions from researchers and practitioners in the field of terrorism research, security, and other related fields.

Topical areas of interest are terrorism and political violence, organized crime, homeland security, religion and violence, internal conflicts and all other areas of security broadly defined.

Articles can be between 1,000 to 2,000 words. Submissions must be made before the 15th of every month for editing purposes and for inclusion in the next month's issue. Please refer to the [guidelines](#).

Electronic copies of the articles (MS Word format) may be submitted to Kelvinder Singh, at the following address: iskelvinder@ntu.edu.sg

Bangladesh in the Run-up to Elections: Walking a Tightrope?

Iftekhharul Bashar

War crimes trials for atrocities committed during 1971 are resulting in violent protests while political parties are in disagreement over a caretaker government mechanism prior to elections later this year, and these two developments are affecting both the economy and the state of democracy in Bangladesh.

Incidents of political violence in Bangladesh have escalated in the first quarter of 2013. Activists of the country's largest Islamist political party, the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJI) clashed with the police in several parts of the country, leaving at least 87 people – including 6 policemen – dead and thousands injured.

Law enforcement agencies are facing challenges in responding to the violence perpetrated by BJI activists, particularly the student wing of BJI, the Islami Chatra Shibir (ICS), who are opposing a war crimes trial in which some of the BJI's leaders have been convicted. Questions are arising in Bangladesh as to whether the government is capable of tackling the violence in a coordinated manner to ensure public safety and security.

Besides the war crimes trial, the disputes between political parties over a mechanism for

the next general election have become another source of violent activism. The question of whether the election will take place under a caretaker government has led to rampant general strikes enforced by the opposition alliance that are affecting the livelihoods of millions of Bangladeshis. As the next general election is due by the end of 2013, the ongoing violence is not only posing a security challenge but also will have implications for Bangladesh's democratic evolution in the long-term.

The War Crimes Trial

BJI has been opposing the 1971 war crimes trial initiated in 2010 by the current government that is led by the Bangladesh Awami League. A major reason for the BJI opposing the trial is because some of its top leaders are among facing charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Protests against the trial took a violent turn in



A demonstration at Shahbag Square in Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital, February 2013.

Photo credit: Andrew Biraj, Reuters
<http://www.nbcnews.com/id/50838479/#.UWIEtpNmiSp>



A demonstration by opposition activists to pressure the government to restore the caretaker government system prior to elections later this year.

Photo credit: Andrew Biraj, Reuters
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/09/us-bangladesh-politics-idUSBRE8B801U20121209>

November 2012 when the tribunal was about to deliver verdicts.

Though insignificant in terms of representation in the *Jatiyo Sangshad* (the Parliament), the BJI's strength as a political party stems from a support base created by its significant investments in the financial, educational and social sectors. The BJI is in a 18-party electoral alliance led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which is one of the two major mainstream political parties that have been ruling the country since the restoration of democracy in 1990.

The BJI's stance against the creation of Bangladesh is well-documented, and many of its members allegedly collaborated with the Pakistani forces in committing genocide, rape and arson during the 1971 conflict. The genocide in former East Pakistan (which later became Bangladesh) is one of the largest incidents of genocide in Asia's history in which, according to official figures, at least 3 million ethnic Bengalis were killed and 10 million became refugees in India.

The traumatic experience of genocide in the name of religion made many Bangladeshis drift away from politics based on religion. As a result, in the early 1970s, especially during the first two

years of Bangladesh's independence, Bangladeshi nationalism overshadowed Islamic fervor. All religious political organizations were banned and the first constitution adopted in 1972 embraced secularism as a fundamental principle.

From 1975 to 1990, military and quasi-military regimes emerged and consolidated their power. These regimes used Islam rhetorically and politically to obtain legitimacy, which was reflected in successive amendments to the constitution that gradually changed the secular orientation of the state and politics. As a result, BJI found itself in an increasingly favorable environment where it could pursue a political agenda in the name of Islam, making a dramatic comeback into the political matrix.

From 1990 to 2011, the BJI increased its influence within the same democratic system it ideologically opposed using the opportunity created by conflict between the two leading political parties in Bangladesh. The party invested in financial and educational institutions, hospitals, and NGOs, becoming an influential social actor in the process. However, the party's electoral performance remains insignificant which reflects the stigmatized reputation it has among the vast majority of Bangladeshis. A war crimes trial has been an enduring popular demand in

Bangladesh, particularly from those families victimized by the events of 1971. BJI is now demanding closure of the trial and the immediate release of its leaders. It believes the trial is politically motivated, and fears extinction if its leadership is successfully convicted.

Several trends can be traced from the current scenario. Firstly, there is a significant decline in law and order, which will result in greater insecurity for Bangladeshis as public transport, police stations, and government offices are being attacked. Secondly, the violence is not limited to the capital Dhaka and continues to spread out across the country. The overall impact of blockades and general strikes is uncertainty which in turn affects the economy. Thirdly, political issues are deliberately being interpreted with a communal undertone which might affect minorities living in Bangladesh. Religiously sensitive issues are being used and exploited by both local and transnational violent extremist groups. Finally, there is intense pressure from pro-trial activists who are demanding capital punishments for those convicted of war crimes.

Putting all the pieces together, Bangladesh appears to be heading towards instability. To avoid a long term effect on the country's security, it is necessary that the major political parties engage in dialogue.

Election Mechanism

Other than the war crimes trial, the political arena is also addressing other issues among which the most prominent is the dispute between the ruling Awami League (AL) and the opposition led by the BNP over an election mechanism. The BNP is demanding restoration of the caretaker government system which was annulled in 2011 by the current government. The BNP and its allies have threatened to boycott the elections without the caretaker policy in place and are enforcing a series of general strikes (locally known as *hartal*) to mount pressure on the

government. As per a roadmap unveiled by the Elections Commission, the next parliamentary elections will be held sometime between October 26, 2013 and January 24, 2014. The main opposition party, the BNP, which is leading an 18-party alliance, has boycotted dialogue with the Elections Commission as the issue of the caretaker government system was not on the agenda.

Key players in Bangladeshi politics have made democracy fragile. To avoid further escalation of violence, a dialogue between the political parties is necessary. General strikes are having an adverse effect on the Bangladeshi economy, with 25 days of productivity lost in the first three months of 2013 alone, amounting to nearly one-third of the total number of working days.

Implications

Strikes have become frequent in Bangladesh over the last few months due to two reasons: firstly, the BNP-led opposition intensifying its campaign to get a caretaker administration installed; secondly, the BJI stepping up its campaign for abolition of war crimes tribunals in which most of its top leaders are implicated. According to the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a day lost to a strike costs the economy TK 160 billion (US\$2 billion).

With the passage of time, the political scenario is becoming more complex. Both the government and the opposition parties need to play a more responsible role by resolving their disputes through dialogue. Failure to manage the current crisis in an appropriate manner multiplies the risk of greater instability and insecurity which will affect Bangladesh's democratic process.

—
Iftekharul Bashar is an Associate Research Fellow with ICPVTR.

Peace Talks with the Pakistani Taliban: Challenges and Prospects

Arshad Ali

Given Tehrik-i-Taliban's propensity to renege on its commitments in past peace agreements, the outlook for the upcoming peace talks remains uncertain.

In late December 2012, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the banned umbrella group of the Pakistani Taliban, offered peace negotiations to Pakistan's government. The ceasefire offer led to an intense debate in the print and electronic media as well as in policy circles over how to respond. Both the government and opposition political parties are considering TTP's peace offer seriously as TTP has the potential to sabotage the upcoming parliamentary elections due in May 2013. The TTP, however, may well be using the circumstances of upcoming elections and the American withdrawal from Afghanistan to push through peace talks in order to squeeze out maximum concessions from a weak Pakistani government.

Ever since the ceasefire offer, political parties have been trying to create a consensus for a roadmap on negotiations with the TTP. To facilitate this, two All-Party Conferences (APCs) were convened.

The first APC was held on 14 February 2013 by the Awami National Party (ANP), a secular Pakhtun nationalist party and former ruler of the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. The second APC was convened on 28 February 2013 in Islamabad by the right wing Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F). Both conferences supported peace talks with the Taliban. However, the TTP rejected the former as an election stunt and accepted the latter. Notwithstanding their acceptance of TTP's peace offers, Pakistani political parties do not have a clear strategy and vision for conducting peace

talks. At the same time, the powerful military establishment has also distanced itself from the two APCs.

Before looking at the pros and cons of the recent peace offer by the Pakistani Taliban, it is worth mentioning that previous peace agreements failed to restore peace in the restive tribal regions along the Pak-Afghan border. Major peace agreements in the past include: the Shakai Agreement in 2004, Sararogha Agreement in 2005, Miranshah Agreement in 2006 and Swat Peace Agreement in 2009. These agreements were directly negotiated by the Pakistani military except in the case of Swat which was negotiated by the ANP through Maulana Sufi Muhammad. Furthermore, these accords were signed by the government from a position of weakness and the militants gained significant concessions as a result of them. The government was unable to enforce its demand to disarm the militants and enforce its writ in Taliban-dominated areas. As a result, the Taliban further strengthened its grip over the regions it dominated and expanded to settled parts of the KP province.

Taliban Demands and Offers

Initially, the ceasefire offer came from Asmatullah Muawiya, chief of the Punjabi Taliban, in a letter to a well-known Geo News journalist and news anchor Salim Safi. Muawiya demanded Shariah law in Pakistan's constitution and asked the government to withdraw its support for the US-led War on Terror in Afghanistan. In return, the TTP would negotiate with the Pakistani government.

On 3 February 2013 in a videotaped message, TTP's central spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan confirmed the demands forwarded by Muawiya, and said his group was ready for meaningful negotiation with the government. Ehsan's video message was followed up by another message from the TTP chief Hakeemullah Mehsud. Reiterating the offer for peace talks he said: "we believe in dialogue, but it should be taken seriously. TTP will not lay down weapons and its jihad in Pakistan will continue until the existing system is replaced with Shariah."

The TTP has also proposed three national political leaders – the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Nawaz Sharif, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) head Syed Munawar Hasan – as guarantors to ensure that the government honors any peace deal that is inked. TTP also demanded that the government release Taliban leaders Haji Muslim Khan (the former TTP spokesman for Swat), Maulvi Omar (former central spokesman for the TTP) and Mahmud

Khan (senior Taliban commander in Swat) as a first step towards the peace talks. However, the government has rejected the TTP's demands to release their top leaders. Commentators and policy makers doubt the seriousness of the TTP's ceasefire offer and see the move as an attempt to buy time and avoid military operations due to public pressure. The TTP has lost public support in Pakistani tribal areas due to its attacks on the civilian population.

Challenges Posed by Peace Talks with the Taliban

Firstly, the Taliban have often used peace deals as a tactic to regroup and reorganize. They then wait to find a convenient time to break the truce and strike back against the state with greater strength. Many analysts believe that the current offer of peace negotiations by TTP is actually a ruse to allow it to regroup and reorganize in those areas where it has lost control after successful military operations.



TTP Spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan (L) released a taped message in February 2013 confirming an offer for talks.

Photo credit: AFP

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/502342/ending-conflict-taliban-name-three-guarantors-for-peace-talks/>

Secondly, the TTP is not a unified group and is reportedly divided into several different factions. The current TTP chief Hakeemullah Mehsud does not have complete control over the entire group. Therefore, a peace deal with one group will not mean that the rest of the Taliban groups will accept it.

Thirdly, talking with the Taliban would legitimize its terrorist activities in the past which have left more than 50,000 people killed or injured, including prominent public leaders and security personnel. More importantly, peace talks with the Taliban sends a message to local people that the TTP leadership is strong enough to negotiate with Pakistan's top government officials. Consequently, the TTP becomes stronger and boosts its image at the local level. Furthermore, negotiations would suppress the anti-Taliban voice in the restive regions where TTP operate in and encourages their own sympathizers.

Fourthly, there is a strong ideological and operational nexus among the TTP, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Al Qaeda and other local and foreign militants outfits based in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). These militant groups have conducted several terrorist attacks in Pakistan and consequently, accepting the TTP's demands would amount to an admission of defeat by the state.

Finally, the Taliban will not lay down its arms even after the peace accords. This is because it has killed prominent tribal elders and community leaders in the localities in which it operates, and the Pashtun tribal code, or *Pashtunwali*, calls for revenge which locals would most likely take once the militants become disarmed. According to *Pashtunwali*, a Pashtun lives by four things: *nang* (honor), *badal* (revenge), *turah* (bravery) and *milmastiya* (hospitality), therefore the militants would not surrender their arms despite amnesty from the government. For instance, Ibni Amin,

TTP Swat Chapter's top operational commander, refused to disarm for the same reason after the peace agreement in Swat in 2009.

The Way Forward

It has been noted that the Taliban will not lay down its arms and those who think peace talks would create a path to peace are mistaken. The TTP is against the notion of a Pakistani state and presents a threat to national sovereignty. Also, it has expanded its control beyond FATA and has active terrorist cells across the country, particularly in the province of Punjab and port city of Karachi. Peace talks are thus not the appropriate solution to restore peace in the country.

Instead, peace talks would provide an opportunity for the militants to reorganize and strike back with more strength. A military operation is a more appropriate strategy as the military has successfully cleared some parts in the northwest of Pakistan, including Orakzai Agency, South Waziristan Agency and Malakand division in KP.

In a statement at the Military Academy in Kakul on 14 August 2012 - Pakistan's National Day - Pakistani Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani said that "no state can afford a parallel system or a militant force." The Pakistani military has also realized that the internal security threat is the primary challenge posed to national security, a thinking that has been reflected in amendments to Pakistan's army doctrine manual, the Green Book. However, the military needs political will as well as public support to conduct a successful military operation against the TTP. To achieve any progress, the political and military leadership needs to work together in order to completely defeat Taliban militancy in Pakistan.

—
Arshad Ali is an Analyst with ICPVTR.

The Expansion of Sectarian Conflict in Pakistan

Abdul Basit

Sectarian violence has entered a growth phase in Pakistan and is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

The dynamics of the inter- and intra-sectarian landscape in Pakistan are changing. The first three months of 2013 have already witnessed an intensification of sectarian violence across the country: two suicide attacks against the ethnic Hazra Shia community in Quetta on 9 January and 16 February respectively; the bombing of a Shia neighborhood in Karachi on 4 March; the targeted killing of a Shia surgeon Dr. Syed Ali Haider along with his 12-year old son in Lahore on 19 February; the bombing of the Ghulam Shah Ghazi shrine in Sindh's Shikarpur district on 4 March and the assault on a Brelvi mosque Masjid-e-Chishtia in Peshawar on 9 March. These events have occurred in the backdrop of an expanding radical social milieu, pervasive insecurity emanating from the volatile border region with Afghanistan and a highly divisive political atmosphere. The factors that have contributed to this situation are analyzed here at four different levels: structural, ideological, operational and regional.

The Structural Level

In Pakistan, sectarian conflict has constantly interacted with broader issues concerning the place of Islam in public life. Pakistani nationalism has generally been majoritarian in nature and based on an Islamic identity. Since Pakistan is a Sunni-majority Muslim country, its Islamic identity has inadvertently tended to tilt towards the majority sect, and this has sown seeds of sectarian discord since the time of Pakistan's creation. Islamic politics in Pakistan is also sectarian both in conception and orientation, thus Islamization has also meant more sectarianism.

With the exception of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), almost all Islamic parties and groups in Pakistan are based in specific sects and sub-sects.

The rise of sectarian conflict is also closely linked to religious education in Pakistan. Religious seminaries in Pakistan operate on a strictly sectarian basis and continue to impart education along sectarian lines. Madrassas generate the main constituencies of religious political parties, jihadi groups and sectarian militant organizations, who look to them to expand their support bases. Madrassas have thus had a great impact on the strength and salience of sectarian organizations and Islamic parties in Pakistan.



Women from the Shia Hazara community protesting against the 16 February 2013 bombing in Quetta.

Photo credit: Reuters
<http://tribune.com.pk/story/508889/hazara-town-blast-quetta-mourns/>

Furthermore, pervasive “blame games” and divisions among political parties account for the surge in sectarian violence as well. During the past five years, parties across the political spectrum have been seen appeasing banned sectarian militant organizations for petty political interests. For instance, the ruling Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) continued blaming the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PLM-N) for being soft on the leadership of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) and its militant offshoot Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) in the Punjab province. The former Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah was seen with the head of ASWJ, Haji Ahmed Ludhyanvi during a by-election campaign in the Jahng district. Similarly, there were allegations that PPP’s information secretary and former Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamr Zaman Kaira won his seat in the 2008 parliamentary elections with the blessings of the ASWJ.



Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) leader Malik Ishaq was detained after LeJ claimed responsibility for the February 2013 Quetta bombing.

Photo credit: Reuters

<http://dawn.com/2013/02/23/3197270/>

The rising tide of sectarian violence is also linked to the absence of a coherent long-term strategy to address the issue of sectarianism. The strategies the state employs are reactive and can best be described as a “fire-fighting” approach. The policy of banning sectarian organizations has not succeeded as they have reappeared under new names. Thus despite government bans, terrorist infrastructure has remained intact and its capacity to carry out attacks has remained unaffected.

The inability of police and the intelligence agencies to pre-empt and investigate sectarian crimes has also contributed to an increase in violent sectarian attacks. Police investigations are hampered by the absence of modern technology, forensics, DNA analysis, electronic data and poorly trained individuals working with obsolete tools.

Pakistan’s criminal justice system has a low conviction rate of five to ten percent. 75 percent of terrorists are acquitted due to lack of evidence among other reasons. Weak prosecution cases filed by the police often fail to hold up in court. Judges and prosecutors trying major terrorist cases lack the necessary protection to resist threats and pressure. Several judges and prosecutors have abandoned cases after receiving death threats in writing. Witnesses have been intimidated by the terrorists to retract statements or avoid testifying in court. Families of the victims have been threatened to withdraw cases from courts as well.

The Ideological Level

The triple alliance of Al Qaeda, LeJ and the Pakistani Taliban has transformed sectarian militant groups into subscribers of the global jihadist agenda, which has in turn been supplemented by an anti-Pakistan agenda. Furthermore, Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban have become anti-Shia. With the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi

became active in the country and proactively inflamed sectarian tensions as a tactic. Civilian population in Shia and Sunni neighborhoods were targeted to aggravate inter-sectarian relations. Sacred Shia pilgrimage sites, like the shrine of Imam Moussa Al-Kazim, were targeted. In 2006, Al Qaeda implemented its strategy in Iraq of fueling sectarian tensions in Pakistan as well.

The Operational Level

The ready availability of lethal weapons has taken sectarian violence to new heights. Manufacturing of small arms in the Pakistani tribal areas and their smuggling across the country has also buttressed sectarian violence in Pakistan.

Though sectarian differences existed between Deobandis and Shias prior to the Afghan jihad, they were less violent than what is being seen now. Most of the tensions are related to the disruption of Shia mourning processions commemorating the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandson Hussain in the 6th century during Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar.

The nexus between Al Qaeda and Pakistani Taliban-supported Sunni sectarian groups in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is also an important factor in the reshaping of Pakistan's sectarian conflicts. In 2002, the government of former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf banned sectarian outfits and launched a nationwide crackdown against them under international pressure. As a result, several activists and leaders of the Sunni-Deobandi sectarian groups fled to FATA.

Relocation of the Sunni sectarian groups to FATA coincided with the retreat of Al Qaeda remnants to the same area in the wake of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of the

Pakistani Taliban. This created a win-win situation for Al Qaeda and the Sunni sectarian groups. Both were facing a common challenge of survival and resurrection against a common enemy – the Pakistani state and its army – and both received space to operate in and generous support of the Pakistani Taliban in FATA to recuperate. For the Pakistani Taliban, Al Qaeda and the Sunni sectarian groups provided them expertise in bomb-making and the creation of training camps for suicide bombing, as well as financial assistance.

The Regional Level

Pakistan is a Sunni-majority Muslim country which also houses the second largest number of Shias in the world after Iran. Thirty million Shias live in Pakistan, accounting for approximately 15-20 percent of Pakistan's overall population.

Pakistan also shares a border with Iran, which has been actively involved in mobilizing, arming and financing various Shia movements in the country. In retaliation, Saudi Arabia has been patronizing Sunni groups to curtail Iranian influence. After the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, if Pakistan fails to check the rising sectarian violence, there are stronger chances of another episode of a Saudi Arabia-Iran proxy war on Pakistani soil.

Sectarian militancy has outlived the Afghan jihad of the 1980s, the Kashmir jihad of the 1990s and continues to thrive in the post-9/11 era. It is more dangerous than any other form of militancy as it involves mainstream religious communities and threatens to radicalize greater segments of the Pakistani population. Since the traditional discourse on sectarianism is changing in Pakistan, new ways and strategies will be required to counter it.

Abdul Basit is a Senior Analyst with ICPVTR.

Drifting Apart? Indo-Lanka Relations Examined

Manoj Harjani

Relations between Sri Lanka and India may be in choppy waters, but the notion that the two countries are drifting apart does not do justice to the complexities of their bilateral relationship.

India and Sri Lanka have a long relationship that both countries have described as a close and cordial one. Yet in recent times there has been much speculation over whether the two neighbours are drifting apart. Those who believe this argue that India is aligning towards the US and Sri Lanka towards China, often citing as evidence the higher level of investment that China has made in key development projects in Sri Lanka since the end of the war. It is true that India is now viewed as an important US partner in the region and that China's involvement in Sri Lanka has expanded and deepened in recent years, but the web of relations in the region is far too complex to be subsumed to such a simplistic explanation.

In the first place, Sri Lanka and China have enjoyed cordial relations since the 1950s and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has debunked the notion that the country is part of a so-called "string of pearls" designed by China to choke Indian maritime interests in its backyard;

the Hambantota Port project was, after all, offered to the Indians first.

Some point to India's reticence to get directly involved in Eelam War IV as the primary causal factor for the current state of Indo-Lanka relations. They argue that relations cooled off when India did not provide overt assistance to Sri Lanka as it fought its final battle against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 2006 to 2009. However this claim must be viewed in light of the fact that India provided valuable intelligence and was regularly consulted by Colombo as the Sri Lankan security forces pressed northward after securing the east in 2007. The so-called vacuum created by a lack of overt involvement, which some commentators have said was filled by China and Pakistan, is an exaggeration. India did play its part largely behind the scenes, but it was nevertheless an important factor in the decision-making process in Colombo. Furthermore, the expansion of weapons and ammunition supplies to Sri Lanka



Sri Lankan and Chinese workers at the construction site of the now operational Hambantota Port.

Photo credit: Andrew Caballero-Reynolds, Reuters.

<http://www.rediff.com/news/slide-show/slide-show-1-dmk-pushing-sri-lanka-deeper-into-the-hands-of-china/20130325.htm#1>

and increased military cooperation with China and Pakistan was a development that evolved out of a practical necessity to cater to the needs of a Sri Lankan military that was highly motivated to defeat the LTTE. With arms, ammunition and equipment supplies drying up from traditional western sources, Sri Lanka did what it had to in order to defeat the LTTE and this was understood by India.

In the post-war environment, reconciliation emerged at the forefront of Indo-Lanka relations. India supported the Sri Lankan government's range of initiatives to promote reconciliation, and made significant contributions towards reconstruction and resettlement in the former war zone through funding the rebuilding of the Pallai-Kankesanthurai railway line and rehabilitating the Kankesanthurai Harbour. Furthermore, the Indian Housing Project, which completed its first phase of 1,000 houses in August 2012, began its second phase in October 2012. In March 2013, India donated 10,000 bicycles to Internally-Displaced Persons (IDPs), the latest in a series of donations to uplift socioeconomic conditions of individuals in the former war zone. India has also extended significant support to help develop the initiative launched in 2012 to make Sri Lanka a trilingual society by 2020.

However, where political reconciliation is concerned, the Indian government has not looked beyond what was envisaged under the Indo-Lanka Accord in 1987. The Accord paved the way for the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, which resulted in a limited devolution of power to the provinces. India has faced an uphill task in pushing for full implementation of the 13th Amendment since the war ended in 2009, but this has yet to motivate it to look for alternative solutions.

In addition to Delhi's constant nudges failing to have an impact in Colombo, the state government in Tamil Nadu has grown restive and

become a bastion of anti-Lankan sentiment. The issue of fishermen has particularly generated much controversy, with regular arrests of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy when they illegally enter Sri Lankan waters. However, despite repeated arrests and diplomatic back-and-forth, including a Joint Working Group that met in March 2011 and January 2012, the incidents continue. Moreover, politicians in Tamil Nadu claim the Sri Lankan Navy is deliberately using a heavy-handed approach. In fact, in March 2013, after the arrest of 53 fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, Tamil Nadu politicians disrupted proceedings in both houses of parliament.

Furthermore, many politicians in Tamil Nadu continue to prop up the cause for a separate state for Sri Lankan Tamils. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) President M. Karunanidhi's Tamil Eelam Supporters Organisation (TESO), which was revived in April 2012, has been particularly active in bringing the pro-Eelam lobby in Tamil Nadu together. The Sri Lankan government has repeatedly requested its counterpart in Delhi to crack down on LTTE infrastructure in Tamil Nadu. The southern Indian state was the main sanctuary for the LTTE before it assassinated Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. In fact, in December 2012, a LTTE bomb-making cell was detected and disrupted. The various LTTE factions also continue to maintain links with their long-time political benefactors in Tamil Nadu to ensure that the voice of their cause continues to be heard.

In the run-up to the 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council (UNHRC), several developments brought the existing dynamics described thus far to a flash point. The BBC's Channel 4 released a new documentary on war crimes in Sri Lanka to coincide with the 22nd Session, titled "No Fire Zone: In the Killing Fields of Sri Lanka", which created a furore in Tamil Nadu over pictures that apparently showed Velupillai Prabhakaran's son Balachandran in Sri Lankan military custody hours before he was allegedly killed by the



Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Leader M. Karunanidhi (L) has been a key figure in the anti-Sri Lanka lobby in Tamil Nadu.

Source: Deccan Chronicle

[http://](http://www.deccanchronicle.com/130326/news-politics/article/dmk-condemns-mlas%E2%80%99-ouster)

[www.deccanchronicle.com/13032](http://www.deccanchronicle.com/130326/news-politics/article/dmk-condemns-mlas%E2%80%99-ouster)

[6/news-politics/article/dmk-condemns-mlas%E2%80%99-ouster](http://www.deccanchronicle.com/130326/news-politics/article/dmk-condemns-mlas%E2%80%99-ouster)

military. India's External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, however, commented that India could not vouch for the authenticity of the pictures and reiterated that Delhi remained keen to engage the Sri Lankan government which it considered an important neighbour.

Furthermore, TESO conducted a seminar to coincide with the 22nd UNHRC session that was attended by members of Congress. During the seminar, Congress made clear that it did not support the cause for a separate state, although this is somewhat at odds with the fact that the event was hosted by a group which calls itself supporters of the very same separate state of Eelam. Karunanidhi has in fact claimed that there was a "worrisome" difference in the stances of the Union government and of Congress on the issue of Sri Lankan Tamils and has called on Delhi to clarify its stance. TESO also organised a general strike in Tamil Nadu on 12 March 2013 to pressure the Union government to take a strong stance on Sri Lanka at the UNHRC, but this received a mixed response.

Delhi's quandary is that the unprecedented step it took in 2012 by voting on a country-specific resolution failed to achieve the required response in Sri Lanka. It has also been forced to mitigate the constant pressure exerted from

Tamil Nadu, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh calling for Colombo to engage the Sri Lankan Tamil political parties followed by the usual refrain on implementing the 13th Amendment. Caught between an uncompromising stance in Tamil Nadu and a Sri Lankan government determined to make its own way, India stood to lose out regardless of the way it voted on the resolution at the UNHRC.

The calculus of the UPA's odds in the upcoming Lok Sabha (lower house of the Indian Parliament) elections in 2014 has also been altered significantly with the loss of the DMK's membership in the coalition due to dissatisfaction over the way Delhi handled the resolution on Sri Lanka at the UNHRC.

The Opposition, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has not wasted the opportunity either, having taken care to work closely with its allies in South India to promote a tougher stance on Sri Lanka. In statements made in the Lok Sabha's debate on the plight of Sri Lankan Tamils on 7 March 2013, BJP Leader Yashwant Sinha called for the withdrawal of the military from Northern Sri Lanka as part of a seven-point road map. The road map outlines a far harder stance on Sri Lanka than that which has been pursued by the UPA government.

Sri Lanka naturally voiced its desire for Indian support on the US-backed resolution as it did in 2012. Relations between the Rajapaksa government and UPA I and II governments have generally been warm as both sides have attempted to maintain cordial and close ties with frequent interaction and engagement at the highest levels. While it is an exaggeration to say that India's vote in favour of the US-sponsored resolution would push Sri Lanka towards China, it is clear that Sri Lanka's Ministry of External Affairs has pursued an adroit policy of diversifying the country's relations and will continue to do so. In addition to China and Pakistan, Sri Lanka has also engaged Russia and many countries in Africa.

India is likely to continue to face challenges in pushing Sri Lanka towards implementing the 13th Amendment. While the two countries are not drifting apart per se, relations are certainly in choppy waters. What is needed is a fresh approach that takes into account the current direction of the Rajapaksa administration, but whether this will come out of a third UPA government or a BJP government in 2014 remains to be seen. The constant agitation in Tamil Nadu against Sri Lanka and the revival of the TESO with its pro-Eelam outlook will only keep Sri Lanka looking for support elsewhere.

Sri Lanka will always seek to maintain good relations with India, but is likely to be wary of any growing influence of Tamil Nadu politics on the approach of the Union government towards Sri Lanka. For India, it is clear that it must sort out its own backyard before it can project itself as an outward-looking global power. This will become significantly difficult in the coming year not only because of Sri Lanka, but also with uncertainty in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region after the US drawdown from Afghanistan in 2014.

Manoj Harjani is Associate Editor of Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis.

GLOBAL PATHFINDER

Global Pathfinder is a one-stop repository for information on current and emerging terrorist threats.

The database focuses on terrorism and political violence in the Asia-Pacific region – comprising of Southeast Asia, North Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Oceania.

Global Pathfinder is an integrated database containing comprehensive profiles of terrorist groups, key terrorist personalities, terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents as well as terrorist training camps.

It also contains specific details and analyses of significant terrorist attacks in the form of terrorist attack profiles.

For further inquiries regarding subscription and access to the Global Pathfinder database, please email Elena Ho Wei Ling at the following email address: isewlho@ntu.edu.sg

MODERATION STUDIES PROGRAM

In late 2012, ICPVTR introduced its newest initiative, the Moderation Studies Program. The program's objective is to promote and cultivate moderation in society as a moral barrier against extremist ideas.

The program's key activities include: conducting interdisciplinary and multi-perspective study on the concept of moderation, assessing best approaches to promoting moderation and socializing ideas of moderation.

The Moderation Studies Program has also conducted research on representations of moderation in Islam, as well as defining Islamic moderation and its attributes.

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH



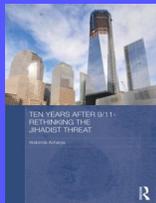
S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University
Block S4, Level B4, Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798
Phone: +65 6316 8925 Fax: +65 6791 1941
Website: www.pvtr.org

The International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) is a specialist center within the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

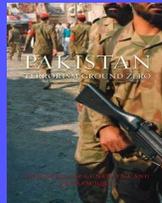
ICPVTR conducts research, training, and outreach programs aimed at reducing the threat of politically motivated violence and at mitigating its effects on the international system. The Center seeks to integrate academic theory with practical knowledge, which is essential for a complete and comprehensive understanding of threats from politically-motivated groups.

The Center is staffed by academic specialists, religious scholars, as well as personnel from the law enforcement, military and intelligence agencies, among others. ICPVTR is culturally and linguistically diverse, comprising of functional and regional analysts as well as Muslim religious scholars from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America.

STAFF PUBLICATIONS



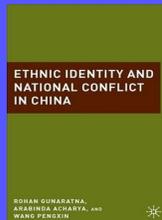
**Ten Years After 9/11–
Rethinking the Jihadist
Threat**
Arabinda Acharya
(Routledge, 2013)



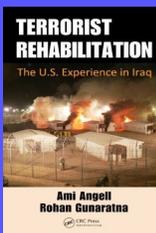
**Pakistan: Terrorism Ground
Zero**
Rohan Gunaratna and
Khurram Iqbal
(Reaktion Books, 2011)



**The Terrorist Threat from
Thailand: Jihad or Quest
for Justice?**
Rohan Gunaratna and
Arabinda Acharya
(Potomac Books, 2013)



**Ethnic Identity and
National Conflict in China**
Rohan Gunaratna,
Arabinda Acharya and
Wang Pengxin
(Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)



**Terrorist Rehabilitation:
The US Experience in
Iraq**
Ami Angeli and
Rohan Gunaratna
(CRC Press, 2011)



**Targeting Terrorist
Financing: International
Cooperation and New
Regimes**
Arabinda Acharya
(Routledge, 2009)