



## The making of Pakistani human bombs

Clive Williams

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Facing the upcoming December 1984 elections and retirement in August 1984, Rajeswar exited the IB early and became lieutenant governor of Arunachal Pradesh in August 1983, making him the first former Indian Police Service officer appointed to such a position. His life in politics continued as governor of Sikkim (1985), West Bengal (1989) and Uttar Pradesh (2004). In the book's final chapters, Rajeswar discusses his political work and problems facing these states, interaction with leading politicians, corruption, immigration and economic issues.

This autobiography is well-written and provides rare insight and perspective from a leading intelligence official. However, it has 8 sections with 52 short chapters that are often only 3 pages long, causing many stories to lack detail. Notably, as the IB joint director in charge of political affairs during the Emergency, much more could have been said about what the IB actually did instead of giving blanket denials about its involvement in the mass arrests. His biases are clear from the start (the book is dedicated to Gandhi). Rather than discuss the prime minister's decisions and Rajeswar's meetings with her, he blames Sanjay Gandhi, Gandhi's son, for the harsh and undemocratic activities during the Emergency.

As a primary source, the book contains unique first-hand accounts about India's intelligence leaders, such as a chapter about all the IB directors who served until 1980, their personalities and careers. Mullik, for example, spent all his time working; when his wife died in 1962, 'he was haunted by a feeling that he had not given due attention to her welfare and happiness' (p. 167). During his retirement, Mullik focused on religion as a devotee and then a 'chief disciple' of an unnamed 'Bengali guru'.

While the book has its strengths, there are no references and no bibliography to corroborate or offer further context aside from sporadic mentions of a few autobiographies. But scholars of South Asian politics, intelligence and terrorism will find this book informative given that Indian intelligence officials have historically been reluctant to publish their memoirs, even if some sections of the book are biased and vague.

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**The making of Pakistani human bombs**, by Khuram Iqbal, Lanham, Maryland, Lexington Books, 2015, 213 pp., US\$85 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-4895-1648-8

Khuram Iqbal is a recognised authority on terrorism in Pakistan. He first worked on terrorism as a research coordinator at the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies in Islamabad, where he planned and executed a number of research projects on radicalisation and terrorism in Pakistan. In Singapore he graduated in strategic studies from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. He also worked as a senior analyst at the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research in Singapore. He is a member of the Council for Asian Transnational Threats Research, an international body of leading Asian experts on counterterrorism and transnational crime. He co-authored *Pakistan terrorism ground zero* in 2011.

*The making of Pakistani human bombs* is packed full of original information and valuable as a reference document, but dense language makes reading it hard work. Nevertheless the book provides valuable insights into the Pakistan human bomber situation (which also affects Afghanistan and India), covering the period up to June 2014.

Suicide terrorism in Pakistan is caused by multiple factors, with perceived effectiveness, vengeance, poverty, and religious fundamentalism playing varying roles at individual, organisational, and environmental levels. Nationalism and resistance to foreign occupation are the least relevant factors behind suicide terrorism in Pakistan. The findings of this research are based on multi-level analysis of suicide bombings, incorporating both primary and secondary data. In this study, the author also examines personal, demographic, economic and marital characteristics of Pakistani human bombs.

On average, Pakistani suicide bombers are the youngest but the deadliest in the world. More than 71% of their victims are civilians. Earlier concepts not linking terrorism with poverty and illiteracy do not hold up against the recent data gathered on the post-9/11 generation of fighters in Pakistan (in suicidal and non-suicidal categories), as the majority of fighters from a variety of terrorist organisations are economically deprived and semi-literate.

The majority of Pakistani human bombs come from rural backgrounds, with very few from major urban areas. Suicide bombings in Pakistan remain a male-dominated phenomenon, with most bombers being single men. Demographic profiling of Pakistani suicide bombers, based on a random sample of 80 failed and successful attackers, undermines the notion that American drone strikes play a primary role in promoting terrorism in Pakistan.

The study concludes that

previous scholarly attempts to explain suicide bombings are largely based on Middle East data, thus their application to Pakistan can be misleading. The Pakistani case study of suicide terrorism demonstrates unique characteristics, hence it needs to be understood and countered through a context-specific and multi-level approach.


Dr Iqbal notes that existing theories on suicide terrorism have limited utility in explaining the emergence and evolution of suicide terrorism in Pakistan. Some of his conclusions include: Islamist fundamentalism provides the ideological justification necessary for individual recruits to conduct martyrdom operations; suicide bombings are a valuable force multiplier against stronger enemies; relative or absolute poverty is a motivating factor for suicide bombers; suicide bombers in Pakistan are primarily motivated by vengeance, and; nationalism is not a primary factor.

The author suggests that the policies of the USA, China, India, Iran and Saudi Arabia will be an important factor in determining prospects for suicide terrorism in the region.

Matters that need to be resolved to take the heat out of regional terrorism include settling the Kashmir dispute, stabilising Afghanistan, and curtailing Sunni/Shia rifts in the region. Equally important is deliverance of good government and economic development under successive democratic governments in Pakistan.

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