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EDITORIAL

Endangering peace in South Asia

The vibes in south Asia are pretty clear now; a nationalist, jingoistic and intelligence-led mindset in New Delhi has turned Afghanistan into the centerpiece of its policy on Pakistan. Regardless of how they position themselves henceforth, the world should not be surprised if the current simmering tensions blew into armed hostilities.

The string of statements from Modi, his foreign and defense ministers, as well as Ajit Doval (the former spymaster and now the national security advisor); in the last three weeks, the vitriolic Pakistan-bashing in Kabul, and the continued demonization of Pakistan in Dhaka reflect a well-knit string of fire around Pakistan

Imtiaz Gul very aptly wrote: “This encirclement – if planned the way it appears today – does not bode well for the South Asian region, with a fragile Afghanistan still caught up in the vicious cycle of insurgency. Afghanistan has upstaged Kashmir and emerged as the critical link in what could be called the triangle of tribulation consisting of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan – a region currently being stoked by the nationalist Modi, ably supported by an ‘intelligence’ mindset.

Coincidentally, Modi’s Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina Wajid minces no words and spares no opportunity in demonizing Pakistan. Her narrative revolves around Pakistan-bashing – wherever and whenever possible. And this fits into nationalist Indians’ recipe on how to deal with Pakistan.

In February 2014, Doval had practically outlined what we see today – in the 10th Nani Palkhivala Memorial Lecture to Indian students at SASTRA University. Ajit Doval advocated the use of what he termed a “defensive offensive mode”, a “fourth generation war” which would bypass the deterrence posed by Pakistan’s nuclear weapons, to attack Pakistan’s vulnerabilities. “It can be economic, internal security, political, their isolation internationally, or exposing their terrorist activities, or defeating their

policies in Afghanistan, making it difficult for them to manage internal political balance or internal security.”

And next door in Kabul, the Indian reservations on an NDS-ISI cooperation deal generated into a political storm that almost toppled President Ashraf Ghani, who not only had to postpone his visit to Doha, Qatar for possible peace talks with Taliban but also had to replace the NDS deputy to neutralize the vicious opposition to the memorandum of understanding between the two intelligence agencies.

Ironically, and interestingly for Pakistan, Mr Modi and his colleagues have indeed done a great service in uniting a.) The political leadership from all shades, and b.) Brought the civilian and military leadership closer than ever before.”

It has been reliably learnt that Pakistan is now actively considering taking up the statement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi about India role in breaking up Pakistan and creating Bangladesh and the evidence of ongoing interference through proxy terrorism in Pakistan at the United Nations.

In his speech at Dhaka University, Narendra Modi publically accepted the Indian government and its people’s role in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. A few days later, Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar said that terrorists had to be neutralized only through terrorists thereby implying that his country will not resist from sponsoring terrorism in other countries. He further said, “We should do it. Why does my soldier have to do it?” Ikram Sehgal writes, “The present architect of India’s “hybrid warfare” “seeking to inflict pain” (in his own words) on Pakistan is Ajit Doval (Modi’s National Security Adviser). He is well aware that Parrikar’s statement was a true reflection of how India perpetuates hegemony (or tries to) on the States on its periphery. Trying to tone down the controversy, Parrikar said he was “only in favour of targeted strikes based on intelligence and not covert operations undertaken by civilians or militia”, his U-turn was an afterthought. Pakistan has persistently maintained that RAW (and other Indian intelligence agencies) have been targeting Pakistan since the 1965 Indo-Pak War. A recent documentary by BBC reported that MQM (a political party based in Karachi) has been receiving financial assistance from RAW (Indian intelligence agency).

Legal experts in international law believe that what Modi said in Dhaka tantamount to self indictment in an act of interference in another country. Under international law this was the most blatant violation of the basic block of the UN- the principle of non interference. According to UN resolution 1373 passing such statements coupled with reported incidents of Indian interference in the country clearly suggested that India was effectively obstructing Pakistan's ongoing counter-terrorism efforts.

Islamophobia in India

While we are concerned more about Islamophobia in the West we have failed to see the more potent and immediate danger that emanates from India. Whereas it is commonly believed that in the West the governments would like to contain Islamophobia and take appropriate remedial measures in India there is evidence that it is state sponsored. Under Narendra Modi Islamophobia has hit India like a tsunami. The anti-Muslim tirade has permeated the body politic of India. RSS — a right-wing paramilitary party politically allied to Narendra Modi's BJP is carrying out "Saffron Terror" and forcibly converting Muslims, Christians and Dalits to Hinduism in what is termed as "Ghar Wapsi. India's right wingers demonize Muslims. Remember what Ambedkar (The guru of Dalits) said, "Dalits were never Hindus and will never be Hindus"

Hindutva is on the rise and the principal targets are Muslims and Dalits. Please take note that there are nearly 250,000,000 (a quarter billion) Dalits and nearly 200,000,000 (two hundred million) Muslims in India. Combined they represent over 40 percent of India population. LISA considers that the most urgent cause of concern should be the rise of Hindutva and Islamophobia in India.

The Indian Hindutva network's inner core is currently comprised of at least 17 groups whose primary purpose is to promote prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims. An additional 32 groups are actively engaged in forcefully converting Muslims, Christians and Dalits in the folds of Hinduism The inner core Indian Islamophobia/Hindutva network enjoyed access to billions of rupees in pursuit of their radical mission

For some, rising anti-Muslim sentiments are immediately explained away as a "natural" outcome of the many violent events in the Muslim world and

“terrorism” in general. However, *we maintain that the rising negative sentiments may have to do with the presence of a well-organized and well-funded Islamophobic industry that has managed to invade and capture civil society and public discourses without serious contestation*

Both of these events and many others continue to remind communities around the world that despite the enduring permanence of Islamophobia, various modes and tactics of organized resistance are available as steps to justice, liberation, and emancipation.

Speaking at a London Institute Seminar at University of London Saeed Ismat emphasised the need to analyze Islamophobia and its multiple manifestations. We hope this issue will foster further research and engagement in academic institutions and in civil and human rights organizations particularly the *rising tsunami of Islamophobia in India*.

In solidarity with Kancha Ilaiah

K.P. Sasi

Now it is time to work on the human rights violation and violation of freedom of expression of Kancha Ilaiah. Prof. Kancha Ilaiah is certainly one of the most prominent Dalit intellectuals in India today. The harassment of Kancha Ilaiah indicates another important signal. The message is loud and clear: 'If we can do this to Kancha Ilaiah, then we can do it to any ordinary Dalit, Adivasis or Muslim.

Around the same time of banning Ambedkar-Periyar study circle, IIT-M, cases has been filed by the Hyderabad police against well known Dalit writer and academic Kancha Ilaiah on a complaint by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). The complaint was filed on the basis of Ilaiah's article Devudu Prajasamy Vada Kada? (Is God a democrat?) Published in a Telugu daily on May 9. The cases have a potential to imprison Kancha Ilaiah up to a period of three years.

Prof. Kancha Ilaiah, 63, is certainly one of the most prominent Dalit intellectuals in India today. His books include 'Why I am not a Hindu', 'Post-Hindu India: A Discourse in Dalit-Bahujan, Socio-Spiritual and Scientific Revolution', 'God as Political Philosopher: Buddha's challenge to Brahmanism', 'Democracy in India: A Hollow Shell', 'Manatatwam' (in Telugu), and 'Buffalo Nationalism: A Critique of Spiritual Fascism'.

The action undertaken by the VHP-Police duo is a clear and strong representation of the growing fascism in the academic circles as well as in intellectual and cultural fabric. Why do the Sangh Parivar activists get so threatened by the academic questions raised by Kancha Ilaiah? Do they feel that the Hinduism will collapse with such questioning? Is it not a symptom

The intellectual arguments placed by Prof. Kancha Ilaiah are to be dealt with counter arguments intellectually. These discussions are not something to be dealt in a police station. Time and again the Sangh Parivar has proved its incapacities to confront intellectual arguments on intellectual terms itself. Therefore, they are forced to resort to violence and the use of police force.

The police cases on Prof. Kancha Ilaiah are symptoms of a larger disorder. Many writers, artists, film makers and theatre personalities have been victims of the growing disorder of violation of freedom of expression in India. When Anand Patwardhan's documentary film 'Ram Ke Naam' was blocked both by the State as well as the cultural fascists on many instances, it was this expression of freedom that was expressed by many individuals, groups and even a large section of the media. Such violations on freedom of expression only resulted in wider screenings of Anand's film. The members of the theatre group Kabir Kala Manch were harassed with fabricated cases restricting their freedom of expression on social issues. Modi Government even tried to arrest the editor of Communalism Combat, Teesta Setalvad on fabricated charges, for having spoken the truth about Gujarat.

Even when the cultural fascists tried to block the mainstream film PK which had a ninety per cent Hindu crew and a Muslim film star Amir Khan, the people rejected such imposition on freedom of expression and the film became a hit. The feature film 'Fire' directed by Deepa Mehta and acted by Nandita Das and Shabana Azmi also faced the same threat. But with the active participation of the sexuality groups, women's groups, secular forces and human rights groups, such violations were overcome. Some of the journalists in the mainstream media even tried to implicate that she was a terrorist. However, people realised the truth in a short span of time. The screening of Sanjay Kak's film was attacked by the Sangh Parivar in Hyderabad some time back. The screening of the film 'Shit' on the plight of manual scavengers in Tamil Nadu, by well known documentary film maker Amudhan, was attacked by the Sangh Parivar in Thrissur. On another occasion in Thrissur, the BJP leader Gopalakrishnan lied in public that a film by a Kashmiri director, which was screened in the VIBGYOR International Film Festival, was funded by Pakistan and the Sangh Parivar destroyed the festival office and tried to stop the screening. Again, due to the unity and strength of a conscious crowd, they were forced to retaliate. Recently, the well known Tamil writer, Perumal Murugan had to withdraw his books from being distributed, out of sheer frustration due to such communal fascist attacks.

One of the most shameful among the fascist attacks on the freedom of expression was on India's most well known painter MF Hussain, who had to leave India due to such threats, expressing his sorrow and difficulty in proving himself to be an Indian, since he was a Muslim. Gyanpeeth Award

winner UR Anantha Moorthy was asked to go to Pakistan by the Sangh Parivar for his critique on Modi.

Journalist Syed Mohammed Kazmi had to spend time in jail as an under trial charged with the draconian law, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). Since there were no proper evidences for his fabricated case, the judge had to give him bail. The evidences and witnesses in many of these cases are least intelligently cooked up by the police. However, it has become a rule if not a norm, that most of the journalists wrote on the basis of the false information projected by the police and the Sangh Parivar. Sometimes, the possession of a mainstream Urdu newspaper is taken as evidence to prove the terrorist links of a media person and sometimes a book written by Mao Tse Tung which is available in book stores is taken as a proof to establish that somebody is a violent Naxalite. In the case of Yahya Kummukkutty, who suffered in jail under UAPA without trial for so many years, the evidences were even funnier. One of the evidences to be branded as a terrorist was that he had a book written by internationally well known writer Khalil Gibran! Yahya got a bail recently.

Well, the list of attacks by the communal fascists on culture and freedom of expression is endless in recent times. These are only some of the examples of denial of freedom of expression by the communal forces and the state. But if you explore properly, you will be surprised to see that the list is fairly huge, especially in recent times. *And with the arrival of Modi, both the Sangh Parivar and the executive machineries of the State became more assertive and more aggressive, with full confidence that there would be nobody to question the misuse of their powers.*

The violation of freedom of expression of Prof. Kancha Ilaiah; however seems to be one of the latest on this list. But what is most significant here in all such cases is the fact that the freedom of expression is also linked to the freedom of people to receive such a communication process. Democracy does not exist if people do not assert their rights.

My own personal experiences on freedom of expression as a film maker are also not very different, if not with such intensity of issues involved as in the above cases. Our documentary film 'Fabricated' on the fabricated cases and under trials was blocked by the Sangh Parivar using the police machinery in Alway around eight months back. Though they were successful in blocking

that particular screening, I was delighted to hear that the organisers organised several screenings of the same film immediately after that in the same district. In Chennai, when I was invited to screen the film 'Fabricated' by the well known documentary film maker Amudhan, I received a call from the Times TV saying that the Sangh Parivar had filed a complaint with the Police Commissioner that the screenings of this film must be blocked. They wanted my responses following which both Amudhan and I spoke on the channel. The support from the mainstream media on this issue was good. Perhaps due to such a support, the behaviour of the police was very decent in Chennai. There were five screenings and the police came for every screening without disrupting. The first screening was organised in a hall which belonged to a book shop and the police came to me and requested for a CD of the film. I told them to watch the film and we could give them a copy after the screening. They said, 'No, sir. We will stay here and wait in the book shop itself till the screening ends.' Anyway, the intelligence people were also there in the hall, watching the film. The police did not know what to do with their time for spending one and a half hours of the screening time. So, they started looking at the books and started reading them casually. After the screening, we gave them a copy of the film. One member of the organising team told me with great excitement: 'Sasi, you have made history. You made the Tamil Nadu police read books!'

The violation of human rights and freedom of expression of Prof. Kancha Ilaiah also indicates another grave reality today. There is also an increasing suppression on the right to dissent, a right that is being violated in many Universities and academic institutions in India, where surveillance is used as a weapon to crush dissent. The assertion of Ambedkar-Periyar study circle, IIT-M, and the wide solidarity actions all over the country, indicate this extremely positive trend. And I am sure, that if the students and teachers express their own freedom, they can play a major role in subverting the entire Silent Emergency that is creeping into our lives in recent history. This community will have to play a central role in the protection of freedom of expression that is enshrined in our Constitution. And I hope that in the coming future, the youth in this country will articulate more strongly against the growing fascism. Remember, it is mainly this same section of youth which was primarily responsible for resisting and removing Emergency of the seventies in India.

While the public spaces for protests shrank during this period, the right to organisation, the right to unionisation and the right to public discourses in campuses were tightened by a collaboration of the State along with the management of the educational institutions. The loss of values among the political party leaderships provided a public image that politics itself was a dirty word. This also accounted for the lack of strong questioning and protests from the side of the students and youth against the efforts of the State to reduce their political spaces.

The idea was to shape a society under a false ideology and do everything possible to convince the people about this false ideology. And those who did not believe in such a false ideology of fascism, Hitler made sure that their lips were sealed. The Sangh Parivar is repeating the same history in India today.

Now it is time to work on the human rights violation and violation of freedom of expression of Kancha Ilaiah. Prof. Kancha Ilaiah is certainly one of the most prominent Dalit intellectuals in India today. The harassment on Kancha Ilaiah indicates another important signal. The message is loud and clear: 'If we can do this to Kancha Ilaiah, then we can do it to any ordinary Dalit, Adivasis or Muslim.' It is high time that the same collective energy all over India which was expressed in the case of Ambedkar-Periyar study circle, IITM, is exhibited on the issue of police cases on Kancha Ilaiah. What should be spoken, written, discussed, debated, painted or filmed cannot be dictated by the Sangh Parivar. That also at a time when many of their speakers are spitting venom against the minorities openly and publicly. While the list of writers, artists, theatre personalities, film makers and academic personalities who have been targeted so far is quite long, Kancha Ilaiah is the most recent victim and appropriate symbol to take up all other such issues of violation of freedom of expression. No democracy will survive without freedom of expression.

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As the US Pivots Away, China Bets on Pakistan

Daniel Twining

Daniel Twining is Senior Fellow for Asia at the German Marshall Fund and a former member of the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff from 2007-9. A version of this article appeared in the Nikkei Asian Review (<http://asia.nikkei.com>). This is online version of PacNet.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has recently concluded an important state summit in Pakistan. Given that much of Pakistani diplomacy revolves around securing foreign assistance, the government in Islamabad is celebrating Chinese commitments of \$46 billion agreed during the visit in new financing for infrastructure investments – especially as American interest diminishes amid the US troop reduction in Afghanistan. Pakistan's role as a hub in China's "New Silk Road" initiative to enhance economic connectivity between Asia and Europe could benefit the whole region. But *Beijing's interests go beyond Pakistan's development: the country is the gateway to a bigger Chinese strategic role in the Indian Ocean and the Middle East. China's "Go west" policy is part of its breakout of East Asia to become a more global power, and Pakistan is at the centre of that transformation.*

In Islamabad, Xi and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif finalized agreements on \$28 billion in new infrastructure projects, from electric plants and pipelines to roads and railways, as part of a \$46 billion Chinese commitment to help stabilize Pakistan and make it a gateway to the sea for China's landlocked western region of Xinjiang. Sharif was appropriately grateful, saying that "Pakistan considers China's security as important as its own" in light of worries that terrorism and extremism emanating out of Pakistan could threaten China. The two countries even agreed to stand up a special security force to project Chinese investments in Pakistan against terrorist attacks.

For all its problems of poor governance and extremism, Pakistan actually has enormous economic potential. A decade ago, Goldman Sachs identified it as one of the "Next-11" big emerging economies. Pakistan sits in between India, the growing large economy; China, the biggest driver of global growth; and Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, with the world's biggest oil and gas deposits. The newly inaugurated China Pakistan Economic Corridor is designed to leverage these geographic advantages to make Pakistan a

gateway to these markets. As Pakistan's Planning Minister, Ahsan Iqbal, said before Xi's visit, "If we become the bridge between these three engines of growth, we will be able to carve out a large economic bloc of about 3 billion living in this part of the world... nearly half the planet."

Expansive as that vision is, China's ambitions for Pakistan go beyond it – in part because they are about much more than Pakistan itself. As the German Marshall Fund's Andrew Small writes in his excellent new book, *The China-Pakistan Axis*:

Pakistan is a central part of China's transition from a regional power to a global one. The country lies at the heart of Beijing's plans for a network of ports, pipelines, roads, and railways connecting the oil and gas fields of the Middle East to the mega-cities of East Asia. Its coastline is becoming a crucial staging post for China's takeoff as a naval power, extending its reach from the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. Penetration by Pakistan's intelligence services into the darkest corners of global jihadi networks are a vital asset to China as it navigates its growing interests in the Islamic world, and seeks to choke off support for the militant activities that pose one of the gravest threats to China's internal stability.

And, of course, Pakistan has been a highly effective way for China to checkmate the power of its great Asian rival, India – including by midwifing Islamabad's nuclear weapons program. China's infrastructure investments in Pakistan are big news. But Behind the scenes, the two countries are finalizing a deal for Chinese delivery of eight attack submarines described by the Naval War College's Lyle Goldstein as "very quiet, capable and lethal." Pakistan is to pay China \$6 billion for the submarines – an amount roughly equal to the amount of US civilian assistance provided to Pakistan under the historic Kerry-Lugar-Berman aid package of 2009. The purpose of the submarines is, of course, to counter the Indian Navy. Meanwhile, Chinese sponsorship to develop the deep-water port of Gwadar, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, renders it the leading contender to be China's first overseas naval station.

US officials have been exasperated dealing with their Pakistani friends for the past 15 years. Perhaps China will have better luck promoting stability and growth there while countering the violent extremism that threatens it.

However, Chinese officials have a mixed record when it comes to state-directed investment abroad in pursuit of wider geopolitical interests.

China has lent over \$56 billion to the crumbling regime in Venezuela, with little hope of repayment. Its economic penetration of Myanmar led the military regime there to cancel an enormous Chinese dam project and to pivot toward the West, to escape Beijing's clutches. In Sri Lanka, Beijing bankrolled the strongman regime of Mahinda Rajapaksa, leading the candidate who beat him at the polls, Maithripala Sirisena, to make China a wedge campaign issue. As now-President Sirisena put it, "If this trend continues for another six years our country would become a colony and we would become slaves." One of his first acts on taking office was to suspend several large Chinese investment projects.

Pakistanis with bigger problems are unlikely to worry about becoming Chinese "slaves" any time soon. But as China deepens its involvement in Pakistan, it will encounter the same obstacles that have plagued US efforts to promote the country's reform and development. Pakistani officials will also discover that China's growing equities with India – and India's growing power – will make Beijing more reluctant to be dragged into sub continental rivalries. Nonetheless, make no mistake: after millennia as an East Asian power, China's new "Go West" policy is part of a more global grand strategy in which Pakistan is but the launching pad.

India's 'Hybrid Warfare'

Ikram Sehgal

Pakistan must directly and/or indirectly attack those cells supporting RAW's hybrid warfare within Pakistan creating internal problems for the South Asian country, argues one analyst after Indian Defence Minister's public endorsement of using terrorism as a policy tool.

Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar recently inadvertently blurted out what has been a home truth for nearly five decades, India's penchant for employing/outsourcing of terrorists to catch/kill terrorists, "We should do it. Why does my soldier have to do it?"

The present architect of India's "hybrid warfare" "seeking to inflict pain" (in his own words) on Pakistan is Ajit Duval (Modi's National Security Adviser). He is well aware that Parrikar's statement was a true reflection of how India perpetuates hegemony (or tries to) on the States on its periphery. Trying to tone down the controversy, Parrikar said he was "only in favour of targeted strikes based on intelligence and not covert operations undertaken by civilians or militia", his U-turn was an afterthought. RAW (and other Indian intelligence agencies) have been targeting Pakistan since the 1965 Indo-Pak War.

Subverting our ideology, culture and economy within and outside Pakistan by using proxies or outsourcing the task, isolating us in sports force-multiplies the mass civic frustration according to a well-crafted Indian game plan. Gone are the days of fighting wars in the conventional manner; today's strategy is a combination of conventional warfare, irregular tactics and terrorist acts, including subverting the media by using the advertising power of financial institutions of the State itself other than violence, coercion and cyber warfare. Employing both modern technology and modern mobilization methods, States use a variety of non-state actors, or a combination thereof. Wikipedia describes this new military strategy as "envisaging attacks by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, improvised explosive devices and information warfare." Taken together these acts are called "Hybrid Warfare". Combining kinetic operations with subversive effort, the aggressor intends to avoid attribution or retribution; this India has successfully managed in world

perception. Pakistan's breakup in 1971 was the successful execution of this type of warfare by India. Among the initiatives, remember the "Ganga" incident of Jan 30, 1971 when we fell for an India staged hijacking of an Indian Airlines Fokker-27 to Lahore, then used its blowing up as a pretext to stop all over flights between East and West Pakistan just when the developing political crisis badly needed physical (and psychological) communications for a direct route to remain and signify unity. Taken out of service by Indian Airlines, the Fokker named "Ganga" was brought into operation for this flight.

The 'media reality' dominates influence over conventional reality by creating perception, especially in political life. The critical weapons used in Hybrid Warfare include "Media and Information Warfare", attacking both Information Technology (IT) systems on which a military opponent may depend upon, controlling and manipulation of the information available to the civilian populace on both electronic and print media. This includes Command and Control, Intelligence-based Electronic and Psychological warfare, etc, etc. The enemy has been using both its media and our own to influence persons (bribe, compromise, coax or threaten) to achieve its designs. A number of media celebrities are, wittingly or otherwise, furthering the cause of India. Notwithstanding adjudicating accountability thereof on what prima facie seems to be an outright fraud, why is the "Axact" saga being so systematically projected, and for whose benefit? Peddling fake degrees is a fairly rampant business in the West! The domestic furore notwithstanding and the "usual suspects" acting holier-than-thou, barring "paid" exceptions why has not a single print and/or electronic media in the West picked up on the sensational "International New York Times" (NYT) article?

To quote my article "Hybrid Warfare" of Feb 04, 2015, "Smart Power being a judicious mix of Hard and Soft Power, India is force-multiplying "smart power" in conducting against us. With Modi's Cardinal Richelieu NSA Ajit Doval (very much a "state actor") in the driving seat, "false-flag terrorism" has gone into overdrive and "Cold Start" has now assumed a different dimension in making things hot for Pakistan. We Pakistanis live in self-denial about being subjected to siege under this new warfare, RAW has with impunity masterminded the spreading of misinformation by using its proxies, why do some in our media mirror the Indian media's animosity towards our Armed Forces and the ISI? One financial institution gave almost Rs.1 billion

in several advertisement orders to a confirmed RAW asset; the money was used to target the Army and the ISI. Our intelligence agencies failed to move on this, either because the agent provocateur being well-connected brought pressure on them or they were simply apathetic. A very professional and competent regional head of one of the primary civilian intelligence agencies requested me to drop the matter.

Outsourcing of terrorists for deadly purpose is quite common. In May 2011 the Pakistan Naval Station Mehran was attacked by heavily armed gunmen targeting the P-3C Orion aircraft hangars and military personnel destroyed two aircraft while another was damaged. Has anyone ever really questioned why the terrorists walked past dozens of modern (and expensive) warplanes on the tarmac to focus on the P3C-Orions almost 1000 meters away? What earthly motive would the terrorists have destroying Pakistan's naval eyes and ears capacity? Who other than India was the sole beneficiary in making our Navy temporarily blind and deaf?

The Chief of Afghan NDSI Nabil incidentally educated in Pakistan as a refugee during the Soviet occupation, candidly justified in a NYT interview using TTP against Pakistan in line with Chanakya's tenet, "an enemy of an enemy is a friend". Training and administering NDSI personnel, RAW has been running almost all their operations till lately. TTP Chief Hakimullah Afridi's No 2 Latifullah Afridi accompanied by NDSI agents was captured by US Special Forces on his way to Kabul to meet Karzai. Karzai tried desperately to get the US to release him. To President Ashraf Ghani's credit Latifullah Afridi has now been handed over by the US to Pakistan with his consent. NDSI's activities against Pakistan may not have ceased entirely but are certainly restricted after Ashraf Ghani became President. Consider the arrest of five NDSI operatives by the Afghans themselves on information provided by the ISI about their involvement in the Peshawar APS atrocity.

We must directly and/or indirectly attack those cells supporting RAW's hybrid warfare within Pakistan creating internal problems for us, "charity" begins at home. Those acting as proxies for RAW are as guilty as the terrorists killing and maiming innocents, they should be exterminated without mercy whatever their stature. Do we have the conviction and courage to physically counter the enemy's evil intentions?

Islam and Islamophobia: Real danger Hindutva - Islamophobia in India

Saeed Ismat

This is the opening address by the Executive Director of London Institute of South Asia at a Seminar held at Institute of Advance Legal Studies, University of London on 20 April 2015. The views expressed here are sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of London Institute of South Asia

Islam

At this time the religion of Islam is in the hands of those who portray it as extremist, intolerant and even absurd. Since the words Khilafa, Jihad and Sharia are deemed by all Muslims as the foundation of Islamic statecraft and no one really disagrees, it is possible for the ‘obscurantist’ (and militant mullahs) to present their interpretation of the three words as the only correct view. The most vocal and insistent groups (like Al Muhajiroun and Hizb ul Tahrir and ISIS) present a view of Khilafa similar to that of Papacy – a head of the Church whose edicts are authoritative and requires unquestioned obedience. But the institution of Church or Clergy are not only foreign to Islam but considered its nemesis. *The vast majority of the Muslims do not endorse the HT or ISIS view of Khilafa but do not know what the right view is.* Similarly, if their view of Sharia, women are considered no more than sex objects and chattel. Jihad in their view is war to establish the universal supremacy of Khilafa and Sharia. *Such views and so much dedication frighten the Muslims as much as the rest of the world. What is the right view?*

1) The statecraft of Muslims has revolved around three words, the political implication of which is as under:

Darus-Salam is a country where Muslims enjoy political sovereignty and cultural freedom. Every Muslim majority country can aspire to be an Islamic State i.e. Darussalam, which has a duty ‘as a state’ to use state power

(including military power) for those they have treaty obligations to help, and to protect Muslims where their life or freedoms are imperilled.

Darul-Aman is countries where Muslims do not enjoy political sovereignty (by virtue of being a minority) but enjoy freedom to practise their faith. Muslims in such countries (like the UK) have a duty of loyalty to the state they are citizens of; they can help imperilled Muslim to the extent the law of the country permits.

Darul-Harb is a country where Muslims neither enjoy political sovereignty nor freedom to practise their faith. They can either migrate or lie low to survive until help arrives.

2) The political objective of Islam is NOT to establish Khilafa but to set up Darus-Salam in countries where Muslims are in majority and Darul-Aman where they are not. *The HT/ISIS view is dangerous nonsense as it delegitimizes the state and requires disobedience to the state regardless of whether the Muslims enjoy sovereignty – political or cultural – or not. In their view, only the ‘Sharia’ enforcing universal state headed by a Khalifa is legitimate.*

3) According to classical view of Islam, Jihad is war declared by the Khalifa or Emir (head of an Islamic state). After the collapse of the Ottoman state there has neither been a recognised Khalifa nor an Emir in any country. Jihad was resorted to in consequence of a fatwa by a high cleric but clerics were never accepted as legitimate authority. When the Soviet Union sent its forces into Afghanistan in 1979, a Palestinian religious scholar – Abdullah Azzam – challenged the classical view. He said that Jihad is not war ordered by the right person; it is war fought for the right purpose sanctioned by the Quran. That view was accepted universally and Muslim volunteers from all over the world joined the Jihad in Afghanistan. When the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, Abdullah Azzam issued a fatwa that Jihad was over and ordered the volunteers to go back to their countries. But there were *Takfiri* among the Mujahedeen who had earlier been waging a war on their state in their own countries; they could not go back. They challenged the fatwa and Abdullah Azzam was assassinated by the Takfiri on the steps of a mosque in Peshawar. The Takfiri view was that the liberation of Afghanistan validated their view of Jihad i.e. struggle to establish universal supremacy of Sharia from a liberated base where such supremacy existed. They looked at Pakistan as ‘appropriate’ extension of the ‘base’ for their Jihad. The rest is history.

4) Pakistan was established as a *sans* sectarian “Muslim Nation state”. It is based on the notion that “Muslims are a Nation”. Pakistan is founded on acceptance of the Westphalia principle of national self determination in which Islam is its national polity (principle of national solidarity). Pakistan is a modern state in harmony with international order of nation states. It is proud of having fused the erstwhile irreconcilable ideas of ‘nation state’ and ‘unity of Muslim Ummah’. It is resisting obscurantist Islam as well as Takfiri cults like Al-Qaeda.

The resistance to extremist cults by the people of Pakistan has been valiant but not very successful. Usman Khalid (deceased former chairman LISA) once said, “The side that loses the argument often loses the war”. This is an attempt to win the argument – a pre-requisite to winning the war on two fronts – against Islamophobia and against diabolical extremism in the Muslim world.

Islamophobia

According to a Pew Global survey in 2014, a quarter (26%) of Britons had an ‘unfavourable’ view of Muslims in Britain. Attitudes were slightly harder in France (27% unfavourable), and much harder in Germany (33% unfavourable), Spain (46% unfavourable) and Italy (63% unfavourable).

I should stress that these are all attitudes expressed towards Muslims as a whole, not towards fundamentalist groupings, or to Muslims committed to anti-Muslim or anti-Western violence

The survey results and analysis raise important questions as to the causes of this steady shift, the forces behind it and how best to reverse it in the future.

Since 2006 the data has shown a steadily increasing percentage of Americans responding unfavourably when asked about Muslims in general.

Many feel that if Islamophobia continues to progress/spread at the current rate continues it shall be dangerous for the mankind as it could possibly lead to a clash of civilisation. Whatever for sure it has already destabilized the entire Muslim world where violence is widespread and prospects not very comforting

Islamophobia in India

Now coming to a subject that is rarely addressed in the West: Hindutva and Islamophobia in India. While we are concerned more about Islamophobia in the West we have failed to see the more potent and immediate danger that emanates from India. Whereas it is commonly believed that in the West the governments would like to contain Islamophobia and take appropriate remedial measures in India there is evidence that it is state sponsored. Under Narendra Modi Islamophobia has hit India like a tsunami. The anti-Muslim tirade has permeated the body politic of India. RSS — a right-wing paramilitary party politically allied to Narendra Modi's BJP is carrying out "Saffron Terror" and forcibly converting Muslims, Christians and Dalits to Hinduism in what is termed as "Ghar Wapsi. India's right wingers demonize Muslims. Remember what Ambedkar (The guru of Dalits) said, "Dalits were never Hindus and will never be Hindus"

Hindutva is on the rise and the principal targets are Muslims and Dalits. Please take note that there are nearly 250,000,000 (a quarter billion) Dalits and nearly 200,000,000 (two hundred million) Muslims in India. Combined they represent over 40 percent of India population. LISA considers that the most urgent cause of concern should be the rise of Hindutva and Islamophobia in India.

The Indian Hindutva network's inner core is currently comprised of at least 17 groups whose primary purpose is to promote prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims. An additional 32 groups are actively engaged in forcefully converting Muslims, Christians and Dalits in the folds of Hinduism The inner core Indian Islamophobia/Hindutva network enjoyed access billions of rupees in pursuit of their radical mission

For some, rising anti-Muslim sentiments are immediately explained away as a "natural" outcome of the many violent events in the Muslim world and "terrorism" in general. However, *we maintain that the rising negative sentiments may have to do with the presence of a well-organized and well-funded Islamophobic industry that has managed to invade and capture civil society and public discourses without serious contestation*

Both of these events, and many others that I cannot cover due to time constraints continue to remind communities around the world that despite the

enduring permanence of Islamophobia, various modes and tactics of organized resistance are available as steps to justice, liberation, and emancipation.

Speaking to a summit on countering violent extremism at the White House on Wednesday, Obama said the United States is not fighting the Islamic faith, but rather finds itself at war “with the people who have perverted Islam.” How true! We need to examine as to why the wrath of these people who have perverted Islam mainly targets Muslims only.

I am hoping that this conference today shall analyze Islamophobia and its multiple manifestations. We hope this issue will foster further research and engagement in academic institutions and in civil and human rights organizations particularly the *rising tsunami of Islamophobia in India* with the intended goal to find solutions.

Beating Uncle Sam at His Own Game

Mike Whitney

“Washington is not looking for peace or war. They’re looking for domination. If they can achieve domination peacefully – that’s fine. If they can’t, they’ll use war. It’s that simple.”— William Blum, Interview with Russia Today

“The U.S. is frantically surrounding China with military weapons, advanced aircraft, naval fleets and a multitude of military bases from Japan, South Korea and the Philippines through several nearby smaller Pacific islands to its new and enlarged base in Australia.... The U.S. naval fleet, aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines patrol China’s nearby waters. Warplanes, surveillance planes, drones and spying satellites cover the skies, creating a symbolic darkness at noon.”— Jack A. Smith, “Hegemony Games: USA vs. PRC”.

The vast build up of military assets in the Asia-Pacific signals a fundamental change in U.S. policy towards China. Washington no longer believes that China can be integrated into the existing US-led system. Recent actions taken by China— particularly the announcement that it planned to launch an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that would compete head-to-head with the World Bank and IMF— have set off alarms in the Capital where behind-the-scenes powerbrokers and think tank pundits agree that a more “robust” policy is needed to slow China’s ascendancy. The current confrontation in the South China Sea—where the US has demanded that China immediately cease all land reclamation activities—indicates that the new policy has already been activated increasing the prospects of a conflagration between the two nuclear-armed adversaries.

There’s no need to go over the details of China’s land reclamation activities in the Spratly Islands since reasonable people can agree that Washington has no real interest in a few piles of sand heaped up on reefs 10,000 miles from the United States. The man-made islands pose no threat to US national security or to freedom of navigation. The Obama administration is merely

using the Spratlys as a pretext to provoke, intimidate and harass Beijing. The Spratly's provide a justification for escalation, for building an anti-China coalition among US allies in the region, for demonizing China in the media, for taking steps to disrupt China's ambitious Silk Roads economic strategy, and for encircling China to the West with US warships that threaten China's access to critical shipping lanes and vital energy supplies. This is the ultimate objective; to bring China to its knees and to force it to comply with Washington's diktats. This is what Washington really wants.

In a recent speech at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore, US Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter said that "there is no military solution to the South China Sea disputes." Just moments later, and without a trace of irony, Carter rattled off a long list of military assets the Pentagon plans to deploy to the Asia-Pacific to shore up US offensive capability. The list includes "the latest Virginia-class [nuclear] submarines, the Navy's P-8 Poseidon surveillance aircraft, the newest stealth destroyer, the Zumwalt, and brand-new carrier-based E-2D Hawkeye early-warning-and-control aircraft." The Pentagon is also going to add "new unmanned systems for the air and sea, a new long-range bomber, (an) electromagnetic rail gun, lasers, and new systems for space and cyberspace, including a few surprising ones."

For someone who doesn't believe in a military solution, Ashton Carter is certainly adding a lot of lethal hardware to his arsenal. The question is: Why? Is Washington preparing for war?

Probably not. The United States does not want a war with China. What Washington wants is to be the dominant player in this century's most promising and prosperous market, Asia. But China's meteoric growth has put Washington's plan at risk, which is why Obama is wheeling out the heavy artillery. The anti-China coalition, the China-excluding trade agreements (TPP) and the unprecedented military build up are all aimed at preserving Washington's dominant role without actually starting a war. The administration thinks that the show of force alone will precipitate a change in behaviour. They think China will back down rather than face the awesome military power of the American empire. But will it? Here's another clip from Carter's speech at Shangri La:

The United States will continue to protect freedom of navigation and over flight – principles that have ensured security and prosperity in this region for

decades. There should be no mistake: the United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, as U.S. forces do all around the world.

America, alongside its allies and partners in the regional architecture, will not be deterred from exercising these rights – the rights of all nations. After all, turning an underwater rock into an airfield simply does not afford the rights of sovereignty or permit restrictions on international air or maritime transit.

Who is Carter kidding? China poses no threat to freedom of navigation or over flight. The real threat is China's participation in the \$100 billion BRICS Development Bank which is set to finance some of the "largest projects of the modern history (including) the construction of new Eurasian infrastructure from Moscow to Vladivostok, in South China and India." The so called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) "represent 56% of world economic output, and account for 85% of world population. They control about 70% of the world's foreign exchange reserves. They grow annually by an average of 4% —5%." (Sputnik News) In other words, US-backed institutions are going to lose their exalted role as "underwriter for the global economy" because the world's biggest infrastructure projects are going to be funded by China and its allies. Naturally, this doesn't sit well with Washington where policy bigwigs are worried that US influence will gradually erode as global power inevitably shifts eastward.

US hegemony is also threatened by China's Sino-centric economic policy which author Robert Berke sums up in an article on Oil Price.com titled "New Silk Road Could Change Global Economics Forever". Here's an excerpt from the article:

China is building the world's greatest economic development and construction project ever undertaken: The New Silk Road. The project aims at no less than a revolutionary change in the economic map of the world...The ambitious vision is to resurrect the ancient Silk Road as a modern transit, trade, and economic corridor that runs from Shanghai to Berlin. The 'Road' will traverse China, Mongolia, Russia, Belarus, Poland, and Germany, extending more than 8,000 miles, creating an economic zone that extends over one third the circumference of the earth.

The plan envisions building high-speed railroads, roads and highways, energy transmission and distributions networks, and fibres optic networks. Cities and ports along the route will be targeted for economic development. An equally essential part of the plan is a sea-based “Maritime Silk Road” (MSR) component, as ambitious as its land-based project, linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and the Indian Ocean. When completed, like the ancient Silk Road, it will connect three continents: Asia, Europe, and Africa. The chain of infrastructure projects will create the world’s largest economic corridor, covering a population of 4.4 billion and an economic output of \$21 trillion...

For the world at large, its decisions about the Road are nothing less than momentous. The massive project holds the potential for a new renaissance in commerce, industry, discovery, thought, invention, and culture that could well rival the original Silk Road. It is also becoming clearer by the day that geopolitical conflicts over the project could lead to a new cold war between East and West for dominance in Eurasia. The outcome is far from certain. (“New Silk Road Could Change Global Economics Forever”, Robert Berke, Oil Price)

China is perfectly situated to take advantage of Asia’s explosive growth. They’ve paid their dues, built up their infrastructure and industrial capability, and now they’re in the catbird seat fully prepared to benefit from the fact that “Half of humanity will live in Asia by 2050” and that “more than half of the global middle class and its accompanying consumption will come from that region.” US corporations will be welcome to compete in these new markets, but they won’t do nearly as well as businesses located in China. (This is why the Pentagon has been asked to intervene by powerful members of the corporate establishment.)

Washington’s gambit in the Spratly’s is an attempt to reverse the tide, derail China’s current trajectory and insert the US as the regional kingpin who writes the rules and picks the winners. As Sec-Def Carter said in an earlier speech at the McCain Institute in Arizona, “There are already more than 525 million middle class consumers in Asia, and there will be 3.2 billion in the region by 2030.” US corporations want the lion’s-share of those customers so they can peddle their widgets, goose their stock prices and pump up their quarterly profits. Carter’s job is to help them achieve that objective.

Another threat to US global rule is the aforementioned Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The danger of the AIIB is not simply that it will fund many of the infrastructure projects that will be needed to integrate Europe, Asia and Africa into one giant free trade zone, but that the bank will replace key US-backed financial institutions (The IMF and World Bank) which have helped maintain Washington's iron-grip on the global system. As that grip progressively loosens, there will be less need for cross-border transactions to be carried out in US dollars which, in turn, will threaten the dollar's role as the world's reserve currency. As author Bart Gruzalski notes in his excellent article at Counterpunch, "China and Russia are creating alternatives that threaten the dollar's status as the sole dominant international currency. By instituting trade alternatives to the dollar, they challenge the value of the dollar and so threaten the US economy." ("An Economic Reason for the US vs. China Conflict", Bart Gruzalski, CounterPunch)

Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers offered a particularly bleak assessment of the AIIB flap in an editorial that appeared in April in the Washington Post. He said:

This past month may be remembered as the moment the United States lost its role as the underwriter of the global economic system. True, there have been any number of periods of frustration for the United States before and multiple times when U.S. behaviour was hardly multilateralist, such as the 1971 Nixon shock ending the convertibility of the dollar into gold. But I can think of no event since Bretton Woods comparable to the combination of China's effort to establish a major new institution and the failure of the United States to persuade dozens of its traditional allies, starting with Britain, to stay out. (Washington Post)

Summers goes on to acknowledge the threat that political dysfunction (on Capitol Hill) poses to "the dollar's primary role in the international system". It's clear that Summers grasps the gravity of what has unfolded and the challenge the AIIB poses to US hegemony. Readers should note that Summers ominous warnings were delivered just months before Washington dramatically revamped its China policy which suggests that the announcement of the AIIB was the straw that broke the camel's back. Shortly after, the Obama administration made "crucial changes" to the existing policy. Containment and integration were replaced with the current

policy of intimidation, incitement and confrontation. Beijing was elevated to Public Enemy Number 1, America's primary strategic rival.

What happens next should be fairly obvious to anyone who has followed US meddling in recent years. The US is now at war with China, which means that it will use all of its resources and capabilities, except its military assets, to defeat the enemy. The United States will not militarily engage an enemy that can fight back or inflict pain on the US. That's the cardinal rule of US military policy. While that precludes a nuclear conflagration, it does not exclude a hyperbolic propaganda campaign demonizing China and its leaders in the media (Sadly, the comparisons to Hitler and the Kaiser have already started), asymmetrical attacks on Chinese markets and currency, excruciating economic sanctions, US-NGO funding for Chinese dissidents, foreign agents and fifth columnists, intrusions into China's territorial waters and airspace, strategic denial of critical energy supplies, (80 percent of China's oil supplies are delivered via the Malacca Strait to the South China Sea) and, finally, covert support for "moderate" jihadist who are committed to toppling the Chinese government and replacing it with an Islamic Caliphate. All of these means and proxies will be employed to defeat Beijing, to derail its ambitious Silk Roads strategy, to curtail its explosive growth, and to sabotage its plan to be the preeminent power in Asia.

Washington has thrown down the gauntlet in the South China Sea. If Beijing wants to preserve its independence and surpass the US as the world's biggest economy, it's going to have to meet the challenge, prepare for a long struggle, and beat Uncle Sam at his own game.

It won't be easy, but it can be done.

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Heating up again

Munir Akram

AS an extreme summer engulfs the Indo-Gangetic plane, the political temperature is also rising. The Indian defence minister's extraordinary statement about "fighting terror with terror" amounts to an open admission of India's role in sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan and confirms the Pakistan Army's accusation of India's role in the Balochistan insurgency. The Pakistan army chief's remarks calling for a solution for Kashmir on the basis of UN resolutions was an obvious reminder that India should not forget its own vulnerabilities.

India's pronouncements have become increasingly strident. The Indian foreign minister has reiterated the refusal to resume a dialogue with Pakistan unless India's preconditions are met. The defence minister, apart from the terror gaffe, has revived the far-fetched concern about Pakistan's nuclear weapons being captured by extremists, in this case by the largely absent extremists of IS or the 'Islamic State'. Indian officials have also floated the ludicrous claim that Saudi Arabia intends to buy nuclear weapons "off the shelf" from Pakistan. Notably, India launched a protest with China regarding the plan for an 'economic corridor' from Gwadar to Khunjerab.

The reasons for the escalating Indian rhetoric against Pakistan are not far to find. First, India is frustrated that Pakistan has not wilted under the pressure New Delhi hoped to generate by cutting off talks and 'isolating' Pakistan by its 'terrorism' accusations. On the contrary, Pakistan has evolved a more normal relationship with the US, obtained a major strategic commitment from China and opened a new chapter with Afghanistan.

Second, India is concerned that a Pakistan-Afghan normalisation will neutralise the western front India opened against Pakistan (through its support for the Balochistan Liberation Army insurgency and secret sponsorship of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan) and reduce Indian influence in Afghanistan. India worked hard with its friends in Kabul to generate opposition to President Ghani's outreach to Pakistan and the putative deal for Kabul to act against the BLA and the TTP while Pakistan works to promote

reconciliation between Ghani and the Afghan Taliban. India has had partial success. President Ghani visited India and has lately voiced discontent with Pakistan. Kabul's cooperation against the BLA and the TTP also appears to have slowed down. The Pakistan Army's open allegation of India's role in Balochistan was also addressed to Kabul.

India is frustrated that Pakistan has not wilted under the pressure New Delhi hoped to generate.

Third, India opposes China's rising role in the region, including in Afghanistan, and particularly its renewed strategic and economic commitment to Pakistan illustrated by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor initiative. The realisation of this plan would be a major setback to India's desire to dominate South Asia and isolate Pakistan.

Fourth, domestically, Modi's 'shine' appears to be fading. So far, he has not delivered jobs or improved the lives of the poor. The BJP's defeat in the Delhi elections to the Aam Aadmi party displayed its slide in popularity. Pakistan-bashing is the standard technique used by Indian governments to revive flagging domestic support. This is, of course, second nature to the extremists of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Besides Modi, the defence minister, national security adviser and the RSS-linked army chief appear all too eager to prove their credentials to their core constituency.

It is difficult to predict how far India's 'fighting talk' will remain just talk or escalate into another crisis with Pakistan. Unfortunately, there are no modalities in place between India and Pakistan for crisis prevention. There are several scenarios in which the two nuclear powers could find themselves engaged in a dangerous confrontation.

Also read: India killing 'terrorists' in surgical strikes, says minister

It seems certain that, following China's commitment to CPEC, India (and others) may see the fostering of violence in Balochistan not only as pressure point against Pakistan (to ensure its 'good behaviour' in Kashmir), but also as a means to prevent China's direct access to the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf and West Asia. Indian (and other) mischief in Balochistan and other parts of Pakistan may escalate. President Ghani may be persuaded not to cooperate with Pakistan in eliminating the support base of the insurgency in Afghanistan. If Pakistan's counter-insurgency measures in Balochistan are

not successful, Kashmir may be brought back into the equation, setting the stage for another India-Pakistan confrontation.

A Kashmir crisis is possible, even without Pakistan's intervention. The BJP government's policies in Kashmir — settling Hindus in the Valley, eroding India-held Kashmir's special status and continued suppression of dissent — have already provoked widespread protest from Kashmiri Muslims. A new Kashmiri revolt is probable. It would evoke popular support in Pakistan, leading to another India-Pakistan crisis.

The spark for such a crisis may be lit by another terror attack in India. Given the anti-Muslim postures of the BJP-RSS government, Muslim militancy is likely to manifest itself more strongly in India. Terror groups, like Al Qaeda or IS, have already declared their intention to instigate such terror attacks. India's Pavlovian reaction would be to blame Pakistan.

Any one of these scenarios can lead to a disastrous conflict. While India may feel tempted to test its 'limited war' concept, Pakistan would operate under the assumption that India's 'Cold Start' doctrine (of sudden and massive attack) is operational. A major military engagement is likely to rapidly involve a missile exchange, with Pakistan seeking to break up large Indian formations, and India responding with attacks on command centres and strategic assets. Since most missiles and aircraft are "dual capable" (they can be armed with conventional or nuclear weapons), the danger of a conflict escalating to the nuclear level is extremely high.

The destiny of billions cannot be left in the hands of leaders motivated by religious and historical antagonisms or to hope and chance. Over almost 70 years, India and Pakistan have been unable to resolve their disputes rationally. The international community, especially the major powers, must play a more active and responsible role in preventing another war whose catastrophic consequences could reverberate far beyond South Asia.

The writer is a former Pakistan ambassador to the UN.

A New Class of Aryans

Dorothy M. Figueira

A new class of Aryans: How Aryans from the Nazi Myths & Aryans from Brahmin Myths Seek the Same End. Dorothy M. Figueira author of Aryans, Jews, Brahmins notes an unsettling similarity between Modi's immense popularity, his claims to Indian superiority and the Hindu reformist myth-making of Dayananda, Tilak and Vivekananda. First published in Fountain Ink.

'The book is pertinent both to the continuing historical debate about the Aryans, and to current politics in India'—Romila Thapar

'Helps the reader grasp why casteist and racist double standards in India and Euro-America still enjoy tremendous intellectual respectability'—Braj Ranjan Mani, author of Debrahminising History

On February 20, 1939, 20,000 German-Americans attended a rally of the German-American Bund at Madison Square Garden in New York City. The organising entity, also known as the *Amerikadeutscher Volksbund*, was an American Nazi organisation established in 1936.

I was not yet born, but my Italian-American mother spoke to me repeatedly about this rally during my childhood when she wanted to complain about the racist double standards at work in American society. She would argue that German-Americans sympathetic to the Nazis spewed their venom in her city with impunity, while the US authorities were far less accommodating to potentially seditious behaviour from groups of other hyphenated Americans whose countries of origin were deemed totalitarian.

German-Americans could flirt with the Nazis as much as they wanted. Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford could accept honours from Adolf Hitler, but law-abiding Japanese-Americans would soon be rounded up and put in concentrations camps in their own country, thanks to the racist policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Earl Warren. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti had earlier taught Italian-Americans the degree to which mainstream America tolerated Italian anarchists.

So it is with a certain *déjà vu* that I read about how on September 28, 2014, Madison Square Garden yet again accommodated 20,000 people when the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, visited the United States. As recently as 2005, *Modi had been denied a visa to enter the US on the grounds of religious intolerance. Now Indian-Americans greeted him at the Garden with tremendous pomp, similar to the fanfare that welcomed the Nazis 75 years ago.*

Instead of swastikas, red and black banners, and massive portraits of George Washington described as a man of action “just like Adolf Hitler”, Modi’s staging was a high-tech and Bollywood-style extravaganza. It was not surprising that the supporters of both the Nazis and Modi had brought with them their own thugs to beat up protesters and journalists. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*

Of course, Modi is a statesman, a head of government elected by the world’s largest democracy, not a rabble-rouser, at least not on this visit. Whereas the leader of the German Bund had referred to Roosevelt as Frank D. Rosenfeld and the New Deal as the “Jew Deal,” Modi indulged in no such inflammatory nonsense. He focused on immigration reform and business opportunities. More importantly, he flattered his audience. He noted the degree to which they had been involved in his election, even if they could not vote. Had it not been for the monetary contributions from the Indian-American community, the BJP would not have had its great success.

He continued to stroke their collective ego. He told them that it was through their actions and values that they earned the immense respect they receive in the world. Without them, the IT revolution could not have been possible. He compared them to Gandhi. Like the “Mahatma” before them, they too work abroad, will return home, and give much to the homeland. Toward that end, he announced that he would establish lifetime visas for PIOs and long-term visas for US citizens. They could stay in India as long as they wished without the bother of registering with the police. In short, they could have all the benefits of living in the US and being Americans but could also enjoy India whenever they desired. No wonder these staid professionals responded to Modi’s remarks just as hysterical bobby-soxers had done when Sinatra played at the Garden years ago!

It must have been nice for Modi's audience to have their worth reaffirmed. In fact, Modi presented them with a very gratifying story of identity which in essence is a variation of the Aryan myth examined in these pages. Like the myth of their Aryan ancestors, the Non-Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin also brought sophistication to the lands they invaded. Unlike other immigrant populations, they did not come to America to flee poverty, starvation, religious discrimination or a tyrannical regime. They came to conquer the US with their education and skills. However, an Indian immigrant quickly learns that one of the downsides of this migration is the loss of caste status. The reality is that most Americans, even though they discriminate in terms of class and ethnicity, do not care about Indian castes. An Indian immigrant soon discovers that he/she is just another "person-of-colour", perhaps a bit richer than the rest.

One might think that an education, marketable skills, and wealth would suffice, but these advantages are really not enough if one is accustomed to the unearned respect and privilege that caste status offers in India. Without those intangible caste benefits, Indian immigrants, no matter how rich and fortunate they may be, crave additional assurance of their superiority. Their egos need accommodation. Modi knew his audience well and addressed them appropriately. They, in turn, appreciated his fawning praise.

The Indian-Americans' need for validation to compensate for their loss of caste prestige determines their behaviour and how they seek to position themselves within the social fabric of the United States. In fact, the diasporic Indians' construction of race and colour in the US is a complex affair. Beginning in 1950, Indians were categorised as "other White" and, as such, not counted separately in the US Census. *This definition suited them since privileged-caste Hindus in India have long used notions of "purity of blood" and "Caucasian features" to exercise power over the majority of the population who were dubbed non-Aryan, such as the populations then called Untouchables.* It was, therefore, only natural that when they immigrated to the West, they brought this ideology with them. Their conviction of their intrinsic "Whiteness" and worth has not been effaced from their consciousness. The belief that they were "White" because they saw themselves as descendants of the Aryans never changed, and was supported by the US Census.

What did change, however, was the Indian immigrants' understanding of American racism. Indian newcomers to the US gradually came to recognise the benefits to be accrued through minority status and sought to position themselves for gain of the resources available to America's historically oppressed minorities. In 1975, Indian-Americans actually lobbied for and won minority status as non-White Caucasians. In other words, they are recognised as both "White" and deserving of minority hiring, even if they lead professionally comfortable lives and do not suffer discrimination on the level customarily still meted out to traditional minorities in America such as Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans. By promoting a self-image as White, Indian-Americans and NRIs claim the privilege usually held by the White majority. By claiming status as a minority, they also make themselves eligible for special dispensation. It is a win-win situation.

Moreover, Indian-Americans have learned to use their unique position as "model minorities" strategically. *Through diasporic "cultural" associations, they maintain strong ties to political parties in India, especially the major vehicles of the Hindu fundamentalist right, which champion Hindutva as the neglected Aryan culture of Hindu Americans.* This ideology has consciously entered many places, especially the multicultural space of American academe where it purports to promote the neglected virtues of ancient Indian civilisations. Just as Indian-Americans exert political influence in India with carefully placed donations—the very aid for which Modi was thanking them—they have become increasingly instrumental in the development needs of US universities, tying their contributions to deciding which India is "taught" in America today. The money that they give to universities in the US does not support a curriculum that challenges religious or communalist sympathies. The India being taught that they finance is Aryan—classical, Sanskritic, and Hindu. Minority Indian religions that I could study forty years ago in college, such as Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism, are rarely funded and taught in American universities these days.

To teach India in America today entails teaching a safely idealised and censored view of the homeland, lest American-based groups financed by Indian-Americans should make their disapproval known (as in the cases of the Hindu Heritage Endowment, and the more virulent Infinity Foundation). Indian philanthropic donors wield their economic clout in their newfound homeland in order to see their funds promote an ideology that is mainly

Vedic and Sanskritic (such as the Hinduja funding to Columbia University in New York).

It is to the population of potential donors in the US who cherish a Hindutva belief system and wish to see it propagated in India and abroad that Modi addressed his comments. White American politicians, realising the economic power of this wealthy immigrant population, has learned to pander to them. This is why some thirty American politicians enthusiastically shared the stage with Modi.

One cannot blame only Modi for his rhetoric. He is what he is—a politician who has yet to answer for the bloodbath that occurred in Gujarat under his watch. I blame the 20,000 *pravasi bharatiya* in the audience for the slippery game they are playing. When the German Bund was addressing its audience in the Garden, it was inciting uneducated and unskilled labourers who were still suffering from the deprivations of the Great Depression. In contrast, Modi performed before a rapturous audience of educated professionals—the best and brightest, the wealthy IT nerds, medical doctors, and businessmen who have left India for the greener pastures of America. The German Bund spoke to blue-collar workers who felt disenfranchised by American capitalism; Modi spoke to hyper-educated and successful elite who have benefitted from the American Dream more than any other ethnic group in the history of US immigration.

Yet, they bankroll the reforms that Modi has begun to implement which limit the opportunities of those Indians who have stayed home and contribute to the system there. *The Indian-Americans' children will not, for example, suffer from Modi's dismantling of the Indian educational system. Their daughters will not be more vulnerable as violence escalates against women in urban areas. These Indian-Americans embrace Modi's politics without having to live with the consequences. Skilled and educated as they are, they embrace Modi's myth of Indian superiority as easily as the uneducated and poor Germans embraced the Nazi's Aryan myth 75 years ago.*

If someone had told me when I was writing this present volume that its thesis would be relevant today, I would have been surprised. Though certainly, at the time I was researching it, India was in the throes of the Ayodhya crisis and Hindu triumphalism was rampant. I even remember a visit from the police in Pune asking me what issues of identity I was researching. I assured them that I was dealing with 19th century nationalists who were seeking models for the new India in the Aryan past, basing their discussions on the

reading and exegesis of the Vedas. That description seemed to satisfy them that I was not some irresponsible American Indologist trying to make a career in the States by provocatively defaming Shivaji.

But as I assess the present situation and reread my book, I am astonished by the degree to which what I had examined in these pages resonates today. I see these constructions of identity as mythic, but not in the sense of an anthropological inquiry or as a component of literary culture. Rather, I investigate them in terms of humanity's continued insistence on carrying on quasi-mythical modes of thought, expression and communication into a supposedly scientific age. When I talk of myth, I am not talking about something poetical, but rather something prosaic, utilitarian and quite often ugly. Myths can be understood as collective representations. Their purpose is in recording and validating institutions, as the great German myth theorist Ernst Cassirer recognised in the wake of the Nazis' deployment of their myth-making skills.

Valorising the irrational in myth was (and is) symptomatic of the same disease that enables the irrational to flourish in politics. It is this "underside" of myth that I examine in these pages.

In part, I investigate the manner in which Indians deployed myths regarding the ancient Aryans in their various reform and nationalist agendas. Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, felt that the Aryans had knowledge of telegraphy and modern chemistry. Tilak felt that they travelled from the North Pole with the mission to civilise the world. Vivekananda saw the Aryans as un-sexist, superhuman geniuses. *If you did not possess Aryan blood, you were not civilised.* In this volume, I examine the ends toward which such myths of identity were deployed. I also identify the various non-Aryan "others" that the myth of the Aryan sought to neutralise or even destroy. I investigate the work of those who challenged the Aryan myth and sought to debunk it, thinkers such as Jotirao Phule and B.R. Ambedkar.

Phule subverted the Aryan myth by identifying national culture as consisting of those very persons that privileged-caste social and religious reformers had relegated to the margins. He did so by turning the myth of the Aryan back upon the elite. Phule took those very strengths and virtues that had been attributed to the Aryan in Western Orientalist scholarship and subsequently

co-opted by Brahmin reformers, and transferred these to the oppressed castes. Instead of appealing to an Aryan Golden Age, Phule called for the re-establishment of an alternative myth—a non-Aryan Golden Age during the reign of King Bali. *More importantly, by challenging the myth of an Indian utopian past, he introduced the new category of reason into the discussion. B.R. Ambedkar began his mission where Phule left.*

He pointed out the fallacy of Indian social reform as only serving privileged-caste needs and sought to prove the illegitimacy of its basis in scripture. *Instead of rewriting the Aryan myth, he rejected it as a plot devised to uphold Brahmin superiority, justify their over lordship over non-Brahmins, and satisfy their arrogance. Both Phule and Ambedkar offered a radical attack on Hindu revivalism and challenged the elite myth of the Indian past.*

What I did not envision at the time I wrote this book was how the elected leader of a secular India would resuscitate the Aryan myth today in the service of Hindu revival and project this identity onto the professional diasporic Indian. *Prime Minister Modi has not only recently entertained his countrymen with his statements regarding ancient Indian knowledge of plastic surgery, aeronautics and reproductive technology, but he also constructs the myth of the superior diasporic Indian of modern times: the IT geniuses who are revolutionising the world, the doctors earning millions of dollars in the US, and, last but not least, the businessmen to whom he is giving carte blanche.* These are the Indians he was praising, uplifting and flattering in New York. Are his claims to Indian superiority, past and present, any different from those of Dayananda, Tilak, or Vivekananda? The answer is an emphatic “no”. The myth of Indians inhabiting a Golden Age of technological and moral advancement is the same. It has its believers, as the recent elections and Modi’s visit to New York amply demonstrated. We look to the Phules and Ambedkars, and their legatees, to challenge this mythmaking and offer a counter-narrative.

Reining in NGOs

Thomas Houlahan

Last week, Pakistan's government said that it was expelling an international NGO and would be holding other NGOs strictly to their mandate. The US government, which seldom fails to miss the point of any action by Pakistan's government, immediately criticised the move. There were three main problems that prompted this tightening.

First, Washington's activities in Pakistan have created a climate of suspicion regarding westerners in Pakistan, particularly Americans. Thanks to Washington's various clumsy covert activities in Pakistan, no American is above suspicion. For example, in 2012, a commentary in a Pakistani newspaper all but said that I had been working as a CIA operative when I had served as an election monitor four years earlier.

Even before the details of the fake vaccination programme that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden became known, American 'consultants' operating in Pakistan were so thick on the ground that you could barely swing a dead cat without hitting one. They were the worst-kept secret in Pakistan, but there is little evidence that Washington cared a bit about the embarrassment or other problems this was causing the government in Islamabad. Worse, when one of them gunned down two Pakistani citizens and others coming to his rescue ran over and killed another, the United States government had the absolutely breathtaking gall to claim that they were covered by diplomatic immunity, though they hadn't been registered with the Foreign Ministry (See Raymond Affair: The US Legal Position Is Shaky, News International, March 02, 2011).

Then there was the run-up to the Bin-Laden raid. Few people in Pakistan and no one in any position of authority mourn Osama bin Laden's passing. Almost everyone, however, found the way it was done intolerable. Washington used a fake vaccination programme to confirm his identity before launching the SEAL Team 6 strike that killed him. That the US government thought that this type of 'ends-justify-the-means' perfidy would do anything other than arouse Pakistani suspicions – not just the

government's, but the people's, about aid workers and programs is astounding.

The climate around aid workers at present is explosive, and will be until the Pakistani government and people can be certain that foreign aid organisations are doing what they claim to be doing and nothing more. The US government is crying about Pakistan's response to a crisis of mistrust that Washington is largely responsible for.

The second problem that forced the Pakistan government to act is closely related to the first. Apparently unaware of just how explosive this situation is, aid workers have been traipsing around some of the most sensitive areas of the country without prior clearance or even coordination with the authorities.

Like it or not, in countries with significant terrorism problems, well-intentioned westerners are absolute magnets for terrorist attacks. So, in addition to causing the government to wonder what they are up to when they go off on their own, in doing so, they tend jeopardise not only themselves, but the Pakistanis they are trying to help. As a result, the more careless have had to be reined in, both for their own safety and for the safety of the people they are trying to help. The third problem has been representatives of INGOs agitating against policies they don't agree with, mostly the death penalty.

The death penalty issue is being worked out as we speak, both in parliament and in the superior judiciary. This is to say, it is being worked out by the people's elected representatives and by a judiciary which has earned the right not to be second-guessed or even denigrated by foreigners who know little about the Pakistani legal system.

Pakistan's position is that foreign aid workers are there to fulfil whatever mandate has been agreed upon between them and the government of Pakistan. They are not there to speak out against the death penalty. They are also not there to send back reports to their governments which Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan has characterised as "slanderous", but that I would characterise as poorly informed, in order to get their governments to bring pressure to bear on Pakistan on that issue. The notion that Chief Justice Nasirul Mulk and his brethren would benefit from or even

entertain such western input is ludicrous. More to the point, the Pakistani government considers it an outrageous interference in the country's internal affairs in a time of war.

INGOs can cry all they want and their governments can scream or threaten all they want. This tightening is going to stick. It was necessary and overdue. I must add, however, that as suspicion of aid workers is the central problem, the extreme generality of the interior minister's accusations has not been helpful, and has rendered all INGOs suspect. I hope he will follow up soon with specific charges against specific organisations.

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Islam on Trial

Soraya Boyd

A paper read on Seminar convened by London Institute of South Asia (LISA)

Currently, people complain about the Islamisation of the West while Muslims also complain about the westernisation of Islam, yet every recent military intervention has been western led. James Baker stated “well some of our some of our adventures have not turned out very well.” Military interventions are but extensions of hegemonic political power.

This militaristic adventurism cannot be disassociated from forms characteristic of empire or in this case neo empire expansionism under the guise of protecting national interests, protecting the interests of allies and since its emergence under the guise of protecting the national security state cloaked in a secretive veil (which include but are not limited to the commission of acts of aggression against sovereign states, secret trials, rendition, torture and on it goes).

The objective is to assert natural superiority of white vs non whites in regard to power projection, whether in its so-called 'soft' form (diplomacy, which may lead to and or may not exclude the possibility of military aggression) or hard (direct or by proxy military aggression) to produce, reproduce, protect and maintain national and regional balance of power.

This bound up with historical capitalism. Particularly true in terms of the economic and financial implications. Former and current empires have given themselves the right to interfere and intervene with a view to assert, as argued by Immanuel Wallerstein, their “legal right to determine the rules governing the social relations of production within their historical jurisdiction” thus asserting a western hegemonic ideology of universalism. Rule of thumb: some are definitely more equal than others.

. In addition, as is presently the case, most if not all former empires have tended to be characterised by a prominent religious component, for example:

Roman: pax deorum – good relations with the numerous deities they worshipped

Carolingian: Christian

Byzantium: Christian

Mogul: Muslim

Persian: Muslim

Ottoman: Muslim

British: Christian

And others.

What better than to create chaos in non-white nations and leave that nation to pick up the pieces. After all as posited by Palmerston “there are no permanent friends or enemies” there are only “interests” which are “eternal”.

Wallerstein claims that the historic “struggles among accumulators” of wealth and power “for political advantage” have laid waste to the hard won and fought for principles of 'liberté, égalité et fraternité. Replaced by greed beyond avarice, the existing hegemonic paradigm of globalisation (the fundamental components of which are: deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation) and militarisation seems to have prevented people from achieving their deepest aspirations. People are not asking for much other than actually being able to provide for their family, freedom, human rights, social development, social justice, economic and political independence; basically achieving a reasonable level of freedom from fear and freedom from want so as to live a simple though dignified life.

If the doctrine of “universalism has been a keystone of the ideological arch of historical capitalism” then, asserts Wallerstein, “racism has ... been a cultural pillar of historical capitalism.” The natural resources of your country (oil etc) belong to others (i.e. America, Britain's political elites).

Indeed asserts Wallerstein “In the United States, a favourite political justification of civil liberties is that truth can only be known as a result of the interplay that occurs in the 'free market place of ideas'.” The 'free market place of ideas' is transformed into intellectual vacuity with catastrophic consequences. Legislation is drafted. Communities are criminalised. Military adventurism is sanctioned. Blood is spilled and it will be yours, you can count of that.

The following conflation immediately ensues: Arabs are Muslims. Muslims are terrorists. Muslims are jihadists. Islam is the enemy. They hate our way of life, our freedom, and our democracies.

The problem is that this simplistic conflation is lethal for in its midst people die and conflicts are described in ethnic and religious terms rather than in terms of geo-political, economic, financial, military and cultural hegemonic encroachment seeking to appropriate the wealth of sovereign nations, impoverishing and de- or under-developing their rightful recipients: the people. You'll be left with greater disparities, increased poverty and end up with wealth privatised and debt socialised, whilst you struggle not only to live but to stay alive in the midst of a raging civil war or illegal military occupation. Your only hope to escape by any means the hell that has become your reality.

The fact that those who committed 9/11 are chiefly Saudi nationals (either Salafis or Wahibis) is not talked about. Saudi Arabia is an ally. Muslim but not a state harbouring terrorist. The logic of double speak knows no bounds, it seems. Aibly supported Saudi is waging an illegal so called war against the people of Yemen.

What do all of the following individuals have in common? They are among those who have been instrumental in speaking up and speaking out on behalf of a besieged civilian population, in promoting human and political rights, advocating the right to self determine in Palestine. They happen to have been and or still are Palestinian Christians (Prof Edward Said, Dr Hanan Ashrawi, and the Ambassadors to respectively Jordan HE Layla Khalid, He Leila Shahed, HE Afif Safieh, and HE Prof Manuel Hassassian). But the illegal Israeli military occupation of Palestine is reduced to Hamas (Political Islam) vs Israel (Political Judaism/Zionism).

Leaders ought to remind themselves of the birth place of Christianity. No not York or Canterbury, not even Rome. But Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Furthermore Arabs are not just Muslims; they are Christians, Jews, Maronites, and Druzes.

World leaders decry jihadists militancy and violence. Are they consciously, wilfully, purposely not paying enough attention to a fundamental compound, namely foreign policy? Is foreign policy not having a hugely negative effect?

The late Robin Cook spoke of the need for and importance of a new type of foreign policy. He called it an ethical foreign policy. We are a long way off.

The current conflicts raging from Syria to Yemen and beyond are but two examples of hard power conveyed through proxy allies. Yet Islam is on trial. But not the Saudi version of Islam or the Bahraini, for they are allies of the US and Britain. They've got to be protected (no reprisals allowed), assisted (in soft power -diplomatically- and hard power overt and covert military support) in their tasks to re-shape the map of the Middle East on behalf of their protectors.

Perhaps western leaders are in need of greater introspection. A simple Christian command 'know thyself' followed by 'do not do onto other that which you would not want be done to you'. They'll do well to ponder.

Then as described in the seminal work titled *War and Peace in Islam* by Prof Ibrahim Kalin and colleagues "jihad the effort that one makes to do something good ... the struggle to control and refine one's ego, to conquer ignorance, to discipline one's own base desires, to excel in the work undertaken to the best of one's ability" to include "the combating of poverty and disease, to build housing for the poor, or to fight corruption and abuse" may take its course.

'Know thyself' and 'struggle to control and refine one's ego' are not mutually exclusive. Their respective outcomes both seek to accomplish the same goal: to enable a person to become a better, more responsible human being.

So if we accept tonight's theme Islam on trial as a reality, let us begin by reminding ourselves, as suggested by Muhammad Higab's *Islam Moderate Legislation For Progressive Nation* that during the Islamic civilisation which began in the 7th Century A.D protected "all living under its banner irrespective of race, creed, or national tongue. All enjoyed freedom of thought and belief, as well as freedom of movement.

Persecution is indeed not the preserve of the Jews or any other ethnic group. The persecution of Muslims has a long history, from medieval times, through to 1099 where on the 7th of May the crusaders were at the gates of Jerusalem murdering on the 15th July with a fanatical fervour "Muslims and Jews alike." In the 1160s the Lombard pogroms began when King William the

good died the royal protection was lifted so that by the 14th century there was hardly a Muslim presence at all.

In *Islam Moderate Legislation for Progressive Nation*, Muhammad Higab states that Islam absolutely prohibits “compulsion in religion” favouring preaching and dialectic engagement fostering a climate of intellectual scientific and religious freedom. Islamic culture contributed much to the world with the extraordinary contributions of such “thinkers and philosophers Avicenna (428-1037), Averroes (Ibn Rushd) (595-1198), Rhazes (925 A.D0), Al-Ghazali (505-1111)” who “were ... the main subject of study in Western [and] Eastern-Academic Institutions.”

In addition another core feature of Islamic Civilization is concerned with the concept of political philosophy. Higab argues that Islam is “built on consultation and the rule of the majority. It insists on the equality before God, in respect for the essential human rights, the peaceful coexistence among all communities and nation, and on non-aggression except when the sanctity of religion or country is violated.”

The above is the litmus test for societal behaviour and the individual’s response to his or her understanding of practice disciplined by the moral and ethical guidelines given above. We then can then see the actions of groups/individuals that would aggress others, as a misguided misunderstanding of the precepts that apply to us all equally, in relation to the truth that is borne by them.

I conclude with Abdulaziz Sachedina book *Islam & The challenge of Human Rights*. Sachedina interprets the Qur’anic verse, correctly in my view, when he refers to the “noble nature which is part of us.” Sachedina holds that “This innate scale is connected with a kind of universal ethical cognition, as is stated in another reference to human creation: By the soul and that which shaped it and inspired it [with conscience of] what is wrong for it and [what is] right for it. Prosperous is he who purifies it, and failed has he who seduces it. (Q.91:7-10).”

Punchline: Politics of Flags

Z. G. Muhammad

Is battle over flags battle of ideas or battle of ideologies? Is it an expression of the conflict between the 'dominant discourse' and the popular narrative? These questions might have stirred the minds of scholars in our universities after cacophonous debates on the corporate television channels over some boys carrying green and white flags with white crescent moon and a five-pointed star in the middle at a public rally in Srinagar.

The rally had been organized by the APHC (G) to accord reception to its leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani on his arrival in Srinagar from New Delhi. The unfurling of green flags at religious and political functions is not an unfamiliar scene in the State. It is the white stripe by the hoist side of the flag that made it news for the reporters and *bête noire* for some corporate television anchors. And in New Delhi sparked debates amongst political parties.

The white stripe in the traditional green Muslim flag with crescent and star makes it *Qaumī Parcham* (National Flag) of Pakistan. The five cornered star in traditional Muslim flag is seen as symbol representing five fundamentals of Islam. In Pakistani flag, the star symbolizes light and knowledge; the crescent moon symbolizes progress and the white stripe on the hoist side minorities in the country.

In 1947, when British Empire closed its show in the sub-continent, the new born dominions of India and Pakistan based their national flags on the parties that were in the vanguard of the freedom struggle. Indian National Flag or tri-colour was based on the flag of Indian National Congress and *Qaumī Parcham* of Pakistan was based on flag of the All India Muslim League.

On April 15, it was not for first time that *Qaumī Parcham* of Pakistan was unfurled at a public rally in Srinagar. In Kashmir politics hoisting of flags has got so intricately woven in the peoples narrative that it has in itself become a political phenomenon having potential to change the political discourse in the state. The battle of flags, historically speaking in fact for past seventy six years has become synonymous for the battle of ideologies in the

state. The green flag with crescent and star entered for the first time into political narrative of Kashmir on 15 October 1932, when it was hoisted on the founding day of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference at a three day convention at Shahid Mashed, Srinagar. Some twenty six years before, in a similar way same flag had entered into India's political narrative, when Muslim elite of India, Syed Ahmed Khan, Kawaka Sal mullah, and Vicar-ul-Mulk under leadership of Agfa Khan had founded the Muslim League. There is no recorded evidence to my knowledge suggesting that founding of the Muslim Conference was inspired by establishment of the Muslim League. Nevertheless, with the Kashmir movement having its roots in Lahore, inspiration from the League cannot be ruled out. From 1919, the plight of the Muslims of Kashmir was highlighted by the Muslim League and on 21 March 1932 Llama Iqbal bringing in presidential address at Lahore bringing it sharp focus and giving it centrality in the League politics.

In 1938, under the influence of Jawaharlal Nehru and communist ideologues deputed by him to Srinagar, Sheikh Abdullah converted the Muslim Conference into the National Conference. And on the pattern of the Soviet Communist Party adopted red flag with plough in the middle as its flag. And with both parties vying for bigger political space by hoisting their flags at important places the battle of ideologies became synonymous with battle of flags.

The Pakistan flag was officially hoisted all over Jammu and Kashmir in 1947. On 12 August 1947, the Maharaja Hari Singh's government entered into 'a Stand Still Agreement' with the Government of Pakistan. On August 14 birth of Pakistan was celebrated in the state as well. British historian Victoria Schofield records, "In the state of Jammu and Kashmir there were staunch Muslim League supporters who believed they would become part of Pakistan at independence and when freedom came at midnight on August 14, they rejoiced. The Pakistani flag was hoisted on most of the post offices....It was a spectacle to watch streams of people from all directions in the town and its suburbs swarming towards the post office in order to have a glimpse of their hope and desire." (Kashmir in Conflict page 40-41).

The Pakistani flags from post offices were removed under instructions from the Maharaja but history does record defiance shown by some Muslim officers against removal of these flags. Notwithstanding, the orders from the Maharaja government, 'people continued to hoist Pakistani flags on the roof

tops and lamp posts.’ The hoisting of Pakistani flags became game of hide and seek between troops of the Maharaja and the League supporters, till Hari Singh on the advice of Indian Home Minister Sardar Patel appointed on 31 October 1947 the National Conference leader Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah as head of emergency administration in the state. The soldiers of “Abdullah Guard” and Peace Brigade were tasked to remove the League and Muslim Conference flags from all over the state. Notwithstanding, the repression, the voice of dissent found expression in youth splashing pro-Pakistan graffiti’s on wall and hoisting green flags on lampposts night. “From 1947-1953, for dissenting with the “dominant discourse” ten thousand political workers were jailed.”(Bazaz).

In 1953, after arrest and deposition of Abdullah and launching of the Plebiscite Front, instead of the green flag it was the hoisting of black flag on lamp posts and roof tops on 9th August every year that gave Goosebumps to powers that be. Not green or red flags but black flag became the flag of resistance and it was only after the 1964 Holy Relic Movement that the green flag with crescent and star forcefully re-entered the political narrative of Kashmir and students and youth once again started splashing walls with pro-right to self-determination graffiti’s.

In 1990, after a gap of forty three years, during the rule of Governor Jagmohan the city and towns were flooded with green flags with white stripe on hoist side. For days, this flag remained hoisted on this politically significant clock tower in historic Lal Chowk till it was removed by troops. To establish government writ in the state in 1992 (BJP) president Murli Manohar Joshi hoisted the Tricolour atop the tower on the Republic Day under full security...

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Indian Media's Embarrassment in Nepal

Vidya Bhushan Rawat

The self-respecting people of Nepal need to be congratulated for compelling the jingoist Brahmanical Indian media to ponder over its follies and idiocies in reporting the painful stories of earthquake from Nepal. The thing is that the reportage of TRP hungry TV channels is not new to us when they market our emotions and sentiments as these are the most 'saleable' products in our market apart from sex, rape, babas, tantra, cricket, corporate and Bollywood. It is not unusual for Indian media to have reported a tragedy in such a way as we have seen their reports elsewhere particularly in Kashmir and Uttarakhand last year when both the states suffered from high decibel flooding and cloud bursting. It is definitely wonderful to see the reporters are on the ground immediate after an incident take place and we appreciate it. It helps to put a break on the rumours which runs thick and fast during such period in the absence of any alternative mechanism. It is equally important that such stories goes in our bed room and raise sensitivity of the issue.

Indian media was first to reach Nepal like the Indian forces and other members of National Disaster Relief Teams who worked incredibly. The Indian response to the crisis was appreciated very much because of its appropriate timings. The first day, we had reporters of a news channel but by the second day huge contingent of reporters landed in Kathmandu. Many of those who reached earlier actually went there by road but later group flew in the Indian Air Force planes. In these times of 'advertisement' and visibility every country is proud of its 'forces' and 'claim' that they are the 'best' hence it is not India specific when we claim that our forces are the 'most valiant' and 'incorrupt' in the world. Pakistanis feel the same way and so does Nepal and China. The western worlds also do the same and advertise their 'equipment' and other military hardware which they want to sell.

BBC reported on War on Libya was the same projection. When the Americans and its allied forces attacked Iraq the CNN was broadcasting the war 'live' and brought it to our living rooms. *But we also need to see one big difference between the western worlds reporting the tragedies in their own countries in comparison to their reporting to the third world.* You just have to see and compare the reporting. During any such cases of incidents we have never seen their cameras on 'dead' and 'mutilated' bodies in their societies. While reporting from the third world they do show all the stuff

which is unacceptable in their societies. The western media is very careful about the privacies and sensibilities of individuals and society so they walk their path very carefully when they report from India or any other country.

Of course, we are talking of western media, we are speaking of the TV channels where reporting is taken seriously such as BBC, Al-Jazeera and to certain extent CNN. There is Fox news which converts every debate into a big joke. India is fast following the path of Fox news where contents does not matter as the newsrooms are fast becoming 'slaughterhouse' and everyday there is a 'Bakra' to be slaughtered by the lynch mob sitting in these newsrooms. This slaughtering of 'guests' in the newsrooms where anchors and participants shouts at each-others without listening and even not allowing others to complete their sentences, has given rise to TRPs as battered middle classes enjoy this immensely. The attempt is to 'shape' their opinion through distortion of facts and creation of fictitious images. The 'fourth estate' of 'democracy' is in fact a clever ploy to derail democratic processes and impose planted stories on the people in the name of 'people's opinion'. *In India this 'people's opinion' is quintessentially Brahmanical in nature and have deep rooted prejudices against minorities, Dalits Adivasis and other marginalized segments of our society. During the Mandal age the media promoted caste hierarchy and campaigned as a party against the job reservation meant for the OBCs in the central government services. The media reporting on the Ayodhya issue indicated clearly which class of people media not just represent but also vehemently propagate to maintain the status quo.*

During the height of anti Mandal agitation, I had opportunity to meet many journalists, columnists and editors as I was writing a dissertation on media reporting on the same. Shockingly, most of them raised the issue of merit and efficiency as if I was talking to them about that. Mandal compelled the urban elite to understand the importance of identities and be a bit accommodative though they continue to show their resentment. We found that a few of the Hindi newspapers gave some space for Dalit writers and novelists and carried out stories and articles written by them. Suddenly those who hated the 'identity' issues began to realize the 'importance' of the 'identities' to get a 'stamp' of 'approval' on their 'agenda'. It resulted in flourishing writings of a number of people who would target people according to the 'agenda' but don't look part of that sinister campaign. Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar was portrayed as if he was a diehard Hindu and supporter of capitalism.

The focus of today's 'Foxified' media is on 'feel-good' factor and anything that is related to 'poverty', hunger, rural development and talks about state's responsibility has to be rejected as 'old-fashioned' 'jhollawalah'. Dalits who are urbanized and articulated are to be used where their thinking 'match' with those in power and even if they may not be supporter of Hindutva, their economic views could be used to discredit others who are struggling for basic rights.

A Dalit journalist like Nagaraju in Hyderabad died of cancer without any support from his newspaper management and journalist fraternity in the New Indian Express. His case was not just an exploitation of a person who hails from a particular background and become nondescript when they come out from their village. There were not many who stood with Nagaraju except for his close Dalit friends in Hyderabad. In fact, the entire issue could not even raise eyebrows and war crimes among the Dalit themselves. None of the 'known' columnists or writers from the fraternity outside Hyderabad thought it fit to write a note on him in their 'columns'. There are dedicated websites and yet not much came out of it. *Indian newsrooms have no respect for 'diversity' and 'dissent' and they are unashamedly promoting Brahmanical nationalism which means glorification of its past, its superiority, its 'values', 'cultural heritage', 'military might' of India. Any kind of debate on 'secularism', Islamic heritage in India, assertion of Dalits and their questioning the Brahmanical myths, OBC reservation, representation for Muslims, autonomy of Kashmir, relations with Pakistan are to be shunned and objected if raised.*

Powerful nations always feel that natural calamities are always the best opportunity to market their products in the name of 'aid' for the 'affected' people apart from establishing your people in the 'think tank' of those societies which are affected as well as popularization of 'religion' which the 'donors' bring with them. It is clear that Indian electronic media is in the business of doing such things in absolute absurdities in India itself when the victims or affected people are virtually 'projected' as if they were nothing and focus of the media campaign is more on the activities of Indian army on the ground.

There is a special case with Nepal. It is a secular nation today though many in India wanted it a 'Hindu' *Rashtra*. Due to Indo-Nepal friendship treaty

which remains unequal between the two nations, India and Nepal have a visa free border and Nepalese and Indian citizens can cross over to each other side and work there. Indian army has a special battalion named as Ghurkha Regiment whose stories of valour are well known.

The Hindu cultural similarities with Nepal make Indian elite to ‘disrespect’ Nepal’s sovereignty. Thousands of Nepalese migrants live in India to earn their livelihood. Their conditions are not great but they migrate because of the prevailing distressful conditions in their own country. With such a large number of people, a majority of whom work as security guards, cooks, domestic servants etc, in Indian cities, an image is built in the minds of common Indian as if all the Nepalese people are the same.

The NC-IC (Nepalese Currency-Indian Currency) exchange rate favouring India and visa free regime here have made India ‘big’ brother of Nepal who don’t care the sentiments and emotions of the younger brother. It is not that Nepal does not like India but the problem is that *Nepal is a self-respecting nation and the patronizing attitude of Indians has always hurt the Nepalese self-respect and pride. Indian think Nepal is their colony* and the entire theme line is developed afterward. Many feel, it is the ‘only’ Hindu country in the world, a statement of helplessness as why isn’t India the other one while a large number of others who have Chottus, and Bahadurs in their families consider every Nepal like that and in that they forget that all Nepalese are not their ‘domestic’ servants.

Then there are other ideologues of various varieties who too present a sorry picture of their parochial and patronizing attitude towards Nepal. So, this mindset actually feels that every Nepali must understand Hindi and respond to their question in the same language. Let us not forget that it is an independent country, a sovereign one and can take its own decisions. Language, no doubt, is a medium of communication yet it is also true that it is also a mean to subjugate the people culturally and decimate their culture. War in today’s time is fought through language to control the communities and whip up their emotional link. India can only win Nepal through addressing emotional issues of common culture. Deliberately, Nepal was presented a Hindu Rashtra so that the Hindu link is strengthened compelling Nepal to look towards India for assistance. Indians understood well if they take time in responding, the Chinese will be there before them and that

would have become difficult to curtail them. So, military on the ground was thoroughly and wholeheartedly supported by ever obliging media.

Amidst this background when Indian reporter descend in Kathmandu to cover the growing tragedy of earthquake then we have to understand what was in store in terms of reporting. A reporter goes and described the tragedy and focuses most of the time the 'Dharmara Minar', Singh Darbar and at the end Swayambhu. The focus is more on 'destruction' of 'Hindu-Buddhist' symbols and less on people. There are no reports from other parts of Nepal and understanding that there difficult terrains to reach. More importantly, not much was reported about international aid. Once Indian Air Force planes started landing the focus then shift to 'Indian' people. I was watching 'news' in the morning when a reporter was standing on road showing some portion of a building about to be collapsed. He speak to people about Ramdev and his programme there slowly he come towards Indian side where some of them are standing and complaining that 'Nepal government is not doing enough and that they are without any kind of aid. 'We want to go back to India as soon as possible as things are getting worst here', they said contemptuously. So, the reporter now focuses on 'Indian' people and 'nothing' has been 'done' to them. In that period when the country was desperate and people were dying our reporters were focusing on 'inability' of 'Nepal' to 'help' Indian people. The sad part is that once they saw Indian reporters, their behaviour changed and all kind of complains started coming in. Many of the reporters were entering into the homes of the people where they were moaning and asking them all kinds of questions of 'how it happened' and 'what did you do'. Will we respect the personal pains and agonies of people?

A reporter wanted to provide a report attempting to sensationalise the issue of 'exodus' of Nepalese people from Kathmandu. So he goes to Kathmandu's new bus stand and start asking questions to a few of them who are standing at the bus station whether they are leaving Kathmandu for ever due to fear of quake. 'Are you leaving Kathmandu, said the reporter. 'No, sir, why should I leave, it is my place as I have grown up here. With negative answer the reporter move further and ask another person,' are you leaving Kathmandu and he gets the same answer again. Frustrated, the reporter now push his mike on to a bus leaving from Kathmandu to Dhangarhi asking the people onboard whether they are 'leaving' Kathmandu. Now you can understand the 'knowledge' and 'commonsense' of these reporters.

It is not shocking that while commercial media have ‘experts’ of each country and they depute those people who have understanding of that country. As when you report international issues, it is not merely a quake but lot of other things including your relations with that country but very unfortunately Indian television channels deputed cub reporters for the Nepal tragedy that did not have much understanding of Nepal’s sentiments and political situation and were reporting the tragedy like a soap-opera of the Hindi film. One of the most offensive points was seeking answer for everything from the Nepalese friends.

‘What do they say about Indian aid’ or ‘ how is Indian army doing’, or asking stupid questions about Narendra Modi and his ‘quick fix’ solutions. Should each Nepali know and respond to Indian questions about India’s politics, Narendra Modi and ‘great’ work done by Indian army. The entire focus of the media therefore was not on people and problem but the ‘great’ work being done by the Indian government. Indian reporting was clear that the Indian media had descended to Kathmandu to actively propagate BJP’s poll campaign and ensure to make other countries look petty in terms of contribution.

Slowly, things were clear and Nepalese people were disturbed at the attempt to make them look small and ‘helpless’. But is the media responsible for it or were they reporting under the ‘influence’ of the ruling party. If we see the Narendra Modi brand of ‘charities’ then we will realize that ‘chest thumping’ is the biggest style today. It was not long ago how Narendra Modi produced a Nepali friend from Gujarat who he ‘educated’ and he was in campaign mood when he spoke at the Nepali Congress asking Nepal how to make its ‘constitution’ and how can it ‘develop’ and that ‘big brother’ India will do everything to ‘support’ ‘chhotabhai’ Nepal.

India’s Nepal actions were actually aimed at countering the influence of China and any other western country. As a neighbouring country, we have a right to make our policy and take a decision and the way the government acted was definitely appreciable but the ignorance of our reporters and their reporting of the matter actually exposed the Indian intentions. If India wanted to make noise of its help in Nepal then it is wrong and discredits the entire efforts. *Indian establishment must think that it cannot treat Nepal as 30th state of India and behave that way.* The irony in the entire exercise is

that media is the fourth estate of democracy and work as a vanguard to protect people's right and warn the government of its mistake became an eager partner in 'embedded' journalism. It would be good if the armed forces remain out of the temptation of media glitz and their TRPs as it would do no good to their strength and professionalism. Media today has corporate interests and in India it is furthering the Hindutva corporate agenda too and therefore every danger to discredit the institutions of armed forces, which have remained neutral and absolutely focused on their national services.

India is aspiring to be a 'world power' but unable to maintain good relations with any of its neighbours and the reason for that is our 'big brotherly' attitude. We need to understand that such attitudinal issues will not bring laurels to India as it need to first learn lessons of charity which must remain humble and not of chest thumping brand. Secondly, we are deeply class and caste conscious society and therefore did not feel it twice how people would react to when we send our old cloths to the people living in trouble. It was good that Nepal understood that its people were taken for granted and that we would be sending all our 'dirt' that we needed to remove from homes, to 'charity' for the 'poor' people of Nepal. No self-respecting society will accept 'degrading' 'charities', which humiliate them and their dignity. It is good that Nepal realized it and sent all the 'international' players back to their home as Kathmandu would have become the 'war zones' of different 'stakeholders'.

It is tough time for Nepal but given the nature of the hard working people there the country will recover soon. Nepal though poor yet is much better than any south Asian society where people are hospitable and warm. Walking in the streets of Kathmandu is safer than in Delhi, Karachi or Dhaka. It's a country that has abundance of love and beautiful natural resources, which need to be protected. The calamity has provided an opportunity to rebuild their nation and we hope Nepal will emerge stronger and greater after this. It definitely needs international support and solidarity yet respecting people's sentiments and values of life. As far as Indian media is concern, it would be good for them to learn a few things about reporting from a foreign nation and follow the basic norms of that country and not to bulldoze every one through their obsessive self-facilitating propaganda which is self defeating and embarrassing for the nation one billion people.

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RAW assigned to scuttle China-Pakistan Corridor

Asif Haroon Raja

India never reconciled to the existence of Pakistan and kept hatching conspiracies to undo it. RAW was specifically created in 1968 to subvert the people of former East Pakistan and prepare grounds for creation of Bangladesh. India was the first country in South Asia to introduce the concept of cross border terrorism in 1971. RAW had established 59 training camps along the border of East Pakistan for the training of over one hundred thousand Mukti Bahini. After succeeding in its mission of creating Bangladesh, RAW was tasked to repeat its success story in Sindh. Sindh Desh movement was instigated by RAW in interior Sindh with the help of GM Spayed. A special wing of Indian Special Services Bureau established terrorist camps in Rajasthan at Ganganagar, Jaipur, Udhampur, Kishingarh, Bikaner, Barmer, Jaisalmer, and Gandhinagar. Services of Hindus who had migrated to India in 1971 and whose relatives are still living in Sindh were coordinated through a RAW cell at Jaipur called Sindh Desh Department. It is also well known that RAW supported Mengal-Marri rebels in Baluchistan insurgency in 1970s. With the exit of Al-Zulfiqar Organization from Afghanistan and Libya in 1980s, it was taken over completely by RAW and used for carrying out sabotage and subversion in Pakistan. After the birth of MQM in 1984 in Karachi, the party was hijacked by RAW. It helped the new political party to create a militant wing and taught how to control port city of Karachi through terrorization.

RAW is used as an instrument to apply state terrorism, indulge in false flag operations, psychological war, espionage, sabotage, destabilize or browbeat them into accepting India's hegemony. RAW incited trouble in Sikkim in early 1970s and made it part of Indian Union in 1975. Its next target was Bhutan and was forced to toe Indian line to retain its independence. When landlocked Nepal got inclined to pursuing independent foreign policy, it was disciplined by stopping import of food, medicine, oil supplies. Burma was pressurized by RAW by fomenting trouble in its Arakan province, which resulted in exodus of 250,000 Arakanese to Bangladesh. Next was Sri Lanka where high intensity insurgency was stoked in 1983 with the help of RAW trained Tamils in Tamil Nadu. The LTTE were finally defeated in May 2009.

In Maldives, RAW created a Maldivian mercenary force to stage a coup against President Gayoom, prompting the latter to seek Indian assistance. Help was extended in return for grant of base facility for Indian aircraft carrier.

Since 1990, India has been dubbing Pakistan as a country indulging in cross border terrorism solely because of its support to Kashmir cause. As a state policy India puts all acts of terror taking place in India at the doorsteps of Pakistan. In most cases Indian spin doctors cook up false stories to blame Pakistan and at times go to the extent of putting its own crimes at the doorsteps of Pakistan. India resorts to these wicked tactics to cover its own brutal policies against its own people and against Kashmiris.

If you recall, a terrorist attack was stage-managed on State Assembly in Srinagar in October 2001. Soon after, another attack took place on the Indian Parliament building in Delhi on December 13, 2001 when the session was on. All the five attackers were killed in the shootout outside the building and all lawmakers remained safe. Indian officials and media made hue and cry over the ordinary incident and termed it as another 9/11. Pakistan's ISI and Lashkar-e-Taiba were blamed without even carrying out preliminary investigations. In that timeframe, Pakistan had deployed 70,000 troops along the western border at the request of the US to nab fleeing al-Qaeda/Taliban operatives from Afghanistan and its bases were in use of US air force. Pakistan's ambassador in Delhi was asked to leave and Samjhota train service between Delhi-Lahore stopped. Within days, Indian military carried out biggest ever troop mobilization, activated all air bases, deployed naval warships in Indian Ocean and hysterically started beating drums of war. Everyone in India bayed for Pakistan's blood. Purpose behind it was to browbeat and overawe Pakistan.

This offensive move was made in collusion with USA hoping that Pakistan would submit to Indian demands the same way as it had succumbed to the US seven demands on a phone call. Military standoff continued till October 2002 and ultimately Indian troops quietly withdrew after Pakistan military gave a befitting response. While the military refused to be cowed down and responded aggressively to India's aggressive posture, Gen Musharraf buckled under Indo-US pressure and on the quiet gave series of concessions to India in his bid to make Vajpayee agree to sign peace treaty.

Indo-US peace treaty signed in January 2004 was preceded by cease fire in Kashmir in later part of 2003. None knew that Vajpayee had agreed only when Musharraf held an assurance that Pakistan will not allow Pakistan's soil for cross border terrorism against India or any other neighbour. This one-sided silly assurance authenticated India's stance that Pakistan was abetting terrorism. It was later misused by India and Afghanistan to the hilt. The treaty helped India in fencing the entire length of the Line of Control (LoC) in AJK and installing electronic gadgets/building posts, thereby enabling Indian military to check cross LoC movement and curtail freedom movement. Responding to India's demand, Musharraf promptly banned six Jihadi groups entirely focused towards Kashmir and also froze their accounts. He thus forced the Jihadist to turn their guns inwards and later get aligned with TTP.

Optimists viewed the peace treaty as a watershed in Indo-Pak relations since India had agreed to resume composite dialogue stalled after the Kargil episode and discuss all issues including the issue of Kashmir. High hopes were expressed that it would end age-old antagonism and herald a new beginning of peace and friendship. In reality, India had no intention to touch upon outstanding issues of Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek and water, but wanted to hoodwink Pak leadership into believing that India was genuinely interested in finding solution to chronic issues. Hidden motive was to dupe Musharraf and then carry out its planned covert war from Afghan soil in connivance with other intelligence agencies to destabilize FATA, and Baluchistan and in the process pin down sizeable regular troops in the troubled regions. Groundwork for the same had already been done. Apart from establishing four Pakistan specific consulates in eastern and southern Afghanistan and filling them with RAW officials, 17 intelligence units were deployed in Afghanistan to undertake clandestine operations at a massive scale. Indian defence attaché in Indian Embassy in Kabul became the chief coordinator. Afghan intelligence and military provided full support for the establishment of 70 training camps and centres and CIA provided funds. CIA and FBI enjoying full liberty of action in Pakistan helped RAW agents to creep into troubled spots.

Another sinister purpose of India behind the farce of peace mantra was to launch cultural invasion from eastern border with the help of its electronic media, artists and singers so as to dilute the spirit of Jihad, deflect the youth towards fun and frolic, paint India as shining and an unconquerable giant,

undermine two-nation theory and Kashmir freedom movement. Aman ki Asha and SAFMA facilitated the goals of India by showing its soft face and hiding its ugly face.

After destabilizing FATA and Baluchistan, flames of militancy were pushed into settled areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar. Blackwater elements were inducted in 2008 and tasked to destabilize major urban centres. Induction of NRO cleansed PPP-MQM-ANP dream team of the US and deceptive Kerry Lugar Bill made the infiltration of Blackwater operatives and dozens of NGOs to pursue US agenda easy. Services of Blackwater were availed by RAW for its own clandestine operations. From 2008 onwards, MQM aided by RAW was activated to destabilize Karachi with the help of target killers, kidnappers and extortionists. Sectarianism was also heightened in several parts of Pakistan. As a result of mushrooming of militant wings, and linkage of TTP with Punjabi Taliban, mostly from southern Punjab, flames of terrorism spread to every nook and corner of the country. Insurgency in Baluchistan was converted into separatist movement.

To make the covert operations more deadly, Indo-US-Jewish-Western media in conjunction with Pak media embarked upon a calculated vilification campaign to discredit Pakistan and its premier institutions, particularly Army and ISI. Obama administration invested \$60 million to subvert Pak media. Likewise, nuclear program was also vilified by asserting that it was unsafe and would fall into wrong hands. Pakistan was kept on the defensive by levelling unsubstantiated charges of its collusion with Taliban and continuously pressed to do more. Pakistan was an ally but distrusted and treated as a foe.

Bajaur, Swat, South Waziristan (SW) were converted into fortresses laden with tons of arms, ammunition, explosives stored in tunnels and caves. Fazlullah made a state within a state in Swat and provoked the Army to barge into the well fortified ambush site in May 2009. So did Faqir Muhammad in Bajaur. The two fortresses were dismantled in a month time, which shocked the plotters. GHQ was attacked on October 10, 2009 to provoke and lure the Army into the killing zone of SW where none had ever succeeded. This area was also cleared in a month time and in the process the security forces managed to free 17 out of 18 administrative units from the sway of TTP. Not knowing what to do, the conspirators then prepared North Waziristan (NW) to destroy the might of the military.

Attack on Karachi airport in June 2014 triggered operation Zarb-e-Azb in NW and gruesome tragedy in Peshawar Army School galvanized the operation. The scope was extended to all parts of the country and it was decided not to spare any terrorist, his protector and sympathizer. 20-point National Action Plan was formulated and host of other corrective steps taken to achieve decisive results against scourge of terrorism.

2014 and ongoing 2015 proved to be bad years for India and its strategic partners. Except for bloodying Afghanistan and Pakistan, none of the laid out objectives could be achieved and things began to spin out of control of ISAF and ANA in Afghanistan. The ISAF had to ultimately pack up and exit in disgrace, while pro-India Karzai handed over the reins to pro-Pakistan Ashraf Ghani which brought marked improvement in Pak-Afghan relations. Ghani candidly declared that he held Pakistan in higher priority because it is Afghanistan's immediate neighbour. Thaw in Pak-Russia relations also occurred and latter agreed to sell combat helicopters. There is visible change in the US demeanour and it now looks towards Pakistan as part of solution of Afghan imbroglio rather than a problem as it had all along been stating. After prolonged reluctance, USA has agreed to sell attack helicopters and Hellfire missiles to Pakistan. Saudi Arabia led Gulf States are leaning more on Pakistan and so is China. India's military coercion along the Line of Control/Working Boundary and high-handed tactics has failed to make any impression on Pakistan and Kashmir issue has been reinvigorated. Pakistani flags were hoisted by Kashmiris in Occupied Kashmir and the Valley often resounds with anti-India and pro-Pakistan slogans. War on terror has made the Army fully battle inoculated and resilient and is rated as the best fighting force. All economic indicators are showing upward trends and energy crisis is being tackled on war footing.

These positive changes took place as a result of outstanding results achieved by Pak Army in dismantling foreign trained/equipped TTP network in NW and by FC in pushing BLA, BRA in Baluchistan on the back foot. Intelligence based Karachi-Police operation in Karachi has also made substantial gains in netting target killers and extortionists and in ascertaining that majority of criminals belong to MQM, which is linked with RAW. Interrogation of two MQM terrorists Junaid and Tahir Lamba revealed that MQM members were imparted training in Deradoon since early 1990s with a view to destabilize port city. The biggest surprise package for Pakistan and

biggest shock for India and the US was China's decision to launch China-Pakistan Energy Corridor (CPEC) worth \$46 billion. Experts are of the considered view that even if 50% of the pledged amount is spent in Pakistan on various projects, it would solve all the problems of Pakistan.

Sudden change in geo-political environment has reduced the pace of India racing towards the victory stand from a gallop to canter. While it was bracing up to receive the trophy, its ecstasy has been deflated. This sudden turn of events has left Indian leaders and their meteoric RAW appalled. The US is equally worried since it sees the CPEC enabling China to achieve its ambition of becoming a super power at its cost. In desperation the two are conjointly hatching conspiracies to scuttle the project at whatever cost. RAW has been assigned this task and allocated \$ 300 million as initial grant. It has established its special office at Lodhi Road, New Delhi, Rajendar Khanna and its chief is personally supervising the given project. RAW will seek assistance from its strategic partners CIA, MI-6, Mossad, Afghan NDS, BND (Germany) and FSB (Russia). It will also garner help from friendly regimes, banned terrorist groups, its moles in Pakistan which are present in almost every government department, some political parties, electronic/print media, NGOs, human rights activists, mafias, traders, lawyers, quislings to accomplish its task.

This is just the beginning. Paid writers have already started writing articles against China's investment, arguing it will be bad for Pakistan. Cause of Baloch rebels is being promoted by NGOs. Acts of militancy are likely to accelerate in coming months. RAW will mastermind some false flag operations. Articles in foreign media written by Hussain Haqqani and Seymour Hersh and killing of Sabeen Mahmood are links of the same chain. India has taken the contract of developing Chahbahar port in Iran to counter Gwadar. It will keep trying to spoil Pak-Afghanistan and Pak-Iran relations. There is a greater need to exercise vigilance and remain watchful of the snakes in the grass. More importantly, doubts about change in route must be clarified and publicity wing in Ministry of Information should effectively counter the propaganda war.

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Has Yemen reshaped the Middle East geopolitical map?

Graham E. Fuller

Does anybody remember the old Cold War geopolitical concept of the “Northern Tier states?” They consisted of three countries—Turkey, Iran and Pakistan (sometimes Afghanistan) that lay along the southern border of the Soviet Union; they were perceived in the West as a potential bulwark against Soviet aggression southwards into the Middle East. Is it just possible that we are witnessing today the possible recrudescence of a “Northern Tier” bloc? But this time it would not be united against Russia at all. On the contrary these three states demonstrate warming geopolitical congeniality with many aspects of Russian, Chinese, and “Eurasian” geopolitical views.

The ongoing crisis in Yemen may have become the midwife to such a development. If so, it is Iran that seems to be pulling the pieces together of a new loose power coalition in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia’s much publicized creation of a supposed ten-nation Sunni coalition to fight “the Iranian and Shi’ite threat” in Yemen and the Gulf recently took two major body blows: the unexpected defection of both Turkey and Pakistan from the Saudi camp as active partners in the military campaign in Yemen—after having initially indicated they would join in.

Yes, it’s notable that Turkey, Iran and Pakistan are all three non-Arab states in the Middle East. But in speaking of a new “Northern Tier” we’re not really talking about an Arab vs non-Arab bloc. The differences are more ideological and geopolitical; they involve differing visions of the future that may reorder the geopolitical map in the Middle East. The “Northern Tier states” could come to constitute a new informal power bloc that challenges Riyadh’s bold new—and reactionary—ambitions in the region. Two differing narratives of the Yemeni struggle now compete.

The Saudis boast of forging a bold and sweeping Sunni coalition to block a much-hyped threat of Iranian / Shi’ite imperialism that is supposedly taking over Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Gulf and now Yemen. Riyadh worries that Iran will soon emerge out from under US-imposed sanctions to take its place

as a legitimate player on the regional stage. Washington is no longer perceived as a reliably anti-Iranian force.

But an alternative narrative suggests a different source of Saudi fear—one that stems not from theological disagreement at all, but from fear of the political goals of the Iranian revolution: revolution, overthrow of entrenched elites, anti-monarchical posture, support for meaningful democratic structures—(yes, Iran’s parliament is more activist and independent than almost any Arab state), direct challenge to the long-standing American political and military domination of the Middle East, strong support for the Palestinian cause, and a feisty nationalism. Much of the “Arab street” has admired Iran for its independence and gutsiness in challenging Washington.

Turkey of course has the best, and most well-established and functioning democracy in the region, notwithstanding sometimes rough domestic politics. And Pakistan, along with its Islamic trappings, has operated within democratic structures for many decades, albeit punctuated by periodic military rule. All three represent “modern” states in terms of institutions, and their strikingly developed and diversified economies and class structures.

These states differ in yet another major respect from the Arab states of the Middle East. Turkey and Iran maintain strong national identities, and Pakistan is striving to build based on a strong regional personality. All three are multi-ethnic states, but the legitimacy of the state concept among them is not basically open to challenge, although work to reconcile some domestic minority dissatisfactions is still needed. The future concept and borders of these states is not in question (although Pakistan has been severely shaken by the destructive fallout from the failing US war in Afghanistan.)

It is much harder to say this about most Arab states today. Only Egypt has a strong regional identity within classic geographic borders—and its potential as a “modern state” has been crippled by bad long-standing bad governance. It no longer has any vision for the region or the Arab world—neither Islamist, nor Arab nationalist, nor democratic, nor socialist. Few other major states in the Arab world are politically functional today either. Iraq had a regional geographic Mesopotamian identity but war has destroyed it for the foreseeable future. The small Gulf States, while often reasonably well run, live off oil, and are archaic and defensive in their political and social structures. Stability, where it exists in the Arab world, is largely imposed by monarchs and presidents-for-life.

What happened to bring about a Turkish turnaround on the Saudi coalition? I was frankly surprised at Ankara's initial support in March for Riyadh's campaign in Yemen, and more so at Erdogan's harshly outspoken criticisms of Iran's role in the region at the time. This short-lived Turkish turn to Riyadh stood in direct contradiction to long-standing Turkish policies. In my recent book, "Turkey and the Arab Spring," I describe Ankara and Riyadh as essentially representing ideological polarities: on sectarianism, democracy, globalization, secularism, multiculturalism, modernity, and the Muslim Brotherhood. They agree only on the need to overthrow the Assad regime. Perhaps Erdogan's early decision was best understood as opportunism—an initial concern not to be left out of what might become a "new Arab force." Yet during a relatively tense visit to Tehran in early April Erdogan's backed away from further criticism of Iran and from participation in the Saudi campaign against Yemen—a notable slap in the face to Riyadh. Iran is still the most important country to Turkey in the Middle East, in economic, energy and geopolitical terms. And Ankara must be mindful of its own large Alevi (quasi-Shi'ite) minority. How much was Iranian influence behind this sudden change of heart?

No less dramatic was the about-face of Pakistan. Islamabad initially seemed to look positively upon Riyadh's call for Pakistani troops and military support in the Yemen campaign. But Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif, despite his close personal ties to Saudi Arabia, then decided to refer the issue to Parliament, well aware that public opinion in Pakistan ran against involvement of Pakistani troops in the distant Yemeni conflict. Strikingly, Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif visited Islamabad just at that time to call for joint Islamic action for a peaceful negotiated solution. How much did Iran influence the Pakistani about-face as well?

There may not yet be any "Northern Tier" bloc as such. Yet there is much logic behind a confluence of views among these states on many issues. Such an informal bloc would represent a significantly more progressive, moderate and forward-looking coalition than the present Saudi-driven "Sunni coalition" that is divisive, ideological, destructive and sectarian. The region cries out for something more progressive than the Saudi/Sunni coalition's reactionary view of the future. The approbation of both Russia and China for these non-interventionist geopolitical policies of the "Northern Tier" additionally lends these states greater clout. Such a bloc would also represent

a clear non-Arab vision for the Middle East at a time when the Arab world itself seems to lack any visionary and constructive leadership representing a genuinely modernist future.

Arabs may not wish to listen to non-Arabs, but they themselves offer little alternative right now in the bleak landscape of the Arab world. Hopefully Washington will not allow itself to become stuck with the “counter-revolutionary” Arab coalition as the basis of future American policy in the area either.

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Islamophobia

Catherine Heseltine

Stories are the way that people make sense of the world. Stories have such a powerful effect on our minds that people even have a tendency to block out any information they hear that doesn't fit with the story – the narrative - they believe. Our narratives not only shape the way we see the world, they also shape the way we see ourselves, they allow us to imagine the future and give us direction, guiding our actions.

So what is the dominant narrative about Muslims today? Anyone who has listened to public discussion about Muslims and Islam will recognise the story that Muslims are backward and violent, they do not share our enlightened values and they pose a threat to our way of life... a threat which must be tackled. It is the same story that is told again and again – every time ISIS commits another atrocity, every time there is a story about halal meat, or Muslims taking over schools, or Sharia, or the niqab, or grooming gangs, or gender segregation... Whatever the issue it's the same dominant story - backward Muslims threatening our way of life. It is told with varying degrees of subtlety but this basic paradigm is increasingly the prism through which Muslims are seen.

It is vital to understand that the tide of Islamophobia that is sweeping through Europe and the United States is driven by a multi-million dollar, transatlantic 'Islamophobia Industry'. Studies such as the book on the 'Islamophobia Industry' by Nathan Lean and the 'Fear Inc' report by the Center for American Progress document how the rise of Islamophobia is not principally a popular reaction against acts of terrorism committed by Muslims, or a simple response to cultural difference - it is purposely manufactured for political motives [2].

A well-funded and influential network of so-called intellectuals and think-tanks, bloggers, politicians, and media pundits is continually pumping out the idea that Muslims are a threat. These anti-Muslim ideologues, often motivated by a neo-conservative or Zionist political agenda, are extremely successful in promoting their ideas and terminology – their narrative - and exploiting events to help whip up fear of Muslims. And successfully demonising and dehumanising Muslims makes the killing of innocent

Muslims in Gaza or Iraq more acceptable and at the same time marginalises the Muslim communities in the West who would naturally be at the forefront of speaking up for the rights of Muslims worldwide.

Interestingly negative stories about cultural differences now outstrip those about terrorism in the media, greatly contributing to negative feelings about Muslims (as highlighted by the Cardiff University study of media coverage on Muslims).

One example of the manufacturing of Islamophobia in the UK was the sudden furore over gender segregation on University campuses, which was sparked by a flawed report by a group calling itself ‘Student Rights’ and claiming to be ‘independent’. It was only after the PM had weighed in to condemn voluntary gender segregation at Islamic society events that Student Rights was exposed as not a student’s group at all but a front for the neo-conservative think-tank ‘The Henry Jackson Society’ which has frequently been accused of fuelling Islamophobia [3]. Interestingly the PM had no issue with addressing a segregated audience of Sikh men and women when campaigning in Gravesend just this week and as an old Etonian has never condemned his old school for segregating by gender and not admitting girls, or done anything to dismantle gender segregation in schools [4]. Such double standards against Muslims are of course common place and totally accepted.

A more recent example of manufactured Islamophobia was the ‘Trojan Horse’ row, promoted by journalists such as Andrew Gilligan, (whose track record writing about Muslims is well known) and given weight by then Education Secretary Michael Gove (whose views on Muslims are clear from his book *Celsius 7/7*). When a cross-party group of MPs finally reviewed all the evidence, far from a widespread plot by Islamic extremists to take over Birmingham schools, they found a single, isolated incident in one school [5]. This unsurprisingly didn’t make the headlines, and the damage had been done.

I’ve been involved in campaigning against Islamophobia for over a decade and I can say clearly that we are failing disastrously. We have reached the point where fear and hatred of Muslims is bringing people out onto the streets with the EDL and Britain First and Pegida, and still tackling Islamophobia is not a priority within the Muslim community. We have had nail bomb attacks and arson attacks on mosques and Islamic schools [6], yet still we spend more money on shiny new Islamic centres than on funding any

kind of professional media and political campaign against Islamophobia. A Muslim grandfather in Birmingham [7] was murdered on the way home from the mosque, another in West London had his skull smashed in [8] – both targeted purely because they were Muslims – and yet still Muslims put more time and effort into debating minor points of religion than we do into building an organised response to Islamophobia.

However we are beginning to see a change. We are beginning to see Muslims waking up to the scale and the urgency of the threat, and just beginning to get organised and take action.

What we need is to confidently articulate our own narrative. We have too often found ourselves cornered into an apologetic response – “I’m not a terrorist, I’m a moderate Muslim. Those are the bad Muslims who are the threat – and we’re not like them, we’re the good Muslims who share your values.” This may seem like a good response, and it’s one that most of us have used, however this fails to fundamentally challenge the Islamophobic narrative, and lends itself to the Rupert Murdoch logic, when he tweeted: “Maybe most Moslems peaceful, but until they recognize and destroy their growing jihadist cancer they must be held responsible”.

The alternative to accepting responsibility for any wrong that any one of more than 1 ½ billion Muslims has committed, is to define our own terms, tell our own story, and expose the fact that an Islamophobic narrative, intimately intertwined with a hegemonic foreign policy agenda, is turning reality on its head – with very dangerous consequences.

What relation does the dominant anti-Muslim narrative bear to reality? A recent report by the Nobel prize winning group ‘Physicians for Social Responsibility’ demonstrates that at least 1.3 million people in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan have died as a result of the so-called ‘War on Terror’ [1] – but it is Muslims who are a threat to the West. Western governments prop up brutal dictators such as General Sisi of Egypt, or the Gulf monarchies – but it is Muslims who are the threat to freedom and democracy.

An effective response to Islamophobia must expose the double standards that are constantly applied against Muslims. An effective response to Islamophobia must highlight the oppression suffered by so many Muslims

and their basic aspirations for justice, equality and freedom. And an effective response to Islamophobia must offer a coherent explanation of Muslim violence, rather than taking the easy option of stopping at condemnation.

That last point in particular is not easy, because as soon as you open your mouth to explain the root causes of Muslim terrorism then you will be labelled an apologist for terror. But explanation is not justification, and offering an alternative to the flawed ‘conveyor belt theory’ of radicalisation is essential if we are to get away from the culture of suspicion and blame directed toward Muslims in general and be able to effectively tackle the small, but very real, threat of terrorism that affects us all.

Current government counter-terrorism policies in the form of ‘Prevent’ and the new Counter Terrorism and Security Bill are arguably an institutionalised form of Islamophobia, where suspicion is directed toward Muslim communities, vague definitions of extremism are applied with no relationship to violence and the normal rights afforded to citizens are circumvented. [9]

So, tackling Islamophobia is no small task – it involves challenging power structures, and exposing the supremacist ideology of those who peddle anti Muslim hate. But the importance of stopping Islamophobia should not be underestimated. Less than 20 years ago in the heart of Europe we witnessed mass murder, expulsion and systematic rape committed against thousands of innocent victims - simply because they were Muslims.

In Bosnia, as in all modern day genocides, the media played a huge role in these first stages of the genocide, alongside the rhetoric of politicians and public figures. But what is truly frightening is that when we examine the Islamophobic ideas that were used to support and justify genocide in Bosnia these ideas are shockingly similar to the way that Muslims are being talked about now, here in the UK...

Reading quotes from the Serbian propaganda against Muslims which preceded the atrocities of Srebrenica the ideas are chillingly familiar:

The Muslims want for the second time to create a Turkish Bosnia, with Sharia law and other norms that are unacceptable in modern times. (Department of Information in Belgrade, Serbia, January 1993)

Muslims represent "an element in our lives that are hard to integrate, and which will be difficult to integrate into any western civilization". (Zoran Djindic, later the Serbian prime minister, 1994)

Could atrocities such as those inflicted on Muslims in Bosnia ever happen here in Britain, or can we say we are intrinsically less susceptible to such evil than the Germans or the Serbs? One thing is for certain - we don't want to sit back and wait to see just how bad things can get in our lifetime, or our children's lifetime.

Economist Milton Friedman once said, "Only a crisis produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around." As someone with two young children, growing up Muslim in an uncertain world, I find it deeply worrying that increasingly the ideas that are lying around are those that demonise Muslims and portray us as a threat that must be dealt with

Modi's disastrous first year

Praful Bidwai

When Narendra Modi arrived in New Delhi to be sworn in as India's prime minister, he flew in a private aircraft belonging to the Adani Group, although he could have taken a commercial flight or a chartered plane. On landing, he was greeted with the communal-military slogan Har Har Modi. The two events showed where Prime Minister Modi's loyalties and priorities would lie: with Big Business and Hindutva, both of which he had served with pious zeal in Gujarat since the anti-Muslim pogrom of 2002 and through crony-capitalist deals later.

Over the past year, he has showered favours on both, and antagonised many who voted for him. His honeymoon period has ended, but he hasn't fully understood that.

This was proved by a third development. That's Modi's May 16 statement in Shanghai to an Indian audience: "Earlier, you felt ashamed of being born Indian, now you feel proud to represent the country..." He repeated this in Seoul, adding the religious motif of "sins" committed in past life as the cause of being born Indian. Modi thus gratuitously insulted Indian citizens. *The use of terms like 'shame' and 'sin' reveals deep insecurity and an inferiority complex in Modi's persona, which psychologists should analyse.*

The boastful claim that India's 'mood' has changed dramatically in a year is meant to cover up that inferiority – the way Hitler and Mussolini tried to do by declaring they had made the German and Italian people "proud" through military aggression and by making the "trains run on time"!

What's the first-year balance-sheet of Modi's government? Frankly speaking, it's overwhelmingly negative. India has socially regressed in multiple ways, economically become more unequal, and politically got further polarised in an unhealthy manner.

India's social regression is evident in the growth of rabid communalism, attacks on democratic rights, censorship of free speech, intolerance towards

dissent, spread of authoritarian ideas, greater licence to male-supremacism and violence against women, insecurity among the religious minorities, all amidst neglect of human development.

The Ramzada-Haramzada abuse, ghar wapsi and calls for depriving Muslims of the right to vote are just the crassest forms of the present outbreak of communalism. The government's indulgence towards them sends a message: it's India's open season to malign non-Hindus, ban the sale of beef and even slaughter of bulls, impose the Bhagwat-Gita on schools, and build a cult around Gandhi's assassin Godse.

The message is amplified when those charged with Gujarat's 'fake encounters' and communal killings, including BJP president Amit Shah, are discharged without trial; but the entire might of the state is brought to bear against secular campaigners like Teesta Setalvad – because they tried to bring the culprits of Gujarat-2002 to justice.

There have been savage cuts in social sector budgets: 20 percent in health, 29 percent in Mid-Day Meal schemes, 17 percent in education, 51 percent in women and child welfare, and so on. Central transfers to the states, which implement many social schemes, were cut by 30 percent.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act had its worst-ever performance under Modi. In 2014-15, the number of person-days of work created was 40 percent less than two years ago. Only three percent of families got the promised 100 days of work, and 70 percent of wages were delayed – to disastrous effect in a year of acute agrarian distress. Employment growth in industry has fallen to barely a fifth of what's needed to absorb the growing workforce.

The suit-boot-ki-sarkar is shamelessly pro-rich and anti-poor. It's cajoling capital to invest. But investment isn't forthcoming. Fifty-two percent of India's top 500 companies are excessively indebted, 14 percent of bank loans have gone bad.

Modi has failed to diagnose this, and believes that the key to stimulate investment is threefold: dismantle environmental regulations, allow

unbridled diversion of agricultural land to industry (hence the land ordinance), and ‘reform’ labour laws to allow hire-and-fire.

The first approach has meant ruthless ‘fast-tracking’ of industrial-project clearances without scrutiny, violating the Forest Rights Act and coastal zone regulations, and redefining ‘forests’.

The high-level (TSR Subramanian) committee has recommended far-reaching changes in environmental laws, including abolition of pollution control boards, self-certification of environment-related information by project promoters, and automatic clearances for roads and power-lines through forests, etc. But environmental regulations are no obstacle to industry: over 94 percent of proposals have been cleared since 2007.

Land has become an extremely contentious issue. The UPA’s land law was meant to give farmers and those dependent indirectly on agriculture a stake in determining their fate – necessary since some 60 million people have been displaced from land since 1947, mostly without rehabilitation.

The NDA’s ordinance undermines this rationale. It is opposed tooth-and-nail by a wide spectrum of parties and farmers’ organisations. A land agitation could turn politically explosive. The government is sitting on Lakhs of acres it acquired for military use and Special Economic Zones, but hasn’t distributed. The ordinance will give private capital free access to land and what lies under it, especially minerals – a huge racket. This has become a Modi obsession.

The planned dismantling of labour protections will rob workers of the right to form unions (for which the minimum membership has been raised from seven to 100). No permission will be needed to lay off workers or close factories with 100 workers; these account for 90 percent of the total number of units. The factories Act will also be undermined, dismantling safety rules. Employment of contract labour for permanent work will become rampant. Politically, Modi is running the most over-centralised government in India’s history. This cannot work without destroying decision-making integrity and creating insecurity among bureaucrats and ministers; indeed, RSS men have been appointed as ‘officers on special duty’ to spy on them. This makes nonsense of cabinet government.

Modi has introduced venomous confrontation into politics, against the spirit of democracy. Intimidating your opponents, and even your allies, can quickly become counterproductive. Several NDA constituents and Sangh Parivar outfits have turned against the land ordinance. Modi is making enemies out of friends.

Going by recent elections, by-elections, and local bodies' polls in different states, the enthusiasm witnessed for Modi last year has all but vanished. The BJP proved incapable of repeating its Lok Sabha performance in vote-shares/seats even in favourable situations like Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. The edge it established in parts of West Bengal, including Kolkata, has already eroded.

What's becoming obvious now is the effect of the thinness of the original support for Modi. He won 31 percent of the vote, but 52 percent of the Lok Sabha's seats, the highest disproportion ever. His support was highly concentrated in a handful of states – thanks to planned communal violence and polarisation along caste and class lines.

Another factor was his high-octane multi-billion dollar election campaign, which hyped up Gujarat's at-best-modest social indicators as major achievements. A CSDS-Lokniti poll asked people which state they thought was India's most developed: 64 percent answered Gujarat, only four percent said Maharashtra, and even fewer cited Kerala, India's indisputably most socially developed state.

This illusion, partly based on the search for a messiah, is breaking down. People are realising that the '56-inch-chest' man is a hollow caricature of his bloated image. Modi's troubles are set to worsen.

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The Pak-Afghan thaw

K. Iqbal

Afghanistan and Pakistan enjoy a unique relationship, which is at times throwing up diverse and daunting challenges, and at times oozing out comforting brotherly sentiments and environment. The Afghanistan-Pakistan, bilateral relationship appears to have come of age, however, the gains are fragile and are reversible—hence needing careful handling and nurturing.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during his visit to Kabul on May 12, outlined three principles in the context of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations: we will strictly adhere to the policy of non-interference; we will not allow our respective territories to be used against the other; and Afghanistan's enemies will be treated as Pakistan's enemies and Pakistan's enemies will be treated as Afghanistan's enemies. These principles were reiterated once again during the Prime Minister's address to the concluding session of the Envoys Conference on 11 June 2015.

The 11th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the process was held in Islamabad on May 25, 2015. The participants reiterated their support to the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan and the Afghan National Unity Governments' reform agenda and programmes. The role of the region in supporting the Afghan led and Afghan owned peace progress was highlighted and the participants committed to support this process. Economic connectivity in the Heart of Asia region was discussed as a top priority for regional prosperity and long-term stability and security. It was emphasised that all parallel projects and initiatives must be pursued with a vision of complementing each other to enhance regional economic connectivity and development. Pakistan is hosting the next ministerial meeting later this year. Pakistan views with great interest China's emergence as a peace-maker in Afghanistan. Both China and Pakistan subscribe to the cardinal doctrine that the Afghan peace process should be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led, while taking Taliban entities onboard. Pakistan also subscribes to the notion that international community should continue to support the Afghan government economically, alongside assisting it in building the capacity of Afghan

National Security Forces in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.

Currently, both countries face common challenge of overcoming militancy of various brands to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan that would soon have ripple effect into Pakistan. Departure of foreign forces has thrown up new dilemmas for the two countries. However, if prudence holds course, most of challenges could turn into opportunities. President Ashraf Ghani has emerged as a mature statesman. Despite heading difficult coalitions, so far he has been able to carry along his wobbly political partners. Credit for this also goes to the CEO Dr Abdullah Abdullah who has given up his political style of yester-years. Both leaders seem to have realised that they have to carry along each other for the betterment of their country.

Afghan diplomacy is no longer conducted through the media, and the Karzai era “blame Pakistan” rhetoric is now a distant memory. The new Afghan government has taken positive steps for addressing some of Pakistan’s concerns by reversing its ‘India only’ approach for getting military equipment and training of AFNS personnel. However, these steps are not without opposition from within Afghanistan and India.

Pakistan is supporting the Afghan peace process by facilitating contacts between Ghani government and various political resistant groups. Back channel contacts between the Taliban and Afghan government appear to have gathered enabling critical mass to shed the denial mode and turn into formal intra-Afghan political dialogue. Latest rounds of contacts were held in Oslo and Dubai during first week of June; another broader round is slated for Doha in July. With the beginning of new fighting season in Afghanistan, Pakistan has distanced itself from the ongoing Spring Offensive and has equated it to acts of terrorism.

Pakistan and Afghanistan will have to work in unison to make behind the scene effort between the insurgents and the Afghan government an enduring success; in all likelihood, it will be a give and take enterprise. A starting point could be the appointment of non-controversial Taliban leaders as provincial governors and also giving them compatible ministerial appointments. Appointment of a towering, yet non-controversial person as Vice President may help in breaking the ice. In parallel, Afghan and Pakistan governments need to find a middle ground for creating an area of

convergence in the context of addressing Taliban's concerns about the Afghan constitution through a consensus based process. At the same time, Taliban should be encouraged to incorporate flexibility in their approach and think about making their constitution and foreign troops' related preconditions as end objectives of intra-Afghan political settlement. This does not mean shifting of goal posts; rather it should be seen as a matter of adjusting the timings.

Pakistan has facilitated the Doha process and other initiatives for narrowing the gaps between the two sides. Moreover, for addressing the concerns of Afghan government about presence of militants in North Waziristan, Pakistan had started a gigantic military operation, Zarb-e-Azb, in North Waziristan Agency to eliminate and or/flush-out the Taliban and other extremist outfits holed-up in their last stronghold in Pakistan. Success of this year-long operation, alongside its offshoot Operation Khyber II, has been acknowledged by everyone.

Recent intelligence sharing agreements between the intelligence agencies of the two countries—Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), and National Directorate of Security is a landmark decision that provides a structural framework for tactical operations against militants. This arrangement is likely to go a long way in jointly countering terrorism. Certain elements across the border are opposed to this improved relationship. Hamid Karzai and his close aides are creating obstacles in Ashraf Ghani's effort towards normalising ties with Pakistan. Karzai has strongly condemned the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries about intelligence sharing on the pretext that it was against Afghan's national interest. He had earlier opposed Ghani's decision to send army cadets for training to Pakistan. While in Kabul the Indian National Security Advisor also gave a statement against the MoU. Keeping in view the complexities of the relationship, especially the deep seeded mistrust, all is not expected to be well between the two countries, nor are all ills expected to get well soon. However, there certainly is a new found political will on both sides to improve the relations, and this will is the ray of hope for the people of two countries.

Visit of President Ghani to Pakistan last November has opened a new phase in Pak-Afghan bilateral relations. Likewise, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Kabul on May 12 enabled the leadership of the two countries to recommit themselves to their common resolve to remove their mutual doubts

and misgivings and to embark on the road to a tangible and meaningful cooperation between the two countries.

Time is now ripe for mobilising robust guarantors for underwriting the upcoming intra-Afghan political understanding. Beijing is already emerging as an appropriate venue for such talks. Pakistan supports Beijing's active participation in the evolving peace process, as it has the credibility of being an honest peace broker as well as potent guarantor. UNSG also needs to step in and facilitate P-5's role as guarantor to the final political settlement in Afghanistan.

Fake Degrees Defaming Indian Education Standard

Mousumi Roy

Indian scholars have created impressive presence globally in various fields over the years. Be it Fine Arts, Literature, Academics, Economics, Socio-Political Science, Financial, Science and Technology, Medical Science or Corporate Affairs Management, the contributions and achievements are well regarded across the globe. This is brighter side of our learning system which helped producing large number of individuals whose contributions and works made them well recognized and renowned both within the country and overseas. On the other hand, failure in controlling various malpractices, cheating, dubious acts, fraudulence and inability in creating skill and need based education system, has proved its ineffectiveness.

Tendency of cheating, embracing to malpractice by students are not unknown, uncommon for India. In fact, this phenomenon is present in many countries in different forms and varied extent. However, increasing trend in mass copying, cheating in more recent times, particularly in some parts of the country, are matter of concerns and causing serious damages. Forged Mark Sheets, 'Fake Degree Certificates' established their presence in our education system for quite long time. Many foreign countries, therefore, adopted stringent rules of authentication, verification of qualification certificates claimed by Indian job seekers in their countries. But in domestic job market, the organized racket continued its operation more freely to make quick buck to meet high demands and needs of dishonest people, by exploiting improper checks and loopholes in our verification system. Political influences and supports have added to this grey area of illegal business.

Recent arrest of Law Minister, Jitendra Singh Tomar, of present Delhi local government has added to new dimension, to show the extent and level this organized racket is operating in our country. In lighter side, this episode has become talking point as "Munna Bhai LLB". He claims doing his Graduation (B.Sc) from Avadh University, Faizabad and Law Degree (LLB) from Tilak Manjhi Bhagalpur University. But both certificates are considered to be fake and presently being investigated. It is shocking that such a dubious person managed to practice profession of law for past a few years. He is not only involved in active politics but got elected as MLA and thereafter even made

Law Minister in local government of Delhi, through fullest support of his party and the party chief of AAP. The irony is, the AAP (Aam Admi Party) which claims to be in politics to eradicate corruption, always vows to honesty and integrity of their leaders, always complain through rallies and media speeches by alleging other political leaders, businessmen are corrupt. It appears, only handful of their party leaders are the most honest who have entered politics to clear the system. The party also claims that full proof system is in place, due diligence and scrutiny process are followed prior to allocating party membership. But in reality these claims cannot be substantiated through facts as many incidents have come out in public domain for a party who is politics for such a short period. The manner in which the party agitated, protested against the arrest of Tomar and continued to support him after the arrest, once again raises big question mark about their claims of value based politics, they always talk about.

The important aspect is, the investigation process is on and it must be carried out to find the organized racket behind such acts of forgery and illegal practices. Such fraudulent documents cannot be generated by an individual alone, a large gang or racket is often involved to carry out such operation. These racketeers are to be found out, all of them are to be brought to book and punished. If this is done, it will do lots of good for our education system. It may be termed as too late actions, but this initiative will certainly help and can be viewed as some measure of damage control efforts. This will create impression about our seriousness to clean up fraudulent practices in our education system.

India was once known for destination for knowledge. Our education system attracted people from other nations in olden days. We may have lost that glory. However, through some serious efforts, through some corrective actions, we can make our education system be more “Localized” for India, more “Relevant” for our need of “Skill Development” program for the country itself. Simultaneously we can rebuild faith and trust of our education system in overseas and thereby claim authenticity and target meeting world demand by utilizing our talent and vast pool of present demographic dividend the country possess.

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