

## **Scenario 183**

### **HATRED & KILLING CULTURE**

#### **SHAHEEN SEHBAI's ANALYSIS:**

This essay is sourced from **South Asia Tribune** [gone dead *since 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005*] an internet magazine compiled by **Shaheen Sehbai**, the veteran media editor of *'the News'* and *'GEO TV'*.  
Though edited due to space constraints, the main theme is being placed here to keep the history in tact.

Hatred & killing culture has not been developed in Pakistan all of a sudden; it has decade's old history on its back. See a very **brief background** here.

Pakistan, a country of 90% Muslim population, is continuously pushed to force living into mutually hostile sectarian groups and to divert their attention from basic social and economic problems. It is on record of media and superior courts that once an army funding had also been used to bribe the religious candidates' in general national elections of 1990 at least.

As these religious candidates belonged to various sects and factions of Islam so, after gaining success, they developed and propagated sectarianism among their followers.

A little detail that how this mechanism worked in Pakistan.

**On 19<sup>th</sup> December 1990**; while an Iranian Diplomat named Sadique Ganji was leaving his hotel premises on Lahore's Mall Road, two assailants riding on a motorcycle emerged on the scene and shot him dead. A 23 year old *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] activist named Riaz Basra, was the man who delivered this terror job. After accomplishing the task, he conveniently ran away as the police were nowhere near the crime scene.

[**On 18<sup>th</sup> August 1996**; Riaz Basra attacked on a Shiite mosque during which 15 people were slain and 50 wounded.

**On 19<sup>th</sup> February 1997;** Riaz Basra launched an attack on the Iranian Cultural Centre in Multan where an Iranian diplomat named Muhammad Ali Rahimi and six Pakistanis were killed.

**On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1997;** Riaz Basra assassinated five Iranian Pasdar officers when motorcyclists pulled up beside their van and sprayed them with gunfire as they were being driven through Rawalpindi to a training course; one Pasdar in the van survived.

From 1990 to 2003, 16 Iranians in Pakistan were gunned down, with *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] suspected in many of the killings. Another radical Sunni group, *Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan* [SSP], was also implicated in a number of killings. The killings halted temporarily in 2003 perhaps due to the killing of Riaz Basra.]

Referring to a book '***Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, The Army, And America's War On Terror***, published by M.E. Sharpe; the author Hassan Abbas revealed that:

*'While Iranian Consul General Sadique Ganji was shot by Riaz Basra, the other person on the motorcycle with Basra conducting the Ganji murder operation was one Athar, allegedly a low-level official from the Pakistan's security forces.'*

Hassan Abbas did not mention his source of information; thus presumed that [might be] the said narration was simply a story fed to him by an enemy country to create rift between Iran and Pakistan.

*[...but it remains a truth that religious extremism had entered the Pak-Army's lines and files during Gen Ziaul Haq's eleven years rule – many say that he had planned to spoil the number 1 army of the world just to please his American bosses.]*

Basra was arrested **on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1992**, providing some breathing space for the political government, but he had influential 'friends' who wanted to see him in action rather than languishing in jail. They were powerful enough to ensure that they got what they wanted, thus launched a successful rescue operation to help Basra escape from police custody while he was being taken from the jail to a special court hearing **on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1994**.

In the above referred book, Hassan Abbas said that:

*'No credible information has come to light yet as to the exact identity of his "friends," but most probably they were the same on whose behalf he had eliminated the Iranian diplomat.]'*

During Gen Ziaul Haq's regime, while he was spending all his energies to impose Hanfi Islam (a branch of *Sunni* Sect), the Shia activism cropped up leading to a strong reaction to Sunni attempts. For this he focused on the hardliners among the Sunni religious groups in order to establish a front to squeeze the *Shias*.

It was in this context that Haq Nawaz Jhangvi was selected by Gen Zia's team to do the needful. After assuming power, Gen Ziaul Haq encouraged the formation of the Militant organizations against non-Muslims in order to scuttle the influence of the PPP and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was a Shi'a politician prime minister of the Pakistan.

**Back Drop:** The faction *Sipah e Sihaba Pakistan* [SSP] was launched **on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1985** with the core mission of targeting Shi'as, whom the *Deobandi* and *Wahabi* groups believed as non-Muslims.

The Pakistani authorities were well aware that the SSP received considerable financial and logistical assistance from Saudi intelligence to get their standing. The SSP gradually built considerable influence on various political parties; *Jamaat e Islami* [JI] and the *Jamiat Ulema e Islam* [JUI] were the main political parties associated with SSP since long, may not be openly.

*Jamiat Ulema e Islam* [JUI]'s recommendations to Gen Ziaul Haq had also played the decisive part in that choice. The adherents of the Deobandi School of thought were already worried about the Shia activism for religious reasons, the state patronage came as an additional incentive and thus a new chapter of bloodshed was opened in Pakistan's history. How it exactly happened, lend me a minute or two.

In their efforts to maintain law and order in Pakistan and weaken nationalist & religious elements and political parties disliked by him, Gen Ziaul Haq followed a policy of divide and rule. After success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, to keep the Shias of Pakistan under control, Gen Zia's some stooge politicians, in association with some clergymen, encouraged the formation of anti-Shia Sunni extremist organizations such as the SSP.

When the Shias of Gilgit rose in revolt in 1988, Maj Gen Pervaiz Musharraf, then in-charge Northern Military Command, had allegedly used *Mujahideen* and his tribal hordes from NWFP Province, later Khyber PK and the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas [FATA] to suppress them brutally.

While Shia activists were chasing these developing trends closely and making themselves ready to counter the SSP propaganda, the leader of *Tehreek Nafaz Fiqah Jafariya* [TNFJ], Arif Hussaini, was assassinated **on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1988** in Peshawar, serving a severe blow to the Shias. Arif Hussaini had lived in Iran for a while and had a close working relationship with the Iranian regime.

One serving army officer named Majid Raza Gillani knew the real culprits who had participated in this "operation" ***in the garb of Pakistan military personnel***. Then it was ***Haq Nawaz Jhangvi's turn***; he was murdered within a year of Hussaini's elimination.

**[It was 1979, the time of the Iranian Revolution; one Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi started attacking the Islamic Republic of Iran, accusing it of exporting its revolution. He directed his attacks against Shiite beliefs and rituals, as well as against Iran's leadership. He received a lot of support from the then ruler Gen Ziaul Haq, in addition to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia kingdom, declaring Shiite Muslims as non Muslim and that they must be killed.**

*The first notable organisational structure with the militant ideology in the sectarian field appears to be Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan [SSP] which was founded in Jhang city of Punjab by Malik Ishaq and Haq Nawaz Jhangvi. Founded in 1985, it was a broken away part of the main Deobandi Sunni organisation Jamiatul Ulema-e-Islam [JUI] in Punjab.*

*The party was created by the Sheikh businessmen's group of the Jhang district against a Shiite Feudal lady politician and ex-ambassador to America, Syeda Abida Hussain, as she was considered unbeatable in the general elections; the Sheikh group, headed by one Sh Iqbal, was interested in creating space for their politics to win a seat in the legislative National or Provincial Assembly from the same constituency.*

*Maulana Jhangvi became popular and won the seat of the National Assembly from the Jhang district. However, **on 23rd February 1990**, Maulana Jhangvi was killed in a retaliatory bomb attack by a suspected Shiite militant; After Jhangvi's assassination, Maulana Ziaur Rehman Farooqi assumed leadership of the group.]*

Prospects of a financial bonanza attracted many other religious extremists to jump into this theatre and they contended for rewards. In the ensuing

competition among such 'humanity loving leaders', sectarian killings in Pakistan sharply increased in the 1990s.

Meanwhile, Iranian funding to Shia organizations also increased, **making Pakistan a battleground for Saudi Arabia and Iran to settle their scores.** The roots of these activities were controlled by the sponsors of religious teams secretly funded by the enemy's intelligence network [**RAW working in the name of ISI**], no effective measures could be taken by the then ruling political governments to halt this slide into chaos.

Realizing that sectarian outfits were untouchable entities, professional criminals hastened to join these groups and benefit from this open charity of opportunities. For instance, **when around 500 trained gunmen belonging to MQM were abandoned by their masters, they tentatively turned to the SSP in search of a 'job'.** They found it to be a promising career.

All they did was growing beards and learn a few anti-Shia lessons. The rest they were already accustomed to - butchering people. During the 1990s the SSP generated many splinter groups, *Lashkar e Jhangvi*, for example, being the most deadly and prominent one, whereas other small outfits were mainly **'personal mafias of influential feudal, led by local mullahs.'**

These organisations once practically went out of control of their protective agencies. Instead of attacking the PPP, the MQM and the Sindhi nationalists, they once tried to work out an idea of recruiting a large number of unemployed Sindhi rural youth to serve the Taliban cause. In Sindh, where the JI and the JUI, had been practically driven out of the province in the 1980s by the PPP, the MQM and the Sindhi nationalists, the said agencies provided them a new breath under Gen Musharraf's patronage.

[***Sipah e Muhammad Pakistan*** [SMP] was also a militant Shi'a organization whereas ***Tehrik fiqh e Jafaria*** [TFJ] was a main Shi'a politico-religious party.]

**Sunni-Fighting Within:** As a result of the [*state sponsored*] policy of divide and rule, the people observed for the first time sectarian violence inside the Sunni community between the Sunnis of the *Deobandi* faith belonging to the *Sipah e Sahaba* [SSP] & *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] and the Sunnis of the more tolerant Barelvi faith belonging to the *Sunni Tehrik* [ST] formed in early 1990s to counter the growing *Wahabi* influence on Islam in Pakistan and the *Almi Tanzeem Ahle Sunnat* [ATAS] formed in 1998 by Pir Afzal Qadri of Mararian Sharif in Gujrat, to counter the activities of the *Deobandi* Army of Islam.

In later years, may be for a short term, the problem of sectarian killings went down because of Pakistan Army's heavy hand on foreign dissidents. Some senior officers had preferred to withdraw from frequent contacts with members of sectarian organizations except at low level individual links. It was a wise decision because the religiously charged sectarian groups had started burning each others mosques and killing innocent people while saying prayers therein.

Meanwhile, **in 1996**, another group had been raised under the leadership of Riaz Basra, Malik Ishaq and Akram Lahori under the title name *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ], after the name of Maulana Jhangvi, the founder of the SSP. Internally, blame was placed at Azam Tariq for deviating from the original program of Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhanvi.

**On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1997**; many of the leaders of the SSP, including ***Israrul Haq Qasmi and Ziaur Rahman Farooqi, were assassinated*** within the Lahore Session Court compound where at least 25 other people were also killed by extremists belonging to *Sipah e Mohammad*, a Shia militant outfit formed in 1994.

**By mid 1997**, *Lashkar e jhangvi* was ready for even bigger operations; Iranian cultural centres in Lahore and Multan were burnt down. Riaz Basra was rumoured as escaped to Afghanistan after those operations, when Ashraf Marth, the then Senior Superintendent of Police Gujranwala [SSP GRW], apprehended the other LeJ members involved in the crime.

SSP GRW Marth had the competence as well as political support to carry on his investigation. In a few months he was able to track the funding sources of LeJ and, through a secret hand of a military agency, evidence of foreign financing and records of fund-transfers through US banks were on the table of the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

One of the main accused was found with a credit card issued from New York. This was enough to cause the Prime Minister to jump in his seat. He immediately discussed the information with the then Army Chief, Gen Pervaiz Musharraf for further action.

Before any action could be taken on the information, **SSP GRW Ashraf Marth was assassinated** right in front of his official residence, in the morning hours when he was leaving his official residence's main gate for his office; the investigation against LeJ etc came to an abrupt closure.

Two famous victims of the sectarian Frankenstein let loose by Gen Musharraf in Sindh were Shaukat Mirza, the Managing Director of Pakistan State

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Oil, and Syed Zafar Hussain Zaidi, a Director in the Research Laboratories of the Ministry of Defence located in Karachi, who were gunned down on 28<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> July 2001 respectively. The *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] had claimed responsibility for both these assassinations.

Maulana Azam Tariq led the LeJ group until **6th October 2003**, when he was also killed in Islamabad in an attack widely attributed to the militant Shiite organisation *Sipah e Muhammad*, along with four others. He was an elected member of the National Assembly, too.

Allegedly, the LeJ had also been linked to Al Qaeda and the Taliban along with many Central Asian and Pakistani originated terrorist groups such as the **Jundallah**, a dangerous militant group operating mainly in Balochistan along the Iranian border.

LeJ's leader Malik Ishaq was detained a number of times but no one come forward to provide evidence against him. At most times he had threatened judges that ***'he knows them and members of their families very well and used to call their names openly in court'***. The US State had declared him as its most wanted terrorist.

Malik Ishaq was in detention but released in December 2014; he continued killing Shiites until he himself was killed in a police encounter **on 29th July 2015** with the Counter Terrorism Department [CTD].

**PM NAWAZ SHARIF - SET AS TARGET:**

The foreign hands were visible and there was likelihood that international media could catch clues of clandestine funding into the whole plethora of sectarian killings in Pakistan since two decades. It was on record that:

*'.....Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif finally decided to target some sectarian groups, including Lashkar e Jhnagvi, through civilian law enforcement agencies, as he was not expecting much support from the military establishment.*

*'..... (on getting a report that Riaz Basra is in Kabul) Nawaz Sharif personally requested the ISI chief to get hold of him, knowing that they had close links with the Taliban. He was told not to worry and that Basra would be taken care of soon.*

*Ironically, instead of Riaz Basra being apprehended, Lashkar e Jhangvi stepped up its activities and attempted to assassinate the Prime Minister NS **on 3<sup>d</sup> January 1999**. The plot failed because a remote control bomb, placed under a bridge that the prime minister had to pass over, detonated an hour earlier.*

**[In 1998, the *Lashkar e Jhangvi* (LeJ), in a press release, had offered a reward of Rs:135 million for anyone who would undertake the killing of Nawaz Sharif, the then Prime Minister; Shahbaz Sharif, the then Chief Minister of Punjab; and Mushahid Hussein, the then Information Minister.]**

How the assassination plan was botched was indeed an interesting story. Gul Khan, Lashkar's top bomb making expert, was hiding near the location with a remote control device, waiting for the Prime Minister's vehicle to approach the ***bridge between Lahore and Raiwind***.

Due to lack of access to sophisticated equipment, he was using an ordinary cordless telephone as a gadget to send the signal. This telephone set was on a VHC frequency, and he was not aware that some police vehicles in the city were also using the same frequency for their wireless communications. Meanwhile, the driver of a police patrol vehicle surveying the prime minister's travel route, by pure coincidence, parked very close to the point where the bomb was planted.

As soon as the vehicle's wireless set received a call, the bomb detonator caught the signal too and the bomb exploded. Nawaz Sharif was lucky; Gul Khan's planning was perfect but the technology he was using was outmoded. When he was arrested later, the interrogations led police to connect the dots.

The warning sent to Nawaz Sharif was a clear message that they [LeJ activists] were capable of eliminating him. In reaction, Punjab's Chief Minister, Shahbaz Sharif, gave the go-ahead to the Punjab police to eliminate the *Lashkar's* activists through all possible means, thus around three dozen operators belonging to the concerned religious groups were gunned down allegedly in staged police encounters.

Nawaz Sharif's efforts to curb this menace during 1998–99 had failed because *Lashkar e jhangvi* [LeJ] activists were using Afghanistan as sanctuary through the Taliban, who were known to be hospitable to their guests.

Once, during Raiwind's annual ***Tableeghi*** congregation [**3-6<sup>th</sup> November 2000**] Riaz Basra of *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] was allowed to escape his

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arrest. Riaz Basra was the No 1 wanted sectarian activist and the occasion was a great miss for the law enforcing agencies which spotted Riaz Basra attending the four-day congregation along with over two dozens accomplices equipped with lethal automatic weapons.

No sooner did the information of Riaz Basra attending the congregation was disclosed by the DIG Central Investigation Department [CID] Tariq Pervez, a high-level meeting of provincial administration and military authorities went into session at the Governor's House. The meeting extensively deliberated upon each and every aspect, with particular reference to conduct a risk-free operation.

However, they were unable to explore any feasible option as any action would have endangered the lives of thousands of the faithful attending that occasion. The military officials decided to skip over the operation since it was seemingly a difficult job to isolate Riaz Basra from a gathering of millions. Fearing massive bloodshed and the media headlines the world over, the arrest program was shunned.

Incidentally, on the same day the ISI had arrested one Zahid from Multan, who was carrying Rs:one million as head-money. During the interrogation, he confessed that Basra was present in the *Tableeghi* congregation along with 25 persons fully equipped with automatic weapons. The prominent among those who were present in the congregation along with Riaz Basra included Qari Asad, Tanveer Alias Tanni, Shabbir Fauji, Umar Taj, and Akram Lahori etc.

The hot chase, however, continued from both sides.

**[During 2001 and later];** having failed in his efforts to weaken the PPP by taking advantage of the exile of Ms Benazir Bhutto and faced with growing unity of action between Altaf Hussain's MQM and certain sections of Sindhi nationalist elements, Gen Musharraf, being the Army Chief and the Chief Executive, had constituted a secret task force in the ISI headed by Lt Gen Mahmud Ahmed, the then DG ISI, and consisting of Lt Gen (Rtd) Moinuddin Haider the Interior Minister, and Lt Gen Muzaffar Usmani, Deputy Chief of the Army Staff, to break the nexus between PPP, the MQM and the Sindhi nationalists.

The said task force had encouraged not only religious political organisations such as the *Jamaat e Islami* [JI] of Qazi Hussain Ahmed and the *Jamiat Ulema e Islam* [JUI] of Maulana Fazlur Rahman etc, but also sectarian organisations such as the *Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan* [SSP] and the *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] of Riaz Basra, allegedly living under protection of the then

Taliban regime of Kandahar in Afghanistan, to extend their activities to Sindh and nearby areas.

The related operations were headed by Lt Gen Mohammed Aziz, the then Corps Commander Lahore. The ISI, which could not afford a direct confrontation with the *Barelvi* organisations, had been [allegedly] inciting the *Sipah e Sahaba* and the *Lashkar e Jhangvi* to counter their activities.

This had led to frequent armed clashes between rival Sunni groups in Sindh, the most sensational of the incidents being the gunning down of **Maulana Salim Qadri of the *Sunni Tehrik*** and five of his followers in Karachi **on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2001**, allegedly by the *Sipah e Sahaba*, which led to a major break-down of law and order in certain areas of Karachi then.

Gen Musharraf, in his anxiety to bring Sindh under control and to weaken the PPP, the MQM and the Sindhi nationalists, had caused creating new factions to give way leading to *Talibanisation* of Sindh, a province known for its *sufi* traditions of religious tolerance.

Gen Musharraf remained under pressure from sections of senior army officers concerned over these developments to suppress the *Sipah e Sahaba* and the *Lashkar e Jhangvi*. He and Lt Gen Haider ultimately worked out a solution to ban these religious factions despite the fact that these organisations were their own brain children.

During the same year of 2001 then, Gen Musharraf took some anti-terrorism measures, banning two groups involved in sectarian killings and barring extremist party leaders from obtaining political power. A national sedition law and section 16 of the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance [MPO] were invoked to tackle extremist political rallies and to legitimise police raids on political demonstrations.

Even then, after a brief lull, clashes between Pakistan's Sunni and Shi'a Muslims had increased dramatically in October 2001, when at least 40 persons, mostly Shi'a, were murdered. The military government placed blame on the Taliban regime in neighbouring Afghanistan for allegedly training the perpetrators but actually they were members of the same 'banned groups'; the intelligence agencies knew them.

In the metropolitan city of Karachi, during the dark hours of **27<sup>th</sup> April 2002**, two politicians named Mustafa Kamal Rizvi and Nishat Malik were gunned down while coming back from dinner at the nearby *Tandoori Hut* restaurant in Rizvi's black Toyota Corolla. Police found it parked, with the engine off, about five minutes away from the crime scene.

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The *shawarma* sandwich Rizvi had promised to bring home for his 45 years old wife, Firdaus, was still in the car. Apart from Rizvi's cell phone and a Rolex watch, nothing was stolen. Police took at least 15 minutes to reach the crime scene from the Gizri Police Station, just a minute's drive away, even though the heavy fire from two automatic pistols could be heard for blocks in the wealthy neighbourhood.

In an article captioned as '*Political Killings Hint at Pakistani Dirty War*' written by *Paul Watson*, Times Staff Writer published in '**The Los Angeles Times**' of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2002, the event was analysed as follows:

*"The MQM and its splinter group since 1992; the two factions have been killing each other's supporters ever since, and a growing number of political and religious leaders charge that the government is reviving its divide-and-conquer strategy.*

*The party's backing for Gen Musharraf collapsed after the killings of Rizvi and Malik -- just one day before what was supposed to be Musharraf's triumphant, final rally in Karachi.*

*[Farooq] Sattar isn't alone in his suspicions. Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who heads one of Pakistan's largest religious parties, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), has added his influential voice to accusations that the government itself is trying to split various political parties and stir up sectarian violence in cities such as Karachi."*

In Pakistan, the Shi'a minority increased in numbers soon making about 20 per cent of the population. During 2000 and 2001, sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'a extremists had dramatically increased.

*[In many historical paragraphs, the blame for the said bloodshed and killings from both sides were attributed towards army's Intelligence agencies especially the ISI.*

*It was a **cogent propaganda** by the Indian counterparts to create distance between the people and the successive governments. ISI came under Gen Musharraf only in October 1999 - but what the successive political governments had been doing from 1988 to 1999 and what was the job of the civilian IB then.*

*It was enemy's propaganda to malign ISI but the facts should also be kept in tact that Indian, Afghan and American intelligence agencies had been providing funds directly to various sects to cre-*

*ate law and order situation in Pakistan and throughout the past two decades.*

*The same strategy was, perhaps, implemented in Pakistan during post-9/11 era and then throughout PPP & PML[N]'s governments till ending 2016.]*

In all the above game, some religious *Madrassahs* played an equally important role. As per western media's estimation, *Madrassahs* run by [banned] sectarian and *jihadi* groups operated freely countrywide and continued to provide foot soldiers to radical Islamist organizations, for *jihad* in Afghanistan especially. Americans believe that poverty prevents many Pakistanis from purchasing school materials and books. They, as a last recourse, go to *madrassas* where they get meals and shelter too.

The religious proliferation in Pakistan can easily be illustrated by the number of established religious institutions.

- In the 1950s, besides a few belonging to Shi'a sect there were 137 traditional Sunni *madrassas* in Pakistan.
- By 1971 there were close to 900 *madrassas* with about 3000 teachers and more than 30,000 regular students.
- After 9/11 Afghan war the number of religious institutions in Pakistan increased to more than 17,500; many of them allegedly having pronounced sectarian orientation.

Several other factors like poverty, hunger, hatred, and illiteracy contributed to terrorist activities. According to the West what Muslims were doing was terrorism and according to the Muslims what West was engaged in was terrorism; in fact both are right but no side having the whole truth.

During Afghan-Iran-Iraq war, many Pakistani went to Afghanistan and Iraq to fight with the passion of brotherhood. The Afghan war in 1980s pushed three million Afghan refugees into Pakistan, and many of them, in dire poverty, had no alternative than to put their sons in care of the above mentioned *madrassahs*.

Having a journey through the history of 'sectarian divide' in Pakistan, one would understand that the ***foreign funds started pouring in to help the two 'Schools of Thought' through the above described madrassas.*** Pro government sects were funded by Saudi Arabia whereas the Shia Sect was getting finances from Iran. How these funds were floated and routed; see a media opinion dated **15<sup>th</sup> September 2004:**

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*'It is not known whether American support for this scheme was readily available, but the ruling regime of Gen Musharraf knew well that the United States would be delighted to agree, given the rising US-Iran hostility.*

*However, some analysts believe that CIA funds were involved in the venture, too'.*

The US State Department's 2006 Country Report on Terrorism had called Pakistan 'a major source of Islamic extremism and a safe haven for top terrorist leaders'. It could be true but who provided arms, ammunition and modern communication gadgets to them, in aid and through deals; surely they were America and India, sometimes directly and sometimes through clandestine moves through their war companions.

From the above facts one can easily read in between the lines that how political and military governments failed to control the sectarian violence despite hundreds of ISI, IB and the Special Branch employees on roll.

All their attempts were foiled by the foreign funded missionaries upholding the banners of Islam in their hands, cutting each others' throats while posing themselves as ISI personnel in civics. Their planning remained superb including even an abortive attempt to assassinate former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif when it was not suitable to their calculated interests.

**RIAZ BASRA POLICE ENCOUNTERED:**

**On 14<sup>th</sup> May 2002;** Riaz Basra, the alleged mastermind behind hundreds of sectarian killings, was killed with three of his accomplices in an 'encounter' in Mailsi, district Vehari of the Punjab province. The 'shootout' took place at Dakota, about 65km from Vehari central; Basra had been targeted twice in the past but later proved as fabricated rumours.

Riaz Basra headed *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] and was in the Faisalabad police custody since five months and was being interrogated for the activities of his network from where he managed to escape.

According to the police, four heavily armed outlaws came to Chak Kot Sher Mohammad Ghalvi at about 3.15am in a Toyota Corolla [DGA-9520] and stopped near the house of Ch Fida Hussain Ghalvi, the district Chief of the banned *Tehrik e Jaferia* Pakistan. Being on the hit-list of the *Lashkar e*

*Jhangvi* [LeJ] militants, villagers used to keep vigil round the clock and were helped by the police at night.

Mr Ghalvi was on guard on the rooftop of his house when the assailants arrived. When he shouted to question the purpose of their visit at the odd hours, they came out of the car and opened fire. Mr Ghalvi and other villagers returned the fire and informed the police control.

SP Syed Javed Shah of Vehari was patrolling the area with some police officials and thus arrived at the spot in no time. Known in police circles as encounter-friendly, SP Javed also joined the crossfire that lasted nearly an hour; resulting that the outlaws died. Two of them had beard and the other two, including one suspected as Basra, were clean-shaved.

The bodies were taken to the Vehari DHQ hospital for a post-mortem examination. A number printed on the assailants' car windscreen read BRE-944. Police had recovered some fake number-plates from the car and also got hold of a rocket-launcher, four rockets, four Kalashnikovs and a huge quantity of live rounds from the scene. The outlaws had hijacked the car at gunpoint from Multan's Gulgashat Colony a night before. Mr Ghalvi claimed that the assailants had come to kill him.

Earlier, *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] was involved in three strikes in Dakota. **On 18<sup>th</sup> August 1996**, it killed 12 people at a *Majlis* [Shiites religious sitting] and **on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1997**, it slew five people, including TJP leader Mukhtar Husain Ghalvi. **On 18<sup>th</sup> February 1999**, unknown assailants gunned down three more Shias near Bridge no:14 in the vicinity of Dakota.

It was later confirmed that one of the dead was Riaz Basra. SP Javed Shah said Riaz Basra's identity was established by one of his accomplices named Kashif, who was under detention for his alleged involvement in the killing of politician Siddiq Kanju [*a former MNA and the Minister of State*] in Keror Pakka area of Lodhran on **28<sup>th</sup> July 2001**.

Kashif was brought from Lahore in the afternoon hours. He identified two of the dead as Riaz Basra and Shakeel alias Hamza. Hamza was then facing the charge of killing DSP Tariq Kamboh in Lahore. Tariq Kamboh and his driver were gunned down in an ambush by two motorcyclists when his car [LOU-6347] was crossing a bridge at Canal Road near Johar Town on **17<sup>th</sup> December 2000** morning.

SP Javed Shah held that Basra carried a head-money of Rs:500,000. His body was also identified earlier by a police officer who had met him some years ago in Afghanistan but the doubts were there.

Referring to the '**Dawn**' dated **16<sup>th</sup> May 2002**:

*"Mr Nisar Memon, the then Federal Information Minister of Pakistan, said that Riaz Basra had been killed in a police encounter and his body had been identified by Punjab's IG of Police.*

*It was wrong to say that Riaz Basra was killed in a fake encounter, he added. He rejected the idea that there should be a judicial inquiry into the killing of Riaz Basra."*

But the same paper, the '**Dawn**' on **18<sup>th</sup> May 2002** claimed the opposing version that why '*in half-an-hour encounter, no policeman sustained injury...*' and how the police was able to reach '*Dokota from Vehari at one hour's journey, and 30 minutes from Mailsi.*'

However, Pakistan's then Information Minister Nisar Memon denied any foul-play. He categorically assured the media that ***Riaz Basra was killed by Shiite fighters seeking to take matters into their own hands after police incompetence.***

Another reliable account, however, held that Riaz Basra was arrested in January that year after the Faisalabad police captured Ajmal alias Sheikh Jamshaid of *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ]. Ajmal, a friend of Basra, helped the police arrest Liaquat Ali of Kehror Pucca, who was wanted for his alleged involvement in a triple murder case. After interrogating Liaquat, the police raided various locations around which finally led to the arrest of Riaz Basra.

But whether Riaz Basra managed to run away from Faisalabad police or some police officer under pressure or financial consideration released him, or the news of his arrest was all fake – still no clue has come up. Faisalabad police record of those days also remained silent on the issue for many days at least.

The doubts about his identification or being in police custody in Faisalabad developed because Sargodha police had already claimed to have killed him in 1999 and the Punjab police had also claimed to have killed him on six different occasions. ***BBC report dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 1999 is referred.***

The news of Riaz Basra's death was slow to sink in because the police had claimed to have killed him many times before, only to reveal later that they had shot the wrong man. In a typical expression of doubt, one newspaper carried a totally straight report of the fatal shootout under the head-line "***Basra Killed Again.***"

The villagers told the media that:

*"We have heard many times before that he is dead, but our hearts don't believe it yet. People say he was a real goon."*

However, a report titled '**For Militant, No Glorified End, but Death in the Dust**' compiled by HOWARD W. FRENCH, appeared in Western press on **19<sup>th</sup> May 2002** confirmed that it was an encounter amongst the police, villagers and about ten attackers in which Riaz Basra along with his three companions were left dead. Riaz Basra was finally identified on third day.

Howard French's report also told that:

*"Riaz basra's activities ranged from a bombing attack against former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif three years ago [in 1999] and the murder of an Iranian diplomat [Sadiq Gangie] in 1990, to multiple jailbreaks and exile. He eventually gained the leadership of a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, in alliance with the Taliban, and fought with the anti-Soviet mujahedeen.*

*In between, there were the killings of hundreds of doctors, policemen and lawyers from his country's Shiite Muslim minority, and a notorious Lahore cemetery massacre of 1998 in which 25 Shiite mourners were gunned down and 50 injured as they recited the Koran. He sprinkled his résumé with numerous bank robberies.*

*Like the Bandit Queen of India, Riaz Basra's career even included a run for political office, in 1989, when he sought election to the regional assembly of Lahore, but lost."*

### **HOME MINISTER PUNJAB KILLED:**

After serious considerations chalked out in the light of policy formulated under National Action Plan ensuing the brutal loss of 151 lives at the Army Public School Peshawar, the Punjab government received threat alerts for airports, prisons, schools and sensitive installations, besides targeted killing of known personalities and kidnap for ransom.

In turn, the Punjab government pledged to take action against the *madressahs* found involved in terrorism.

**On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015;** Home Minister Punjab Col Shuja Khanzada told a press conference at the Chief Minister's Office that:

*"Security has been put on red alert after reports of terrorists' attacks on airports, prisons and other sensitive installations. Schools may be hit; there may be indiscriminate firing incidents, while target killing of prominent personalities and kidnap for ransom are also feared."*

Mr Khanzada told the media that threats continued and all security forces were put on high alert to counter the terrorists. Appealing to the masses to help the law-enforcers in pre-empting the nefarious designs of the terrorists, there was an extraordinary "do or die" like situation prevailing in the country that called for extraordinary measures and the citizens should share the responsibility of maintaining peace.

The Home Minister also said ***all the banned organisations had been stopped from operating*** and lists of NGOs and seminaries working against "national interests". Records of persons who delivered provocative speeches anywhere in Punjab were with him and action would be taken against them on scrutiny of "**solid evidence**".

Urging landlords, managers and proprietors of hostels and guest houses to provide details of the tenants or guests to police and take care while renting out their properties; Khanzada warned them that otherwise they could also face trouble.

New laws were being enacted and the existing ones were being amended to tighten noose around the extremists and anti-state elements in the backdrop of decisions taken in the National Action Plan [NAP] meetings.

Replying to a media question ***about the religious schools involved in extremism***, Home Minister Khanzada said ***that action would be taken against terrorists, their financiers and facilitators in the light of reports of secret agencies***. He confirmed that citizens were happy over the setting up of military courts which would soon start functioning. Punjab's IG Police Mushtaq Sukhera told the media that:

*"Police have registered cases against 650 people, recovered more than 8,000 weapons in the general hold-up and impounded over 25,000 vehicles."*

*A number of foreigners were among those arrested, most of them from Afghanistan and they also included terrorists."*

Daily '**Dawn**' of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015 is referred.

Law Secretary Syed Abu'l Hasan Najmi said the government had issued five ordinances and the laws regarding tenancy, security of sensitive places, illegal weapons, wall-chalking and loudspeakers had been amended and their violation had been declared non-bailable offence; prison sentences and the amounts of fine were also increased.

**On 16 August 2015;** the loud voice of Punjab's Home Minister, Col Shuja Khanzada, was silenced. He was killed along with 14 others in a suicide attack on his political office in Shadi Khan village of District Attock. At least 23 people were injured in that attack and were sent to different hospitals in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Three injured in critical condition later passed away at DHQ Hospital Rawalpindi, raising the death toll from the attack to 17. The driver of home minister Khanzada was also among the dead.

There were two suicide bombers, one stood outside the boundary wall and the second one went inside and stood in front of the minister. The blast by the bomber standing outside ripped the wall which caused the roof to fall flat on the minister and people gathered there. It was not immediately clear if the attacker inside the building could detonate his bomb or not.

The impact of the explosion caused the roof of the building to collapse, and shattered windows in nearby houses. Almost 50-100 people were estimated to have been in attendance at jirga being held at Khanzada's political office. Many of them were buried underneath the wreckage as the entire structure had been razed to the ground by the explosion.

***Deputy Superintendent of Police Hazro Syed Shoukat Shah was amongst the dead recovered from the site.*** Ten other policemen got injuries as they were present at the scene when the blast occurred.

The interior ministry told that banned outfit *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] had immediately claimed responsibility of the said suicide attack on Khanzada; he was under threat following the killing of LeJ Chief Malik Ishaq in July 2015 – just two weeks earlier. Later it was confirmed that the attack was a suicide blast.

Col (rtd) Shuja Khanzada was given charge of the home department as the Provincial Minister in October 2014; he had been actively involved in major operations against terror outfits. The provincial department he headed was responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and protection of life and property of citizens. He had previously held positions as an Advisor to the Chief Minister Punjab. The minister had also talked about tightening the noose against certain NGOs and seminaries working against the state.

### **SECTARIAN ATTACKS IN LAHORE:**

Lahore is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city of Pakistan – known as city of colleges and gardens, but its sanctity was ruined by the sectarian assaults and violence while the PML[N]'s government, being in saddles since 2008 at least, remained helpless; an utter disappointment.

Sectarian terrorism in Lahore started on **30<sup>th</sup> March 1987**, when a globally-acclaimed Sunni religious scholar Allama Ehsan Elahi Zaheer was fatally injured in a bomb blast. Shifted to Saudi Arabia for treatment, he had succumbed to his injuries after battling with death for 22 hours in a hospital at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Chronology of terror incidents in Lahore city during last one decade is given below: A report published in '**the News**' of **28<sup>th</sup> March 2016** is referred.

-On **May 14, 2004**, six members of a Shia family were shot dead in city's Mughulpura locality.

-On **October 10, 2004**, an explosion by a suicide bomber at a Shia mosque had killed four people and had left eight injured.

-On **September 22, 2005**, at least six people, including a woman, were killed and 27 injured in two bomb blasts in Lahore city within an interval of one hour and a half.

-On **January 10, 2008**, at least 24 people were killed and 73 injured in a suicide attack when the cops posted outside the Lahore High Court were deliberately targeted just minutes before the commencement of the scheduled lawyers' protest against the government. This attack was first of its kind in Lahore since the start of the US-led War on Terror.

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-On **March 4, 2008**, eight persons killed and 24 injured when two suicide bombers blew themselves up in the parking area of the Pakistan Navy War College on The Mall. This attack on War College was carried out by two suicide attackers, the first one to clear the way for the second one; and the second one to do the damage.

This was the first time a Pakistani Naval institution was targeted by the militants, although Army had been targeted at least eight times outside the war zone and Air Force was hit twice by then.

-On **March 11, 2008**, 24 people instantly killed and about 200 wounded in twin suicide bombings in Lahore. One of the attacks had ripped apart the FIA building killing 21, including 16 policemen.

-On **August 13, 2008**, eight people, including two policemen, were killed and over 20 [including 12 policemen] were injured after an alleged suicide bomber blew himself up near a police station in Lahore on the eve of Independence Day celebrations.

-On **November 22, 2008**, at least three people including a teenager were injured in a series of explosions near the Al-hamra Cultural Complex in Lahore, where the International World Performing Arts Festival was in progress.

-On **March 3, 2009**, a convoy carrying Sri Lankan cricketers and officials in two buses was fired upon near the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. Six members of the Sri Lankan cricket team were injured and over half a dozen Pakistani policemen and two civilians were killed at the spot.

-On **March 30, 2009**, at least eight police recruits and a civilian were killed when about 10 terrorists attacked the Manawan Police Training School with guns and grenades. Terrorists had taken over the main building during a morning parade when 750 unarmed police recruits were present on the compound's parade ground.

Security forces had regained control of the facility in an operation that lasted more than eight hours. About 93 cadets and civilians were injured in this event. Three of the attackers blew themselves up to avoid arrest while three others were taken into custody as they tried to escape in police uniforms.

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-On **May 27, 2009**, suicide bombers had detonated a vehicle loaded with 100 kilograms of explosives near offices of the Capital City Police Officer [CCPO] and the Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] on Queen's Road Lahore.

At least 27 people were killed instantly and 326 were wounded. The two-storey building of the Rescue 15 police service was also destroyed. This was the second attack on ISI since the start of the War on Terror. Some 40 vehicles were also destroyed.

-On **June 12, 2009**, a leading anti-Taliban Sunni cleric Sarfraz Ahmed Naeemi was among the seven assassinated, after a suicide attacker detonated himself at the *Jamia Naeemia madrassa* situated on the Allama Iqbal Road in city's Garhi Shahu area, shortly after Friday prayers.

-On **October 15, 2009**, 38 people, including 14 security officials, were killed and 20 injured in three separate attacks in Lahore. All nine attackers were later shot dead by security personnel. A large amount of ammunition and maps of sensitive installations were also recovered.

The attacks were carried out at the FIA building [again] on the Temple Road, the Manawan Police Training School and the Elite Police Academy at the Bedian Road.

-On **December 7, 2009**, terrorists struck the provincial headquarter Lahore three times. The highest casualty rate was seen when two powerful bomb blasts, 30 seconds apart, had ripped through the busy Moon Market in Lahore's Allama Iqbal Town, killing nearly 100 people. The blasts, which took place within a radius of 30 metres, had also caused a massive fire in a crowded shopping mall while knocking out the electricity supply.

-On **March 8, 2010**, a suicide bomb attack killed 13 people in Lahore and wounded more than 60 others. The bomber reportedly rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into a building that housed an anti-terrorist wing of the FIA. The explosion was so deadly that it had brought down the building that was targeted. A nearby religious school was also damaged in this bombing.

- On **March 12, 2010**, two suicide bomb attacks in Lahore had resulted in the deaths of at least 45 people, including at least nine soldiers, and had wounded 100 others. Both these bomb attacks

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had reportedly targeted military vehicles, as they were passing through a crowded area. The blasts occurred within 15-20 seconds of each other; occurred very close to Lahore Cantonment's RA bazaar, which is in a busy residential and shopping area housing numerous Army facilities.

-On **May 28, 2010**, two Ahmedi worship places in city's Garhi Shahu and Model Town localities—15 kilometres apart— were attacked by terrorists. The two attacks were carried out almost simultaneously. About 100 people had lost lives in this incident.

-On **May 31, 2010**, at least 8 people were killed and up to 40 others were injured after three armed militants stormed into Lahore Hospital, and opened fire indiscriminately upon hospital guards and attendants on duty.

Reportedly the militants were dressed in police uniform. There was speculation in media that the militants intended to reach a captured militant who was detained by the authorities in the Ahmedi worship place attacks, which had occurred just three days earlier.

-On **June 3, 2010**, two low intensity bomb explosions had occurred in Lahore, injuring five people. A stampede had reportedly ensued after these blasts as a large numbers of people were present at the shrine of a local saint.

-On **July 1, 2010**, at least 50 people had lost lives and 200 others were hurt, after two suicide bombers had attacked the shrine of globally renowned saint **Hazrat Data Sahib** in Lahore.

The first suicide bomber had struck in the underground section of the Data Darbar Complex, while the second suicide bomber had reportedly chosen the upstairs area of the shrine to strike. Both the suicide bombers had used explosive devices packed with ball bearings, in order to maximise the impact of their suicide attacks.

-On **July 5, 2010**, Pakistani police arrested six men, members of the banned group "*Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami*," believed to be linked to the above attacks. The men were in possession of 18,000kg of explosives, 21 grenades, six AK-47 rifles, as well as bomb-making material. Four of the apprehended men had furnished logistical support for the twin attacks against the Ahmedi community.

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-On **September 1, 2010**, at least 38 people were killed and more than 250 others were reportedly injured in a series of three bomb explosions targeting a Shia procession taken out to observe the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib [RA].

Following these three bomb blasts, angry members of the general public had vented their anger on local police authorities, torching a police station and a police truck. The first explosion had occurred in the Karbala Gamay Shah area at 6:50 pm local time.

This was followed by a second explosion about 25 minutes later in Bhatti Chowk and the third blast had rocked the Anarkali market about 10 minutes after the second explosion. Bodies of three suicide bombers were recovered.

- On **January 25, 2011**, at least 16 people were killed while 70 others were injured in a suicide bomb explosion in a mourning procession of Hazrat Imam Hussain near its concluding point at Karbala Gamay Shah at Lahore.

-On **April 24, 2012**, a five kilogram bomb was implanted at Lahore Railway Station platform, resulting in three deaths.

--On **July 5, 2012**, Major (rtd) Ma'az, the Security in-charge of Chief Minister Punjab, was injured after a bomb had exploded at his residence in Lahore. Some unidentified men had hurled a grenade inside the house, which had exploded within no time, injuring the security in-charge.

-On **July 12, 2012**, masked TTP gunmen had attacked a police academy in early morning hours, killing nine police cadets hailing from Khyber PK province.

-On **August 1, 2012**, two bomb explosions in Lahore's Badami Bagh Fruit Market area had killed two people.

-On **July 7, 2013**, a blast in the Anarkali Food Street had killed three people.

-On **October 10, 2013**, a blast had again occurred outside another Anarkali restaurant, killing one person and injuring 16 others.

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--On **November 2, 2014**, an attack at the Wagah Border had killed more than 60 people, leaving more than 110 injured. Victims included 10 women and eight children. Eight people from one family were also killed in this blast.

Lahore's temporary calm and tranquillity were thus shattered after a break of 387 days by this incident.

--On **February 17, 2015**, the deadly suicide attack at the heavily-fortified Police Lines in Lahore's densely populated Qilla Gujjar Singh locality had killed eight people.

--On **March 15, 2015**, bombings at a Lahore church had killed at least 15 people. Two blasts had rocked the Roman Catholic Church and the Christ Church during Sunday service at Lahore's Youhana-bad locality.

--On **May 29, 2015**, a suicide bomber had blown himself up near Gaddafi Stadium Lahore where over 20,000 people were watching a Pakistan-Zimbabwe Cricket match. A few others were injured in this incident.

--On **June 29, 2015**, at least four terrorists were gunned down in a shootout during search operation in Lahore, but not before they had killed one police personnel.

--On **November 26, 2015**, three police constables had received bullet injuries as security agencies had successfully hunted down Haroon Bhatti, one of the founding members of the banned *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] in Lahore's Badami Bagh area. Bhatti and three others were killed in this police encounter.

--On **27<sup>th</sup> March 2016**; Easter Sunday, more than 75 people were killed and over 340 injured in a suicide bombing that hit the main entrance of Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park Lahore, Pakistan.

The attack targeted Christians who were celebrating Easter. Of the 75 dead, 14 were identified as Christians and the rest (61) as Muslims. The majority of victims were women and children. *Jamaat-ul-Ahrar*, a group affiliated with the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack led to worldwide condemnation and national mourning throughout Pakistan. Pakistan

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also launched a widespread counter-terrorism operation in South Punjab, arresting more than 200 people but with no cogent results.

Referring to **'the New York Times'** dated **29<sup>th</sup> March 2016**; more than 500 people were killed in terror attacks since 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014, when the Army Public School was stormed in Peshawar.

In its wake, the government lifted a six-year moratorium on executions. In a harsh crackdown, more than 300 prisoners were also hanged in the year 2015 through the military's judicial system comprising Military Courts.

But attacks – suicide bombers, planted bombs and raids by gunmen – continued gathering pace. An analysis of major terrorist attacks in Pakistan since the assault on the Peshawar school suggests that government officials, health workers and religious minorities continued to be frequent targets of attacks.