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THE ENGAGED INTELLECT

By JAMES GRAFF PARIS

BERNARD-HENRI LEVY, FRANCE'S most irrepressibly public philosopher, says he's always been fighting the same adversary: "the will to purity," whether political or racial. In a long career of public causes, he has seen that ill will on the faces of Nazi sympathizers; the Soviet *nomenklatura*, Pakistani generals fighting against Bangladesh's independence, and Serb paramilitaries bent on ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Now he sees it in militant Islam—which he believes is perilously close to acquiring nuclear arms. Lévy's latest book was not prompted by political theory, but brute fact: the murder of kidnapped *Wall Street Journal* reporter

Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in January 2002. Lévy, 54, was in the office of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, on a mission for the French government, when he learned that Pearl was dead, and decided there and then to write about why. He does so with the flamboyant iconoclasm that has long made him a lightning rod in French public life. His new book, *Who Killed Daniel Pearl?*, released in France to great fanfare at the end of last month, is his report on a year of remarkable research that took him from the urban wastelands of Karachi to

France's most famous philosopher turns gumshoe and investigates the murder of a U.S. journalist. His verdict: militant Islam is guilty and must be stopped

Mulholland Drive in Los Angeles, from London to Dubai and Bosnia, and from fact to a kind of fiction. In retracing Pearl's last steps—the story that got him killed—Lévy concludes that the reporter's kidnapping, decapitation and dismemberment was essentially a "crime of state" that implicates parts of the Pakistani government. And it is in Pakistan, he believes, where al-Qaeda's "madmen of God" mesh with nuclear scientists and intelligence chiefs, that a battle must be joined that will dwarf the controversy over Iraq. "The tyranny of Saddam Hussein belongs to another century," Lévy says. "The debate of the next century will

PEARL WAS A FRIEND OF THE UNCOUNTED,