

Terrorism in South Asia: Identity Politics in a New Pakistani State

So this was the challenge of the new state. Jinnah had to figure out how to create a bureaucratic mechanism to govern the state. All the while, problems were beginning to develop about what was Pakistan's identity. After all, the "two nation theory" had most appealed to those Muslims living in undivided India in Hindu majority areas. After all, those people were the ones who actually were afraid of Hindus.

And the areas that actually became Pakistan that were Muslim majority to begin with, they were less interested in the communal politics of the "two nation theory." In fact, the irony is, the parts that became West Pakistan weren't even interested in being a part of Pakistan.

People in Balochistan wanted to be independent. Some of the Pashtuns of what became the Northwest frontier province actually wanted to join India. So not only did Jinnah have this enormous problem of building a state, he also had to manage all of these different aspirations of the different peoples that one day woke up and found themselves to be citizens of this new state called Pakistan.

One of the enduring questions that lingered over this new Pakistan was, what was going to be the role of Islam in this state. After all Jinnah had said many things to different people. To some people, he said this isn't going to be an Islamist country. This is going to be a country for Muslims, but where the individual rights of non-Muslims would also be respected. To other audiences, he said things that this in fact would be a state that would be founded on Muslim law.

Jinnah said many things to many people. Unfortunately, Jinnah died right after Independence. And so we never will know what Jinnah had imagined for the state that he worked so hard to found. What we do know is that the Pakistan that emerged had about 25% of its population that we're actually non-Muslim. In fact, mostly they were Hindus.

Very quickly, the state adopted what was called the "Objectives Resolution" of 1949. The "Objectives Resolution," which became a part of Pakistan's constitution, said very clearly that Pakistan was going to be governed by the laws of Allah as opposed to some sort of Western democratic notion. Very quickly, Pakistan's religious minorities began to wonder what was going to be their fate in this new state that was developing.