

Religion in the Political Process in Context of Bangladesh: A Historiographic Account

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Introduction

The Bengali culture and tradition could be considered as great tradition and it contains a broader perspective which includes language, customs, rituals, values, knowledge, myth, art, music, symbols, subsistence pattern etc. The religio-cultural dimension is minor in comparison to broader cultural traditions. Many religions and belief systems have been introduced in this region in different times. The local people practiced them in various ways and included many elements that are cross-cutting. Thus, various elements of those religions co-exist in the way of life of general community members.

The main objective of this paper is to explore the relationship between the religion and contemporary political culture from a historical perspective. It argues that the role of religion veined into the political process and influences the citizens' affairs. Thus the paper presents the historical fact in a genealogical order: the first section describes the religion-cultural traditions. The second section explains how religion was considered as a political factor in case of the separation of India and Pakistan. The third section analyzes the status and role of religion inside Pakistan. And finally, the role of religions in current political process in Bangladesh has also been analyzed.

The Religio-cultural Traditions

The historical review shows that Bengal was the land of Murayan Emperors. This lower delta of the Himalayan peninsula was an important root for traveling to and from east and west. The

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missionaries, travelers and various of ethnic groups crossed the delta. It is evident that many groups crossed, stayed, conquered and kept their footprints in this region. Thus, the people of Bengal and other parts of Indian Subcontinent are basically mixed ethnic groups. The early history shows that the region Bengal was divided into many small kingdoms which were ruled by the individual king who had been the followers of Buddhism. This trend continued till 10th century A.D. Later power had gradually shifted to the Hindu rulers. They ruled the region until 1204. The Islamic Sufis arrived in 8th century in Bengal but Ikhtier Uddin¹ conquered the region in 1204 A.D. At that time, this was the last region in the subcontinent that came under Islamic rule. The Muslims came to India as early as 637 A.D. and settled as tradesmen and missionaries. At the early stages, Indians were profoundly impressed with their ways of living, zeal for new faith, universal brotherhood. A large number of Indian embraced the new faith (15 thousand/year)². The conquest of Sindh by Mohammed bin Qasim in 712 A.D. was the first entry of Muslim conqueror into the Indian Subcontinent³. Since then, Islam has been spreading in the Indian Subcontinent. The Muslims ruled the Bengal from 1204 to 1757. The British won the Palashi war in the same year. The British ruled India (included Bengal) till 1947.

Religion as a Political Factor: the division of India into India and Pakistan

India was divided in 1947 on the basis of religion⁴. The 5000 years old society was divided on the basis of religious identity. This was the significant relationship between religion and politics of the people of subcontinent. This communal 'two-nation's theory' had been conceived by Muslim leaders⁵ and scholars. The root of this imagination was far deep in the history. After the British conquer of the Indian sub-continent, the Hindus showed their loyalty to the British. Muslims denied to cooperate the British rulers. Thus, the differences between the Hindus and Muslims were taken place without considering their homeland. The British colonial rulers played with communal sentiment of both religious groups. The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the Communal Award of 1911 were some of it's evidences. In 1940, The Muslim league of India demanded precisely 'the areas, in which the Muslims are majority,

particularly in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'independent states'⁶.

From 1940 to 1947, a lot of debate took place over the division of the sub-continent. Finally, British government prescribed a three-tier governmental structure: Group A: the provinces with Hindu majority; middle and southern regions, the greater part of India; Group B: Provinces with Muslim majority; north-west part of India and Group C: provinces with marginal Muslim majority; eastern part; Bengal and Assam. Congress fought for Assam to keep it in group A instead of group C and Muslim League differed. Finally, the British administration sympathized Congress and Assam was incorporated into group A. The British parliament passed the Indian Independence Act in 1947. The Muslim League leaders looked for independent states as to the majority of Hindus in the sub-continent. Probably, the Muslim leaders feared of being oppressed by the Hindus in the long run and did not find possibility of any Muslim leaders to be the chief for the power. On the other hand, the Congress was confident about their assumption into political power in the united federation.

On 14 August, 1947 Pakistan became an independent state with an unequal combination of Group B and C. Definitely this was the historical breakdown of the Bengali nation for the second time. The group B and C had only one common factor that is religion, where language, intellectual development, culture traditions, mode of living, subsistence activities, infrastructure, and pattern of environmental adaptation were significantly different. The traditions of the west Pakistan were based on Shiraz and Isfahan while the east's traditions were based on Calcutta⁷.

Religion inside the Pakistan State: Used as an Exploitive Tool

The emergence of Pakistan state was based on Islamic religious identity. Certainly, it was hoped that Islamic codes of conduct would be implemented in the state. The motivation of establishing a religious state was also present in the voices of leaders. In reality, they practiced it in different ways⁸. They started to undermine the teaching of Islam (all human beings are equal, Muslims are brothers, Islam means peace, etc.). Instead, they emphasized on power and

authority. The spirit of religious brotherhood gradually disappeared and the spirit of aggressive politics, domination of power and socio-economic oppression took place. The west Pakistanis became intolerant to the Bengalis, though majority of these people were Muslims with a few minority groups (Hindus, Christians and Buddhists) who voted for the Islamic state. The leadership misguided the countrymen at this point. They tried to show that the state is the property of West Pakistan. East Bengal (East Pakistan since 1955) is mere an annex land⁹. Thus, they began to behave as colonial power.

In the new state, the religious extremism had grown to demoralize the citizens. The west Pakistan leaders and administrators left nothing to do in the name of religion. Exploitation in every sector has been demoralizing Bengali people. Moreover, killing, torturing, and suppression happened in the regime. The first political violence started through a declaration of Urdu¹⁰ as the state language excluding Bangla¹¹. A number of students were killed in 1952¹². The voice of '*Islamization*' received supreme agenda in every issue. Gradually, Pakistan became a country of military rulers until the independence of Bangladesh. Army Generals were the rulers of 'Islamic Pakistan'. The history shows that there was significant development in West Pakistan immediate after independence. In industrialization, agricultural developments, foreign policy seemed creditable. The government came closer to USA, UK and Islamic Middle East as allied forces. In real sense, East Pakistan was considered as a colony of a large religious State. Most severe problem were observed in economic and political spheres.

The final aggression was the genocide in 1971. The west Pakistanis started ethnic cleansing of Bengali nation. Everything, according to them, was done for the sake of the religion. As a result, Bangladesh Liberation War had started. In 267 days (from 25th March to 16th December), a total of 3 millions people were killed, 200,000 women were raped, thousands of houses were burnt, 10 millions people were dislocated who took shelter in India and millions of people left their homes temporarily in fear of being tortured. In early December, India recognized Bangladesh as an independent country and interfered¹³ in the liberation war. Here it is noted that India as a state of Hindu majority (or, Hindu state as per 1947 separation) came to

rescue Bengali Muslims from the cruel hand of Pakistani Muslims (for whom Bengali Muslims cast their vote in 1947). In fact, Pakistan did not exploit East Bengal (Bangladesh) only; they also exploited the religion (Islam). The only success of this religious state was to increase a significant number of religious schools (*madrassa*). Moreover, they successfully created many militia guerillas groups (*Al-Badar*, *Al-Sams*), fellow and collaborators (*razakars*) at wartime. The significant trend was to mislead the religion from its original spirit. Thus, the image of the religion appeared in twofold for the Bengali people. Firstly; practicing Islam, *takwa* (wisdom), piousness in individual and social life, which have been established through 8th century to 1947. Secondly; the state sponsored image of the religion in 1947-71. People came to understand that political Islam severely ignores human rights, communal harmony, and moral behavior and encourages use of state power to implement religion on common mass.

Religion in Bangladesh State: Worship versus Politics

The country has been ruled by many political groups. The groups can be divided into categories: the seculars (middle-left, 1971-75, and 1996-2001), the rightists (middle-right, 1975-96) and rightists and Islamists (alliance of middle-rights and political Islamists¹⁴, 2001-onward). Moreover, the democratic governments have been ruling the country since 1991 consecutively. The elections by constitution approved were held accordingly. A possible democratic trend would have confirmed/ institutionalized within these 15 years. The situations had deteriorated,¹⁵ instead of improving. Firstly, grenade and bombs have been charged in many courtyards, public gatherings and meetings, cultural programs, entertainment halls, political processions, religious shrines, government and non-governmental officials, organizations' offices. A significant number of lawmakers, university professors, and journalists have been killed and a lot of others injured. Besides, many innocent people have been killed in numerous attacks. Secondly, a debate on the uprising of religious extremism been taken place both in national and international levels. Media, politicians, scholars, and the civil society have been divided and engaged themselves on these issues. Moreover, international bodies and print media got engaged on this debate. The politician, scholars and the commoners are concerned whether this country is

turned into a heaven for religious extremists (who are committed to destroy cultural traditions, all possible routes of a secular and democratic ideologies) or will continue the 'told' 'moderate Muslim' image.

Islamic values in Bangladesh can be categorized into two parts: worshipping and politicizing. The country of majority Muslims are desperate vowed to create a moral environment of Islamic practices. A large number of scholars and pious people are looking for a complete code of Islam. On the other hand, a significant number of scholars and Islamic leaders are looking for having state power to implement Islamic rules. The attitudes are different from each other. One group looks from the below (from individual's life to communal/social life) and other from the above (from state to its citizens).

The fellows of the political Islamic ideology are looking for a model of Islamic state. Many Islamic leaders often indicate the importance of an ideal Islamic state as described and ruled by the Prophet and first four Caliphs. But a significant lack of these scholars is to show an ideal Islamic state in the Muslim world. There are many Islamic countries in Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. But none of them could be cited as an example of an ideal Islamic state. The Islamic republic of Iran created a nominal example of democratic Islamic state. The Kingdoms in the Arabian Peninsula (e.g.; Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Yemen, Jordan, Syria) are merely the examples of Muslim majority and monarchy states and are not following either the Prophet or the Caliphs. The political Islamic groups are encouraged by some of the Arabian Kingdoms. The returning migrant workers from the Middle-eastern countries are foot-soldiers of the contemporary *Wahhabi*¹⁶ influenced Islam. Money from the Middle-east countries through donations for building mosques and religious schools have penetrated deep into the country, undermining the moderate, peaceful and Sufi-oriented tradition of Islam.

The *Deobandi* Islam was taught in the 1950s by the intellectual and activist Maududi. He defined Muslim politics in opposition to Indian nationalism and his original agenda was reformist. The *Deobandi* model is now better known from the *madrassas* of Pakistan, where it

gave rise to the Taliban in Afghanistan. Whether Maududi intended it or not, his teachings have become synonymous with radical Islam¹⁷. The *Tabligh* group is the largest Muslim organization for missionary work founded in 19th century in India¹⁸. Now it organizes an annual gathering for Muslims near Dhaka which is the largest gathering next to the annual pilgrimage at Mecca. Muslims from different countries join in the gathering.

A new Islamic scholar group has emerged in the society. They are trying to reshape their collective existence according to the challenge of the times. These groups are well versed in Islam, familiar with the western thoughts¹⁹. Thus, the identity and interpretation of Islam has widely used in the studies of human rights, politics, culture and society, ethics and economics. The new Muslims scholars are also posed some problems. The major allegation came from the traditional scholars (*ulemas*) who think themselves the sole authority to interpret Islam. Previously, the monopoly in this field was enjoyed by the conventional scholars. According to their view, the new groups acquire western ways, accepted colonial rule and their guidance came from the West instead of Islam, and thus, their interpretation would not be 'Islamic'.

The government of Bangladesh is spending money for both general and religious education. The prime objective of these schools is to provide basic religious education. A large number of graduates are coming out from these religious schools every year and they are getting into the job market accordingly. Here is a critical situation for both: state and graduates. The goal of the religious school is mainly to create a good leader of religion as well as a good worshipper. They are studying the concept of ideal Islamic values and culture from the life and activities of the Prophet and caliphs. After graduating from the religious school, they face a structure of a state based on secularism, modern norms and western democratic ideology. These graduates are devoted to the religious performance. The expectations of both state and graduates become very different from each other which are the most critical point, which create a conflicting relationship between the state and the graduates' culture. The students passing out from, are not well-equipped to enter into mainstream professions. On the other hand, the target of the general education is to serve the country from the viewpoint of a

state. Most of the jobs of the state are occupied by the graduates having general education. Thus, the graduates of religious education find a strong competitor group (graduates of general education) as well as ideological distinctiveness. At the sametime they face an unfamiliar environment from the state which creates maladjustment. Gradually, state and general education system become alien to them.

The Islamic leaders and scholars in Bangladesh are divided on the issues of implementation of Islam in the country. It is a contrasting situation with the Islamic ideology that approves only a single sect in the religion. The members of each group are talking and showing them as the only devoted sect of the religion. Each of the groups has created platform according to their own guidelines. They are devoted to the political Islam and to make a single platform for state and religion. Some groups are devoted to keep ordinary people in practicing Islamic activities regularly (*e.g.*; *Tabligh*). The major portion of the liberals and ordinary Muslims (who are considered having a limited idea on religion) are the target population to take on the ideological platform by most of the above groups. Thus, commoners are in a dilemma of accepting different ideas, comparing them and perform accordingly. For the commoners, it is very difficult to reject any invitation to work for Islam. Here it is noted that majority of the population are out of literacy who are obviously sensitive to issues of their religious beliefs. Thus, the different types of news, true of false, on behalf or against the religion, shake the people everywhere in the country. However, the religious identity has been assimilated within the national identity but the national identity does not disappear in presence of religious consciousness²⁰.

Now the situation has become complicated because both the radical political Islamists claim that Islam is a code of life in itself, and does not require any man-made laws and regulations to rule the country and does not need present-day government style. Some of the political parties want to transform Bangladesh into a religious state, specially using communal voice²¹. The extreme form of political Islam is motivated to the vision of power exercise to implement Islam.

The Influence of International Crises

The advancement of science and technology in North America and Europe is always acknowledged by the other countries of the world. At the same time dominance of the both regions has been established accordingly. With the presence of all of these 'sweet' phenomena, many critical situations and questions are also taking place. The role of western armed forces, international politics, creating imbalances, using international organizations according their will, are needed to be taken into consideration. Asia, Africa and Latin American nations are sufferers mostly. The facts and aftermaths of the 'nine-eleven' incident could be presented to prove the given arguments.

The 'nine-eleven' incident influenced the world politics than any other incidents since the World War II. The situation in Bangladesh carries the reactions and aftermath of the incident in different ways. This was an unpleasant situation for many commoners in Bangladesh as they define themselves 'moderate' Muslims. Firstly, it is widely publicized that the organization named *Al-qaida* (which is consists of Muslims, as said) is responsible for this incident. But many of the Muslim countries became doubtful about the US led war strategy against the Muslims. Muslim scholars wrote many papers about their suspicions²². Experts of trade and investments wondered on the extraordinary business²³, *i.e.*; sales of shares of the two airlines whose planes were used in the 'nine-eleven' incident. Secondly, following the incident, 'war against terrorism' has begun. Many of the Muslim countries are severely affected due to this war. Violence spread out in many countries. The situation created more complication through the writings of Western scholars²⁴ (which reached to the non-western readers too). The religious commoners of Bangladesh were sympathized the war victims of the Muslim countries. Thirdly, the activities of western countries cannot ensure the transparency everywhere. Their policies, activities, war games and trade strategies are not out of question. Many scholars (especially, Armstrong 2005) argued that the western countries aided the local religious organizations with particular objective²⁵. Trust are being breaking between the parties after a certain period. Some local organizations stand to protect such hegemonies. As a result, unpleasant salutations take place. Even, some organizations are engaged in practicing and

working peacefully for their own religion. These situations are creating questions among the commoners about the vulnerability of their religion.

Conclusion

The course of history shows that religion was in the process of politics and often has multifaceted use. At the beginning of the 21st century, the world politico-economic situations are posing new dilemmas of war and violence. In such situations, the role of respective religious groups is vital for peace, human rights and communal harmony. With many other things, the communal harmony is crucial for citizens. At the same time, the expectation of the commoners is a peaceful and a good religious life.

Bangladesh has drawn international attention in many ways which are common and fit to these circumstances. As a South Asian country, it is known as poverty drives, victim of frequent natural disasters and densely populated country in the world. However, it has the credibility to introduce the neutral caretaker government model, succeeded micro-credit scheme, owner of the golden fiber - jute which had the monopoly in the world market. Bangladesh is considered as a strong state in terms of formal presence of power, a poor state in terms of economy and a weak state in terms of the quality of the services it provides to its people. The people become 'the oppressed commoners'²⁶ when state exercises its bureaucratic and political power. The civilians and the commoners of the country are frustrated and disappointed as to some destructive factors which include destroying intellectual strength and cultural traditions of the nation, religious intolerance and demoralization of citizens. The essential factors to survive as a nation are the intellectual strength, morality, and a forward looking vision.

Endnotes:

¹ Ikhtier Uddin is widely known as Bakhtier Khilji. His proper name was Ikhtier Uddin Mohammed bin Bakhtier Khilji. This means that his name was Ikhtier Uddin Mohammad who was the son of Bakhtier Khilji.

² M.A Ghani, cited in Goyal, S. R. A religious History of Ancient India, published in India

³K.S Lal, *Early Muslims in India*, published in India

⁴ This is widely known as 'Two-nation theory' which was announced by Ali Jinnah but it was the brainchild of a Muslim poet named Iqbal, a poet. The national identity has been established on the basis of religion. The Muslims and the Hindus of the British India have been identified as the two separate nations.

⁵ As Haque (2002) cited 'Jinnah who 'believed in two ..things. That Muslims of all of the Indian subcontinent spoke one single. And he believed the violently dangerous Hindu-Muslim bipolarism had one and only antidote-cleaving the subcontinent into Hindu and Muslim majority ones. The first of his beliefs can outright be dismissed. The second, incredibly, worked and cut the subcontinent in three pieces, making up two states, on a very communal line. It ignored not only the opposition of the majority populace of the then India, it also made minorities of a hundreds of millions of potentially repressed people.many millions were made to abandon their homes of a thousand of years, ...many millions were killed outright. The repressive dominance of one community in a state is balancing the excesses of the other in the state. Jinnah can lay claim to the patent of the Balance of Terror doctrine.' (Haque 2002).

⁶ Philips, C. H., 1962, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858-1947*, 353-4

⁷ Holt, et, al, 1970, *Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, UK

⁸ As Amir * wrote 'The attempts by Pakistani rulers were to make everything 'Islamic' including culture, as per their own understanding of Islam' (see ref. Amir).

⁹ The word Pakistan has been taken as it meant the pure land (for Muslims). Later it was changed and explained as the abbreviated form of P for Punjab, A for Afghan, K for Kashmir, I for Indus, S for Sindh and Tan for Beluchistan. Thus, East Bengal/East Pakistan could be excluded as 'we and others' form.

¹⁰ Urdu language has been originated from a mixture of Arabic alphabet, and Hindi, Persia, Arabic vocabularies. The Pakistanis tried to show it as the Islamic language which definitely undermined Arabic (Language of the Holy Quran).

¹¹ Approximately, 55 millions people's mother tongue was Bengali whereas an estimated 45 millions people's first or second language was Urdu.

¹² On the 21st February, 1952, the Pakistani defense force killed many university students and general people on a procession against the suppression of Bengali language. The national legislature agreed (in 1954) that both Urdu and Bengali would be national languages. Since then, it was observed as the 'Martyrs Day'. Later, UN declared this day as the 'International Language Day'.

¹³ It was whispered that Pakistan was going to handover East Pakistan to China. Many Pakistanis pointed out this during the discussion of the historical facts with them (oral communication). As Khan wrote "true, Indian help was decisive in Bangladesh movement but the civil war in East Pakistan was Islamabad's own making and it could be argued that Pakistan had committed a demographic aggression of India by driving thousands of people as refugees to India from East Pakistan" (Khan 1976:19-20).

¹⁴ The rightists and Islamists' alliance is consisted of four partners, two of them are radical Islamic parties. Regarding one of those two radical parties, a feature in The Daily Times of Pakistan wrote '.....maintains links with Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), the Bangladesh Army and radical Islamists'. See the Daily times Pakistan, 2005.

The 2001 post-election situation has been analyzed by Haque (2002) and Jahangir (2002). A convention held in Dhaka on Crime against humanity where Jahangir wrote '..... well over 30 thousand Hindus fled from Bangladesh to India, over 1 thousand women were raped, over 185 political opponents were killed; over 5260 were injured, over 4,000 houses have been burnt; punitive taxes are levied against the population without allowing that population any form of recourse; acres after acres of paddy harvest have been expropriated. These are human rights abuses and these abuses are done by the government against their own people. This is terror, state sponsored terror' (see, Haque 2002, *Living in culture or among criminals?* and , Jahangir 2002, *State sponsored terror*, paper presented at the Crime against Humanity, National Convention, Dhaka, 12-15 February 2002, under the auspices of the Bangladesh civil society.).

¹⁶ Once it was the only tradition in Islam. This is being widely practiced in Saudi Arabia and other states in Arabian Peninsula.

¹⁷ Daily Times (Pakistan) 'Radical Islam on the rise in Bangladesh', May 2005

¹⁸ The Tabligh is often known as Tabligh Jamaat. In 19th century India, two organizations were established by the traditional Hindu leaders Shudhi and Sangathana. One worked to ensure the smooth turn back of

Hindus who were converted or preached in Islam and another worked to keep solidarity in the community. In response to that, Muslims established two organizations named Tabligh and Tanzim to keep solidarity, visiting the locality/local communities to show that they are also united. See, Cambridge History of Islam.

¹⁹ 'This came about because of the printing press, 'proliferation of translations and commentaries on the Koran and Hadith, and a conscious reaction to Western thought and actions. There has been an amazing increase in the number of such scholars during the last fifty to sixty years, and they are offering solutions to the challenges of the modern age according to their comprehension and insight' (Haqqani 2001, see, Haqqani, I., 2001, *Emergence of a Modern Islamic Community & Possibilities of a World Islamic Khilafat*).

²⁰ As Amir (2002) wrote 'majority of the population in Bangladesh are (moderate) Muslims. The birth of a nation with majority Muslims population, founded on the premises and principles of secularism is almost unheard of and unprecedented. Yet in 1971 during the cold war era, exactly that happened when Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation state. This was a unique experience on the face of the globe whereby a majority Muslim population, exercised their right of self-determination and declared themselves as an independent, separate, secular state' (Amir 2002). 'The people of Bangladesh found no conflict or contradiction with the concept of secularism and Islam. Rather their understanding of Islam is that it is tolerant and secular in nature' (Amir 2002).

²¹ The widely used slogan of some of the religious groups is 'We will be Taliban, Bangla will be Afghan'. See Awal 2002.

²² Professor K. Ahmed (2005) wrote 'This is also a mystery that International Herald Tribune's list of the dead that belonged to 68 countries has none from Israel. World Trade Center was reported to have more than 4,000 Jewish workers, but the information that has come to fore till now has no mention of Jews. There was news of arrest and investigation against 5 or 6 Israelis but this was immediately swept under the carpet. Stern Intel of Canada reported that the US intelligence sources suspect Israel's Mossad for the terrorist acts. In his condolence message, Iranian leaders underlined the same in the Tehran Times, Sept. 19, 2001, Iran

²³ As Ahmed wrote 'these apprehensions are substantiated by the information that is being gathered from the statistics of the surprisingly extraordinary activity at the Stock Exchange prior to the attacks. The commerce reporter of the daily Independent, London, relates that on

September 6 extraordinary activity was noticed in the sale of shares and whose share value has nose-dived after the events. This had been overlooked at that time, but now the question is raised as to why this was not noticed. The United Airlines made 2,000 contracts in a single day and this was 285 times higher of its earlier average of daily business. Its share value was \$ 30 on that day which dropped to \$ 18 after the attacks. Likewise, the share value of the American Airlines remained 60 times higher of its earlier average for two or three days before the events. Also, the shares of two international financial companies, Morgan Stanley and Marsh & McLennan, recorded 25 times and 100 times higher sale in those days as compared to their earlier average²³ (Ahmed 2005). While writing in *The Independent*, London, J. Nagarian, an expert on the trends of investment, expresses his astonishment on the extraordinary business'. See, ref. Ahmed, K., 2005, *War and Politics against Islam*

²⁴ For example; Rich Lowry wrote in the *Washington Post* on September 13, 2001, just two days after the incident- 'If we flatten part of Damascus or Tehran or whatever it takes, that is part of the solution'. Steve Durleavy wrote in the *New York Post* on September 12, 2001- 'kill A gunshot between the eyes, blow them to smithereens, poison them if you have to. As to cities or countries that host these worms, bomb them with basketball combs'²⁴. At the same day Ann Comlter wrote in the *New York Daily News*, Ann Comlter has gone to the extent of saying: 'We should invade these countries, kill their leaders. We were not punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities, we killed civilians. That is war and this is war' (see Ahmed 2005, *Tehran Times*, Sept. 19, 2001, *The Independent*, Sept. 20, 2001, *Washington Post*, Sept.13, 2001, *New York Post*, Sept. 12, 2001, *New York Daily News*, Sept. 12, 2001).

²⁵ US aided the growth of Islamic militancy in Afghanistan and Pakistan by first aiding the *mujahideens* in Afghanistan against Soviet occupation and later indirectly backing the emergence of Taliban militants from religious schools in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Armstrong added 'membership of *Al-qaida* has increased since the recent Gulf War; the offensive has convinced many Muslims that the West really has inaugurated a new Crusade against the Islamic world' (see Armstrong 2005).

²⁶ see Lewis 2005, Wood 1997, Davis and McGregor 2000:56, White 1999:10

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