

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: PAK35022
Country: Pakistan
Date: 15 June 2009

Keywords: Pakistan – Lahore – Security – Militant network

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

Questions

- 1. What is the security situation in Lahore with regard to law and order? What is the situation for the Punjabi population in particular?**
- 2. Have persons advocating secular liberal views been targeted in Lahore by militant networks? If so, what kind of profile did the victims have and what kind of views did they express?**

RESPONSE

- 1. What is the security situation in Lahore with regard to law and order? What is the situation for the Punjabi population in particular?**
- 2. Have persons advocating secular liberal views been targeted in Lahore by militant networks? If so, what kind of profile did the victims have and what kind of views did they express?**

Summary

Over the recent 18 months Lahore has suffered a number of bombings and attacks by gunmen which have been attributed to militant Islamist groups and the insurgency in Pakistan's restive North-West. A recent report by *The News* estimates that, since January 2008, "around 86 people, including over 35 policemen, [have been] killed and as many as 716 [civilian's] seriously injured". Most of these attacks have targeted the offices of state security forces and would appear to have injured civilian bystanders only incidentally. This noted, other attacks have affected civilian targets more directly. Three venues associated with liberal behaviours have been bombed and, in one case, a prominent cleric opposed to the insurgency has been assassinated. Attacks to have targeted civilians include the bombing of a stretch of Lahore fruit juice parlours known to be popular as dating venues for Lahore's youth on 7 October 2008. The blast reportedly injured several people, one of whom subsequently died. According to *The Washington Times*: "An unknown group called Tehreek-ul Haya, or Movement for Decency, took responsibility and said more attacks against 'centers of immorality' would

follow". On 22 November 2008 "at least three people, including a teenager, were injured in a series of three explosions near the Alhamra Cultural Complex in Lahore, where the World Performing Arts Festival was in progress", according to *The News*. 9 January 2009 reportedly saw the bombing of two theatres which were empty at the time for the Muharram holiday. 3 March 2009 saw the well publicized attack on the bus convoy of the Sri Lankan cricket team. And on 12 June 2009 one of Lahore's most prominent Muslim clerics, Allama Dr Sarfraz Ahmed Naeemi, was killed in a suicide bomb attack which also killed several persons meeting with Naeemi in his office at the Jamia Naeemia mosque. Naeemi was well known for his opposition to the Islamist insurgency. According to a *Dawn* report of 13 June 2006: "a spokesman for militant leader Baitullah Mehsud's Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack on Allama Naeemi" (Dogar, A. 2009, 'Civil Lines Police Division most vulnerable to terror', *The News*, 15 June http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183106 – Accessed 15 June 2009 – Attachment 18; for an overview of recent attacks in Lahore, see: 'Recent major attacks in Pakistan or blamed on Pakistan-based militants' 2009, *The Canadian Press*, 10 June – Attachment 1; '486 killed in suicide strikes in Punjab since 2007' 2009, *Thaindian News*, source: *Asia News International*, 31 May http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/486-killed-in-suicide-strikes-in-punjab-since-2007_100199072.html – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 4; and for the January 2009 theatre attacks, see: ('Timeline: Terror attacks in Lahore' 2009, *Dawn*, 28 May <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/09-timeline-terror-attacks-in-lahore-szh--01> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 11; and for the November 2008 World Performing Arts Festival bombing, see: Aslam, S. 2009, 'Terrorists change their modus operandi', *The News*, 28 May <http://thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=179935> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 6; for the fruit juice parlour attacks of October 2008, see: Nasir, A. 2009, 'Taliban, terrorism stifle life in Lahore', *Washington Times*, 23 April <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/apr/23/taliban-infiltrates-culture-of-pakistans-liveliest/print/> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 12; and Rahman, M. 2008, 'Lahore: Cultural capital to Taliban territory?', *Indian Express*, 27 October <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/lahore-cultural-capital-to-taliban-territory/378300/0> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 15; for the attack on Naeemi, see: Ali, M.F. 2009, 'Suicide bomber kills anti-Taliban cleric Allama Naeemi', *Dawn*, 13 June <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/07-suicide-blast-near-jamia-naeemia-mosque-in-lahore-ha-02> – Accessed 15 June 2009 – Attachment 17; Buncombe, A. 2009, 'Anti-Taliban cleric killed by bomb', *The Independent*, 13 June <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/antitaliban-cleric-killed-by-bomb-1704149.html> – Accessed 15 June 2009 – Attachment 20; for the apparent targeting of police in Lahore, see: Rosenberg, M. 2009, 'Taliban Wages War on Police In Its New Front in Pakistan', *Wall Street Journal*, 28 May <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124346214159560023.html#> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 7).

News sources vary in the manner in which they report the level of security and/or sense of threat amongst residents of Lahore. Some journalists paint a very dim picture of Lahore and report that artists and performers are maintaining a low profile in the current climate. Others suggest that reports of a high level of fear amongst Lahore's more cosmopolitan residents are greatly exaggerated. Most reports are, however, consistent insofar as they report that Lahore's cosmopolitan middle-class consider militant Islamist networks to be either an actual or a potential threat to the more liberal way of life enjoyed in Lahore. Most reports also note

that there have been large rallies in Lahore, and also in Karachi, in which residents have publicly protested against the bomb attacks and militant Islamist insurgency (for higher levels of security being employed in Lahore, see: Terrorist threat looming in Lahore: Security beefed up, again!’ 2009, *Daily Times*, 3 June http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C03%5Cstory_3-6-2009_pg13_1 – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 2; for the open presence of Lashkar-e-Taiba in Lahore, see: Swami, P. 2009, ‘Saeed’s release raises fears of fresh terror wave’, *The Hindu*, 3 June <http://www.hindu.com/2009/06/03/stories/2009060353271000.htm> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 3; for reports of public opposition to militancy in Lahore, see: Lamb, C. 2009, ‘Facebook Pakistanis unite against terror; Fightback Alarmed by the growing threat to their nation, ordinary people are rising up, reports Christina Lamb in Lahore’, *Sunday Times*, 31 May – Attachment 5; Khan, N.A. 2009, ‘Middle-class Pakistanis awaken to Taliban threat’, *Washington Times*, 28 May <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/28/middle-class-pakistanis-awaken-to-taliban-threat/> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 9; for reports which argue that liberal fears are on the rise in Lahore, see: Nasir, A. 2009, ‘Taliban, terrorism stifle life in Lahore’, *Washington Times*, 23 April <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/apr/23/taliban-infiltrates-culture-of-pakistans-liveliest/print/> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 12; Alam, A.R. 2008, ‘The beginning of the Talibanization of Lahore?’, *The News*, 13 October <http://thenews.jang.com.pk/print1.asp?id=140667> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 14; Rahman, M. 2008, ‘Lahore: Cultural capital to Taliban territory?’, *Indian Express*, 27 October <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/lahore-cultural-capital-to-taliban-territory/378300/0> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 15; for a report which finds the mood unchanged, see: Birsell, R. 2009, ‘RPT-Attacks in Lahore “aimed at Pakistan’s heart”’, *Reuters*, 31 March <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSISL458522> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 13; for a report which argues that the sense of fear and threat in Lahore is being exaggerated, see: (‘Pakistan is quite a safer place to visit’ 2009, *Daily News*, 26 May <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/05/26/fea24.asp> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 8).

Source information

An overview of the available source information follows. The source information is listed, for the most part, in reverse chronological order.

On 13 June 2009 the *Dawn* news service reported on the assassination of Allama Dr Sarfraz Ahmed Naeemi noting the manner in which Naeemi had been outspoken and prominent in his opposition to the insurgency. The article also reports the statements of “Senior Superintendent of Police (operations) Chaudhry Shafeeq believed Mr Naeemi was targeted by a suicide bomber, saying Mr Naeemi, however, did not inform the police about any immediate life threat to him”. The Superintendent is reported to have told *Dawn* that: “We had asked him many times for the security but he did not accept it”. Extracts follow:

Allama Dr Sarfraz Ahmed Naeemi, a renowned religious scholar of the country and principal of the Jamia Naeemia, was killed, in what police believe was a targeted suicide attack at his seminary’s office in Garhi Shaho on Friday.

His close aide, Maulana Khalilur Rehman, Abdul Rehman, an ex-student and a journalist, and two students were also killed while five others suffered injuries in the attack which destroyed furniture and religious books lying in the single room office and smashed all the

windowpanes of madrassa-cum-mosque where over 1,000 students are receiving religious education.

A series of protests broke out outside Jamia Naeemia and other parts of the city following the attack on Mr Naeemi, who was the son of the ex-chairman of the Ruet-i-Hilal Committee and founder of Jamia Naeemia, Mufti Mohammad Husain Naeemi.

Capital City Police Officer Pervez Rathore said Dr Sarfraz had supported military action against Taliban militants and also issued a decree calling suicide attacks 'Haram' in Islam.

He told Dawn that Mr Naeemi had also arranged an Anti-Taliban seminar in his madrassa two weeks ago.

Senior Superintendent of Police (operations) Chaudhry Shafeeq believed Mr Naeemi was targeted by a suicide bomber, saying Mr Naeemi, however, did not inform the police about any immediate life threat to him.

'We had asked him many times for the security but he did not accept it,' he said.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for militant leader Baitullah Mehsud's Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack on Allama Naeemi as well as the attack on a mosque in Nowshera and Tuesday's bombing of Peshawar's Pearl Continental hotel that killed nine people.

'Anyone who will oppose us to please the Americans will face the same fate,' Maulvi Omar told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location (Ali, M.F. 2009, 'Suicide bomber kills anti-Taliban cleric Allama Naeemi', *Dawn*, 13 June

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/07-suicide-blast-near-jamia-naeemia-mosque-in-lahore-ha-02> – Accessed 15 June 2009 – Attachment 17).

The Independent also noted the prominent "anti-Taliban" activities of Sarfraz Naeemi in the lead up to the bomb attack which killed him, reporting that "Mr Naeemi's high-profile campaign had made him and his mosque highly vulnerable". Extracts follow:

Sarfraz Naeemi, who had organised demonstrations against the Taliban and helped form an alliance of religious organisations opposed to the brutal interpretation of Islam, was attacked at his mosque in Lahore after leading Friday prayers. "Unfortunately, Maulana Sarfraz Naeemi has been martyred," said Pervez Rathore, the head of the city's police force. Another person was killed in the attack and seven wounded.

Mr Naeemi's high-profile campaign had made him and his mosque highly vulnerable. Last month, the new Sunni Ittehad Council, made up of 22 different groups, held a news conference where it said the Taliban's authoritarian brand of Islam was creating problems for moderate Muslims. Announcing a "Save Pakistan" campaign, the council, which claimed to represent about 85 million followers of the moderate Bareilvi school of Sunni Islam, declared: "We strongly condemn the Taliban and urge the Pakistan military to eliminate them at the earliest."

The council said it would "unveil the real face of the Taliban before the public" by highlighting public executions and floggings.

Mr Naeemi and the alliance were also monitoring young students in their seminaries who may be vulnerable to approaches from militants after it was reported the Taliban may be targeting such institutions for recruits (Buncombe, A. 2009, 'Anti-Taliban cleric killed by bomb', *The Independent*, 13 June <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/antitaliban-cleric-killed-by-bomb-1704149.html> – Accessed 15 June 2009 – Attachment 20).

On 15 June 2009 *The News* reflected on the number of persons killed and injured in militant attacks in Lahore since January 2008 noting that “Dr Sarfraz Naeemi is the ninth terrorist strike in this division since January 2008”, and that “During this short span of time, majority of important government and private installations were targeted by terrorists in which around 86 people, including over 35 policemen, were killed and as many as 716 civilian were seriously injured”. This report note that a number of attacks have occurred within Lahore’s Civil Lines policing division: “Civil Lines Division of Lahore Police is most vulnerable to terrorists’ activities due to inefficiency of police and intelligence agencies”. Extracts follow:

Terrorists targeted five installations, including a police reserve, during 2008 in Civil Lines Division. In 2009, terrorists carried out four attacks in the same division. Two attacks were carried out on the same day at two theatres located in two different localities of Civil Lines Division. The third attack was successfully carried out on Rescue 15 and regional headquarters of Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) on May 27 and fourth one at the office of principal of Jamia Naeemia on June 12.

There are 11 police stations in the jurisdiction of Civil Lines Division and majority of police stations had been hit by terrorists so far. Police stations in the jurisdiction of Civil Lines Division are: Race Course, Civil Lines, Qila Gujjar Singh, Garhi Shahu, Old Anarkali, Lytton Road, Mozang, Shalimar, Gujjarpura, Mughalpura and Women Race Course police station.

Most sensitive government and private installations and residences of top brass of executive and judiciary in Civil Lines Division, include GOR-I, two five star hotels, and two three star hotels, the Governor’s House, the Punjab Assembly, MPAs Hostel, private schools and government universities, Wapda House, Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh, DIG Investigation Office, CCPO, ISI building, 90-Shahra, Nadra Office, DGPR, PTV, Navy War College, High Court, GPO, offices of Urdu and English dailies and shopping malls.

Terrorists had conducted successful strikes killing scores of people and injured several others. Sensitive agencies had also warned this division about possible attacks but poor security measures and inefficiency of police allowed terrorists to carry out their nefarious plans.

Police officials blame the government for insufficient resources. However, police officers can not justify their failure to motivate the administrators of respective installations for becoming vigilant during the warlike situation in the country especially in Lahore. Police could have motivated and supported administrators of important buildings in arranging internal foolproof security but this did not happen. There is a lot to be done on part of Civil Lines Division in Lahore.

The chronology of terrorist attacks carried out in Civil Lines Division since January 2008 available with *The News* is as follows:

Suicide bombers targeted policemen at GPO Chowk in Civil Lines Division on January 10, 2008. At least 24 people, including 17 policemen, were killed and 80 others injured in a suicide bomb blast outside the Lahore High Court, minutes before the arrival of an anti-government lawyers’ procession. The blast ripped through GPO Chowk in front of the Lahore High Court as the suicide bomber walked up to 60 riot policemen – who had gathered there

ahead of a protest by lawyers against President Pervez Musharraf's government – and blew himself up.

The second blast was carried out on March 4, 2008, killing eight people and injuring 24. Two suicide bombers blew themselves up in the parking area of the Pakistan Navy War College in Racecourse police limits.

The third attack was carried out on March 11, 2008 blast at the FIA headquarters, killing at least 30 people and injuring more than 200. Terrorists in their fourth hit in Civil Lines division planted time bombs at juice corners in Garhi Shahu area on October 7, 2008. Three remote-controlled bombs exploded one after the other in three juice shops in the Garhi Shahu area injuring seven persons, including two children and a woman. On December 24, 2008, a woman identified as Farzana Bibi, was killed and five other people injured as a mini-truck packed with explosives blew up in GOR-II area in Lytton Road police limits and it was the fifth strike of terrorists in Civil Lines Division in 2008.

During 2009, two attacks were carried on January 9 in Civil Lines Division. Four low-intensity bombs exploded in the main electricity supply control room of the Al-Falah Theatre while a high-intensity bomb exploded at the Tamasil theatre in Mozang Chungi.

Suicide bombers carried out a huge attack on May 27, 2009 in Civil Lines Division. Suicide bombers detonated a vehicle loaded with 500 Kg of explosives near offices of the capital city police officer (CCPO) and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – killing at least 27 persons and injuring 400 others, in addition to destroying a two-storey building of the Rescue 15 police service. An ISI colonel and 15 Police officials were among those killed.

On Friday last, a young suicide attacker entered the premises of Jamia Naeemia and blew himself up at the office of Allama Mufti Dr Sarfraz Naeemi, killing the cleric and four others and injuring five on June 12 (Dogar, A. 2009, 'Civil Lines Police Division most vulnerable to terror', *The News*, 15 June http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183106 – Accessed 15 June 2009 – Attachment 18).

Should it be of interest, a January 2009 *Daily Times* report provides an assessment of the Lahore police divisions most significantly affected by crime and violence. According to this report "The records showed the Civil Lines Division of the City Police received the fifth highest number of 974 calls reporting robberies and armed robberies, which included 551 real incidents and 396 fake calls". The worst area of Lahore in terms of overall criminality is said to be the Model Town Division while the least affected is said to be the Cantonment Division. Extracts follow:

The Model Town Division topped the crime chart with the highest number of robberies and armed robberies, they said. Records showed that 15 emergency received 1,229 calls reporting robberies and armed robberies from Model Town out of the total of 6,619 calls. Out of the 1,229 robbery calls for Model Town Division 828 were actual incidents, while 401 were bogus reports. Similarly the emergency number recorded 129 calls from Model Town reporting vehicle snatching, out of which 88 were found to be real incidents with 41 fake calls. Of the 6,433 calls made for vehicle snatching, 1,294 were from the Model Town Division, and 4,512 were actual incidents, with 1,921 calls unsubstantiated.

Second place: In second place, the City Division of the City Police, 15 received 1,282 calls for robberies and armed robberies, while 750 of them were true and 532 fake. With vehicle snatching, 185 calls were received while 124 were actual incident, while 61 were found to be false, while of the 6,433 reports of vehicle lifting, the City Division received 1172 calls with 724 real reports and 448 fake ones.

Third place: At number three, the sources said that of the total of 6,619 calls the Iqbal Town Division received 1,121 calls for robberies and armed robberies, adding that 746 were genuine calls while 375 were bogus reports. Likewise, of the 156 vehicle snatching reports in Iqbal Town 97 were real, while 64 were found to be fake. Of the 6,433 vehicle lifting reports received by 15 emergency, 914 were received by the division with 667 real reports.

Fourth place: At number four the Saddar Division of City Police received 1,104 calls reporting robberies and armed robberies with 634 real incidents and 470 hoax calls. There were 153 reports of vehicle snatching in the Saddar Division with 89 real incidents and 64 fakes ones. The number of vehicle lifting incidents reported were 630, which included 400 real ones and 230 false reports.

Fifth place: The records showed the Civil Lines Division of the City Police received the fifth highest number of 974 calls reporting robberies and armed robberies, which included 551 real incidents and 396 fake calls. Of the 162 calls reporting vehicle snatching, 91 were authenticated while 71 were found to be hoaxes. Vehicle lifting remained high in the division with 1,198 calls out of which 835 were true while 363 were fake calls.

Lowest number of robberies and armed robberies: The lowest number of robberies and armed robberies in the city were reported in the Cantonment Division where 15 emergency received 936 calls, of which 518 were proved to be true whereas 418 were proved fake and misguiding. Similarly 15 received 160 calls of vehicle snatching in the division, with 77 being real incidents. The division received 1,125 calls reporting incidents of vehicle lifting with 949 actual incidents and 276 hoaxes (Sharif, S. 2009, 'Crime "awards" for 2008: Model Town Division: Lahore's most unsafe area?', *Daily News*, 1 January http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C01%5Cstory_1-1-2009_pg13_1 – Accessed 15 June 2009 – Attachment 19).

On 10 June 2009 The Canadian Press listed the following incidents as the most significant recent attacks in South Asia to be connected to Pakistan militants. Attacks which took place in Lahore have the city's name set in bold. Most would appear to have targeted state security forces.

June 9, 2009: A huge bomb explodes at a luxury hotel in Peshawar, killing at least 11 people and wounding 70 others.

May 27, 2009: A suicide car bomber targets buildings housing police and intelligence offices in the eastern city of **Lahore**, killing about 30 and wounding at least 250.

March 30, 2009: Gunmen armed with rifles and hand grenades attack a police academy on the **outskirts of Lahore**, killing at least 12 people and wounding dozens.

March 27, 2009: A suicide bomber demolishes a packed mosque near the northwestern town of Jamrud, killing about 50 people and injuring scores more.

March 3, 2009: Gunmen attack the Sri Lankan national cricket team **in Lahore**, wounding several players and killing six policemen and a driver.

Nov. 26-28, 2008: Ten attackers, allegedly from Pakistan, kill 164 people in a three-day assault on luxury hotels, a Jewish centre and other sites in Mumbai, India.

Sept. 20, 2008: A suicide truck bomb kills at least 54 and wounds more than 250 and devastates the Marriott hotel in Islamabad.

Sept. 6, 2008: A suicide car bombing kills at least 35 people and wounds 80 at a police checkpoint in Peshawar.

Aug. 21, 2008: Suicide bombers blow themselves up at two gates of a weapons factory in the town of Wah, killing at least 67 people and wounding at least 100.

March 11, 2008: Suicide bombs rip through the seven-story police headquarters and a house **in Lahore**, killing at least 24 people and wounding more than 200.

Feb. 29, 2008: Suicide bomber strikes funeral of slain police officer in the Swat Valley, killing more than 40 people and wounding at least 60.

Jan. 10, 2008: Suicide bomber blows himself up among police guarding the High Court **in Lahore**, killing 24 people and wounding scores more.

Dec. 27, 2007: Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and 20 other people are killed in a suicide bombing and shooting attack in Rawalpindi, just south of the capital ('Recent major attacks in Pakistan or blamed on Pakistan-based militants' 2009, *The Canadian Press*, 10 June – Attachment 1).

On 3 June 11, 2009 *The Daily Times* reported that security was being increased in Lahore:

The security of important buildings and police offices was beefed up on Tuesday after intelligence reports of more terrorist attacks in the city.

The city police has finalised a comprehensive security plan in this regard and has deployed security personnel at all the sensitive government buildings. The Punjab Civil Secretariat has been declared as a red zone. Police has been checking vehicles by setting up pickets on different roads and patrolling in mobile vans. They checked the Computerised National Identity Cards (CNIC) of passengers. The traffic wardens were also sternly directed to keep an eye on suspicious vehicles and check them.

Checking: Police continued checking suspicious vehicles on The Mall, Jail Road, GT Road, Canal Road, Ferozepur Road, Multan Road, Lower Mall, and Ravi Road. Diversions have been set up in front of the sensitive buildings to reduce the speed of vehicles. Orders have also been issued to tighten the security of the police stations. Additional security personnel have been manned at the Qila Gujjar Singh Police Lines, offices of sensitive agencies, police training centers, PTV building, Alhamra Hall, Punjab Assembly building, Punjab Civil Secretariat, Lahore High Court, Supreme Court Registry, GPO, Railway Station, Wapda House, CM House, hotels, State Bank, and educational institutions providing co-education.

Qurban Lines: Trenches made of sandbags have been set up at the entry points of the Qurban Lines. A concrete security post was constructed at its Jail Road entrance. Snipers have been appointed at the Sherpao over-head bridge to thwart any possible attack on the Qurban Lines.

Suspicious activity: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Muhammad Pervez Rathore appealed to the citizens to keep an eye on their neighbourhoods, markets, tenants and pedestrians. He said terrorists were the enemies of the state and it was incumbent upon the citizens to extend wholehearted cooperation to defeat the nefarious designs of Taliban. He called upon the citizens to immediately inform the Lahore police about any suspicious person or activity and assured the name of the informant would be kept secret. rana tanveer ('Terrorist threat looming in Lahore: Security beefed up, again!' 2009, *Daily Times*, 3 June http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C03%5Cstory_3-6-2009_pg13_1 – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 2).

On 3 June 2009 an editorial piece in *The Hindu* criticised the release of Lashkar-e-Taiba leader, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, by a Lahore court. The report also claims that Lashkar-e-Taiba has operated openly in the city reporting that “in February this year, thousands of Lashkar cadre marched through Lahore holding the organisation’s black-and-white flag but under the name of a new organisation, the Tanzeem-e-Azadi-e-Kashmir [Organisation for the Liberation of Kashmir]”. Extracts follow:

Even as the Lashkar-e-Taiba assault team that attacked Mumbai in November was waiting for its final orders at a Karachi safehouse, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed had issued a declaration of war.

The only language India understands is that of force, a press release issued by the Jamaat-ud-Dawa recorded his telling the organisation’s leaders on October 12, 2008, and that is the language it must be talked to in.

Now, a Lahore court has released Saeed from house arrest: the consequence of so-far unexplained procedural failures by Pakistani authorities in its enforcement of the public order regulations under which he was detained. Pakistani prosecutors have not initiated criminal proceedings against the Lashkar chief, leaving him free to now rebuild the terror networks he commands.

Given the Lashkar’s intimate relationship with the Pakistani state, Saeed’s release is no surprise. Pakistan’s military establishment sees the Lashkar as a partner and strategic asset, not a threat that must be crushed. Even as Pakistan fights hostile jihadist elements that threaten it in the west, it continues to patronise groups such as the Lashkar; groups which, like the Pakistan Army itself, see themselves as guardians of the ideological frontiers of the state.

...Earlier, in February this year, thousands of Lashkar cadre marched through Lahore holding the organisation’s black-and-white flag but under the name of a new organisation, the Tanzeem-e-Azadi-e-Kashmir [Organisation for the Liberation of Kashmir]. Pakistani newspapers reported that its activists had collected donations from bystanders, handing out receipts bearing the name of the Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation (Swami, P. 2009, ‘Saeed’s release raises fears of fresh terror wave’, *The Hindu*, 3 June <http://www.hindu.com/2009/06/03/stories/2009060353271000.htm> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 3).

On 31 May 2009 *Asia News International* (ANI) published a list of attacks to have affected Pakistan, reporting that: “that at least 486 people including army, navy and police officials, have lost their lives in suicide attacks in the province since 2007”. The report follows, most of the attacks listed involve the targeting of state security forces, incidents involving Lahore have the city’s name set in bold.

The deteriorating law and order situation and the expanding writ of extremists in Pakistan, and especially in Punjab can be gauged from the fact that at least 486 people including army, navy and police officials, have lost their lives in suicide attacks in the province since 2007.

Besides that about 1,573 people have been injured in terror strikes since 2007 to till date, The News reports.

Some of the recent terror attacks that have rocked the province and other parts of the country are as follows:

May 27, 2009: A suicide car bomber targets buildings housing police and intelligence offices in the eastern city of **Lahore**, killing about 30 and injuring more than 100.

March 30, 2009: Armed gunmen attack a police academy on the outskirts of **Lahore**, killing at least 12 people and wounding dozens.

March 27, 2009: A suicide bomber demolishes a packed mosque near the northwestern town of Jamrud, killing about 50 people and injuring scores more.

March 3, 2009: Gunmen attack the Sri Lankan cricket team in **Lahore**, wounding several players and killing six policemen and a driver.

Sept. 20, 2008: A suicide attack kills at least 54 and wounds more than 250 and devastates the Marriott hotel in Islamabad.

Sept. 6, 2008: A suicide car bombing kills at least 35 people and wounds 80 at a police checkpoint in Peshawar.

Aug. 21, 2008: Suicide bombers blow themselves up at two gates of a weapons factory in the town of Wah, killing at least 67 people and wounding at least 100.

March 11, 2008: Suicide bombs rip through seven-story police headquarters and a house in **Lahore**, killing at least 24 people and wounding more than 200.

Feb. 29, 2008: Suicide bomber strikes funeral of slain police officer in the Swat Valley, killing more than 40 people and wounding at least 60.

Jan. 10, 2008: Suicide bomber blows himself up among police guarding the High Court in **Lahore**, killing 24 people and wounding scores more.

Dec. 27, 2007: Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and 20 other people are killed in a suicide bombing and shooting attack in Rawalpindi ('486 killed in suicide strikes in Punjab since 2007' 2009, *Thaindian News*, source: *Asia News International*, 31 May http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/486-killed-in-suicide-strikes-in-punjab-since-2007_100199072.html – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 4).

A 31 May 2009 article by Christina Lamb of London's *Sunday Times* reports that, in spite of the recent bomb attacks, support for the ongoing campaign against "extremists" remains high in Lahore. The report highlights the activities of "Abid, 35, is chief executive of a foundation providing microfinance for rural women". The report relates that: "twice in the past two months, she and many of her friends have gathered for rallies in the Mall in central Lahore, holding placards declaring 'No to terrorism', after spreading the word through Facebook and text messages". The report also relates that: "On Thursday [28 May 2009], when the Taliban commander Hakimullah Mehsud warned that residents should evacuate the cities of Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Multan or face further attacks, most stayed put". This noted the report also suggests that residents took the threat seriously: "Some kept children home from school, shops stayed closed and public places and hotels were largely deserted, but the mood was one of defiance". Extracts follow:

LIKE most residents of Lahore, the first thing Sadaf Abid did when she heard Wednesday's massive bomb rattling the windows in her office four miles away was to telephone to check on family and friends. However, what she did next was more surprising.

"I told them we should come out on to the streets to protest against these militants," she said. "This bomb was meant to turn public opinion against the army operation to clear the Taliban from Swat and we shouldn't give in."

The stylishly dressed Abid, 35, is chief executive of a foundation providing microfinance for rural women, and says until recently she never thought the Taliban were anything to do with her.

Yet twice in the past two months, she and many of her friends have gathered for rallies in the Mall in central Lahore, holding placards declaring “No to terrorism”, after spreading the word through Facebook and text messages.

Outraged at a video showing the Taliban flogging a young girl in Swat, in North West Frontier Province, they were shocked to see part of the country ceded to extremists. When, even in cosmopolitan Lahore, warnings were sent to colleges for girls to cover their heads and not to wear jeans, they began a letter-writing campaign to tell the government and army chief not to give in to militants.

...A series of bomb attacks last week seemed to strengthen public resolve. On Thursday, when the Taliban commander Hakimullah Mehsud warned that residents should evacuate the cities of Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Multan or face further attacks, most stayed put.

Some kept children home from school, shops stayed closed and public places and hotels were largely deserted, but the mood was one of defiance. “It’s our war,” said one of the country’s biggest textile manufacturers. “We’re the ones who have to live here.”

Inspired by the lawyers’ movement, which saw the country’s chief justice restored last March after an unprecedented two-year campaign, citizens’ groups in Peshawar are planning a march against terrorism. “We can no longer just stand by,” said Maryam Bibi, one of the organisers who runs a women’s group in Waziristan, near the troubled Afghan border.

Such moves may be small but represent a shift of attitude in a country which has often blamed its problems on outsiders, usually Indians, rather than recognise its own failings.

“It’s a huge change,” said Pakistan’s leading human rights activist, Asma Jahangir. “For a long time it felt like we were the only ones raising voices against these militants while the rest of country remained silent and we were labelled anti-Pakistan. I just hope it’s not too late.”

Last week the Taliban showed they can hit anywhere, with two bombs in Peshawar and one in Lahore. On Friday a man wearing a suicide vest was arrested entering Islamabad, the capital.

In Lahore the area around the police headquarters was still sealed off yesterday after the powerful car bomb that killed at least 24 and injured 200 on Wednesday. That section of Mall Road was heavily guarded but gunmen shot at police before driving in and detonating the bomb.

That blast was the third big attack in Lahore, the capital of Punjab, in three months. In March a raid on the police training centre led to an eight-hour siege in which 18 died, just weeks after gunmen attacked Sri Lanka’s visiting cricket team, killing six police guards and a bus driver.

“Lahore is now the real prize for militants,” said an intelligence official.

As chief minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif is charged with holding off the insurgents and protecting its 82m people. Staff say he works from 7am to midnight. He looks exhausted.

“There’s no doubt that one of their aims is to penetrate into Punjab as well as to stop the operation in Swat,” he said. “But I think finally the whole nation is behind the concept of not allowing the insurgency to cripple our society.”

In his view Pakistan is paying the price for years of oppression of its poor and needs a social revolution. Pointing out that the Taliban won public support in Swat by demanding an Islamic justice system, he said: "To think in a society thirsting for justice that people will look away from such a movement is fooling ourselves."

...Anti-Taliban protests are being staged after suicide attacks in cities including Peshawar (Lamb, C. 2009, 'Facebook Pakistanis unite against terror; Fightback Alarmed by the growing threat to their nation, ordinary people are rising up, reports Christina Lamb in Lahore', *Sunday Times*, 31 May – Attachment 5).

On 28 May 2009 Pakistan's *The News* provided the following overview of recent bomb and gun attacks in Lahore. For ease of reading the date, locations and basic details of each attack have been set in bold. Most of the attacks would appear to have targeted state security forces.

The City on **Wednesday [27 May 2009]** witnessed another terrorist attack on the law enforcing agencies on the **Fatima Jinnah Road**.

This time the terrorists changed their mode of action as they first carried out a ground attack on the Rescue 15 building and later used a vehicle which had an explosive device fixed in it.

It is suspected that the material used in the attack was a mix of the RDX and trinitrotoluene or TNT explosives. The RDX is used as a major component in many plastic-bonded explosives to increase their intensity while the TNT is usually used to shatter concrete structures and hillocks. **At least 24 people have reportedly been killed while over 200 injured in the attack.**

The investigators say the similar mix of RDX and TNT explosives had been used in an attack **on March 4, 2008, when a suicide bomber forced his entry to the Navy War College on The Mall, Lahore**, by ramming his explosive-laden vehicle into the main gate, **killing eight** navy employees on the spot. The incident occurred at around 1:10 pm (PST) when classes in the Pakistan Navy War College were in progress.

Another attack was carried out six days later **on March 11, 2008, when a bomber rammed his explosive-laden Shahzore truck into the main gate of the Federal Investigation Agency headquarters in Lahore, killing 33 people**. Hardly few minutes later, yet another bomber ripped through an advertising agency's office in Model Town, Lahore, confusing it with an undercover office of the Special Investigation Authority (SIA), killing two children and their father.

Earlier, **in another [sic] attack on January 10, 2008, at least 24 people, including 17 policemen, were killed and 80 others injured in a suicide bomb blast outside the Lahore High Court**, minutes before the arrival of an anti-government lawyers' procession. The blast ripped through GPO Chowk in front of the Lahore High Court as the suicide bomber walked up to the about 60 riot police, who had gathered there ahead of a protest by lawyers against the Musharraf government, and blew himself up.

On August 13, 2008, a suicide blast in Lahore killed at least nine people and injured more than 35, targeting policemen standing guard on the eve of the Independence Day. The attack took place at the busy Dubai Chowk in the Allama Iqbal Town area at 11:34pm as citizens appeared in the streets before midnight to celebrate the 61st anniversary of the country's independence.

On October 7, 2008, three remote-controlled bombs exploded one after the other at three juice shops in the Garhi Shahu area injuring seven people, including two children and a woman. The first bomb went off at the Chhino Juice Corner near the Garhi Shahu Chowk, injuring two waiters, aged 12 and 14.

Fifteen minutes later, the **second explosion occurred at the Rehman Juice Corner, which had been closed. The third bomb exploded after another 15 minutes at the Dasco Juice Corner, injuring passers-by.**

On November 22, 2008, at least three people, including a teenager, were injured in a series of three explosions near the Alhamra Cultural Complex in Lahore, where the World Performing Arts Festival was in progress. Police said at least one of the explosions at 10:02pm (PST) might be of a timed device planted at the cafeteria in the basement of the adjoining Punjab Institute of Language, Art and Culture. Police were trying to locate the bombing site when another explosion occurred less than 15 minutes later, injuring two workers. Another 15 minutes later, a third explosion took place outside the Alhamra Cultural Complex gate, injuring a 13-year-old boy.

On December 24, 2008, a woman, identified as Farzana Bibi, was killed and five other people were injured as a mini-truck packed with explosives blew up in the GOR-II [Gazetted Officers Residences] area, police officials said. The windows of nearby houses were shattered, several walls collapsed while a transformer also exploded. Superintendent of Police Umar Virk said a mini-cabin with about 10kg explosives blew up on the road. Forensic experts said the explosives were detonated by remote or a timer device. The vehicle was completely destroyed. Police said the vehicle, belonging to the Fisheries Department, was stolen on November 19. The target of the Lahore blast was likely a police officer who had headed an operation that led to the death of a leader of LeJ in 2002.

On January 9, 2009, five explosions were reported from two theatres in Lahore. However, no casualty was reported. Four low-intensity bombs exploded in the main electricity supply control room of the Al-Falah Theatre at around 8:20pm (PST) while a high-intensity bomb exploded at the Tamasil Theatre at around 10:30pm at Mozang Chungi. A suspect was arrested from the premises of the Al-Falah, who was taken to the Civil Lines police station for interrogation. Declining to name a group, Deputy Inspector General of Police (Investigations), Mushtaq Sukhera, said people who opposed the cultural activities carried out the attacks.

On March 3, 2009, Sri Lankan cricketers narrowly escaped a terrorist attack when terrorists ambushed a bus which was taking them to the Gaddafi Stadium for the third day's play of the second test between Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

At least seven people, including six policemen escorting the Sri Lankans and the driver of another van in the convoy, were killed and 20 others wounded in the attack near the Liberty roundabout, 500 metres from the stadium. Seven Sri Lankan players were among the wounded. A British coach, Paul Farbrace, and Pakistani umpire Ahsan Raza were also injured in the attack.

On March 30, 2009, eight police recruits and a civilian were killed when a group of 10 terrorists attacked the Police Training Centre, Manawan, with guns and grenades. The security forces regained the control of the school in an operation that lasted for more than eight hours. About 93 cadets and civilians were injured. Punjab IGP Khawaja Khalid Farooq said one of the attackers was arrested, another fled after being hit by a bullet and three blew themselves up to avoid arrest (Aslam, S. 2009, 'Terrorists change their modus operandi', *The News*, 28 May <http://thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=179935> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 6).

On 28 May 2009 *The Wall Street Journal* reported on the manner in which insurgents appeared to be targeting Pakistan's police force in metropolitan areas like Lahore.

The Islamist insurgency has opened a new front against the Pakistani government, hitting its undertrained and poorly equipped police in a series of increasingly bloody and daring attacks in the nation's heartland.

Suspected Islamic militants decimated a police emergency center and the office of Pakistan's main intelligence agency in this eastern city Wednesday. They killed at least 21 people, including nine police officers, and wounded hundreds more.

...In Punjab province, home to Lahore, more than 50% of Pakistan's 175 million people and its major industries, insurgents have struck the police during four major attacks and a handful of smaller ones since February.

Police in northwestern Pakistan, where the Taliban control vast swaths of territory, have in recent years been shot, blown up and beheaded at an alarming rate. Police and security officials say the series of attacks now being seen in Punjab is aimed at destroying police morale and discipline there so the militants can extend their influence beyond the country's mountainous northwest.

The campaign against Pakistani security personnel closely parallels an offensive by Sunni militants in Iraq that resulted in the deaths of thousands of Iraqi soldiers, police officers and recruits. Taliban militants in Afghanistan have also stepped up their attacks on Afghan security personnel in recent months, killing hundreds.

So far, the assaults in Punjab have faced little resistance. "Before, we looked only for criminals, not the terrorists," said Suhail Aslam, a 22-year-old local constable. Now on nighttime patrols on the rutted back roads, the police keep their assault rifles at the ready.

U.S. officials have in the past six months begun to recognize how ill-equipped the police are to challenge the insurgents' spread. Washington plans to provide nearly \$120 million this year – up from about \$30 million last year – for police training and equipment under President Barack Obama's revamped strategy for defeating militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan, a U.S. official said.

Police in Punjab said the attacks have been carried out by a combination of Punjabi Islamists and the Pakistani Taliban, which have taken credit for one of the attacks. The Punjabi groups were once nurtured by Pakistan's intelligence services to fight India in Kashmir but have since become enemies of the Pakistan state and have forged close ties with the Taliban and al Qaeda.

...Deploying the army in Punjab is not politically feasible; there's no open rebellion in the province like that seen in the parts of the northwest. It is also not clear that the military, which is dominated by Punjabis, would be willing to take on their own.

That leaves the police as the front line against terrorism, a role they are ill-suited to play.

One problem has to do with public perception. Many ordinary Pakistanis believe that dealing with the police – be it a traffic stop or the scene of a serious crime – often ends with a payoff. That taint of impropriety can make it difficult for the police to secure the kind of cooperation needed to root out militant networks. "They always tell people, 'You are doing something wrong, give me your rupees,'" said Abdul Karim, a 30-year-old mechanic in Mianwali.

The Taliban and other Islamists, in contrast, are often seen as pious Muslims, further compounding the police force's problems.

The police force still recruits much as it did in British colonial times, taking barely educated young men and training them to protect the elite and maintain order for pay of about \$160 a month. The force only has about 80% of the weapons it needs for its 167,000 men and women, says Jawad Dogar, the senior Punjab police officer in charge of logistics.

The lack of training and firepower were on stark display March 3 when about a dozen militants attacked a convoy carrying the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team in the center of Lahore, Punjab's capital and largest city. They were armed with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades and carrying backpacks loaded with ammunition and dried fruit and chocolate for sustenance.

On paper, the convoy was well guarded. Its escorts – four pickup trucks and five motorcycles – carried 37 police from the force's elite commando squad. The police were armed with high-end weaponry, MP-5 assault rifles and 9mm pistols, said Muhammad Iqbal, one of the officers escorting the team.

But, Mr. Iqbal said, he and most of his fellow officers had only enough bullets to fill a single cartridge of their assault rifles and a few rounds in their handguns.

...Dozens of suspects arrested in the following days couldn't be connected to the attack, investigators say. One key suspect fled to northern Pakistan before he could be arrested, taking refuge in a mosque. But police in that area, outside Punjab, took days to act on requests from the Lahore police and the suspect disappeared, said a senior investigator.

Four weeks later, as more than 700 recruits lined up on March 30 for roll call at a police academy on Lahore's outskirts, at least five gunmen tossed grenades over a wall. Then they jumped it themselves, opening fire with assault weapons.

Eight recruits were killed. Two of the attackers were fatally shot, two blew themselves up with suicide belts and one was caught, said Mubasher Ullah, a senior police officer who oversees the school.

Punjab is considered to have the best-trained and best-equipped police force in Pakistan. Yet constables spend their first months training at academies that, like the one attacked in Lahore, often lack beds, toilets or kitchens.

The province has a single police laboratory, and forensic investigations are almost unheard of. Instead, police often detain "a suspect and take him to a private house and work" – that is, beat – "the information from him," said a veteran police officer in Lahore. "After, we can arrest him and take him to the station."

Often it is not so straightforward. The southern Punjab city of Bahawalpur is home to Jaish-e-Mohammed, a banned militant group that once enjoyed close ties to Pakistan's premier spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence. The police in April tried to arrest a Jaish commander who was hospitalized in Bahawalpur after being wounded in a U.S. missile strike while meeting with Taliban commanders in the northwest.

Bahawalpur police wouldn't comment on the incident. But a senior officer with knowledge of what happened said the commander's men threatened to blow up police stations and schools if police went through with the arrest.

The police backed down, and the militant commander slipped out of the hospital a few days later, the senior officer said. He's now believed to be staying at one of the mosques or seminaries that Jaish openly runs in Bahawalpur.

During Wednesday's assault, Sajjad Bhutta, a senior city official, said intense firing followed a massive blast which shook the whole area. It was unclear whether the police or the ISI, or both, were the main target. One ISI official said the agency believes the police were the main target. Other officials suggested that the ISI's counterterrorism role may have made them the target.

A little-known group calling itself Tehrik-i-Taliban Punjab claimed responsibility for the bombing in a Turkish-language communiqué posted on Turkish jihadist Web sites, saying it was related to the fighting in Swat, according to SITE Intelligence Group, the Associated Press reported. The claim couldn't be verified. But it added to speculation that Wednesday's attack was carried out in retaliation for the army offensive in Swat (Rosenberg, M. 2009, 'Taliban Wages War on Police In Its New Front in Pakistan', *Wall Street Journal*, 28 May <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124346214159560023.html#> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 7).

On 28 May 2009 *The Washington Times* published an assessment of the mood in Lahore and Karachi following successive attacks in both cities. According to *Washington Times* reporter, Nasir Anwar Khan, both cities are home to a growing trend of public protest against the militant networks suspected of orchestrating the attacks, by bomb and gunmen, which have recently affected both cities. The report relates details of a number of liberal-minded individuals actively campaigning against what they reportedly see as "Talibanization of their country". Extracts follow:

Khalid Mahmood is a graduate of Northwestern University and runs a flourishing marketing consultancy firm in Karachi. He speaks English fluently, leads a charmed life crammed with parties and globe-trotting, and regularly reads U.S. newspapers on the Internet.

At heart, however, Mr. Mahmood, 38, is a man of the Swat Valley: His grandfather was the army commander of the last wali, or ruler, of the region now under the control of Islamist Taliban militants. Mr. Mahmood has vowed to restore the Switzerland of Pakistan to its former glory.

"Swat is where my heart and soul is," he said. "And I will do everything in my power to bring back the valley."

Mr. Mahmood is part of a growing movement of students, civil society leaders, politicians and activists who have joined hands against the Talibanization of their country, inspired to a great extent by a nationwide movement of lawyers that led to the reinstatement of the Supreme Court chief justice earlier this year.

As residents in Lahore, Karachi and other major Pakistani cities raise their voices against Talibanization, the Pakistani military has been attacking militants across a 50-mile arc northwest of the capital, Islamabad. After reports of policemen being beheaded and girls being flogged in Swat made their way across the world and horrified potential aid-givers in Washington, Pakistan's government finally sent the army in to do battle.

The coming together of middle-class Pakistanis against Talibanization is a recent phenomenon.

“This is a remarkable change,” social scientist Amen Jaffer said. “For the longest [time], the middle class remained silent as extremists gained attention and power. Now, they are fighting back and showing they mean business.”

Through public meetings, Internet forums and meetings with politicians, the anti-Taliban activists hope to prompt the government to come down heavily on extremists.

“Every other day, I am involved in a protest, a letter-writing campaign, a rally, et cetera,” Mr. Mahmood said, speaking rapidly as he made his way from one meeting to another. “I have been raising my voice against what’s happening in Swat for months now, but finally it seems others have also realized the urgency of the situation.”

The activists achieved a small moral victory in early May. Kinnaird College, one of Lahores [sic] premier institutions for the education of women, had banned jeans and body-hugging clothes after officials reportedly received threats from extremists.

Protests by the anti-Taliban brigade forced the college administration to defend the decision by asserting that the dress code was in line with government regulations and was not the result of militants’ threats.

“It’s a first step,” Mr. Mahmood said. “We have put Kinnaird on the defensive and soon we will be able to make them retract their orders.”

In April, more than 2,000 people joined a rally in Lahore to protest Talibanization and terrorism. The event was arranged by the Citizens of Lahore, a loose coalition of social, political and trade union organizations. Behind massive placards bearing slogans such as “No to Talibanisation” and “No to Terrorism,” a crowd of mostly women and students chanted against Islamic fundamentalism.

Mr. Mahmood and his compatriots are also drumming up support for rallies in New York City and London, both of which are home to many Pakistani expatriates.

Concerns have mounted about a potential backlash against the government and Taliban opponents, however, as the military crackdown in Buner and Swat has forced more than 2.5 million people from their homes. Many have found temporary shelter in Lahore and Islamabad.

...The recent criticism of the Taliban by the ruling Awami National Party in the North West Frontier Province, which had earlier signed a peace deal with the Islamists, helped strengthen the campaign. So have condemnations by mainstream Muslim groups.

“The Taliban need to be defeated,” said Salima Hashmi, a noted artist and member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. “They are trying to push us back into the pre-Islamic era, and their claims of Islam are a sham.”

...Though the anti-Talibanization movement has attracted a good deal of attention, many observers are still skeptical about its effect on the government’s will to root out the militants.

...Hamid Zaman, a businessman and spokesman for Concerned Citizens of Pakistan, said one of challenges facing their work is the mind-set of the middle class. “Often, we come across people who believe that Talibanization is not a threat in Pakistan, it is simply an American-created notion,” he said. “And then we have to convince them that ... this is a genuine problem.”

Meanwhile, in his office on a busy street in Karachi, Mr. Mahmood is putting together yet another petition to cajole Islamabad into exerting even more force against the Taliban.

“I just want to see a return to the Swat of my grandfathers time,” he said, “when every woman could go to school and justice was speedily dispensed” (Khan, N.A. 2009, ‘Middle-class Pakistanis awaken to Taliban threat’, Washington Times, 28 May

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/28/middle-class-pakistanis-awaken-to-taliban-threat/> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 9)

A 26 May 2009 report by Sri Lankan journalist Thaha M. Muzammil argues that the western press has exaggerated the level of danger and fear currently affecting Lahore and Karachi. The *Daily News* journalist found public crowds in Karachi and Lahore to be relaxed and at ease: “When I asked of some recent blasts in Lahore they say these types of incidents are taking place everywhere in the world; in India, in US, in Europe even in Sri Lanka. It doesn’t mean the country is filled with terrorism”. Extracts follow:

On receiving an invitation from the South Asian Free Media Association to attend a workshop during April 22 to 25 in Lahore, Pakistan, I thought a while whether it would be safe enough to travel to that country. Some friends and family members too cautioned me travelling to Pakistan given the present security condition.

Anyway, I undertook the journey. Left for Pakistan three days ahead of the workshop and arrived in Karachi on April 19. My good journalist friend, President of SAFMA, Sindh Province, Aamer Mahmood, took care of my stay in Karachi.

Lahore is the second largest and historical city in Pakistan after Karachi

We travelled length and breadth of Karachi, the largest and commercial city of Pakistan, day and night, without any fear. Beaches, shopping malls, markets are filled with people.

Even the restaurant we went late in the night was full of people. I just asked the server how many people are there in the restaurant, he said over one thousand at the moment. I didn’t see a semblance of uneasiness. No security check points on roads, no military personnel around. The situation looked quite normal everywhere.

Why then all these propaganda of security threats in Pakistan? I asked my friend Aamer. He said, unfortunately the US’s vicious eye has fallen on Pakistan. Certain powers are unreasonably trying to fork their finger in the internal affairs of the country.

They try to portray Pakistan as a terrorist producing country; we are actually a victim of terrorism which the world knows best.

These Taliban have become a headache. Who created and fostered the Taliban and placed them on the borders of Pakistan? From where are these Taliban getting those sophisticated weapons which you saw on television? Pakistanis know well about these things, but, unfortunately all the major news agencies of the world are under the influence of big players of international affairs.

They know how to project a country to the rest of the world according to taste of their masters. One thing should be clear to everyone that Pakistan is quite capable of safeguarding itself from any threats, internal or external. And all the evil scheming of enemies are bound to fail, Aamer said.

Since my connecting flight to Lahore was early next day we returned home around 1 a.m. for a few hours rest and then to proceed to the airport at 3 a.m.

When I arrived at the Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore the alert of my Sri Lankan friends cropped up in mind. I had arrived at the purported hot spot of the region. I looked around. No much security hassle, only a routine security and Customs check which are quite normal as at any international airport.

Lahore is the second largest and historical city in Pakistan after Karachi bordering the Indian city of Amritsar. Lahore is often called the Garden of Mughals because of its Mughal heritage.

Lahore also is often called the cultural heart of Pakistan, as it is the centre of Pakistani arts, films and intelligentsia. It is located near the Ravi River, close to the Pakistan-India border. Mughal structures such as the Badshahi Mosque, the Data Darbar Complex, the Lahore Fort, Shalimar Gardens, and the Mausolea of Jahangir and Nur Jahan are popular tourist spots in the city.

Lahore is also home to many British colonial structures built in the Indo-Gothic style, such as the Lahore High Court, the General Post Office (GPO), and many older universities. Since I was in Lahore two days ahead of the program I was able to roam the city all alone.

The Anarkali market and the Liberty market are filled with people. I could talk to many of them with regard to lots of issues.

When I asked of some recent blasts in Lahore they say these types of incidents are taking place everywhere in the world; in India, in US, in Europe even in Sri Lanka. It doesn't mean the country is filled with terrorism.

You are here now; see for yourself how safe it is in Lahore, they said. All of them felt sorry about what happened to our cricketers. No Pakistani with his sound mind would have done this, they say. They firmly believe some external hands are behind this incident to discredit Pakistan and to tarnish its image.

Pakistanis are very friendly. When you say you are a Sri Lankan they take extra care of you. They love Sri Lanka a lot.

So let us not be gullible to what the Western media is propagating about a Third World country. Pakistan is quite a safe place to visit ('Pakistan is quite a safer place to visit' 2009, *Daily News*, 26 May <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/05/26/fea24.asp> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 8).

On 28 May 2009 *Dawn* reported that: "Terrorists [had] struck Lahore for the third time in as many months with the emergency response police bearing the brunt of a brutal suicide attack on Wednesday that left a total of 26 people dead". The report continues:

A van carrying high-intensity explosives hit a police checkpoint outside the offices of the Rescue-15 and the Inter-Services Intelligence on Lawrence Road on Wednesday morning, leaving behind a trail of blood and an administration seeking urgent answers to control the reign of terror.

Among the dead were 16 policemen, an army officer and many civilians including a 12-year-old boy. Officials at the city morgue said two of the bodies were as yet unidentified.

More than 251 others were injured, rescue services were looking for survivors trapped in the rubble late into the night. It was feared that the death toll may also rise.

The incident took place at a heavily guarded entry point to the offices of Rescue-15 and the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) as well as to the official residences of police officers at the Plaza Cinema Chowk at around 10:10am.

The buildings are adjacent to the offices of Lahore's police chief and are only yards away from the old Freemason's Hall where the Punjab chief minister has his secretariat. Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif was at his Defence residence at the time of the explosion.

...This was the third serious terror attack in Lahore since the March 3 assault on the Sri Lankan cricketers at Liberty Roundabout.

On March 30, terrorists besieged a police training school in Manawan, a suburb of Lahore, for many hours. In the wake of Wednesday's attack, a possible security lapse by the government was again a moot point (Ali, M.F. 2009, 'Death toll from Lahore car bomb attack rises to 26', *Dawn*, 28 May <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/04-explosion-on-lahore-mall-road-qs-02> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 10).

On 28 May 2009 *Dawn* provided a list of the most significant militant attacks to have affected Lahore in 2009. Most of the attacks would appear to have targeted state security forces. Notable exceptions involving other targets include: the bombing of two closed two theatre halls on 9 January 2009; and the Sri Lankan cricket team on 3 March 2009. The list follows:

March 30, 2009:

Militants armed with guns and grenades storm a police training centre in the Lahore suburb of Manawan, killing at least 12, wounding scores and holding off police and troops for eight hours. The attack is claimed by Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud. Four militants are killed and three militants were arrested.

March 3, 2009:

Gunmen attack a bus carrying Sri Lanka's cricket team to the Qadhafi Stadium in front of the popular Liberty Chowk market, killing seven people, including six policemen and a driver, and wounding six of the cricketers and a British coach.

January 9, 2009:

Five low-intensity explosions rip through two theatre halls; no casualties are reported as the theatres were closed for Muharram.

August 13, 2008:

A suicide bombing in front of a police station at Dubai Chowk kills two policemen and seven civilians and injures 35 others.

March 11, 2008:

Suicide bombs rip through the seven-story headquarters of the Federal Investigation Agency and a house in Lahore, killing at least 24 people and wounding more than 200.

March 4, 2008:

Two suicide bombers blow themselves up in the parking lot of the Naval War College in the Jati Umrah suburb. Eight are killed and 24 injured; most casualties are military officers and enlisted personnel.

January 10, 2008:

A suicide bomber blows himself up among police guarding the High Court in Lahore, killing 24 people and wounding scores more ('Timeline: Terror attacks in Lahore' 2009, *Dawn*, 28 May <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/09-timeline-terror-attacks-in-lahore-szh--01> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 11).

On 23 April 2009 Ayesha Nasir reported on the security mood in Lahore for *The Washington Times*. The report paints a dim picture of the city relating that: "With recent terrorist attacks and more subtle threats from black-bearded strangers in turbans and skullcaps, the city's artists and performers have stopped appearing in public". The report attributes a particular significance to two October 2008 events in Lahore. The first saw "three small bombs exploded near juice shops in Garhi Shahu" which "had become known as 'dating points,' offering concealed booths for young couples to cuddle". In the second: "traders on Hall Road set on fire tens of thousands of CDs and DVDs...after vendors received anonymous letters and phone calls threatening suicide bombs if they continued to sell" certain objectionable types of material. Nonetheless, the report also relates that: "More than 3,000 activists, artists, students and journalists turned out recently to demonstrate against the extremism that is becoming more rampant every day". Extracts follow:

Fear of Taliban rules and retribution has descended on this cosmopolitan city near the Indian border, with militants taking aim at fashion shows, nightclubs, sports and other entertainment that made Lahore the cultural capital of Pakistan.

With recent terrorist attacks and more subtle threats from black-bearded strangers in turbans and skullcaps, the city's artists and performers have stopped appearing in public. University women are being warned to cover their faces, and merchants are pulling CDs and DVDs from store shelves.

Faizaan Peerzada, chairman of the Rafi Peer theater workshop, which used to manage and arrange shows for more than 200 artists, said his clients "have become petrified."

"They don't want to sign up to do gigs, and people don't want to attend these events for fear of bomb threats," he said. "The result is at this time in Lahore, almost no cultural events are taking place."

One musician who used to be the drummer for a Pakistani band said he took a company job under duress from his mother.

"My mother became really worried and thought I was a definite target for the extremists," said the musician, who requested anonymity. "And so she begged me to stop playing for some time."

A few months ago, the reality of Taliban-style intolerance seemed unimaginable in this city of 10 million.

"This was the best city in the whole world," said event manager Aamir Mazhar, 29. "There was an energy, an enthusiasm and a life to Lahore which no other city could rival."

A terrorist attack last month targeting a visiting cricket team from Sri Lanka has jeopardized future sports events in the city. The specter of Talibanization is of particular concern to women and girls. The city is home to some of the best private girls schools in the country; in 2008, more than 50 such schools received bomb threats.

Last week, two girls studying at Kinnaird College – Lahore’s premier higher-education institute for young women – were accosted on the street and told to wear burqas.

One of the students, too scared to give her name, said she was crossing the road to enter the college when a bearded man walked up and growled at her for not being appropriately dressed.

...The fear that has infected the cultural climate in Lahore is relatively recent. A year ago, as other parts of Pakistan became caught up in the throes of religious militancy, the leafy boulevards of Lahore seemed immune.

...The turning point appears to have come in October, when three small bombs exploded near juice shops in Garhi Shahu, close to Hall Road, one of the largest commercial districts in the city. These shops had become known as “dating points,” offering concealed booths for young couples to cuddle. An unknown group called Tehreek-ul Haya, or Movement for Decency, took responsibility and said more attacks against “centers of immorality” would follow.

A few weeks later, traders on Hall Road set on fire tens of thousands of CDs and DVDs. The Anjuman-e-Tajiran, an association that represents many shopkeepers in the area, said they were weeding out objectionable materials after vendors received anonymous letters and phone calls threatening suicide bombs if they continued to sell such products.

In an op-ed in a major daily at the time, commentator Rafay Alam asked whether the association, in carrying out such self-policing, was “giving the local Taliban their first victory.”

Malik Shabeer, a member of the Anjuman group, said it had no choice. Mr. Shabeer, 45, has been running a movie store in the area for decades and used to sell a wide selection of Bollywood and Hollywood flicks, along with old Urdu classics, music CDs and, he grudgingly acknowledged, some pornographic material.

After October, Mr. Shabeer and many of his colleagues scaled back their businesses.

“Fewer people are visiting these shops,” he said. “I am so scared of the Taliban targeting my shop that I want to just close this business and do something else ... have a tire shop. The Taliban can’t take offense to that, can they?” he asked, half in jest.

Yasmeen Rahman, a member of the National Assembly, said she was surprised at how eager the traders were to comply with anonymous threats.

“I never thought the climate of fear would become so strong in Lahore,” she said.

Political analyst Hassan Askari said he also was saddened.

“Lahore was never like this,” he said. “This was a cosmopolitan city where women could dress as they liked and walk freely in the bazaars, where movie premieres were always well attended and where both conservative and liberal streams of Islam freely existed. This has all started to change.”

Rasool Baksh Raees, a political analyst, said it’s not just the fact that the Taliban appears to be moving into Punjab from tribal areas to the north and west.

“We can’t blame one jihadist organization or another, since it is a lot more complicated than that,” he said. “The problem is an extremist mind-set is gripping Lahore and an anti-American mentality is taking over the city.”

...About a decade ago, a small minority of Lahore residents said their prayers in mosques, while the majority enjoyed secular pastimes such as smoking cigars in the evenings, watching soap operas, listening to live music or betting on cricket matches. Graffiti messages scrawled on walls would talk of love and unrequited passion; now graffiti messages bash the United States and urge Pakistan's youths to take up arms in jihad.

In place of advertisements for purses or shoes, ads invite the faithful to attend religious classes. Vehemently anti-Western imams deliver angry sermons at neighborhood mosques while multinational phone companies have started offering Islamic verses as ring tones.

"Lahore has changed," said Ali Imran, a Harvard graduate who returned to the city after an absence of six years. "And I am not sure where we are heading now. It seems this secular city is becoming a shadow of Swat," where Islamic law is now in force officially after a decision last week by President Asif Ali Zardari.

The president was seeking to end fighting between government troops and the Taliban in Swat, a former resort area 100 miles from the capital, Islamabad. However, his concession appears to have emboldened the Taliban to further expansion.

Mr. Mazhar, the events manager, said he is beefing up security, and "no event is allowed to proceed without metal detectors and private security guards."

Event organizers became petrified after three bombs exploded simultaneously outside Alhamra Cultural Complex on Nov. 22 during an international performing arts festival.

In early January, five explosions rocked two theaters.

"I don't know what's going on," said Irfan Khan, owner of one of those theaters. "Theater has been a part of our culture forever, but it seems for some people it has now become objectionable. Who are these people who seem to be hijacking the secular spirit of Lahore?"

Not everyone in Lahore is acquiescing in the cultural clampdown.

More than 3,000 activists, artists, students and journalists turned out recently to demonstrate against the extremism that is becoming more rampant every day.

"This is our city," said Anita Khan, 20, a student. "And we will not let any extremist or terrorist dictate the way we live" (Nasir, A. 2009, 'Taliban, terrorism stifle life in Lahore', *Washington Times*, 23 April <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/apr/23/taliban-infiltrates-culture-of-pakistans-liveliest/print/> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 12).

On 31 March 2009 *Reuters* reported that: "Despite the attacks, Lahore, which is also Pakistan's cultural centre, was its bustling self on Tuesday" (Birsal, R. 2009, 'RPT-Attacks in Lahore "aimed at Pakistan's heart"', *Reuters*, 31 March <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSISL458522> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 13).

On 13 October 2008 Pakistan High Court advocate, Ahmad Rafay Alam, published an article in which he lamented the spread of the influence of the "Taliban" from the NWFP to Lahore. The author attributes a particular significance to an event which took place in the preceding week when it was reported that: "that traders on Lahore's Hall Road deliberately set alight thousands of pornographic VCDs and DVDs". The report also relates that: "a recent wave of suicide bombs and blasts and bomb scares and hoaxes closer to home – across the city of

Lahore in fact – are contributing to a rising sense of insecurity among Lahoris of all class, income and social divides”. Extracts follow:

A significant event passed by relatively unnoticed last week when media reported that traders on Lahore’s Hall Road deliberately set alight thousands of pornographic VCDs and DVDs. The Anjuman-e-Tajiran had resolved to weed out the “objectionable” media after vendors in the area reported receiving anonymous letters and phone calls threatening them of dire consequences if the sale of such “obscene” material continued. The event was widely reported, but the obvious undercurrents did not surface. I learnt of the burning when a local TV station carried an interview of a video trader insisting only a handful of the hundreds of outlets at Lahore’s hub of trade in pirated video indulged in selling pornographic material. A study of the undercurrents of this event are quite disturbing.

In the past, the urban elite has sat and heard and read of CD shops in the NWFP and Northern Areas being the targets of bomb blasts. These attacks were explained to be part of the local Taliban’s quest to rid society of corruption and immorality. Because of their twisted and mistaken belief that the pornography the vendors allegedly supply to people is ruining the morals of society, bombing VCD stores has become the local Taliban’s signature method of forwarding a show cause notice to a citizen it feels is breaking a moral code. While these blasts received media attention, urban Pakistanis removed from the civil war that has broken out in our country considered them to be of little significance; an ordinary tragedy in the otherwise violent and tragic life of the ordinary tribal.

Meanwhile, a recent wave of suicide bombs and blasts and bomb scares and hoaxes closer to home – across the city of Lahore in fact – are contributing to a rising sense of insecurity among Lahoris of all class, income and social divides. The Anjuman-e-Tajiran were understandably nervous. With the evidence of Pakistan’s civil war now fast becoming an everyday urban reality, they realized they were on the frontline of the local Taliban’s quest for moral purity. Their burning of thousands of pornographic VCDs and DVDs – a fraction of what is produced and traded, by the way – was also meant as a pre-emptive reply to the local Taliban’s show cause notice. Their message was loud and clear: Don’t bomb us, we are as against immorality as you. Just last week, a blast before a collection of juice shops in Garhi Shahu claimed the life of a young man. That blast was believed to be a message to the owners of the juice stores to cease and desist from allowing young boys and girls to “indulge in immoral acts” on their premises

It’s not for nothing that such a powerful traders association will bend over backwards and stop the sale of pornographic media. Now just about every boy growing up in Lahore knows of the trade in Hall Road’s Zaitoon Plaza and the Anjuman-e-Tajiran has always been a very powerful organization. They have overcome police raiding squads, the local moral police and even crusading intellectual property lawyers many times in the past. But this acquiescence, this formal display of obsequiousness is a real eye-opener. The Anjuman must realize it is impotent against the local Taliban. But in making such obsequiousness, isn’t the Anjuman also giving the local Taliban their first victory? A foothold in their war against immorality?

There may not be bombs at Lahore’s DVD stores. At least not yet. But the Talibanization of Lahore has begun. This is a major development. For centuries, Lahore has been the beacon of culture in this region. It is one of the cities of the Sufi tradition. It was a capital of the Mughal Empire, the seat of the Sikh Khalsa and a jewel of the Colonial Crown. It is the second largest city in Pakistan and, as capital of the Punjab, arguably the most politically significant. Lahore has been the seat of great learning and scholarship. Government College, the University of the Punjab, the National College of Arts, Kinnaird and Aitchison Colleges and, more recently, LUMS, LSE and BNU. It has given the world Kipling, Manto and Professor Abdus Salam and can claim the likes of Ganga Ram, Diyal Singh Majithia and Imran Khan as its sons (yes, Imran Khan – one must never take his gift of the Shaikat Khanum Hospital for granted). It

has been home to Faiz and Patras Bokhari and a million other shining lights of Pakistani culture. Now one thinks twice before going out (Alam, A.R. 2008, 'The beginning of the Talibanization of Lahore?', *The News*, 13 October <http://thenews.jang.com.pk/print1.asp?id=140667> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 14).

On 27 October 2008 *Indian Express* columnist Maseeh Rahman commented on the security situation in Lahore noting the significance of the bonfire held by the Hall Road traders and Ahmad Rafay Alam's subsequent article. According to this report "Pakistan's second largest city, routinely hailed as the nation's 'cultural capital', appear far more anxious" following the bombing, on 7 October 2008, "a cluster of fruit juice parlours – which also serve as popular dating venues – in the Garhi Shahu area". This event, along with the subsequent "bonfire of videos and other allegedly pornographic material at the popular electronics bazaar on Hall Road" is reportedly of greater concern to Lahore residents than the "bomb attacks on security establishments" which had affected the city earlier that year. The report relates that Lahore, though it has "long been home to organisations such as Jamaat-ud-Dawah, Lashkar-e-Toiba, or even Jamaat-e-Islami", has recently seen "a fundamental shift in Pakistani thinking, especially amongst a section of the westernised elite, who now fear that in Pakistan, like in Afghanistan, the jihadis... want to seize state power and are no longer content with only participating in state-sponsored campaigns, such as in Kashmir". The report also comments on the situation elsewhere in Pakistan, including the southern city of Karachi. Extracts follow:

Lahore was the scene of at least three massive bomb attacks on security establishments earlier this year, but people in Pakistan's second largest city, routinely hailed as the nation's 'cultural capital', appear far more anxious about two relatively minor incidents which occurred earlier this month.

The first was on the evening of October 7, when a cluster of fruit juice parlours – which also serve as popular dating venues – in the Garhi Shahu area, not far from the railway station, was hit by three low-intensity bombs, injuring five people, of whom one died later. The next day, panic-stricken traders organised a well-publicised bonfire of videos and other allegedly pornographic material at the popular electronics bazaar on Hall Road.

The reason for the disproportionately nervous reaction to these recent incidents is not difficult to find. Unlike the earlier attacks by suicide bombers trained in the jihad factories of the Pashtun highlands to the west, the latest threat in Lahore appears to emanate from closer home, proof perhaps that just as in Bannu or in Swat in the Northwest Frontier Province, radical groups in Pakistan's cultural capital have now begun to use violence to enforce their idea of an Islamic way of life.

In other words, the spectre of the Taliban has begun to haunt Lahore.

"People see these two incidents as quite significant, it's having an impact on people's psyche," says theatre director Shahid Nadeem. "We can no longer deny the existence of extremist sects in our midst."

Both incidents are classic examples of Taliban-style moral policing. The fruit juice parlours were bombed because they functioned as 'dating joints' for young, middle-class Pakistanis. They were partitioned into tiny cabins and the house rules were straightforward – couples could sit as long as they liked, provided they ordered at least three glasses of juice every hour at Rs 45 a glass. The cabins were without doors though, so even the most daring could do no more than hold hands or, at most, pet a little. Nonetheless, the cabins did provide some shelter from the public gaze.

Before they were bombed, the juice parlours had received threats (what in Afghanistan are called 'night letters', since they're delivered nocturnally) from a group calling itself Tehrik-e-Haya (Decency Movement), but these were ignored. The alacrity with which the Hall Road DVD and video dealers lit a merchandise-destroying bonfire the next day revealed that other businesses had received such threats too. And after having resisted the 'moral police', the traders were now caving in without a whimper of protest.

But traditional hardliners are not the only problem. Equally worrisome for Lahoris was the fact that when the juice parlours were bombed in Garhi Shahu, other traders in the area cheered, showing their disapproval of the dating joints.

"Lahore's traders are powerful and organised, and have withstood threats in the past," says Ahmad Rafay Alam, a young lawyer. "But the trading class is also getting radicalised now."

Rafay Alam was so disturbed by the recent turn of events in his home city that he shot off an article for *The News* under the challenging title "The Beginning of the Talibanization of Lahore?". It's become a much-discussed piece, a cry from the heart of a modern young Pakistani fearful of the direction in which his beloved city – and country – is hurtling.

...For outside observers, especially from India, it may seem a bit specious for Lahoris to suddenly begin agonising about the crazed 'fundos' in their midst when the city and its environs have for long been home to organisations such as Jamaat-ud-Dawah, Lashkar-e-Toiba, or even Jamaat-e-Islami. The missionary Tablighi Jamaat also holds its annual sessions there, always with record-breaking attendance.

But such a response ignores a fundamental shift in Pakistani thinking, especially amongst a section of the westernised elite, who now fear that in Pakistan, like in Afghanistan, the jihadis, or 'Partisans of Allah' in Ayesha Jalal's memorable book title, want to seize state power and are no longer content with only participating in state-sponsored campaigns, such as in Kashmir.

Even those, such as noted political scientist Rasul Baksh Rais of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), who discount the potential, or even the ambition, of the so-called Pakistan Taliban (an umbrella term for several autonomous localised groups) to take over in Islamabad acknowledge the serious challenge posed by these groups.

..."It is now becoming increasingly clear that Taliban insurgents and suicide bomber squads also include large numbers of non-Pashtuns, mainly from the Punjab," he warns. But he is confident that given the political will, the Pakistan military can successfully "break the backbone of the insurgency".

Many wealthy Pakistanis, however, are not waiting for the final result of the contest. Mohammed Hanif, the author of the delightful novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, relocated to Karachi with his family last month after 12 years of voluntary exile in London. Looking to buy a house in the posh Defence area, Hanif notices that too many mansions are lying empty and up for sale. "After every house we visit, I ask the estate agent why the owner is selling this house," he writes. "The most common reply is that they are moving to Toronto. Others are headed to Dubai, to London. One even to South Africa."

Oddly enough, one source of Karachi's 'Taliban scare' is the city's powerful secular leader, who guides his ardent followers via video-telephone from distant Edgware in London. Altaf Hussain, chief of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) representing the Mohajir migrants from India and their descendants, has recently taken to issuing dire warnings about the Taliban "spreading its tentacles" in Karachi.

“We will not permit a Taliban system to be implemented in Karachi,” he warned, after insisting that two major districts had already been taken over by Pashtun radicals. “We do not want to fight anybody, but if the Taliban attack Karachi, we will defend as per the Sharia.” (Even secular Pakistani politicians lean on religion to convey their message.)

Hanif recounts a recent telephone address by Hussain to his affluent party members in Defence and Clifton.

“After he spoke, the audience was invited to ask questions,” writes the novelist. “A young female student asked what she could do, as a girl, when the Taliban arrived at the gates of Karachi. ‘Weapons training,’ Hussain replied. ‘Buy weapons and learn to use them.’ Also, he (Hussain) continued, ‘there are many martial arts training centres in Karachi. Please join those, learn self-defence, learn judo and karate’.”

Hanif adds: “As a friend who was present at the address later told me, ‘I sat there and listened and tried to imagine a girl from Defence flooring Mullah Omar with a karate chop’.”

Amber Alibhai, who heads an urban advocacy group, acknowledges that Karachi, unlike the rest of Sindh, faces creeping ‘Talibanisation’ as well as a reverse ‘brain drain’, with a section of the elite opting out. “But I’m fed up of these people in Defence and their silly talk,” she adds. “Our city has been partitioned, it’s getting more and more divided, but it’s due to the economic disparities, the lack of opportunities, education, housing, jobs.”

“Even if the Army succeeds in clearing the tribal areas in the north of the country of the Taliban, if the vacuum isn’t filled up with schools, clinics, economic development, the Taliban will be back,” she adds.

Political analyst Rais maintains that the scare scenario of a Taliban takeover in Pakistan will appear plausible only under one eventuality. “If the US withdraws from Afghanistan tomorrow, the Taliban will become an unstoppable force in the region, and it will take on the Pakistani state,” he says.

After waking up to the Taliban threat after years of insouciance, the Americans are not likely to ditch Kabul in a hurry. But their heightened concern about the situation in the Pashtun tribal belt, it’s being whispered, has made them warn Islamabad that if the Taliban ‘crosses the Indus’ (in other words, if Punjab gets Talibanised) then the US Central Command would take out Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal.

The story about the American nuke warning may be apocryphal, but for Lahoris today, the spectre of a rising Taliban is beginning to look uncomfortably real. “The people of Lahore are liberal, tolerant, open-minded, and the majority don’t support Taliban-type interpretations of Islam,” says theatre director Nadeem. “But one test will be next month, when the World Performing Arts Festival will be held, with theatre, dance, and mime from many countries, including India.”

If the festival is a success, feels Nadeem, then it’s one more victory at the cultural barricades. For as Rafay Alam put it, if Lahore ever surrenders to the Taliban “it will be the beginning of the end of the Indus Valley civilisation” in Pakistan (Rahman, M. 2008, ‘Lahore: Cultural capital to Taliban territory?’, *Indian Express*, 27 October <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/lahore-cultural-capital-to-taliban-territory/378300/0> – Accessed 13 June 2009 – Attachment 15).

On 23 January 2008 Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid discussed the level of concern for security in Lahore in an interview with the US based *National Public Radio* network. In the context of reflecting on a recent suicide bomb attack in Lahore “where 22 policemen were

killed”, Rashid expressed the view that “everyone is feeling very unsafe” and the fear that “the next level of attack is going to be on human rights workers, on journalists, on women’s activists, people who are prominent in liberal causes in Pakistan”. Extracts follow:

Ahmed Rashid, welcome back to FRESH AIR. The suicide attacks in Pakistan have increased since the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Can you describe the scope of the attacks?

Mr. AHMED RASHID: Well, they’ve become much worse and much more varied. For example, we had the first major suicide attack in my hometown of Lahore where 22 policemen were killed on the main road outside the high court. And a suicide bomber got off a motorbike and just waded into these policemen who were waiting for a lawyer’s demonstration. And he killed 22 policemen. It’s been absolutely devastating. And as a result of that—you know, Lahore is the center of political activity, it’s the center for the elections that are forthcoming. And literally the politicians, the people, have just gone kind of underground.

...GROSS: You know, you told us at the beginning of the interview that Lahore, which is where you live, recently had its first suicide bomber attack. And so I’m wondering, are you any less comfortable? Do you feel less safe than you did just a few weeks ago in your home city?

Mr. RASHID: Well, yes. I mean, I think everyone is feeling very unsafe, and I think people – the fact that, at the one level, they’ve gone after, you know, army and police, but at another level they’ve gone after politicians and liberals really means that the next level of attack is going to be on human rights workers, on journalists, on women’s activists, people who are prominent in liberal causes in Pakistan. And I think the extremists don’t just want to destabilize the country, they don’t just want to wipe out liberal politicians or pro-Western politician, pro-democracy politicians, they also wanted to wipe out the backup for that. And the backup for that is this very fledgling civil society that we have in Pakistan, which is just – in fact, it’s really only emerged in the last one year, you know, protesting against Musharraf and against military rule. But it’s very vibrant, it’s very active, and it comprises all sorts of people: lawyers, doctors, journalists, women activists, NGOs, teachers, a lot of school teachers.

So that is really, I mean – God forbid – but if the next bomb blast is going to be, for example, against a very prominent girls’ school or prominent teachers or prominent journalists or prominent women’s activists, you know, people who are not necessarily known outside the country but are very well known inside the country, I think this is going to lead to an absolutely terrifying repercussions. Because, you know, I think a lot of your liberal elite will then seriously think about moving out.

GROSS: Are you thinking about leaving?

Mr. RASHID: No, not at all. I mean, not at all. No. I would like to leave, I mean, you know, certainly not. And, I mean, there’s no way I would be happy living for any length of time anywhere else apart from Pakistan. And, you know, that’s where my life is, and that’s where my job is; and, you know, that’s what I write about. But, you know, I mean, there has been – it’s depressing because, you know, just before 9/11, you know, I was writing and I wrote the book “Taliban,” which said that, you know, you have to rescue Afghanistan. The world has to rescue Afghanistan from the Taliban and al-Qaeda. And the world did rescue Afghanistan from al-Qaeda but only, unfortunately, after 3,000 Americans were killed in the Twin Towers (‘Interview: Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid talks about the increase in suicide attacks within Pakistan and the aftermath of Benazir Bhutto’s assassination’ 2009, *NPR: Fresh Air*, 23 January – Attachment 16).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Regional News Services

Asia Times Online <http://www.atimes.com>

Daily Times <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk>

Dawn <http://www.dawn.com>

Geo TV News <http://www.geo.tv>

The Nation <http://www.nation.com.pk>

The News <http://www.thenews.com.pk>

The Pak Tribune <http://www.paktribune.com/index.shtml>

Internews Pakistan <http://www.internews.org.pk>

Other News Services

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

International Herald Tribune <http://www.iht.com>

New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com>

Reuters <http://www.reuters.com>

The Washington Post <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com>

Staggregation Google API Proximity Search search engine

<http://www.staggregation.com/cgi-bin/gaps.cgi>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. 'Recent major attacks in Pakistan or blamed on Pakistan-based militants' 2009, *The Canadian Press*, 10 June. (FACTIVA)
2. 'Terrorist threat looming in Lahore: Security beefed up, again!' 2009, *Daily Times*, 3 June
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C03%5Cstory_3-6-2009_pg13_1 – Accessed 13 June 2009.
3. Swami, P. 2009, 'Saeed's release raises fears of fresh terror wave', *The Hindu*, 3 June
<http://www.hindu.com/2009/06/03/stories/2009060353271000.htm> – Accessed 13 June 2009.

4. '486 killed in suicide strikes in Punjab since 2007' 2009, *Thaindian News*, source: *Asia News International*, 31 May http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/486-killed-in-suicide-strikes-in-punjab-since-2007_100199072.html – Accessed 13 June 2009.
5. Lamb, C. 2009, 'Facebook Pakistanis unite against terror; Fightback Alarmed by the growing threat to their nation, ordinary people are rising up, reports Christina Lamb in Lahore', *Sunday Times*, 31 May. (FACTIVA)
6. Aslam, S. 2009, 'Terrorists change their modus operandi', *The News*, 28 May <http://thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=179935> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
7. Rosenberg, M. 2009, 'Taliban Wages War on Police In Its New Front in Pakistan', *Wall Street Journal*, 28 May <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124346214159560023.html#> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
8. 'Pakistan is quite a safer place to visit' 2009, *Daily News*, 26 May <http://www.dailynews.lk/2009/05/26/fea24.asp> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
9. Khan, N.A. 2009, 'Middle-class Pakistanis awaken to Taliban threat', *Washington Times*, 28 May <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/28/middle-class-pakistanis-awaken-to-taliban-threat/> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
10. Ali, M.F. 2009, 'Death toll from Lahore car bomb attack rises to 26', *Dawn*, 28 May <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/04-explosion-on-lahore-mall-road-qs-02> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
11. 'Timeline: Terror attacks in Lahore' 2009, *Dawn*, 28 May <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/09-timeline-terror-attacks-in-lahore-szh--01> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
12. Nasir, A. 2009, 'Taliban, terrorism stifle life in Lahore', *Washington Times*, 23 April <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/apr/23/taliban-infiltrates-culture-of-pakistans-liveliest/print/> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
13. Birsal, R. 2009, 'RPT-Attacks in Lahore "aimed at Pakistan's heart"', *Reuters*, 31 March <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSISL458522> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
14. Alam, A.R. 2008, 'The beginning of the Talibanization of Lahore?', *The News*, 13 October <http://thenews.jang.com.pk/print1.asp?id=140667> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
15. Rahman, M. 2008, 'Lahore: Cultural capital to Taliban territory?', *Indian Express*, 27 October <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/lahore-cultural-capital-to-taliban-territory/378300/0> – Accessed 13 June 2009.
16. 'Interview: Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid talks about the increase in suicide attacks within Pakistan and the aftermath of Benazir Bhutto's assassination' 2009, *NPR: Fresh Air*, 23 January. (FACTIVA)

17. Ali, M.F. 2009, 'Suicide bomber kills anti-Taliban cleric Allama Naeemi', *Dawn*, 13 June <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/07-suicide-blast-near-jamia-naeemia-mosque-in-lahore-ha-02> – Accessed 15 June 2009.
18. Dogar, A. 2009, 'Civil Lines Police Division most vulnerable to terror', *The News*, 15 June http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183106 – Accessed 15 June 2009.
19. Sharif, S. 2009, 'Crime “awards” for 2008: Model Town Division: Lahore’s most unsafe area?', *Daily News*, 1 January http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C01%5C01%5Cstory_1-1-2009_pg13_1 – Accessed 15 June 2009.
20. Buncombe, A. 2009, 'Anti-Taliban cleric killed by bomb', *The Independent*, 13 June <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/antitaliban-cleric-killed-by-bomb-1704149.html> – Accessed 15 June 2009.