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A Brookings Doha Center Policy Discussion

PAKISTAN'S MADRASSAHS AND EXTREMISM:
IS THERE A CONNECTION?

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

PARTICIPANTS:

Welcome and Moderator:

HADY AMR, Director, Brookings Doha Center;
Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

SALEEM H. ALI, Visiting Fellow
Brookings Doha Center

ROBERT G. WIRSING, Visiting Professor
Georgetown School of Foreign Service Qatar

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. AMR: I'm going to put myself on off or on silent. It would be great if everyone could do the same so we could have a nice focused discussion. So thank you very much.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Welcome and thank you for coming. My name is Hady Amr. I'm the Director of the Brookings Doha Center and a Fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings. I'm especially pleased and proud to welcome you today to this policy discussion with our first Visiting Scholar, Dr. Saleem Ali, to my left, and also with Dr. Robert Wirsing from Georgetown.

Brookings is the oldest think tank in the U.S., born in 1916, and the largest of its kind. It was established in 1969. The Brookings Doha Center itself was established about 2 years ago through the generosity of the Government of Qatar. We opened our doors last year. Our purposes together bring together business, government, the media, academia, the private

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sector, and I see by the audience that we've done that today especially with the cameras and the media. Like Brookings Washington, Brookings Doha is open to a broad range of views and our scholars represent their own views and we're very proud of that and very pleased to have them.

Our event today is entitled "Pakistan's Madrassahs and Extremism: Is There a Connection." We'll conclude in under 90 minutes, and again I'd like to ask you to please turn off your cell phones before we begin. I'll just introduce both of the speakers very quickly. Obviously you have their bios. Dr. Saleem Ali is an Associate Professor of Environmental Planning and Conflict Resolution at the University of Vermont. I don't know if any of you have been to Vermont, in Burlington, but the weather at least couldn't be any different than it is here. It's green and cold and wet on a big fresh-water lake. He's also Adjunct Professor at Brown University, and a man of many talents. His work spans from research on energy and oil and gas pipelines to education, religion and

Pakistan's madrassahs. His latest book which he actually has here on sale himself the proceeds of which will be donated to charity for a remarkably low price is entitled "Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan's Madrassahs" published just in the last few months by Oxford University Press. He has an M.A. from Yale University and a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT. Professor Robert Wirsing is Visiting Professor at Georgetown Qatar. He was previous faculty of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii, also a far-away place. I don't know how the flight time is from here to Honolulu if you want to go back. And also a Professor of Government and International Studies at the University of south Carolina. He has numerous, numerous publications which are listed in the programs that are on your seats including "Pakistan's Security Under Zia," "India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute." His recent research focuses on the politics of natural resources and water in South

Asia. He has a Ph.D. in international studies from the University of Denver.

I thank you all for coming. I'll ask Professor Ali to give us his remarks for about 10 minutes or so, and then Robert Wirsing for about 10 minutes. Then we hope to have a lively exchange and dialogue with you all. Thank you very much.

DR. ALI: Thank you very much, Hady, for that very kind introduction. Thanks to all of you for coming. A special thanks to the Brookings Doha Center staff for organizing this event, so kindly all of them are here, and so my special thanks to all of them. And also a special thanks to the Government of Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs who are the hosts of the Brookings Doha Center here.

The topic of this evening's discussion and also of the book on which it is based is clearly a very sensitive and controversial one. I have always attempted to try and bring some level of balance and nuance in my research, but there are times when one has to be more normative than is often the case with

academics. By normative I mean sometimes you have to really make a case for how the world should be rather than how we just see the world and in some ways when you're dealing with any topic that involves religion and politics there is always going to be a normative dimension. So even though the book on which this discussion is based is clearly an empirical study, it's an academic study of madrassahs and their linkage to conflict and various other issues, the policy prescriptions that may come out of this will inherently be normative.

I should also mention that this book was very much also a personal journey for me, and as you may have noted from my bio, much of my own empirical work previously has not been on Islam or on education but, rather, on the extractive industries, on environmental management, environmental planning. My doctorate is on environmental planning. So you may wonder how did this environmental planner get into this topic, and does this person even have the required authenticity to attempt to address this

topic? So allow me to give you a little bit of background on that account.

The story on which this book is based and as mentioned in the preface starts when I was a high school student in Pakistan and I was studying at school in Lahore, Pakistan, called Aitchinson College which is a fairly elite institution established by the British, but it's also a very unusual institution because it brings in people from all over the country. You have people from villages, you have people from the urban centers also, many people come on scholarships as well from distant parts of the country, and may expatriates who are sent for schooling. So you have people whose families are in England or America and they send their children for schooling there.

In my class in my high school's third year there was a student who joined us from England and he was my class fellow for 2 years while I was there. He was a name named Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh. I don't know if that name rings any bells for you, but this

was an individual who was later incriminated in various unfortunate terrorist incidents. As you know the Daniel Pearl case, of course, he was implicated in that. He was also implicated in various terrorist incidents in India, but while he was a student in Aitchison there was no hint of this coming through. So what happened is I finished high school and I went off to America for my higher studies. He was not a friend, he was in my class and I saw him every day, he was an acquaintance, but there was no sense that there was anything happening in this dimension.

Then when I came back after 2 years I found out that he had gone off to England to study at the London School of Economics and then went off to Bosnia on jihad and so on. Then one would just hear about him throughout the grapevine that things were happening in very strange ways, he's kidnapping someone or he's doing some other horrible deeds. It occurred to me that this fellow was not educated in a madrassah, he was very much schooled in a Western kind of tradition, yet he went on this very acrimonious and

unfortunate path. So I was always intrigued by this issue of how Islamic education is linked to conflict since this person clearly did not have that lineage but I didn't want to make the simplistic case that since this fellow didn't come from a madrassahs that therefore there is no connection between madrassahs and conflict. So that was a personal interest on one dimension.

The other interest comes from the environmental aspect. In Islamabad if you travel in the capital of Pakistan, all over the city you will find that the madrassahs are located in green belt zones. Islamabad is a very well-planned city, planned by the great Greek urban planner Constantinos Doxiades. He was known for his ecological design. The green belts are conservation zones where no building is allowed and yet right in the middle of these you find madrassahs. We documented all the madrassahs in Islamabad. The book looked all the madrassahs in Islamabad. We did quantitative surveys there and we also did surveys in a rural area in

Southern Punjab to compare urban and rural dynamics of madrassahs. In Southern Punjab we chose a site called Amatpur Shalkia which is a very sectarian area.

There is a lot of conflict between Shias and Sunnis in that area. So we wanted to compare an urban area and a rural area to see what the dynamic was there. So as an environmental planner I was also intrigued by just the geography of madrassahs, where they are located, why they are located in this way.

I also had the good fortune of working for a year with a former Pakistani Civil Service Officer, Dr. Toquil Shah who was a Visiting Scholar at Brown University when I was teaching there. He had done a survey of madrassahs in 1994 when he was the Assistant Commissioner in Amaptur. So he had data from 1994 on all the madrassahs in Amatpur in the Southern Punjab case study. So this was a great way to have a temporal comparison from 1994 to about 2004 to 2005 when we started this research so we could compare over 10 years what had changed.

Toquil was supposed to be here with us. Unfortunately he wasn't able to come. But I do want to acknowledge his help in the research. His policy prescriptions may be different from mine, but he was instrumental and he was the field team leader for the work in Pakistan and the book would not have been possible without his help.

Then the other dimension of this book which is very important to recognize is that there has been a lot of interest from the West in madrassahs and we did get funding to do this field work from the U.S. Institute of Peace which is a U.S. government-funded institute but it is independent of the government. Even their website is usip.org, not usip.gov which shows that they really want to be considered as independent. And because especially in Pakistan people like to spin all kinds of conspiracy theories, there is absolutely no U.S. government influence in the outcomes of this research at all. They gave us complete independence to do the research. I also prepared a short video documentary as part of this

project which is available for viewing free online. It's a 15-minute video called "Children of Faith," and it's viewable on Google Video. That video was intended more for a Western audience to give people more of a human depiction of madrassahs and what it is like to be a madrassah student. So I've tried to provide a little bit of a different audience perspective in the video from what you find in the book. So that's kind of what this project is all about.

Now let me just summarize quickly a few of the key findings of the book. As I said, I went into this research completely without any predilections one way or the other. I wanted to find out what is first the history of madrassahs in Islam. I myself had some training in Islamic scholarship. While I was a student in Pakistan I went to a Western school but I also used to have a tutor every evening who would give me a 1-hour lesson in Islamic scholarship as well. So I had a little bit of training in that. But I did not go to a madrassah so I didn't really know what a

madrassah curriculum is like. So I did some research on that as well.

What I found out is that in South Asia, madrassahs have had a very noble lineage. At one point, for example, in West Bengal in India the madrassahs were of high enough quality that even non-Muslims would send children to madrassahs, and I learned this from Sugata Bose who is a professor at Harvard who is not a Muslim. He is a Bengali. He is a very well-recognized scholar. And he himself said, yes, outside of Calcutta in the outskirts you had madrassahs where Hindus would send their children because the quality of the education was very good, similar to what you have in Pakistan for example where Muslim families send their children to Christian schools many times because the quality of education is very good. So this was a revelation.

But then something happened which clearly changed the madrassahs and the madrassahs became co-opted by the political apparatus in various ways, and something went terribly wrong with madrassahs. What

we have found in the book is that a very noble institution unfortunately got manipulated by various political interests and what has resulted is that the madrassahs have become an instrument of recruiting political activists first, but those political activists can potentially become foot soldiers as well in various causes.

One of the other findings of the book is that there are actually very few madrassahs which are linked to international terrorism most likely, but there are lots of madrassahs which can be linked to sectarian violence within Pakistan which is also just as significant, for the Shia-Sunni violence in Pakistan is a very serious challenge, and madrassahs are very clearly linked to that. The other analysis that we did is that we looked at also land holdings in Punjab and the feudal system in Southern Punjab is also linked to the rise of radicalism and also the funding of madrassahs. Many of the madrassahs are funded by landlords and they use that as a means of actually keeping a certain level of constituency within their

electorate. There is an electorate too because most of the politicians are landlords in Southern Punjab, so you have this dynamic as well that you have the landlords who have kind of an autocratic control but then they also are politicians who have electoral support through that process. So there is also inequality in land ownership. Most of the landowners in Southern Punjab, some of the large more prominent one, are Shias, but the majority population is Sunni. So you have also that kind of tension historically because of the demographic disconnect and so the madrassah phenomenon just feeds on that kind of aspect as well.

The urban madrassahs in Islamabad we found were much more of a migrant phenomenon. We had for example the madrassahs in the affluent sectors in Islamabad like in E7, those people who are familiar with Jamafaridia , most of the students are coming from the frontier so they're migrants who are being sent for education and so the urban madrassahs in

Islamabad is a different phenomenon in that regard so now that there is this problem.

What is being done about it finally in the last couple of minutes? Finally I think there is a realization within the madrassah establishment that there is a problem. In my interviews which I conducted, I did quantitative analysis in the book also in terms of the surveys, but then we did a lot of interviews as well. We found that clearly there is now some recognition slowly among some of the scholars that there needs to be a change, but there is a knee-jerk defensive reaction whenever that change is imposed from outside. So you have scholars like Dr. Anee Sama , Dr. Whoshee Amad who are scholars from the Jamaat-e-Islami, so they've been trained in Western education as well, and they realize that there is a problem with the madrassahs but they don't want Western kinds of edicts to reform the madrassahs. So each time you talk to them there's immediately this knee-jerk defensive action. So my conclusion is that the madrassahs need to be reformed absolutely, but

they need to be reformed internally through institutions within Islam, through Pakistani institutions, and that it needs to be done with great care so that it's theologically grounded.

Now just for a couple of things I'm doing as a follow-up, we are trying to develop a peace education curriculum for madrassahs. This was initiated by the U.N.-mandated University for Peace. You may be familiar with this organization which is based in Costa Rica of all places, but it's an institution with a U.N. mandate to promote peace education in the world. We've started a program with them to promote peace education in madrassahs, but the first country that was selected for that was Indonesia. We have done some workshops on that with Indonesia and ulaman scholars there and we want to replicate that in Pakistan as well. So my own contribution to that will be developing an environmental peace education curriculum for the madrassahs. My own interest as you know is environment, but I feel that the environment is

actually a very important part of peace building. So that's what I have been working on. And as Hady was saying, all of the royalties of the book will go toward that effort. We're working on developing some books which are going to be translated into Urdu in that regard. We have got a couple of madrassahs already, prominent madrassahs, which are on board to work on that, most notably the Jamashrafia in Lahore which is a very notable diobundi madrassah, but they are willing to work with that.

So I will leave it there and I look forward to Professor Wirsing's comments.

DR. WIRSING: I want to add my thanks to Hady Amr for inviting me here this evening. I want to thank all of you for attending. I'm looking forward to listening to you and your questions and comments on these extremely important and sensitive issues. I also want to add my thanks to the staff for the kindness that they have shown.

I am not a renowned scholar of madrassahs, but my interest in them goes back some time. People

call me a natural resource fundamentalist nowadays because of my interest in water and energy resources as powerful drivers. But I always keep one eye on the issues relating to religion and extremism and madrassahs.

Saleem and I only met very recently here in Qatar but we actually have been in correspondence for some years. He very, very kindly sent to me the original study which was paid for by a United States Institute of Peace grant. They do a lot of very good work. I welcomed it because this was in 2005-2006. I was then working for the Pentagon and I immediately built it into the curriculum and into my courses and required reading at the time. I welcomed it because at that time and even earlier, madrassahs had already become a focal point of discussion and were being held up -- there are some quotes in the book here if you read it that he cites. They were being called the incubators of terrorism, and I think I liked best weapons of mass destruction and so forth. I have a huge file on madrassahs and I have collected all sorts

of such commentaries. I felt this was in need of investigation. No doubt there was some truth in these allegations about the uses to which madrassahs were being put, but I feel it's always of great importance for people in the scholarly community to put these things to scrutiny.

What had particularly irritated me was a very renowned report by the International Crisis Group which is a very important nongovernmental organization that produces generally high-quality reports on crises areas all over the planet and they have a permanent office in Pakistan. In 2002 they had produced a report on Pakistan's madrassahs and in that report, and this is a highly respected organization, well financed whose reports are available free online and very widely read and cited, but in that 2002 report, it's called "Pakistan, Madrassahs, Extremism and the Military," they wrote, "About a third of all children in Pakistan in education attend madrassahs." Pakistan today is a country of about 174 million people. I haven't done the math, but there are a lot

of people in education in Pakistan. So if one third in madrassahs and if they have been changed and transformed in this manner, you have a problem of enormous scale.

It took 3 years, but they finally issued in 2005 an amended version of this in which they made some important changes. So they admitted that there had been an error in the placement of a decimal and by correcting that error they reduced the number of Pakistani students in madrassahs to about a million and a half, and I think that's close to 4 to 5 percent. The difference between 4 to 5 percent and 33 percent is enormous. I think there may have been the willingness to accept that early figure from a person who grew up in Pakistan, lives in Pakistan and could not possibly think that one third of students in madrassah institutions and so forth is itself worth some scrutiny.

In any event, for me madrassahs are an extremely important issue because of the controversy surrounds them, what uses they are being put to

include by Pakistan's enemies and various propaganda organs that frequently report that Pakistan is a failed state or a failing state or a state that is sinking into the abyss of terrorism and so forth. So these are extremely important, all the more so because as we speak in Washington, D.C. a very important interagency policy review process has begun in which for a about a month thousands of Americans are reviewing American policy toward Pakistan and toward Afghanistan. And at the end of this the President will do what he has done with Iraq and announce the policy decisions in regard to Pakistan and Afghanistan. So it's very, very important. Of course madrassahs are only one element of the total picture, but it's one important element that needs to be clarified.

You have a wonderful book here to read and a scholar who has spent years studying it. I'm going to shift ground here a little bit and look at the other half of the title of this meeting. It's called "Madrassahs and Extremism." I'd like to just real

quickly suggest that I hope tonight our small group if we can somehow bond and form a contract to stop using the word extremism we would make tremendous progress in regard to this. I'm going to offer you three reasons why from this day forth we should stop using that word unless we have very great cause to use it and are very, very careful in applying it.

The first is we have good authority for being careful. Vice President Joseph Biden has very recently given his estimate in regard to extremism. He says that 70 percent of the militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan's FATA area are mercenaries who are working for pay, they are not religiously motivated in his view. Therefore he rightly or wrongly would put them and clump them with what they might call moderates, people who can be negotiated with, moved away from the violent course that they have taken. Then he said there are 25 percent more who are sort of fence sitters who haven't made up their minds exactly what motivates them. And he said that only 5 percent that he would call extremists.

That's 5 out of 100 that the Vice President of the United States is prepared to call extremists and I presume that point of view will certainly be paid some attention to in the policy review now going on.

A second reason I would offer you for forming a compact with me to be more careful in the use of the word extremism is that I think using the word gives far more weight to religion, religious identity and religious extremism than it really deserves in explaining what's happening whether it's in Pakistan, in FATA or in Afghanistan itself. As many of you in here know better than I, there's a tremendous variety of motivations that are at work in Pakistan, in FATA and in Afghanistan and not just mercenary motives. There are all kinds of things. This is an extremely important arena not only for internal domestic actors to compete for power and so on, but it's also a battleground of a great many international forces. The problem of course of dealing with FATA in Afghanistan is that it's not just a local or regional problem and a great many non-South

Asian actors are involved. Think of it. The Russians I am told by pretty competent authorities in Pakistan are thickly involved not just in Afghanistan which is kind of natural given their history there, but also in FATA, Indians I think rather naturally, Iranians for whom so much is at stake in Afghanistan. Of course they are not going to leave FATA or Afghanistan to evolve in any rich way tailored to some other power's interests. So there are lots of foreign hands. Pakistanis tend to overdo the foreign hand thing, but when they're talking about FATA or Afghanistan or indeed Pakistan, there's an awful lot of truth in what they say, a lot of foreign hands which have nothing to do with religion, religious identity, much less with extremism are at work. So we need to attempt to sort this out without letting the word extremism get in the way.

Lastly, most sensitive, and I don't want to tread on anyone's feet, but I'm nearing the end of my academic career and I swore to myself a few years ago that in public audiences like this I would make every

effort to be very honest with you, and I'm going to be honest now. The third reason why I think we've got to be very careful about using the word extremism is because sometimes where extremism is present there is extremism and extremist behavior in that region, in FATA, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but I think that often times it isn't religion which is driving the extremism at all and sometimes I think perhaps the extremist behavior is even justified. Certainly some of the extremism I think is a direct response to collateral damage. How many reports do we need of wedding parties struck, young brides blown to bits and so forth? Some of this is pure propaganda no doubt, but it's not all propaganda. There are too many foreign correspondents who've got in there and gone to the hospitals, inspected the bodies and so forth, and so we need to pay some attention to the consequences of the way in which warfare is being conducted sometimes from 10,000 or 5,000 miles away using Predator drones strikes and so forth. It's hard to target perfectly when you're doing that. So some of

the extremism, the picking up of weapons and so forth or outfitting oneself in a bomb outfit and perpetrating acts of suicide terrorism, some of it may be justified, some of it I think can be accounted for best as revenge or complete resentment for the kinds of policies that have been adopted in the war on terrorism.

Lastly, in this same connection, the last chapter in this book I think has a very interesting discussion of the Red Mosque in Islamabad. When that happened in July 2007, all the lights went on in my nasty brain because I rarely believe very much that I see on television and almost nothing that I read in most newspapers. So I said this needs a Saleem Ali, frankly, to conduct the same kind of careful investigative work in regard to what exactly happened. I don't know what happened. I was there shortly before the event itself and I've made several trips to Pakistan since and I've talked to a heck of a lot of people. It's not my subject, I'm a water and gas person, but it's too important to neglect, so I did a

lot of interviewing immediately at that time. My feeling is that you shouldn't believe what you read in Wikipedia. Sometimes there's good stuff in Wikipedia, but I wonder who wrote the account that's in there. It will tell you that 103 people died. Maybe so, but maybe a lot more died, and maybe they weren't well armed. Maybe there was no big arsenal of weapons. The figures I was given by a whole lot of people, very senior people in the political hierarchy of Pakistan and people I've known, I've been going to Pakistan since 1973 and I have wonderful friends there. I've learned who to trust and who not to trust. I have a suspicion that the figure shouldn't be 100, but maybe what I often heard was 1,800 people overwhelmingly young women rather than masses of armed militants. There's an awful lot of evidence of this. An absolutely tragic event. There were 1,800 mainly women who perished in that. Think of the number of people particularly in NWFP whose families would have been affected, where anger and resentment would have been terrific. I think maybe some of you, I'm sure

about myself, might strap on a bombing outfit and seek to revenge that fantastic event. But it needs careful research, more than what newspaper people are able to give to it. But my third then is sometimes when extremism occurs, perhaps there is some justification for it. Thank you very much.

MR. AMR: Thank you, Professor Wirsing. Before I turn to the audience I'd just like to kick off and ask you both a simple question. What in your view are the policy implications? If you had 5 minutes for the President of the United States or 5 minutes with the King of Saudi Arabia, what advice might you give on the issue that we're addressing today? Really, in a minute or two what would either of you say to the President of the United States or the Arab world which is often labeled in the U.S. as financing religious education in South Asia? I don't know which one of you would want to go first.

DR. ALI: There could be multiple recommendations. One is regarding the overall curriculum of the madrassahs regardless of its

connection to violence. The violence part is more nuanced as I was saying than is often presented, but what is more interesting is perhaps that children who study in madrassahs, they are often not qualified to do anything else in life apart from either opening new madrassahs or going and teaching the Koran from household to household. This was not how it used to be. Madrassahs were much more diverse in their curriculum. They used to be able to train people to do a lot more. So if there was any kind of policy advice to give, it would be to think about some kind of livelihood and apprenticeship for madrassah graduates so that they are trained to excel in other avenues in life with their religious education. So I'm thinking for example medical professions. You have a lot of these madrassah graduates who were helping with the earthquake happened, the Kashmir earthquake. The first responders were often these madrassah graduates because they had a lot of altruism engrained in them through religious education, but they didn't know what to do because there is

absolutely no training in paramedics. So this way they could actually do God's work as they perceive it, but they're also helping society. So I would say that would be one kind of policy recommendation in terms of the kind of USAID kind of policy recommendation.

But then the other policy recommendation which goes back to what Professor Wirsing was saying in terms of the role of the military versus the role of diplomacy, I agree that this issue of collateral damage is very serious in Pakistan and it provides very easy recruitment for militancy within madrassahs as well. We have felt this not just with madrassah graduates, but with other school graduates. There was a Fulbright scholar we had in Vermont. We had a student leadership with the Fulbright Commission. One of the students there, one of his best friend's entire family had been destroyed by a drone attack. He didn't mention this in his Fulbright application, but when he came to Vermont he was welcomed of course. He had a fantastic time there. The day he was leaving he revealed this. He was crying profusely and he said

Americans are such wonderful people. They have treated me so well. But how are they so oblivious to what goes on in the lives of the people where they are sending their armed forces? So it was a very poignant moment, and there are so many other such untold stories. There needs to be a real policy revision about understanding the role of the military and especially this kind of dehumanizing of intervention which goes on with these drone attacks especially. It's very easy to say, yes, we got two or three al-Qaeda activists, but then you've destroyed so many other people's lives without realizing it, and there are undocumented statistics even. There's not even any documentation of the collateral damage neither on the Pakistani government's side nor on the U.S. side. So I would say that needs to be seriously reconsidered as well, and unfortunately that aspect in the current administration has not been brought to attention.

MR. AMR: Professor Wirsing?

DR. WIRSING: One minute with the President of the United States?

MR. AMR: Yes.

DR. WIRSING: What would I say? One thing I would say is, Mister President, don't be obsessed with the madrassah issue. It is important, but I think I would point out as others have that to the extent madrassahs serve as recruiting grounds at all, the recruits are going to be very low level. They may be the foot soldiers of terrorism at the present time, but I don't think a madrassah product is going to make a very effective global level terrorist. They simply don't have the education, the technical skills or anything else for the United States of America to be greatly worried about them. And I would tell him that the real problem in Pakistan and the reason many go to madrassahs is because of the rather poor state of public education in Pakistan. On my last trip I spent some time looking at this aspect of things as well, and I would urge him to pour some American resources into various levels of education in Pakistan as certainly a long-term way of addressing the problem. And second and most important, I would urge him to

treat Pakistan as an independent nation with its own set of national interests independent of those of India and independent of those of Afghanistan. I would tell him, Mister President, tell those folks in the Pentagon to stop speaking of AFPAK, the border region, which links the two and seems to suggest that their interests overlap or converge perfectly, that Pakistan's interests of course must be the same as those of United States and Afghanistan. Some years ago the United States went to considerable lengths to insist on the decoupling and de-hyphenation of India-Pakistan relations. So I'd say, Mister President, that was a good idea. They insisted them in the Clinton administration that India and Pakistan have their own separate vectors and separate trajectories, their terms. I would say, Mister President, use the same logic when you're thinking about Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are two separate nations, their interests do not entirely converge, and they also do not quite converge fully with your own, and deal with Pakistan as an independent nation with its own

interests, and if you fail to do this I think that you're going to fail to achieve your objectives in Afghanistan.

MR. AMR: Just to follow-up for both of you really quickly and then we'll turn to the audience, there is I've found over the last 8 years in Washington this perception that funding from this part of the world where we're sitting right now in the Arabian Gulf has fueled radicalization of madrassahs in Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Muslim world. There is that perception in Washington I know because I've heard it from senior policymakers. The person leading up the interagency review on Afghanistan and Pakistan is my colleague. Our desks are right next to each other at Brookings and he's a good friend. What would you say? Is that true? Is that false? Is that a misperception in the United States? What would your recommendations be?

DR. ALI: There are some madrassahs which clearly have dominance of foreign funding and there are some as I said which are specifically linked

through particular causes which may have some terrorist connections. For example, the (inaudible) madrassah in Mauritke which is well known to people who are familiar with the Punjab, there is no doubt that that madrassah was linked to international terrorism in India in Kashmir, but that was their sole purpose. Their cause is Kashmir, so they were sending people to Kashmir. This is a seletin madrassah. There are various schools of thought and within the madrassahs there are different boards and federations, and the seletin ones clearly they have some commonality. Theologically they have commonality with the Saudis so people make that guilt by association. I don't think the Saudi government was funding them, but they did receive funds from people who sympathize with seletin doctrines. So I think it's not fair to incriminate a whole government for it, but there are certain religious persuasions which are tending to fund others. Like the Shia madrassahs are funded by people who are sympathetic to Iran. There is no doubt about that.

So in terms of the Gulf, the other connection is that some alumni of madrassahs who have not got any jobs in Pakistan, they may end up as laborers in the Gulf. When we interviewed some of the madrassah establishment people they did say that we were getting some charitable gifts from some of our very well-qualified students who went to the Gulf and were sending money, but I don't think they were sending it specifically to finance violence. Just like we sent our alumni to nations (inaudible) so that kind of dynamic is going on. But I would not be concerned about saying incriminating entire governments. There is this issue though of a general intolerance about certain Islamic doctrines which certain theological views within Islam have. So like the status of women, there are some madrassahs which if they are going to be supported in a certain tradition like the seletin tradition, they have certain views about the status of women. That can be something that leads to conflict because there are others who say, no, we should have a more progressive

view of how women are treated, so there is that dynamic going on too.

DR. WIRSING: I agree.

MR. AMR: With that role model response, let me turn the questions to the audience. I will try to call on you in the order that I see you. My eyesight is not perfect. If we could keep the questions to about 90 seconds and the responses to a couple of minutes that will allow time for all of the questions. I think the first hand up was the lady in the white sleeved shirt. Please stand up, and also please identify yourself, your name, and let us know what you're doing in town.

MS. SALAMA: My name is Vivian Salama . I'm a freelance journalists based in Pakistan actually. I'm just in town by coincidence. My first question, I have a two-parter. It's for both of you. Dr. Ali, I wanted to hear your thoughts on what's happening in the Swat Valley with regards to the women's schools, the girl's school, blowing them up, prohibiting women from going to school, and just sort of where this

ideology surfaced. You just started to talk about it toward the end there and I would like to hear more about it.

Just on that note with the Swat Valley and what's happening there and talking about extremism or not to say extremism, there is this theory that is floating around Pakistan right now with a lot of people I've interviewed and talked to about that they don't say that it's Taliban out there in the Swat Valley. A lot of people it so-called Taliban and there's this belief floating around that these are hired mercenaries by say India or Israel or whomever else. A lot of people don't believe that they are actually Taliban fights out there, and so I wanted to hear your thoughts on that as well please.

DR. ALI: Interesting question. With regard to the Swat Valley, the theological approach that these people, Maulana Fazlullah, the man who is behind the Swat rebellion, there are two things going on. One is this movement to have courts in Swat and that was an indigenous movement because Swat has had always

a separate judicial system from the rest of Pakistan because it was a principality and so on. Then when the principality kind of withered away then there was no judicial system really to take its place. So there was an indigenous movement and I know from very close quarters the great-grandson of the Valley of Swat I know fairly well and there was an indigenous movement for the courts. But then that courts movement was taken over by this very radical cleric, Fazlullah, to promote a much larger kind of radicalization and sharia implementation and so on.

These people, I do not subscribe to the conspiracy theories, that these are people from India because clearly they have linkages to that region and you will find people all over Pakistan, even in the Army I have interviewed people who will come up with all kinds of elaborate revelations that they've found people and they have evidence that the Maulana was caught with not a Muslim court, and I don't have to go into details of how they discovered that he was not a Muslim through physical examination apparently. But

that kind of thing I think is absurd really. There is no real evidence for that based on any ethnographic work at all.

However, if you look at Balujistan, I want to put in Balujistan, the rebellion in Balujistan clearly has Indian connections and that has been documented, just as Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir is documented, and on the Indian side, India is using Balujistan as a foil and there is no doubt about that, the fact that the Indian government has had very close ties with some of the Baluj separatists. So there is an Indian connection and it's in Balujistan and it's not in Swat, and the same where Pakistan is just as guilty for having the same kind of connections in the Kashmi rebellion, guilty or however you want call it, culpable, that both countries are playing each other out, Balujistan versus Kashmir. Swat is a different story.

Now where did these people come in, your question? I think that the Swat people, it's mainly a few radicalized clerics who got access to arms. When

there was a vacuum of governance in the frontier, these people got access to arms and they were able to establish the kind of might-is-right dictum there and that's what went wrong. With the girls' school, from what I have heard, some of the girls' schools, now when you talk with some of these clerics they say we are not against girls' education, that the reason why some of the schools were bombed, and I don't know if they're just backing out of their initial premise, they say that they were bombed because the army was using the schools as their refuge when they were fighting, because they also bombed boys' schools. They didn't just bomb the girls' schools. There were several boys' schools which were bombed also. I don't know what the reality is. It's clear that in Afghanistan the Taliban has banned girls' schools. So if you have the same kind of Taliban strain of fundamentalism coming here, it may well be that that is the case. But that's something which has to be a nonnegotiable stance. I'm fine for negotiating in some terms of sharia, but there are certain

fundamental rights which one cannot compromise on. Women's education is one of them. Interestingly enough, the Red Mosque clerics were adamantly against the Swat clerics. Why? Because the Red Mosque clerics actually believed in girls' education. Don't forget that the larger madrassah in the Red Mosque was a girls' madrassah and there were more girl students than men students. So you have to appreciate that there's a lot of distinction even within the radicals in that regard, and these are a really fringe group who are saying that they don't want girls' education.

DR. WIRSING: I think that that's a very good assessment of the situation, certainly better than I could supply to you. It reminds me once again that each of the arenas in which this struggle is going on, all of the different agencies of the federally administered tribal areas and the districts of the NWFP and so forth, each houses its own sets of tribes and tribal animosities, its own distinct history. Swat has a very distinct history, social class structure and so forth that impacts on what's

happening there. I was there about 2 weeks ago and I also listened to a great many conspiracy theories. There were some incredible things, that actually it was the Pakistan Army which was fueling the terrorists or militants in Swat which seems a rather striking possibility to me. But I haven't been in Swat in a great many years and I have nothing to add there.

I would say this, that the Pakistan Army, it's important to bear in mind in terms of the 17-point agreement that was reached, the Pakistan Army is stretched pretty thin in Pakistan. There are something like 140,000 troops up in the Badar area alone and that for an army of about a half million which still continues to see its neighbor to the east as its principal enemy has meant a substantial drawdown of forces from the Indian border. Pakistan has to be concerned about east and India. It's not an obsession. It's a national interest, a national requirement that Pakistan be concerned about India. India after all has a new doctrine called Cold Start which means that they can strike first. So ever time

there's a military maneuver in Rajasthan, the Pakistanis have to immediately alert their troops because you don't know what's happening on the other side of the border and India's division commanders are enormously concerned about the depletion of their ranks along that border which is added to, by the way, by the political crisis because a lot of the Rangers have to be pulled off border duty and placed around Lahore, places in Lahore or Islamabad in order to protect those cities. So it has enormous problems in regard to its deployment, and I think that something to do with some of the eagerness to strike bargains and agreements with militant groups whose demands may not appeal to everyone but have to be responded to and accommodated to a certain extent given the immediate requirements of the circumstances.

MR. AMR: There were two questions in the front row. Yes, sir, here, and then we'll get to these two.

MR. KHAN: With your permission I'd like to make a comment as well.

MR. AMR: Please.

MR. KHAN: My name is Ali Khan. I'm the (inaudible) Pakistan Embassy. Thank you very much, Dr. Saleem Ali and Dr. Wirsing. I'd like to bring another perspective to this issue. The thing is that we are a huge country, 796 thousand square kilometer, 160 million population. We have (inaudible) long ago. We think we are growing by 2 percent, but I believe more. So it's not a small country. We did not know the word of terrorism as Saleem would hold me out until we went into the (inaudible) if you look at our political history and I personally blame the U.S. for it, we had had military dictators like lately Musharraf. And when our military dictator came into Pakistan, he completely wiped out the fundamental rights. Completely. And unfortunately those two dictators really suited the United States at that time and it was Pakistan and the United States who used these madrassahs who had a noble (inaudible) as you said to come out and bring out those people which we call jihadis or Taliban. And once the soldiers were

defeated, the Americans left and the Pakistanis themselves even if they realized what would be the fallout for our own country, did not have the capacity to deal with it. And as you rightly pointed out, if you look at that entire era from (inaudible) or even before, what was happening is that in all social sectors our investment has gone down, particularly in education. We have always been trying to go up to that 4 percent of GDP but we stayed around 2 percent, and even with that we are not able to spend. So those madrassahs, you see there is no government welfare network. No viable government welfare network. So these madrassahs are very important private social welfare networks.

What type of people are going there? They are the ones who are way, way down the poverty line. And even today a family of five in Pakistan is around five to seven. So these are some of the factors which are happening which are radicalizing the society, because talking about sharia is not an issue because once you are a Muslim, and all Muslims will bear me

out, you are bound by sharia. It's another thing whether you practice it or not or whether a state practices it or not. We inherited the British legacy and we always went by the British law, but those people who wanted to practice sharia would always practice sharia, and you know Saudi Arabia practices sharia. So you can't call it and I don't think anyone calls it an extremist state.

So that was not the issue. The issue was successive military rules in which the United States colluded with these dictators to bring out this issue of jihad. Jihad, when it was very selectively used even in the context of Kashmir, even at that time you would not have heard the word jihadis. You would have heard the words Kashmiri freedom fighters. These jihadis, these suicide bombers, these people who blow themselves up, they all came up during the Wan war.

And one last thing I would like to say is that still fortunately like Dr. Wirsing has pointed out, there are a very small proportion of our people who are really radicalized. I'm of course looking

from outside, you look very worried about it, but still they are a very, very small proportion. And if you had seen the long march which just took place, you will see women, children, people, nobody was shouting for jihad. Nobody shouts for jihad in Pakistan. We are very Muslim people and there are people they get attached to the issues which concern Muslims. Even if the Palestine issue is called an Arab issue, we would own it. Even if the Iraq issue is a Middle East issue, but we would own it. It would be a big possession in Pakistan. So that is sort of the mindset of the people, but there has never been a movement in Pakistan to go out and to spread jihad until this (inaudible) phenomenon took place.

So I now I think like you said what will be the recommendation. I think the United States and friends of Pakistan really have to partner with us and come in a big way and in a sustained way in our social sectors because they are really suffering, and as long as they continue to do that, you can well imagine that 160 million population and with 30 percent of them at

a working age and not getting employment what sort of issues are coming up. That's all. Thanks.

MR. AMR: Thank you. We have so many questions. If you gentlemen want to respond, please keep your responses short because we have less than -- why don't you respond?

DR. ALI: Just quickly, the role of the U.S. and the Wan war is discussed in the book. However, whatever happened in the 1970s and the early 1980s, you can't still blame that for the continuation over the next 15 years. I think we do have to take some responsibility because once you had that apparatus of militancy, it was then used by the Pakistani state also. So I think, yes, I talk about all of the University of Nebraska school books which were made to indoctrinate these people and all this. That was there. The U.S. did play a role. But then one can also make the argument that the U.S. was helping this jihad, and then if you talk to some of the U.S. government officials they say why did they turn against us? We were helping them and then they turned

against us suddenly. What went wrong? So you have to understand their perspective also. Clearly I have criticized the U.S. government policy like with the drone attacks and all, that's all clear, but we have to as Pakistanis take some responsibility for the predicament.

Sharia, I would be much be more cautious and saying, yes, we are almost living in sharia. There are too many shades of sharia and one of the challenges has been that Pakistan has never really had a consensus process within all of the Muslim factions. What kind of sharia do you want to implement? I do not think we want to implement the Saudi version of sharia. For one thing, women are allowed to drive in Pakistan. For one thing, we have had women as chief justices. For one thing, we have had women as prime ministers which could never be dreamed of in Saudi Arabia. So we clearly do not follow the Saudi sharia. We might follow a different kind of sharia. We might follow the kind of Malaysian sharia. I don't know. There is one strain of sharia and there needs to be a

consensus within the country that what kind of strain of sharia needs to be followed. Yes, it's the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Yes, our constitution says that we cannot have any laws which are antithetical to Islam. But there is no unified vision of Islam. Let us not delude ourselves into that. And I have suggested in fact in my most recent op-ed for the "Daily Times," I write regularly for the "Daily Times," that we need a national process of reconciliation to understand what kind of Islam we want to implement. We are all Muslims but we want to have -- I shouldn't say we're all Muslims. We're 95 percent Muslims in Pakistan. We first of all have to accept that we have to respect the 5 percent minorities also, and that we then figure out what kind of consensus of sharia we want. So that's how I would respond to that.

MR. AMR: Because there are so many questions, why don't we take two at a time? Why don't you gentlemen and then these two here? Why don't you two go? Go ahead. Please identify yourself.

DR. MATA: I've lived in this area for 5 years. I know the area.

MR. AMR: Please identify yourself for the benefit of the audience.

DR. MATA: I beg your pardon?

MR. AMR: Please state your name and affiliation for the benefit of the speakers.

DR. MATA: Dr. Mata , a university official. I was a professor in this area for 5 years so I know the area very well. So I'm asking you why in India there are madrassahs also? Why they're in Pakistan producing terrorists and not in India? That's one. The second, you have to mention the social and political conditions in Pakistan. We have 100 families controlling politics, wealth, jobs, everything. The gap between poor and rich is so vast. I think this may be a cause for extremists.

The second thing, do not recognize more (inaudible) between Pakistan and India (inaudible) no Afghanis signing a treaty between Pakistan. There are no borders. So they are not (inaudible) Taliban here

and they consider that (inaudible) they say here is Afghanistan. Here is Hindustan. No Pakistan. I was there. I know this well. So what I'd like to mention to you that you asked about the first war. I think they paid \$20 million in the first war (inaudible) I told them enough (inaudible) the Afghani (inaudible) better than 20 million for the Afghani (inaudible) you can solve the problem. But (inaudible)

MR. AMR: Thank you.

MR. KAMAL: Falsi Kamal . I'm an American lawyer temporarily based in Qatar. First of all, congratulations, Dr. Saleem Ali, for an excellent publication. Whatever I've read of the book, it's an excellent piece of work. Just cursorily I've read it. Just a comment first of all on this thing, when you do your research on the book, were you able to discern the Abundi madrassahs versus Brali madrassahs (inaudible) and did you distinguish that there was a philosophy a little different between the two, the orientation, the teaching and the whole set-up within the two? Like the Abundi might emphasize the militant

aspect of Islam, the jihadi aspect, while Bralis would emphasize more the peaceful -- the live and let live, the peaceful coexistence of Islam. Were you able to distinguish the difference?

Secondly, about reforming the madrassahs. I think it will be a tough task given the powerful forces are at work to seek control of these madrassahs, and we should not underestimate these powerful forces. The tremendous finances, the tremendous ideological underpinnings, with wide popular support, the (inaudible) forces. So it won't be easy to wrest control of the madrassahs from these forces. As long as they're controlled it will be difficult to reform.

Finally, just a comment on extremism. I don't think it should ever be justified the apologies, Dr. Wirsing. Beheading of innocent civilians can never be justified. Or killing of women in the fields or bombing or just usurping the rights of the people to live or to breathe can never be justified. Thank you.

MR. AMR: Thank you. Gentlemen, if you'd like to comment on both of those?

DR. ALI: I totally agree with Dr. Zakaria about the issue that the borders are not respected and the (inaudible) situation and that they should have invested in education at that time. And this was a tragedy of the Cold War more generally. In the Cold War period, overall there was an investment in militarization and if there was any kind of knowledge used, it was in a very polarized way. So this was a tragedy of the Cold War altogether and Afghanistan was the last chapter of the Cold War. But I totally agree with you that they should have done that.

With regard to India, the Indian madrassahs have been studied and I do have a little bit of material on Indian madrassahs in this book. But if you're interested in Indian madrassahs, there is an excellent book by Yuginder Sakan called "Bastions of Belief" and he goes into great detail about Indian madrassahs. They still have a problem of a very narrow vision of the world. They are not militarized,

but there are still same systemic problems now among some Indian madrassahs also. They are just not militarized because they're in a minority situation compared to a dominant non-Muslim majority. So they have had to be very careful. But some of their rhetoric I find is still antithetical to pluralism. For example, the (inaudible) which is one of the parent madrassahs of the Abundi school. That's in India. And some of their edicts you hear occasionally they will be publish will be very antithetical to pluralism and they will want to sort of ghettoize the Muslim community and not really reach out and be pluralistic. They are not militant. You're right, they are not militant, but that is partly a result of the fact that the way in which they are located.

There are some very good Muslim institutions in India of higher education which I think we should emulate. The first one (inaudible) Muslim University you have the Usmania University , you have the Hamder Foundation in India and in Pakistan which are Muslim organizations for higher education which are very

good. But they are also doing work now in Pakistan. Hamder, for example, there is a Hamder University in Karachi also as well as in Pakistan. We have the Alarkan Foundation which is of course both in Pakistan and in India, though of course (inaudible) so that's how I would take the Indian situation.

The question about the Abundis and Bralis. Yes, the book looks into all the different sects. In fact, even the data analysis for the madrassahs is by the different sects. The Bralis tend to be more inclined toward the Sufi tradition and are more tolerant than the puritanical school. The Talafis and the Abundis are much closer to each other in terms of puritanical approaches and they're very exclusionary. They feel as though there is just one path to salvation, whereas the Bralis are more willing to consider other paths to salvation. But Bralis also -- the madrassahs in terms of career problems, they have the same issues because the children are not really qualified to do anything outside of that basic

curriculum. So the career problem persists with the Brali madrassahs.

DR. WIRSING: On the India madrassah question, there was a very interesting study that was released by India in 2006 -- a huge volume by the Sacha Commission which was appointed by the government to look into the status of India's Muslim minority. That was the first time in India's history that the government had done this. It has a whole lot of very interesting data and findings. One of them is that very few Indians put their children into madrassahs. It's a tiny percent, if I recall correctly, maybe 2 percent which is considerably less than happens in Pakistan. I would not necessarily take great comfort from that necessarily. I don't think for one thing that it means that the public education in India is a whole lot better than in Pakistan. I doubt that very much. But after all, what we have learned from the study of terrorism in the last decade or so is that terrorists do not need and frequently do not have a madrassah education

anyway. You're not really secure against terrorist activity because you have a few students in madrassahs. I don't think you need any madrassahs and you're going to have terrorist activity anyway.

One last comment on the theme of extremism. My wife will wonder what's happened to me, but back in the 1960s one of the candidates for the American presidency was Senator Barry Goldwater and he won fame at the time with his statement, "Extremism in defense of freedom is no vice." I certainly didn't support that man for the presidency, but there is a certain element of truth in what he said.

MR. AMR: There are two questions here, so I'll take the gentleman in front and then the gentleman in the blue shirt in the back. So the gentleman here in the front, and after the gentleman in the back.

MR. KABRALA: My name is Saleem Kabrala , born, bred and educated all in Pakistan. I think Saleem probably touched on the issue regarding the Southern Punjab, and of course I have not read the

book as yet so I just followed the questions and answers up until now. You've taken up issues regarding madrassahs. It doesn't emphasize what exactly a madrassah is all about. It's a public school basically run -- sort of a private school or sort of a public school for poor people set up throughout the state by individuals -- emphasizes that or not. And basically what it boils down to is (inaudible) poor country with the event in '73 is when all the schools were nationalized and thereafter in 1979 they were denationalized. Thereafter the government completely sidestepped the whole issue of education throughout the country. The government has since the 1980s not really emphasized anything at all on education. That has led to the mushrooming of all public schools set up by religious institutions or private parties to set up these madrassahs. So the point as Dr. Wirsing pointed out was the emphasis related to public schools. It doesn't really point out that deficiency which is there throughout the country of students or of poor people going to the

schools. Even the last emphasis of the (inaudible) itself was actually a free school for poor people coming in from the Northern areas. So thus the main area of education which is lacking throughout the country, the emphasis of literacy going down to more than 50 percent, does not emphasize any way at all (inaudible)

MR. AMR: Thank you. Why don't we take also the question in the back and then -- excellent. Thank you.

MR. BADA: Thank you. My name is (inaudible) Bada . I'm from Pakistan and I'm (inaudible) Doha. I have two questions, one for Saleem and then I'll go to Mister Robert. Saleem, from the past few years even like I will definitely contradict what one of my friends has said that the military government -- regardless of that was the civilian and the military government are, they have been doing a registration process of all the madrassahs in Pakistan and they have been very much -- what you can say is they are very much willing to do

all the reforms in the curriculum which is being taught in the madrassahs. I would like to have your point of view and would you like to enlighten us that what your research is saying what the reforms you are talking about because I heard you say there was a policy recommendation you mentioned and where do you see these policies efforts throughout the past few years? We have witnessed that the government is very much committed to bring reforms and they start bringing them to the registration process and all this stuff.

And to Robert, like there is always I mean I've been like from Pakistan and working there for the (inaudible) I witnessed there was a bilateral effort from the USAID and from the (inaudible) for having some reforms in the madrassah through the USAID and then from different funding. So I'd like to have your views on that as well, how these efforts have been so much successful, what was the level of success. Thank you.

MR. AMR: Gentlemen, please.

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DR. ALI: First of all on the question of need. First of all, madrassahs in Pakistan are private, but not everywhere. There are other parts of the world like in Bangladesh where there are two different kinds of madrassahs. There are public madrassahs. They're called Gami and Alia madrassahs, different ones. But in Pakistan the madrassahs are private and government schools are what we call public schools, not like the British where it confuses everything what the British call private schools, public schools. So in Pakistan the government schools are free. The public schools are also free. So you can't say the madrassahs are free and the -- they are both free in that regard. There are other private schools where they do charge money.

In terms of need, I think that you could perhaps say that a certain percentage of the children or the orphans who go to madrassahs, and we did the survey in Amatpur of the madrassahs, maybe 10 percent of the children in the madrassahs were orphans. Those are probably going because of that need base. But the

others, it's not just because of need, because as I said the government schools are also free. So they go many times and we did detailed surveys to ask why the children -- many times it's like the children will be dedicated to Islam. The family will say we want to dedicate one child to Islam and so they will send the child to a madrassah.

SPEAKER: (inaudible)

DR. ALI: Not all are boarding. I'll also mention the boarding part too, because the madrassahs in Islamabad most of them are boarding schools, but the ones in the rural areas are not majority boarding. There the boarding is maybe 20 percent of the students might be. So the rural madrassahs, like on the cover of the book, this madrassah, it just has one room. It can't be a boarding school. It's basically an alfresco madrassah. A lot of the rural madrassahs are like that. They are not -- if you think about, yes, the Jama Faradias and the Jama, those are boarding schools, but the rural madrassahs can be very small too. So it depends. You are right that some of them

are boarding. So for the orphans that's a criterion certainly. But I would be hesitant to say that it just because of need, that it's just poor children who are going. We also found that in fact sometimes you have children from affluent families who are sent because they say there is better discipline there so they'll send the children there. These children are really getting spoiled, and the other schools we sent them to madrassahs.

The second question about the registration procedure. It was woefully inadequate. They never really followed through on it. They tried. Part of the problem was that the Musharraf regime was perceived by the madrassah establishment as having external influence and so the madrassahs rebelled against it. They formed the (inaudible) to defend the madrassahs and most of their efforts, they were boycotting a lot of the registration process. And Molana Hani Jalandry who I interviewed for this book also, he was the director of this organization. He was very clear. He said we want to reform but we want

it to be an indigenous effort. And the U.S. government actually invited him. The State Department took him all around America and showed him different schools and this and that, but it made no real difference because they are very much focused on it has to be indigenous. That's why I said we need a national consensus building process with the ulima involved to really make that happen. Otherwise they will resist registration. They won't be able to do it.

DR. WIRSING: You probably know better than I. My feeling is that the United States has not invested very much in madrassah institutions.

DR. ALI: They say they can't invest by law because they're religious institutions. So their strategy was to fund the government schools a little bit, but their funding for government schools is very bizarre too. They're like we'll buy air conditioners for government schools and things like that but not investing in the institution.

DR. WIRSING: And there's some danger in doing that also I thin because for the United States to be a conspicuous reform agent in religious institutions is likely to generate more suspicion than benefit. While I was there 2 weeks ago, a very good friend of mine took me -- what the United States could to usefully. He took me to an institution a few miles outside of Islamabad called the Pakistan Agricultural Research Center. What he wanted to show me was a vast project entirely U.S. paid for and built I think back in the 1960s. It's a phenomenal institution. In those days USAID was a very different kind of agency. Sort of with high morale and enthusiasm about what they could do in Pakistan. The comment that the United States needs to make a sustained commitment to Pakistan I completely subscribe to and I would suggest that a part that, a large part, should be in the education sector. What my friend told me is as we went around this institution, he said there are 200 scientists here many with very prestigious degrees, but they're doing nothing. He said the organization

is completely stagnant. Of course it produces papers which no one reads and they have no impact on agriculture. A country which is deeply mired in very traditional and inefficient farming practices and tremendous need for heavy investment and sustained and creative investment, this was a tragedy. This is Pakistan's premiere institution for investigating and carrying out research in regard to agricultural problems. It's not being done. So if they're looking for a place to invest heavily, this certainly would be one.

MR. AMR: Thank you both. We have a few minutes left and so we're going to have to take about five questions and then five answers. Let's start right here, and then the woman behind and then here and we'll wrap our way around. We do have to wrap up in about 10 minutes.

MR. BASHIR: My name is Nadeem Ahmed Bashir and I spent my golden days in Pakistan I would call like this (inaudible) my question to Saleem, you mentioned about the green belts in Islamabad. Did you

further investigate how those green belts were taken over by madrassahs and what were the factors behind those? Because from there we can further trace down the root cause. The other question I think partly you have already answered, the economic activity. We received billions of dollars from the U.S. and other parts of the world, aid in the forms of military assistance. It did not help (inaudible) realize that Pakistan needs to move forward. The world should not or at least discourage those efforts that is choking Pakistan in my understanding. So they need to work together to put all the efforts that Pakistan should move forward and that can definitely resolve the issues.

MR. AMR: Thank you. The one behind him, and I'd ask our speakers to keep note of the many questions we're going to have because this is the last round of questions.

SPEAKER: I'm a housewife and I'm staying here with my husband. I'm actually a doctor but I'm staying home. My question is for Mr. Saleem Ali. I

have heard the whole discussion. I have one question and a comment -- question. My first question is you talked about madrassahs and the style of teaching, the beliefs inculcated in the students, but you didn't mention the core curriculum. Did you study? Because I think most of the core curriculum, I don't mean the secondary things, they are supposed to be based on Koran. What do you think about that?

The second thing is what I found missing in the whole discussion which is -- is the real Islamic point of view, the real Koranic point of view, I think the traditional point of view about all the issues whether they be madrassahs, whether they be women's issues, whether about (inaudible) bombing of the girls' schools or whatever, women's education, whatever. I think it would have been beneficial for all of the Muslims and non-Muslims in the audience.

MR. AMR: Thank you much. We'll just to keep going. We're going to have to take all the questions -- then the ladies behind you.

MR. ADRANA: My name is Fawad Adrana . I have done a lot of theater in Pakistan. Maybe you have heard (inaudible) I formed that theater. We resisted a lot. We have done a lot of theater at that time to tell to the people and to the world that what we are fighting in Afghanistan, we have to pay back for that. And let me tell you which country in the world can support 6 million refugees and a country like Pakistan at that time maybe a \$10 billion GDP. What happened that today the whole transport system of Pakistan is controlled by Afghanistan? The whole import system is controlled by Afghanistan (inaudible) from here and what we do, we sell to Pakistan one container and 20 to Afghanistan and all this 20 come back to Pakistan. This is all sorts of economic deprivations for Pakistanis as to where else they can go. Where else they can go for education and for things like that? And that if you travel, if you have traveled in Pakistan, if you travel from Lahore to Gudwala you see all along the petrol stations you see Afghanis are working there and they speak Punjabi

better than me. How can you remove those people whenever you wanted to do anything and you know that, most in madrassahs you will find a lot of percentage of madrassahs Afghani people are there. And if you look into the Northwest Frontier and Peshawar, they are full of madrassahs, maybe 30,000 madrassahs there where are producing where we say the radicalism. They are all Afghanis.

So what we need to do that I fully agree and I thank you, sir, your comments that we should treat Pakistan as Pakistan and Afghanistan as Afghanistan and the world must help us to finish up where is the Pakistan and where is the Afghanistan. We are sitting here. We are six or seven people came here to listen to you, and do you think that we are Taliban? We are running companies. So there must be -- and when we get up in the morning we see in newspapers Afghanistan and Pakistan together and only bloodshed. The only thing that we are killing people and we are only for that. That will create our children and their children.

MR. AMR: Thank you, sir. We are running out of time.

MR. ADRANA: Thank you very much.

MR. AMR: We only have a few minutes and I really want to give a few opportunities. I'm going to have to really ask everyone to keep their question to under 1 minute because we have to close in 5 minutes. I need to keep your questions now to about 45 seconds and we're going to have to keep the answers all to about a minute. We really have to close in 5 minutes because of the TV production. So please if you can keep your questions to under a minute and I will be forced to cut you off.

MR. BASHARAF: Good evening. My name is Mustafa Basharaf . I teach anthropology at Qatar University. I actually have a very short question. I enjoyed your comments tremendously. I'd like to know a little bit just the main features in 45 seconds about the nature of the reform and to what extent is it going to serve in the counter-radicalization task.

MR. AMR: Thank you for that model question. I hope all the other questions can be just like that one. Please go ahead. Why don't we go to the back and then this side because it will be easier for the microphone? So if we can stick to that model question format it would be great.

SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible) Professor Ali, you made the point earlier on I think that there quite a tenuous link between the madrassahs and international scale terrorism but a stronger link between sectarian terrorism. Can you say some more about the nature of that link? What is that happens in a madrassah that makes that link possible?

SPEAKER: (inaudible) one of the beauties of and challenges for especially Sunni Islam is that we don't have a single voice of authority that can act as a compass for the entire faith unlike other religions. That's a curse and a pleasure at the same time. In the particular case of madrassahs, we could really use a voice like that to really come through and offer some guidance as to how madrassahs can be a force for

good rather than at the tail end, a force for evil. You mentioned that some institutions especially Islamic institutions could be used to kind of offer that kind of religious leadership. Can you tell me into which institutions you would place most hope for that sort of leadership?

MR. AMR: Thank you. Then there are two questions here and then we'll have to close here. The two ladies.

MS. QUESHI: My name is Esna Queshi . I'm a Georgetown student. I just want to make that comment that terrorists or extremists could emerge from private groupings in a marketplace under a tree, not necessarily in madrassahs. So why -- in your book for example why do you focus only on madrassahs as incubators for terrorists or for extremists?

MR. AMR: Then the last question here? That's it? Then there was a question right here. Please use the microphone and identify yourself for the audience.

SPEAKER: Just a comment, Professor Wirsing. The agricultural college that you mentioned performed wonders in the 1960s and 1970s. Pakistan is still reaping benefits of the development of Basmati rice so that it could withstand all weather conditions. Another strain was Taxmari rice. Really there is a need to investigate why on earth the deterioration started in Pakistan from 1970 onwards. At that time they were in banking and airlines. It's really a tragedy.

MR. AMR: Thank you for all those questions, and I apologize. I'll ask each of the speakers to try and respond in a few minutes and we'll try to close in a few minutes.

DR. ALI: I'll try to be as concise as possible. The green belt question, the reason why they were allowed to continue, the al-Haq regime, basically they were given a waiver. They were still illegal in terms of building on the green belt, but the way in which it would happen, a small mosque could be built. Once you build a mosque, no one is going to

dare to bring that down. Then slowly around that the madrassah would develop and so on. I do feel now that they're there there is no point in trying to destroy them because there are certain things in history which are irrevocable and if you try to do that it's not worth the effort. But certainly in future planning they have to be given due consideration.

With regard to the issue of Afghans, the question about the curriculum, yes, I did look at the curriculum of the madrassahs. They tend to all use there is some version of the Destin Isami which is itself more than a 200 year old curriculum. And unfortunately the curriculum has not been allowed to evolve and develop and allow the students to in fact learn more about it and you would think that is giving Koranic training. It's not just Koranic training. They are also given training in jurisprudence and other aspects of Islamic learning.

SPEAKER: (inaudible)

DR. ALI: Yes, absolutely, but they divide the subjects separately. So the Koran is one subject,

but then they have other subjects. But the problem is that with that they are only equipped to become seminarians. They can only open new madrassahs or they can only go and teach jurisprudence and so on.

SPEAKER: (inaudible)

DR. ALI: I'll give you the example. In Karachi there are some madrassahs which have like Mulana Taki Usmani's madrassah, they have tried to make some changes. There are a number. But if you ask those graduates --

SPEAKER: (inaudible)

DR. ALI: The vocational training aspect, if you look at it, you look at the graduates and you can go and investigate yourself also, you will figure out what are they doing. There are some who are going to in the higher education level they will be able to go and do other things. Often they have to repeat the classes and they have to go back and do that. I am not against that. If that's what people want to do, that's fine. But I am just saying that if you have a child at the age of 6 or 7 who wants to be a doctor

later in life, if you are going to just start them in a certain path you have to be able to provide them some options later on. So like for example for the documentary we interviewed a madrassah graduate who wanted to be a lawyer. After finishing his studies in the madrassah he had to go back and to 5 years of education again before he could even go and apply for law school. So we cannot be in denial about that problem. And in the rural areas it's even more severe, and when I talked to the madrassah establishment they would say, yes, if you want us to do more in education we'll open a separate school. So you have some madrassahs like the one in Multan where they have opened a whole level A level school. It is run by the madrassahs, but they charge a fee for it. It's like a regular school. So they can say it's part of the madrassah, but that's not what I am talking about. That's great they are doing that. I'm talking about the ones which are just focused.

MR. AMR: I apologize. We are going to need to close in a minute. What I would suggest is you

continue that conversation afterwards. Just a few minutes, Saleem, and then we really have to close.

DR. ALI: The Afghan question. I find it easy to make -- the Afghan issue, yes, it's serious. We had a huge refugee problem. But a lot of the madrassahs and sectarian activities in Southern Punjab are not (inaudible) they are Punjabi. The Jasha Mohammad . Some of the military organizations in Southern Punjab were not Afghans. So we can't just blame the Afghans for that aspect. The ones like the Havgani madrassah near Peshawar, yes, those were Afghans and those ones definitely you can, but I don't want to just single out the Afghans on this matter either. They have also brought a lot of positive things to Pakistan in terms of commerce and corporate industry and other things.

With regard to the issue of sectarianism, some of the things that they do is that there are a few doctrines in Islam which are systematically exploited like the issue of shik . It's very easy to make people think that if you shik in Islam that means

ascribing others to go out apart from Allah. It's very easy to make people think that you are doing shik if for example if you go to a shrine and people will say you are doing shik and in Islam according to puritanical Islam if you do shik then you can be killed for doing shik and shik can be killed. So people, the clerics will make these kinds of arguments that these people who go to shrines are doing shik. So in Peshawar last week you had a shrine which was blown up. Why? Because people were made to think that these people who go to shrines are doing shik. Now you can disagree with them. I don't think that going to shrines and doing some of the mumbo-jumbo is right either, but you disagree with them in the marketplace of ideas. You disagree without being disagreeable. That's what is not taught in the madrassahs. How do you deal with disagreement? You don't go and blow up the place. But they exploit these doctrines. They exploit another one, the doctrine of isadad multa basically that says that if someone becomes a Muslim and then reverts to another

faith, you can kill them. There is a lot of Islamic jurisprudence which has gone into that and said, no, that was in a certain context. It's not now that it's going to be applied, but the madrassahs will exploit that. Fitna is another one. They will use it and say they are spreading fitna.

The last one I'm going to try and get at -- which one should I get at? The reform.

SPEAKER: (inaudible)

DR. ALI: Yes, the model question. Yours was about reform. Right? What is being done on the reform end? Unfortunately not much has happened since then on the reform front. That's part of the argument in the book, is that these are the things which need to be done for reform. The government's approach in Pakistan with reform was first let's just register them. And one other thing they did was at the higher education level they established an Institute for Progressive Islam which brought in all kinds of problems and how it's based at the International Islamic University and they trying to bring scholars

like Diagra Madan and Kiren Armstrong , big names, and they give lectures, but I don't think that's really going to solve the problem of curricular reform. They haven't done it.

MR. AMR: Professor Wirsing, you've been left with about 2 minutes before we have to go.

DR. WIRSING: I'm only going to respond to the one comment about the Pakistan Agricultural Research Center. The United States all through these years and to today continues to fund I think \$1 million to \$2 million per year into that establishment. Determining whether the United States or Pakistan should share the greater part of blame for what has happened to it, that would require a lengthy discussion and investigation. I think responsibility would be found on both sides. There are some great flaws in what you might call the educational culture in Pakistan in universities as well as research institutions like this. It's clear to me that the United States has sort of lost enthusiasm and is content with a very detached aid role simply providing

money. What is needed obviously is a long-term commitment and engagement and exchanges of faculty between the two Americans, committing themselves to these institutions and Pakistan having opportunities to study, bring themselves up to date in the United States and funding massive agricultural projects that can serve as models for development for the whole country. They need a big-time and highly imaginative series of projects. You can't choose a better field of endeavor than agriculture in Pakistan. It's just utterly important that that be reformed as much -- I would put more money in the reform of agriculture than I would into madrassahs.

MR. AMR: I'd like to thank the audience here at the Brookings Doha Center for being with us and for asking such interesting questions and for your patience. I'd also like to thank the staff of the Brookings Doha Center which is growing. I think we're a team of six or seven now, so I'd like to thank the staff. I'd like to thank our speakers. And there are

still some refreshments and I hope you'll stay and
enjoy. So thank you very much.

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706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190