ABSTRACT

In the context of the ‘global war on terror’ and related debates about development and the new imperialism, this essay looks at the involvement of religious absolutist militias in humanitarian aid following the Kashmir earthquake in 2005. By analysing how organizations which are considered ‘terrorist’ are simultaneously working with and fighting against US ‘Empire’, the essay considers the form of the Pakistani ‘development’ state, its geostrategic importance and how this relates to a religious absolutist militia infrastructure. The transformation of (often violent) religious right groups since the 1990s into development and welfare agencies is considered within the broader context of new ‘hypergovernance’ processes unleashed within ‘Empire’. Some general comparisons are also made between the processes of juridical hypergovernance that international humanitarian and human rights NGOs initiate in the ‘South’, and those created by violent groups of the religious right. Both reflect contending strategies for the management of populations by bodies having ambitions on a planetary scale.

INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT AND TERRORISM

In the mind of the neoconservative, the problem of ‘global terrorism’ is bound up with the failure of ‘Southern’ economic and political development. This failure relates to the zone of Southern countries that appear to refuse integration into economic ‘globalization’ and do not adopt a neoliberal version of market democracy and attendant state reform that, it is regularly claimed, will propel democratization (Berger, 2006; Roberts et al., 2003). The zone that is of special importance stretches from the Maghreb to beyond South Asia, a belt of disorder across the planet’s midriff that is largely congruent with the imagined caliphate of political Islamists. It is seen as a seething cauldron of violent, usually Islamist, opposition to the US. Pakistan is especially significant here since it was quickly characterized by the Bush administration as a frontline state in the ‘global war on terror’ in a region that was certainly seen as chaotic. Hence, American development

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aid to Pakistan since 2001 has been couched in terms of the resumption of long-term economic assistance because Pakistan’s prosperity and stability are critical to US foreign policy in South Asia (USAID Pakistan, 2003: 2). Development, the ‘war on terror’ and US imperialism are thus entangled in complex ways.

These complexities can have surprising outcomes. One key example, explored below, is the extensive involvement of Al Qaeda associated religious absolutist militia (‘jihadis’, ‘terrorists’) in relief and rehabilitation after the 2005 Kashmir earthquake disaster. At the frontline of US military imperialism, geographically at the sharp edge of its frontier battlespace, there is the apparent paradox of a major ‘Al Qaeda’ terrorist organization working with US and UN humanitarian agencies in Kashmir with the seemingly full backing of a military state that is a key ally in America’s global war on terror. At the same time, erstwhile associates of the same militia are shooting and shelling US (or NATO) soldiers a short distance away in Afghanistan and further away in Iraq. If Pakistan has been charged with maintaining the frontline of the US’s ‘Empire’ and its global war on terror, then in that very frontline, in its numerous cracks and interstices, those that the war on terror has named as its mortal enemies are present, active, seemingly working with ‘Empire’ here, fighting ‘Empire’ there. If this seems to be a small incongruous event in the wider global war on terror, it is by no means exceptional, nor does it simply reflect the contradictions and messiness inherent in regional realpolitik.

Instead the event exemplifies a series of tensions embodied in the Pakistani developmental state that concern its military-rentier form in ‘Empire’, its indefinite territorial boundary (especially in relation to Afghanistan and Kashmir) and its management of a religious absolutist militia swarm that it has largely created and sustained. This religious absolutist militia infrastructure exists even though Pakistan has formally been an ‘anti-terrorist regime’ since 1997, well before 11 September 2001 (Kennedy, 2004: 389). The expansive anti-terrorism legislation introduced during one of the Nawaz Sharif periods extended its reach much further under General Musharaff (ibid.: 398–400). Hence, this is a pre-2001 anti-terrorist state whose anti-terrorism infrastructure has been instrumental for the legitimation of its recent civilian and military governments, even though the state maintains a violent religious absolutist militia complex that is often considered ‘terrorist’.

This essay explores the broader geosocial processes through which an internationally sanctioned terrorist organization was actively promoted and habilitated as a humanitarian and development organization by a military regime that was fighting the war on terror at America’s behest. Through this exploration, several theoretical areas are elaborated. The essay first considers the nature of (some) religious absolutist militias in Pakistan, including their association with Al Qaeda. The existence of a large militia infrastructure in Pakistan raises acute theoretical questions about the nature of the Pakistani state and the form of that developmental state within ‘Empire’. This is
considered in the second part of the essay and is expanded in the conclusion to a discussion about the relation of religious absolutist militias to broader, global transformations in humanitarianism, human rights and development.

The Pakistani state and the religious absolutist militias it sustains can also tell us something about the sharply divergent theories of Empire and the new imperialism. In the current period, it is difficult to tell whether Empire is incompetent, incoherent, seriously overextended and therefore on the verge of economic failure, or whether the seeming inconsistencies and contradictions are being driven by other determinate processes and generative mechanisms which we cannot, at the moment, see clearly (see variously, Arrighi, 2005a, 2005b; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Harvey, 2003; Mann, 2003). If the theories of Empire or the new imperialism are necessarily loose-fitting, they nevertheless attribute coherence to the objects or logic to the processes they describe. Other logics and ‘illogics’, particularly regarding varied and incompatible orders of sovereignty, authority and power as well as the political utility of violence and disorder, substantially complicate matters. Here, a genuine ‘geosociology’ is suggested which does not seek to make normative assumptions about, for example, the idealized nation-state of modern societies, or an idealized globalization as discerned in the west, both of which can then be contrasted with failed states and mutilated modernities in Southern developing regions. From sociological vantage points outside Euro-America other theoretical dimensions can become apparent. Following Sinha (forthcoming), the arguments presented below highlight the manifest problems of nation-centric west-focused approaches to states, societies and globalization.

It is further argued that, at a variety of geographical scales, there are numerous transnational processes of domination, regulation and resistance that are singularly preoccupied with what is called the hypergovernance of populations. Hypergovernance exemplifies how the very near and the very far, the very large and very small become intertwined in transnational relations of power and domination. These disciplinary relations dislodge traditional ideas of sovereignty or sovereign territories of operation. They are not restricted to the nation-state form and are only partially addressed by modes of governmentality that describe the dynamics of power in largely liberal-democratic, nation-focused settings.

The arguments presented below attempt to move beyond conceptions of power that oscillate between Foucault’s ‘governmentality’, biopolitics and ‘sovereignty’ on the one hand, and Gramsci’s ‘hegemony’ and the doublet of consent and coercion on the other. It can also be too readily assumed that our understanding of ideology is largely settled — that we know what ideology is and that it involves the creation of a ‘subject’, its ‘identity’ and perhaps, from there, a symbolic ‘community’ or collective. The theoretical commitments entailed here about the internal furniture of identity and subjecthood can narrow down how we might understand transnational processes of solidarity, association and antagonism, as well as how we might conceive the rapid unravelling, reassembling and reinvention of identities and subjects through
novel translocal associations. Direct coercive violence by transnational state and non-state bodies, ‘consensual’ assent to power (and even violent subjugation), and the quick repackaging of the ‘selves’ of identity can all coalesce within hypergovernance processes. These processes might rely simultaneously on ‘consent’ and ‘coercion’, subjugation and liberty, state and non-state power. Within hypergovernance processes, the forms of ‘sovereignty’ are not necessarily linear and apparent but can represent conflicting and dissimulated regimes of order and restraint, ones conducted through transnational complexes that can attempt to organize states, civil societies and populations in varied and often conflicting orders of regulation and domination. Similarly, the local over-accumulation of governance ambitions can generate disorder as a form of political rule. It can also throw up forms of resistance to ‘Empire’ which are equally preoccupied with the hypergovernance of populations on transnational scales, as the examples of several religious absolutist militia demonstrate.

TRANSNATIONAL JIHAD’S VARIED ORIGINS

The epicentre of the devastating South Asian earthquake on 8 October 2005 was near the town of Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. Muzaffarabad and its environs house key organizational and training centres for the Lashkar-e Toiba (LeT), the military arm of the (former) Markaz-ud Dawa wal-Irshad. As with several Islamist groups fighting in Kashmir, the LeT’s origins lie in the American, Pakistani and Saudi Arabian-backed mujahideen war against the Soviet army which formerly occupied Afghanistan. The LeT was co-founded by Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden’s ideological and political mentor and the founder of the organization for foreign mujahideen that later became Al Qaeda (Abbas, 2005: 210–16; Mir, 2004: 97–98). The LeT has since been openly associated with bin Laden’s alliance and with Al Qaeda. Since the depletion of Al Qaeda’s organizational capacity after 2001, the LeT allegedly co-ordinates the International Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders (Asia Times Online, 12 August 2004; India Today, 18 July 2005). A large proportion of ‘Al Qaeda’ members arrested by Pakistani police and security services were reportedly in LeT members’ houses, including very senior Al Qaeda heads. Independently of Al Qaeda, the LeT has from its inception operated extra-nationally: LeT-trained fighters have been reported in Chechnya, Bosnia and the Middle East (including in significant numbers in Iraq after 2003). Other LeT supporters have been alleged to be active much further afield, including in the US, Canada, Australia (Daily Times, 24 May 2004) and the UK. In this important sense, LeT is not a Kashmiri organization but a translocal religious absolutist militia operating in Kashmir, whose members are largely from Pakistan, but also Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Central Asia and the Middle East. Contrary to the assumption that the LeT or the Harakat-ul Mujahideen (HuM) ‘family’ are
confined to South Asia, their possible involvement in direct operations in Europe, or in operational training which led to the latter, would represent an unprecedented phenomenon which is concealed by the attention given solely to Al Qaeda, its hierarchy and personnel in Pakistan.¹

Hence, one part of the answer to the question ‘what is Al Qaeda?’ in South Asia is about the nature of the LeT and HuM family of organizations and their various offshoots (Abou Zahab and Roy, 2004). If there is now an Al Qaeda hierarchy in South Asia, the higher command of the LeT and HuM family of organizations overlaps it. If there is now a South Asian training ‘core’ to Al Qaeda, it is significantly comprised of a South Asian militia swarm that predates Al Qaeda. Its histories, significance, dynamism and forms of organization are hidden in the general designation ‘Al Qaeda’ or elided in approaches that characterize Al Qaeda as a *sui generis* phenomenon or which speak of a generic ‘terrorism’ or a ‘global terrorist network’, however much ‘franchised’.² Within a broader political economy of transnational organization, these transnational complexes exhibit characteristics that are formal and informal, highly rule-based and personal, enduring and ephemeral, explicit and covert, hierarchical-centralized and horizontal-cellular, manifest and interstitial, unitary and polycephalous.

The LeT is the most important and best trained armed organization that has been fighting in Kashmir against Indian military forces. It pioneered *fi-dayeen* operations (human bomb attacks) in Kashmir, and has also instigated systematic massacres of civilians and other spectacular attacks within India, such as on the Red Fort in Delhi in 2000 (Rana, 2005: 330). It worked closely with the Pakistani army in its 1999 incursion, under Musharaff’s enthusiastic approval (Abbas, 2005: 171–3), across the line of control in Kargil, a venture that led to a brief skirmish and a dangerous nuclear brinkmanship in South Asia. From the late 1980s (when a major Kashmir insurgency began) but especially after 1992, the LeT and various other major jihadi organizations accelerated their operations in Kashmir. This was a result of what we might call, unfaithfully following David Harvey, a ‘spatial fix’ of a geomilitary, non-economic kind initiated by the Pakistani military and the Inter Services

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¹. Attacks and alleged plots in the UK have allegedly implicated factions of two militia combines: the LeT and groups that emerged from the ‘Harakat-ul Mujahideen family’. The South Asian militias provided general and specific operational training for an array of groups from elsewhere and so were essentially a militia, munitions and explosives training programme for foreign mujahideen who went away to conduct their own independent operations elsewhere. Such operations need not involve the ‘trainers’ in a command hierarchy but can involve them directly in the planning of operations, including ones that might be claimed by the Al Qaeda hierarchy if they were ‘successful’.

². The ‘network’ description is underdetermined by empirical examples, and can lead to a sociological overstatement about terrorist networks that risks collusion with a different political agenda for which the idea of concealed but powerful terrorist networks has utility.
Intelligence Directorate (ISI) that it commands. Here, *mujahideen* groups from Afghanistan were systematically redeployed to Kashmir, a highly consequential rearrangement of ‘jihadi corridors’.

The LeT’s theological ideology originates in a sect from the Ahl-e Hadith tradition, one of the few Wahabbi-oriented movements in South Asia. Consequently, the LeT, a Pakistani militia, has received official and private support from Saudi Arabia. The LeT’s political ideology far surpasses Kashmiri national independence. Its aims, unlike those of most Kashmiri militant groups, are intertwined with the idea of a phantasmatic global jihad that would lead to a planetary shari’a system, one which is to be initiated by bringing some (‘Muslim’) parts and then all India under religious absolutist rule (Abbas, 2005: 214; Sikand, 2001). This is an instance of groups molecular in scale not only having planetary ambitions on an entirely different scale, but undertaking actions that were transnational in their effects and consequences. This leads to a phenomenon of global and imperial institutions (such as the UN and American state respectively) focusing geomilitary, financial and legal attention on molecular groups irrespective of territorial boundaries or legal sovereignty, a geosociological ‘Goliath and David’ syndrome of intensified hyper-engagement by global institutions with diminutive groups.

The LeT was designated as a terrorist, proscribed or sanctioned organization by the UK (March 2001), US (December 2001), European Union (May 2002), India (2004) and the United Nations (May 2005). It was initially banned by Pervez Musharaff in January 2002. Just before the ban, the LeT renamed itself as the Jamaat-ud Dawa (JuD). While most other major religious absolutist militia groups remain on the Pakistan government’s banned list, the JuD is on a ‘watchlist’ and free to operate. The JuD claimed to have shifted its main headquarters from Muridke near Lahore (where it ran a huge training and educational complex) to Muzaffarabad, the main base of its Kashmir armed operations. Several other banned groups (such as the Jaish-e Mohammed), also changed their names and followed the same strategy. The JuD allegedly went through a very serious factional split (*Daily Times*, 18 July 2004, but see Raman, 2004). The JuD leader continues to make fiery speeches against Musharaff, the US and the ‘puppet’ role of the military government, even blaming the Kashmir earthquake (which affected key jihadi territory) on the regime because of its failure to implement Islamic law. Yet the JuD seemingly retains a favoured status with the military or sections of it. The reasons for this, as well as Musharaff’s alleged duplicity, and the meanings of the splits within the militias become significant sociologically.

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3. On the ISI’s role with jihadi groups, see Abbas (2005); Abou Zahab and Roy (2004); Hussain (2005).
EARTHQUAKES AND HUMANITARIAN SOLDIERS

During the earthquake, the LeT/JuD suffered losses ranging from a reported seventy to possibly more than a hundred fighters (Agency France Presse, 11 October 2005; Hindustan Times, 12 October 2005); its properties were damaged and the roof of one of its offices in Muzaffarabad collapsed killing a dozen members. Almost immediately after the earthquake, the JuD announced that it was initiating relief operations in several heavily affected areas, including Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Rawlakot, Abbotabad and Balakot. The JuD claimed it had organised 2,500 volunteers and provided 1,500 tents, one for each family ‘so the women can hide themselves’ (Agency France Press, 12 October 2005). The JuD was frequently reported as the first external agency to reach victims and provide assistance and relief, including establishing field hospitals, delivering supplies and burying the dead. This was most obviously contrasted with the tardy Pakistani military response. The actions of the JuD and other jihadi groups thus highlighted the incompetence of the Musharaff regime.

The JuD already ran a network of educational and welfare services in Pakistan (including through its Idara Khidmat-e Khalq welfare wing) and had previously been involved on a smaller scale (though an insignificant one in comparison with secular NGOs) in disaster relief activities and the supply of relief aid and materials, including during the 2004 Asian tsunami. However, in both Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and in North West Frontier Province, ‘jihadi training camps and infrastructure had remained intact’ (ICG, 2006a: 11). Hence, communications networks, transport and medical facilities that had previously been central to jihadi activities could be redeployed. Within about a week of the Kashmir earthquake, the JuD said that it had raised some US$ 840,000 for aid and relief. It also claimed all its funds had come from private contributions (The Guardian, 18 October 2003).4 A couple of weeks after the earthquake, the JuD had bought a large piece of land in Rawalpindi for the care and education of children orphaned during the quake (Gulf Times, 21 October 2005). Though the LeT had been ‘banned’ and the JuD was on a ‘watchlist’, Musharaff praised the JuD for doing ‘a good job’, reflecting an ambidextrous discourse of both repression and support for religious absolutist militia groups (Financial Times, 26 October 2005).

The JuD worked with a remarkably wide range of agencies, from the Pakistani army to UNHCR, UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and Oxfam, to the UK-based Sikh organization, Khalsa Aid and USAID (Bamforth

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4. Alarmist reports alleged that the 2006 UK–US ‘airline plot’ was funded from money raised for Kashmir earthquake relief. The uncovering of the alleged plot related to following the trail of a large transfer of money from the UK to the JuD, allegations that both the Pakistan government and the JuD denied (The Hindu, 16 August 2006; Daily Times, 16 August 2006; Washington Post, 15 August 2006).
and Qureshi, 2007; Frontier Star, 27 October 2005; ICG, 2006a; Qureshi 2006). Hence, the JuD not only became enmeshed in the networks, processes and procedures of transnational government and non-governmental organizations; it also became a key node in local relief operations. The UN was working closely with an organization that is on its list of sanctioned entities, while US and UK agencies collaborated with an organization that had been characterized as terrorist and banned. Oxfam provided ‘various services such as water sanitation’ for the JuD and the International Organization for Migration provided other assistance (Bamforth and Qureshi, 2007: 12). USAID relief was also distributed by the JuD (Qureshi, 2006). UN agencies provided tents, camp management training, teachers’ salaries and schools support, including UNICEF funding for new JuD primary schools in which youngsters were taught songs about being soldiers of Islam who should destroy those who refuse to convert (File on 4: Pakistan, BBC Radio 4, 3 October 2006). Importantly, the majority of schools in Muzarrabbad and Bagh were destroyed in the earthquake and so education, a key site of the global religious right’s development activity, became a major focus for the JuD. Gender segregation, enforced prayers and compulsory religious education was reported in JuD camps at Mansehra (ICG, 2006a: 8). The JuD registered some 2,000 children without parents or fathers, of whom about 1,600 were to be sent to a new JuD complex in Mansehra town. Related allegations included indoctrination about jihad to orphaned children and the taking without consent of children whose parents were alive (File on 4: Pakistan, BBC Radio 4, 3 October 2006). JuD workers in Balakot also supported the demands of religious clerics that all women international aid workers should be expelled from quake-affected areas in North West Frontier Province, since they were ‘improperly’ dressed, mixed with men and consumed alcohol (Reuters Alert-Net, 3 August 2006) and there were other allegations of ‘friction’ between international aid agencies and jihadi groups, or harassment of the former by the latter (Daily Times, 21 December 2005). To be sure, JuD involvement in the relief efforts was immediately reported in the national and international press.

HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT’S ‘IDEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS’

In this narrative so far, one might be forgiven for thinking that LeT militants and the US army were co-operating towards the same goal of disaster relief in Kashmir while at the same time, in Afghanistan and Iraq, US soldiers and LeT associates were fighting each other on opposing sides of an open-ended global transcendental cause. However, the uninformed complicity by international aid agencies and NGOs was followed by a quick realization of the nature of the JuD and a disavowal of it. The boundaries of the global war on terror might have been temporarily disturbed, but were quickly re-established once the nature of the JuD and its identity with the LeT became obvious. In
April 2006, the US State Department placed the JuD and its welfare wing, operating as aliases of the Lashkar-e Toiba, on its list of specially designated global terrorist organizations.

The question remains — as implied in an important report from the International Crisis Group (2006a) — why did the JuD’s relief efforts receive such positive media coverage in Pakistan (and in a different way internationally) in comparison with the much greater work of secular Pakistani NGOs, which was sidelined and ignored? Much of the reporting of the JuD followed a very familiar pattern: recognition that it was the first agency on the disaster scene and that it worked selflessly to provide aid and assistance in dire and tragic circumstances, its presence and efforts universally applauded by victims, even by those who opposed its ideology; and registration of surprise and (in some of the international media) alarm at the JuD’s involvement.

Each of these narrative dimensions has accompanied similar efforts by Hindu Right and Christian Right transnational groups, though it has rarely prevented their further involvement and embedding within transnational NGO processes. It is not simply that humanitarian aid or development are used opportunistically by such groups to save souls for Christ or ‘develop’ adivasis into Hindutva warriors (Awaaz – South Asia Watch, 2004). Instead, the latter are consequences of how the fields of humanitarianism and development already carry within them the potentials for ideological reinvention and subjugation — a process of hypergovernance by transnational bodies acting on local scales. The ‘subject’ of humanitarian aid and development has become an unlikely but privileged locus of ideological interpellation, a key site of contending ideological struggles, as seen repeatedly in the aftermath of the 2004 Asian tsunami. Hence, both the JuD and USAID saw the survivors of the earthquake as carrying a capacity for ideological disposition that had to be cultivated in a particular direction. The JuD undertook education of survivors in Wahabbi and jihadi ideologies, whereas USAID tried to create pro-American, friendly Muslims (USAID, 2006: 15). Furthermore, humanitarianism is now largely military humanitarianism (for example, see Bartholomew, 2006; Chandler, 2006). From the vantage point of many Southern victims, humanitarian aid and development is integrally associated with armed groups — western soldiers. In this sense, the ‘transformation’ of a religious absolutist militia into a humanitarian NGO is not unusual, but a logical outcome of the global militarization of humanitarianism.

THE ‘MILITARY-RENTIER’ STATE

The JuD could only have operated with the consent and co-operation of the Pakistani military state and its legitimation as a humanitarian agency was facilitated by the military. Hence, the processes whereby secular Pakistani humanitarian and civilian bodies were optically marginalized in the relief efforts were the same ones that projected as saviours of the nation
two seemingly divergent but long-linked institutions — the military state and the militia infrastructure. While in the first couple of days, the army had little control over which groups provided aid, the assistance given to the JuD once the army (and, significantly, not the civilian Earthquake Relief and Rehabilitation Authority) took charge is important.

Pakistan’s military state has been an enduring necessity both for the military class and periodically for US imperialism. Just as important is its fully-fledged, dense and persistent legitimating ideology of ‘guided democracy’ and the national interest. ‘Guided democracy’ has the status of a founding myth. The ideological basis for this kind of militarism has a substantial philosophical pedigree (Torres, 1963) that controverts understandings of military regimes as essentially pragmatic in orientation. Hence, no amount of democracy, devolution and good governance talk can substitute the military state’s strategic utility nor challenge its thorough embedment in Pakistani society.

The military class and the military state in Pakistan have coalesced in a theoretically definitive way such that the political economy of the military class and the geopolitical, translocal importance of the military state become critical and dynamic factors in reproducing the form of the state. The Pakistani state could be considered not a failed state but a ‘military-rentier’ state. This represents neither a classically rentier state, based on the supply of natural resources such as oil from which external rent is derived (Beblawi and Luciani, 1987), nor a ‘praetorian’ or ‘garrison’ state besieged by neighbouring enemies, although it demonstrates both these elements (see Gardezi and Rashid, 1983; Haleem, 2003; Jalal, 1995; Talbot, 1999). Its ‘praetorian’ dimension (the term being used by Samuel Huntington in the late 1960s) is most clearly demonstrated during periods of democracy, which the commander corps can ‘constitutionally’ dissolve at will, and ‘guided democracy’, as in the Ayub Khan and Musharaff dictatorships.

Even recent ‘good governance’ and ‘devolution’ initiatives represent a fiercely mutilated democracy under military ‘guidance’ that has developed under strictures of international development. Hence, while devolution proposals were announced before September 2001, they became integrated into international demands for reform (on devolution, see Talbot, 2002; Zaidi, 2005). As noted, Pakistan has also been an ‘anti-terrorist regime’ since the 1990s (Kennedy, 2004), and so its integration into the global war on terror required streamlining an existing and extraordinarily expansive legal framework and apparatus of civilian and military anti-terrorist courts.

The military state’s rentier form also has external and internal dimensions. Externally, the military class supplies geostrategically important military resources in which geographical location is the basis for deriving rent in the form of military and economic aid, loans and loan guarantees (a global ‘Keynesian’ buffer that sustains the military class ‘in full employment’). Internally, the military classes’ heavily protected and unaccountable business and ‘feudal’ landed interests, as well as the favourable conditions the state
sustains on behalf of that class, are largely based on the selective institutionalization of rent-seeking. Both transnational and national dynamics are essential for the reproduction of the military class. Conversely, development aid and the military classes’ business income largely bypass public services, education, health or poverty alleviation.

As with the classic rentier state, the Pakistani military class remains unaccountable to a population that pays very little tax, can claim no democratic purchase upon the military state nor assume public services as of right, not least because of a concomitant collapse of modern mass education, appalling levels of literacy and enduring mass poverty. The military class reproduces itself through external aid and so-called rent-seeking, exports-based revenues and internal accumulation, which partly explains increased GDP during dictatorships in comparison with democratic periods (Faruqui and Schofield, 2002). The military has such a monumental business sector that Ayesha Siddiq (2007) has used the term ‘Milbus’ to describe the organic association between military and business interests in the country. This sector is worth about US$ 10 bn and is dominated by five virtually unaccountable conglomerates that have very wide business interests and investments, both agricultural and industrial (Siddiqa, 2007). The military allows itself automatic retiree land entitlement, reinforcing a modern feudal arrangement. It has its own (exclusive) educational institutions and colleges, and key institutions for military acculturation and social advancement, dominated by but sometimes crossing regional-ethnic, especially Punjabi, affiliations (Siddiq, 2007; Siddiq-Agha, 2001, 2002). However, the Pakistani economy remains (industrially and agriculturally) undiversified, virtually untaxed, heavily dominated by the informal economy, geared to huge external debt servicing coupled with a large domestic debt, and poor external infrastructural or industrial investment (even including Japanese, Chinese and EU investment).

This economic situation means that the Pakistani state’s collapse is regularly predicted. Indeed, the social, demographic and economic pressures facing the military seem very severe today and its room for manoeuvre seems limited. There seems little more that can be cut in terms of non-military public spending. While some sectors of the economy are booming, the agricultural and industrial base, whose exports deliver income to the military class, faces much harder external competition from Asian neighbours. Expanding through a war economy may mean sanctions on the international military aid that partly sustains the military class. There is little prospect of IT or other service sector growth because of factors related to poor education and literacy (Faruqui and Schofield, 2002). However, the solutions to Pakistan’s economic development, as defined by USAID, should also come as a surprise: increased access to microcredit and microfinance services and increased market-based opportunities for rural populations (USAID Pakistan, 2003), both standard post-neoliberal panaceas for Southern development. Conversely, identifying what should matter — the reduction of military expenditure so as to invest in health, education and rural anti-poverty programmes (Siddiq-Agha, 2002)
— becomes virtually treasonous. Hence, there is little in terms of the accountability of the military state with regard to severe and intensifying rural poverty and nothing in terms of land reform. In other words, little that challenges the rentier form of the military state but much to sustain and deepen that form.

Despite these indicators of impending state failure or collapse, the military-rentier state continues to survive in and through a history of individually short military regimes and civilian governments. The conditions of possibility for this state form include historical factors, such as the local colonial state in the subcontinental regions that became Pakistan (Talbot, 1999), and the modern already-transnational state constituted soon after Independence. This change in perspective does not underestimate the power of the nation-state, but moves away from seeing relations between some post-war post-colonial states and ‘Empire’ as simply redactable to foreign policy, the international state system or wavering American interests in South Asia since the mid-1950s. Instead, as Sinha (forthcoming) argues, transnational geopolitical processes were imbricated from the beginning in the new (post-colonial) state in which the idea of an independent sovereign nation-state bound to its civil society was always a creative fiction of sorts. Pakistan had a state that was from its inception enmeshed in geosociological formations that did not simply sustain it from collapse but constituted its very being. A new theoretical vocabulary is required that would reflect the ways in which fully global economic processes, dense transnational complexes of certain states and civil societies, certain hegemonic political and geomilitary relations, local and transnational class and social forces, the historical state bureaucracy, the shadow state complex, the secret state and private militias (all of which have transnational dimensions) are factors in the constitution of this transnational state form. This opens other dimensions of analysis at different scales of sovereignty and hegemony which can allow unexpected geosociological features to emerge.

For example, both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have usually been ‘client-states’ of the US. However, foregrounding only the dyadic US–client relation, as critical as this is, can subsume other dimensions. The post-Zia-ul Haq association of Pakistan with Saudi Arabia might be considered as an enduring geosociological relation between two rentier states and two (largely or significantly) rentier economies. This type of association is an under-theorized feature of many transnational rentier states. One political effect of this relation was the importance given to the Rabita al-Alam al-Islami, a global organization devoted to financing the spread of Wahabbi ideology. The Rabita had an important satellite in Pakistan, initiated by Zia-ul Haq, that facilitated the promotion within Pakistan of Wahabbism, a foreign state’s political ideology.

At one level, this is simply state propaganda, the ordinary business of states that wish to promote their ‘cultures’ and symbols globally — the Lexus against the olive tree or the unimposing idea of ‘McWorld’ against ‘Jihad’. However, the political economy of state propaganda could be
associated with competing attempts to create dominant global subjects as part of new hypergovernance processes. From this perspective, the transnational operationalization of ‘rent’ can form the basis for new forms of population governance, in this case within one state territory by another state through a transaction that benefits the military class. Here the human capacity is not simply the capacity to sell labour power, nor is it restricted to migrant labour and its remittances, but embodies a capacity for ideological disposition and reinvention. Economic loans, aid and substantial migrant worker annual remittances from Saudi Arabia become linked with allowing Saudi Arabia, a foreign state, to indoctrinate Pakistan’s citizenry with a heterodox and largely alien ideology that has no historical basis in the nation and may indeed be inimical to the people’s interests. This is not a ‘long-distance nationalism’ of the diaspora, but something like its converse, an association between a nation-state and an arbitrary population of another nation-state. The scale of the polity here is not imperial in the way the latter is usually understood, but neither is a lesser, state-centric scale of analysis convincing.

These emergent transnational properties that associate foreign states and home populations in ‘Empire’ are not easily captured by logics of accumulation or territory because they are not about accumulation (extended or by dispossession) or traditionally conceived Westphalian territory, but relate to the hypergovernance of global populations that are conceived as imperfect in some way. If neoliberals (and neoconservatives) believe that people embody something called human, social or cultural ‘capital’, so can the Saudi state. Hence, the Pakistani state is obliged to manage the financial and ideological interests that Saudi Arabia (and several other Gulf states) have in some of the religious absolutist militia operating in South Asia, especially Wahabbi groups such as the LeT/JuD. Here is one reason why the JuD (and its linked organizations) remain key instruments of the military state’s regional policy, even though their political ideology is close to the founding ideology of another state.

**THE RELIGIOUS MILITIA AND THE STATE**

Approaches to the political economy of terrorism have generally tended to focus on transnational financial and charitable networks (Burr and Collins, 2006; Napoleoni, 2004), rationalist cost–benefit analyses, or positivist and game-theoretic approaches (Rosendorff and Sandler, 2005). However, a broader transnational political economy of the Pakistani ‘developmental’ state’s relations with religious absolutist militia, as well as a penetrating political economy of new forms of transnational political violence and terrorism, would considerably facilitate analysis. Virtually all the key documented aspects of the economic base for religious absolutist militias show an intrinsic transnationalism of a complex kind: private foreign donors, hawala-based transfers, inter-state financing, black and shadow economic exchanges,
diaspora funds, the South Asian drugs and arms trade, enmeshment in international aid economies, illicit and other trade (smuggling), rent (territory, transport and roads) and service sector financing based on cross-border transactions (Rashid, 2002). These areas highlight other sociological dimensions that could be significant: how religious militias have the remarkable capacity to ‘integrate’ widely differing local and transnational, formal and informal economic sectors — religious, drug, arms, welfare, educational and charitable; the way that landed-feudal arrangements which formerly provided employment opportunities for some in the form of a private militia ‘service sector’ became regionally transformed into transnational economic enclaves once the state took over or allowed this ‘employment’ sector to proliferate in the decade after 1979; the economic dimensions of the religious militia in the viable gender-based livelihood paths generated; and how militia members (including important peripatetic and mercenary components) sustained themselves and their dependants.

Since 1979, the Pakistani military-rentier state has developed a mobile parastatal militia space as an integral feature of its domestic and foreign policy infrastructure such that it can be seen to constitute relatively enduring features of the state form itself. Because of its Afghanistan and Kashmir strategies, which can be seen to be a kind of ‘territorial dissembling’, Pakistan has to actively manage the religious militias it has created. Notwithstanding Indian government dissimulation or the war-on-terror white and grey propaganda emanating from America and elsewhere, the military state and ISI are the sources for a staggering number of religious absolutist militia while remaining keenly active allies that co-operate with America in the war on terror. Here, it is significant that there is a spatial convergence between the military state’s regional ambitions and those of Islamist militias: both focus heavily on Afghanistan and Indian-controlled Kashmir as their territories of operation, and both consider those two territories to be of prime geostrategic significance for their otherwise divergent goals. In these dense ties between military and militia (Ziring, 2003: 264), there is much smoke and there are many mirrors. Much about the state’s and the secret state’s relationships and everyday dealings with religious absolutist militias and their leaders, and with religious political parties and movements, seems mysterious and inexplicable in the light of the state’s explicit policy. However, the state had to align with the global war on terror while retaining intact its Kashmir policy, the latter based on the funding, training and promotion of militias. Similarly, the Pakistani military made itself indispensable to America’s global war on terror while maintaining militias, several of which were implicated in terrorism. Hence, these are only mysteries if we assume that the existence and clout of the secret state and the habitual divergence between the state’s stated intentions and its motives are anomalous features of the modern state rather than aspects of its normal, universal functioning form.

The association between the military state and the militia swarm has proved repeatedly necessary to counter key internal threats to the military class and
its camouflaging ideologies of guided democracy and national development. These threats come from a genuinely informed democracy and mass movements for social and economic justice, but also extreme centrifugal forces related to regional and ethnic subnationalisms. Hence, the need to counter regional and sectarian ethnic movements and rebellions (in Balochistan’s virtual civil war, Sindh and in the federally administered tribal areas) that threaten the military class, ethnic Punjabi or landholder domination. The expansion by the state of political Islamist and militia groups within Pakistan is one possible counter to both regional and democratic forces. This demonstrates certain elements of ‘the shadow state’ thesis in that the fostering of conflicts within the nation and within the state itself is a key technique of rule (Reno, 2000: 49). This strategy was certainly used by Zia-ul Haq (in which violent Islamist groups were unleashed against the left, democrats and regional autonomists).5

The military state–militia nexus can have significant consequences for the state itself, or key sections of it. The condensation of features arising from outside the state has an impact internally within the state or on rival sections within it, not least because rule in the military state is based on the strategic cultivation of internal rivalries that deflect from the illegitimacy of personal rule. The multiple and simultaneous management of the militias and their containment, represents a state form wherein the relation between the president, the military state and the religious militias is not based on a correspondence of institutions, dispositions or interests. It instead represents an association that is typically unstable with regard to any one militia family but which has been durable up to now with respect to the militia infrastructure as a whole.

The faction-proliferating nature of the militias is also a central dynamic in how they (or their splinters) have become linked to wider operational ambitions about global jihad. As seen with the LeT/JuD earlier, the militias are managed through independent or engineered splits and mergers, and this can involve rehabilitation, transformation and a diversification of territorial battle spaces (which are alleged to include spawning factional and sectarian battles within Pakistan’s own cities). It also includes periodic purging or putting out to pasture sections of the military class who become ideological (rather than pragmatic) supporters of the Islamists and religious militias. However, if generating militia splits is easier, then the militia management process is a fractionating one whose outcomes are not at all guaranteed. The cycles are significant, since the militias have to be strengthened and consolidated (independently by Islamists because of political ideology and power, and by the military as a force in Kashmir) but also repeatedly fractionated

5. The strategy of using Islamism against ethnic nationalism can become deflected; for example, several observers have noted how political Islam has become a conductor for the expression of Pathan ethnic nationalism, as in the MMA regional assembly election victories in 2002 in North West Frontier Province and in parts of Balochistan.
and divided. Here, militia or political Islamist so-called ‘blowback’ is not a surprising occurrence. It is a sociological consequence of the dispersal of the legitimate means of violence beyond the state by the state, an outcome of the attempt by the military state to use disorganized violence as a structure of governance. In other words, the boundaries of what counts as state-sanctioned violence are not easily decidable or decipherable.

In the regime imposed by the military we glimpse how, in their joint destruction of other social solidarities, religious absolutism provides a dominant field for political mobilization, even though it represents only a minority view within Pakistan and has required the secular military state as its condition of legitimacy. In Pakistan, the religious vote is a small one which historically (even under circumstances extremely favourable to the religious right) has ranged from over 8 to over 11 per cent of the restricted vote. This may translate into a proportionally large share of seats in the national assembly for the MMA, but still represents a small, currently regionally circumscribed section of the Pakistani electorate. However, the association between the state and the religious right is an historic one that can be thought of as an organic association between the post-Zia-ul Haq military and the religious right. This association is ‘organic’ in so far as certain key social solidarities that become threats to the military class, sections of landowner classes and political Islamists have been progressively and repeatedly destroyed. While there is certainly a history of strong military repression of Islamists, this pales in comparison with the ferocity of repression of regional subnationalism, rural and urban class movements, and movements for accountability and popular democracy. Yet it remains one of the paradoxes of the military class that the expenditure it demands does not increase national protection but is at the expense of Pakistan’s national security (Siddiqa-Agha, 2002), an example of how social order conceived in military terms creates regional disorder.

CONCLUSION: HYPERGOVERNANCE AND ATAVISTIC SOLIDARITIES

The reinvention of the LeT/JuD into a humanitarian body is intrinsically part of the militia management process and is a consequence of the military-rentier form described. The JuD is now rooted in spaces established by transnational humanitarian and NGO agencies. By no means uniquely, the JuD is embedded within and constitutively assists in reproducing a transnational complex of associations such that its removal from one relation would generate new ones, reflecting both the polycephalous and interstitial nature of such complexes. It will not be surprising to find the JuD (or a new, better incarnation) or a group from the HuM family working with international secular NGOs and institutions in future humanitarian and development work while their associates continue to engage in militia violence against civilians.

On a broader scale the example of the LeT/JuD and its relation to the military state exemplifies how novel processes and structures of
population hypergovernance have emerged at diverse geographical and institutional scales. Hypergovernance under ‘Empire’ opens up a vast array of possibilities for transnational intervention in the South. We see new alliances and trends: of militarism and humanitarianism, of religious absolutism with development, of social authoritarianism with democracy, of good governance with praetorianism, of strong civil societies reduced to NGOs under a military dictatorship. Here also, abstract solidarities engendered by modernity — such as citizens, civilians, the people, workers, democrats — become destroyed, displaced or transformed. Forms of governance that do not conflict with atavistic solidarities based on religious, communal or national affiliations are combined with them in transformative ways — hence, religious absolutist humanitarianism or military democracy.

In their broadest sense, these processes are about population governance through non-contiguous, contending forms of transnational ‘sovereignty’ and new planetary imaginations of social order. Whereas the nation-state was formerly imagined to manage its individual citizens as the collective ‘people’ or citizenry, there are other logics focused at national, sub-national and transnational levels. These do not follow nation-bound or linear paths of sovereignty or hegemony, nor are they simply about the control of territorial space or the accumulation of capital. They are concerned with the political constitution of subjects and groups in planetary space in accordance with particular visions of human nature, virtues and conflict, historical-mythic time and planetary law.

Some of the driving global ideologies today compress the human condition into narrow tunnels of existence based on ‘authentic culture’, planetary law or consumption. Such ideas can co-exist with conceptions of personal virtue, ‘the character of character’ which is as much a part of neoconservative and Christian Right theology as it is of political Islamism. Hence, when George W. Bush speaks of freedom and liberty, this is intended to appeal not simply to economic neoliberal or traditionally liberal sensibilities, but to Christian ones in which ‘freedom’ is the freedom to worship Jesus and ‘liberty’ is exactly equivalent to the state of subsumption under the Christian dispensation (Hedges, 2007). These are fantasies of global hypergovernance that nevertheless have tangible effects, including resistance that takes the form of other omnipotent fantasies of virtuous violence. These outcomes of geosociological transformations within ‘the new imperialism’ challenge the ways in which civil society, culture, community and social order have been understood.

Hypergovernance processes are equally manifest in the development reforms imposed on Pakistan after 2001 that were about manufacturing a ‘civil society’. As a result of pressure from the US and international financial institutions, a new language of ‘civil society’, ‘good governance’, limited democracy and some elements of press and media liberalization emerged. These reforms were also parcelled as conditions of development and military aid. USAID’s (2006) interim strategic plan for Pakistan’s post-September
2001 development includes a vast range of indicators related to governance, democracy, devolution, greater civic participation, a free media, improved rural health, greater literacy and better education, the latter especially focused on reforming militant deeni madaris. This last example shows the hypergovernance by one far away nation-state over the children of another state so that they do not grow up inclined to seek its destruction. Comparing this with, for example, Macaulay’s famous ‘Minute on Education’ in colonial India in 1835, shows its distance both from formal colonial rule and post-colonial independent nation-bound sovereignty: neither a formal colonizing imperialism nor an unengaged informal imperialism.

While ‘development’ has never been simply economic, development discourse has expanded into remarkably diverse areas, from civil society, culture, gender and the family, education and welfare to governance, state- and nation-building. These areas can be sites for new hypergovernance processes. The novel reification of civil society in development thinking must necessarily ignore existing forms of sociality, social solidarity and affiliation unless these are transformed, reified, abstracted into the corporate or narrowly cultural forms of civil society as substituted by NGOs (DeMars, 2005; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Kamat, 2003).

These areas are directly relevant to how religious right groups have reorganized over the last decade or so. It is frequently observed that religious right groups undertake welfare and educational activities that the Southern state does not have the authority or competence to provide to its citizens. It is also assumed that religious right intervention in these areas is simply instrumental and strategic. However, religious right groups have comprehensive and totalizing visions for the civil society they wish to genuinely remake in their own image. Typically, this is their foundational aim. Hence, the meanings of civil society promoted by transnational (imperial) bodies or by secular NGOs are inevitably contested by religious right claims to genuine social authenticity. The point here is not that these secular and religious tendencies might have radically opposed visions about civil society. The pertinent issue is that they share a key paradigm in which transforming the entire civil society of a nation in accordance with externally-prescribed blueprints is a desirable and feasible project to undertake, that wholesale social transformation based on the substitution of entire peoples and cultures by small organizations beholden to planetary political ideologies is an entirely legitimate aim. Hence, even though secular and religious right projects have very different goals, their legitimacy becomes shared and their organizational forms may even merge in complex ways. Similarly, if Southern civil society is considered appropriate for transformation by transnational NGOs, religious absolutist groups also seek to occupy these spaces of social reinvention by changing themselves into voluntary sector groups concerned with social development. These are consequences of the enormous range of possibilities for transnational governance that have emerged under ‘Empire’ and which have allowed secular and religious right groups to proliferate their initiatives (Kamat, 2003).
is equally striking that both human rights organizations and religious absolutist groups want to bring Southern populations under a planetary law. In this sense, all planetary subjects are narrowly legal subjects, whether of international humanitarian and human rights law, or of shari’a or dharma — a form of planetary thinking about populations that is narrowly juridical in form.

Since the early 1990s, transnational religious right NGOs have concentrated densely on natural disasters as sites for interested activity leading to deep societal embedding, resulting in territorial and ideological conflict (and sometimes co-operation) with secular NGOs. As alternative visions of religious right development continue to sharply contest secular NGO paradigms, these conflicts will intensify. Disaster relief, education, religion and the ‘development’ of ideological populations have become privileged modes of intervention. They reflect a virtually universal religious right methodology of social governance — what others might see as the systematic colonization and desecularization of independent civil society (Awaaz – South Asia Watch, 2004; ICG, 2006b). This is inevitably undertaken in the name of a common humanity but invariably results in the creation of violent sectarian and religious fissures within civil society. This destruction of previous affiliations and solidarities in civil societies is often deliberate. On local scales we see repeatedly how the management of a new legal, social order is precisely intended to generate disorder — whether this is anti-Muslim, anti-Christian violence by Hindu Right NGOs in India, or anti-Barelwi, anti-Shia and anti-Hindu violence by the LeT/JuD and its associates. Religious law, intended to bring order, instead tears apart existing sociality, leaving it fragmented into antagonistic sectarian enclaves.

Finally, hypergovernance processes imply that, for some regions, the ‘normal’ form of governance will not be (and has not been) the nation-state form but hybrid forms, including regional, religious and ethnic ‘tribelets’ and cantons subject to transnational accommodations with regional and global powers. These may appear to be disordered forms of governance, but they also signify the geopolitical utility of disorder. Indeed, each US military intervention appears to lead to one of two dialectical possibilities: a secular military state that is neither fully totalitarian nor near-democratic but which can violently suppress organized political religiosity; and sectarian religious and ethnic states, statelets and ‘tribelets’ which are deliberately empowered (as in Iraq and to a great extent in Afghanistan) as repressively atavistic political forms. In neither case is genuine popular democracy or social and economic equality within ‘Empire’s field of thinkability. A reductive ‘cultural knowledge’ is a key aspect of many military imperial processes, ones that magnify and institutionalize, for example, the patriarchal loya jirga in Afghanistan, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq or Kurdish and Muslim Brotherhood-based Sunni ‘tribelets’. In the absence of other social forces and solidarities, and where civil society is propagated in an arid NGO form, an accommodation between US imperialism and a string of
political Islamist states appears to be a plausible outcome in the zone of failed development.

REFERENCES


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