

between relationships existing before individual socialization into jihadism and those forged within the four group clusters after extremist ideas were adopted but prior to the formation of a terrorist network. Nevertheless, in regard to individuals engaged in criminal activities headed by “The Chinese,” loyalty to the criminal gang and above all to its leader appears to have been the key motivating factor for involvement in the 2004 Madrid bombing plot.

### Conclusion

The 2004 Madrid train bombing network should not be viewed as a case of “homegrown” terrorism, or as a case of a “homegrown” network of al-Qa`ida sympathizers. The network did not lack international connections with prominent global terrorism figures and entities, and its members, with one exception, were not disaffected people born or raised in Spain or in any other Western European country.

As for the network’s radicalization processes, individuals who radicalized into jihadism after the 2003 invasion of Iraq are a relative majority, and this issue appears to be a significant factor in their radicalization. Members who adopted jihadism before the 2003 invasion of Iraq were influenced by Islamic injustice frames, such as with respect to major conflicts involving Muslim communities. These include the conflict in Bosnia before 9/11, or Afghanistan immediately afterward; the invasion of Iraq also likely contributed. As for members who acquired a jihadist ideology before 9/11, their radicalization processes were slower, taking from months to years. A possible explanation is that the radicalizing agents needed more time to build trust among subjects for indoctrination, and they may have deliberately created various radicalization stages to advance a recruit’s socialization into jihadism.

It was in mosques, worship sites, countryside gatherings and private residences where most of the members of the Madrid bombing network adopted extremist views. A few adopted a violent conception of Islam while in prison. The internet was clearly relevant as a radicalization tool, especially among those who were radicalized after 2003, but it was more

importantly a complement to face-to-face interactions.

Nearly six years after the Madrid bombings, many of these same causal factors still exist. The country continues to host worship sites where a number of foreign radical Salafists preach. Prisons remain locations where jihadist radicalization occurs. The internet has only grown as an important radicalization tool, and extremist documents can now be found in Spanish. Iraq has become another radicalizing factor, joining other conflicts involving Muslims such as Afghanistan, Somalia and even North Africa.

There is also a new potential radicalizing factor to be considered. Spain is now experiencing the emergence of a second generation of descendants from immigrant Muslim parents coming of age. Although this second generation, as a large aggregate, is not yet old enough for university, schools may gradually become locations where peer groups of second generation adolescents are eventually affected by a lack of effective integration into Spanish society and a concomitant absence of identification with the country from where their parents came. This could be conducive to global jihadism as an alternative cognitive frame of reference among the several thousand pupils currently between 14 and 17 years of age. Failure to prevent and counter jihadist radicalization could finally result in real cases of “homegrown” terrorism in Spain, similar to incidents in other Western European countries.

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## The Past and Future of Deobandi Islam

By Luv Puri

AS THE BARACK OBAMA administration considers modifying the current U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, it is useful to understand the social, religious and historical forces that influence Pashtun society. Pashtuns form the single largest community in Afghanistan, consisting of approximately 38% of the population.<sup>1</sup> Pakistan also hosts a significant Pashtun population, primarily in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), where they make up 78% of the population, and in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where they make up 99% of the population.<sup>2</sup> Overall, 15% of Pakistanis are Pashtun.<sup>3</sup>

When developing a strategy involving the Pashtun community in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is relevant to understand the Deobandi school of Islam. Deobandi Islam is the most popular form of pedagogy in the Pashtun belt on both sides of the Durand Line that separates Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, prominent Afghan and Pakistani Taliban leaders have studied in Deobandi seminaries. This article explains the history of Deobandi Islam, shows how Deobandi Islam in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been influenced by Saudi Wahhabism, and finally looks at the role of Deoband today.

### History of Deobandi Islam

The Deobandi school of Islam was founded in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was part of a series of revivalist movements that were sweeping British India during the time. After the 1857 revolt against the British colonialists, Muslims in British India were the primary targets during the

1 See the UNHCR Assessment for Pashtuns in Afghanistan, located at [www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,MAR,,AFG,4562d8cf2,469f3a5112,0.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,MAR,,AFG,4562d8cf2,469f3a5112,0.html).

2 “Population by Mother Tongue,” 2006 Pakistan Census Report, Pakistan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, available at [www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pcso/statistics/other\\_tables/pop\\_by\\_mother\\_tongue.pdf](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pcso/statistics/other_tables/pop_by_mother_tongue.pdf).

3 Ibid. Other Pakistani provinces host sizeable Pashtun populations: Baluchistan Province (29.84% Pashtun), Sindh Province (4.19% Pashtun), Punjab Province (1.16% Pashtun), and Islamabad (9.52% Pashtun).

ensuing British crackdown because the revolt was fought under the leadership of the Muslim Mughal emperor. As part of the crackdown, the British occupied religious sites in Delhi, the capital of the Mughal Empire for several centuries. Muslim clerics in Delhi enjoyed the patronage of the Mughals, but this changed once the British occupied the city. The last Mughal emperor was exiled to Rangoon, Burma, and the British occupied the mosques in Delhi. This caused many *ulama* (religious clerics) to migrate to various locations, such as the northern Indian town of Deoband, to preserve their religious life and culture. Deoband was a natural choice because it was a center of Muslim culture, and many families from Deoband had served in the Mughal Empire. Moreover, it was only 90 miles away from the former Mughal capital of Delhi.

In 1867, Darul Uloom was founded in the town of Deoband as one of the first major seminaries to impart training in Deobandi Islam. In addition to being close to other Muslim cultural centers in northern India, the founders of Darul Uloom believed that the decision to establish the seminary had divine sanction. By 1967, Darul Uloom had graduated 3,795 students from present-day India, 3,191 from Pakistan and present-day Bangladesh, and 431 from multiple other countries, such as Afghanistan, China and Malaysia.<sup>4</sup> By 1967, there were 8,934 Deobandi schools worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

When the school was founded, Deobandi scholars were cognizant of the religious diversity within India, and they made an effort to engage in dialogue with India's non-Muslim population. In 1875 and 1876, for example, Deobandi scholars participated in religious debates with Christian and Hindu scholars.<sup>6</sup> They jointly fought with non-Muslims against the British during India's colonial resistance, and they also participated in non-violent struggles against colonial rule.<sup>7</sup> Even the town of Deoband itself is

located in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, where Hindus form 62.7% of the total population of approximately 452,000 people.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, during the initial period of Darul Uloom's establishment, Hindus reportedly contributed to its operating expenses.<sup>9</sup>

The Deobandi movement became the most popular school of Islamic thought among Pashtuns living on both sides of the Durand Line. Many prominent Pashtun community leaders established Deobandi seminaries in these areas. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, a prominent Pashtun leader, was instrumental in establishing several schools based on Deobandi curriculum in the Pashtun belt.<sup>10</sup> In other parts of British India, however, they faced competition from other Islamic schools, primarily Barelvi Islam. Barelvi Islam, for example, remains the most popular Islamic school in what is now Pakistan's Punjab Province.

As in other South Asian schools of Islam, such as Barelvi and Ahl-e-Hadith, Deobandi places particular emphasis on the importance of religious education. It is committed to a "correct" interpretation of Shari'a (Islamic law). Deobandi students become *alim* (religious scholars) after an eight-year-long course in various aspects of Islamic learning such as logic, Islamic jurisprudence, the Qur'an, the history of literature and the hadiths. Deobandi scholars are opposed to certain Barelvi practices, such as visiting the tombs of saints. Their opposition to these practices, however, is not as rigid when compared to Ahl-e-Hadith, which follows a more narrow interpretation of Islam. In that respect, Ahl-e-Hadith is similar to Saudi Wahhabism, although it remains of South Asian origin.

### The Rise of Deoband in Afghanistan and Pakistan

In 1947, British India was partitioned into Pakistan (which included present-day Bangladesh) and India. The separation caused the migration of many leading Deobandi scholars to Pakistan. This included Mufti Mahmood, the father of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, the current president of a faction of Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam. Moreover, Mufti Mahmood, an ethnic Pashtun, became the chief minister of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province in 1972 for nine months.

The looming war against the Soviet Union only led to a rise in enrollment in Deobandi seminaries in the Pashtun areas of Pakistan. During the late 1970s, for example, Deobandi seminaries in the Pashtun belt received state patronage. According to a World Bank report, enrollment in Deobandi seminaries increased after 1979, coinciding with the start of the Afghan jihad against

### "Saudi Arabia infused Deobandi seminaries with Wahhabi ideology. The Saudis targeted Deobandi Islam because it was the most popular Islamic school in the Pashtun belt."

the Soviets.<sup>11</sup> Pashtuns played a major role in the Afghan jihad, and a large number of these fighters were drawn from Deobandi seminaries. In addition to American and Saudi money helping to support the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia infused Deobandi seminaries with Wahhabi ideology. The Saudis targeted Deobandi Islam because it was the most popular Islamic school in the Pashtun belt. Ahl-e-Hadith, for example, had a weak presence in the Pashtun belt, and Wahhabis considered certain Barelvi practices—such as visiting mausoleums—as anti-Islamic

4 Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

5 Ibid., p. 136.

6 Ibid., p. 221.

7 This information is drawn from the website of Darul Uloom, located at [www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/aboutdarululoom/freedom\\_fight.htm](http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/aboutdarululoom/freedom_fight.htm).

8 "Profile of Saharanpur District," Planning Commission, Government of India, available at [www.planning-commission.gov.in/reports/sereport/ser/stgpnt/stgpnt\\_ch2.pdf](http://www.planning-commission.gov.in/reports/sereport/ser/stgpnt/stgpnt_ch2.pdf).

9 Personal interview, Maulana Adil Siddiqui, Darul Uloom, Deoband, India, July 2009.

10 Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, "Abdul Gaffar Khan," Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, undated, available at [www.baachakhantrust.org/AbdulGaffarKhan.pdf](http://www.baachakhantrust.org/AbdulGaffarKhan.pdf).

11 Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Ijaz Khwaja and Tristan Zajonc, *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

and heretical. Some Pakistan-based scholars, such as Akbar Zaidi, have argued that Deobandi Islam in Pakistan and Afghanistan has moved away from its roots in India due to a number of factors, one of which is the influence of Saudi Wahhabism.<sup>12</sup>

The Soviet Union eventually withdrew from Afghanistan, and Deobandi became the religious base for much of the Taliban movement that ruled Afghanistan until 2001. Many Taliban leaders and fighters studied in Deobandi seminaries, many of which were influenced by Wahhabism. Mullah Omar, the head of the Taliban, is the product of a Deobandi seminary. Moreover, the top bracket of the current Taliban leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan studied in Deobandi seminaries on both sides of the Durand Line. Even Hakimullah Mehsud, the new commander of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, studied in a Deobandi seminary in Hangu District of the North-West Frontier Province, although he left his studies early and seems heavily influenced by Salafism.<sup>13</sup>

#### Deoband Today

The bifurcation of British India in 1947 severed the institutional links between Deobandi seminaries in Afghanistan and Pakistan and in India. It became difficult for Deobandi scholars in the Pashtun belt to engage in dialogue with their counterparts in Deoband. Since 1947, occasional meetings have occurred, but they have required the approval of both the Pakistani and Indian governments.

As a result, today the town of Deoband, once the leading center of Islamic learning in South Asia, has become a location restricted to Indian Muslims. The representation of students from foreign countries is currently at an all-time low. Since the 1990s, the Indian government has pursued an extremely strict educational visa policy, primarily due to fears that foreign students might

radicalize young Indian Muslims.<sup>14</sup> India's Muslim community numbers approximately 160 million, making it the third largest Muslim country in the world after Indonesia and Pakistan.<sup>15</sup>

Scholars at Deoband have taken a hard line in regard to terrorism. In early 2008, Darul Uloom declared a battle against the forces of religious extremism. On February 25, 2008, Darul Uloom hosted a conference of Islamic scholars at Deoband to debate the issue of terrorism, and the scholars unanimously passed a *fatwa* (religious edict) condemning all acts of terrorism in the name of Islam.<sup>16</sup> The declaration stated that Islam has taught its followers to treat all mankind with equality, mercy, tolerance and justice. It said that Islam sternly condemns all types of oppression, violence and terrorism.<sup>17</sup> According to Darul Uloom's Maulana Adil Sidique,

We thought that the time has come for the institution to come out with a strong position against terrorism and take a stand against the men who wrongfully invoke the name of Deobandi Islam for committing acts of terror.<sup>18</sup>

More recently, on November 3, 2009, Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind, a group of Deobandis dedicated to the rights of Muslims in India, met at Deoband and condemned suicide bombings and attacks targeting innocent civilians. They also argued that efforts to make "jihad" synonymous with terrorism are incorrect. "Jihad is basically a constructive phenomenon," they said. "Misrepresentation of jihad should be avoided."<sup>19</sup>

14 Personal interview, Maulana Abdul Latif, Darul Uloom Waqf, Deoband, India, July 2009.

15 According to the U.S.-based Pew Research Center in 2009, India is estimated to have the third largest Muslim population of more than 160 million people. Indonesia has more than 200 million Muslims and Pakistan has nearly 175 million.

16 To read the full declaration, visit [www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/news/shownews.php?id=5](http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/news/shownews.php?id=5).

17 Ibid.

18 Personal interview, Maulana Adil Sidique, Darul Uloom, Deoband, India, July 2009.

19 "Jamiat Upholds Fatwa Against Vande Mataram," *Times of India*, November 4, 2009.

Scholars at Deoband are divided over the issue of whether to grant visas to Pashtuns from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Maulana Abdul Latif, who has taught at Darul Uloom Waqf for 26-years, strongly opposes any move to allow students from Afghanistan and Pakistan; he believes that they could radicalize Indian Muslim students.<sup>20</sup> Maulana Adil Sidiqui disagrees, and thinks that educating students from Afghanistan and Pakistan at Deoband would have a sobering influence on the Muslim populations in these countries. According to Sidiqui, Pashtun graduates would be the "true" ambassadors of a Deobandi education that emphasizes research, contextual interpretation of various religious edicts, debate, engagement and co-existence with non-Muslims.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, he added that Deoband can become a constructive platform to debate political, religious, economic and social challenges confronting Muslims in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and simultaneously engage in dialogue with non-Muslims.<sup>22</sup>

Currently, seven students from Afghanistan are studying at Darul Uloom in Deoband. There are no students from Pakistan's Pashtun belt. According to 24-year-old Matiullah, an Afghan student at the school, his religious training at Darul Uloom has equipped him with the skills to guide the Muslim community and confront elements that misinterpret Deobandi Islam.<sup>23</sup> Matiullah believes that the Indian government should issue more visas to students from Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, even if the Indian government were to grant more visas to Afghans and Pakistanis to study at Deoband, it is questionable whether these seminaries could accommodate an influx of new students. The small group of Afghan students currently studying at Deoband, for example, lives in a single, small room. The living conditions of the educational facility are a stark reminder of the plight of Indian Muslims, which is in contrast to the rising social and

12 Akbar Zaidi, "The Ulema, Deoband and the (Many) Talibans - Historical Scholarship Ignores the Discontinuities and Breaks That Have Taken Place in the Traditions of Pakistani Islam," *Economic and Political Weekly* [Mumbai], May 9-15, 2009.

13 Ayaz Mir, "Chevalier Of The Undead," *Outlook India*, November 2, 2009. For a profile of Hakimullah Mehsud, see Mukhtar A. Khan, "A Profile of the TTP's New Leader: Hakimullah Mehsud," *CTC Sentinel* 2:10 (2009).

20 Personal interview, Maulana Abdul Latif, Darul Uloom Waqf, Deoband, India, July 2009.

21 Personal interview, Maulana Adil Sidiqui, Darul Uloom, Deoband, India, July 2009.

22 Ibid.

23 Personal interview, Matiullah, Darul Uloom, Deoband, India, July 2009.

economic profile of India's middle-class urban youth, who are becoming leading members of the global economy equipped with marketable skills.

These are just some of the pressing concerns for students at religious seminaries such as Darul Uloom.<sup>24</sup> One of the main reasons for the shortage of funds is that they depend on donations from the Muslim community. Darul Uloom and Darul Uloom Waqf, the two leading seminaries in Deoband, do not receive financial help from the Indian government as they believe this would dilute their institutional autonomy and control. Some scholars want administrative reforms at these seminaries, striking the right balance between institutional autonomy and accountability. They suggest having flexibility in curriculum by offering technical courses and English-language training.<sup>25</sup>

This ongoing ideological battle between scholars at Deoband and the forces of Islamist extremism will shape events in South Asia, particularly in the Pashtun belt, for years to come. The outcome is nothing less than the legacy of Deobandi Islam.

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## Maintaining the Message: How Jihadists Have Adapted to Web Disruptions

By Manuel R. Torres Soriano

SINCE THE SEPTEMBER 11 attacks on the United States, the internet has become a hostile domain for jihadists.<sup>1</sup> The internet is increasingly monitored by government and non-government entities that seek to disrupt jihadist communications and reduce the presence of jihadist material on the web. Jihadists have been forced to adapt to this mounting pressure by copying the practices of internet "pirates" who distribute illegal materials such as copyrighted music, movies, software and illicit pornography. These practices have allowed jihadists to continue their communications and propaganda activities. Today, jihadists have been inspired by websites of the most diverse character. Their goals are to enhance the visual appearance and accessibility of their content, and improve website security and reliability.

This article explains how jihadists have adapted to attempts to shut down their websites and disrupt their communications. Jihadists are increasingly using file-hosting websites and web forum software to sustain the accessibility of their content on the internet. These new technologies have allowed them to avoid some of the main weaknesses that have affected their operations in recent years.

### The Search for a More Efficient and Stable Presence on the Web

In the early years of jihadist online activity, many groups created their own websites with the intention to broadcast announcements, videos of

their operations, speeches by their leaders, and other material of interest.<sup>2</sup> Jihadist groups, however, had a difficult time maintaining a steady online presence.<sup>3</sup> Various governments and other actors concentrated their efforts on shutting down a small group of websites connected to major terrorist organizations, such as al-Qa`ida. Al-Qa`ida's official alneda.com website, for example, suffered incessant harassment after the September 11 attacks, and the site was taken offline. Major terrorist groups were forced to continuously establish new domain names and use different web hosts to keep their sites operational.<sup>4</sup>

This practice, however, also became unsustainable. Changing web hosting companies required payment, which was a problem for jihadist groups since it created a paper trail. To bypass this vulnerability, jihadist users paid with stolen credit cards. Again, however, this process was not practical; their website account only remained active until the fraud was discovered by the credit card's legitimate owner, and the hosting company would then shut down the account. The jihadists were then forced to start the process all over again.

To avoid these limitations, jihadists tried hosting their websites using free web hosting companies such as Geocities.com and Yahoo.com. These companies offered free web hosting to any user who supplied a valid e-mail address. Yet since the services were free, the companies only offered a limited amount of monthly data transfer. As a result, when a jihadist website became popular, it exceeded its data transfer quota and the site was subsequently suspended. Jihadist websites, in effect, died from success.

<sup>24</sup> Personal interviews, students at Darul Uloom and Darul Uloom Waqf, Deoband, India, July 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Some of the Deobandi scholars who argued for institutional reforms did not want to be quoted.

<sup>1</sup> This article uses the term "jihadists" to include individuals physically participating in the activities of terrorist groups, but also to individuals sympathetic to the goals of jihadist terrorist groups. This latter category of "jihadists" may have no physical connection to terrorist groups, and may have no intention of physically taking part in terrorist attacks or plots, but still participates in web forums promoting jihadist interests. These users help to spread jihadist propaganda and maintain jihadist websites, which makes them relevant for this article's discussion.

<sup>2</sup> Evan Kohlmann, "The Real Online Terrorist Threat," *Foreign Affairs* 85:5 (2006).

<sup>3</sup> There is not an exact number of websites of jihadist inspiration. The estimates tend to oscillate between 5,000 websites, suggested by the Israeli professor Gabriel Weimann, and 50,000 according to the data of an automatic inquiry completed by a group of researchers at the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the University of Arizona under the project "Dark Web Terrorism Research."

<sup>4</sup> Brynjar Lia, "Al-Qaeda Online: Understanding Jihadist Internet Infrastructure," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, January 1, 2006.