Research Report

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Title of Research: The Changing Perception of Islam and Jihad in Turkey and Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis

Purpose of Research: （400 words）

With regard to the perception and shaping of societal and political orientations in Muslim societies, interpretations of Islam have been divergent amongst countries with different social, cultural and political structures and conditions. For example, Islam in Pakistan is closely associated with the establishment of the state, the emphasis being that no laws can be enacted that violate the basic principles of Islam (Esposito 1998: 118). Upon the advent of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Islam was perceived as responsible for the backwardness and flaws which culminated in the defeat and collapse of the Ottoman empire (Grigoriadis 2009: 1194). Moreover, recent political discourses – scholarly literature and policy papers – term the present Turkish government's domestic (e.g. removing the ban on headscarves and positive attitudes towards religious schools – *İmam Hatip*) and foreign policy decisions (particularly its involvement in conflicts in neighbouring Iraq and Syria) as the "Pakistanisation of Turkey" (Shams 2016; Almond 2015). With regard to Pakistan, since the end of the Cold War there has been a disillusionment in Western discourses – political and academic– in terms of the perceived use of Islam and jihad as a political and strategic tool in domestic and foreign policy matters (Abbas 2005: 201-206; Tomsen 2011: 520).

This paper examines the factors that define the perceived differences between Turkey and Pakistan's relationship with Islam and jihad. It argues that the perception of Islam and jihad in both Turkey and Pakistan developed concurrently with changing social, political and security conditions, all of which contributed to the shaping of the societal dispositions and political orientation of these states. However, this study does not intend to provide an in-depth interpretive analysis comparing the various interpretations of the fundamental source, *usul al-fiqh*, or the models of law espoused by the different schools of jurisprudence. Rather, employing both an analytical and historical comparative research framework, this article, in the first section, will assess the variables manifest in the shaping of Muslim perceptions of Islam and jihad in Pakistan. Following this, a similar methodology is employed in section two to explore the factors shaping the Turkish perception of Islam and jihad. Lastly, the study concludes with an argument that the constantly changing socio-political conditions and security challenges in Islamic societies, as well as the state or ruling elites' insight, approach and responses to such challenges, have been key to the

shaping of different perceptions of Islam and jihad in Turkey and Pakistan.

Content/Methodology of Research: （800 words）

Turkey is one of the few Muslim-majority countries that has remained largely impenetrable to religious fanaticism and militancy since its inception as a secular democratic state in 1923. Given the geographical proximity of Turkey to the divergent representation and perceptions of Islam in Egypt, Iran, Palestine (the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Revolution in Iran, and Hezbollah) and, more importantly, to the recent interpretations of Islam and jihad espoused by militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the question, really, is what are the factors that make Turkey seemingly impervious to radical versions of Islam? In answering this question, one must understand contextual and historical synthesis of Islam in Turkish societies. In fact, the dynamics of the secular movement were inherited from the Ottomans, who implemented large-scale modern reforms in administration, education, and law, particularly during the last decades of their reign (for example, the Tanzimat reforms between 1839 and 1876) (Karpat 2001: 9). Moreover, through the incorporation of the advances of European science and the adoption of a Western style of education between 1876 and 1909 (Hefner 2007: 14), the Ottomans discouraged the revival of a nostalgic Islamic origins movement. Rather, by adopting western modernisation, the Turks created political models of their own with regard to requirements of a changing socio-political environment. These reforms gained momentum during the era of the republic. With even greater intensity, key voices within Turkish society concurred that the interpretation of Islam as concordant with the rational sciences was indispensable when seeking to promote democracy, tolerance, and the rule of law. Such a perspective not only separated the Turkish perception of Islam from those of other Islamic states, but also countered the rooting of radical religious militancy in the country (Rabasa and Larrabee XI: 23-25).

On the other hand, Islam existed in various social, cultural and political spheres in the geographical domain which, on the 14 August 1947, was to become the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Yet, the interpretation of Islam in Pakistan has been the subject of many different scholarly and popular debates and perspectives. Following the independence of Pakistan, the Islamic population divided into distinct sectarian orientations (*Ahli-i Hadith wa'l Jama'at*, *Ahl – I Sunnat wa'l –Jama'at Ahmadis*, *Qadiyanis*, *Salafi, Ithna Ashari*, *Tablighi Jamaat* and *Isma'ili*) (Borchgrevink 2011: 4). In fact, this was product of the various socio-political conditions – internal/external –, such as disagreements on the Islamic identity of Pakistan amongst the secular and religious elite; the Kashmir war in 1947, the widening rift between *Shi'a* and *Sunni* sects (particularly after the Iranian Revolution in 1979), the Afghan jihad (since 1979), and the emergence of regional and international non-state Islamic militant groups, such as Al-Qaeda and the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban.

This study is based on both an analytical and historical comparative research framework. The most important reason for relying on this kind of methodology is to make the changing perception of Islam and jihad clear in the way in which that the constantly changing socio-political conditions and security challenges in Islamic societies have been key to the shaping of different perceptions of Islam and jihad in

Turkey and Pakistan. Secondly, author's research trips to Turkey between March and April 2017, during which he interviewed a number of Turkish scholars and former government officials have been key in providing factual context to theoretical analysis of the subjects concerned under this research project.

Conclusion/Observation （400 words）

Contemporary discourses on the role of Islam in Turkey and Pakistan overlook the point that the perception of Islam differs on the basis of the various interpretative traditions, as well as agendas in accordance with various backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, political systems and ideologies of different peoples. From a historical perspective, what makes Turkey different to Pakistan is that the Turks curved a new Islamic identity out of an Arabian Islamic world. The Turks instrumentalised their cultural values alongside their faith in their statecraft, the forming of their administrations, and the conduct of their wars. In short, the Turks have been less evangelical and more pragmatic when reacting to the constant change manifest in sociopolitical affairs. From a political perspective, they developed a modern secular governing system, in which state always controlled religion. In other words, by not allowing a dual of authority, (religious and secular), Turkey has been largely successful in curbing the spread of distorted versions of Islam and jihad in the country.

On the other hand, unlike the Turks, South Asian Muslims lacking the institutional capacity to build their own Islamic identity, followed the Central Asian Turkic tradition of *Sufism* that was brought to them in 13th century. Later, upon the colonisation of India by the British, in the absence of an Islamic state of their own, Indian Muslims remained divided on the issue of how to secure the fundamental principles of Islam and their Islamic identity in the light of social reforms. This led to the emergence of non-state Islamic actors as guardians of Islam in both the social and political spheres. Within this context, Islam (in all its different sectarian orientations) became an integral part of the political movement that carved an Islamic Pakistan out of India in 1947. This movement left a problematic legacy for the newly independent state of Pakistan, one where modernists strived to established secular Pakistan, whilst religious elites sought to establish an Islamic one. One of the most serious issues in this regard (which remains as enduring problem even in present Pakistan) is religious sermons representing sectarian orientations and agendas delivered by independent, and often charismatic religious figures. Such figures provide legal rulings regarding the classification of sociopolitical matters as either immutable individual duties (*fardh*) or as forbidden (*haram*), and have remained highly influential in their power to resonate with and impact Muslims' perception of Islam.

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