

PAKISTANI MADRASSA SYSTEM AND FOREIGN STUDENTS TALKING POINTS

NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS IN PAKISTANI MADRASSA SYSTEM:

- Only July 7, 2005, four British nationals, three of which were of Pakistani decent detonated several bombs in the London subway system. Two of those bombers were educated at Pakistani Madrassas.
- Since Sept. 11, 2001 and the London attacks in 2005, madrassas have come under intense international scrutiny for their anti-Western sentiment and links to terrorism.
- There has been an increase number of “political” madrassas that mass-produce extremists with a political agenda, including a narrow view of society and no tolerance of Western culture, radicalize Muslims towards a jihadi terrorism ideology.
- The Pakistani region is an important piece of the War on Terror and the U.S. must continue to focus on succeeding both militarily and politically.
- Britain's Daily Telegraph drew attention to the Dar ul-Uloom Islamia madrassa in the town of Charsadda. Situated in the remote mountains near the border with Afghanistan, the school instructed future leaders in Afghanistan's Taliban regime, such as commander Jalaluddin Haqqani, who is high on the United States' most-wanted list in Afghanistan. (South Asia Times, “Slow learning curve at Pakistan's madrassas”; March 10, 2004)
- The Pakistani Islamic theologian, Maulana Sami ul-Haq, runs Darul Uloom Haqqania and was chairman of the pro-Taliban anti-Western Pak-Afghan Defence Force and was once imprisoned by Musharraf, but was released. “Haqqania is known in Pakistan as Jihad University, a name not bestowed on it by a sensationalist media but by the Maulana and his charges themselves.” (Newsweek's The Bulletin, “Jihad Generation”, August 2, 2005)
- The Haqqania boasts almost the entire Taliban leadership among its graduates, including Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban. (Asia Times, “Learning from Pakistan's Madrassa”, June 23, 2004)
- European Union reported that as many as 30 percent of the Taliban's fighters attended madrassas. (South Asia Times, “Slow Learning Ccurve at Pakistan's Madrassas”, March 10, 2004)
- In 2005, Professor Saleem Ali, of the University of Vermont, spent four months in Pakistan investigating madrassas. While he cautions against branding all madrassas as jihad factories, he did find that “Madrassas, despite their noble past, are in dire straits right now and need reform... There is a tremendous degree of intolerance that is part of the madrassa culture. This must be addressed.” Professor Ali says throughout much of their existence, they preached tolerance toward other religions. But today, the heart of the problem, he says, lies in a very different message - one of strong dislike of those who are different. He says part of the change began with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. (Voice of American.com, “Analysts Say Many Pakistani Madrassas Teach Worldview of Intolerance”; July 20, 2005)

- Pakistani Clerics have tried to recruit children as young as 14 years old to become suicide bombers and target our military troops in Afghanistan. One boy, with only four months education in a Pakistani Islamic madrassa, said that if he agreed to go across the border to Afghanistan and kill foreign soldiers, he wouldn't die, even though he was in the car filled with explosives. (The Chicago Chronicle, "At 14, he's a suicide recruit", May 27, 2008)
- Faqir Mohammed, an al-Qaeda commander in the Bajur tribal district of Pakistan, gave shelter to Taliban leaders and was a vocal supporter of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden. He told his students that it was their responsibility to support the Taliban and Osama bin Laden because Bin Laden says they are at war with people who are fighting Islam. He urged his students to support the mujahedeen and war with the West. In his public speeches Mohammed has said, "it is our moral and religious obligation to support mujahedeen, to provide protection for mujahedeen, and shelter for others who have left their homes to perform jihad." Moreover, Mohammed has been accused of providing shelter to militants and even invited bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, to the madrassa. (NBC News "On-scene at Blasted Pakistan Madrassa", October 31, 2006).
- "Even more alarming for our security forces is the fact that hundreds, if not thousands, of the young British Muslim men and women who are sent to study at Pakistan's madrassas return to these shores filled with the conviction that it is their Islamic duty to sacrifice their lives as suicide bombers." (Telegraph.co.uk, "Our safety is in the hands of Pakistan:", July 17, 2005)
- In 2004 Pakistan's government approved more than US\$100 million for madrassas participating in the modernization program. About 80 percent of an estimated 10,000 madrassas are to receive those funds - meaning 20 percent of the madrassas have not met Islamabad's reform criteria. According to a World Bank study, that is about the same number of madrassas that were sending their students to camps for military training when Musharraf's reform program was launched. (South Asia Times, "Slow learning curve at Pakistan's madrassas"; March 10, 2004)

THE JAMIA BINORIA INSTITUTE IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN

- The Binori madrassa, whose assassinated leader Mufti Shamzai, was once talked about as a possible hiding place of Osama bin Laden. The Madrassa is also reportedly the place where bin Laden met Mullah Omar to form the al-Qaeda-Taliban partnership. (Asia Times, "Learning from Pakistan's madrassa", June 23, 2004)
- The Binoria madrassa prominently displays a banner supporting the Taliban.
- Shortly before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, Osama bin Laden spoke to students at the Binoria madrassa about the importance of jihad. (The Jihad Next Door: The Lackawana Six and Rough Justice in the Age of Terror, PublicAffairs: 2007)
- The Binoria madrassa is known to recruit Americans most aggressively. Mufti Muhammad Naeem, the head and founder of the Binoria madrassa, says on the Karachi Kids documentary that there are 80 Americans enrolled in his madrassa, and other many other students from American allied countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom. (www.karachikids.com)

AMERICAN CITIZENS AND FOREIGNERS IN PAKISTANI MADRASSAS

- Noor Elahi Khan, 17, and Mahboob Elahi Khan, 16, of Atlanta, GA, are being held at the Jamia Binoria Institute in Karachi, recognized by both the U.S. and Pakistani governments as one of the most radical madrassas in Pakistan. The boys enrolled in Binoria in August 2004, and have expressed the desire to leave Pakistan since their arrival. They talk of beating from their teachers (Karachi Kids Documentary, www.karachikids.com)
- While it is believed that there are 600 American boys being educated in 22 madrassas in Pakistan, there are no official numbers.
- Foreign students in Pakistani madrassas come from all over the world, including countries allied with the United States, such as Canada and the United Kingdom. These countries have easier travel policies between their citizens and the United States border. Moreover, there are estimated to be hundreds of American citizens in Pakistani madrassas all of which hold American passports and have open access to the United States.

PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- In 2005, after the London bombings, President Musharraf announced an edict stating that all foreign student must be expelled from Pakistani madrassas, and that there needed to be a reform of the madrassa curriculum.
- On July 4, 2008, the newly elected civilian government stated their need to register and reform the Madrassa system in Pakistan, and to remove any foreign students and return them to their home countries.
- Despite both edicts, the many madrassas still educate foreign students and refuse to release them.

HISTORY OF PAKISTANI MADRASSAS

- Prior to the 1970s, Pakistani madrassas largely followed the Dars-i-Nizamia curriculum, which was to combine Islamic teachings with rational sciences to train the madrassa pupils to become lawyers, judges and administrators. In the 1970's and 1980's, the Deobandi curriculum took over and secular subjects like mathematics and sciences, in part or whole, were dropped and replaced with memorizing the Koran and studying the obligation and rewards of violent jihad. The madrassas taught the young students that the world was divided into believers and unbelievers in a black and white setting. The curriculum started emphasizing the need for Islamic warriors or jihadis to "liberate" regions dominated by unbelievers as well as "purify" Islamic nations in order to establish a single Islamic caliphate where pure Islam would be followed. The students were taught that the only means to achieving this Utopian state was by waging a near-perpetual war, pursued by any and all means against unbelievers as well as "impure" sects within Muslims. ([Asia Times](#), "Learning from Pakistan's madrassa"; June 23, 2004)