AFGHANISTAN, EDUCATION, AND THE FORMATION OF THE TALIBAN

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis

Submitted by Leigh Nolan

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I. Introduction

In the past half-century alone, Afghanistan has seen the collapse of its monarchy, the installation of a Soviet secular state, a successful Mujahideen insurgency to overthrow the Communist government, debilitating factionalization of Mujahideen clans, the precipitous rise and collapse of the Taliban government, and the installation of Hamid Karzai's fledgling government in the wake of post 9/11 US intervention. Underlying these successive waves of conflict has been an ongoing struggle between secular and religious control of Afghanistan's educational institutions. Control of the education system has been a mobilizing force for the conservative Islamist movement, the socialists, the overthrow of the Soviet government and the subsequent rise to power of the Taliban. This thesis will examine both the symbolic and the substantive role that the education system in Afghanistan has had in precipitating these successive waves of conflict with a particular focus on the madrassa system and its impact on the emergence of the Taliban.

There has been a substantial amount of press coverage linking radical Madrassas to the formation of the Taliban and implying that such institutions of education act as a breeding ground for Islamic extremism. This link between madrassas and a particular extremist ideology merits considerable analysis as it has been cited as a factor with potential influence on the security of the Afghan state, regional stability due to the spread of "radical Islam", and militant extremism in a global context. To properly understand both the negative potential of education to re-entrench conflict, and the positive potential of education in reconstruction and peace building efforts, in Afghanistan it is essential to

bring a historical perspective on the dynamic role that education has played in Afghan society in the twentieth century and the ways in which it continues to evolve.

This thesis links a particular variant of Islamic education to political violence, namely that of the Deobandis school to the formation and rise of the Taliban. Through an analysis of the Madrassa education system and its contribution to the radicalization of the Taliban in Afghanistan, this thesis hopes to provide insight into the structure and philosophy of the educational institutions which contributed to the rise of the Taliban and thus into the strategies of reducing the security threat of such institutions. At the same time this thesis recognizes the complex and crucial role that Madrassas play in both Afghan and Pakistani society. It is only through a thorough understanding and differentiation of extremist Madrassas versus moderate and mainstream Madrassas that steps forward to producing a stable educational system for a reconstructed Afghanistan can be considered.

This thesis has four main parts: the first will examine why education is an important component in security studies, the second explores the role of education in precipitating and feeding conflict in modern Afghanistan, the third examines the connection between the Taliban and Madrassas in Pakistan and the fourth outlines recommendations for future reconstruction and security policy in Afghanistan informed by its educational history. Throughout, the case of Afghanistan will be used to understand the complex inter-relationship between education and conflict and will highlight the importance of education as a "soft" power approach to both security-

building and peace-building missions, while simultaneously addressing the practical limitations to its implementation, particularly in areas of conflict.[1]

II. Security, Education and Peace building:

This section will examine the place of education in a traditional security matrix and review some of the recent literature on education as a component of human security. There is an emerging body of literature on the importance of education in peace-building and conflict prevention which suggests that education is a key component in creating communities and creating stability. However, the institutional aspects of education can also function as a root cause and feeder of conflict, with the potential to retrench ethnic/religious divides and other societal cleavages. This dual nature of education reflects both the positive, or peace building and the negative, or conflict enhancing potential of education. A careful examination of the linkage between education and conflict in Afghanistan demonstrates the ways in which education policies have inadvertently helped to create the conditions for further conflict instead of building a foundation for reconciliation and sustainable peace.[2]

1. Human Security, Education and Peace building

A rigid definition of security which does not include human security neglects the multivariate and complex interdependencies associated with the stability of a state and

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[1] Wayne Nelles, ed., Comparative Education, Terrorism, and Human Security: From Critical Pedagogy to Peace building? (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1.
[2] Alan Smith and Tony Vaux., (2003), Education, Conflict and International Development. London: Department for International Development. INCORE.

society. Human security concepts expand the definition of security threats beyond military threats to such challenges as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, community security and political security.[3] Recent literature, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) includes the concept of human security in a comprehensive assessment of countrywide security. This inclusive view of security is particularly useful when addressing the rise of fundamentalism and feeders of terrorism in intrastate conflicts which have complex social and economic roots which may not be captured in a traditional security matrix. An exploration of the negative relationship between education and conflict can also inform the implementation of the positive peace building aspects of educational institutions to prevent a reoccurrence of violence and lay the ground for reconciliation.

Education plays an essential, but too often overlooked role in relation to conflict prevention, resolution, reconciliation and reconstruction. Education has been cited as a basis for investment in human capital, economic growth and mitigation of conflict.[4] Under this rationale, education should be considered as a non-traditional tool for building security by linking education to the human security framework.[5] Scholars of "nontraditional security threats" have lead to pioneering work in education as a strategy for conflict mitigation and prevention in the last few years. Brad Hayes and Jeffrey Sands authors of "Non-traditional Military Responses to End Wars: Considerations for Policymakers," state:

[3] UNDP, Human Development Report 1994 (New York/Oxford: United Nations Development Programme/Oxford University Press), p. 22-24
[4] L. Axworthy, "Human security and global governance: Putting people first," in *Global Governance, 7*(1), 2001, 19-23.
[5] Working Draft of Dissertation, Ahsiya Posner 2005, Fletcher School by permission of the author

One, final and perhaps surprising, security area is education. Opening schools and getting children (particularly teenagers) off the streets reduces one source of potential instability, and frees their parents to go to work. School attendance also gives children hope for the future and provides them an alternative to joining factional militias.[6]

By enhancing opportunities for students and providing a civic curriculum, education can act as a unifying force for nation-building. Education is also increasingly recognized as an essential component of peace-building. The goal of peace-building is to strengthen the capacity of societies to manage conflict without violence so as to achieve sustainable human security. This civil-military coordination has become a common and necessary tool for successful peace operations and interventions, demonstrating that human security's multi-dimensional approach is effectively targeting the connection, priorities and creating the space for hope needed for mitigating complex conflict situations.[7]

While international organizations such as UNHCR, UNESCO and UNDP are increasingly prioritizing educational infrastructure in post-conflict development contexts, the connection between education and security is just beginning to gain attention. This thesis argues for a cross-disciplinary perspective on security that includes incorporating human security factors such as education into consideration when analyzing feeders of political violence.[8] This analysis extends from the emergency provision of education in refugee contexts to the structure of education reform in a post-Taliban Afghanistan.

2. Education and Conflict:

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[6] Hayes, Brand and Sands, Jeffrey, "Non-traditional Military Responses to End Wars: Considerations for Policymakers," Millennium: Journal of International Studies (1997). p. 827

[7] Posner, Ahsiya, Working Draft Fletcher Dissertation, 2005, by permission of the author.

[8] Williams, Christopher, "Education and Human Survival: The Relevance of the Global Security Framework to International Education," International Review of Education, Vol. 46, nos. 3 -4, 2000, p. 183 – 203

Education can act not only as a peace building element but as both a precipitant and

underlying condition of conflict.

> *'Prejudiced children are more likely to be moralistic, to dichotomize the world, to externalize conflict, and to have a higher need of definiteness.…Under conditions of inter-ethnic tension and conflict, such characteristics unavoidably find their way into the classroom and must be taken account if the peace destroying impact of education is to be minimized.'*
> Bush and Saltarelli (2000)

A recent UNICEF study highlights some of the negative aspects of education in relation

to conflict.[9]

- The use of education as a weapon in cultural repression of minorities, denying them access to education, or using education to suppress their language, traditions, art forms, religious practices and cultural values.
- Segregated education such as the apartheid system in South Africa that served to maintain inequality between groups within society.
- The denial of education as a weapon of war, for example, through the forced closure of schools for Palestinian children by Israel during the Intifada.
- The manipulation of history and textbooks for political purposes, particularly where government defines the 'national story'.
- The inculcation of attitudes of superiority, for example, in the way that other peoples or nations are described, and the characteristics that are ascribed to them.
- The likelihood that many of these negative practices are in addition to gender-based discrimination and practices prevalent in conflict environments.[10]

The UNICEF study draws attention to the role of education in political and social

processes, and therefore implies an active rather than passive role for education in relation

to conflict. Aspects of education with the potential to exacerbate conflict may be deeply

embedded in state-provided education and taken for granted. Therefore an analysis of the

relationship between education and conflict needs to not only be a central and consistent

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[9] Bush, K and Saltarelli, D (2000) The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, p.3.

[10] Bush, K and Saltarelli, D (2000) The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, p.5.

feature of all education sector planning and development but a primary consideration in state security and stability planning. In the case of Afghanistan, the rise of Deobandis Madrassas, which promoted radical Islamism in connection to political Jihad, can be tied to the increase funding of such schools during the Afghan war against the Soviets. As will be discussed later in this thesis, U.S. and Pakistani support of violently anti-Communist Islamist ideology in Afghan refugee schools in Pakistan has had lasting consequences on both the stability of Afghanistan and the spread of the ideology of global jihad.

3. Education and Security:

The importance of human security concerns in the field of security studies has gained prominence after 9/11 terrorist attacks on U.S. soil and the subsequent U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and reconstruction effort. Traditional security tools such as military intervention and domestic security measures such as tightened borders are not adequate to deal with the emerging threats of global terrorism, failed states and widespread hatred of the West in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Since the Vietnam War the "hearts and minds" strategy has been an integral component in complex military interventions. After 9/11, the security dialogue shifted to re-embrace this multifaceted notion of security, recognizing that an under girder of the "hearts and minds" approach are institutions that support and sway public opinion. It is in this context that a focused analysis of the relations between educational infrastructure and Islamic extremism in Afghanistan is particularly valuable. The connection of institutions which encourage a particular form of political violence in service of extremist ideologies has obvious implications for future strategies in the war on terror. The scope

and magnitude of the influence of extremist madrassas on the "hearts and minds" of the populace is an especially important factor in security considerations as an inadequate response risks re-entrenchment, while an overzealous top-down approach risks inflaming moderates.

In the 2002 *National Security Strategy* President Bush indicated a shift in the US' security strategy, from one of primarily defense, to one of prevention/preemption.[11] The security strategy specifically highlighted the emerging nexus of terrorism and failed states as necessitating a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to security. As a first step in this direction, the Bush administration committed to increase development aid by 50% and to specifically "emphasize education"[12] in its allocation of development resources. This language signaled the recognition of a more flexible and holistic view of security which embraces human security concerns as one of the fundamental pillars of prevention.

The dynamic and incendiary nature of education to the stability of the Afghan state has been a continuing factor throughout the past century. Such a complex, and crucial variable which affects state security does not lend itself to military intervention, but rather depends upon the careful analysis of the historic role education has played in Afghan society and the factors which led to its role in the incubation of Islamic extremism and the rise of the Taliban. In the case of Afghanistan, it was not only the absence of a functioning centralized and moderate education system which was a contributing factor to the growth of the Taliban, but also the availability and pull of

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[11] Wayne Nelles, ed., Comparative Education, Terrorism, and Human Security: From Critical Pedagogy to Peace building? (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 16
[12] White House, National Security Strategy of the United States of America (September 17, 2002), http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html.

extremist madrassas which acted as a substitute education system in the refugee camps in Pakistan.

In a field strewn with difficult conflicts, it is meaningful that Afghanistan is often referred to as the hard case. Afghanistan's documented history of tension between a modernizing education system and violent popular backlash to state control over provincial/community based religious education provides valuable insight into the difficulties and dangers involved not only in a laissez-faire approach to educational institutions, but the difficulties inherent in providing tangible and realistic alternatives in weak states with a small, but committed reactionary group.

III.   Afghanistan Background

The legacy of Afghanistan is one of ethnic, religious and linguistic division. To understand the importance of the educational system in Afghanistan, it is essential to examine the longstanding ethnic, ideological and regional influences that underlay so much of Afghanistan's turbulent history and how this legacy contributed to the formation of the Taliban.

The dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan is the Pashtuns who are concentrated in Southeastern Afghanistan. The Pushtun population extends on both sides of Afghanistan's border with Pakistan, with approximately as many Pushtuns in the North-West Frontier Province as on the Afghan side of the border. This division of the Pashtun population has been a longstanding destabilizing force in region, especially during the refugee flows of the 1980's in which hundreds of thousands of Afghani Pashtuns flowed

across the border into Pakistan. The Pashtun language, Pashto, is linguistically distinct from Dari, the dialect of Persian spoken elsewhere in the country.[13] As the Taliban are seen as emerging from a Pashtun dominated region, it is important to note that there are also significant cultural differences among the various groups and regions throughout Afghanistan. The Pashtuns are tribal and adhere to high traditional codes of conduct, which govern relationships both within the family, community, and towards outsiders. There is also an emphasis on clan-based consensus through local consensual decision making structures known as jirgas. The culture and structure of the Taliban will be explored at greater length later in the paper, but this valuation of consensus and strong clan ties makes for a fairly cohesive identity and force grouping.[14]

Northern Afghanistan is composed of three main ethnic groups: the Turkoman population, the Uzbek population and the Tajiks. Each of these ethnic groups also has a degree of identification with ethnic kin in their respective nations: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as well as Turkey. In comparison with the Pashtuns in the North, the Shi'a Hazara population in the central provinces, while conservative, is much less rigid in terms of prescription of behavior. The Hazara structure of community also places a greater emphasis on hierarchy and individualism in comparison to the Pushtun consensual decision-making structures. There is also more of an emphasis on the nuclear as opposed to the extended family or clan.[15] In Mazar and Heart, the population is generally more urban in character and less conservative, although the rural areas surrounding the city are themselves fairly conservative.

13 Marsden, Peter, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan,* Zed Books, London, 2002, p. 9
[14] Parvanta, Angela. "Afghanistan-Land of the Afghans? On the Genesis of a Problematic State Denomination." Edited by Christine Noelle-Karimi, Conrad Schetter, Reinhard Schlagintweit. *Afghanistan- A Country Without a State?* IKO-Verlag fur Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2002
[15] Marsden, Peter, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan*, Zed Books, London, 2002, p. 10

Throughout the twentieth century, ethnic, religious and tribal divisions have interacted to create an ever-shifting landscape of allegiances and power dynamics amongst the different regions and groups. While the feuds and attempts to power of the various clans are beyond the scope of this paper, what should be noted is that Afghanistan has never been a monolithic state. Rather, regionalism has dominated the country's discourse and path, with attempts to reform and centralize Afghanistan being met with hostility and rebellion. A microcosm of the failed attempts to unify Afghanistan under an ideology be it nationalist or Islamic can be seen in the legacy of Kabul. Kabul as the capital of Afghanistan has quite literally been battered by successive waves of modernism, ultra-traditional, liberalism, Soviet-Style socialism, and strict theocracy. The transformation of Kabul can be seen as a magnifying glass of the divisions that have rocked the country in the second half of the 20th century.

1. Education and Reform in Afghanistan pre-WWII:

Throughout the 20th century there have been successive waves of both liberal reform and reactive traditionalist movements in Afghanistan. In the main power struggles of 20th century Afghanistan, control over the education system was viewed as a key to consolidating and enforcing control over a highly fractionalized state. Since the early reform attempts of Ammunallah Khan in the 20th century, education has been used to impart particular political ideologies among the rural and urban populace. Subsequent reformers such as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the Islamist parties of the Mujahideen have all tried to shape the political and ideological terrain of Afghanistan by pushing through reforms and/or religious mandates via the institutions of

education. These attempts have been met in turn with various degrees of resistance and rebellion. In this context, the Taliban are the most recent in a long series of groups to attempt to unify Afghanistan under an imposed system of educational strictures.

One of the first reformers of the 20th century was Amanullah who ascended to the throne after the assassination of his father, Habibullah in 1919. Habibullah had been remarkably successful at balancing both British and Russian imperial interests and in maintaining Afghanistan's independence. Shortly after taking power, Amanullah declared war on Britain and eventually succeeded in gaining Afghanistan's independence from British intervention through the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi, which stated that Afghanistan was free to conduct its own foreign affairs.[16] King Amunallah immediately moved to establish diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union, the United States and various European countries.

After consolidating power and wrenching away foreign control from the British, King Amanullah embarked upon a sweeping program of reform and modernization. During a seven-month tour of Europe in 1928, King Amunallah was inspired by Europe's progressive societal reforms and technological modernization. Amanullah, developed telephone links between Afghanistan's cities and became convinced that the future of Afghanistan depended upon the modernization of the country's ancient tribal and cultural norms. Universal education, the emancipation of women, and the separation of church and state were the bedrocks of his modernization initiative.[17] In particular, Amunallah insisted that the Ulema's, or religious leaders, control over education through the informal network of religious schools- madrassas- was acting as a barrier to modern

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[16] Marsden, Peter, The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan, Zed Books, London, 2002, p. 15
[17] M.J. Gohari; The Taliban Ascent to Power, Oxford University Press, Oxford England, 2000, p. 6

technological progress of the sort that was occurring in Europe. Amunallah would be the first in a long series of liberal reformers in Afghanistan who would seek to impose reform, especially secular education reform, uniformly throughout Afghanistan's disparate regions.

Against his military commanders' advice that the military forces should be strengthened before undertaking a countrywide program of reform, Amanullah pushed his ambitious modernization plan for Afghanistan ahead, ignoring the signs of unrest in the conservative countryside. The outrage of religious leaders and tribal leaders coalesced when Amanullah attempted to legislate and impose western dress codes and co-education. An opposition brigand named the Baccha-I-Saddaq emerged to take control of the Afghan government, and Amunallah's forces, unable to withstand the armed rebellion of the traditionalist opposition forces from the North, fled into exile. [18]

Muhammad Nadir Khan, a former commander in Amanullah's army who had opposed plans for the rapid reform of Afghan society, ascended to power backed by moderate traditionalist opponents to Amunallah's regime. Mindful of Amanullah's legacy, but cognizant that a move towards modernization was necessary, Muhammad Nadir Khan moved to both strengthen the army and undertake only gradual reforms that would not arouse the suspicion or ire of the ultra-traditionalists in rural Pashtun regions.

In 1931, Muhammad Nadir Khan assembled a loya jirga, a formalized meeting of the tribes, to recommend and introduce a constitution for Afghanistan.[19] The constitution proved to be a careful balancing of both the religious interests of the Ulema and a

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[18] M.J. Gohari; The Taliban Ascent to Power, Oxford University Press, Oxford England, 2000, p. 7
[19] Noelle-Karimi, Christine. "The Loya Jirga-An Effective Political Instrument? A Historical Overview," Edited by Christine Noelle-Karimi, Conrad Schetter, Reinhard Schlagintweit. *Afghanistan-A Country Without a State?* IKO-Verlag fur Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2002

controlled move towards a secular rule of law. The loya jirga constitution decreed that Shari' a law of Sunni Islam would be the prevailing legal code in the newly reconstituted Afghanistan, but added the provision that both the secular and the religious legal systems would operated in parallel.[20] While this was a far cry from the sweeping vision of Amanullah, the constitutional acknowledgment of the legitimacy of both secular and religious legal systems laid a foundation upon which reformers could build. By acknowledging the legitimacy of both Shari'a law in the legal code as well as secular jurisprudence the constitution would also leave the question of ascendancy unresolved, creating a precondition for the religious and secular tensions of the decades to come.

2. Modern Education Reform

Traditional education in Afghanistan was provided at home, in mosques, in informal schools associated with mosques and in madrassas, which were formal religious schools.[21] This traditional and decentralized system of education co-existed with an increasingly secular and state controlled public education system in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1931, the Constitution formed under Muhamed Nadir Khan made primary education compulsory for all Afghan children and placed the supervision of all schools under the authority of the central government. However, the reach of the central government remained weak and the educational mandates of the constitution were not fully realized until the establishment of the Republic of Afghanistan under the communist regime of the 1970's. In 1973 the new constitution of the Republic of Afghanistan stipulated that the provision of public compulsory primary education, and the

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[20] Marsden, Peter, The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan, Zed Books, London, 2002, p. 20
[21] Samady, Saif, "Education and Afghan Society in the Twentieth Century," *UNESCO*, Paris, November 2001, p 28

development of free secondary, vocational and higher education for the training of scientific and technical personnel was essential to the advancement of the nation of Afghanistan.[22] This decry was more than mere words, the new communist government made its reform of the education one of its top priorities in its modernization push.

From the first modernization efforts of King Amunallah and the rise to power of the Taliban, control over the education system became synonymous with control over Afghanistan. After WWII and the creation of the state of Pakistan, Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union on both an economic and an ideological level were forged. Muhammad Daoud Kahn, who served as prime minister under King Zahir Shah from 1953-1963, re-championed the process of liberal reforms that had essentially ceased upon the death of Amanullah Kahn. Daoud sought to make a sweeping gesture of support for liberal reforms, backed by an army newly strengthened by Soviet support. In 1959, Daoud and senior members of government found the opportunity for such a gesture when they appeared at a public political event with their wives and daughters unveiled, unequivocally announcing to the people of Afghanistan the government's commitment to secular reforms.[23] Much like the reaction to Amanullah's reforms, traditionalist religious forces responded with riots and acts of resistance in the North. Daoud, backed by a newly strengthened army, quickly suppressed protests from the traditionalists' quadrants and moved full steam ahead with his socialist reform agenda. As Prime Minister, Daoud flexed his political muscle and sherparded the introduction of women into the modern workforce and advocated co-education. The reaction to Daoud's reforms was vehement

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[22] Ibid, p. 30
[23] Marsden, Peter, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan*, New York: Zed Books, 2002, p. 20-25

in traditionalist strongholds such as the Pushtun regions, with rioters targeting girls' schools, a women's public bathhouse and a cinema as symbols of foreign corruption.

King Zahir Shah not only supported Daoud's progressive reforms but also took them a step further with the creation of the Constitutional Advisory Committee. The Constitutional Advisory Committee included both men and women and was tasked with revising the constitution to give legal equality to both women and men and precedence of the secular legal system over Shari' a law, upsetting the prior ambiguity established in the 1931 constitution.[24] Zahir Shah also expanded the primary and secondary education system as well as the public university system. Educational establishments were centers of influence that challenged the authority of the mosque. The king hoped that the secular education system would act as unifying force for the creation of a nationalist ideology, and limiting the emphasis on Islamic studies to a corollary instead of central tenet of education. A separate benefit of the system was the pragmatic promotion of technical education, which was seen as the key to progress. By the 1960's, ninety percent of all secular school graduates were employed by the expanding government. [25]

This expansion of the educational opportunities available to students led to a marked increase in the student population at the universities, especially the premiere Kabul University. This new generation of students came from all parts of Afghanistan and the diversity of backgrounds was reflected in the sharp campus divisions between those who wished to speed the reforms and those who opposed the imposition of what was called a western value system on an Islamic populace. Kabul University became a hot bed for the secular and religious tensions that were straining the nation as both the

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[24] Ibid. p. 22
[25] http://countrystudies.us/afghanistan/71.htm

radical Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the seeds of the

reactionary Islamist movement were sown among the student population. The PDPA

drew mostly on students from the Institute for the Sciences, while the religious opposition

drew from the humanities and theological study departments at Kabul University.[26]

As both the socialist and the Islamic parties grew in strength, the unrest in the

country became palpable. Daoud emboldened by internal socialist support, deposed King

Zahir Shah in July 1973. Daoud attempted to maintain a moderate pace of reform and

looked to moderates in the PDPA and the army for his power base. However, the pace of

Daoud's liberal reforms was seen as too cautious by the radical wing of the PDPA. The

radical wing of the PDPA orchestrated a coup, likely with Soviet backing.[27] After

assuming power, the PDPA's radical orientation and its purges of opponents instigated

one of the first massive waves of Afghan refugees to Pakistan. The PDPA, which

ignored the lessons of earlier attempts to impose rapid reforms on Afghan society,

undertook a massive and rapid program of communist reforms. The reforms imposed a

ceiling on landholdings, set a minimum age for marriage, and most significantly

embarked upon a nation wide literacy campaign through the promotion of a universal

secular education program aimed at both men and women of all ages. It was this

imposition of a uniform education system with no regard for the separate education of the

sexes and with a wholly secular curriculum tailored for a socialist state that met with the

most unified backlash in the countryside. The disgruntlement with the reforms of Zahir

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[26] Rastegar, Farshad, *The Mobilizing Role of Secular Education in Islamist Movements: The Case of Afghanistan*, G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA, 1992, p. 7-10
[27] Marsden, Peter, The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan, Zed Books, London, 2002, p. 23

Shah boiled over with the PDPA's nationwide imposition of secular education; a call for Jihad was raised by many of the rural religious leaders.

The imposition of secular education in Afghanistan was a catalyst, or in the formulation of Eckstein,[28] a precipitant, for the mobilization of Islamist movements in Afghanistan. The new resistance formed from a loose confederation of tribes and regions encouraged a return to Shari'a law and the suppression of what was viewed as the alien forces of secularism. The fact that the government's bureaucracy was recruited primarily from the secular university did not help to mitigate the perception among rural villagers that those who received secular education were the self-same government officials that many viewed as infringing on what had hitherto been matters of local concern. Madrassas, local religious schools that were more prominent in the rural villages of Afghanistan despite the mandated secular school system, were viewed as producing local religious leaders and village judges by the rural populace, and thus had more local legitimacy than the state schools. Graduates of madrassas in rural Afghanistan possessed greater respect and control over the day-to-day affairs and well being of the populace than did their counterparts in the communist government.[29]

Faced with popular revolt led by the rural religious forces, the PDPA government in Kabul called on the Soviet Union for military assistance and support in quashing the rebellion. As organizational discord within the PDPA grew, the Soviet Union decided to seize control of the situation and invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979. The great

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[28] Eckstein, Harry. "On the Etiology of Internal War," in Ivo Feirerabend (ed.) *Anger, Violence and Politics.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972, ch. 1

[29] Rastegar, Farshad, The Mobilizing Role of Secular Education in Islamist Movements: The Case of Afghanistan, The G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA, 1992, p. 3-5

jihad of the twentieth century commenced in Afghanistan against the Soviet forces. For

over a decade Afghanistan became a bloody battleground for both Soviet forces and its

own internal clash of ideologies and identity. It was in this miasma of conflict that an

ultra-conservative strand of Islam, the Deoband School of Hanafite theology, took root

and flourished in the rural regions of the Pushtun North and among the millions of

Afghan refugees who had crossed the border to Pakistan. As will be explored further in

the next section, the Islamist parties in Pakistan supported by the U.S., the ISI in Pakistan

and various Saudi funders, saw in the Afghanis fleeing from the PDPA and Soviet

control, the opportunity to promote a particularly reactionary Islamic ideology through

the support of madrassas in the refugee camps and orphanages in the border regions of

Afghanistan and Pakistan.

3. The Emergence of Taliban:

According to many accounts, the Afghan Mujahideen were a loosely affiliated

patchwork of tribal fighters whose only common goal was to expel the Soviets, rather

than a unified insurgency. Indeed, a working definition of the Mujahideen is that they are

Afghans who fought against PDPA and Soviet forces, and believed that they were

engaged in jihad- a holy war.[30] Through the covert support of both the U.S. and Pakistan

governments in training, arms and supplies, the Mujahideen fighters transformed from an

ad-hoc tribal resistance to well skilled and equipped strike teams. By the mid-1980's the

Mujahideen resistance movement was beginning to have a significant impact on both the

morale and effectiveness of the Soviet Army. While the exact 'straw that broke the

camel's back' is subject to debate, what is clear is that the Soviets were unable to

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[30] Marsden, Peter, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan*, New York: Zed Books, 2002, p. 26

successfully control Afghanistan and announced their intentions to withdraw in 1988.

The withdrawal of Soviet forces was heralded as a victory of David versus Goliath

proportions for the Mujahideen and their supporters in jihad around the world.

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, and the collapse of the

socialist Massoud government in 1991, Afghanistan was essentially split into four mini-

states and tribal enclaves continuously clashing with each other in a quest for political

dominance. With the specter of the external threat extinct, the Mujahideen split along

party and tribal lines, to the consternation of many of their most ideologically fervent

supporters: the talibs or religious students recruited from the refugee camps and border

areas of Afghanistan. As Michael Griffin notes in *The Taliban, War and Religion in*

Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War:

> No mujahideen group was without its band of taliban during the Soviet war.
> Young, unmarried and with a tolerance for shahadat, or martyrdom higher than
> their comrades, they maintained a distinct and separate identity during operations,
> even eating and sleeping apart. At the wars end the returned to their spiritual
> studies, only to watch in disgust the behavior of the political order they had
> helped install.[31]

As Afghanistan collapsed into anarchy, the once triumphant supporters of the

Mujahideen fell silent as it became apparent that the great jihad victory against the

Soviets was a pyric one for the country. Kabul was shelled on a daily basis as various

Mujahideen factions tried to seize power. Ardent Islamist supporters who had formerly

fought with the Mujahideen, young students raised and recruited from the destitute

refugee camps their families had fled to, along with the more traditional rural populace,

realized that the triumph of Islam had been replaced with factionalized power struggles

and common thuggery. It was in this vacuum of power that the Taliban, a hitherto

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[31] Griffin, Michael, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War*, Pluto Press,
England, 2001, 2003, p. 50

unknown group, emerged publicly and seemingly out-of-nowhere to as the minister of

communications declared: "Purge Afghanistan of all foreign and corruptive influences,

such as mujahideen and communists who have become killers, thieves and drug

traffickers in the name of Islam,"[32] and to restore order to the anarchy and chaos which

had characterized the post-Soviet period.

The Taliban viewed the failure of the Mujahideen to unite and introduce a pure

form of Islamist government of Afghanistan as a direct result of the Mujahideen's corrupt

reliance on western support and lax view of secular conduct. Indeed, part of the founding

mythology of the Taliban revolves around an incident that occurred in Kandaheri Village,

where two girls were abducted and raped by local Mujahideen. It is reported that

Mohammed Omar, a prominent local Pushtun mullah with a strong following of religious

students, or "talibs" mobilized thirty talibs or Taliban to exact revenge against the lawless

Mujahideen. [33] According to the legend Mohammed Omar swore to restore honor and

dignity to the Islamic people through a strict adherence to Shari'a law and thus protect his

people. Taliban spokesman Mullah Wakil Ahmed stated on Oct. 23, 1996:

> After the Mujahideen parties came to power in 1992, the Afghan people thought
> that peace would prevail in the country. However, the leaders began to fight over
> power in Kabul….Therefore, after these incidents, a group of students form
> religious schools decided to rise against these leaders in order to alleviate the
> suffering of the residents of Kandahar Province.[34]

While the actual origins of the Taliban and the veracity of the story of its foundation are

blurred, its positioning as a force for the restoration of order in a war-ravaged and

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[32] Gohari, M.J, The Taliban: Ascent to Power, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000
[33] Griffin, Michael, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War*, Pluto Press, England, 2001, 2003, p. 32

[34] Rashid, Ahmed, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London, 2002, p. 60

anarchic country was initially viewed by many international observers as a possible solution to the continued chaos and factionalization of the former mujahideen.

Discipline and order were central to the Taliban's code of conduct in the immediate period of its ascension to power. The discipline of the Taliban mirrored the obedience that the students had learned form an early age through the strict discipline of the madrassa system. This rigid adherence to religiously proscribed behaviors was in direct and marked contrast to the disorder and lawlessness of the Mujahideen factions fighting for control of the country. According to many eyewitness accounts there were no rapes, individual looting or other such unruly behaviors as the Taliban initially moved out of the Pashtun bases of the South and East Afghanistan into other areas of the country.

Mohammed Omar claimed that the Taliban were a neutral force, appointed by God and the people to become a peacekeeping force, disarm the factions, and restore Islamic Shari'a law to Afghanistan. In November of 1995, Mohammed Omar called for 4,000 madrassa trained volunteers from Pakistan to assist in moving the Taliban movement out of Kandahar, its home base. This call to arms and support by the madrassa trained Afghan students in the Pakistan refugee camps reflects the intimate connection between the Taliban's power base in madrassas and its ability to mobilize:

> Mullah Omar asked the heads of the Pakistani madrassa to declare a ten-day holiday so students could assume responsibility for security in Kabul, freeing more seasoned troops to bolster the collapsing frontlines. More than 2,000 started for the capital over the next two days.[35]

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[35] Griffin, Michael, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War*, Pluto Press, England, 2001, 2003, p. 197

In September of 1996, The Taliban captured Kabul a well-orchestrated and rapid advance. Due to the nature of the advance and technical skill it required, it has been posited that the Taliban forces were receiving direct support from Pakistan's ISI. Pakistan's direct military involvement in the emergence of the Taliban is unclear, but its financial, political and ideological support of the madrassas system, a crucial recruitment area for the Taliban, was extensive.[36] In the next section the role of the madrassas in the recruitment and training of the Taliban will be examined.

IV. Madrassas, Pakistan Refugee Camps and the Rise of the Taliban

> *Pakistan's endemic poverty, widespread corruption, and often ineffective government created opportunities for Islamist recruitment. Poor education is a particular concern. Millions of families, especially those with little money, send their children to religious schools, or madrassas. Many of these schools are the only opportunity available for an education, but some have been used as incubators for violent extremism. According to a Karachi's police commander, there are 859 madrassas teaching more than 200,000 youngsters in his city alone.*
> (Section 12.2) 9/11 Report

The word 'taliban' literally translates to "students" in Arabic and is traditionally used to apply to students who studied in Madrassas such as the Deobandis Schools in Pakistan. The word "talib" however does not apply to individuals who study Islamic theology in modern universities, such as Kabul University, it only applies to traditional study in purely religious institutions. Thus even the etymology of the word "Taliban" suggests the Taliban party's close ties to madrassas and its distance from other varieties of modern

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[36] Marsden, Peter, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan*, New York: Zed Books, 2002, p. 124

education[37]. Many of the Madrassas linked to the Taliban in Afghanistan were concentrated in the so-called "Pashtun" belt on the western border of Pakistan.

By late 2001, after more than two decades of civil war, over 3.6 million Afghans had fled Afghanistan and established some of the largest refugee camps in the world across the border in Pakistan. The initial wave of refugees into Pakistan in the 1970's and 80's were mainly conservative Islamists who favored the madrassa-style schools that were arranged in the camps both through the Pakistani government and external funders such as Saudi Arabia. These refugees from the Soviets were viewed by both traditionalist and radical Islamist parties in Pakistan, as well as Saudi Arabia as a fertile ground for ideological training and recruits.

In Pakistan there was an organized network, controlled to a great extent by the Pakistani government, to assist revolutionary Islamist parties to run many aspects of the Afghani refugee camps in the border areas of Pakistan. These programs included health, social and educational services. Many observers, such as Peter Singer[38] have argued that madrassas with a radical orientation were allowed to flourish in the refugee camps and border regions of Pakistan simply because the state was unable to provide alternatives, and thus radical Islamist parties were more than willing to fill the void. This "failed-state" argument links the rise of Madrassas to the poor Pakistani public school system:

> "The reason for the madrassas new centrality stems from the weakening of the Pakistani state…the madrassas became immensely popular by targeting the lower class and refugee populations, whom the Pakistani state has failed to provide proper access to education." [39]

[37] M.J. Gohari, *The Taliban Ascent to Power*, Oxford University press, 2001, Oxford England, p. 31
[38] Singer, P.W. *Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education not Jihad*. Washington DC: Brookings Institutions Analysis Papers #41, 2001, p. 2
39 Ibid

According to this arrangement, individual Islamist political parties controlled specific schools, including the selection of teachers and the curriculum.

1. O*rganizations Operating Madrassas in Pakistan during the Afghan Jihad 1980-1995:*

This informal network of these Madrassas within Afghanistan, near the border of Pakistan, provided the founding basis for the Harakat-I Inqilab-I Afghanistan (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) of Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, which was one of the primary mujahideen parties in the 80's.[40] Out of the various mujahideen parties operating in the camp, the two most influential, especially in light of their strong support of Madrassas were the Jami'at-I- Ulema-I Islam (JUI) and the Jamaat-I Islami (JI), but almost all mujahideen parties placed a prominent emphasis on running their own madrassas.

In the 1980's the Hizb-e Islami party, one of various Mujahideen Islamist parties allowed to operate in the camps, offered both formal education as well as special schools for orphans and ideological courses for Mujahideen who were on leave form the war. In 1986 the Hizb-e Islami party claimed to have more than 250 schools operating in the refugee camps that served over 3 million Afghanis. The Hizb viewed the mobilization of young primary and secondary school students as a key ingredient in the long-term success of its ideology. [41]

The Jamaat-I Islami (JI) another prominent political actor in the Afghan Jihad was used by the Zia regime as its principal contact with the Afghan Mujahideen through

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[40] Magnus, Ralph H., Naby, Eden; Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid, Westview Press, Colorado, 1998, p. 179

[41]Rastegar, Farshad, The Mobilizing Role of Secular Education in Islamist Movements: The Case of Afghanistan, The G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA, 1992, p. 19

Pakistan's intelligence agency, Interservices Intelligence Agency (ISI). It bears

mentioning that the JI were rivals of the JUI, a push pull dynamic which led to the

continual breakdown of attempted peace agreements among different Mujahideen

factions in the wake of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The JI philosophy was

closer to that of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, although some segments of JI also

accepted Wahhabism.[42]

The Jami'at-I Ulema-I Islam (Society of Islamic Scholars, JUI) established

Madrassas specifically for Afghan orphans in Pakistan.[43] The JUI, prominent in the

Pashto and Baluchi regions of Pakistan traced its philosophy to the Deobandis schools in

India. As will be discussed in greater depth later in this section, this version of Islam

emphasized a strict interpretation of Hanafi Sunni orthodoxy and heightened the role of

the Ulema in the leadership of the community.[44] The JUI thrived through the expansion

of its educational outreach in the 1980's. The JUI grew and flourished by offering a free

Koranic education through its madrassas in many of Pakistan's poorest areas, including

the Afghan refugee camps. The JUI's madrassas not only provided a wellspring of

manpower for the Taliban, but they also provided its ideological cornerstone and strength

in uniformity.[45] Abdul Hanan Karimi, Director of Ideological Courses for Jam'iat-e

Islami underlined the importance of education to the mission of the Mujahideen during

opposition to the Communists as follows:

> For us the motive of education in exile is that the trench and the school are like
> parallel lines. The trench must be reinforced from the intellectual standpoint.

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[42] Nojumi, Neamatollah, The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, And the Future of the Region, Palgrave, New York 2002, p. 119

[43] Magnus, Ralph H.; Naby, Eden, Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid, Westview Press, Colorado, 1998, p. 179

[44] Ibid, p. 180

[45] Griffin, Michael. *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War*, London: Pluto Press, 2003, p. 66

Thus the school must be reinforced and the new generation must be prepared intellectually so that the trenches can be manned. We have reached the conclusion that if those who are fighting in the fronts, fight based on the principles of ideology- i.e. having Islamic consciousness and knowledge and belief-then they will fright bravely till the last moments of life.[46]

Most of the Taliban leadership came from Madrassas run by the JUI, particularly from Jamia-ul-Uloom-al-Islamiyyah in New Town, Karachi. Three of the six members of the Taliban leadership council came from this madrassa and it has strong ties with Mullah Omar.[47]   The JUI actively supported the movement of Taliban from JUI Madrassas in Pakistan to Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal and mujahideen infighting. Later in the decade, as the Taliban fought for control of Kabul, the JUI suspended school examinations in the refugee camps to allow over 2,000 students to gain experience in Afghanistan's new jihad and assist the Taliban in toppling the interim Afghan government. [48]

2. Use of Education for Recruitment:

The politicization of exile and the resonance it bears in Islam also created a fertile ground for the spread of madrassas in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. The most common background for commanders in the mujahideen resistance movement was that of provincial/village religious students, in fact, the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Mujaheed was a religious teacher in a local Madrassa prior to the Soviet invasion. In the refugee camps the themes of the preservation and defense of Islam were the driving

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[46] Rastegar, Farshad, The Mobilizing Role of Secular Education in Islamist Movements: The Case of Afghanistan, The G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA, 1992:
Muhammad Isma'il Is'haqi, member of the Political Committee and Foreign Relations Chief, Islamabad
[47] Nojumi, Neamatollah, The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, And the Future of the Region, Palgrave, New York 2002, p. 120
[48] Magnus, Ralph H.; Naby, Eden, Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid, Westview Press, Colorado, 1998, p. 179

forces behind the educational doctrine of Afghanistan's Islamic Jihad. As Abdul Hai the

President of Education for the Mujahideen forces stated in 1986:

> The rebellion has been a defense of culture. In education, we regard the safeguarding of this culture as necessary. The spirit of our educational policy is created to safeguard this Islamic culture.[49]

In the political and ideological history of Islam in Afghanistan, a nation is not considered

free from colonial domination or corruptive forces unless is has "purity" from the

scientific and intellectual viewpoints. This view is particularly prominent in the

Deobandis school of Islamic thought which formed in part as a response to British

colonialism in India.[50] Thus education plays an essential role is dismantling the

intellectual and cultural traces of foreign domination. Education is seen as a purification

of the soul from prior corruption and the foundation for resistance to future corruption.

In this way the educational policy of the Mujahideen became a fundamental technique

and ideological underpinning for the mobilization of fighters and recruitment for the

jihad. As Abdul Hai noted:

> In other nations such as in Palestine which have initiated their struggle years ago, they have forgotten the issue of having an education especially related to one's own environment. Cultural alienation has come about and they have been factionalized in many areas.[51]

The Islamist revolutionaries were actively aware of the value of education in creating

political awareness of students and in indoctrinating them into the jihad cause.

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[49] Rastegar, Farshad, *The Mobilizing Role of Secular Education in Islamist Movements: The Case of Afghanistan,* The G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA, 1992, p. 23
Muhammad Isma'il Is'haqi, member of the Political Committee and Foreign Relations Chief, Islamabad
[50] Rashid, Ahmed, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, I.B. Tauris Publishers, New York, 2002, p. 88
[51] Ansari, Hizb-e Islami

A consciousness of education as a tool for cultural, political, and military mobilization for Jihad or holy war first took shape in the refugee camps. Many leaders of the JUI stated on record that part of the success of the JUI was a strategy to utilize schools to install an Islamic political ideology in the next generation of Afghan youth and emphasized the importance of religious education in countering the communist indoctrination that many Afghan students received in the government controlled schools in the late 70's and 80's. Schools, both in the refugee camps and throughout Afghanistan itself, were viewed as tools to both recruit for the jihad effort and to extend the control and reach of the Mujahideen parties.[52]

Madrassa enrollment declined from 1940 to 1978 but increased during the religion-based resistance to the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets starting in 1979. As the World Bank study *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data* reports, the largest jump in madrassa enrollment is for the cohort aged 10 in the period 1989-93—coincided with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Taliban.[53] The notion that the madrassa movement grew during the period of resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is supported by the 1998 data from the population census.[54] Combined with the fact that the largest enrollment percentage in Pakistan is in the Pashtun belt bordering Afghanistan, this suggests events in neighboring Afghanistan greatly influenced madrassa enrollment in Pakistan and vice versa.[55]

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[52] Afghan Refugee Education in Pakistan-A Summary: UNESCO Education
http://portal.unesco.org/education
[53] Andrabi, Tahir; Das, Jishnu; Khwaja, Asim Ijaz; Zajonc, Tristan, *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data.* Policy Research, Working Paper Series, no. WPS 3521, 2005, p. 22-24

54 Andrabi, Tahir; Das, Jishnu; Khwaja, Asim Ijaz; Zajonc, Tristan, *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data*. Policy Research, Working Paper Series, no. WPS 3521, 2005
55p. 22-24, Andrabi, Tahir; Das, Jishnu; Khwaja, Asim Ijaz; Zajonc, Tristan, *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data.* Policy Research, Working Paper Series, no. WPS 3521, 2005

V: Curriculum and History of Madrassas

The Madrassa system dates back to eleventh century Iraq, where they were founded as an educational system to support Islamic civilization under the rule of Nizam al-Mulk. The early madrassa curriculum focused primarily on religious education for the Muslim clergy. Madrassas are primarily a Sunni tradition as they developed the Dars-e-nizami, the first standardized madras curriculum of which versions are still used at all Sunni madrassa in Pakistan and India.[56] Islamic learning groups which often center around local madrassas are ubiquitous and key actors in brining together communities in the diverse Muslim world. Students in madrassas are not formally subsidized by the state, but rather the Madrassas are financed through the charity of the community. This private funding of education is a traditional practice dating back to the early days of the founding of Madrassas in Iraq.

There are a variety of Islamic education institutions. The Koranic school (Maktab) is an informal learning space where children learn to read and recite the Koran, often in Arabic. These maktabs are usually small in size and based around a single instructor. Madrassas on the other hand are generally more organized institutions with classrooms and teach a variety of levels.[57] While a maktab provides only a very basic education in the Koran, a madrassa typically provides a higher level of religious education beyond just the basics. In addition to advanced theology classes, madrassas often provide free room

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[56] "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military", International Crisis Group Asia Report N. 36, Islamabad/Brussels, 2002 (amended 2005), p. 5

[57] Anzar, Uzma, "Islamic Education: A Brief History of Madrassas with Comments on Curricula and Current Pedagogical Practices", March 2003 (Draft) p. 1

and board for students, and sometimes even a stipend which can be used to support students' families.[58]

The traditional curriculum in madrassa in general is Islamic studies and the acquisition of Islamic principles that govern day-to-day existence. These principles include: Islamic Law (Fiqa), Prophet's sayings (Hadith), Prophet's traditions (Sunna), Interpretation of the Koran (Tafseer), and logic. There is great diversity among the madrassas in different regions and even within the same region. For example, most madrassas in the North Western Frontier Provinces (NWFP) of Pakistan teach only religious subjects while madrassas in Egypt, Indonesia and Bangladesh in general include secular subjects as well.[59]

While madrassas were originated in Iraq, it was in India that the Madrassas system began to flourish under Muslim rulers in the 16th century. The madrassas in India and the surrounding regions became scholastic centers for learning Arabic and Persian, the two main languages of early Islam. As will be discussed in the next section, the rise of British colonialism in India produced a strong religious backlash and planted the seeds for two separated educational movements: that of the modernist English learning and the other which espoused a more traditional inward turning, that of the Deobandis madrassa. Colonialism in India heralded a sharp divide in the types of education available to the local populace. Islamic schools became the education of the poor while secular schools

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[58] For a more comprehensive discussion of Madrassa curriculum and pedagogy in Pakistan see Tariq Rahman's "Language, Religion and Identity in Pakistan: Language-Teaching in Pakistan Madrassas", Ethnic Studies Report, vol XVI, July 1998

[59] Anzar, Uzma, "Islamic Education: A Brief History of Madrassas with Comments on Curricula and Current Pedagogical Practices", March 2003 (Draft) p. 7

became the preferred education of the wealthy elite, intensifying the class divide between religious and secular education.[60]

1. Goals and Philosophy of Deobandis Education:

Just what do madrassas teach and why are they such an instrumental force in the emergence of the Taliban? It has been noted that countries affected by chronic civil conflict, fundamentalist revivalist movements often take root by espousing a return to what are regarded as the absolute truths of the religion, and to eradicate any influences that have appeared to weaken religious belief.[61] In the case of Afghanistan, the adoption and spread of a particularly fundamentalist sect of Islam, that of the Deobandis School, through the madrassas in Pakistan and Northern Afghanistan, was aided both by the jihad against the Soviets and the subsequent failure of the Mujahideen to bring a purely Islamist government to power after the withdrawal of the Soviets. It was this latter factor, combined with a war-weary and destitute populace, which may have opened the door to the embrace of the Taliban who heralded a return to the basic tenets of Shari'a law in face of the chaos around them. The Taliban's claim to religious legitimacy rested on its portrayal as a conservative force trying to reclaim Islam from the infighting of the Mujahideen who just a mere couple of years before were touted as the Islamic warriors of faith in the Soviet Jihad. To understand the ideology of the Taliban, it is necessary to outline the tenets of the Deobandis School, and factors that accelerated its spread in aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan[62].

[60] Evans, Alexander "Understanding Madrasahs" Foreign Affairs, January/February 2006
61 Rashid, Ahmed, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, London: IB Tauris, 2000, p. 59
[62] Gohari, M.J. *The Taliban: Ascent to Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 60

The madrassa system in Pakistan, whish is examined in depth here due to its close relationship with the formation of the Taliban, is characterized by diversity. It is not a monolithic reactionary force as it has been oft portrayed in the Western press in the immediate attention brought to it by 9/11. A careful examination of the rise of the madrassa system in Pakistan, its tenets and its contribution to the formation of the Taliban is essential to understand the future underpinnings of education reform efforts in post-Taliban Afghanistan and the region as a whole.

Among the Sunni in Pakistan there are three primary sub-sects: Deobandis, Barelvis and the Ahl-i-Hadith which all run madrassas.[63] The Ahl-i-Hadith (Wahabis), the Deobandis and the Barelvis created madrassa to preserve and spread their respective interpretations of Islam under colonial rule in India. This section will give a brief overview of the four main sects which run madrassas in Pakistan, with particular attention paid to the Deobandis philosophy as it was the school most firmly associated with the rise of the Taliban and is the where many of the Taliban's senior leaders were educated.

Figure 1: Sect-Wise Increase in the Number of Madrassas in Pakistan

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[63] Rahman, Tariq "The Madrasa and the State of Pakistan: Religion, Poverty and the Potential for violence in Pakistan. HIMAL South Asian, February 2004.

Sect-Wise Increase in the Number of Madrassas											
Deobandis		Barelvis		Ahl-i-Hadith		Shia		Jamat-i-Islami		Total	
1988	2002	1988	2002	1988	2002	1988	2002	1988	2002	1988	2002
1779	7000	717	1585	161	376	47	419	97*	500	2801	9880

Source: For 1988 see GOP 1988; for 2002 Report of Sindh Police in Dawn 16 Jan 2003. The other figures have been provided by the Central Boards of madrassas. *This figure in GOP 1988 was for 'Others' and not only for the Jamat-i-Islami madrassas. The figure for 2000 given in several sources is 6,761. [64]

Barelvis: The Barelvis embrace a more meditational, custom-laden Islam, closely associated with" folk Islam". This belief has been challenged by both the Deobandis and the Ahl-i-Hadith ulema. The Barelvis madrassa in Pakistan also teach the Dars-i-Nazami but with less of a strict emphasis of purifying the religion.

Ahl-i-Hadith: The Ahl-i-Hadith sect of Sunni Islam is also known as Wahabi and associated with Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1703-1792) of Saudi Arabia. The movement is focused on purifying Islam and as such follows no particular school of jurisprudence and thus were branded as nonconformists by other sects. The Ahl-i-Hadith madrassa also teach the Dars-i-Nazami but include the Quran, Hadith and oppose folk Islam. In Pakistan, the Deobandis and the Ahl-i-Hadith are seen as closely related and ideological kin. The Saudi Arabian Harmain Islamic Foundation is rumored to have supported the Ahl-i-Hadith madrassas which are connected to Wahhabism, but there has been no published confirmation of this supposed connection.[65]

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[64] Ibid, p. 2
[65] Ibid.

Jamat-i-Islami: The Jamat-i-Islami is a revivalist political party formed by Abul ala Mudoodi (1903-1979) to incorporate modern/Western techniques and technology into Islam to strengthen the Islamic community.

Deobandis: The original madrassa at Deobandis is located in a small town in Uttar Pradesh of India. The Deobandis school was founded by Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanutawi (1833-1877) and Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1829-1905). The Durul Uloom at Deobandis, established in 1867, was the first and main Deobandis madrassa. Its curriculum was based on the Dars-i-Nizami which emphasizes that the traditional science should be transmitted unchanged to the learners, thus placing a greater emphasis on Hadith[66] than other sects prescribed.[67] The fundamentalist, anti-Shia views of the Deobandis also challenge many sects within Sunni Islam.

The Darul Uloom Deobandis, established in 1867, viewed the introduction of English education and Western curriculum as a threat to traditional Muslim learning. The Deobandis School laid an increased emphasis on theological studies, a "purification" of the belief system and a rejection of British colonialism and its attendant culture. This anti-western emphasis is a defining aspect of the Deobandis school into the present day. The Deobandis, as opposed to the Barelvis, rejected the folk Islam which had become popular in India and which relied on saints and mysticism. The Deobandis placed a greater reliance on closely following Sharia law as the path to religious righteousness. In Pakistan, the JUI party embraced the Deobandis philosophy most closely, and ran the greatest number of madrassas in the refugee camps.

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[66] Hadith is all that is narrated from the Prophet Muhammad i.e. direct saying and acts
[67] Ibid, p. 2

The influence of 19th century Indian Wahhabinsm on Deobandism lent it a particularly puritanical and orthodox outlook. The Deobandis are on the extreme end of conservative Islam in terms of attempting to strictly regulate individual and societal behavior.[68] Disciples of Deobandis view modern practices that are not relevant to the proper knowledge of Islam, such as technical and secular studies, as corruptive influences. In this particular school of thought, the modern practice of Islam is to be studied only in order to purify it of unorthodox renovations. Since the beginning of the 20th century religious leaders or Ulema associated with the Deobandis School of Islam have issued over a million fatwa on the conduct of daily life. [69]

In the Deobandis School of Hanafite thought, there is an emphasis on conformity to make external behavior and appearance a visible expression of inward faith. Thus conformity with the regulation and strictures of the school can be visibility demonstrated and judged through an individual's actions and dress.[70] As one observer noted, it is in this way that the community becomes an enforcer of individual behavior, with public opinion acting to intercede and take responsibility for an individual who has gone astray.
 Such a strict and discernible adherence to strictures on behavior and action can act to reify the community's identity as well as keep discipline and morale constant within the ranks, as was the case with the Taliban. By providing such a solid and undifferentiated identity it increases not only group cohesion, but permits little deviation and/or factionalization. This ideology is apparent both in the cohesion of the Taliban, and in its

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[68]Koepke, Bruce, "Finding A Balance between Religious Orthodoxy and the Maintenance of Afghanistan's Performative Traditions", Edited by Christine Noelle-Karimi, Conrad Schetter, Reinhard Schlagintweit. *Afghanistan-A Country Without a State?* IKO-Verlag fur Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2002, p. 69
[69]Griffin, Michael. *Reaping the Whirlwind*: *Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War*, London: Pluto Press, 2003, p. 54
[70] Gohari, M.J., *The Taliban: Ascent to Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 27

ideological emphasis on imposing strict societal mores in accordance with Shari'a law when it ascended to power.

The imposition of the Soviet system on Afghanistan emboldened the spread of the followers of the Deobandis School in several important ways. Firstly, the Soviet government drove millions of Afghans into the border provinces of Pakistan. In the border area of Pakistan where most of the Afghan refugees fled, the North Indian school of Deobandism was already the most dominant form of madrassa schooling and the influx of refugees were fertile ground for a school who traced its origins to colonial resistance.. The United States also contributed to the rise of Deobandis influence in Pakistan's border areas by providing Deobandis madrassas with massive amounts of aid during the Soviet invasion to strengthen anti-Soviet resistance.

The Deobandis School has exerted an influence on Afghanistan's spiritual leadership equal to that of Egypt's Al-Azhar University. Many members, both followers and leaders of the Taliban received their education in Deobandis influenced Madrassas located in Pakistan. The Taliban's former envoys to the UN as well as the Taliban's representative in Islamabad were both graduates of a Deobandis madrassa in Karachi.[71] However, it was only in the aftermath of the post-Soviet Mujahideen period that graduates of the Deobandis madrassas exerted themselves as a unified political force.

2. Government and International Influence on Radical Madrassas:

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[71] M.J. Gohari, The Taliban Ascent to Power, Oxford University press, 2001, Oxford England

The funding increases of the ISI, USAID and Saudi funders[72] through charitable organizations in conjunction with the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan fueled the spread of radical madrassas in Pakistan, especially those of the extremely conservative Deobandis school. The heady mix of funding, a visible Jihad cause and available recruits changed the traditional function and nature of some of the Madrassas in the NWFP leading to a reciprocal influence on the formation of the Taliban and the political geography of Afghanistan in the 1990's. As Ahmed Rashid stated in his research on the Taliban,

> Prior to the war the Islamicists barely had a base in Afghan society, but with money and arms form the CIA pipeline and support from Pakistan, they built one and wielded tremendous clout.[73]

Thus, the nature of the Afghan war and the attention it drew from a variety of interests, namely that of the US and Pakistan contributed to a shift in the purpose, curriculum and philosophy of many border region Madrassas.

One example of how international influence contributed to the radicalization of the curriculum of refugee camp madrassas in Pakistan can be seen in the textbooks that USAID issued to many refugee madrassas. Between 1986 and 1992, USAID underwrote the printing of explicitly violent Islamist textbooks for elementary school children in both the camps and Pashto border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The University of Nebraska, Omaha (UNO), oversaw this $50 million contract with Education Center for Afghanistan (ECA), a group jointly appointed by the seven mujahideen organizations that

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[72] Alex Alexiev at the Center for Security Policy suggested that as much as 75% of all Madrassa funding comes from abroad, with Saudi Arabia as the largest funder. Alex Alexiev, "The Pakistani Time Bomb," Commentary, March 2003, *http://members.lycos.co.uk/terrorism/pakistani-time-bomb.htm*.
[73] Rashid, Ahmed, Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, I.B. Tauris Publishers, New York, 2002, p. 19

the ISI and CIA had taken under their wing.[74] A fourth-grade mathematics text noted that

"the speed of a Kalashnikov bullet is 800 meters per second, " and then asked students,

"If a Russian is at a distance of 3,200 meters from a Mujahid, and that Mujahid aims at

the Russian's head, calculate how many seconds it will take for the bullet to strike the

Russian in the forehead?[75] These textbooks designed by the Centre for Afghanistan

Studies and the University of Nebraska-Omaha were published in both Dari and Pashto

under a USAID grant in the early 1980's.[76] Over 13 million of these textbooks were

distributed to Afghan refugee camps and Afghan border region madrassas between 1984

and 1992.

Thomas Gouttierre, director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies at the

University of Nebraska since 1970 stated at a Brookings Institution conference in

December 2001:

> "There was a mandate from Congress that said that the Afghans were going to be
> in charge of the content of their curriculum. This was passed on to the State
> Department and to USAID and any of those organizations of the government that
> were helping various organizations, institutions like the UNO."[77]

On the ground, this congressional mandate opened the door for a promotion of a

mujahideen curriculum with an emphasis on Jihad, at the expense of more traditional

religious texts and secular textbooks.

Pakistani Madrassas, due to both their subsidies by the ISI and USAID and the

Saudis during the Afghanistan war with the Soviets in the 80's and their lack of

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[74] Coulson, Andrew "Education and Indoctrination in the Muslim World: Is there a Problem? What Can We Do about It?" March, 2004 p.17

[75] Craig, Davis "A' is for Allah, 'J' is for Jihad," World Policy Journal, Spring 2002, pp. 90-94, http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/articles/wpj02-1/Davis.pdf , p. 90-94

[76] "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military, International Crisis Group Asia Report N. 36, Islamabad/Brussels, July 2002 (amended July 2005), p. 131

[77] Coulson, Andrew "Education and Indoctrination in the Muslim World: Is there a Problem? What Can We Do about It?" March, 2004, p.17

government oversight, present a particularly strong example of the link between education, politics and security.

3. Madrassa Enrollment in the Border Regions of Pakistan/Afghanistan

The role of Madrassa education in the radicalization of the Mujahideen is still a greatly contested, and largely unexplored, field of study. Many of the current estimates of the strength and numbers of madrassa, let alone radical madrassa are highly disputed. The data regarding madrassa enrollment in Pakistan, particularly in the North West Frontier Provinces which was a temporary home to many Afghans in exile and where the Pashto based Taliban movement was incubated, is based largely on government estimates and small household surveys whose methodologies have been questioned. Despite the growing acknowledgment of the importance of education in human security and absolute security terms, there unfortunately is not a widespread and comprehensive literature on the interrelation of Madrassa education and religious extremism. What is certain is that the field remains largely unexplored and that there are developments underway to provide a more rigorous analysis of not only the number of madrassas, but their curriculums, societal role and their connection to extremist philosophies. This section will take a look at the data on Madrassa element and explore some of the areas of contention.

In 2002 an International Crisis Group report entitled "Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military" was published and became a reference point for a variety of media reports on madrassa in the press. The ICG report estimated that one-third of all school children in Pakistan attended madrassas.[78] This estimate was strongly refuted in a

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[78] "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military", ICG Asia Report N 36, Islamabad/Brussels, July 2002

2005 World Bank study "Religious School Enrollment n Pakistan: A Look at the Data."

The main contention of the later group of scholars was that the ICG report, which had been the basis for many of the estimates of madrassa enrollment in the popular press, sensationalized and exaggerated the reach of extremist madrassas by a factor of ten by estimating that there were only 1,900,000 Pakistan children enrolled in schools, instead of 19,000,000. In July 2005, the ICG report released a revised report where the authors acknowledged that they had miscalculated the percentage of Pakistani children enrolled full time in madrassas. The correct estimate according to the revised ICG report is that approximately 3.5% of school age Pakistani children are enrolled full time in madrassas. In April 2002, Dr. Mahmood Ahmed Ghazi, the Minster of Religious estimated that there were over were 8,000 registered madrassas and some 25,000 unregistered ones, educating over 1.5-1.7 million children[79], this number contrasts sharply with the World Bank study which estimated total student enrollment in Madrassas at 475,000. The ICG, while revising its percentage of enrolled children, stands behind its estimate of 1.7 million formally enrolled children in madrassas in Pakistan.

The heated debate between these publications demonstrates that when it comes to evidence based assessments of the numbers of madrassas, their respective student enrollments and their influence in Pakistan and Afghanistan the data is woefully lacking. While the ICG report drastically revised its estimation of the percentage of school-age children in Pakistan enrolled in madrassas it stood firmly behind its characterization of madrassas in Pakistan as feeders of Islamic extremism and political violence. The World Bank study however sharply criticizes the post 9/11 characterization of madrassas in the

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[79] Stern, Jessica, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture", Foreign Affairs, 79(6), 2000

Western place as monolithic institutions that produce a uniform extremism. This thesis

agrees with the World Bank study that not all madrassas are equal, rather they represent

different sects and pedagogical philosophies, however there is an influential minority that

have their roots in the Afghan War against the Soviets which do espouse anti-Western

violence.   While the debate between the numbers of students enrolled in Pakistan

Madrassas, particularly near the border region with Afghanistan has an impact on the

magnitude of the problem presented by the Deobandis madrassas, it is their rising

popularity, not just their sheer enrollment numbers which merit attention.

Figure 2. Madrassa Growth: A Timeline

| 1956: Approx. 244 madrassas. | Madrassas double in size every ten years. No accurate estmates. GoP (Ed. Ministry): 1995: 3,906; 2000: 7,000. Unofficial estimates: 10,000-45,000 schools with >1.7 million students. | 2004: Madrassas increasing in strength. Leaders are embedded in government as part of the newly formed MMA alliance. 10,000-25,000 madrassas. |

1947: Pakistan gains independence: Approx. 137 schools with very limited political power

Source: Jamal Malik. Colonialization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan (1996); Khan, Ayesha "Managing the Madrssah: The Case of Education Reforms in Pakistan", Kennedy School of Government, 2005.

According to the 2003 Pakistan Ministry of Education's directory, established

madrassas grew from 6,996 in 2001 to 10,430 in 2003, a total growth of over 45%. Of

these madrassas, Pakistan ministry officials estimate 10-15 percent of madrassa could

have links with sectarian militancy or international terrorism.[80] In 1995, the Government

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[80]"Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military", ICG Asia Report N 36, Islamabad/Brussels, July 2002, p. 2

of Pakistan under President Bhutto identified over 700 militant madrassa in the Punjab and more than 120 such schools in the NWFP.[81]

Concrete data for operating Madrassas in the Pashto region of Afghanistan is scarce, but several sources estimate a correspondent rise in enrollment with the return of repatriating refugees. The Taliban administration when it gained control of Afghanistan placed a policy emphasis on the growth and promotion of Deobandis madrassas within Afghanistan.[82] The rise in madrassa enrollment in Pakistan is closely linked to the rise of religious extremism and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The recent post 9/11 increase in Deobandis madrassa enrollment in Pakistan, while relatively small in terms of the percent of students as a whole, indicates that it remains, and indeed increasingly so, a popular ideology in the region.

4. Refugee Education in Pakistan, Literature and Data

The evolution and growth of Deobandis affiliated madrassas in the Pakistan border regions during the Afghan war highlights the importance of education in conflict situations. While there is a substantial amount of literature on the experience of Afghan refugees in Pakistan border camps in terms of health and security at the camps, there is little systematic study of educational interventions provided at the camps. Refugee education is an emerging area of concern for humanitarian aid agencies, both for practical camp management reasons and the growing concern of radicalism spread through informal camp education networks. Lyndsey Bird noted in "Surviving School, Education for Refugee Children from Rwanda 1994-1996" not only is the field of educational

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[81] "746 Punjab Madrasas Involved in Sectarian Activities", The News, Islamabad, 7 March 1995. p. 1
[82] See section on Taliban and Education

planning in emergencies and reconstruction still young but that, "To date no assessment has been conducted on the impact, value or relevance of the education children received in the camps."[83]

As Rosemary Preston noted in her 1991 assessment of funding for refugee education, "There are few studies of educational assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in places of temporary settlement, while research into educational provision for those who have returned to their country of origin after a period of exile is almost totally lacking."[84] Although Dr. Preston's study was conducted in the early 1990's, I have found that her observation still holds true; systematic study of educational approaches in refugee camps, particularly in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan is sparse. Rather than systematic case study of educational programs in Pakistani refugee camps, most of the literature revolves around data collected from disparate aid organizations with regard to their own educational programs. Such studies include a UNHCR assessment of girls' education programs instituted in a couple of camps and IRC evaluations of teacher training programs.

Research into the area of the relationship between education in refugee camps and educational preferences post-repatriation are almost entirely comprised of descriptive reports for NGO's and project reports about a wide variety of education initiatives. UNESCO produced a summary in 2003 about the state of Afghan Refugee education in Pakistan estimating that only 45% of refugee children were enrolled in primary school, of

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[83] Lyndsey Bird, "Surviving School, Education for Refugee Children from Rwanda 1994-1996", International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris 2003, (UNESCO working document)
[84] Preston, Rosemary, "The Provision of Education to Refugees in Places of Temporary Asylum: Some Implications for Development", Comparative Education, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1991, p. 61-81

which only 1/3 were girls.[85] The report confirms that most educational initiatives in the

camps had been ad hoc and decentralized. This means that the quality of the education,

indeed even the type of instruction varied significantly from camp to camp.[86] While there

is relatively little information on the impact of refugee education on the future

educational experiences of returnees, there is a growing body of literature on refugee

camp curriculums and the theoretical debates about refugee education in crisis situations.

Most of this literature is fairly recent, but among the resources that proved useful

Margaret Sinclair's "Planning education in and After Emergencies" and Marc Sommers's

"Emergency Education for Children" were particularly helpful in gaining insight to the

on-the-ground realities of emergency education. Many of the emerging issues in the field

of emergency education and its link to repatriation include cross-border consultation with

government standardized curriculums, the training of teachers, the tension between top-

down formal education initiatives such as the UN's "School in a Box" program versus the

more grassroots approach of local refugee leaders taking charge of instruction with

minimal assistance, as was the case with the JUI run madrassas in Pakistan.

The funding literature by UNHCR, ICR and other NGO's and humanitarian

assistance agencies increasingly highlight the importance of education, as a multifaceted

response to meeting the rights and protection needs of refugee children. There is, as

mentioned in the first section of this thesis, an increasing recognition that not only does

emergency education have a potentially positive impact on refugee children and society,

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[85] http://www.ineesite.org/about/pakistan.asp: Notes from meeting Secondary Education for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan and "Refugee education Trust for Post-Primary Education", held at UNESCO, Islamabad, 10/05/02
[86] United Nation as High Commissioner for Refugees Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, "Meeting the Rights and Protection Needs of Refugee Children: An Independent Evaluation of the Impact of UNHCR's activities", Valid International, Oxford, U.K., May 2002, p. 19

but also that shortfalls in education are directly linked to more acute protection problems of military recruitment, radicalization and exploitation. This problem of "negative education" includes the potential recruitment of refugee children via manipulation and indoctrination, an area of increasing concern to the international community in terms of collective security and terrorist recruitment. Many of these organization reports stress that education is a key issue in durable solutions.[87]

VI: The Taliban and its Education Reforms in Afghanistan:

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its attendant displacement of over 5 million Afghans into Iran and Pakistan was a precursor to the increase in extremist Madrassas and the recruitment of Mujahideen fighters. As has been emphasized throughout Afghanistan's waves of reform and counter-reformation, education in Afghanistan is religious dynamite. The ascendancy of the Taliban, a movement firmly rooted in Deobandis influenced madrassas, was a clear signal that the tables had been turned once again in the secular versus religious debate and that the place of secular education in Afghan society had disappeared.

When the Taliban assumed control of Afghanistan in 1996, teachers were one of the soft targets of the jihad, with some 2,000 assassinated and 15,000 forced to abandon the profession for fear of their lives. One commander admitted to burning down the local primary school and slaughtering its nine teachers, because "that was where the

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[87] United Nation as High Commissioner for Refugees Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, "Meeting the Rights and Protection Needs of Refugee Children: An Independent Evaluation of the Impact of UNHCR's activities", Valid International, Oxford, U.K., May 2002, p. 16

communists were trained." [88] It is significant, both in terms of strategy and the tactics of

the Taliban in its consolidation of power, that one its first acts of state was to turn its eye

to proscribing the content and structure of education in Afghanistan. The Taliban

established as many Madrassa as possible upon their return form Pakistan and actively

solicited funding from Saudi Arabian charities to support this effort.[89]

In 1997, the Taliban minister of information and the Supreme Shhura, Mulla

Ameer Khan Muttaqi, issued an announcement to the Al-Rasheed Trust, a Taliban

supporting foundation with headquarters in Pakistan, that "in accordance with the

directives of Ameer-ul-M'umineen, new universities and colleges are being opened to

provide higher education to ten thousand students…and new Madaris are being

established…Al-Rasheed Trust should now come forward to assist in the completion of

this noble, purely religious work." [90] The Taliban minister's announcement continued to

state that:

> The talabah (students) of these universities and madaris (schools) will be
> entrusted with the duty of "Jihad-fi-Sabeelillah' (war in Allah's path) too, and as
> the heavy responsibility of defending the one and only purely Islamic government
> in the world will rest on their shoulders, providing aid to these madaris will be
> assisting simultaneously in the teaching of Holy Quaran and Hadeeth, Jihad-fi-
> Sabeelillah (holy war), defense of the Islamic government, implementation of
> Islamic rule….Thus this is an excellent opportunity for Muslims to gather the
> rewards with both hands.[91]

Thus, as can be gathered from the Taliban's own pronouncements to its supporters, the

installation of a religiously rigorous educational system was seen as one of the

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[88] Griffin, Michael. *Reaping the Whirlwind*: *Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War*, London: Pluto
Press, 2003, p. 136
[89] Nojumi, Neamatollah, The Rise *of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, And the
Future of the Region*, Palgrave, New York 2002, p. 121
[90] Gohari, M.J. *The Taliban: Ascent to Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 101
[91] Ibid.

cornerstones of its creation of a "pure" Islamist state. As the Taliban's ideology was greatly influenced by both a Pakistan strand of Deobandism and Pashtun tribal codes, its control over the government and schools was met with extreme consternation by other ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan.

The office of the Minister of Education assumed a primary significance to the Taliban's vision of a reconstituted Afghanistan. The ministry of education was in charge of purging all corruptive foreign and communist influences from curriculums which had been used for the past decade and a half in Afghanistan. Postwar school curricula were painstakingly deconstructed by mullahs searching for heresies. It was of utmost importance to the Taliban that its ideological prescriptions were strictly adhered to and propagated.[92] Not only the content of the curriculum received meticulous attention from the ministry of education, but also the composition of the student body, especially the role of women in education, became one of the hallmarks of the regime. As the Taliban sought a "return" to strict societal prescriptions in accordance with a severe interpretation of Shari'a law, one of its most visible and controversial tactics of asserting its power was the prohibition of female education.

An estimated 106,256 girls, 148,223 boys and 7,793 women teachers were affected by the Taliban's prohibitions on the participation of females in education.[93] In 1998 all girls' schools were closed. Although some girls were allowed to be home-schooled, and private international aid agencies supported many private home-schooling

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[92] Koepke, Bruce, "Finding A Balance between Religious Orthodoxy and the Maintenance of Afghanistan's Performative Traditions", Edited by Christine Noelle-Karimi, Conrad Schetter, Reinhard Schlagintweit. *Afghanistan-A Country Without a State?* IKO-Verlag fur Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2002, p. 71

[93] Griffin, Michael. *Reaping the Whirlwind*: *Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War*, London: Pluto Press, 2003, p. 132

initiatives with supplies and money, the Taliban's blind eye was erratic. The vice police

after periods of seeming to tacitly allow home-schooling for girls would suddenly raid the

teachers' apartments and arrest the teacher.[94] The Taliban minister for Education, Haji

Khulimuddin, accused foreign aid workers of promoting anti-Taliban propaganda through

home-schools and announced that all schools would have to vetted by the Ministry of

Education before they were allowed operate.[95]

Through the Taliban's attempts to control the infrastructure, content, and

composition of the educational system in Afghanistan, the classic struggle of secular

versus religious influences, conservative Deoband influenced Islam versus a more

modern vision of Islam, and regional versus centralized control of Afghanistan played

itself out once again.

VII. Post-Taliban Afghanistan and Education

During the 12 year interim from the end of the cold war in 1989 until 9/11, the

United Nations and various NGOs were engaged in primarily humanitarian support of

Afghanistan, often in the face of heightened tensions with the Taliban regime.[96]

However, despite humanitarian assistance and a low-level mission to Afghanistan in the

1990's, Afghanistan largely remained of secondary importance to the international

community prior to 9/11.

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[94] Schwittek, Peter. "About the School System under the Taliban Government" Edited by Christine Noelle-Karimi, Conrad Schetter, Reinhard Schlagintweit. *Afghanistan-A Country Without a State?* IKO-Verlag fur Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2002

[95] Gohari, M.J. *The Taliban: Ascent to Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 99

[96] Ibid

In October, 2001 the United States, backed by UN Security Council Resolution 1368[97] invaded Afghanistan. Afghanistan became an object of intervention by the international community when it materialized into a strategic threat to US security.[98] However, the realist driven invasion of Afghanistan, much to the consternation of U.S. military planners, proved to be merely the first step in a long journey to stabilize and reconstitute a sustainable Afghan state. What had initially been planned as primarily military enforcement operation by coalition forces[99] with no mandate to nation-build or provide stability operations began to take on aspects of a peace operation as the magnitude of maintaining a secure[100] Afghan state became apparent. The last section of this thesis will address the role of education in the reconstruction and peace building process in Afghanistan.

1. The Bonn Agreement:

After the initial U.S. military invasion of Afghanistan (phase I of "Operation Enduring Freedom"), an UN-supported conference was held in Bonn, Germany to re-establish the post-invasion state of Afghanistan.[101] Participants at the Bonn conference included representatives from the U.S., Russia, the six nations surrounding Afghanistan, aw well as representatives from four Afghan factions**.**[102] The defeated Taliban regime had no representative at the talks. This was perhaps an unavoidable exclusion, but one

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[97] 1368 (2001) of 12 September 2001 and 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001

[98] Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-Building in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan* (2003) p. 110

[99] Flavin, William, *Civil Military Operations: Afghanistan: Observations on Civil Military Operations During the First Year of Operation Enduring Freedom*, March 23, 2004

[100] By "secure" I mean no longer a terrorist haven or threat to regional stability.

[101] Goodson, Larry, *Afghanistan's Long Road to Reconstruction*, *Journal of Democracy* 14.1, 2003 p. 82-99

[102] Ibid.

which has arguably fed much of the discord in the Southern and Western regions of Afghanistan and other former Taliban strongholds.

The agenda of the Bonn conference was an ambitious one: to establish an interim government (the Afghan Interim Administration), lay out a road map for the reform of state institutions, and provide guidance for the foundation of peace and security in the region. The Bonn Agreement stipulated that:

> The interim arrangements are intended as a first step toward the establishment of a broad-based, gender sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government, and are not intended to remain in place beyond the specific period of time…[this interim authority is to] act in accordance with the basic principles and provisions contained in international instruments on human rights and international humanitarian law; cooperate in the fight against terrorism, drugs and organized crime; ensure the participation of women as well as the equitable representation of all ethnic and religious communities.[103]

The Bonn Agreement was not a peace accord, but rather a "first step" in the anticipated peace-building process.   The indeterminate language concerning the international responsibility to rebuild in both the Security Council Resolutions[104] and the Bonn agreement reflected the wariness of the UN, and the international community in general, of being saddled with the whole-scale management of a failed Afghan state.

Under the Bonn accords the sooner an Afghan-led administration could take over the reins of the state, the better. A Loya Jirga, a traditional mode of participatory governance and consultation, was held in June 2002 as the first step in a process leading

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[103] Bonn Agreement on Afghanistan's Interim Government (December 5, 2001); Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, S/2001/1154 (5 Dec. 2001)
[104] UN Security Council Resolution 1383 further outlined a strategy for the international community in Afghanistan:
> … to help the people of Afghanistan to bring to an end the tragic conflicts
> in Afghanistan and promote national reconciliation, lasting peace,
> stability and respect for human rights, as well as to cooperate with the
> international community to put an end to the use of Afghanistan as a
> base for terrorism…

to a new constitution and functioning government.[105] A time-table for national elections was set with the target date of June 2004, a particularly ambitious one for a country which had never held a democratic election.[106] In the meantime, the Afghan Transitional Authority, (now called the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan (ITGA)), was established under the leadership of Hamid Karzai with the support of the US, Russia and Iran.

Even as the Bonn agreement was negotiated ongoing and intensive security operations against Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters continued. The greatest concern at the Bonn conference was to prevent of the resumption of war and deny an ongoing base for terrorists. However an equally prominent concern was the fear of establishing an Afghan client state indefinitely dependent on the international relief and development community. It was this concern, combined with the daunting on-the-ground realities of attempting to manage a vast and insecure state, which proved to be the driving force behind the "light-footprint" approach of the international community in post-invasion Afghanistan.   This "light-footprint" approach to international aid and assistance has centered UN administrative initiatives around Kabul, to the exclusion of the Pashtun provinces, the Taliban stronghold, where fighting and ISAF/US military operations continue.

The phase of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of local security forces is particularly problematic in Afghanistan. The resurgence of 'warlordism' in the

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[105]Ibid
[106] Ibid

past two years has fed into the re-militarization of regional factions.[107]   In March 2003, the Secretary General stated:

> Security remains the most serious challenge facing the peace process in Afghanistan. Security must be improved to allow the re-establishment of the rule of law, ensure the protection of human rights, promote the reconstruction effort and facilitate the success of the complex political processes, including the development of the new constitution and the holding of free and fair elections. Afghans in many parts of the country remain unprotected by legitimate State security structures. Criminal activity by armed groups has of late been particularly evident in the north, east and south, and in many areas, confrontation between local commanders continues to contribute to instability."[108]

As the operation in Afghanistan demonstrates, a light footprint approach makes the success of a peace-building operation highly dependant on the political dynamics of local actors.[109]

It is in this context of instability, continued factionalization and lessening international attention that the role of education in the future Afghan state becomes all the more critical to its health and survival.

2. Education and Reconstruction

This section will focus on the role of education in internal conflict and as a building block of post-Taliban reconstruction. The role of education in Afghan politics is now, perhaps more than ever, a bell-weather for the strength and legitimacy of the post-Taliban government. Education is inextricably linked with reform, both of a modern

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[107] Durch, William: *Peace and Stability Operations in Afghanistan: Requirements and Force Options*, The Stimson Center, June 2003

[108] UN Security Council, The Situation In Afghanistan And Its Implications For International Peace And Security Report Of The Secretary-General General. (New York: General Assembly 57th Session, Agenda Item 37, 18 March 2003, p. 13.

[109] Simon Chesterman, "You the people: the future of state-building", Chapter 8 in Chesterman, *You, the People: The UN, Transitional Administration and State-Building,* 2004

secular nature, and, in the case of the Taliban, a purging of corruptive non-Islamic influences. As has been demonstrated through the successive coups and civil discord in Afghanistan over the past century, tension over control of the institutions of education has often been both a precursor and a precipitant for internal conflict. If the international donor community and the fledgling Karzai government move to quickly to reform the institutions of education, without a proper base of legitimacy and the support of the rural populace, the new regime could suffer the fate of King Amanullah's. If they wait too long, the risk of a re-entrenchment of fundamentalist madrassas with an anti-modernist message in the border regions strengthens.

With the fall of the Taliban government in 2002, the UNHCR has assisted over 3.1 million Afghan refugees repatriate with an agreement with Pakistan to help it close its decades old refugee camps by late 2005.[110] This repatriation of Afghan refugees is the largest number of returning refugees in the world since 1972. The civic, political and logistical implications for repatriating millions of refugees in Afghanistan present some of the most difficult challenges in the decades ahead for the new Afghan government.[111] One of the areas of utmost importance and primary concern is the reintegration of refugee children into Afghan schools and the ability of Afghanistan's educational system to accommodate and educate its population.

Following the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, millions of dollars of aid money flowed into the country and the education system was highlighted as the one

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[110] http://www.un.org.pk/unhcr/about.htm
[111] The UNHCR estimates that only 45% of children in refugee camps in Pakistan attended school. Source: http://www.ineesite.org/about/pakistan.asp: Notes from meeting Secondary Education for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan and "Refugee education Trust for Post-Primary Education", held at UNESCO, Islamabad, 10/05/02

of the key areas for support in the post conflict situation. However, after the initial influx

of international aid, monies earmarked for education diminished dramatically in 2004 and

2005.[112] In 2002 one of the primary UN agencies working on education in Afghanistan

had a budget of over $90 million, in 2005 its budget was less than $10 million. Instead of

a widespread and coordinated effort to examine the national education curriculum and

infrastructure left in shambles after Taliban rule, international aid centered on a "Back-to-

School Campaign" which focused on enrolling children in schools, but not on the content

or quality of said schooling.[113] This joint UNICEF and USAID initiative did succeed in

dramatically increasing school enrollment, especially for primary school-aged children,

but at the same time heavily relied on reprinting some of the same textbooks which were

in circulation during the 1980's in the Pakistan refugee camps. These UNO (University

of Nebraska Omaha) textbooks from the 1980's were the same that had emphasized

violent imagery and holy war against the communists.[114] Thus the large initial influx of

aid was used primarily to expand the distribution of outdated and outmoded textbooks

from the mujahideen years and expand the enrollment of children, without a systematic

review of the national curriculum.

In recognition of this problematic use of textbooks from the 1980's filled with

violent imagery, UNICEF in conjunction with a research team from Columbia University

Teachers College worked with Afghanistan's new Ministry of Education to reform the

primary school textbooks. However, the proposed changes to the textbooks removed

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[112] Spink, Jeaniene "Education and politics in Afghanistan: the importance of an education system in peacebuilding and reconstruction" Journal of Peace education, Vol. 2, No 2, Sept 2005 pp. 195-207
[113] Ibid.
[114] Spink, Jeaniene "Education and politics in Afghanistan: the importance of an education system in peacebuilding and reconstruction" Journal of Peace education, Vol. 2, No 2, Sept 2005 pp. 195-207

some of the religious content and were ultimately rejected by the newly appointed Minister of Education, Yunous Qanooni, one of the primary opposition candidates to Hamid Karzai,.[115] Minister Yunous Qanooni, a Panjsheri Tajik is a graduate from the Dar ul Uloom Madrassa in Kabul, and has advocated for a more conservative religious philosophy in the schools. Minister Qanooni expressed his strong disapproval of the UNICEF curriculum as being developed by 'outsiders'. A compromise curriculum which would have included a more moderate version of Islam was never enacted due to diminishing finances in the ministry. The reform of the national curriculum remains an extremely contentious and hot button topic in the new government.[116]

By the start of 2004, there were more than four million Afghan children enrolled in school (UNICEF, 2004). In addition to the concerns of forming a national curriculum, a survey conducted by the Agha Khan foundation in the northern provinces of Afghanistan found that over 10 percent of teachers have never attended a school, and of the rest, the majority had been educated only in madrassas near the border region of Pakistan.[117] Thus, in addition to the materials and textbooks, teacher training itself remains a primary concern as the new Afghan government promotes its "Back-to-School" campaign..

Since the collapse of the Taliban government and the election of the new Afghan government of Hamid Karzai, the struggle for state versus local control of the schools has continued. The return of 3 million refugees, many of who were educated for years in the

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[115] Ibid.
[116] Thomas Gouttierre, "Basic Education in Pakistan and Afghanistan: The Current Crisis and Beyond," Presentation at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, December 17, 2001, http://www.brookingsinstutiotn.org/dybdocroot/comm/transcripts/20011217.htm
[117] Spink, Jeaniene "Situational analysis: teacher education and professional development in Afghanistan (Kabul, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)) 2004

refugee camps in Pakistan, will most likely have a significant impact on the nature of the education system and affect the balance between strict madrassas and more liberal institutions. It remains to be seen whether the enrollment of girls in school and indeed the general educational attainment level of the populace as a whole will improve. What is certain is that the reshaping and metamorphosis of the educational system is of greatest importance to the stability and growth of the new Afghanistan. [118]

3. Recommendations for Education Reform

In the case of Afghanistan, the rebuilding a previously failed state with no tradition of strong central authority, an drug economy and armed clan rivalry is a far greater task than the loose and imprecise language of the Bonn Accords, the subsequent UNAMA political mission, and Coalition forces were prepared for. A systematic examination of the education system in Afghanistan, with particular attention paid to the Northern provinces where Deobandis madrassas continue to flourish due to lack of alternatives and popularity is an immense, but essential task in ensuring the vitality of a new Afghan state and prevention of extremist re-entrenchment. A realistic assessment of educational alternatives and strategies that can diminish the spread of fundamentalist Madrassas without raising the specter of reactionary revolt is crucial to the maintenance of a secure Afghan State.

Madrassas serve a critical role in the community and it is necessary to emphasize that the percentage which espouse a radical ideology are small. It is attendant that policy makers not leap to conclusions about the connection of all madrassas to radical extremism. Such a connection would not only be false, but lead to injurious tactics

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[118] Afghanistan in 1996 had the highest illiteracy rate in Asia, for both men and women.

against madrassas which would likely alienate the very communities and individuals which are essential to the maintenance of a moderate system of education. The US government risks using an all too heavy hand in becoming involved in the educational systems of Afghanistan, but it risks infinitely more by doing nothing and letting a system whose decay it is largely responsible for, continue. The lessons of education's turbulent history in Afghanistan, in particular the rise of extremist Madrassas can inform the future direction of education for the Afghan government, promoting state stability and mitigating the rise of extremism.

The U.S. government should emphasize private donors over government streams of money, as private donors might be less politically charged. A recent USAID publication, *Foreign Aid in the National Interest*, states that private voluntary organizations are more well suited to "operate in politically sensitive situations" than government contractors.[119]

Decentralization has become a common feature of education reform proposals in many countries. This can take the form of devolution of powers from a central Ministry to regional or local authorities for matters such as education planning and the allocation of resources. Further decentralization of school management, finance, advisory and inspection systems can be a means of democratizing and improving the quality of education by increasing participation, ownership and accountability. However, in situations of conflict, the benefits of decentralization of education may also carry risks. For example, decentralization of education is susceptible to partisan decision-making influenced by local politics and carries the potential for dominant groups to force their views. In certain contexts decentralization may also exacerbate the exclusion of women

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[119] USAID *Foreign Aid in the National Interest*, p. 141

from consultation, decision-making and participation. In the context of Afghanistan, the reach of the central government is still very weak and in practical terms limited to Kabul and the surrounding regions. Thus, a decentralized approach to education might be the only feasible model.

The fundamental problem of reconstruction is that it may seem to re-establish a situation that was only transient. In Afghanistan, for example, processes of reconstruction had scarcely been under way when a new phase of conflict erupted, and with it came totally new ideas about the functions of the state, including education. Furthermore, investments made during such periods can prove to be a burden to the new administration and might even cause its collapse. Unless massive resources are provided, coupled with security protection, reconstruction is unlikely to stabilize a situation that would otherwise revert to conflict. However, within a framework of decentralization which leaves the bulk of educational decision making to localities, the national government can enact safeguards to mitigate the possibility of fundamentalist re-entrenchment in local madrassas through selective engagement. It is useful to examine the recent madrassa reform movement undertaken by President Perez Musharraf in Pakistan as it might provide signposts to education reformers in Afghanistan. This effort has centered around two separate tactics: regulation and reform of madrassas which are often seen as outside of the purview of central government..

The first approach, that of reform, concentrates on measures that tighten government regulation and control over the madrassas. This reform tactic has included compulsory madrassa-registration, curricular reform mandates and the restriction of

foreign students enrolled in Madrassas.[120] In terms of curricular reform, the "Pakistan Madrassa Education Board Ordinance 2001" attempted to mainstream madrassas by introducing secular subjects. This model madrassa curriculum included: English, Mathematics, Computer Science, Economics, Political Science, Law and Pakistan studies were roundly rejected by the ulema as being alien and Western dominated.[121] A separate law, the "Voluntary Registration and Regulation Ordinance", 2002 which attempted to catalogue the madrassa and their principals, has been largely unsuccessful with only and estimated 1/10th of madrassas registering.[122] As Alexander Evans suggested in a January 2006 article for *Foreign Affairs*, the example of India may prove a more useful one for the fledgling post-Taliban Afghan state. India with a Muslim population of over 138 million and a tradition of minority rights has had to confront the specter of growing extremism in some regions. While traditionally religious minorities under the Indian Constitution have had the right establish and administer schools, the Indian government has used laws established to prevent incitement to violence to shut down or otherwise intercede in a Madrassa which is viewed as advocating violent extremism.[123]

One of the new initiatives undertaken in India to mitigate the potential for extremism in Madrassas that the government will pay for English, math, and science teachers in private madrassas in the madrassas applies to the program. In exchange for applying to the program, the madrassa will be given a fully funded teacher in one of the above secular subjects. This plan has a double benefit, it reduces the risk of backlash

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[120] Evans, Alexander Understanding Madrasas, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2006, p. 3
[121] Rahman, Tariq "The Madrasa and the State of Pakistan: Religion, Poverty and the Potential for violence in Pakistan. HIMAL South Asian, February 2004.
[122] Singer, P.W. *Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education not Jihad*. Washington DC: Brookings Institutions Analysis Papers #41, 2001
[123] Evans, Alexander Understanding Madrasas, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2006, p. 3

among the Madrassas to the state as it is a voluntary program, and it befits the madrassa as it will receive a fully funded a qualified teacher in a greatly in demand subject. In 2001, 3,500 out of 6,000 madrassas in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh received funds for teachers of modern subjects, reaching some 175,000 students.[124] This incentive based approach towards moderating extremist Madrassas might be a good fit in Afghanistan, where history shows that overt government interference in the provincial schools is seen as an overreach of governmental authority and has sparked political violence in the past.

Madrassas do not need to be closed or tightly regulated. Thousands of madrassas are a pillar of their communities and play an important social role. According to Evans, "the leaders of most madrassas are willing to consider changing the way they work, although they are bound to defend what they stand for."[125] A suggested way forward is for the government of Afghanistan to encourage modernization but avoid insisting on secularization, which would be taken as declaration of war on Muslim education. "Reform of the madrassa system will ultimately be spurred by competition from within— and the more competition, the better."[126]

In addition to nationwide incentives for madrassas to moderate their curriculum and include secular subjects, a practical eye needs to be turned to the reintegration of the refugee populations. Hindsight is twenty/twenty, the fragmented and politicized funding and control over education in the Pakistan refugee camps demonstrates the impact that a militarized education system can have in mobilizing a populace, and the consequences it bears down the road for reintegration. Education can play a critical role in helping refugee children return to normalcy and lay a foundation for productive engagement in

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[124] Evans, Alexander Understanding Madrasas, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2006, p. 3
[125] Ibid. p. 4
[126] Ibid. p. 4

society and diminish their potential for radical recruitment. While flexibility is essential in responding to a unique refugee crisis, an ad-hoc approach to education ensures that there are lapses in the provision of education and that often a crucial window of opportunity to promote structured education and reconciliation programs in the camps can be missed due to a lag in start-up time. This was the case in the refugee camps in Pakistan, where the international aid community did not prioritize formal education interventions in the camps until the early 90's, allowing for the spread of radical Madrassas in the vacuum of alternative educational opportunities in the camps.

In addition to promoting a more formalized and uniform approach to the funding and structure of crisis education, government and NGO actors designing peace building and reconstruction programs in Afghanistan should gain a clearer picture of the returnee population in terms of educational preferences and attitudes towards the existing school system, the placement and content of the school curriculum can be honed to promote successful refugee reintegration into the Afghan communities. It can also be used to address refugee concerns about existing educational structures, a concern which in the past has been viewed as precipitant to civil strife, such as the unilateral imposition of secular schooling and the emergence of fundamentalist Madrassas in response to local resistance.

VIII: Conclusion

The imposition of secular education in Afghanistan in the twentieth century has acted as both a precipitant and precursor to political violence. During the Soviet invasion, the education system was viewed as dominated by the communists, and thus a hostile

institution and strategy to undermine Islam. This formulation led to a militant reactionary response and an increase in the support of more extremist schools, namely Deobandis madrassas, both within Afghanistan, and in the border regions of Pakistan where millions of Afghan refugees had fled. The use of Madrassas as a strategic tool to recruit Mujahid, and their role in the formation of the Taliban demonstrates the importance of education as a strategy in war, and its necessary consideration in peacebuilding and reconstruction.

The historic dynamics of secular and religious education in Afghanistan and Pakistan suggests that the path towards the mitigation of extremist and the support of moderate institutions of education is not through a direct confrontation with the system of madrassa education as a whole, which could be seen as an attack upon traditional Islam, but rather through positive engagement. Madrassas should be actively engaged by the government of Afghanistan, with moderate madrassas rewarded and incentives provided to the attendees and graduates of such schools. This policy of selective engagement rather than centralized control creates the space for moderate madrassas to be viewed as legitimate and not state-dominated while allowing room for more substantial measures for those few madrassas viewed as problematic. Moderation, not elimination is the only realistic policy alternative given the dynamics of education in the region.

There are short, medium and long term implications of working out a more strategic, systemic approach to the provision of education in conflict situations. The greatest challenge is to develop better understanding and awareness of the links between education and conflict as an integral and routine part of policy, planning and practice amongst those working within all levels of the education and development sector. The

daunting and often indirect nature of education's role in security should not let it lie fallow as an area of security research. As the case of Afghanistan demonstrates, time and time again the lack of attention to the modes of education, the philosophies they transmit, and the support and sustenance they can give to military causes has fueled conflict and undermined security. Education as a pillar of sustainable security is an area of research which necessitates further sustained attention and active analysis.

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