



## Pakistani Lawyers Laud Jihadist Assassin

When Governor Salman Taseer was murdered by his own bodyguard, “moderate Muslim” scholars in Pakistan greeted the assassination with cries of adulation. As was reported previously for *The New American*, a statement issued by the 500 scholars upheld the murder of the governor of Punjab as an example of Islamic justice in action; since Taseer sought to defend a Christian woman who had been unjustly sentenced to death for “blasphemy” against Islam, it was — they believed — only right that he be murdered as well. In the words of their statement: “The supporter is as equally guilty as one who committed blasphemy.”



But the clerics of Jamat Ahle Sunnat are not the only voices of “moderation” in Pakistan who are now being revealed as Jihadists. The younger generation of Pakistani lawyers are also stepping forward as the assassin’s advocates. An article ([“Pakistan Faces a Divide of Age on Muslim Law”](#)) by Carlotta Gall for the *New York Times* reveals that those who were touted as the hope for Pakistan’s future are proving to be the most strident advocates of the harsh penalties dictated by sharia law because the policies of the government in the 1980s promoted jihad:

But under General Zia in the 1980s, the government began supporting Islamic warriors to fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the Indian control of Kashmir, and the syllabus was changed to encourage jihad. The mind-set of students and graduates changed along with it, Mr. Minallah said.

That change is now no more apparent than among the 1,000 lawyers from the capital, Islamabad, and the neighboring city of Rawalpindi, who have given their signed support for the defense of Mr. Qadri, who has been charged with murder and terrorism.

Their leader is Rao Abdur Raheem, 30, who formed a “lawyers’ forum,” called the Movement to Protect the Dignity of the Prophet, in December. The aim of the group, he said, was to counter Mr. Taseer’s campaign to amend the nation’s strict blasphemy laws, which promise death for insulting the Prophet Muhammad.

In interviews, Mr. Raheem and six of his colleagues insisted they were not members of any political or religious party, and were acting independently and interested only in ensuring the rule of law.

All graduates of different Pakistani universities, they insisted they were liberal, not religious conservatives. Only one had religious training.

The Jihadist ideology unleashed against the Soviets in Afghanistan cannot be tamed and made to serve Western goals. As in most conflicts, the duration is longer than the war: Long after the policy goals of the previous generation have been forgotten, the implications of governmental actions live on. The



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Soviet Union fell, but the Jihad continued. The Jihad unleashed on the Soviets in Afghanistan now targets U.S. soldiers in that nation, and its advocates defend the murder a governor in Pakistan who attempted to move his nation in the direction of toleration.

Regardless of whether or not one considers Pakistan to be a “failed state,” it certainly seems to be moving in the direction of manifesting what it truly means to be an Islamic republic. [As Babar Ayaz wrote for the \*Daily Times of Pakistan\*](#):

The founders of Pakistan thought that the end justifies the means. This Machiavellian approach was dangerous and was only good for short-term gains. The political formulation that “the end justifies the means” is only half the story. The other half is that there onwards the “means” used for such short-term political gains dictate another “end” on which the creator of this formulation has little control. Such is the dialectics of history. And today we are dictated by these “means” to another violent “end”. ...

What we are facing today is the logical outcome of the dangerous policies of the past. Salmaan Taseer’s murder has shown that even discussion about the blasphemy laws is dubbed as “blasphemy” by the religious parties. Instead of the murderer, the victim is blamed by these bigots. In the space provided to the religious leaders, we see their statements offering head money for Salmaan Taseer and Aasia Bibi printed by the media.

And the suo motu-happy judges do not take notice of such statements, which incite murder by announcing handsome rewards. Neither do they take the media to task for abetting by reproducing such statements. The government is too afraid of the religious militants and has no check on the hate speeches made by extremists in mosques and madrassas because the state is defined as an “Islamic state.”

Fanatics like Mumtaz Qadri would continue to kill and maim people for establishing their brand of intolerant Islam. The fact is that we have declared Pakistan an Islamic republic and have a constitution committed to make laws according to the Quran and Sunnah. This gives political space to religious parties. Their argument is that the state has failed to enforce shariah as stipulated in the constitution, so the ulema have taken it upon themselves to fulfil this duty.

The course of events in Pakistan is proving the wisdom of America’s Founders with regard to avoiding foreign entanglements. The continuing degeneration of Pakistan is proving that any notion of that nation being an American “ally” renders the concept so nebulous as to be virtually meaningless.

*Photo: A man holds a banner that reads “Prophet’s lover, release Mumtaz Qadri,” during a rally supporting and calling for the release of Mumtaz Qadri, alleged killer of Punjab governor Salman Taseer, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Jan. 9, 2011: AP Images*



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