

'Pakistan biggest rogue of all the rogue states'

HN VERMA

Every new generation grudges the older generation and belittles it for failures to keep pace with time. Some even try to turn the wheel back. The present day Islamic fundamentalists fall in the latter category. They want to take society back, 1400 years, to the seventh century, to the time of Prophet Mohammad. And, to achieve their objectives, these extremists don't hesitate to violently eliminate all those they perceive as being obstructions in their way. Imagine an assassin (or assassins) pinning down a human being, with whom till a little while ago they were friendly, and then brutally thrusting a knife across the victim's throat. They then dismember the dead (?) man's body into ten pieces and bury him. Such are the ghastly ways of Islamic terrorists in Levy's book.

"Who murdered Daniel Pearl?" is the story of an American journalist who, on assignment from the *Wall Street Journal*, is looking into the terrorism network he suspects exists in Pakistan. The author, Bernard Henry-Lévy, recounts Pearl's activities in Pakistan in the form of a novel based on a juxtaposition of real and imaginary events. He adds poignancy to the story by giving the background of the victim and his assassins. Worse, the assassins are not just some goons, but include a well-educated young Muslim from England - Omar Sheikh, a student of the London School of Economics - who can pass off as a perfect Englishman. Omar Sheikh's accomplices, too,

a call for the sharing of light." A few lines preceding this sentiment, Levy opens his mind, "Who will prevail: the heirs of this ancient commerce of men and cultures that stretch from Avicenna to Mahfouz by way of the sages of Cordoba - or the madmen of Peshawar camps who call for Jihad and belly strapped with explosives aspire to die as martyrs?"

Of the 460-page novel's five parts, the first two relate to Danny and Omar, the next two to the role of state and its agencies (one of which is ISI) and al-Qaida, the likely sponsor of the crime. The fifth part titled "Over Intrusive" raises the question of "Bomb for Bin-Laden" and exposes the professions of "gentle Islam."

The first call at Karachi is for Levy a bizarre scene - the airport

has no woman, not a Westerner to be seen (there is no major female character in the novel). Danny's kidnapping was not the first of an alien by Pakistan's terrorist groups which are engaged in guerilla warfare with the support of secret services for the last four decades

has been established. Levi concludes that all of them have an ideology to establish "the United States of Islam" and enlist Black-Americans as volunteers. Levy states that, "I assert that Pakistan is the biggest rogue of all the rogue states today. I assert that what is taking form there, between Islamabad and Karachi, is a black hole compared to which Saddam Hussein's Baghdad was an obsolete weapons' dump. The stench of apocalypse hangs over those cities. I am convinced that Danny smelled that stench." But this was overlooked by USA, and Pakistan was taken into confidence for the war against terrorism.

What is the reaction of Omar Sheikh when Bin Laden called him his "favored son"? Levy observes "This man is decidedly a maniac. I'd laugh if it were not tragic - he suggests kidnapping the sons of Bush and Cheney," and "The Devil doesn't make appointments, he is at home everywhere, except in his own home, the demon's lamp as we all know is like Minerva's owl - it screeches once you have left."

Because of the temptations, Omar, a prince in the universe of evil, plays love and hate for the West. The Jihadist believes that he has the right to name 72 of the chosen - the same as the number of virgins waiting for him in paradise - to follow in his ascension. To be safe from harm, Jihadists keep on changing their names. Omar has 17 aliases - Kashmir also figures in his game - he tells

After Levy had paid his last visit to USA to complete his novel, he wrote

"Who Killed Daniel Pearl?" He followed the trails that led to a mastermind - Gilani - a Kashmiri, who founded in 1980 an organization called the al Fuqra in a Brooklyn mosque. Levy noted that the mosque recruited volunteers for Jihad from the African-American community. Although al Fuqra was small, it was the "grand summit" of terrorists concentrated in Lahore. Gilani worked silently.

In 1993, upon coming under suspicion from US administration, he left USA for Lahore where he established ties with Pakistani intelligence agencies, and when US put pressure on Pakistan for his arrest, with police connivance he changed his master persona to "Mafosa." Though not an Arab, he was considered the antenna of Bin Laden's network in New York. Similarly, though not connected with the international Islamic front for Jihad, he was a warlord. Gilani's premises had a map of the work entitled "The United States of Islam" which showed a green flag in the middle, the Muslim universe with a small inset map displaying the same in 20 years.

Pearl was engaged in investigating Muslims of America and the International Quranic Open University, which carried out campaigns on Jihad including martyred Muslim peoples, Bosnia, Chechnya, intellectual resistance to the Zionist lobby, and Jamats - a religious commune. He found such organizations existing in many places - under pretext of protecting members from a materialist world. They also remitted funds to charities which did not reach the needy and instead these reached the coffers of madarsas and ultimately to the servers of Jihad.

Levy thinks that Pearl was busy establishing the list of ISI superior officers who were faithful to the Gul line (Gul is the ex-ISI director), that is to the doctrine of the Islamist bomb,