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PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC PARADIGM: ESCAPING THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR

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INTRODUCTION: IS RELIGION THE OPIUM OF ANALYSTS?

To begin, oversimplification must be avoided. Of course, when discussing Pakistan, the religious issue is a legitimate one. The country was after all founded on the "theory of two nations", declaring Hindus and Muslims to be too different to live together in the new India promised for independence, during the last days of the British Empire on the subcontinent. The 1947 partition spawned this mentality of difference in the bloody massacres and a staggering flow of refugees, giving birth to a Muslim Pakistan on either side of India. Looking past the obvious, however, the issue of religious belonging and its impact on social dynamics and the states' geopolitics is a major intellectual and strategic challenge, in particular in this situation where religious identity was originally a basis for the structural foundations of the nation.

There are two countering paradigms on this issue. The first, like Samuel Huntington, evokes the clash of civilisations, which Al Qaeda and radical Islam claim as a global aim. The second, more complex, which developed through the contribution of the social sciences, declares on the contrary that identity is constructed and received in equal measure and identities are always pluralist. This paradigm also stresses the significance of the interconnection of religious and non-religious factors. Factors such as power struggles, nationalism, social and economic parameters, political context explain how a radical ideology remains marginal, or, inversely, prospers and spreads, or, in a third scenario, spurs on the smallest of minority groups that are highly active in their effort to destabilise, which can become terrorism. The third aspect, which also refutes excessive simplification, is the internal fractures within Islam. For this reason, the radical forces that preach jihad are also unwittingly capable of provoking *fitna*, "*the obsessive sectarian fear of ulemas, the doctors of the law*", Gilles Kepel tells us – in other words, it is division and chaos, or "the war at the heart of Islam" (Kepel, 2004).

Throughout its short history, and especially today, Pakistan has witnessed all of these issues. The situation is well known: the country has around 180 million inhabitants, making it the second-greatest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Its Armed Forces are 600,000-strong, and it is equipped with growing nuclear power; it is a hub of extremist and terrorist networks, between India, against which it has battled in four wars, and Afghanistan, which is supposed to guarantee its strategic depth against the powerful neighbour to the east. It is not a failed state, but a country with a turbulent political life, where the armed forces play the dominant role. Pakistan twice found itself as a "front state" at Washington's service, for the two Afghan wars: against the Soviets in the 1980s, and against "terror", to use the term coined by the Bush administration, in the 2000s. Between the two, the 1990s was an important decade, as during those years Islamabad sent Pakistani jihadists to Kashmir, and Afghan Taliban from Pakistani madrassas to conquer Kandahar and Kabul.

However, the question remains: Is religion the opium of analysts? (Racine, 2006). Could the religious factor, while significant, be overestimated in the common narrative? The answer, which this article attempts to defend, is less likely to be found in the diminution of the role of religion in the development of Pakistan and more so in a detailed look at the instrumentalisation of Islam for domestic policy gain and strategic ambitions. This instrumentalisation brings with it the risk of

rampant radicalisation, which goes against Pakistan's initial ideology borne by its founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Examining the role of religious ideology in the conflicts affecting Pakistan requires studying in detail the wars waged by the Pakistani authorities against its Indian neighbour and against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, which were open or asymmetrical wars conducted by proxy. Another element that must be analysed in detail is the reasoning behind the civil war that led to the creation of Bangladesh, and especially today, to reflect on war in terms of a rebellion against state power, with a risk of civil war, and think of terrorism as a tool in the combat.

To go about this study, it is important to describe the role of Islam in the creation of the Pakistani nation in the mid-20th century, and, going beyond this initial statement, to remember the extent to which the debate over Islam and identity have haunted its national history. It shall then go on to analyse Pakistan's strategic paradigm, as declared since the 1990s and since September 11th, 2001, in order to highlight the stalemate brought by the military, at the heart of the State's power, in attempting to use Islam for geopolitical purposes, to the point of bringing the country "to the brink, to use Ahmed Rashid's words (Rashid, 2012).

■ DEFINING ISLAM IN THE NEW PAKISTAN

THE TWO-NATION THEORY

In 1940, the Muslim League met in Lahore, and reached a critical milestone in its political doctrine. The speech given by its president, Muhammed Ali Jinna, proposed the two-nation theory, supported by the following reasoning:

> "The Hindus and the Muslims belong to different religious philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither intermarry, nor interdine together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations, which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions (…). To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and the final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the Government of the State. (…). Musalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation, and they must have their homeland, their territory and their State" (Saeeduddin, 1998: 85-106).

The League then adopted a short resolution, the anniversary of which became one of Pakistan's two national holidays: the Lahore Resolution, 1940, also known as "the Pakistan Resolution" (although the word Pakistan is not mentioned), is indeed seen as the political turning point which gave rise in 1947 to the concurrent birth of independent India and Pakistan. The resolution explicitly guarantees the rights of minorities, but remains vague on the concept of independent states (plural) and the extent of their autonomy and sovereignty. A committee was tasked with preparing a more precise draft constitution based on these principles.

In the meantime, negotiations with the Congress Party presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru did not succeed in establishing a confederation that gave the Muslim lands enough independence. With wrongs committed on both sides, the "day for direct action" launched on 16 August 1946 by the Muslim League in Calcutta, in a province where the League governed, ended with bloodshed and served only to widen the gap between the two religious communities. The Congress, meanwhile, was too opposed to the two-nation theory to conceive of a confederation where the elements would be defined by their religious identity. This failure brought the British government, who wished to wash its hands of the situation as soon as possible, to approve the implementation of the Partition, which was not in the least a success, especially in the west, between New Delhi and Lahore, where the great Punjab province was split in two by a new border set according to the census of 1931 that identified the religious identity of the inhabitants. For months, the partition was the cause of massacre. While certain well-off Muslims in the north of India voluntarily moved to Pakistan, many in Punjab fled the widespread killings: Muslims left for Pakistan, while Hindus and Sikhs left the new Pakistan for India, in what remains today one of the greatest disasters in human history. The partition syndrome traumatised the two countries for a long time, heightened by the issue of Kashmir, a princely state attached to India by its maharaja as the rules of the Partition allowed, though it was a majority Muslim state and a neighbour of Pakistan.

FROM A STATE FOR MUSLIMS TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

With the state of Pakistan now a reality, what role would it give to Islam? Three days before independence, on 11 August 1947, Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared in his opening address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan what is now a reference for liberal Pakistanis:

> "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed, that has nothing to do with the business of the State (...). In the course of time, Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State" (Jinnah, 1947).

When Jinnah died, his right-hand man, Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister, held a vote amongst the Constituent Assembly on the "Objectives Resolution" in 1949. This cornerstone text proclaims the universal power of Allah, who delegates his power through the people to the State of Pakistan, which must fully respect "the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam". In his assembly address, Khan declared that "the State will create such conditions as are conducive to the building of a truly Islamic society" and would thereby become "a laboratory for the purpose of demonstrating to the world that Islam is not only a progressive force in the world, but it also provides remedies for many of the ills from which has been suffering". He declared, as Jinnah had before him, that a State that followed the principles of Islam would not be theocratic: "Islam does not recognise either priesthood or any sacerdotal authority; and, therefore, the question of a theocracy simply does not arise in Islam" (Saeeduddin, 1998).

In the political disarray that followed the death of Jinnah, the Constituent Assembly made little progress and the first Constitution of Pakistan only materialised in 1956. It proclaims the Islamic

Republic, but Sharia law is not enforced. General Ayub Khan, who led the first military coup d'état in 1958, suspended this constitution, without according a greater role to Islam. Paradoxically, it was a supposed modernist, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former minister to Ayub Khan, who restored the Islamic Republic after a long period of military rule (1958-1971) in the Constitution of 1973, making Islam the state religion and therefore the religion of the President and the Prime Minister, as no existing or future law could go against the principles of Islam. An Islamic Council was established under the Constitution in order "to make recommendations to the Parliament and the provincial Assemblies as to the ways and means of enabling and encouraging the Muslims of Pakistan to order their lives individually and collectively in all respects in accordance with the principles and concepts of Islam as, enunciated in the Holy Quran and Sunnah", and "to advise a House, a Provincial Assembly, the President or a Governor on any question referred to the Council as to whether a proposed law is or is not repugnant to the injunctions of Islam" (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973: Article 230). Of course, in such a framework,just who is Muslim must also be known. It was under Bhutto, the rhetorician of "Islamic socialism", that the Ahmadi minority was officially excluded from Islam in 1974.

Three years later, Bhutto was overthrown by the Chief of Army Staff, General Zia ul Haq. Zia, who had Bhutto executed, greatly contributed to the radicalisation of Pakistan, for reasons that were both ideological – he was close to the strict school of Deobandi Islam – and strategic. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan offered the Pakistani military regime a window of opportunity that enabled it to regain the support of the United States, concerned about its clandestine nuclear programme. American (and Saudi) support to the Afghan mujahedeen mostly came through Pakistan: the special services in the military, Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), became greatly powerful thanks to this. At the same time, Zia was encouraging greater Islamisation in the armed forces, evidenced in the ideological training of officers and the adopting of a new motto for the armed forces: —"Iman, Taqwa, Jihad-fi-Sabilillah: A follower of none but Allah, the fear of Allah, Jihad for Allah" – and in the preface that Zia wrote for a book written by a brigadier general published in 1979 on "The Quranic Concept of War" (Malik, 1979). Any war with India, openly or secretly, since the Pakistani militia entered Kashmir in 1947 up to the war in 1965 led by the secular-minded Ayub Khan, had long been seen as jihad, as was the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Anti-India nationalism was often expressed, in the military environment, as a movement of Muslim revenge against the Hindus, or against the enemies of Islam: it is not by chance that the four companies of Pakistan's Military Academy, as Brigadier General Siddiqui mentions, bear the name of great warriors of Islam: Tariq – named for Tariq ibn Ziyad, conqueror of Spain; Qasim, after Muhammad bin Qasim, conqueror of the Sindh and Punjab regions; Khalid, after Khalid ibn al Wahid, companion of the Prophet and conqueror of Iraq; and Salahuddin, after Saladin of the Crusades (Siddiqui, 2011).

RELIGIOUS AND ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITIES

However, the great plan for the nation was to suffer a major setback after the first general elections were held, which wasn't until 1970. The winner of the election was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League, which called for maximum autonomy for East Pakistan, which was established in the region of Bengal. Bhutto's denial of this victory led to a Bengali uprising in East Pakistan, which was brutally crushed by the Pakistan Armed Forces and its local militia, but India's military supported the

insurgency, under Indira Gandhi. Indian troops took Dhaka in December 1971 and made 90,000 Pakistani soldiers its prisoners. The two-part Pakistan, East and West, born of the 1947 partition, had come to an end. Ethnolinguistic identity won over the religious basis for the two-nation theory. Nonetheless, the Muslim Bengalis of East Pakistan did not return to neighbouring India: they created an independent state, called Bangladesh; its 1972 Constitution was amended in 1977 and 1988, with Islam becoming in that year the state religion, though Bangladesh is not an Islamic Republic today.

In the Pakistan of 1972, diminished in size but much more coherent geographically, ethnolinguistic diversity remains an unavoidable reality that the religious mortar is not always strong enough to transcend. Punjabis are greater in number (55% of the population in the census of 1998[2], including the Seraikis of South Punjab, which count for 10%) and carry a greater economic weight than other provinces. The Pashtuns, near the Afghan border, represented 15% of the population in 1998, a little more than the Sindhis, on the Indian border (14%) and much greater in number than the Baloch people (close to 4%, spread across the largest of the Pakistani provinces). The Muslim people that came from India during or after the Partition, the Muhajirs, represent 8% of the population. Karachi, the main port and financial capital of the country, is their bastion, home of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a very active and occasionally very violent mouthpiece for the Muhajirs.

Despite its name (National United Movement), the MQM once played with the idea of separating Karachi from Pakistan, to create a Singapore between India and the Gulf. The Sindhis, uncomfortable with the power of the Muhajirs in their greatest city, also had a nationalist movement, today weakened but still present, which once called for an independent Sindh region, and which still attempts to link its democratic hopes to Sufism in popular Islam. Balochistan has seen a number of uprisings since its integration into Pakistan. Baloch separatists, of ancient tradition, continue to suffer tough military repression. The Baloch Liberation Front is the main political mouthpiece, while the Baloch Liberation Army is classed as a terrorist organisation by Washington. The separatists of Gilgit Baltistan are less vocal, and today have outlets in the United States.

The major Pashtun issue is perhaps the most strategic one: the Durand Line, drawn by the British in 1893 after failing to conquer Afghanistan, remains the mountainous border separating Afghanistan from Pakistan, but it was never recognised by Kabul, even when the Taliban were in power. This border splits the population area of the Pashtuns, greater in number in Pakistan though still a minority in a country of 180 million inhabitants, while they represent 40% of the Afghan population. The spectre of Pashtun separatism haunts the Pakistani military (a majority of whom are Punjabi, though there are a large number of Pashtuns in its ranks). The Awami National Party, of ancient tradition and politically left, declares itself the voice of the Pashtuns. Its historic leader, Khan Abdul Wali Khan (1917-2006), former member of the Congress Party, did not support the creation of Pakistan, and fought for maximum autonomy for the North West Frontier Province (which was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010) before falling out of favour after the split of the Awami National Party, which went on to fully support the move for the Pakistani state. The fear of a "greater Pashtunistan" that would join all Pashtun areas on either side of the Durand Line, though entirely hypothetical, continues to be a catastrophic scenario for Pakistani strategists, especially given that traditionally the frontier tribes cross the Durand Line without having to pass by the border control

[2] This does not include the Northern Territories, modern-day Gilgit Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir, claimed by India. They are inhabited by around 6 million people speaking a variety of languages.

posts set up on the two major roads connecting Pakistan to Afghanistan. One, in the north, connects Peshawar to Jalalabad and Kabul via the Khyber Pass, and one travels from Karachi and Quetta to Kandahar, via Chaman in the south. These have been the two NATO supply routes throughout the 2000s.

To counter the Pashtun risk, various strategies have been implemented. The first consists of providing support to the Afghan Pashtun insurgents: these were the mujahedeen that rebelled against the Soviets in the years from 1979-89, Taliban of Afghanistan or Afghan Taliban that came from the madrassas of Pakistan from 1994 on. This could appear risky, as it reinforces cross-border networks. Its aims are to establish lasting political networks in order to make sure that the governing power in Kabul is close to Pakistani interests: a strategy quite effective for a long period, but which met with strong resistance under the second mandate of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The second strategy seeks to highlight religious affiliations, at the expense of the ethnic affiliation. This was the strategy of General Pervez Musharraf, using the special services, which aimed to create a coalition of Islamist parties capable of defeating the Awami National Party. In the 2002 elections, this strategy had great success, with the United Council for Action (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal: MMA), an ad hoc alliance of five religious parties coming to power in the North West Frontier Province, sharing power with the pro-Musharraf party in Balochistan. This move was also to lessen the weight of the two major political forces in the country, the Pakistan People's Party led by Benazir Bhutto and the Muslim League-N, led by Nawaz Sharif, both leaders being in exile at the time. At its height, this Islamist coalition had 58 seats out of 342 in the National Parliament, a remarkable number that made it, on paper, the second political force in the country. The ex-MMA split in 2008, and having mostly boycotted the election, it got only seven representatives, belonging to Jamiat-e Ulema-e Islam (with 2.2% of the national votes).

For the military, this political Islamism, which could play the election game while being capable of rallying people in the street, was however one of several cards they could play for a dangerous game. Pakistani Islamism is particularly complex, with different types of actors that all have a role to play in Pakistani strategy. Here, it is necessary to give a brief outline of the Islamist sphere.

THE ISLAMIST SPHERE IN PAKISTAN

Pakistani Islam is mostly Sunni, with the Shiite minority generally estimated at less than 25% of the population. The influence of Sufism is (or was?) a determining element: "popular" Islam, which is attached to the belief in saints, is the most widespread. From Qawali worship songs to pilgrimages to the tombs of saints, this Islam also gives structure to certain traditional forms of authority: many politicians are descendants of "pirs", holy men and spiritual guides.

This traditional Islam was challenged in the 19th century in South Asia by the strict Deobandi school, which yielded the global missionary movement active today, known as Tablighi Jamaat. While most Pakistani Sunnis are closer to the Barelvi school of thought, which is fully devoted to saint worship, Deobandi influence greatly increased under the dictatorship of General Zial ul Haq, who encouraged the setting up of more madrassas (Islamic religious schools) of Deobandi inspiration, nowadays in great majority. After the arrival of Arab fighters supporting the Afghan mujahedeen in their combat

against the Soviets, the rigorous Deobandis and Saudi Wahhabism came together with a vision that called for a return to the ideology of the first companions of the Prophet. [3]

In addition to the long-established political-religious movements, the Jamiat-e Islami and Jamiat-e Ulema-e Islam parties that wished to establish a truly Islamic state in Pakistan, in the 1980s radical activist groups began to appear, originally established in Punjab. The war in Afghanistan, depicted as a jihad, the Shiite revival brought to Iran through the rise of the ayatollahs to power in 1979, followed by the uprising amongst a group of Kashmiris in the Srinagar Valley, administered by India, gave a geopolitical context to these "sectarian" movements, as they were referred to in Pakistan, that fostered the radicalisation of violently anti-Shiite groups. The most active of these groups are Sipah-e Sahiba Pakistan, founded in 1985 (renamed Millat-e Islamia, then Ahl-e Sunnat Wal Jamaat when it was banned) and Lashkar-e Jhangvi, created in 1990. Faced with attacks from these Sunni radicals, reactionary Shiite movements such as Sipah-e Mohammad and Tehrik-e Jafria Pakistan were never strong enough to counter them, not only due to their size in numbers, but also because radical Sunni groups were protected by Pakistani services determined to exploit these extremist groups for geopolitical gain. This is where a third type of organisation appeared, alongside political-religious movements and militant sectarian groups: the cross-border fighter groups. The most well-known today is Lashkar-e Taïba, but in Kashmir a large number of Pakistani organisations had joined the fight, such as Harkat-ul Ansar which spawned other groups: Harkat-ul Mujahideen, for example, produced a breakaway group called Jaish-e Mohammad in 2000, since renamed Khuddam-ul Islam. Towards Afghanistan, the Afghan Taliban educated in Pakistani madrasas attended by Soviet era refugees (or children of refugees) were similarly organised and instrumentalised. Added to this are the Pakistani movements that united fighters prepared to battle the American forces and NATO troops arriving in Afghanistan following September 11, 2001, such as the "Pakistani-Afghan Defence Council", created at the instigation of Jamaat-e Islami, the two factions of Jamiat-e Ulema-e Islam and other Islamist organisations to save the Afghan Taliban.

The genesis and the instrumentalisation of these groups are at the heart of the dialectic between war and religion in Pakistan. It is they who gave Pakistan the strike capacity in what can be classed as asymmetric war principles – which the Indians referred to as a "proxy war" conducted against them. It is they, and all of the actors in the Islamist sphere, that formed the breeding ground where existing and new forces developed and later on turned against the state power, accompanied by a determination to destabilise the country in resorting to terrorism. In other words, some of the Islamic combatant groups set up or tolerated for transborder purposes, turned against Pakistan itself.

■ THE INSTRUMENTALISATION OF RELIGION IN PAKISTAN'S STRATEGY

The political instrumentalisation of religion by the Pakistan State is not solely due to the military. While the separation from India originally was based on religion, the initial plan for an independent state, as it was proposed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was supposed to guarantee peace between Pakistan and its neighbours. The unsolved issue of Kashmir, the democratic deficit that quickly took

[3] For an insight into Pakistani Islam in the historical context of the Islam of South Asia, see Matringe, 2005; Gaborieau, 2007.

hold in the country followed by the repeated military coups in between phases of civilian governing eventually gave Islam a tactical value that went even beyond its identity-based value. The tribal militia sent to support the Kashmir insurgents against the maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, in 1947, claimed to follow the jihadi cause, as they freed their Muslim brothers under the thumb of a Hindu prince, and consequently, with accession to India being decided by the maharaja, under control of an India depicted as a "Hindustan". After the independence of Bangladesh, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, founder of the Pakistan People's Party, took the country back from military control from 1972 to 1977, he invoked "Islamic socialism" as doctrine. After the death of his successor, General Zia, when Benazir Bhutto for the PPP and Nawaz Sharif for the Muslim League were both twice in power during the years 1988-1999, Sharif, during his first mandate, held a vote on a new law on Sharia. During his second mandate, Pakistan recognised the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the same Taliban which were organised in 1994 under Benazir Bhutto by her Home Minister, the retired General Nasirullah Babar, in order to bring the country out of the anarchy into which it was plunged by the various factions of the mujahedeen, both pro and anti-Pakistan. From 1993 on, the ISI, under the civilian government, began to swell the ranks of the Pakistani Islamist militia fighting in Kashmir. Military chiefs or civilian politicians, they all therefore contributed to the exploitation of Islam in different ways, from temporary concessions made to Islamist political parties to the setting up or the protection accorded to sectarian militant groups, carrying the torch for radical Sunnis, and groups fighting in the name of jihad.

PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC PARADIGM AND THE GEOPOLITICAL INSTRUMENTALISATION OF THE ISLAMISTS

Irrespective of the political manoeuvres undertaken in relation to the Islamists, it is the armed forces and the ISI (under the armed forces' authority) that have long been responsible for exploiting combatant Islamism, as a result of the strategic paradigm that governs Pakistan's defence and regional policies. The strife caused by the partition and the unresolved Kashmir issue were also obvious factors, alongside deeply entrenched defiance towards India. Pakistan's strategists suggest that this only materialised in the theorising over the perception of the threat to the country. Two factors are indeed in play. On the one hand, there is the desire to be India's equals, and on the other, the desire to exert enough pressure on Afghanistan to control its regional policy. Concerning India, what is especially sought after is relative parity in terms of defence rather than the desire for absolute parity. This would give it enough leeway to establish conventional deterrence, alongside its desire for nuclear deterrence following India's first nuclear test in 1974. Pakistan's nuclear deterrence remained hidden since the 1980s, until it was revealed by the first Pakistani tests in 1998. As regards Afghanistan, Pakistan wants to exert enough pressure on Kabul to guarantee three Pakistani interests: a)- Quell Pashtun nationalism to wear the movement down, while keeping the situation from encouraging the demand for a "Great Pashtunistan" that would also include Pakistani Pashtun land; b)- counter any Indian influence in Afghanistan that would cause Pakistan to be caught between its two neighbours; c)- in the event of conflict with India, establish "strategic depth" designed by Pakistani generals to compensate for the narrowness of their country. As the crow flies, there are less than 250 km from Indian Kashmir to the Afghan border, and 400 km from Rajasthan to the fringes of Kandahar province.

The wars against India were obviously not successful: the 1965 War was futile; the 1971 War resulted in the loss of Bangladesh. However, the 1947-48 War, initially launched by francs-tireurs before the two armies fought, at least allowed Pakistan to conquer half of Kashmir; the ceasefire line of 1949 became the Line of Control in 1965, and this is still valid today. Lessons were learned, taking into account two major historic events: firstly, the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan by the Afghan mujahedeen, supported in their combat by countries indirectly committed against the USSR (the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, for partly distinct motives but which enabled strategic convergence); secondly, what could be referred to as the revival of Islam, after the failure of Arab nationalism. This revival was multifaceted, encompassing the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to the Iranian Ayatollahs –the first in prison, the others in power. Irrespective of the ideology of liberation movements – from Algeria's National Liberation Front, to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the intifada, the central Islamist narrative of the 1990s appropriated the theme of oppression among Muslim peoples, be they Kashmiris, Chechens, Bosnians, etc. In this context, heightened by the defeat of the Soviets, the rebellion that shook the Srinagar Valley in late 1989/early 1990 provided a long-awaited opportunity for Pakistan's strategists, who obviously supported the insurgents while simultaneously ensuring they were under control: having supported the separatists of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), they then got behind the Islamists of Hizb-ul Mujahideen, a pro-Pakistan group who also had training in the camps set up in the Pakistani Azad Kashmir, over the Line of Control. When Indian forces got the upper hand, without managing to quash the rebellion, the ISI infiltrated fighter militias from 1993 on, such as the Laskar-e Taïba and the Harkat-ul Jihad al Islami, founded in the 1980s to support the Afghan mujahedeen. Certain groups merged (this was how Harkat-ul Ansar was born, a faction of which became Jaish-e Mohammad in 2000), still under the control of ISI and the Pakistani authorities, which allowed these movements to operate freely in Pakistan, collecting funds and glorifying the fallen martyrs in Kashmir, publicly honouring their families.[4]

IN parallel, in 1994 the support provided to the young Taliban movement by Benazir Bhutto's Ministry of the Interior completed the strategy of exploiting Islamist militias. Evidently, in order to create the right environment for these militias to thrive, the ideologues must also be given some freedom, as they provide the young fighters with an ideal, and diffuse it through public discourse. This is what enabled Darul Uloom Haqqania – the madrassa west of Peshawar set up by Sami ul Haq, leader of one of the factions of Jamiat e Ulema e Islam (the other faction, led by Fazlur Rahman, provides similar propaganda for the Taliban) – to prosper. The same is true for the Binoria mosque madrasa in Karachi, where Masood Azhar, founder of Jaish-e Mohammad, studied, and Markaz Dawa Wal Irshad (today Jamaat ud Dawa), the preaching centre founded by Hafeez Mohammad Saeed in the vast campus of Muridke, on the outskirts of Lahore in Punjab, and which was, for a long time, none other than the headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba.

[4] For an overview of combatant Islamist groups and sectarian organizations, see Rana, 2004.. On the ties between the Pakistani and Afghan movements: Abou Zahab & Roy, 2006. See also the interview with Mariam Abou Zahab and the author: Abou Zahab, 2010 : 87-98..

JIHADISTS AND TALIBAN: WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Has this combatant Islamism made an impact? Overall, the results are inconclusive on more than one level. On the Indian side, the use of Islamist militia was a failure, considering that after twenty years of asymmetric conflict, India hasn't budged on Kashmir. Another interpretation, however, sees the Pakistani military strategy as a success, not in terms of a change of status in Kashmir, but more pragmatically, with regard to India's sinking into the conflict. This interpretation sees Islamabad (and especially Rawalpindi, the headquarters of the Pakistan armed forces) satisfied that it has engaged a significant portion of the Indian forces, beyond the local police (armed forces and paramilitary, estimated at over 300,000 men, without official figures) in a conflict zone, and that India's image has been tarnished by its repressive policies and refusal to hold a referendum. On the Afghan side, the scenario was different until 2001, since the Taliban managed to win over the government, and succeeded where Islamabad's old allies, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami party, had never been able to overcome the Northern Alliance's power, and particularly Ahmad Shah Masood, secretly supported by New Delhi. Beyond the pawns moved on the geopolitical chessboard of the region, the struggle for power in Afghanistan showed evidence of the junction point between the dialectic that binds tribal affiliations and power plays (and therefore regional alliances) on the one hand, and the sharing of an openly declared Islamism, but that could be anti-Taliban (Masood was a member of Jamiat-e Islami, which Hekmatyar had left). The conflict between Hekmatyar and Massoud was less of an internal war within Islam, on different conceptions of what Islam should be, than a war between Muslims with different political projects. Inversely, with the radicalisation of the Taliban regime, the power plays between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns doubled up with a war between two conceptions of what an Islamic society should be. Twenty years later, this divide can still be seen in Pakistan.

THE REPERCUSSIONS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The dual result of the exploitation of combatant Islamism by the Pakistani State was compromised by the fallout from September 11. Before Al Qaeda's attack on American soil, the Pakistani line was already stretched to its limit. The sanctions enacted against the Taliban regime, the first American strikes in response to the attacks perpetrated on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the issue of the Buddhas of Bamiyan had already caused a decline in relations between Pakistan, under Nawaz Sharif's government, and Mullah Omar's regime. After Pakistan's adventuring over the Line of Control in Kashmir in 1999 – causing the Kargil War, in which Pakistani forces under command of General Pervez Musharraf wanted to test the possibility of conducting a limited war under a nuclear shield – Musharraf took control of the country, by ousting Sharif.

In the aftermath of September 11, Musharraf limited the implications of the American engagement, explaining to the country why, after having supported the Taliban, they now had to fight al-Qaeda and therefore, for better or worse, it was "for the good of the country" that they join the "war on terrorism" launched by George W. Bush. This decision has had an impact on the development of Pakistan right up until the present day, according to two partly contradictory perspectives that nonetheless follow the same line, if somewhat risky: that is, trying to have it both ways, while the home stage and the regional chessboard are both extremely complex.

In the new context created by the global traumatism caused by the 9/11 attacks, General Musharraf engaged a new rhetoric, one of "enlightened moderation" (Musharraf, 2004). He made more promises than he could keep, both in terms of the control of extremist madrassas and denouncing terrorism and jihad, which he condemned in a historic speech in January 2002, while outlawing (on paper) the Lashkar-e Taïba and the Jaish-e Mohammad (Musharraf, 2002). Pakistan's strategists are faced therefore with two partly contradictory imperatives: on the one hand, fighting al-Qaeda, and on the other, preserving the tools for influence that serve the regional strategic paradigm: Jihadists and Taliban: In fact, over time, a number of senior Al-Qaeda leaders were arrested in Pakistan, one of whom was Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the mastermind of the New York and Washington attacks. Regarding the Taliban, the policy is simple: Pakistan is hospitable to those who seek refuge on its soil, beginning with Mullah Omar, who is surrounded by exiled leaders, all within the Quetta Shura council set up in the suburbs of the capital of Balochistan. At the same time, and contrary to much of the population's desires, in particular the Islamist parties, Pakistan provided logistic support to the Americans and to NATO when it began to expand its presence in Afghanistan. Most of the equipment belonging to foreign forces passes through Karachi. This double-dealing remains possible as long as the Afghan dynamic appears to go in the right direction: election of President Karzai in 2004 followed by the Parliament in 2005, with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) covering all of the country's provinces in 2006.

On the Kashmir side, the interplay is more complex. Al-Qaeda's brand of terrorism inspires imitators, and Pakistani jihadist groups, after a first attack against the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in Srinagar in October 2011, targeted the Indian Parliament in New Delhi two months later. Islamabad's condemnation of terrorism was not enough. In retaliation, India rallied its troops and the two countries found themselves in a stand-off for months, on the cusp of war, though India decided not to strike beyond the Line of Control or the Indo-Pakistani border: nuclear deterrence seemed to work. Similar to the situation after Kargil in 1999, pressure from the international community was strong enough to calm the situation in 2002. Musharraf ended up committing to a restraint policy with New Delhi: a ceasefire along the Line of Control was established in 2003, with structured dialogue occurring in 2004. The cost of this unwieldy balancing policy was the loss of support from a portion of the extremists, while New Delhi, on the Kashmir side, and the United States, on the Afghan side, remained nonetheless dissatisfied.

For a certain number of radical groups, Musharraf's policy line had become unreadable. Some of the jihadists considered that he had abandoned the Kashmir cause, especially when it involves "putting aside" United Nations resolutions voted in the 1950s that called for a referendum to be held on the Kashmir issue. From December 2003, Musharraf was the target of attacks that he narrowly escaped: attacks that a number of young officers had taken part in. Things also grew complicated on the Afghan side. American anti-Taliban combat methods (aggressive searches in village houses and bombings causing collateral victims) and the porosity of the Durand Line were fuel for unrest in the tribal agencies (FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas, a buffer zone left from the British Empire and maintained with a specific status, outside of general Pakistani law). From 2004 on, Musharraf sent in troops to combat the FATA's rebel groups (first, the Pashtun paramilitary of the *Frontier Corps*, followed by the Army). The agreements negotiated between the armed forces and the rebels by the traditional tribal leaders, the Maliks, were not respected. The tribal zone insurgents, alongside the Afghan militants hiding in the FATA, such as the Haqqani network, Al Qaeda operatives, and radical militants from Punjab together with jihadists returned from Kashmir and Islamist parties: all

criticised the president and his government, accused of leading an "American war", because of Washington's repeated requests to Islamabad to "do more" to dismantle the forces that operate in Afghanistan from Pakistani safe-houses against the coalition.

The situation was becoming unmanageable for the government, who were dealing with the contradictory weavings of the double play deliberately established with the pretext of protecting national interest, and the instrumentalisation of combatant Islamists. The FATA rebels came together in 2007 to form Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), thereby making the existence of Pakistani Taliban official. That same year, after a long period of hesitation, the government decided to take control of the Red Mosque of Islamabad and its madrassa, bastions of radicals inspired by the Taliban ideology: the operation caused over 150 casualties. The backlash, on top of an uprising among the tribal agencies, included the rise of urban terrorism, which reached new levels in 2008 with the suicide attack that destroyed the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, in close proximity to the presidential palace. A long series of attacks followed, targeting markets, police recruitment centres and military buildings.

The U.S. decision to resort to drone strikes in the tribal zones added to the contradictions in Pakistan's policies. With the risk of "collateral damage" provoking uproar in Pakistani public opinion, Washington's strategists believed that this method paid off: Pakistani Taliban leaders and Al-Qaeda commanders were killed. But these strikes bolstered the uprising, putting the Pakistani forces in a delicate position, when its repression policy – which was selective – escalated. Its position didn't improve until 2009, when large numbers of the public approved of the reclaiming of the Swat Valley, in north-east Peshawar, overcoming the radical forces under Maulana Fazlullah, causing tens of thousands of refugees to flee the combat zones, a situation that repeated itself in later operations conducted in the FATA. Once again, the battle against radicalism was not without ambiguity because the government – from the Awami National Party established in Peshawar to the National Assembly and the election of President Asif Ali Zardari in 2008 after the fall of Musharraf – believed it had bought peace by allowing the toughest interpretation of Sharia law to be enforced in the region. Only when the Islamist Sufi Mohammad – founder of Tehrik e Nifaz Shariat e Muhammad (Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Law) – wascalled on to mediate, and criticised the parliamentary democracy for acting against Islam, and Fazlullah's Taliban began marching outside Swat, did Army Chief General Ashfaq Kayani's forces finally intervene, as it would go on to do in a number of tribal agencies, Bajaur and South Waziristan in particular, where the state's power is disputed. The army did not intervene then in North Waziristan, to the great disappointment of the Obama administration, which greatly intensified the use of drones launched by the previous administration. North Waziristan is the agency that is home to both Pakistani Taliban that remain loyal to Islamabad (under Gul Bahadur) as well as the Haqqani network, used by the Pakistani services to operate in Afghanistan, and to conduct operations that target India's interests, such as the Kabul Embassy, struck twice in attacks in 2008 and 2009. Here again is the strategic paradigm, and the desire to tackle India on both sides, while trouble continues to brew at home.

A HIGH-RISK STRATEGIC POLICY LINE

General Kayani, as head of the ISI before taking over from General Musharraf as Army Chief of Staff, began by forging a good reputation by staying out of the 2008 elections that brought the Pakistan

People's Party to power. Though his rise to Army Chief may have been thanks to a discreet push from Washington, when the Bush administration was trying to promote an alliance between the president General Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto – leader of the PPP and assassinated during an election campaign in 2007 – General Kayani proved to be loyal to the traditional strategic line (Racine, 2010: 3-50).

The supposed progress made in the discrete negotiations opened with India over Kashmir, under Musharraf, was denied, and everything else remained the same. The outlawed jihadist organisations continued to prosper, like in 2002, under a new name, as long as they remained loyal to Islamabad, as was the case for Lashkar-e Taiba, for example. Although the infiltrations of fighters into Indian Kashmir considerably lessened since the 2003 ceasefire, the intervention policy instruments were not dismantled, even after the Mumbai attacks, perpetrated by a terrorist commando that came by sea from Pakistan, in November 2008. Mohammad Hafeez Saeed, head of Jamaat-ud Dawa, to whom Lashkar-e Taiba answers, was put on trial, but freed due to "lack of evidence". With a price on his head in the US, he was seen at public rallies in 2012, and his organisation was one of the founding members of the new Pakistan Defence Council (Difa-e Pakistan Council). This movement unites around forty militant organizations that oppose any re-establishing of good relations with India, calling for all ties to be cut with the United States following the US Special Forces operation that killed Osama Bin Laden in the garrison town of Abbottabad in May 2011, and incidents that took the lives of Pakistani soldiers on the Afghan border.

While the continued uprisings and the expansion of terrorism within the country endanger the dominant strategic paradigm, the announcement of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan marked the beginning of a new phase; this was less due to the US forces "surge" than the negotiation attempts undertaken with the Afghan Taliban through American channels (including, among others, German and Qatari representatives) and by Hamid Karzai, the Pakistani military and the ISI saw the limitations of their Afghan strategy (Racine, 2011 : 8-18; 2012 : 146-149). The fear of seeing the progress of contacts that they had no control over was worsened by the rumours coming from certain Taliban leaders that found the shadow of the ISI overbearing. With the arrest in Karachi of Mullah Baradar, the Taliban number two, the Pakistani services were sending a clear signal to all actors that Islamabad intended to remain at the heart of the game, even though everyone knew that a long-term solution to the Afghan crisis required Pakistani interests to be taken into account. Former President Rabbani's assassination in Kabul did not help. Rabbani was named by Hamid Karzai at the head of the High Peace Council, appointed to open talks with the Taliban.

In other words, the policy line, which under Musharraf appeared a dangerous line to balance on, became increasingly counterproductive. The old triad, in which the three "A"s of Pakistani strategy were "Allah, Army, America" and which guaranteed America the favours it expected for Afghanistan and also the direct and indirect American contribution to the Pakistani budget (and the defence budget), gradually wavered as anti-Americanism, and not just Islamism, were exploited in the name of independence and Pakistani sovereignty. It is interesting to see how the Parliament, on hearing the Army Chief and head of ISI after Bin Laden's assassination, voted unanimously on a declaration condemning clandestine US operations that ridiculed their sovereignty, while ignoring the fact that an Al-Qaeda chief was living for years in the same town as the country's main military academy.

CONCLUSION: THE COST OF EXPLOITING THE RELIGIOUS PARAMETER

There is a policy of denial in place, and it is criticised by brave Pakistani analysts, contrary to many television anchors debating the issue. It is also a policy that is extremely costly to the country, for several reasons. The first concerns the country itself. The weakness of oligarchic civilian governments and the military obsession with security pushed aside development policies and the construction of a reasonably democratic society. This socio-economic context was a breeding ground for extremism, which invokes a call for justice, including social justice, and can be accompanied by charity work, just like the madrasas – which are not all radical – compensate, for better or worse, the deficit in the state primary education system. Going beyond the metanarrative of the oppression or victory of Muslim peoples, Islamism is also fuelled by the rejection of corrupt and oppressive regimes, be they dictatorships or civilian governments. This message can be found explicitly in the testament of Ghazi Abdul Rashid, leader of the Red Mosque in Islamabad – a Taliban bastion in the Pakistani capital – assailed by the army in 2007:

> "We want a just Islamic system in our country. We want to see Sharia implemented by the courts of justice. We want to give bread and justice to the poor. We want to end corruption, illegal practices, favouritism, injustice and vulgarity. The only solution to these problems is in proper respect for Islam. This is the desire of Allah and it is also the objective of the Pakistani Constitution" (Noorulislam, 2007).

The second cost to pay is *fitna*, the war within Islam: extremism is no longer only sectarian, against the Shiite or Ahmadi minorities. It now strikes within the Sunni community, ordering terrorism against saints' graves and pilgrimage sites. The support provided by some of the middle classes to the assassination of the governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, killed in January 2011 by a member of his security team for having called for a review of the draconian law on blasphemy, indicated the radicalisation of mindsets that went far beyond the most radical of the Deobandis: the assassin was a Barelvi, for whom the revision of this law would have equalled denigration of the prophet. For some Pakistani observers, the Talibanisation of the country is underway (Mir, 2010).

The third cost is the backlash due to a misguided strategic paradigm. It has already been mentioned previously: the uprising of the Pakistani Taliban and the scourge of urban terrorism testify to the risks attached to the geopolitical instrumentalisation of radical Islamist groups.

The fourth is the lost opportunities. The anti-Indian focus prioritises the old confrontational mindset, both openly and covertly, that fuel a costly nuclear deterrence policy as well as the exploitation of Islamist militants, both directed toward India and Afghanistan. This, incidentally, renders inoperative the geo-economic rationale that would give Pakistan the opportunity to take advantage of its promising location between India, China, Central Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean - nestled among major emerging markets, energy hubs and a key sea route between the Eastern Asia and Europe - to benefit from the growth of the new economic powers it has for neighbours. In this respect, the decision to give India, who did the same for Pakistan in 1996, the "most favoured nation

status" as per WTO engagements is moving in the right direction, but history has too often shown that such advances are shaky, often compromised by a hardening of the forces opposed to the normalisation of Indo-Pakistani relations, as long as India makes no significant progress on the Kashmir issue. Indeed, the political forces and the economic interests favourable to a normalisation negotiated with India have not yet won over the strategic decision-makers.

A few days after the death of Osama Bin Laden, the Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari published an article in the *Washington Post* that stressed the price Pakistan has paid in its battle against extremism and terrorism (tens of thousands of civilian deaths, and much more Pakistani soldiers and policemen killed than NATO troops hit in Afghanistan): "The religious fanaticism behind our assassinations is a tinderbox poised to explode across Pakistan. The embers are fanned by the opportunism of those who seek advantages in domestic politics by violently polarizing society". He added: "It is finding a solution to this internal debate within Islam – about democracy, about human rights, about the role of women in society, about respect for other religions and cultures, about technology and modernity – that shall shape future relations between Islam and the West" (Zardari, 2011).

Indeed, the stakes are much higher for Pakistan's future, as the effects of the strategies put in place and the instability they cause also affect the relationship between the country and its Chinese neighbour. Of course, China and Pakistan are "iron brothers", to use the term employed by Beijing. China does after all provide Pakistan with combat planes, civilian nuclear reactors, and invests in both the new port of Gwadar, near the Gulf, and Gilgit Baltistan in the Himalayas. But Beijing is concerned for the safety of its economic expatriates, just as it is over the ties between the Pakistani Taliban and the Uyghur separatists of Xinjiang. China supports the Pakistani military and the Chinese Communist Party, keeping all options open, hosts Jamaat-e Islami delegates in Beijing, but the grand project envisaged under Musharraf to create an economic and trade corridor between Xinjiang and the Indian Ocean via the Indus Valley is not about to see the day if security does not improve. Pakistani diplomats, familiar with China, know well that it will never fully replace the United States in helping Pakistan live on credit – American loans, FMI loans, etc. – and they also know that in the event of renewed conflict with India, China will never go further than rhetoric and arms policy and will not send troops to support Pakistan (Duchatel, Racine, 2010).

A final issue is raised by the radicalisation of part of the middle class, victims of the stagnant socio-economic policies and the vagaries of foreign policy. This issue is the risk of part of the armed forces becoming radicalised.[5] Aside from a few famous retired generals that remain on the public stage and are known for their tough position, such as Hamid Gul, director of the ISI dismissed by Benazir Bhutto in 1989, heaviness weighs on the mindset of rank officers. Some were compromised in the attacks against Musharraf, and several attacks against military facilities – the Army HQ in 2009, an Air Force naval base in Karachi in 2011 – show signs of internal collusion. Much greater than the spectre of Mullahs rising to power in a nuclear state, this risk of an inner slide in the armed forces is considered with the greatest of discretion, including, evidently, by the National Command Authority, heading the strategic forces.

[5] On the ideological history of the Army: Nawaz, 2008.

At a time when General Kayani is declaring that the country is "in a state of war (…) against terrorists and extremists" and reiterates that the armed forces support democracy (Daily Times Pakistan, 2012), after a phase of serious tension with the government of Yusuf Raza Gilani, it appears that the strategy has not yet been brought up to date. The dominant paradigm has nonetheless shown its limits, as the instrumentalisation of combatant Islamist groups has succeeded in contaminating Pakistan itself, without any victory achieved in either Kashmir or Afghanistan, irrespective of the future of the Taliban that may partly regain power in Kandahar or Kabul. Once again, in the history of Pakistan, the armed forces remain the arbitrator in the country's politics, and its geopolitics.

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Pakistan's strategic paradigm: escaping the complexities of the religious factor

The development of Pakistan tends to show, instead of a weakening of the role of religion, the instrumentalisation of Islam for the benefit of internal a politics and strategic ambitions. This instrumentalisation brings with it the risk of rampant radicalisation, which goes against Pakistan's initial ideology borne by its founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This article recalls the role of Islam when Pakistan was created in the mid-20th century. It then analyses Pakistan's strategic paradigm, as declared since the 1990s and in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, in order to highlight the stalemate brought by the military, at the heart of the State's power, in its attempt to use Islam for geopolitical purposes.

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