

Jihadist Ideology in Pakistan and Javed Ahmad Ghamidi's Counter Narrative

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Jihadist ideology in the religious intellectual discourse, accelerated in the recent years in Pakistan is having its roots in an atomistic approach to the holy texts and a narrative which sanctified the killing of non-Muslims and their Muslim collaborators alike. Ghamidi (b. 1951), an ardent religious scholar challenged the *Jihadists* ideology in its bases. The counter narrative of Ghamidi on *Jihad*, Muslims and non-Muslims relations, Islamic state/relation of religion with politics and many other issues cannot be easily ignored intellectually. His views are ingrained in the main Muslim religious treatise and have a profound divergence from the contemporary exclusivist interpretation/narrative of the Muslims. Ghamidi's views, embedded in Farahi-Islahi school of South Asia, a relatively unknown religious trend, is upholding a holistic approach to Quran based on structural and thematic coherence in Quran (*Nazm-i-Quran*) against the disjointed and isolationist approach of the dominant religious discourse sometime appeared in the shape of religious militancy. Pakistani society ridden with an armed religious conflict cannot overwhelm the militant elements through the use of force unless it is encounter with a stronger ideological counter narrative. Ghamidi's work is relevant to societies elsewhere in the Muslim world also. In this paper roots and standing of Ghamidi against the dominant religious discourse in Pakistan is investigated and evaluated in the light of his publications and his presentation in electronic media while the same was adopted for the *Jihadist* ideology and added with the stories narrated among the masses through interaction of the researcher with the conflict ridden areas in the north-western part of Pakistan called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA.

Keywords: *Jihad*, terrorism, Ghamidi, counter narrative, Pakistan, Political Islam, Taliban

Pakistan, a geo-strategic important country of South Asia witnessed the worst kind of conflict resulting killing of thousands of people more than any other country including the US since 9/11.¹ The menace has its roots in the region since the coming of the *Sour* Revolution popularly known as communist revolution in Kabul in 1978, the subsequent resistance by the people of Afghanistan and support of all major non-Communist regime in the world particularly USA during the Cold War years². The Middle Eastern Arab states were the other major actors in the region. The Afghan resistance movement was carried out with an ideology emanating from the modern Islamic revivalist thoughts in the 20th century- a conglomeration of thoughts of Abul Ala Mawdudi of Pakistan, Sayyed Qutub of Egypt, Salafis (non-conformists of Saudi Arabia and Dewbandis (originated in India in 1860s). The regional and international actors also found it appealing to safeguard their own national interests by curtailing the Soviet expansionism in the region. For twenty years the religious discourse was dominated by a *Jihadist* ideology till the Soviet Union unglued in 1991. The *Jihadist* Ideology was thought to be wind up after the fall of Najib government in Kabul in April 1992. But it was not easy to uproot an ingrained militant ideology particularly when the global actors turned off their attention and Pakistan was left alone to deal with the threat. Pakistan was not having capability and capacity to face the after effects of the 15-year war conflict in the region. The overthrow of Taliban government in Kabul by the US led NATO coalition forces and installation of Karzai

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¹ In the last thirteen years Pakistan suffered 13,721 terrorist incidents which left 56,156 dead and more than 200,000 critically injured (National Counter Terrorism Authority), *Dawn*, Karachi, March, 2015.

² Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President Ronald Reagan were among those who appreciated the Afghan militant against the Soviet Union forces in Afghanistan in early 1980s.

regime in 2001 met the same response from the Taliban resistance forces. Taliban and their sympathisers elsewhere in the world particularly in Pakistan launched a resistance movement using the same religious slogans against the US and its allies as they did against the Russians. But this time the reaction of the third generation of the militants in Pakistan was more brutal against the military and civilians than their earlier ones. They devastated the government and non-government institutions on one hand and annihilated the already poor infrastructure particularly in the north west of Pakistan including Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The stubborn resistance of the militants to the security forces of Pakistan is based on a particular religious narrative which justifies all kind of violence including killing of innocent people/children, lethal encounter and suicide bombing on one hand and beheading, imputation and display of dead bodies in public places on the other. After analyzing statements, communiqué, videos and literature of the militant groups it can be contributed to a particular approach to the religious texts; Quran, hadith and *athar*³ and *fiqh* verdicts which are constantly used to justify their 'noble' actions.

What this *Jihadist* ideology is about?

The contemporary *Jihadist* ideology believes in the categorization of entire humanity into two groups; Muslims and 'infidels', 'good and evil', party of God (*Hizb u Rehman*) and party of Satan (*Hizb u shetan*). Since the dawn of humanity these two groups are at perpetual war with each other. Hence it is incumbent upon the Muslims to continue this holy war against the 'infidels'. This holy war will continue till *kufr* (infidelity) became subservient to Islam everywhere on the earth as stated in the holy Quran (*Al-Tuba*, 112, 123; *Al-Baqra*, 190). They uphold the opinion that the holy war is forever and it will continue till the doomsday as it is enunciated in the hadith (Sunan-i-Abi Dawood, 2170; Sahih Bukhari, 2801).

The *Jihadists* looks all political, economic, diplomatic and strategic events in the world dominated by the Western/Christian world with a perennial war prism and citing the events in Kashmir, Palestine, Chechnya, Balkan, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan from the pulpit⁴ to instigate people which ultimately helps in enlisting support for the militants and their violent activities. Certain events happened in the West on the pretext of freedom of thought and expression is narrated as iconoclasm against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam. If there is any reference to the solution of problems through the offices of UN they term this body as incompetent when comes to Muslims. The Muslim countries accepted U.N. resolutions more than any other country of the world. With the support of US and other international actors the UN failed to implement its resolutions on Israel and Kashmir. When the USA says that Al-Qaida is in the tribal areas⁵ and planning to attack the Americans in US the local people ask questions how the Americans can be trusted as it were the Americans who claimed the presence of WMD in Iraq but later on nothing was found and one million Muslims have been killed in Iraq (Hamid Mir, 2009, March 30). The militants and common people thinks that the Americans and other non-Muslims cannot face us on ground so they sent these machines (drones) to kill the innocent people. The Americans are 'coward' and do not have the courage to face us in the warfront. The sympathetic intellectuals in media frequently cited examples of the patronage of certain figures such as Suleiman Rushdi and Taslima Nasrin whose writings against the holy personalities of Islam hurts the feelings of Muslims. The caricature episode in the West fomented the already unreceptive feelings of the Muslims. They applauded those Muslims who reacted violently against the value of freedom. Newspapers, magazines and journals and speeches from the pulpits and public platform are full of news depicting the West as the place where morality⁶ is eroding day and night. A reactionary attitude among the Muslims pushed some of them to the extreme and thus do not ready to accept any good in the Americans and in the West because of their double standard in the international relations. Writers and speakers refers that when the Oklahoma bombing occurred, within minutes' western media reported to have

³ Traditions narrated from the companion of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

⁴ Particularly in the Friday sermons, funeral ceremonies and after daily prayer the *dua* which an imam sought.

⁵ It refers to the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan which enjoy relative autonomy from the state institutions and remained safe places for the militants during the Afghan war in 1980s.

⁶ When they use the term morality (*Ikhlāq*) they mean laxity in opposite sex relations.

connection with the Middle East. Investigation afterward proved it incorrect and nobody termed it Christian fundamentalism while it was having a connection to Christianity.⁷ These learned men pointed out subjectivity of the Western media which portray Pakistan's Atomic Bomb as an Islamic Bomb but they never termed the Indian atomic bomb as a Hindu Bomb or Jewish or Christian Bomb elsewhere in the world. The statements of George W. Bush referring the American war on terrorism as crusade only reinforce the *Jihadists'* analogy to the crusades (SAIS Review). The success of Mujahidin against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan became religious symbols of the Muslim resistance struggle and *Jihadists* use this notion in their addresses in mosques and public gatherings. In Pakistani society, common people are influenced more by the clergy on the religious knowledge and attitudes as one of the Gallup survey shows in its reports. According to the report 71 % of the people of Pakistan have been influenced by the local cleric (*imam-i-masjid*) for their religious knowledge and belief while the same was 79 % in 1980 when the *Jihadist* ideology was in the offing in the region (Murad Javid).

Following is the narrative based on militants understanding of religion and explanation of their violent actions in Pakistan. On the question of targeting the Muslim military weather they are in Afghanistan or in Pakistan they blatantly declared them liable to death as they are collaborators with the 'infidels' as Quran is condemning friendship with Jews and Christians. In terrorist actions if civilians including children, women and old people get lost, the terrorists felt no excuse because such innocent people will be awarded paradise promised by God to the martyrs (Geo TV, 2014, Dec 21). When asked why they are conducting jihad in Afghanistan their answer is if jihad in 1980s was obligatory against the Soviet the why it is not obligatory against the Americans now who are occupying Afghanistan? When it is said that attacks on the rulers of the Pakistan is un-Islamic as they are Muslims? Their reply is that the then president of Afghanistan (Dr. Najibullah) was also a Muslim then why he was targeted by the then mujahidin? When Najib was collaborating with the Russians, so is the case of Pakistani rulers. When it is asked why you are killing the policemen and military soldiers? who are only earning bread for their children and thus should not be killed. The soldiers in Afghanistan and soldiers in Kashmir are also earning their livelihood so why they were targeted? When it is asked that due to the actions of Taliban hundreds of civilians are killed in Pakistan. They would say that the same civilians are killed in Kashmir, Iraq and Afghanistan by the 'enemies' of Islam (Jang, 2013, November 19) When it is said that due to suicide bombing innocent people are killed and thus Taliban are responsible for their killing. Here came a unique and interesting argument. They said if these victims are innocent then they will go to paradise and thus the Taliban are doing good to them by sending them to the paradise (Geo TV, 2014, Dec 21). When they are asked why they are targeting the barber shops, their reply would be that it is evil and there is saying of the Prophet to stop an evil with force.⁸ When asked why they are targeting schools particularly girls school. The will term these schools as centre of spreading western values and cultures and that girls should remain within the walls of their houses.

Intellectual Support from Political Islam

The literature on political Islam, emerged and spread after the end of the colonial rule in South Asia, is considered to be the main source of support to the Taliban's plea to declare Pakistan as un-Islamic state. Unconditional obedience to such a state is not binding upon the Muslims. The concept of establishment of an Islamic rule as mandatory for the Muslims is articulated in the contemporary revivalist literature and thus greatly supported militants in receiving logistic, cash and human resource assistance from the sympathisers of this thought.

Increased complaints against governments, failure of civil servants in service delivery, Pakhtun ethnic and cultural susceptibilities and peasants class grievances especially in Swat also contributed to the on-going *Jihadist* narrative. However, the most important factor used by the militants is an upsurge for Islam in the modern world. These militants effectively manipulated the reliable religious signs and emblems (mainly from history) that carry great appeal to several people who accept it on the promise of establishment of a religious society free from social inequality and every kind of injustice and on the other a 'promised' permanent happy life in the hereafter. They refer to the Islamists failure of the peaceful political struggle to bring a change in society

⁷ The episode was also mentioned by Edward Said as an example how the media is reporting terrorism of different people associated with different religions differently (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g) visited on November 27, 2016.

⁸ "Whoever among you sees an evil, then let him stop it with his hand. Whoever is not able, then with his tongue, and whoever is not able, then with his heart. That is the weakest of faith." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi Hadith, 2172)

e.g. Algeria in 1991 and Ghaza in 2006, these militants emphasize on the accuracy of their tools and methods (militancy) for the establishment of a 'paradise' on earth i.e. Islamic State. The argument proved to be a very important mobilizing factors by the militants and its diffusion among the apparently peaceful Islamic organizations such *Tablighi Jamaat* and particularly *Jamaat-i-Islami* by the use of modern technology such as internet, mobile, social media and video clips. Looking to the *Jihadist* ideology, some scholars substantiate the opinion that Islam is inherently violent and they brought evidences from the texts and actions of these militant Muslims.

The greatest target of *Jihadist* ideology is democracy and freedom. In the latest video of Mullah Fazlullah (leader of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan) ridicules western life, branding democracy a lie and forbidden and declared it *kufur* and Haram (Mirror news). They do not endorse the concept of popular sovereignty and consider it contrary to the supremacy of God. The rule of democracy is rule of disbelief and any call to it is a call to *kufur* system. They are against all kinds of democracy and uphold the idea of a universal caliphate. They do not recognize the territorial demarcation of the modern state and consider it the legacy of the European colonialism. The ranks and file off these militants include Chechens, Uzbeks, Arabs (from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Palestine and African countries), Kashmiris, Chinese, Tajiks, and Afghans fought against Pakistani forces. In the *Jihadists'* narrative, freedom is restricted to the limits demarcated within the Sharia laws. Freedom in the west is portrayed with lewdness. Freedom of expression and faith is selectively allowed. A person when left Islam is an apostate and thus is liable put to death as stated in the hadith.⁹ In many cases when as accused for blasphemy when attacked by the mob the *Jihadists* implicitly supported them. The women folk were specially targeted in society. In their dominated areas girls were not allowed to attend schools and whenever they were in position they either closed those schools or destroyed them. In the *Jihadist* narrative. for women, there are only two places; either home or grave (*khaza ya da kur da ya da gure da*).

Basis of the *Jihadist* Ideology in the Religious Text

The *Jihadist* narrative in Pakistan and elsewhere in the world is based on an atomist approach to the religious texts. According to this approach a passage is taken from the Holy Scripture and is interpreted in the light of tradition literature and practices of the early companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Applying this method, the *Jihadists* concluded for example, Jews and Christians cannot be your friends,¹⁰ holy prophet instructed to eliminate all non-believers from the earth,¹¹ jihad (war) is obligatory upon Muslims,¹² those who leave Islam (apostate) is liable to be punished with death,¹³ non-Muslims are not equal citizens, if they came out in public they should wear an emblem to show that they are *zimis*,¹⁴ women are half of men,¹⁵ married couple if

⁹ "Execute the person who changes his faith." (Bukhari: Kitab Istatabatul-Murtaddeen)

¹⁰ O You who have attained to faith! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies: they are but allies of one another and whoever of you allies himself with them becomes, verily, one of them; behold, God does not guide people who are unjust. (Quran 5:51)

¹¹ Narrated Ibn 'Umar: Allah's Apostle said: "I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, and offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity, so if they perform all that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islamic laws, and then their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allah." (Sahih Bukhari 25, 26)

¹² "And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have Turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith (Quran, 2-191)"

¹³ "Those who leave their faith kill them" reported by Abdullah bin Abbas in Sahih Bukhari. The militant in Pakistan declared Muslims of the Pakistan military as apostate and therefore fighting against them and killing them is lawful (*Ahya-i-Khilafat* - organ of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, November 2014, p.16) <https://ia601405.us.archive.org/21/items/ihvaeKhilafatUrduMagazine9/ihvae%20Khilafat%20Urdu%20Magazine%209.pdf> visited September 6, 2015.

¹⁴ Obeying this opinion Taliban during their rule in Kabul asked the non-Muslims to wear distinctive dress to be distinguished from the Muslims in public places.

committed adultery will be awarded the punishment of *rajam* (put to death by stoning ('Almi Idara-i-Fikr-i-Islami, 1997). It is responsibility of each Muslim to uphold good and suppress evil in the society even if it requires the use of force (June 28, 2015). Interpretation of the texts disjointedly always led to certain conclusion which suits the *Jihadists* narrative. Though the *Jihadist* narrative dominated the present religious discourse but there was and there is always a divergent opinion on all these self claimed 'settled issues' in Islam.¹⁶

Ghamidi's Counter Narrative or Ideology

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi (b.1954) is one of the religious scholars who challenge the *Jihadist* narrative persistently in the last 25 years and suffered in the hands of militants. His house in Lahore has been targeted by the militants but before the detonator went off the culprits were arrested. One of his very close associates, dr. Farooq Khan¹⁷ who was also vice chancellor of the newly established Swat University¹⁸ and a very multifaceted personality by himself, was brutally murdered by the militants in October 2010.¹⁹ The second editor of his monthly *Ishraq*, Mr Manzoor ul Hassan was shot outside of the office Al-Mawrid in Lahore but he survived the injuries. Another associate, dr. Habib ur Rahman, was shot dead in Karachi. Some of his associates for example dr. Khalid Zaheer were threatened and had to leave the country for some time. His students and associates in Pakistan are going through the same scared situation. Ghamidi himself despite his reluctance was persuaded by his colleagues and associates to leave the country and till this time he is residing in Malaysia. In such a dangerous situation Ghamidi did not stop his work and continued to challenge the *Jihadist* ideology on their religious bases.

Jihadist ideology in Pakistan have also been encountered by some Muslim groups like the Berailvis, and other non-religious political and non-political groups on their own ideological orientation having little relevance with original sources of religion. Ghamidi's case is different because he encounters them in the religious precepts which the militants produce in their support. Ghamidi inferred differently from the same sources with apparently convincing arguments and thus left little space for the exclusivist ideology of the *Jihadists*. Ghamidi's counter narrative is humane, pluralistic and all inclusive. Ghamidi's discourse is revolving around the principles of understanding of religion from its scriptures primarily based on the Farah-Islahi hermeneutics. Hamiddudin Farahi (1863-1930)²⁰ an exegete of the first quarter of the 20th century educated in religious discipline from the ulama of that time²¹ and modern education from Aligarh college the prime modern educational institution of the Muslims of South Asia who later on also became a teacher in the Allahabad University and Sind Madrast ul Islam. He propounded a new school among the Muslims emphasising upon adopting a coherent approach to the Holy

¹⁵ As stated in the Quran, "Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth" (4-34) and that their testimony is half of men, "And call to witness two men from among you. If two men are not available, then one man and two women whose testimony is acceptable to all-if one of them fails to remember, the other would remind her (2-282)

¹⁶ In Muslim history there always existed non-popular views and so Ghamidi is not an exception.

¹⁷ See for details, Dr. Abdul Rauf paper, "Individuals and Social Change in Pakhtun Society: A Case of Dr. Farooq Khan", in International Conference on Dynamics of Change in Conflict Societies: Pakhtun Region in Perspective" organized by Department of Political Science in Collaboration with Hanns Seidel Foundation (November, 14-15, 2011). <http://www.upesh.edu.pk/advertisement/Conference%20Proceedings%20%20Nov%2014-15,%202011.pdf>

¹⁸ Swat and its surroundings were practically under the Taliban before a military operation carried out by the Pakistan military in 2009.

¹⁹ The responsibility was accepted by Al Azam Brigade, a group of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan.

²⁰ Hamiddudin Farahi was important religious scholar born in 1863 in Pariha (UP), India. His stay in Aligarh College as a student, and Sind Madrasa, Karachi and Allahabad University as faculty member exposed him to the modern education and the orientalist's scholarship and scepticism about Islam. He thus concentrated his research on the holy Quran and recorded his findings in books (mostly unfinished) in Arabic except one which is in Urdu. He closely worked in the establishment of Usmania University, Hyderabad and Dar ul Mussanifin, Luknow. In his last days he devoted all his time in teaching Quran in the Madrsat ul Islah in Sarai Mir. He breathed his last in 1930 (See for more details, Dr. Sharfuddin Islahi, *Zikr-i-Farahi* (Lahore: Dar ul Tazkir, 2002).

²¹ For example, he studied religious disciplines from Mawlana Faiz ul Hassan Seharanpuri and Mawlana Shibli Numani who was also his cousin.

Quran, very rarely referred in the past (Ahsan, 1993). His student, Amin Ahsan Islahi²² forwarded the concept into a whole system and completed his nine volume exegesis, *Tadabbur-i-Quran* on the same principles. The Farahi-Islahi religious thought were moved forward and reinvigorated by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi when he applied these principles to the contemporary socio-political and economic issues of the Muslims and thus deter the traditionalist approach to religion demonstrated in the shape of militancy in Pakistan.

According to Farahi-Islahi principles of understanding the holy Quran, the concept of *Nazm* (coherence) is the fundamental principle. According to Islahi to understand Quran the following principles which are of two kinds must be followed; i. internal and ii. external. In the internal principles he included; Language of the Qur'an, *Nazm* (coherence) and *tafsir-i-Qur'an bil Qur'an* (clarification with the help of the Qur'an), while the external principles include; *sunnat-i-mutawatirah* (constant practices of the holy Prophet), hadith and *athar-i-Sahaba*, *shan-i-nazul*, previous exegeses, previous Holy Scriptures and Arab history (Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*). Ghamidi adopted and followed Farahi and Islahi in interpreting the text of the Quran and other religious precepts and thus reached to certain conclusions mostly contradictory to the *Jihadist* interpretation of the Quranic verses.

Another distinctive and important point of deviation of Ghamidi is the law of *Itmam-i-Hujjat* (finality of testimony). The law originally derived by Islahi is extensively applied by Ghamidi in socio-political realm of affairs and thus lead not only to different but in some cases even opposite to the common understanding of religion. According to this law God sent among His prophets (*anmbia*) a particular section, *rasul* (apostle) who were not only messengers of God but also a testimony to bestow the wrath of God upon those who reject the message of God willingly. Therefore, the tenants of the *rasul* cannot be extended to the *non rasul* period in human history. Prophet Muhammad was a *rasul* and thus many of his action are confined to his lifetime only. The specification of the addressee in the holy Quran thus drastically changes meaning of a verse in the Quran.

Applying the principle of coherence in Quran (*nazm-i-Quran*) and the law of finality of testimony (*itmam-i-Hujjat*), Ghamidi's stance can be narrated as; Taking up of arms against the non-Muslims to convert them to Islam is forbidden (Ghamidi, Videos); an armed struggle for bringing change in state and society is declared *Fasad fil Ardh* (creating disorder on earth) particularly after the coming of democracy. Jihad cannot be done by private militant groups and Jihad is the duty of state and can be waged only if there is persecution (particularly religious) of people weather they are Muslims or non-Muslims.²³ There is no compulsion in religion and thus death for the apostate was confined only to the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Renaissance). Islam and state was declared separate. It is individual who is addressee of Islam and not state. It is individual who will be accountable before God. Ghamidi declared that the modern state is having no religion (Ghamidi, Jang 2015) and thus the non-Muslims should have an equal footing while deciding the nature of a state. However, decision of any government in ordinary matters should be carried out on the principle of majority (Ghamidi, Jang 2015). The role of religious scholars in society is very much deviated what God has inscribed for them in Quran.²⁴

Conclusion

²² Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904-97) for an interval joined Jamaat-i-Islami and emerged as the second important ideologue after Abdul Ala Mawdudi (1903-79) but he had to quit after having differences with Mawlana Mawdudi. Certain views of Islahi have been incorporated in the state structure for example the status of non-Muslims and thus got free Pakistan from the narrow approach on the issue of the traditionalist ulama in Pakistan. During Zia ul Haw period (1979-88) when an adultery case was decided in the light of Islahi's views, the traditionalists raised hue and cry throughout the country and the then regime had to change the very organization of the court, induct new judges and accept the traditionalists understanding of religion.

²³ The holy jihad can be conducted against the Muslims also if they are persecuting non-Muslims.

²⁴ The main function of the ulama is *Inzar* i.e. reminding and warning to the ruling and non-ruling elite as it is stated in the holy Quran, "And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious" (9: 122).

Javid Ahmad Ghamidi is among those few religious scholars in Pakistan who tried to disentangle the domain of profane life from the religious life and thus confront the *Jihadist* who tries to intermingle religion with the worldly matters and raise hue and cry as 'Islam is in danger'. He in his discourse challenged the plea of the *Jihadist* in the very context of religion i.e. Quran and Sunnah. His ideas greatly appealed the modern educated minds of Pakistan to see Islam not as a religion of violence and terror but a peaceful religion for the entire humanity. He also raised his voice against the marginalized classes in society such as women and non-Muslims something very rare from a Muslim religious scholar. Because of his 'innovative' ideas he and his associates faced irritation of the religious people which resulted even attempt on his life and on his associates in Lahore, Karachi and Mardan. However, this did not help to silence his voice. The alternative religious narrative of Ghamidi may provide such a ground to all those elements who want to end the conflict having its roots in religion. The current Muslim religious scholarship and Pakistan's policy makers need to give attention to this counter narrative against the popular *Jihadist* narrative in Pakistan. However, the acceptance of Ghamidi's counter narrative depends on many socio-political and international factors as well. The geo-strategic dimension of the conflict in the region is subsiding to a great extent the alternative narrative in Pakistan.

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