Sectarianism & Internal Security: How the State-Society Nexus was reconfigured in the post Zia Era ?

By Hassan Abbas

Abstract (Research proposal has very recently been accepted so only an outline of issues is presented here): The proposed paper will primarily focus on the dynamics of sectarianism in Pakistan and study how state's law enforcement infrastructure is responding to this growing challenge. The paper will especially deliberate on the following issues in the first half of the paper:

A. Broad phases of the role of religion in Pakistan's history as regards State's policies;
B. How General Zia era (1979 -88) redefined Pakistan in terms of its ideological orientation;
C. Impact of Islamic Revolution in Iran & Afghan 'Jihad' years on sectarian tendencies in Pakistan;
D. How the above trends influenced country's political economy (especially vis-à-vis religious issues) & social milieu (especially in terms of diversity & tolerance of minority views).

The second half of the paper will probe the following questions in the above context:

1. How state (both under democratic institutions & military regime of General Pervez Musharraf) responded to the challenges of sectarianism;
2. Effectiveness of police and civilian law enforcement in dealing with sectarian groups such as Sipah-i-Mohammad & Sipah-i-Sahaba; an assessment of state's banning of these groups & its impact;
3. Whether severity of Pakistan's internal security challenge has a corresponding impact on investment in reform of its law enforcement and criminal justice system; and reasons if that is not the case.