

Krzysztof DĘBNICKI

Collegium Civitas

Warsaw University, Poland

k.debnicki@chello.pl

THE PAKISTANI IDENTITY CONSTRUCTED IN REACTION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

PERCEPTIONS OF THE WEST CREATED BY PAKISTAN'S MILITANT MEDIA AT THE TIME OF INTERNAL STRIFE

ABSTRACT

In the past twelve years Pakistan has gone through a period of acute internal strife between the status quo and the emerging new religious/political ideologies. A number of reasons define the conflict: religious, social, economic, international. A very important element of the strife is the psychological attitude of Pakistanis towards their own state, religion and the world at large. The key elements of this psychological attitude are: inferiority/superiority complex vis-à-vis their Arab neighbours, India, and the Western world, and the commonly held belief in dangerous conspiracies that the world outside is constantly hatching against it. These two elements are enhanced by militant (jihadi) electronic and printed media creating a strongly skewed vision of the outside world.

Keywords: Pakistan, militant, media, Islam, West, conspiracy

1. A BRIEF HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

For a number of years now Pakistan has been going through the most difficult and dangerous phase since it became independent in 1947. It has been estimated that since 2001, as a result of the conflict between the state and various militant and terrorist organisations, about 40,000-50,000 people have been killed in Pakistan, most of them since 2007. Material losses are estimated at about US\$ 50-70 billion. The conflict is the result of various factors both internal and external but the key problems emanate from within. The role of the media, both militant and non-militant, is of crucial importance in the internal strife. It is largely shaping the common man's perception of the reality, his ability to evaluate the conflict and to ascribe relevant roles to key actors while also being personally influenced by them. To explain the complexity of the situation, the problem of Pakistan has to be first put into its historical and ideological context.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan and Muslim League, the party that fought for the creation of Pakistan, claimed that Indian Muslims were a separate nation and as such were entitled to a sovereign state of their own. To achieve it they would have to physically separate from the Hindu majority in British India and establish their own state. That much was achieved. But from the beginning – and the debate continues until the present day, it was not clear what kind of state should Pakistan be. Should it be a state for the Muslims but not excluding non-Muslim minorities or a strictly religious, Muslim state? Jinnah himself was a liberal Muslim, intellectually open and probably more inclined to have a state for Muslims that would guarantee equal rights to religious minorities, rather than a religious state. He is often quoted by liberal Pakistanis:

We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of State. [...] Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State. In the same speech he added: *You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the state.*¹

However, he also repeated a number of times that Sharia law would reign supreme in Pakistan because Islamic principles have no parallel. But that being the case, how could Sharia law accept faith as a private matter of each individual? How could it separate the individual from the community within both the reality of highly communitarian Islam and equally communitarian social ethnic organisation of Pakistan? How would Jinnah reconcile the division of the religious and secular within the essential principles of Islam which do not, for one, recognize such duality? Jinnah's premise of individual autonomy within an Islamic state was unrealistic from its very inception. Of course, Jinnah was primarily a politician and as such he used to say various things depending on the changing audience and circumstances.

¹ I. Talbot, *Pakistan. A Modern History*, London 2005, p. 136.

In 1949, just six months after his death, the Pakistani Constituent Assembly adopted the Objectives Resolution which ultimately paved the way for an Islamic state. The Resolution said:

*We, the people of Pakistan have the courage to believe firmly that all authority should be exercised in accordance with the standards laid down in Islam so that it may not be misused. [...] Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accordance with the teachings of Islam as set out by the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. It is quite obvious that no non-Muslims should have any objection if the Muslims are enabled to order their lives in accordance with the dictates of their religion. You should also notice, Sir, that the state is not to play the part of a neutral observer, wherein the Muslims may be merely free to profess and practice their religion, because such an attitude on the part of the state would be the very negation of the ideals which prompted the demand of Pakistan, and it is these ideals which should be the corner-stone of the state which we want to build. The state will create such conditions as are conducive to the building up of a truly Islamic society, which means that the state will have to play a positive part in this effort.*²

The Objectives Resolution laid the groundwork for turning Pakistan into a religious/ideological state. Leaders of Pakistan hoped that Islam would help in binding together the many different ethnicities and linguistic groups that made up the new country which had little in common except their faith. But in reality it only complicated things. It could not and did not specify which school of Islam was to be followed and who would decide it. This problem was later explained in the Munir Report of 1953 published after the anti-Ahmadi riots in Lahore. A Court of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Justice Munir was constituted to ascertain the causes of disturbances and the adequacy of the government's reaction. The Munir Report was subsequently published, and its implications, according to Hamid Khan, *were very deep and fundamental to the new state of Pakistan*.³ The committee interviewed all the leading ulemas of Pakistan, leaders of religious schools and sects only to find out that *they could not stand one another and called each other kafirs as well. According to the Barelvi ulema, Deobandis and Wahabis were outside the pale of Islam and well liable to the death penalty if they fell within the definition of murtad, namely if they had changed and not inherited their religious views*.⁴

The strong belief in the uniqueness of one's sect predominance could be linked with the hadith (tradition) attributed to Prophet Muhammad according to which the Islamic *umma* (community) shall be divided into 73 sects of which only one will be saved.⁵ There are many different sects in Islam and each one believes that it is the chosen one, while the rest are all condemned to burn in hell. Over the centuries, the said

² H. Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, Karachi 2009, p. 58.

³ Ibid., p. 72.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ According to Maududi: *You should not therefore be surprised to see Muslims living in servitude to others. This is what they have earned by their actions. Upon them has descended that punishment which Allah has warned them of: ... [He will] divide you in sects and make you taste the violence of one another* (al-An'am 6: 65) – SAA. Mawdudi, *Let Us Be Muslims*, ed. K. Murad, London 1986, p. 133.

Hadith had many explanations according to the needs of time. Now it comes handy in the bloody sectarian conflict spreading across Pakistan providing it with a religious-ideological justification.

Somewhat dejected, Justice Munir concludes: *The net result of all this is that neither Shia nor Sunnis nor Deobandis nor Ahl-i-Hadith nor Barelvis are Muslims and any change from one view to the other must be accomplished in an Islamic state with the penalty of death if the government of the state is in the hands of the party which considers the other party to be kafirs. And it does not require much imagination to judge of the consequences of this doctrine when it is remembered that no two ulema have agreed before us as to the definition of the Muslim. [...] Keeping in view the several definitions of a Muslim given by the ulema, need we make any comments except that no two learned divines are agreed on this fundamental. If we attempt our own definition as each learned divine has done and that definition differs from that given by all others, we unanimously go out of the fold of Islam. And if we adopt the definition given by any one of the ulema, we remain Muslims according to the view of that alim, but kafirs according to the definition of every-one else.*⁶ The report ended with *Allah knoweth best* as a clear sign of the Committee's frustration and inability to describe the fundamental principle upon which the new state had been created.

Now, the problem of Pakistan was how to practice ideological politics within the parameters of the ideologically murky state in which everyone understood the country's fundamental principles in its own exclusive way while denying the legitimacy of others. The system may have worked in the atmosphere of liberal inclusiveness, but this precisely was and still remains lacking in Pakistan. President Gen. Ziaul Haq attempted to solve the problem of the nature of Pakistan after he seized power in military coup in 1977. Pakistan ought to become a fully Islamic state he decreed and proceeded accordingly with a comprehensive process of Islamisation of all walks of life. This only enticed the various sects to fight for dominance. Since then, Pakistan has become deeply entangled in a bloody, sectarian, Hobbesian-like conflict (or *Manusmrytian*, to stay closer to the South Asian realities⁷) which in reality drifts into a civil war. Over time, the growth of religious political ideology and political parties and Islamist terrorist movements coincided with the deterioration in the country's governance, growth of corruption, unemployment and various forms of social discrimination. The literacy level remains dismally low, even when compared to other countries of South Asia; electricity and water shortages make normal life difficult and slow down the economic growth. About half the country's budget is spent on the Armed Forces which has a vested interest in keeping up tense relations with all the country's neighbours except China.

Militant media play an important role in the worsening political situation inside the country and in Pakistan's relations with the West and India. To understand the role of the militant media in Pakistan, it is first necessary to focus on two elements: Pakistan's

⁶ H. Khan, *Constitutional...*, p. 72.

⁷ Manusmryti – The Laws of Manu is commonly dated at about 5th century BC to 2nd century AD.

identity and its psychology. While the former is unique to the country and its people, the latter has much in common with the psychology of the wider Islamic world.

2. CONSTRUCTING THE PAKISTANI IDENTITY

Pakistan as a state and Pakistanis as a nation are very young, surrounded by some of the oldest civilisations on earth. Chinese take their well-documented history approximately five thousand years back. Indians could safely speak of almost four thousand years of documented history, so can Iranians. In 1947, Pakistan's leaders decided to dissociate the state from the Hindu dominated India including its history and culture, and rest the new country's foundations on Islam which emerged among the Bedouins of Arabia some fifteen hundred years ago. For ideological/religious reasons they decided to forgo the obvious benefits that accrue from continuing within a truly mature civilisation. While geographically remaining a part of South Asia, this act of psychological *hijra* (migration) cut the umbilical cord linking it to India and moved Pakistan west, and quite far at that. From 1947 onwards, Pakistanis were to have nothing to do with their own, pre-Islamic heathen past, now considered impure. Its eastern border became a line of ritual cleanliness dividing "cow-dung worshipping Hindu kafirs" from the clean believers in Islam.

The separation became even more pronounced with the independence of Bangladesh, when Pakistan, having lost its eastern wing has physically shifted west. It coincided with the economic boom in the Arab states of the Gulf where many thousands of Pakistani labourers began looking for jobs, and the new foreign policy of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto aiming at opening up to the Islamic world to make Pakistan into the leading Islamic country. With the growing part of economic activity of Pakistanis moving away from the country, can national identity remain far behind? In fact the very centre of gravity of Pakistan's identity moves imperceptibly towards Saudi Arabia, away from South Asia and Pakistan itself.⁸ This is accompanied by the growing process of cultural Arabisation of Pakistan.

Attempts at forging a civilisational and ethnic link with the Arab world by accepting Arabs as the ancestors of subcontinental Muslims began decades before the inception of Pakistan. After independence, the new homeland had to be somehow legitimised not only religiously but culturally and maybe even ethnically. If inhabited by people of different ethnic stock, Pakistan would cease to be an ex-part of India, becoming the land that always (some believe since the Harappan civilisation⁹) was the home of the Muslim Pakistani race.

Back in the 1940's, the idea to make Arabic rather than Urdu the country's national language was under serious consideration. It would distance Pakistanis from

⁸ There is only one flight per week between Pakistan and India, while there are hundreds of flights between Pakistan and the Arab Gulf states. Moreover, some parts of Pakistan are better linked with the Gulf than with the rest of the country. There are more airline connections between Peshawar and the Gulf than between Peshawar and Lahore or the country's capital, Islamabad.

⁹ See: A. Ahsan, *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan*, Karachi 1996.

traditional South Asian Islam tainted by centuries of the common Muslim-Hindu cultural heritage. The idea remains alive, albeit in a less radical shape. In 2014 a Pakistani federal minister announced that preparations for making Arabic a compulsory subject at secondary schools have been completed.¹⁰ Attempts to expunge the pre-Islamic identity from the consciousness of Pakistanis continue with official government backing.

The tendency to purify ideological foundations became stronger with the ascent of President Gen. Ziaul Haq, and the influx of Arab mujahideen during anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. Many thousands of *medresas* (religious schools) of the radical Salafi orientation were funded by donations from the Middle East. The process of emotional detachment from South Asia by marginalising the Sufi component of Pakistan's Islam increased. It was accompanied by changes in traditional ways connected with everyday customs. *We no more say Khuda Hafiz, like we all did three decades ago* regretfully said a retired Pakistani brigadier I spoke to in 2009, *we switched over to Allah Hafiz, as the Arabs do. It's the same with changing Ramadan into Ramazan, Eidul Azha rather than Adha. It's largely because of all the migrant workers returning from the Gulf. They were made to believe there that our culture and religion were inferior.*¹¹ Many millions of Pakistanis worked in the Gulf for the past three decades were imbibing Arab ways.¹² These were later transferred home with the returnees becoming important agents of Arabisation. Aspiring for prestige among neighbours and merit before God, many well-to-do returnees founded mosques in their ancestral villages, often of the exclusivist Salafi school. It is not uncommon for the mosques or religious schools affiliated with them to establish close links with similar institutions in the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia to keep the religious and cultural pipeline intact.

The unfortunate side effect was the rise of a burning inferiority complex in Pakistan and a desire for some sort of compensation. While this is hardly possible in the race-conscious Arab community where Pakistanis are perceived as an inferior kind of human beings, it is doable upon return back home in relation to those not fortunate enough to be earning their keep in the Gulf. The easiest way of compensating for the inferiority complex is to take revenge at various non-Muslim minorities and weaker ethnic communities – Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Shias, Ismailis, Hazaras, etc. Close links with the Gulf meant the increase in importance of the more strict Islamic local sects like Deobandis to the detriment of the traditionally inclusive Barelvīs and Sufis, indigenous of South Asia. It introduced an element of increased viciousness to the intra-Islamic conflict in Pakistan. Thus the very idea of a state based on ideological/religious foundations worked against the nascent Pakistani national identity disintegrating the community rather than uniting it. The rise in the number and violence

¹⁰ R. Zakaria, 'Arabicising Pakistan,' *The Dawn*, 23 May 2014, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1108154/arabicising-pakistan>>, 23 May 2014.

¹¹ *Khuda Hafiz* is Persian for "may God be your guardian" traditionally used as a farewell in Central and South Asia.

¹² But bringing tangible benefits for Pakistan's economy. The 2013 remittances from Pakistani workers abroad equalled US\$16 billion.

of communal/religious and ethnic conflicts and militancy over the past three decades prove the point. Yet there is no escaping the process of further Islamisation, including the increase in jihadi or Taliban militancy. There is no limit to radicalism and hence to more insecurity.

By their own choice Pakistanis belong neither to South Asia with its old and diverse cultural tradition, nor are they accepted as equals by the wider Muslim world, especially its aristocracy – the Arabs. The deliberate drift from South Asia did not bring tangible psychological benefits in terms of political cohesion and self-respect any mature nation strives for.

3. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONSPIRACY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PAKISTAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Insecurity creates a fertile soil for the growth of conspiracy theories. The idea of Pakistan as the emerging leader of the world community of Muslims was linked with the notion of the country becoming the victim of international intrigue and conspiracy aimed at restricting that very aim. It complemented Pakistan's perceived mission within the wider Islamic world with the need to defend itself against the scheming of anti-Islamic forces. Hence it provided it with the idea of a just, defensive war to be waged against "Western injustice" and external threats from non-Muslims. Over the years, but especially since the Ziaul Haq era, as "Pakistan, the fortress of Islam" began erecting its defensive walls, the world outside was increasingly perceived as hostile.

From the Pakistani perspective the post-Second World War conflicts were easy to explain as replays of the centuries-old struggle between Islam and Christianity which ended in the humiliation of Islam. This is taught at schools, universities, mosques and is present in the media. One aspect of the Islamic history linking past with present that many, if not most educated Pakistanis are aware of, is the history of Muslim domination of Spain. It is presented as the righteous and glorious period of Islam that ended with the defeat of Muslim armies at the hands of the Christian kings of Spain in the 15th century. Muslims see it as a great injustice. This feeling of loss, loaded with melancholy and grief whenever Muslims think of the sorry fate of the once great community even got its own name – the "Andalus syndrome."¹³ Iberian Peninsula was the only Muslim foothold in the western part of the European continent, and psychologically, it seems, very important. It gave the Muslims, later conquered by Western powers in their own hinterland of Arabia and the greater Middle East, the reason to feel equal to their new colonial masters over whom they used to rule in the old days. Many Pakistani Muslims, especially among better educated social groups, deeply mourn the loss of the political glory of Islam and, as they see it, its key, dominant position among world powers. It should come as no surprise that they are especially numerous among the military and the religious community.

¹³ S. Kakar, *The Colours of Violence*, New Delhi 1995, p. 167.

Pakistani Taliban stress the importance of the Andalusian experience and contrast the glorious Islamic past in Spain with the miserable state of contemporary Islamic societies and states. Here is what the first issue of "Azan," a Pakistani Taliban periodical published in English has to say:

Muslims ruled Andalus for the best part of almost 700 years and what a glorious rule it was! It is truly sad to see today how the kufar have alienated the Muslims from their glorious history. The mindset of the modern "educated" Muslim has become quite bizarre – a fascination of the Western culture coupled with an aura of disappointment and belittlement with regards to Islam, Muslims and Islamic history... After a glorious long rule in Muslim Spain which was a centre of Islamic learning, science and knowledge, by the 11th century, the Muslim states had dismembered into these separate territories, each being ruled by kings who were in constant skirmish with their neighbouring Muslim rulers. This was also a period that witnessed a shocking phenomenon – something which we are experiencing in full force today i.e. Muslim leaders fighting alongside Kafir armies to fight against Muslim rivals. Some of the Muslim Kings had even started giving heavy taxes to the Christian Kings as bribes so that the Christians would not attack them. This was because of their cowardice and indulgence in luxuries.¹⁴

But then came the mujahideen (holy warriors) and together with Islamic scholars they offered a solution:

In such times, Yusuf bin Tashin (RA), a great Muslim commander, sought verdicts of the Islamic Scholars and Fuqaha (jurists) throughout the Islamic world to attack the Christians and the impious Muslim Kings of Andalus. This was in 1090 CE. He had previously successfully attacked the Christians and repelled them from many Muslim lands at the bequest of these same Muslim Kings. However, the corrupt kings managed to snatch their own benefits from the work of the Mujahideen (Murabiteen as they were called) and resorted to their impious ways. Instead of fighting the ambitiously advancing Christians, they levied heavy taxes on the Muslim populations to repay massive debt incurred by the protection money demanded by the Christians armies in return for not attacking Muslim land. This was due to the cowardice of the Kings. So, Fuqaha from around the globe responded positively to Yusuf bin Tashin's (RA) call. The Moroccan Fuqaha declared that the Muslim Rulers of Andalus were unworthy of ruling since they had allied themselves with the Christians and had played a double game against the defenders of Islam. Unfortunately, the same is true for almost all "Muslim" rulers and "Muslim" Army Generals throughout the world we live in today.¹⁵

Here, the Taliban point at a direct link between the old, corrupt Islamic rulers of Spain and the contemporary, corrupt political and military leaders of Islamic states, including Pakistan, who also "sold out" to Christian powers.

The Andalus syndrome was present in Pakistan's military hierarchy. When in 1965 the Pakistani military decided to organise an anti-Indian rebellion in the Indian part of

¹⁴ Zelin A.Y., 'New English Language Magazine *Azan*, Issue #1,' Jihadology, 6 March 2013, at <<http://jihadology.net/2013/05/06/new-english-language-magazine-azan-issue-1/>>, 6 July 2013.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Kashmir by sending into the Srinagar Valley groups of army saboteurs disguised as civilians the operation was code-named “Gibraltar,”¹⁶ after its Arabic name Jabal-i-Tariq, the Mountain of Tariq. The mountain itself was named after the Umayyad general, Tariq ibn Zahid who at the beginning of the 8th century led the invading Muslim armies in the conquest of the Christian Iberian Peninsula.

Over time, the external threat, partly self-imagined and partly self-inflicted by Pakistan’s own policies on Kashmir and Afghanistan, turned into a wider perception of victimhood bordering on self-pity. Pakistanis are now convinced that their country is under constant attack by “foreign hand” and has to struggle hard to preserve its religion and its world mission in the face of the multitude of international conspiracies. Whenever there are problems of governance, be it in Baluchistan, FATA,¹⁷ Swat or even Karachi, “foreign hand” is at hand. It is usually depicted as Indian involvement in the shape of money, arms, detonators, RDX explosives or first-aid medicines the security forces do manage to uncover from time to time from the militants, CIA agents and Blackwater mercenaries attempting to undermine Pakistan. It is claimed that India has fifteen consulates in Afghanistan¹⁸ all operating against Pakistan from across the border. Former Minister of Interior, Mr. Rehman Malik has mentioned the “Indian hand” and then the “Afghan hand” a number of times but was unable to substantiate any of his claims.¹⁹

The fear that the United States are seriously preparing to destroy and dismember Pakistan is common among the masses and elites. The quote below is a part of the article I received from an influential Pakistani as a serious piece of research on the US goals in Pakistan with his personal note “this is what we are trying to avoid”: *On the eve of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, the goals of U.S. politicians with regard to Pakistan are as follows: 1) the fragmentation of Pakistan with a view to weakening the strategic position of China in Southern Asia; 2) full control of the territory of the “narcotaliban,” where about half of the world’s hard drugs are produced; 3) neutralization of Pakistan’s nuclear program, which is being implemented with the assistance of Chinese specialists (or on the contrary, if this is not successful, the removal of the psychological barrier to using atomic weapons)... The author quotes a high-ranking official of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Brig.Gen. Aslam Ghuman as saying: During my visit to the U.S., I learnt [that the] Israeli spy agency Mossad, in connivance with [the] Indian agency RAW, under the direct supervision of [the] CIA, planned to destabilise Pakistan at any*

¹⁶ It should probably come as no surprise that the then still Anglicised Pakistani generals, for all their Islamic zeal, decided on the English code name for the operation rather than the Arabic one. It probably would not have happened from the time of Gen. Ziaul Haq onwards.

¹⁷ Federally Administered Tribal Areas along part of the border with Afghanistan.

¹⁸ The number is greatly overblown although widely believed in Pakistan and quoted by media. It would be difficult to find fifteen towns in Afghanistan large enough in which to open the consulates.

¹⁹ His comments were ridiculed by Mr. Akhtar Mengal, the head of the Baluchistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M): *I don’t know why foreign hands are visible only to Rehman Malik and the agencies. ‘A Handy Excuse,’ The Dawn*, 1 October 2012, at <<http://dawn.com/2012/10/01/a-handy-excuse/>>, 3 August 2014.

cost.²⁰ The above information (provided by a Russian Internet site) on the danger the United States pose to Islamabad's nuclear weapons and the apocalyptic vision of the U.S. willingness to unleash a nuclear holocaust fits perfectly the psychological profile prevailing in Pakistan.

To believe that some of the world's mightiest states (U.S., India, Israel, Western Europe) are conspiring against Pakistan must be very distressing for an average Pakistani, besides strengthening the attitude of general helplessness. It creates a deep feeling of general insecurity to which most of those who know Pakistan well would testify. Sohail Abbas drew attention to it in his well-researched book about the jihadi mind-set.

*When asked by a researcher, "Do you think people are conspiring against us, or, against Muslims?" Pakistani jihadis imprisoned after the unsuccessful attempt to stop the Northern Alliance forces supported by American air power from sweeping Afghanistan in 2001 replied in the affirmative. Ninety-two percent felt that we are the victims of a conspiracy hatched by the West, with the help of Hindus and Jews: "They want us to lose power not only in Afghanistan but all over the world and make us their slaves." When asked if the present day Muslim plight was not also due to some of their own mistakes, only 17 per cent admitted that, "We may have committed some mistakes." Nevertheless, in the same breath, they added, "Poor Muslims were outmanoeuvred and manipulated by the cunning enemies." The rest (83%) gave a more clear statement. "No, it is only because of the infidels that Muslims are backward and it is they who make Muslim fight with each other." Bashir, a jihadi, said, "The West took away our government, took away our wealth, and made us poor. They even took all the wisdom from our holy book which was meant to be used by us."*²¹

In his 2013 EID message, Prof. Hafiz Saeed, the head of Jamaatud Dawa,²² a very influential militant leader feared even by the Pakistani establishment thus presents the sorry state of the Muslim *ummah* (community) constantly hammered on all sides by anti-Islam forces:

Today when we see the condition of Muslim Ummah, we notice how in many parts of the world Muslims are being oppressed. We saw how Indian forces continuously enter Masajids, desecrate holy Qura'an and then mercilessly kill innocents in occupied Kashmir, their leaders are constantly under arrest, curfews in Ramadan, torture and humiliation continue. In Burma, Buddhists are killing Muslims with Hindus supporting this genocide. Decisions to suffocate Muslims have been made, by snatching their right to freedom. They fear that Muslims will rise for their right; therefore they should be brutally killed and in-

²⁰ N. Malishevski, 'Who Will Benefit from the Disintegration of Pakistan?', *Strategic Culture Foundation Online Journal*, 31 October 2013, at <<http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2013/10/31/who-will-benefit-from-the-disintegration-of-pakistan.html>>, 22 August 2014. In his article, Malishevski refers (without quoting his source) to the article of Ralph Peters, 'Blood Borders,' published in the *Armed Forces Journal*, 1 June 2006. Peters presents an alternate, redrawn map of the Middle East and Pakistan divided into a number of independent units. See at <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/blood-borders/>>, 22 August 2014.

²¹ S. Abbas, *Probing the Jihadi Mindset*, Islamabad 2007, p. 159.

²² A charitable organisation created by the banned Lashkare Toiba, a key militant organisation involved in many terrorist acts in Pakistan and abroad, including the 2008 attack on Mumbai. Prof. Hafiz Saeed has a \$10 mln bounty on his head announced by the US. He lives in Pakistan and is not in hiding.

*timidated before such occurrence. Similar situation is prevailing in Palestine where Israel is occupying their land. ALLAH's enemies are hatching deadly conspiracies against Muslim countries in order to destabilize them. Pakistan remains the prime target of India, US and Israeli conspiracies.*²³

Similar messages are repeated in the thousands of mosques and by the media including many commercial TV stations, and taught at schools. The argument is not new, it goes back many decades. The well-known Pakistani religious leader, Maulana Maududi (Mawdudi) equally highly respected outside of Pakistan, the founder of the far-right revivalist Jamat Islami party in his book *Let Us be Muslims* depicts Muslims as suffering from the subservient position unbecoming of true believers:

*But even though there are so many Muslims and Muslim governments, the world is in the hands of those who have rebelled against God. Your necks are in their grip, to be turned to whichever side they like; your heads, which should not bow before anybody except Allah, are now bowed before human beings. Your honour, which no one dared to touch, is now being trampled upon. Your hands, which were once always held high, are now lowered and stretched out before your enemies.*²⁴

Maududi was honest enough not to put the entire blame on insidious *kafirs*, but rather on Muslims, who ceased to be “true believers” and therefore are suffering. On the other hand Sir Allama Iqbal, Pakistan's national poet only complains of God's injustice towards Muslims in his poem ‘Shikwa’ – ‘The Complaint:’

What justice is this then?

The Ka'fir gets all – wealth, women and wine.

And the Muslim sweet words, privations and piety!

Gone are the days indeed,

*when sweet with us were your ways!*²⁵

Pakistan's belief in the world-wide conspiracy hatched against it has a long history and points at a dangerous mass paranoia based on intense fear and suspicion of others. Pakistanis see the world as a dangerous place populated largely by enemies of their state, culture, religion, sovereignty and of their nuclear arms they wish to take away. It is a well-known phenomenon that the more the people are made to feel uneasy and scared, the easier it is to make them follow the leaders. Skilful manipulation and keeping the population in a constant state of psychological stress is the key to success. This is precisely what Pakistani elites, both civilian and military have constantly resorted to since 1947.

Why did ordinary Pakistanis acquire this “persecution complex,” of course apart from the activities of various state institutions? The former chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, and a respected Islamic scholar, Dr Khalid Masud was quoted as

²³ Prof. Hafiz Saeed EID 2013 Message, Tune.pl, at <<http://tune.pk/video/311881/eid-masseg-final-1>>, 13 August 2013.

²⁴ SAA. Mawdudi, *Let Us...*, p. 56.

²⁵ A. Iqbal, ‘Shikwa’, Urdu Compositions, at <http://musingsofanintrovert.blogspot.com/2008_03_01_archive.html>, 17 August 2014.

saying that Pakistan was carved out of India as the demand of the minority that went against the majority will. After independence *we retained that minority syndrome... a persecution complex has shaped our discourse and weights heavily on our psyche. Therefore every one of our issues is the world's fault and there is always someone else to be viewed with suspicion, blamed.*²⁶

However, according to Danish psychologist Nicolai Sennels the “persecution complex” has much deeper causes rooted in Muslim psychology, and particularly in the different understanding of the “locus of control,” the key psychological factor.

There is another strong difference between the people of Western and Muslim cultures writes Sennels, their locus of control. Locus of control is a psychological term describing whether people experience their life influenced mainly, by internal or external factors. It is clear from a psychological point of view that Westerners feel that their lives are mainly influenced by inner forces – ourselves. This is reflected in our points of view, our ways of handling our emotions, our ways of thinking, our ways of relating to people around us, our motivation, our surplus, and our way of communicating. These internal factors are what guide our lives and determine if we feel good and self-confident or not. Every Western library has several meters of self-help books. Every kiosk has dozens of magazines for both women and men that tell us how to create happier and more successful lives for ourselves. Our phone books have columns of addresses for psychologists, coaches and therapists. All these things are aimed at helping us to help ourselves create the life that we want... All these things do not exist in Muslim culture and countries. The very little psychiatry and psychology that is taught, in only a few universities in the Muslim world, is imported from the West. It is mostly taught by teachers educated at Western universities and does not have roots in the Muslim culture.

But Muslims have something else. They have strict external rules, traditions and laws for human behavior. They have a God that decides their life's course. “Inshallah” follows every statement about future plans: if God wants it to happen. They have powerful Muslim clerics who set the directions for their community every Friday. These clerics dictate political views, child rearing behavior, and how or whether to integrate in Western societies.

The locus of control is central to our understanding of problems and their solutions. If we are raised in a culture where we learn that “...I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul,” as William Ernest Henley wrote in his famous poem Invictus in 1875, we will, in case of personal problems, look at ourselves and ask: “...What did I do wrong?” and “...What can I do to change the situation?” People who have been taught throughout their entire lives that outer rules and traditions are more important than individual freedom and self reflection, will ask: “Who did this to me?” and “Who has to do something for me?”²⁷

²⁶ A. Nasir, ‘Path to Perdition,’ *The Dawn*, 22 September 2012, at <<http://dawn.com/2012/09/22/path-to-perdition/>>, 22 September 2012.

²⁷ N. Sennels, ‘Muslims and Westerners: The Psychological Differences,’ *New English Review* (May 2010), at <http://www.newenglishreview.org/Nicolai_Sennels/Muslims_and_Westerners%3A_The_Psychological_Differences/>, 1 August 2013. Nicolai Sennels is the author of *Among Criminal Muslims. A Psychologist's Experiences from the Copenhagen Municipality*, Free Press Society 2009.

The expectation that the external world is obliged to “do something for us” is common in Pakistan. Here is news published by Frontier Post, a Peshawar daily on what the Pakistan Economy Watch believes that United States should do for Pakistan:

The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Friday said the US should compensate Islamabad after admitting that it wronged with Pakistan for thirty years. The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton acknowledged on May 19th that Washington had not been consistent and coherent in its dealings with Islamabad. “Now America is morally bound to help Pakistan recover its losses,” said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President PEW. US should try to restore its reputation by paying a minimum of 100 billion dollars and help waiving all the debt of international lenders. Only Americans can soothe local sentiments and remove distrust against her intentions. No one else will do it for them. [...] Friendship with US landed Islamabad into multifaceted problems like insurgency, sectarianism, Talibanisation, Kalashnikov and heroin culture and extreme poverty. People were deprived of proper education, health, security and other social services. “Our industry, trade, agriculture, exports, taxation and all other sectors suffered colossal losses... Political and economic instability in Pakistan is direct result of US policies. [...] Had Pakistan not been pushed in the Afghan war, we could have easily achieved economic successes like Singapore and South Korea, Dr. Mughal said.”²⁸

Own incompetence, political and economic, dishonesty and corruption are blamed on others. Then the others, since they are guilty of “injustice” are expected to make good. The expectation of external assistance is not only seen as Pakistan’s (or other Islamic countries’) inherent right, but as the obvious obligation of the outside world. Going hat in hand is not considered dishonourable – it is the world’s duty to provide.

A couple of months after I had arrived in Islamabad I was invited to dinner by a retired army brigadier. He was well-educated, spoke excellent English and had travelled the world. There were two other couples invited, both well-educated and Pakistani. The men were employed at large international corporations doing business in Pakistan. They all belonged to the wealthy upper-middle class. The conversation soon moved to politics and to American scheming against Pakistan. The political mess that Pakistan found itself in with President Pervez Musharraf attempting to stick to his presidential post against the judgement of the Supreme Court and his subsequent decision to introduce the state of emergency and arrest the judges was blamed on American machinations. The war in Afghanistan and violence along the country’s western border were the results of U.S. policies. One of the two gentlemen said that such policies were only to be expected of a country whose intelligence agency organised the deadly bombing of the twin towers in New York. I didn’t quite follow which bombing he had in mind and he had to explain that he was talking about the 9/11 attacks. *It was all the CIA work he said and of the Jewish intelligence agency. It is not a secret anymore that not a single Jew turned out for work at the twin towers on the day the planes struck. They all knew beforehand what was going to happen.*²⁹ I have read this kind of stories before, but found it

²⁸ Frontier Post, 25 May 2009.

²⁹ The conversation took place in 2008.

most surprising that an otherwise intelligent, well-educated person, with a top managerial position seriously believed them to be true.

Historical experience has shaped the Pakistani psyche in a particular way but there is more to it than a simple lesson of state and nation-building. The Pakistani establishment assiduously promoted the notion that enemies and danger lurk everywhere. It enabled Pakistan's ruling elite to successfully confine the people inside its defensive corral and convince them that they are heroically surviving the constant onslaught of the hostile world. It enables the elites to conveniently blame the many failures of the state, be it in the field of education, health, economic development or science and technology on foreigners. It also explained the dominant role of the army and various security agencies as the country's defenders against the conspiring enemies. And finally, it enables the secular, religious and military establishment to keep intact its dominant political and economic position.

4. THE VISION OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD CREATED BY THE PRINTED AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

The officially and semi-officially sanctioned propaganda was an important factor for the mass proliferation of the siege mentality and the many conspiracy theories, creating in effect a seriously distorted world-view. Since the rule of President Field Marshal Ayub Khan (1958-1965) Pakistani media were subjected to state censorship and were used as tools for the state propaganda deemed necessary to create the new Pakistani identity.³⁰ Islamist propaganda was also encouraged by religious political parties largely supported by the government or powerful elements within the political civilian-military establishment. Censorship does not help in better understanding the complicated social issues, matters of state and world politics. Combined with mass illiteracy it is disastrous.³¹ However, mass ignorance is deemed useful by the country's elite.³²

The media were largely liberalised by president Gen. Pervez Musharraf in 2002 and soon, ironically, became instrumental in toppling his regime five years later. In the largely illiterate society the electronic media, TV and radio are particularly important.

³⁰ *The first step in introducing media laws in the country was done by the then military ruler Field Marshal Ayub Khan who promulgated the Press and Publication Ordinance (PPO) in 1962. The law empowered the authorities to confiscate newspapers, close down news providers, and arrest journalists. Using these laws, Ayub Khan nationalised large parts of the press and took over one of the two largest news agencies. The other agencies were pushed into severe crisis and had to seek financial support from the government. Pakistan Radio and TV, established in mid-1960's was also brought under the strict control of the government – Between Radicalization and Democratization in Unfolding Conflict. Media in Pakistan, a Report by International Media Support, July 2009, p. 15, at <<http://www.i-m-s.dk/files/publications/1491%20Pakistan.final.web.pdf>>, 3 August 2012.*

³¹ Officially, 40% of Pakistanis are illiterate. According to diplomatic sources in Islamabad about 60-65% of Pakistanis are illiterate. Some Pakistani researchers I met would even put the real percentage as high as 70%.

³² Pakistan's expenditure on education (as a part of GDP) is the lowest in South Asia.

According to Pakistani government statistics, of the 20 million households, 35% had a TV set and 24% had a radio.³³ This means that about 7 million households, and approximately 50 million inhabitants have access to television, and somewhat less to radio programmes. There are now more than 40 television stations in the country and many private radio channels of which many serve as propaganda tools for various radical militant groups. Internet media are less important. You Tube is currently banned, while Facebook, the most popular social network has 15.4 million users which makes approximately 8% of the population.³⁴

The printed media in Pakistan are divided into the English and non-English language media. The English-language media are read mostly by English-speaking elite, primarily large towns dwellers and the expatriate community, including foreign journalists. However, only about one per cent of Pakistanis are fluent enough in English to read a paper³⁵ which makes the real impact of the English medium newspapers very limited indeed.³⁶

Vernacular electronic and printed media are very important as propaganda tools. According to the International Media Support there are close to a thousand regular dailies and weeklies published in Pakistan with a daily circulation of more than 6 million copies.³⁷ PIPS report on media in Pakistan estimates that at least 15% of the households subscribe to a newspaper a day³⁸ which means that close to 3 million households, or at least about 15 – 30 million Pakistanis read a daily newspaper.

According to a Pakistani journalist, *Daily Jung published in Urdu is printed in 300 thousand copies. It is read, however, by many more readers. It is available at retiring rooms at railway stations, local restaurants and barber shops. In most villages there are traditional "common rooms" where villagers meet for a chat and where the literate ones read papers to those who are unable to. It can safely be assumed that three million Pakistanis have a daily access to this paper. Many of the papers available to the common man are no more than propaganda of religious extremism published by various jihadi organisations and medresas. Combine it with the biased information provided by local TV channels, radio stations and even the many illegal but somehow broadcasting jihadi-ran FM radios, and it becomes understandable why there is so much hate for America and the West and why Pakistanis have been living with the siege mentality, as they do now, for years.*³⁹

³³ *Understanding the Militants' Media in Pakistan. Outreach and Impact*, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Islamabad 2010, p. 11.

³⁴ J. Haque, 'Analysis: Pakistan's Facebook Dilemma,' *The Dawn*, 3 August 2014, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1123012/analysis-pakistans-facebook-dilemma>>, 3 August 2014.

³⁵ The percentage is more or less the same as in India.

³⁶ It is the same case with the electronic media. "Dawn" TV began as an English and Urdu – language broadcaster only to drop their English programmes a year or so later. One of its popular anchors told me that there were not enough viewers for English language programmes.

³⁷ *Between Radicalization and Democratization...*, p. 20.

³⁸ *Understanding the Militants' Media...*, p. 11.

³⁹ Muhammad Shehzad, editor of *Pakistan Media Monitor*.

The key to the “siege mentality” and “hate-the-West” campaign are the jihadi media,⁴⁰ that have proliferated since the 1980s and continue to exert preponderant influence on the way of thinking of average Pakistanis. Militant media appeared in Pakistan in a big way as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The aim was to keep the flame of the anti-Soviet jihad, increase the flow of new recruits into the mujahideen ranks and collect donations. After the Soviet withdrawal and the fall of the Najibullah government in Kabul, jihadi media begun supporting the Taliban in the civil war in Afghanistan. Another important aim of jihadi media was to support the militant activity in Kashmir. Militant groups fighting the Indian government there have their own newspapers published in Pakistan. They are widely distributed among their supporters all over the world, primarily in Saudi Arabia, UAE and some European countries, to inform supporters about their activities and collect donations for the movement.

The militant media became tools in the internal politics supporting the process of Pakistan’s Islamisation. For Islamisation to be effective, it is not sufficient to present Islam in the most favourable light as the best religion, but to show how and why it is better than other faiths. That eventually turned media into instruments for anti-Western, anti-Christian and anti-Hindu propaganda. It was the militant media that imposed a certain model of presenting the post-9/11 Afghan conflict that created the myth of Pakistan and the wider Muslim community as threatened with aggression by Christian powers. This narrative was soon adopted by mainstream electronic media and resulted in fast deterioration of the public debate. Militant media’s influence runs far deeper than its theoretical reach based on the number of printed copies would suggest.

According to jihadi media, the world is divided into two parts – the righteous, Islamic “us” and the perfidious Christian-Jewish-Hindu “they.” According to psychologist Sudhir Kakar, *Few if any civilisations have attached as much importance to history as has Islam in its awareness of itself. “Recognise your history (tarikh)!” is the common fundamentalist exhortation, in contrast to the Hindu revivalist’s implied suggestion, “Live your myth!” From the Prophet’s time to the present, it has been Islam which has distinguished between self and other, between brother and stranger, between the faithful and the alien kafir, the unbeliever.*⁴¹ This dichotomy is continuously propagated in a simple way, accessible to uneducated population having little awareness of the realities of the world outside of their village or their town *basti* (locality).

The world that very many, if not most, Pakistanis believe they live in is a virtual creation. It serves the interests of the various militant outfits and religious political parties and, for the time being, the Pakistani establishment. It manages to keep the social discontent away from the true perpetrators of the misery of the average Pakistani’s daily life. The culprits are found in Kashmir, where treacherous “Hindu Bharatis” fight the brave Pakistan-backed mujahideen; in Afghanistan, where “Christian crusaders” massacre

⁴⁰ To be honest, however, the vernacular *jihadi* media are not the only ones to present a highly biased picture of the world and of Pakistan’s many problems. A number of English medium mainstream dailies do the same.

⁴¹ S. Kakar, *The Colours...*, p. 222.

peaceful Afghans out of pure hatred for Islam (or in order to steal the country's wealth); or even as far away as Palestine, where Jews constantly torment the Palestinians.⁴²

Here are some examples of the militant media's world view. According to *Daily Wahdat* a militant paper published from Peshawar in 50,000 copies, distributed in Pakistan, UAE and Afghanistan:

*Every single act of terror in Pakistan is due to the US. The US has imposed a war on the Muslims after the 9/11. The US has put a label of terrorism on the Muslims. The US has divided the world into two blocks now – Muslim and non-Muslim. The two blocks are fighting against each other. The infidel world is being headed by the US. The US is equipped with every kind of arms. And it is using its resources to commit atrocities against the Muslims. It seems that the US has waged a direct war against the Muslims. And it is shedding the blood of the Muslims – which will never benefit it. Sooner or later, the US will have to pay a very heavy price for it. The Muslim countries do not have the power to fight with the infidel world, therefore, hatred against the US among the Muslims is increasing day by day. And this hatred is not limited to America only. Muslims hate Europe and West and even any person whose skin is white.*⁴³

Daily Mashriq, another influential mainstream paper published from Peshawar in 50,000 copies by the Mashriq Group of Newspapers informs of a diabolical, if somewhat weird, conspiracy against Pakistan hatched by the CIA together with Osama bin Laden's son-in-law Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman Khalil heading the militant group Harkat-ul-Mujahideen:

The story of the second son-in-law is that he is Osama bin Laden's son-in-law. America, Britain and Saudi Arabia have chosen him to fight the decisive battle against Pakistan. Thus, the mission that could not be accomplished by the father-in-law has now been handed over to the son-in-law. The results of the negotiations, which took place in Jeddah, Dubai, London and Washington, are now becoming obvious. It seems that America needs the services of Osama bin Laden's son-in-law and the head of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman Khalil. According to the new drama script, the government of 12 or 15 Afghan provinces will be handed over to the new leadership by the name of the Taliban. These people will supply militants for attacking Pakistan, provide training camps to train the terrorists and help America in the decisive war against Pakistan. [...] Osama bin Laden's son-in-law has been assured that Pakistan will be under his control and that all of Pakistan's resources will be handed over to him. He has been made to believe that Pakistan is responsible for all the troubles he faces. He has been assured cooperation from Saudi Arabia and America if he attacks Pakistan and according to reports he believes in the promises made to him. Pakistan is also a part of these negotiations, which means that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's son-in-law [Asif Ali Zardari, the former President of Pakistan] is playing the role of a "guest actor." The Pakistani officials are being appeased by pledges of cooperation in dealing with terrorism. The Afghan terrorists will be used to defeat the Pakistani terrorists.

⁴² The Chinese are spared, though, despite their treatment of Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang.

⁴³ *Daily Wahdat*, 2 December 2009, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 285.

The services of the sons-in-law of Osama bin Laden and Maulana Sufi Muhammad [i.e. Mullah Fazlullah of Swat, now leader of the Pakistani Taliban, K.D.] will be engaged in the war against Pakistan to ensure that minimum number of Americans are killed. According to the details of this report, America, Britain and Saudi Arabia have promised the son-in-law of Osama bin Laden that Sharia'a [Islamic law] would be implemented. Think about it: can the Jews and Christians implement Sharia'a? The Muslims will cut each other's throats because of this Sharia'a. If you go back to history, you'll notice that the war fought by America in Afghanistan between 1978-1990 has left 200,000 Muslims dead. Not even a single American was killed; it was not the Muslims but America who emerged victorious in this war. Likewise, the war fought by America and the European countries between 2001-2009 has left 300,000 Muslims dead. In contrast, some 1400 Americans and 600 Europeans have lost their lives in this war. Thus, it is 300,000 Muslim casualties against 2000 non-Muslim casualties i.e. 150,000:1000. This implies that one non-Muslim is accidentally or mistakenly killed after the death of 150 Muslims. Victory is only achieved after the end of war. About 38,000 Muslims have been killed so far in America's war against Pakistan. It is said that 93 non-Muslims were also killed in this war, which means that one non-Muslim was accidentally or mistakenly after the death of 423 Muslims. Someone else is fighting the war but we are the ones being killed. Osama bin Laden's son-in-law should also think about it. Sufi Muhammad's son-in-law should also consider the whole situation. The son-in-law of the national leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto should also analyze the new script of this drama and devise a new strategy to deal with it.⁴⁴

Glorification of jihad against the neighbouring India is another popular subject of the militant media. Here is the story about a young martyred holy fighter published by *Roza tul Atfaal Weekly* which is fortnightly publication by Lashkare Taiba, one of the most influential and dangerous (though theoretically banned) jihadi organizations in Pakistan. This sentimental story is characteristic of the militant propaganda:

A young man enters his house with a suitcase. He is the most handsome son of his parents. He asks his mother that if she had to sacrifice an animal then what kind of animal she would chose. She said that she would choose a fat, healthy and big animal. The boy questions that is he not the biggest, healthy and muscular boy in the family and should he not be sacrificed for Allah. The mother says that yes he is a gift of Allah and he should be sacrificed for Him. Then the boy asks his parents to take good care of his jihadi friends and love them like they love him.

The boy joins Lashkar Taiba with the permission of his parents and receives training of jihad and after sometime is launched inside Kashmir. He gets motivation to kill the Hindus while listening to the stories of their atrocities. He fought in Kashmir for three years and receives six bullets in an encounter with the Indian army. He returns home and the mother insists that she would arrange his marriage. He says that he would marry the 70 girls of paradise. But he surrenders before his mother's will and marries a girl. But the wife's love fails to keep him away from jihad. He goes to Kashmir again and kills the Hindus for 8 months. He visits his mother again and complaints that she is not praying for him. He

⁴⁴ *Daily Mashriq*, 1 December 2009, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 285.

*has not embraced "martyrdom" yet. The mother says that she prays for his martyrdom everyday and very soon Allah will listen to her prayers. The boy says to mother that he would like his wife to produce seven sons and he would like to wage jihad along with his seven sons. He would like to embrace martyrdom along with his seven sons. This further motivates his mother to bow before God and pray hard for his martyrdom. Finally, the boy embraces martyrdom in Kashmir. The Lashkar leaders visit his parents; congratulate the family; pay cash money as reward and pray for his soul. They give his will to their parents. The will asks the parents to send rest of the sons for jihad. It urges the father to grow beard. It asks the parents to use his gun and never let it catch rust.*⁴⁵

According to the militant media, the West is collapsing and the United States is on its last feet. Having lost the war against the Taliban its military is demoralized and in disarray, its economy crumbling. Society is disintegrating and the more enlightened Americans convert to Islam. America is no more a great power it used to be and is on the way to a complete collapse, just like the former USSR disintegrated due to the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan.⁴⁶ Here is an interesting assessment of the state of the United States in 2011 as seen in the editorial of Shahadat published in Pashto from Peshawar:

*The Europeans have learnt that the war in Afghanistan has been lost and American economy has gone bankrupt. The army of the US, NATO and ISAF is totally demoralized. The US is weak to such an extent that just another blow and it will collapse. Many journalists in America are writing these days that the US control over Afghanistan is not more than 20 percent and it has lost the war. Now it is disintegrating like the USSR. The US education system is declining. The US is no more the single super power now. Afghanistan has become its graveyard. History will tell the students that a great superpower of the past – the US – is now resting eternally in the graveyards of Afghanistan.*⁴⁷

Hand in hand with the inferiority complex vis-à-vis the Arab and Western world (as well as India among certain sections of the better educated population), goes the notion of racial/religious superiority of Muslims. The two are not mutually exclusive and are often found in other parts of the world.⁴⁸ There has been a historical tendency among the Muslim elites, at least since the thirteenth century, to invent real or imagined Central Asian, Arab or Persian ancestry, considered better than their true Indian origin.⁴⁹ The compensating effect of the superiority complex has been long known to

⁴⁵ Roza tul Atfaal Weekly, 15 August 2010, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 314.

⁴⁶ The belief in the USSR's collapse as directly resulting from its engagement in Afghanistan is commonly held in Pakistan and among many Muslims in Indian Kashmir.

⁴⁷ *Shahadat*, 3 January, 2011, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 328.

⁴⁸ They form, for example, a part of the complex psychological attitude of Poles towards Russians and Germans.

⁴⁹ *The court (of the Great Mogol) does not now consist, as originally, of real Mogols; but is a medley of Usbecs, Persians, Arabs, and Turks, or descendants from all these people; known, as I said before, by the general appellation of Mogols. It should be added, however, that children of the third and fourth generation, who have the brown complexion, and the languid manner of this country of their nativity, are held in much less respect than new comers, and are seldom invested with official situations: they consider themselves happy, if permitted to serve as private soldiers in the infantry or cavalry* – F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, AD 1656-1668*, trans. by A. Constable, Delhi 1997, p. 209.

psychologists and it works very well with Pakistanis. The Western and Indian civilisations are contrasted unfavourably with Muslim civilisation and presented as degenerate, primitive, deceitful, immoral and false. Their contribution to the world civilisation is nil. The West stole or otherwise illegally appropriated the scientific discoveries made by Muslims. The essence of this evil-minded Western civilisation bound on destroying Islam out of spite is thus presented in "Daily Islam" by Prof. Khubab Ahmad Khan:

*The West was under the Dark Age for a long time and it was brought to enlightenment by the Muslims. The West learnt simple manners of life like washing hands and eating from the Muslims. The West invented new things on the basis of discoveries that were made by the Muslim scientists – but it will never acknowledge it.*⁵⁰

The Pakistan army, the most powerful and influential Pakistani institution, is waging its own internal jihad promoting the same skewed world view and enhancing the siege mentality. In the Pakistan Army Green Book published in 2008, Brigadier Waqar Hassan Khan argues:

*Now it has come in the open that people have been missing the jungle for the trees; the so-called Pakistani Taliban was a bogey created by RAW, MOSSAD, and probably the U.S.-led coalition to keep the Durand Line on fire and destabilise Pakistan internally to achieve the ultimate objective of undermining the only nuclear Islamic state on this earth.*⁵¹

The same Brigadier clearly promotes the idea of an American conspiracy that led to the 9/11 attacks: *the superpower's entry into the Middle-East and West Asia was not possible without a Pearl Harbour; 9/11 was either created or supported, to be labelled as the second Pearl Harbour.*⁵² What he was in effect saying was that Americans bombed their own city and killed 3,500 of their own citizens in order to insidiously blame it on Al Qaeda and the Muslim world to get the casus belli to attack Afghanistan and then threaten Pakistan – the only nuclear-armed Muslim state on earth directly or via US-sponsored Pakistani Taliban Movement (TTP). This logic, though much warped, is characteristic of a very wide spectrum of Pakistanis – from the Western-educated businessmen, top-ranking Army officers, bureaucrats, down to a street shoe-shine boy and a small-town rickshaw-puller.

The Green Book of 2011 blames United States, India and Afghanistan for creating and fomenting the insurgency in FATA and attempting to convert Pakistan into a *colonised state which should serve US interests and oblige the dictates of India.*⁵³

What is particularly interesting, however, is the way that the jihadi narrative influences the mainstream media. Far from speaking against religious fanaticism, the mainstream vernacular electronic media are keen to promote both the jihadi narrative and

⁵⁰ *Daily Islam*, 31 December 2011, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 328.

⁵¹ P. Swamy, 'God's Soldiers: Pakistan Army's Ideology,' *The Hindu*, 17 October 2011, at <<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/gods-soldiers-pakistan-armys-ideology/article2515374.ece>>, 7 August 2012.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ A. Mir, 'Pak-US ties declining, reveals Army's Green Book,' *The News*, 7 December 2013, <<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-218760-Pak-US-military-ties-declining,-reveals-Armys-Green-Book>>, 15 May 2014.

some of the most intolerant representatives of the fundamentalist religious right. These narratives very strongly emphasise Pakistan's "Islamic uniqueness" which makes it the target for Western and Indian intrigues thus enhancing the fear of international conspiracies. This media stand partly results from the threats by the Taliban against Pakistani media. There were journalists who received personal threats from the Pakistani Taliban, particularly those active in Peshawar. Some decided to go into hiding, others suspended their journalistic activity. Still, others were brutally murdered, as were the three journalists employed by the Express TV in Karachi who had their throats cut for doing stories that the militants disliked. The seriousness of the Taliban threat made journalists take a fresh look at the fatwa issued by the Taliban in 2012 where the militants juxtapose prevailing "un-Islamic" media practices with religious injunctions prescribing various punishments, including death, for the erring journalists. The killing of the journalists in Karachi turned out to be a very effective move by terrorists and forced electronic media to publicise the militants' viewpoints.⁵⁴ But the media's very often sympathetic presentation of the militant's perspective also results from the simple fact that it is largely accepted by the society. It primarily results from the media's belief that this is the narrative that the people wish to hear, and the financial sponsors wish to pay for. According to Umair Javed:

A two-month long analysis of city and metropolitan pages, of two major Urdu-language national dailies, reveals that events hosted by one or more religious parties account for approximately 22pc (or roughly one-fifth) of all news stories within local-level reportage.

These events take several forms, first of which is the overtly political – where mid-to-higher tier leadership of Jamaatud Dawa (JuD), Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, JI, JUI-F, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Sami, Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan, Sunni Ittehad Council, and others hold their own gatherings for the purpose of disseminating opinions on national events. Such gatherings often conclude with a local protest, burning of the American flag, and reaffirmation of their commitment to bringing "true Islam" in the country. The second variety encompasses the overtly theological events – these include Seerat-un-Nabi conferences, Khatm-i-Nabuwat conferences, panel discussions on what it means to be a good Muslim, Islam and modernity, debates in jurisprudence, and in some cases, Islam and contemporary business.⁵⁵ According to Javed, the proof of the success of religious right in Pakistan is in the wide coverage given to it by vernacular media. It certainly is a true assertion, however, one could also claim that one of the key reasons for that success is precisely the support the extremists receive from the majority of vernacular media, printed and electronic, if only tacitly given, for instance by not providing enough space to alternate points of view not linked with religious discourse. And then there is also a very mundane reason for the media's attention to what the religious right has to say. The media is, after all, only a business. The mainstream media do engage in the

⁵⁴ S.I. Ashraf, 'Media under Fire,' *The Dawn*, 15 February 2014, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1087086/media-under-fire>>, 15 February 2014.

⁵⁵ U. Javed, 'A Difference of Decibels,' *The Dawn*, 19 November 2013, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1057086/a-difference-of-decibels>>, 19 November 2013.

process of soft, or creeping Islamisation because this is what the viewers and readers are looking for and patrons (business, religious institutions, security services, etc.) are willing to pay for.

Pakistani media are basically free, although the influence upon them of the powerful militant, jihadi, religious and military/security lobbies is obvious. They continue to be used as agents in the process of Islamisation by strengthening the siege mentality of the population in relation to Pakistan's neighbours and those non-Muslim countries that the elites see as threatening their undisputed hold on power. The influence of the jihadi media, both in printed and electronic form is particularly telling due to their wide availability (distribution through mosques and approximately twenty thousand medresas) and their simplified black and white message. These media foster the growth of conspiracy theories, xenophobia, religious and political radicalisation which are not in the interests of either the growth of international understanding or, in the final analysis, of Pakistan's prosperous future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbas S., *Probing the Jihadi Mindset*, Islamabad 2007.
- Ahsan A., *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan*, Karachi 1996.
- Ashraf S.I., 'Media under Fire,' *The Dawn*, 15 February 2014, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1087086/media-under-fire>>.
- Bernier F., *Travels in the Mogul Empire, AD 1656-1668*, trans. by A. Constable, Delhi 1997.
- Between Radicalization and Democratization in Unfolding Conflict. Media in Pakistan*, a Report by International Media Support, July 2009, p. 15, at <<https://www.mediasupport.org/publication/pakistan-between-radicalisation-and-democratisation-in-an-unfolding-conflict/>>.
- Daily Islam*, 31 December 2011, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 328.
- Daily Mashriq*, 1 December 2009, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 285.
- Daily Wahdat*, 2 December 2009, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 285.
- Frontier Post*, 25 May 2009.
- 'A Handy Excuse,' *The Dawn*, 1 October 2012, at <<http://dawn.com/2012/10/01/a-handly-excuse/>>.
- Haque J., 'Analysis: Pakistan's Facebook Dilemma,' *The Dawn*, 3 August 2014, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1123012/analysis-pakistans-facebook-dilemma>>.
- Iqbal A., 'Shikwa,' Urdu Compositions, at <http://musingsofanintrovert.blogspot.com/2008_03_01_archive.html>.
- Javed U., 'A Difference of Decibels,' *The Dawn*, 19 November 2013, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1057086/a-difference-of-decibels>>.
- Kakar S., *The Colours of Violence*, New Delhi 1995.
- Khan H., *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, Karachi 2009.
- Malishevski N., 'Who Will Benefit from the Disintegration of Pakistan?,' *Strategic Culture Foundation Online Journal*, 31 October 2013, at <<http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2013/10/31/who-will-benefit-from-the-disintegration-of-pakistan.html>>.

Mawdudi SAA., *Let Us Be Muslims*, ed. K. Murad, London 1986.

Mir A., 'Pak-US ties declining, reveals Army's Green Book,' *The News*, 7 December 2013, <<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-218760-Pak-US-military-ties-declining,-reveals-Armys-Green-Book>>.

Nasir A., 'Path to Perdition,' *The Dawn*, 22 September 2012, at <<http://dawn.com/2012/09/22/path-to-perdition/>>.

Peters R., 'Blood Borders,' *Armed Forces Journal*, 1 June 2006, at <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/blood-borders/>>.

Prof. Hafiz Saeed EID 2013 Message, Tune.pl, at <<http://tune.pk/video/311881/eid-masseg-final-1>>.

Roza tul Atfaal Weekly, 15 August 2010, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 314.

Sennels N., 'Muslims and Westerners: The Psychological Differences,' *New English Review* (May 2010), at <http://www.newenglishreview.org/Nicolai_Sennels/Muslims_and_Westerners%3A_The_Psychological_Differences/>.

Shahadat, 3 January, 2011, *Pakistan Media Monitor*, Vol. 328.

Swamy P., 'God's Soldiers: Pakistan Army's Ideology,' *The Hindu*, 17 October 2011, at <<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/gods-soldiers-pakistan-armys-ideology/article2515374.ece>>.

Talbot I., *Pakistan. A Modern History*, London 2005.

Understanding the Militants' Media in Pakistan. Outreach and Impact, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Islamabad 2010.

Zakaria R., 'Arabicising Pakistan,' *The Dawn*, 23 May 2014, at <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1108154/arabicising-pakistan>>.

Zelin A.Y., 'New English Language Magazine *Azan*, Issue #1,' *Jihadology*, 6 March 2013, at <<http://jihadology.net/2013/05/06/new-english-language-magazine-azan-issue-1/>>.

Krzysztof DEBNICKI, Ph.D. – Professor at Collegium Civitas and the Department of Oriental Studies, Warsaw University. Previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Poland in New Delhi (1995-1999), Ambassador to Mongolia (2001-2005) and Ambassador to Pakistan (2007-2010). Specialises in the history and contemporary socio-political problems of South and Central Asia.