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Islam and Sectarian Violence in Pakistan: The Terror Within.
By Eamon Murphy. New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2019. ISBN 978-1-138-74995-5. Maps. Glossary. Notes. Index. Sources cited. Pp. xvi, 208. \$140.00.

The latest offering from Adjunct Professor Eamon Murphy of Western Australia's Curtin University establishes itself as an out-of-the-gate "must read" for academics, policy makers, strategists, diplomats, warriors, and any responsible citizen desirous of being well-informed. It follows his outstanding 2013 tome *The Making of Terrorism in Pakistan: Historical and Social Roots of Extremism*, picking up where that book left off and expanding upon questions it raised. Murphy eschews facile stereotypes and fearlessly undertakes a comprehensive, holistic study to examine roots causes of the sectarian violence infecting Pakistan.

Breaking with conventional wisdom propagated by Western media, he establishes and then guides the reader through empirical and critical analysis to demonstrate that Pakistan's sectarian woes are due less to Islamic religious extremism than to a near continuous churn of societal upheaval. Because of myriad factors such as political upheaval, economic strains, class conflict, urban-rural tensions, and local-external (Afghanistan, Iran, U.S., Saudi Arabia, China, India, etc.) traumas.

The author deconstructs the myth that most Muslim terrorist acts target the West by pointing out that Western media ignores that fact that most Islamic terrorist acts target fellow Muslims. Murphy discusses how a minority of Muslims worldwide carried out Muslim-on-Muslim violence during the 2011-2018. As 90% of the victims were Muslim, he points out that Western media portrayals of the West as the main target for Muslim religious extremism do not paint a complete picture. He provides numerous examples of Muslim-on-Muslim attacks that Western media never reported that were much more brutal and resulted in many more casualties than attacks in the West. In many cases, although the perpetrators were Muslim, their religious zeal was not a driving factor in carrying out attacks – local economic, social, and political drivers were.

In an analysis reminiscent of former U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr.'s dictum that "all politics is local," Murphy outlines how all sectarian political violence in Pakistan is

local. Local politics, local social and economic conditions, the caste system, local religious communities, and local external factors (such as an approximately 4 million strong Afghan refugee population) impact how sectarian groups interact with and often clash with one another, leaving death and injuries in their wake.

Murphy emphasizes that terrorism and sectarian political violence in Pakistan occur in a context-specific environment with its own logic, history, political and facets. He rightly submits that one can't compare an instance of terrorism or sectarian political violence in Karachi or Lahore with one in London. By the same token, an instance of terrorism or sectarian political violence in Peshawar, Karachi, or Lahore has its own *sui generis* factors that uniquely contextualize it.

With an historical overview of Islam in Pakistan and the subcontinent, Murphy adroitly shows how multiple Sunni (Barelvi, Deobandi, Ahmadi, Ahl-i-Hadith), Shia (Ismaili, Khorja, Bohru), and Sufi sects coexisted for centuries, often blending local syncretic elements into their practices. Tensions between sects (at times intra-Sunni or intra-Shia) did lead to violence, due to difference in theology, historical tradition, religious rituals. For example, Sunnis and Shias worked together at times to persecute (Sunni) Ahmadis, Deobandis and Barelvis (both Sunni sects) both fought against each other and alongside each other against other sects, and Barelvis persecuted Ahmadis, to provide a small sampling.

Murphy explains how Sufism helped spread a syncretic Islam across the subcontinent and legacy governmental and social issues from colonial British India laid a groundwork for future difficulties. Due to a *laissez-faire* British end to colonial rule, India and (the future) Pakistan were left to their own devices to sort out how the Partition would take place.

The other major issue that has continued to plague Pakistani governments has been the role of Islam in the state. The Pakistan movement was characterised by the lack of any strong ideology except a vague commitment to the protection of Muslim interests. While the cry of Islam in danger was a key rallying slogan...the place of Islam...has remained highly ambiguous. At one extreme of the ideological spectrum was the belief that Pakistan should be a secular state in which one's religion and sect would be a matter of private concern; at the other end was the demand...that Pakistan should be

an Islamic state governed strictly according to *sharia*. The latter demand, however, begged the all-important question of which form of Islamic law, Sunni or Shia, would guide the new state. (Pp. 55-56)

This question persisted as Pakistani leaders grappled with the question of “whether Pakistan was created to be a safe homeland for Indian Muslims in which religious beliefs and practices were a private matter for its citizens or was it to be an Islamic state governed according to Islamic law.” (Pp. 84-85).

With military strongman Zia ul-Haq in charge, Pakistan seemed to be headed for Zia’s preference of Deobandi practices under the mantle of purifying Pakistan and reinforcing its Muslim identity. The turning point for Pakistan came in the latter half of the 20th Century with two pivotal events in the 1979 – the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Zia was already heading down the road of Islamization for Pakistan with no intention of sharing power with the clerics. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Zia took full advantage of U.S. and Saudi largesse to fund a mujahedin resistance that Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (Directorate) ISI. During this process, Pakistan through the ISI became a powerful broker among the mujahedin resistance to the Soviets. The ISI favored seven major mujahedin factions. During this time, hundreds of hardline madrassas (Islamic schools) proliferated throughout Pakistan, fueled by Saudi funds.

With revolution in Iran, new leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini called for worldwide Islamic revolution. As Iran’s new leadership was antagonistic towards the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, it looked with disfavor at Pakistan’s alliance with them. While Zia was promoting a Deobandi approach, at least 4,000 Pakistanis went to Iran to study Shia theology and jurisprudence. Shia militants later banded together and 100,000 strong demanded that Shia laws have a place in the Pakistani legal system.

While the immediate result was that Pakistan had a key role with steady U.S. and Saudi funds, the post-war Afghan blowback was, as Murphy states, a “pyrrhic victory.” Afghanistan’s resultant civil war brought four million refugees to Pakistan, straining its infrastructure and causing a

dearth of jobs. The growth of Deobandi and Wahhabi schools in Pakistan led to more sectarian violence. Afghan war veterans from all over the Muslim world had combat experience, weapons training, stridently extreme ideologies, and no place to go. Opium production in Afghanistan flowed through Pakistan, creating its own set of problems. The U.S. no longer had any vital interests in Pakistani affairs (until the next war), and left quickly. ISI quickly employed former mujahedin in a proxy war in Indian-occupied Kashmir, nearly starting another war. A failed excursion into Kargil nearly brought Pakistan into a major war with India.

With ongoing U.S. military actions in Afghanistan, Pakistan is still involved in regional conflicts, but now with constant sectarian violence brought about by the colonial legacy and the Afghan conflicts. Sectarian violence continues with local, national, and regional aspects fueled by politics, colonial legacy problems, and little prospect for an immediate cessation.

Murphy's' book is a master tome well worth the read. It belongs in the library of any serious student of geopolitics in South Asia.

Mark J. Roberts is a subject matter expert