

EU looking for politically correct terms on Islam

Brussels: It may be just words, but European Union policymakers struggling to build better ties with Muslim nations have set themselves a new task—hammering out guidelines to ban the use of terms considered derogatory to Islam.

The focus is on stopping the bloc's officials and documents from using words that are considered offensive to Muslims or give the impression that Europe's drive against terrorism is specifically aimed at Muslims.

Launched in December, the initiative has gained added importance and urgency as the EU struggles to mend relations with Muslim countries

following publication this year of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed in several European newspapers. The cartoons, some of which depicted Mohammed as a terrorist, caused outrage in many Muslim countries, leading to violent demonstrations, the deaths of many protesters and attacks on European embassies.

EU officials say the search for correct terminology on Islam is part of an internal debate within the 25-nation bloc on how best to forge deeper ties with Muslim countries and reach out to the 20 million Muslims living in Europe. One way of doing so, they say, is to make clear that Europeans do not equate Islam with terrorism but believe that extremist groups are abusively invoking Islam for their own purposes.

"Our aim is to clarify the EU discourse on Islam and to ensure there is no link

made between any specific religion and terrorism," a EU official said.

"It is about using vocabulary to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations," said the official, speaking on conditions of anonymity.

The initiative would stop references to terms like "Islamic terrorism" and 'fundamentalism', which critics say are often used by European Union officials when talking about extremist groups operating in the Muslim world. The so-called "non-emotive lexicon for public communication" would also urge officials to be careful when talking about 'jihad'.

Although the term is used by some radical groups in the Islamic world to mean a combat against non-believers, many Muslims say it refers to an internal, spiritual struggle. EU insiders say the new lexicon will be non-binding but will probably be endorsed by the bloc's leaders when they meet in Brussels in June. "What we get very often is people in the EU talking about Islamic terrorism when they are in fact talking of violence in the Middle East," says Sajjad Karim, British member of the European Parliament.

"Events in Palestine have little to do with Islam and a lot to do with the political frustration of Palestinian people," he says.

"Similarly, when young French Muslims protested last year, they were reflecting the realities of their lack of integration. It was not about Islam," Karim said. IANS

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

24-11-2019

THE TIMES OF INDIA

The wages of hate: Islamist terror in India

Praveen Swami & Anupama Katakam

"ISLAM IS our nation," thundered Mohammad Amir Shakeel Ahmad at a Students Islamic Movement of India conference in 1999, "not India."

Sitting in the audience was one of the founding fathers of the Lashkar-e-Taiba's Indian operations, Azam Ghauri. For months after the speech, intelligence operatives carefully monitored Ahmad's movements, certain that he was linked to Ghauri. Not the slightest bit of evidence emerged, though, that Ahmad had links to the Lashkar. Ahmad barked loudly, investigators concluded — but had no intention of biting.

Earlier this month, Ahmad's name surfaced again: now as a core member of one of two independent Lashkar cells assigned with executing major terrorist strikes in Gujarat. Operating without knowledge of each other's existence, the twin cells had been ordered to carry out bombings that would demonstrate the Lashkar's commitment to avenging the Gujarat pogrom of 2002 — and provoke a fresh wave of violence that would bring the terrorist group's dream of tearing apart India along communal lines closer to realisation.

Ahmad's story has once again cast light on the organic relationship between Hindu communal violence and Islamist terrorism. Coupled with emerging evidence on a separate Lashkar cell that was also planning to execute major terror strikes in India, investigations into the planned assault on Gujarat have thrown up evidence that makes clear serious political intervention — not just policing — will be needed if the growth of Islamist terror in India is to be checked.

The twin cells

Last month, the Intelligence Bureau learnt that a major consignment of arms was to be ferried through Maharashtra to a Lashkar unit in Gujarat. Late on May 9, after an hour-long chase, the jeep was found abandoned on the outskirts of Aurangabad. Inside, police found over two dozen kg of lethal RDX packed inside ten computer central processing unit cases, along with 11 AK-47 assault rifles and ammunition.

While nine arrests have been made, just where the explosives came from is still being investigated. Officials are particularly concerned that

Two Lashkar cells targeting Gujarat are discovered, preventing major terror strikes. Their stories underline the disastrous fallout of the anti-Muslim pogrom of 2002.

they were landed on the Maharashtra coast by sea — the same route used to move in the RDX used for the 1993 serial bombings of Mumbai. If so, it would suggest that Karachi-based trafficking networks of mafia baron Dawood Ibrahim Kaksar have once again been committed to the Islamist terror campaign against India.

Links between Islamist terror groups and the Karachi mafia have long been evident. Dawood Ibrahim-affiliated ganglord 'Chhota' Shakeel Ahmad Babu, for example, helped transport several Ahmedabad residents recruited by the Jaish-e-Mohammad from Dhaka to Karachi in 2001. Another Dawood Ibrahim aide, Fahim Machmach, helped a separate group of terror recruits transit through Bangkok, including two Bangalore residents who identified themselves using the code names 'Iqbal' and 'Sohail.'

Machmach is alleged to have supervised a 2003 attempt on the lives of Bharatiya Janata Party leaders Bharat Banot and Ashok Bhat, using the services of a longstanding mafia hit man, Ali Mohammad Kanjari. Other mafia figures have also played a direct role in several terror attacks. Aftab Ansari, who executed a 2002 attack on the United States Information Service building in Kolkata, was recruited by Jaish-e-Mohammad co-founder Syed Omar Sheikh while both were in Tihar Jail.

While the Aurangabad cell may have tapped organised crime networks, the second cell used very different kinds of resources. At its core was Feroze Abdul Latif Ghaswala, a Mumbai-based engine mechanic of Gujarati origin, who had decided to join the Islamist jihad against India after the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom. He tapped his contacts among local clerics and, in the summer of 2004, was put in contact with Harkat ul-Jihad Islami operatives in Srinagar.

Ghaswala had initially hoped to cross the Line of Control into Pakistan for training in a Harkat camp. His contacts, however, eventually ar-

ranged for him to head east to Bangladesh. Under the tutelage of Mufti Abdul Hannan — a Peshawar-trained HuJI commander responsible for a 2002 assassination attempt on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as well as the 2005 serial bombings that rocked Bangladesh — he learnt the basic tradecraft of terrorism, such as fabricating bombs from easily available chemicals.

During his time in Bangladesh, Ghaswala met one of the Lashkar-e-Taiba's most aggressive young operatives, a Hyderabad resident named Asad Yazdani. Operating under the code name 'Naved Gul,' Yazdani had joined the Lashkar in the wake of the Gujarat pogrom along with 13 other men from Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. After training in Pakistan, Yazdani had organised the assassination of the former Gujarat Home Minister, Haren Pandya, in 2003, as well as a series of bombings in northern India.

Using his riot-revenge credentials to good effect, Yazdani persuaded Ghaswala to work with the Lashkar. In June 2005, Ghaswala caught a Mumbai-Teheran flight, after obtaining a visa to visit shrines in Iran. Ghaswala's intentions, though, had little to do with piety. His handlers wished to ensure that there would be no documentation that ever linked him to Pakistan. A Lashkar operative helped him cross the porous border into Pakistan's Balochistan province, from where he was driven to a safehouse in the town of Bahawalpur.

After completing his training, Ghaswala relocated to Ahmedabad. Mohammad Iqbal, a Bahawalpur resident who had operated in Jammu and Kashmir under the code name Abu Hamza in 2002-2003, was assigned direct charge of the operation. Nine kg of high-grade explosive, along with two assault rifles and a Thuraya satellite-phone set, a communications system known to be resistant to penetration by Indian signals intelligence, were smuggled across the Bhuj border under his supervision.

Even as Iqbal and Ghaswala finalised targets, though, their operation was nearing its end. In February 2006, an Intelligence Bureau-led operation had led the Delhi Police to two Bangladeshi nationals from whom Yazdani had sourced explosives. Days later, Yazdani himself was shot dead. Delhi Police investigators developed information that became available in the course of this operation. On May 9, Iqbal was killed in an exchange of fire with the Delhi Police, while Ghaswala and an associate were arrested.

Terror networks

Despite the interdiction of the twin cells, though, there is plenty of evidence other Lashkar units are still active. The Delhi Police's failure to coordinate with the Gujarat and Maharashtra Police and the Intelligence Bureau, resulted in the escape of at least two Pakistan-trained members of Ghaswala's group, including a Bhuj resident instrumental in facilitating the cross-border movement of explosives, once news of the arrests broke. Nor have the men who helped Ghaswala make contact with HuJI been detected so far.

Just where are these recruits coming from? Few, unlike Ghaswala, have direct Gujarat pogrom links. Ahmad's story is instructive. A school dropout from an impoverished Aurangabad family, Ahmad, like thousands of other young men from ghettoised urban communities, found meaning and purpose in the now-proscribed ultra-right Students Islamic Movement of India. But his sole run-in with the law came after he was charged with being part of a mob that attempted to burn Vishwa Hindu Parishad banners.

Gujarat 2002 seems to have been the moment when many of Lashkar's new recruits chose to turn from ideological conviction to terrorism. In this, they are much like Azam Ghauri, Jalees Ansari, and Abdul Karim 'Tunda,' the founders of the Lashkar in India, or the mafia figures who carried out the 1993 serial bombings, for whom the demolition of the Babri Masjid was a catalytic moment. While the numbers of recruits organisations like the Lashkar are picking up are small, they are large enough to point to a serious malaise.

Interestingly, none of the members of either of the twin cells had directly experienced the violence in Gujarat. Aurangabad has not had a riot since 1999; nor has it ever experienced the kinds of large-scale pogroms seen in Bhiwandi or Mumbai.

Part of the answer may lie in the fact the denial of opportunity, both educational and economic, as well as the ghettoisation of Muslims by sustained communal violence, has vacated space for organisations of the religious right.

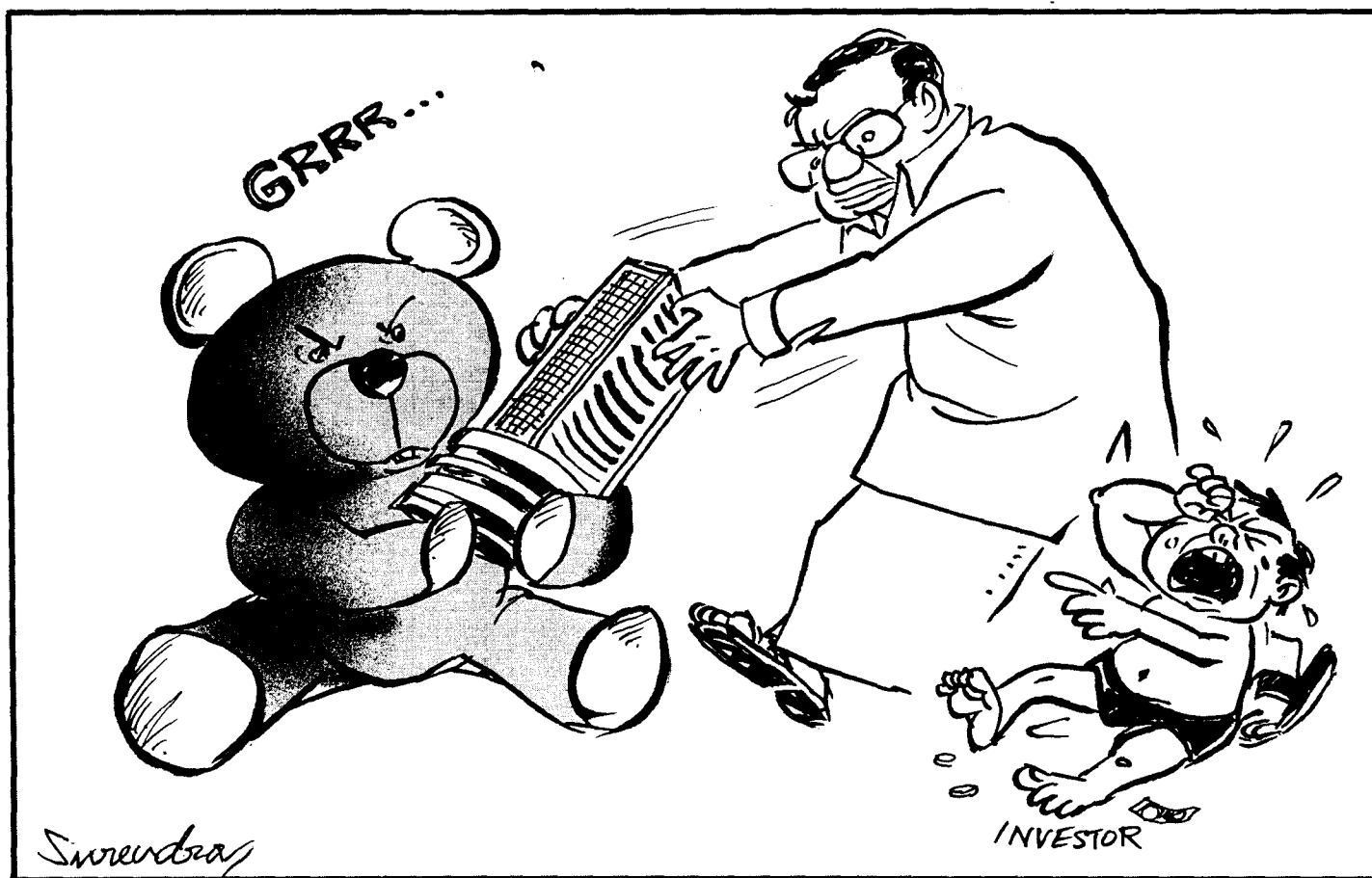
Aurangabad has, as a consequence, seen the flourishing of organisations seeking to impose an Islamist social order. One example is the Islah Mashara, which was founded in November 2005 by three former SIMI members. The Islah promotes what it believes to be social order by beating up Muslim boys seen with Hindu girls, and harassing women who do not wear the burkha. Another Islamist group, the Markazi Majlis-e-Shura, has been seeking to build religion-based legal institutions.

Despite self-congratulatory official polemic on Indian Muslims' minimal participation in Islamist terrorism, there is real reason for concern. Not a decade ago, the Lashkar's pan-India operations were heavily reliant on Pakistani nationals.

As late as 1998, Cheema had to assign Pakistani national Salim Junaid for its operations in Andhra Pradesh. Junaid married a Hyderabad woman and set up a spare-parts enterprise to build a cover identity. Today, neither the Lashkar nor HuJI has great trouble finding local recruits.

India's covert services and police forces deserve not a little credit for preventing major terror strikes in Gujarat: one, ironically, that would have served the political interests of the perpetrators of the 2002 pogrom nothing. However, their work is a palliative, not a cure.

CARTOONSCAPE



Bali bombing convict walks free, urges Islamic unity

REUTERS

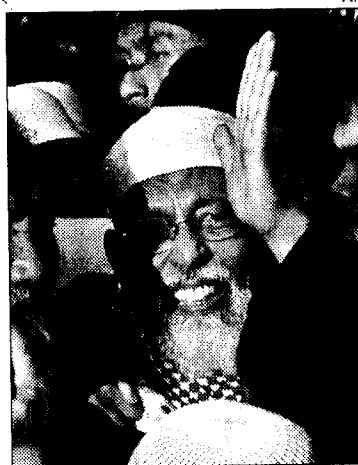
JAKARTA, JUNE 14,

RADICAL Indonesian cleric Abu Bakar Bashir walked out of a Jakarta jail on Wednesday after serving time for links to the 2002 Bali bombings, calling on jubilant supporters to join forces for the spread of Islamic law.

Australia's Prime Minister John Howard said millions of his citizens would be extremely disappointed because of the release and a US embassy spokesman said there was cause for concern.

Wearing his trademark white skull-cap and red-and-white checked shawl as he emerged from prison, a smiling Bashir said: "Let us strengthen Islamic brotherhood. We strengthen our unity for one aim—that is Islamic sharia (law)."

Indonesia and other nations that "have been in darkness" could be saved by adherence to Islamist precepts, he said. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation.



Abu Bakar Bashir waves to supporters as he walks out of Cipinang prison in Jakarta

Seen by the West as the spiritual head of the al Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) regional militant network, Bashir was convicted of being part of a conspiracy behind the Bali bombings that killed 202 people, many of them Australian tourists.

Al-Qaida threatens attacks

Associated Press

CAIRO, June 11: Al-Qaida in Iraq vowed today to carry out "major attacks," insisting in a statement that it was still powerful after the death of its leader Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.

The statement did not name a successor to Al-Zarqawi, who was killed in a US air strike last week. But it said the group's leadership "renews its allegiance" to Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden "will see things that will bring joy to his

heart," it said, vowing "to prepare major attacks that will shake the enemy like an earthquake and rattle them out of sleep." The authenticity of the statement could not be independently confirmed. It was posted on an Islamic militant website where the group has posted statements in the past.

The statement was issued in the name of Al-Qaida in Iraq, but was put out by the Mujahideen Shura Council, an umbrella organisation of five insurgent groups that Al-Zarqawi helped found.

The Jordanian-born Al-

Zarqawi created Al-Qaida in Iraq and turned it into the most feared insurgent group in Iraq with brutal suicide bombings against Shi'ite civilians and beheadings of Western hostages.

After his death on Wednesday, the group quickly put out a statement on the same website confirming he was killed and vowing to continue its jihad, or holy war.

Today's statement said Al-Qaida in Iraq's leadership met and "agreed to continue jihad and not be affected by his martyrdom."

12 2006

THE STATESMAN

This man had \$25 million on his head

The fugitive Islamist was on top of the US most wanted list since Saddam's downfall

Baghdad: Al Qaida frontman Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, whose death was announced on Thursday, was one of the world's most wanted men who for years evaded capture both in Iraq and his homeland Jordan.

The fugitive Islamist topped a US most-wanted list in Iraq since Saddam Hussein's downfall in April 2003, and long remained elusive despite a huge reward and relentless military pressure.

US military leaders repeatedly described him and Al Qaida as the biggest obstacle to peace in Iraq. Zarqawi's ruthlessness in fighting the Americans in Iraq brought him fame that at times has rivalled Osama bin Laden's as public enemy number one in the US "war on terror".

The 39-year-old militant, who helped introduce gruesome tactics like beheadings and suicide bombings in Iraq, last appeared on an internet video in April vowing to defeat the US and "chase" America out of Iraq "defeated and humiliated".

If only to reassert his mystique and outlaw appeal, the Zarqawi video, which appeared just two days after a new audiotape recording of Bin Laden surfaced, showed a paunchy thick-bearded man gripping a light-machine gun.

Unlike Bin Laden, Zarqawi had never before released a videotaped message, preferring to remain an enigmatic figure. Only grainy identity shots, old images from Afghanistan and more recent photos of a grizzled figure gave any clue to his appearance. In June, an audiotape purported to be made by Zarqawi and broadcast on the internet urged Sunni Arabs to fight their Shiite compatriots.

Zarqawi last made a splash with his November suicide bombings of three hotels in Amman which killed 60 people.

Those attacks, along with a failed rocket strike on US warships in the Gulf of Agaba last August, brought his fight from Iraq across the border to his birthplace of Jordan.

Ironically it was Jordan's King Abdullah II who in 1999 freed as part of a general amnesty the man he later referred to as a "street thug".

Recently Zarqawi, who had a US bounty of \$25



School Dropout To Terror Boss

1964: Born Ahmed Fadel Al Zakwani in Zarqa, Jordan.
1980s: Dropped out of high school.
1980s: Went to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. Took a job at an Islamic newspaper.
1992: Returned to Jordan. Began associating with a militant group, Sayyid Al-Jarrah.
1994: Associated with weapons in Jordan during a crackdown on militant groups.
1995: Released in amnesty for political prisoners. Went to Pakistan, with his mother.
2000: Established terrorist camp near Herat in Afghanistan. Stayed for 125 days.

million on his head and was anointed in December 2004 by Bin Laden as Al Qaida's leader in Iraq, had taken a lower profile.

The son of Bin Laden's mentor Abdullah Azzam said in April that Iraq's resistance had replaced Zarqawi as political head of the rebels, confining him to a strictly military role.

The apparent demotion raised speculation that Zarqawi's readiness to kill civilians and his foreign nationality had cost him supporters among Iraqi Islamists, who had rallied to the insurgency's fight against US forces in the country.

The fighter's mystique suffered another chunk in his armour when the US military was forced to deny it had exaggerated the importance of Zarqawi as part of a propaganda campaign to turn Iraqis against the insurgency.

The Washington Post reported that some military intelligence officials believed the campaign had overstated Zarqawi's importance and helped the Bush administration tie the war in Iraq to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US.

But Zarqawi's story from his humble origins in Jordan to his transformation into a face of terror has always been shrouded in mystery. Born Fadel Nazzal Al Khalayleh, Zarqawi was a poor student who never graduated from high school.

Oil prices fall to \$70 a barrel

London: World oil prices fell under \$70 per barrel on Thursday following news of Zarqawi's death, analysts said.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in July, sank by \$1.07 to \$69.75 per barrel in electronic deals before the official opening of the US market. The contract earlier touched as low as \$69.54—the lowest level since May 25.

In London, Brent North Sea crude for July delivery dropped 89 cents to \$68.30 per barrel in electronic trading, after earlier falling to \$67.97—last seen on May 22.

"The news has helped lower oil prices as it reduces the risk premium in the market," said Sueden analyst Sam Tilley.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki announced on Thursday the killing of Zarqawi, saying he "has been eliminated".

However, Investec analyst Bruce Evers remained cautious in his outlook. "There is a view that now that Zarqawi has been killed, the situation in Iraq will become more stable. But it is a very dangerous thing to assume, and it is probably a wrong reaction." Evers also pointed out that Thursday's price falls also reflected the healthy US energy stocks data published the day before.

Crude futures had slumped on Wednesday on news that US crude reserves rose across the board last week, coupled with positive developments in the Iranian nuclear crisis, dealers said. The rise was heartening as gasoline demand in the US is now peaking during the summer driving season. **AFF**

Al-Jazeera airs new Zawahri tape

ASSOCIATED PRESS

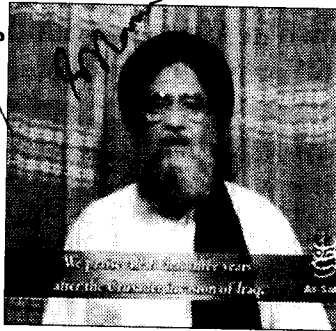
CAIRO, JUNE 9

98
10/6

Al-JAZEERA television channel broadcast on Friday excerpts of a video tape by deputy leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahri, that praises Abu Musab al-Zarqawi but does not mention his death, suggesting it was made earlier. Al-Zawahri focussed on political developments in the Palestinian territories, Sudan and Egypt.

An Al-Jazeera announcer said that the tape was made before the announcement of al-Zarqawi's death on Thursday, because al-Zawahri praised the al-Qaeda in Iraq leader's efforts to confront US-led forces in Iraq.

"God bless the prophet of Islam in Iraq, the persistent hero of Islam, the Holy Warrior Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," al-Zawahri said. He



A file photo of al-Zawahri taken from video footage on April 29. Reuters

also sent greetings to the Shura Council of Mujahedeen in Iraq and insurgents, "who are confronting crusaders and their apostate aids and the merchants of religion."

Al-Zawahri appeared against a black background. He repeatedly waved his right hand and pointed his finger in a gesture of admonishment. The channel did not give the

date the tape was made or say how it received it.

The al-Qaeda deputy leader criticised a possible referendum in the Palestinian territories. "I call on Muslims to reject any referendum on Palestine, because Palestine is part of the Islamic world and not subject to any compromise." But he did not mention the Palestinian Islamic movement Hamas by name as he did in an earlier tape when he criticised it for participating in elections.

On developments in Sudan, he concentrated on the situation in Darfur, criticising the visit by UN Security Council security experts to Sudan as being "to prepare to occupy and divide it."

Weighing in on the campaign by a group of Egyptian judges for an independent judiciary, al-Zawahri urged judges to apply Islamic law.

4 JUN 2015

INDIAN EXPRESS

Zarkawi's death is not the end of Al-Qaeda in Iraq or elsewhere, but the manner of his death gives us hope

Beginning of end for Al-Qaida?



JAITHIRTH
RAO

THOSE of us who have believed all along that the Anglo-American coalition was strategically correct in moving into Iraq, but have been the victims of executional incompetence, insensitivity and bungling, may finally have some hope. Jordanian Islamist Fascist, one Khalaylay, popularly (or more appropriately infamously) known as Zarkawi is dead.

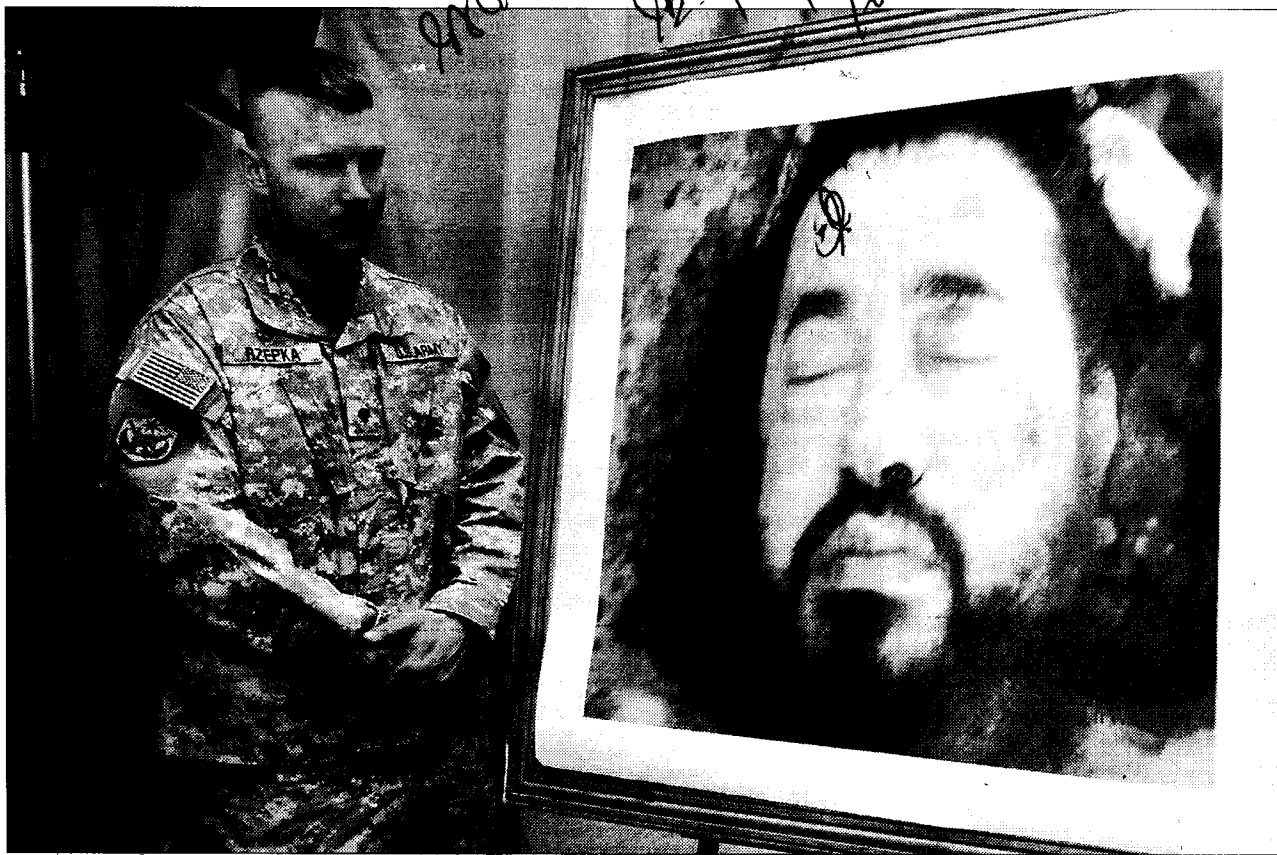
Zarkawi combined Beria's wickedness with Eichmann's matter-of-fact fanaticism and added a dash of cunning that one can associate only with Karla (he of John Le Carre's Moscow Centre fame).

In fact, he resembled Karla in more ways than one.

The usual quota of well-meaning and ineffective liberals like Robert Fisk was confident that Zarkawi did not exist and that he was simply a figment of the imagination of American propagandists. Until one fine day, Zarkawi announced himself as the head of the Iraqi branch of the Al-Qaeda. And he was loudly and openly acclaimed and confirmed in this position by the one who would recreate the empire of the faithful across the globe, the wannabe Caliph, Osama bin Laden himself. Once truth was officially proclaimed on Al-Jazeera, even wimpish BBC correspondents had to concede that Zarkawi existed and was a menace.

And what a diabolical menace he was! He was an equal opportunity killer who killed people of all races and nationalities. In his time, his group of sanctimonious assassins have killed Koreans, Japanese, Turks, Bulgarians, Jordanians, Britons, Americans and of course, hundreds of Iraqis. He had extra special hatred for Shias (because they were heretics) and for Jews (presumably because they were Jews).

He orchestrated car bombs in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, killing large numbers of helpless pilgrims. He attacked mosques to inflict psychological damage on the heretics.



Zarkawi, who was determined to start a civil war in Iraq, may have been at the root of the tragedy of post-Saddam era.

He engineered the killing of Ayatollah Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim, a senior Shia religious leader with the deliberate intent of fanning sectarian riots.

Zarkawi specialized in brutal beheadings and enjoyed capturing these events on film. The films were routinely loaded on to the various web-sites of the fanatic variety and many were shown on Al-Jazeera. In one beheading, Zarkawi seems to have taken delight in personally wielding the knife. The fact that the victim Nicholas Berg, a telecommunications engineer (who was trying to fix Iraq's telephone system) happened to be a Jewish American, presumably was the source of this ghoulish delight.

Of course, Zarkawi was not to be faulted on the grounds that he was not patriotic.

He loved his fellow-Jordanians so much that he blew up hundreds of them in a hotel in Amman. Apparently going to hotels was an infidel activity punishable by death.

All of us who have been watching the appalling American incompetence in Iraq were beginning to give up.

The confused and amateurish Paul Bremer started off the venture on the wrong foot. The horrifying and unpardonable excesses of Abu Gharaib followed by the equally inexcusable civilian killings, were all beginning to pile up, eroding the moral position of the coalition, making life difficult for the newly-elected Iraqi government and leading to defeatism on the home front (yet another Vietnam on our hands!).

Zarkawi and his ilk were determined to

provoke a civil war and prove to the average Iraqis that their enthusiastic participation in the recent elections was definitely a wasted exercise. The coalition as well as the Iraqi government seemed to be either watching helplessly or coming down hard with a hammer, inciting greater public disenchantment.

In some sense, Zarkawi may have been at the root of the tragedy of post-Saddam Iraq. In the initial days after the fall of Baghdad, the UN moved in under the leadership of the charismatic diplomat Sergio Vieira de Mello. The UN could and would have taken on an important role in creating conditions for lasting peace, given that de Mello knew his way around minefields having brought peace to tragic blood-stained East Timor.

It is almost certain that the group that bombed the UN building and killed de Mello was connected with Zarkawi. That bombing had strategic consequences that were sad indeed. The UN completely withdrew, depriving everyone of a neutral forum and exacerbating the ill-advised moves of Bremer and his ilk.

Zarkawi's death is welcome in itself.

What is even more welcome is its manner. The location of the safe house where he and his key acolytes were meeting as well as the timing of the meeting itself, were both betrayed by one of his own people. At long last, the "Circus" (shorthand for the Americans or the new Iraqi government) seems to have found a superb George Smiley who has successfully planted a mole (or who knows, maybe many moles) in the heart of Al-Qaeda. Finally, the coalition seems to have realized that the need of the hour is a surgeon's scalpel, not a bumbling hammer. If their intelligence remains good, if they succeed in planting informers and turning Al-Qaeda on itself, the forces of civilization will slowly but surely start winning the battle against the organizers of terror.

It is good to know that the spy-runner George Smiley is back. After he trapped Karla, Moscow Centre and KGB did not disappear—but they were considerably weakened and finally the Berlin wall did fall (who in the distant sixties and seventies would have thought it possible?) and Checkpoint Charlie (is that where Karla crossed over or was it at another place?) is now history.

If the Americans move away from Bremerian incompetence and hit-and-smash tactics which are both ugly and ineffective, if the focus now is on the use of intelligence (literally and figuratively), if the Iraqi government co-opts its people away from a needless civil war into an understanding that there are no heretics in a civil republic, victory is still possible.

Zarkawi's death is not the end of Al-Qaeda in Iraq or elsewhere. The manner of his death gives us hope that it might mark the beginning of its end. And of course, Le Carre and Smiley would stand vindicated!

INDIAN EXPRESS

AFGHANISTAN ■ Suryanarayan's body was spotted by highway patrol in Zabul an hour before Indian negotiators reached Kabul

Indian engineer beheaded by his Taliban abductors

JAYANTH JACOB
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

CONFIRMING the worst fears, Taliban militiamen executed K Suryanarayan, an engineer with the Bahrain-based Almojed company who was abducted on Friday after his car broke down in the Zabul province on the Kabul-Kandahar highway.

Suryanarayan's decapitated body was found near Hassan Hariez district of Zabul province much before the Taliban deadline of 6 pm for India to pull out its citizens from Afghanistan.

The Indian team of negotiators, headed by joint secretary K B S Katoch and two members of security agencies, sent to deal with the crisis reached Kabul via Doha around 9.30 am, an hour after Indian Ambassador Rakesh Sood was told about the body being spotted by a highway patrol.

In its efforts to secure Suryanarayan's release, India was in touch with countries involved in Afghanistan, including Pakistan, the Afghan authorities and international security forces deployed in the Zabul area.

During the November crisis involving Maniappan Kutty, the BRO driver who was eventually killed by his captors,

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Suryanarayan's wife and children in Hyderabad on Sunday. AP

01 MAY 2006

Taliban abductors behead Indian engineer

National Security Advisor MK Narayanan had spoken to his Pakistan counterpart Tariq Aziz.

E Ahmed, Minister of State for External Affairs, told The Indian Express that news of Suryanarayan's death came when India was putting together all "possible channels" to secure his release.

Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said that the kidnapers were "not interested in negotiations and the killing was premeditated." He said the international community, including Pakistan, must recognise the true colours of Taliban.

The Bahrain firm which had employed Suryanarayan too had turned to countries where they have a presence—this includes Pakistan—to help secure his release. "We had approached the governments wherever we have our networks for his release. But sadly, we did not get enough time", Waji Ahmed, spokesperson of the company said from Bahrain. The firm announced Rs 20 lakh as immediate help to the family.

Ambassador Rakesh Sood denied the Taliban claim that Suryanarayan was shot dead while trying to flee from captivity. "He was beheaded. There was no sign of bullet injuries on his body", he told The Indian Express.

Suryanarayan's body will be brought to his Hyderabad home by 5.30 pm tomorrow.

President APJ Abdul Kalam, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi condemned the killing and offered their condolences to the family.

01 MAY 2005

Engineer beheaded

OUR BUREAU

April 30: K. Suryanarayana was today found beheaded in Afghanistan in a new Great Game in which tactics are becoming more cold-blooded and motives less concealed.

The 41-year-old telecom engineer from Secunderabad was killed much before the deadline set by the Taliban for his execution expired, prompting India to label the murder a "premeditated" act by the militia and its "sponsors".

"It (the killing) was a premeditated act committed before the Indian team led by a senior official of the ministry of external affairs could reach there," foreign secretary Shyam Saran said in Delhi. "It demonstrates that the Taliban were not interested in negotiations."

Delhi found the Taliban's demand that all Indians should leave Afghanistan within 24 hours "outrageous" as well as menacing.

The Taliban's blanket condition reflects a gradual change in priorities and motives: what once began as localised demands like freedom for comrades are increasingly acquiring a larger sweep, which means bigger forces are at play.

India pinned the blame on the Taliban's "sponsors" but stopped short of naming any country. A reference was made to the usual suspect, Pakistan, but in an indirect manner.

"We know the Taliban have been active on the Pakistan-Afghan border. Even Pakistan is affected by their terror. So

KILLING FIELDS

Indian victims in Afghanistan



● April 2006: K. Suryanarayana, telecom engineer

Killed in Kandahar

● February 2006: K. Bharath Kumar, engineer

Killed in blast

● November 2005: Maniappan Raman Kutty, driver-cum-technical hand

Kidnapped and killed

● December 2003: Murali and Varadaya, employees of a road-building firm

Taken hostage and later released

everyone, including Pakistan, needs to confront this," Saran said.

South Block was rippling with suggestions of how a new version of the Great Game — originally used to describe the race among the big powers for strategic control of Afghanistan — is being played out in the treacherous terrain.

After the Taliban regime collapsed, India has been helping Afghanistan rebuild itself. In the process, Delhi has regained a foothold in the region for the first time since the Soviet Union pulled out.

The area where Suryanarayana was working — eastern Afghanistan on the western border of Pakistan — is strategically the most crucial for Islamabad. By undertaking infrastructure projects there, India has brought alive Pakistan's worst nightmare — the

possibility of a new playground for Delhi in an area so far considered inaccessible.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who visited India this month, may have aggravated Islamabad's fears when he said he is keen on "trilateral cooperation" among his country, India and Pakistan. Besides, Karzai had made it clear when he was in Pakistan that India cannot be kept out of the reconstruction programme in Afghanistan.

The statements carry in them the possibility of India stepping up its activities along the western border of Pakistan in Afghanistan.

Saran vowed today to continue India's "fraternal assistance to the people of Afghanistan in their endeavours to bring peace, stability and economic recovery".

This means that having clawed back some of the lost ground, India can ill-afford to step back now, though it is ill-equipped to protect those on the field in Afghanistan.

The body of Suryanarayana was spotted by a police patrol this morning in a roadside ditch in Zabul in southeastern Afghanistan. The Taliban had threatened to kill him by Sunday 6 pm unless the condition was met.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi said the engineer was killed while trying to flee but Afghan officials rubbished the claim. "The engineer was in a room with one guard, he attacked the guard and punched him, went out of the building running as other Mujahideen shot him dead," Ahmadi said by satellite phone.

G-1 115 9/11/06

01 MAY 2006

Muslims make Cong pay for pro-US stand

Subodh Ghildiyal | TNN

New Delhi: The emergence of the fledgling Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF) as a factor in Assam and clear indications that the open support of fundamentalist outfits like Jamaat-e-Islami and the Peoples' Democratic Party played an important role in rallying Muslims behind the Left in Kerala are seen to reflect Muslim community's anger at the Congress' pro-US policy tilt.

Worried Congress sources conceded that the party lost substantial Muslim support to its adversaries in the two states because of the UPA government's embrace of the US at a time when the superpower is seen as engaged in a crusade against Islam.

The explanation seems credible considering the affiliation of Badruddin Ajmal to Jamait-Ulema-e-Hind, the conglomerate of Deobandi clerics who were in the vanguard of anti-Bush protests in the capital when the US President was there. In Kerala, the Left, having been in the forefront of resistance to the India-US partnership, was the natural beneficiary.

Besides reflecting the hostility of the community towards the US, Muslim sullenness towards the Congress also marks a new-found assertiveness as well as radicalism. In Kerala, the debacle of UDF partner, Indian Union Muslim League, in the minority-dominated pockets of Malappuram and parts of northern Kerala underlines the growing appeal of the radical rhetoric of Jamaat and PDP. Ironically, it was the Congress which made the



LOSING SUPPORT Muslim sullenness towards Congress marks a new-found assertiveness as well as radicalism

first move to appease PDP. It led the Kerala assembly to pass a resolution seeking the release of PDP's jailed head, Abdul Naser Mahdani, the main accused in the Coimbatore blasts case, on health grounds. The sentiment was not quite reciprocated by PDP, which opted to sail along with community sentiment.

The rise of AUDF in Assam represents a new boldness by community leaders in a state where Muslims make up about 30% of the electorate. Ajmal, a traditional Congress supporter, branched out on his own when the party, which had been indulgent, refused to acquiesce to his diktat to dump Tarun Gogoi.

The Congress, which had taken many measures in deference to the community's concerns—accepting the demand for a Muslim as home minister and successfully lob-

bing the Centre to enact a law to get around the SC order scrapping the Illegal Migrant (Detection by Tribunal) Act—drew the line on the issue of chief ministership.

Within two months of his rebellion, AUDF has secured eight seats, besides damaging Congress' prospects in many others. More than numbers, the performance of the AUDF is significant in that it marks a departure from the trend where Muslims stayed away from exclusivist formations, preferring mainstream political parties.

In successive elections, Muslims have defied fatwas and exhortations from prayer pulpits to rely on secular formations. The ability of the Jamaat and PDP to shape the voting pattern in Kerala can also be seen as a deviation from the norm, considering that IUMML, despite its nomenclature, was never as radical as its new challengers.

13 MAY 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2006

The Lashkar's message

Although the Lashkar-e-Taiba will not be represented at Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's round-table conference on Jammu and Kashmir tomorrow, the terrorist group has succeeded in delivering its message to all those who will be present. While its attack on a Congress rally in Srinagar on Sunday was not exceptionally bloody — at least by the macabre standards established in the course of the 18-year jihad in Jammu and Kashmir — it has achieved its purpose: to proclaim that violence could have a veto over whatever solution might emerge through dialogue. In addition, hopes that secessionist politicians would join the round table, and thus help strip terrorism of legitimacy, have been frustrated. All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, under intense pressure from terror groups, has said he believes the round table is an “exercise in futility.” Even as Sunday's attack took place, the Mirwaiz was asserting that “political, military and diplomatic fronts” of the anti-India movement would continue to “work in unison” until independence was achieved. Underpinning this position is the stark fact that secessionist leaders have neither the influence nor the moral authority to persuade terrorist groups to accept a settlement. Round-table participants will have to demonstrate seriousness of purpose if rejectionists are to be prevented from undermining the dialogue process. They must put in place an agreed road map for the political reconstruction of the State, which can be realised with or without the participation of the APHC and the Islamist terror groups.

Two other lessons must also be learned. First, proximate security protocols need to be reviewed — and improved. Police officials at the fringes of the rally did well to bring down one of the two fidayeen even as the attack commenced. However, the second terrorist succeeded in entering the protected zone, a security failure that must be carefully analysed. Inspector-General of Police K. Rajendra was injured because of his extraordinarily courageous decision to remain in the open, rather than throw out the civilians who had taken shelter in his bulletproof police vehicle. The failure to provide him with a secure fallback area and the decision to evacuate him to a low-security medical facility instead of the nearby military hospital demonstrate an appalling remissness in crisis management. Police authorities in Srinagar must be held to account. Secondly, India needs to make clear to Pakistan that its continued support of terrorist groups is unacceptable. “I cannot,” Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said recently, “have a meaningful dialogue with someone who is waving a gun at me.” India needs to make sure his message is heard in Islamabad. Despite repeated promises, Pakistan has shown no desire to act against the infrastructure or functionaries of terrorist organisations such as the Lashkar, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Until Pakistan can be made to act against them, peace in Jammu and Kashmir will remain elusive.

23 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Muslim clerics oppose SC order on talaaq

SOUFYAJIT Pattnaik
Bhubaneswar, April 22

THE SUPREME Court's directive to provide police protection to a Muslim couple who decided to live together even after the husband pronounced triple *talaaq* in an inebriated condition, has drawn flak from the Muslim clerics in the state.

Maulana S.S. Sajideen Quasmi, state president of the Jamiat-e-Ulema told *Hindustan Times* on Saturday that the Supreme Court has no right to interfere in the Muslim personal law.

Maulana Quasmi said, "We will not obey the Supreme Court decision under any circumstance. Can we obey a directive of the

Supreme Court that tells us to read the *na-maaz* four times a day instead of five times? We are ready to give up anything to protect our religion".

The Maulana said the Jamiat-e-Ulema will appeal to the Supreme Court to review its decision and it will also appeal to the President, Parliament and the government of Orissa against the direction given by the Supreme Court.

According to the Maulana, the Supreme Court should have consulted the Dar-ul-Uloom, Deoband and similar Islamic institutes before coming to any conclusion.

The apex court, while directing the state government to give police protection to the couple, had observed, "No one can force them

to live separately. This is a secular country. All communities should behave in a civilised manner". Chief minister Naveen Pattnaik, however, said, "We will study the directive of the Supreme Court and take appropriate action".

Petitioner Najma Bibi, a resident of Kantabania in Bhadrak district, who was forced to live separately from her husband Sheikh Seru, said the Supreme Court directive would bring her miseries to an end and she could live with her husband and children again. Seru in an inebriated condition pronounced triple *talaaq* to his wife Najma Bibi on October 8, 2003. Soon after, Seru realised his folly and decided to live together again with his wife. But the local Muslim

leaders would not let the couple to live together under the same roof.

This is not the first time that the state government has been directed to provide police protection to the couple. Earlier in May 2004, a delegation from the National Commission for Women visited Bhadrak and recommended that the couple should live together. The police provided them protection for a few days, but after a few days the local religious leaders forced them to live separately.

Maulana Quasmi said that Najma could live with her husband again if she performed 'halala' (she must marry another man, the marriage must be consummated and she can then get a divorce and then remarry her first husband).

Another fatwa as Muslims rise against terror

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow/Hyderabad: As one of the most influential clerics of Lucknow issued a fatwa decreeing that those who attack places of worship be treated as enemies of Islam, more Muslim voices across the country rose in anger against terrorist groups operating under the banner of Islam's holy names and their wanton killing of innocent civilians. The fatwa by Maulana Khalid Rasheed of Dar-ul-Ifta Firangi Mahal issued late on Monday night in Lucknow came a day after four similar edicts by some of the main ulema in Hyderabad, including the head of one of south India's biggest Muslim seminaries.

And like the clerics in Hyderabad, Maulana Rasheed said terrorist groups had no business wearing a religious veneer by naming their groups after the 99 references to Allah, many of them names of the Prophet himself. "Even the Prophet was insulted and attacked, but he never turned back and targeted the attackers in return," the Maulana said. As the tide of Muslim anger against the perpetrators of the Varanasi serial blasts — at the Sankat Mochan temple and a rail-

way station — rose, more voices joined in the condemnation, especially after a group calling itself the Lashkar-e-Gahar (army of the Subduer) claimed responsibility. The Muslim outcry against terrorists also proved, what some analysts had always maintained, that there was a deep reservoir of disapproval or revulsion to acts of terror among Muslims in India.

"Muslims in India may have been ambiguous about Islamic terrorism initially, but after the Taliban smashed the ancient Buddha sculptures in Bamiyan — I can say with certainty that — but for the lunatic

Pradesh minister Basheeruddin Babukhan, commenting on the fatwas, said holy words should not be used frivolously. "By giving Islamic connotation to terror acts, these people are spoiling the name of Islam and all Muslims are being branded as supporters of such acts. This is wrong," he said. Film producer Elahe Hip-toolah said it was good to see the ulema trying to distance Islam from terrorism. "These fatwas are certainly a positive step. I don't care what these outfits call themselves as long as they do not have Islamic connotations in their names as if they were fighting their wars in



BURNING THE RELIGIOUS DIVIDE ON TERRORISM

fringe Indian Muslim response has been consistent and unambiguous, against terror acts," said Javed Anand, a social activist. In Hyderabad, where the response appeared most crystallised, former Andhra

the name of Islam, which they are not," she said.

Another thumbs up for the ulema came from the University of Hyderabad vice-chancellor Syed E Hasnain. "These terrorist outfits think they are the only defenders of Islam. People who use Islam to spread violence should be ostracised from the religion," he suggested.

In Chennai, Sharifa Daud Khanam, who heads the all-women Jamaat Committee of Pudukottai of Tamil Nadu, said, "No doubt the Varanasi blasts should be condemned. It is against human rights."

But in welcoming the fat-

was, she also demanded that the ulema come out of its straitjacket and react to cases of Muslim women being victimised. They should also spring to the defence of the Imranas and come out in support of Khushboo, who was targeted by political parties for innocuous remarks about safe sex, she said.

"If I talk of religion and about Allah, I am a good person. If I talk of women's emancipation and liberty, I am a bad person. The ulema who have issued fatwas against the militant groups would keep quiet when women's issues come up," she said.

washingtonpost.com

Negative Perception Of Islam Increasing

Poll Numbers in U.S. Higher Than in 2001

By Claudia Deane and Darryl Fears
Washington Post Staff Writers
Thursday, March 9, 2006; A01

As the war in Iraq grinds into its fourth year, a growing proportion of Americans are expressing unfavorable views of Islam, and a majority now say that Muslims are disproportionately prone to violence, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll.

The poll found that nearly half of Americans -- 46 percent -- have a negative view of Islam, seven percentage points higher than in the tense months after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, when Muslims were often targeted for violence.

The survey comes at a time of increasing tension; the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq show little sign of ending, and members of Congress are seeking to block the Bush administration's attempt to hire an Arab company to manage operations at six of the nation's ports. Also, Americans are reading news of deadly protests by Muslims over Danish cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad.

Conservative and liberal experts said Americans' attitudes about Islam are fueled in part by political statements and media reports that focus almost solely on the actions of Muslim extremists.

According to the poll, the proportion of Americans who believe that Islam helps to stoke violence against non-Muslims has more than doubled since the attacks, from 14 percent in January 2002 to 33 percent today.

The survey also found that one in three Americans have heard prejudiced comments about Muslims lately. In a separate question, slightly more (43 percent) reported having heard negative remarks about Arabs. One in four Americans admitted to harboring prejudice toward Muslims, the same proportion that expressed some personal bias against Arabs.

Though the two groups are often linked in popular discourse, most of the world's Muslims are not of Arab descent. For example, the country with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia.


As a school bus driver in Chicago, Gary McCord, 65, dealt with many children of Arab descent. "Some of the best families I've ever had were some of my Muslim families," he said in a follow-up interview. "They were so nice to me." He now works for a Palestinian Christian family, whose members he says are "really marvelous."

But his good feelings do not extend to Islam. "I don't mean to sound harsh or anything, but I don't like what the Muslim people believe in, according to the Koran. Because I think they preach hate," he said.

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As for the controversial cartoons of Muhammad, he said Arabs seem hypersensitive about religion. "I think it's been blown out of proportion," he said.

Frederick Cole, a welder in Roosevelt, Utah, acknowledged: "As far as being prejudiced against them, I'd have to say maybe a little bit. If I were to go through an airport and I saw one out of the corner of my eye, I'd say, 'I wonder what he's thinking.'" Still, Cole, 30, said, "I don't think the religion is based on just wanting to terrorize people."

A total of 1,000 randomly selected Americans were interviewed March 2-5 for this Post-ABC News poll. The margin of sampling error for the overall results is plus or minus three percentage points.

Americans who said they understood Islam were more likely to see the religion overall as peaceful and respectful. But they were no less likely to say it harbors harmful extremists, and they were also no less likely to have prejudiced feelings against Muslims.

In Gadsden, Ala., Ron Hardy, an auto parts supplier, said Arabs own a lot of stores in his area and "they're okay." But, Hardy, 41, said "I do think" Islam has been "hijacked by some militant-like guys."

Edward Rios, 31, an engineer in McHenry, Ill., said he feels that Islam "is as good a religion as any other" yet vengeance seems to be "built into their own set of beliefs: If someone attacks our people, it is your duty to defend them. . . . I don't think Christianity has anything like that."

James J. Zogby, president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute, said he is not surprised by the poll's results. Politicians, authors and media commentators have demonized the Arab world since 2001, he said.

"The intensity has not abated and remains a vein that's very near the surface, ready to be tapped at any moment," Zogby said. "Members of Congress have been exploiting this over the ports issue. Radio commentators have been talking about it nonstop."

Juan Cole, a professor of modern Middle Eastern and South Asian history at the University of Michigan, agreed, saying Americans "have been given the message to respond this way by the American political elite, mass media and by select special interests."

Cole said he was shocked when a radio talk show host asked him if Islamic extremists would set off a nuclear bomb in the United States in the next six months. "It was ridiculous. I think anti-Arab racism and profiling has become respectable," he said.

Ronald Stockton, a professor of political science at the University of Michigan at Dearborn who helped conduct a study of Arabs in the Detroit area and on views of them held by non-Arabs, said an exceptionally high percentage of non-Muslims feels the media depicts Arabs unfairly, yet still holds negative opinions.

"You're getting a constant drumbeat of negative information about Islam," he said.

Michael Franc, vice president of government relations for the conservative Heritage Foundation, said that the survey responses "seems to me to be a real backlash against Islam" and that congressional leaders do not help the problem by sometimes using language that links all Muslims with extremists.

Polling director Richard Morin contributed to this report.

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Zawahiri blasts West for cartoons, backs Hamas

Cairo (Egypt): Al Qaida's No. 2 leader Ayman Al Zawahiri criticised the West for its insult to Islam's prophet and called for continued jihad, or holy war, to reclaim Palestinian lands, in a video broadcast on Sunday on Al Jazeera.

Al Zawahiri also expressed support for Hamas, the militant Islamic group that swept Palestinian parliamentary elections in January, and its refusal to recognise Israel.

Referring to the cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed that have been printed in a number of European newspapers, Al Zawahiri said, "They did it on purpose and they continue to do it without apologising, even though no one dares to harm Jews or to challenge Jewish claims about the Holocaust nor even to insult homosexuals."

It was the second Al Zawahiri videotape aired by Al Jazeera in six weeks. An official at the network would not say how the network received the latest tape.

The bearded Al Zawahiri, wearing a black turban and seated in front of a curtained window, spoke insistently and waved his right hand to emphasise his words. "The insults against Prophet Muhammad are not the result of freedom of opinion but because what is sacred has changed in this culture," he said. "The Prophet Mohammed, prayers be upon him, and Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, are not sacred anymore, while Semites and the Holocaust and homosexuality have become sacred."

He complained about the double standards of laws that punish those who challenge the Holocaust but bar Muslim girls from covering their hair in school, as in France. "In France a Muslim father cannot prevent his daughter from having sex because she is protected by the law but this same law punishes her if she covers her

hair," he said.

He said the West repeatedly insulted Muslims and their holy book, the Quran. "In the eyes of the West, they have the right to occupy our land, rob our wealth and then insult us and our religion, and humiliate our Quran and our prophet, prayers be upon him," Al Zawahiri said. "After that they give us lessons in freedom, justice and human rights."

Speaking of Palestine and Iraq, Al Zawahiri said, "We have to be aware of the American game called 'political process.'"

He agreed with Hamas' refusal to accept Israel or renounce its violent ideology and rejected US President George W Bush's State of the Union message that the group would lose funding if it did not reform.

"There were declarations about respecting the signed agreements between the Palestinian Authority and Israel," he said. "That means accepting Oslo and Madrid and the road map agreements and the other surrendering agreements.

This is a dangerous deal which should be dropped immediately."

In place of negotiations, he said, was "the path of prophets and messengers, which is... jihad, until the soil will be liberated and the Islamic states rise again."

Al Zawahiri complained that the previous Palestinian leaderships had "sold Palestine" through peace agreements in Oslo and Madrid and the US-backed roadmap peace plan. "No one has the right, whether a Palestinian or not, to abandon a grain of soil from Palestine which was a Muslim land that was occupied by infidels. It is the duty of every Muslim to work on getting it back," he said.

Al Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's deputy, has issued several video and audiotapes in the past year. His last video came on January 31, in which he threatened a new attack against the United States. AP



Protest against cartoons: 30 injured

Bandh near-total in many districts

9/10/06
11/12
4/32



DEMONSTRATION: Protesters pelt stones at policemen during a rally in Srinagar on Friday against the visit of U.S. President George Bush. PHOTO: NISSAR AHMAD

Shuja'at Bukhari

SRINAGAR: The entire Valley observed a bandh on Friday against the publication of cartoons of Prophet Muhammed in some European newspapers and a picture in a weekly news magazine from Delhi.

At least 30 people were injured in clashes between the police and protesters at many places.

In response to the bandh call given by the Imam of the holy mosque at Makkah and supported by many organisations, shops and business establishments remained closed here and other major towns of the Valley. Vehicles remained off the road.

Normal life was hit badly as protests were held by women separatist groups and other organisations. The bandh was near-total in Baramulla, Budgam, Anantnag, Pulwama and Kupwara districts, reports said.

People observed the bandh despite an appeal by the hard-line faction of the separatist All Parties Hurriyat Conference led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

Mr. Geelani had urged the people to protest peacefully after Friday prayers. The moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, however, supported the call.

Soon after Friday prayers, people shouted slogans against European countries and the editor of the weekly news magazine.

At the historic Jamia Masjid in Nowhatta, hundreds of protesters took to the streets and pelted stones at the police, while shouting anti-American and anti-India slogans.

At least 24 people, including two photojournalists, were injured in the stone-throwing. Police, however, observed restraint at almost all the places. Sources told *The Hindu* that Director-General of Police Gopal Sharma had flown to Srinagar on Thursday to meet senior police officers in order to make sure that the situation was dealt with peacefully in view of the visit of United States President George Bush.

"We have orders that even if we are attacked we have to observe restraint," a senior officer said, adding, "We can only use lathis."

Early in the morning, scores of students from madrassas converged at Lal Chowk and burnt an effigy of President Bush. A rally of scooter-borne protesters was also organised.

In Maisuma, a procession was organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Rajbagh). Muslim League activists, headed by chairman Massarat Alam, also organised protests.

Pakistan takes up blasphemous cartoon issue at the U.N. *9/10/12*

B. Muralidhar Reddy *9/10/12*

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday that Islamabad has taken up at the United Nations (U.N.) the issue of publication of offensive cartoons of Prophet Muhammed.

Speaking to an eight member delegation of the eminent Islamic scholars, who called on him at Rawalpindi, Gen. Musharraf said Pakistan believed the entire international community has a responsibility towards promoting inter-faith harmony and discouraging any act that may damage the cause of world peace and stability.

"Pakistan has strongly condemned the appearance of sacrilegious sketches and taken up the issue internationally and working in coordination with the UN and the OIC to prevent recurrence of such blasphemy," he stated.

He noted that such blasphemous publications encourage the propagators of insidious notions of clash of civilisations. "Therefore, it is the collective responsibility of the entire world leadership to help foster under-

• **Musharraf calls for inter-faith harmony**

• **"Blasphemous publications encourage insidious notions"**

• **Clashes over cartoon spread in Nigeria**

• **Death toll in violence mounts to 157**

standing and bridge the gap created in the wake of sacrilegious sketches," he said and added that he would also discuss the issue with U.S. President George W Bush when he visits Islamabad in the first week of March.

The Muslims, he said, hold Prophets of God in the highest esteem and believe that blasphemy against any of the Prophets is reprehensible.

Clashes in Nigeria

AP reports from Lagos:

Meanwhile, sectarian violence spread to three more Nigerian cities on Friday, claiming at least seven lives and pushing up the death toll in days of kill-

ings to at least 127, residents and witnesses said.

Rival religious and ethnic groups skirmished in the cities of Potiskum in northeastern Yobe state, Kontagora in northern Niger state and Enugu, capital of southeastern Enugu state.

Churches burnt

Muslim youths in Potiskum, armed with machetes and clubs attacked shops belonging mostly to Christians and burned five churches, resident Ibrahim Dagbugur said.

Four people were killed. Riot police battled for hours before they could bring the violence under control, other residents said.

The violence followed week-end protests over the publication in Europe of controversial cartoons of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad that have enraged Muslims worldwide.

In the mainly Christian southeastern city of Enugu, at least one person was killed by mobs that attacked ethnic Hausa Muslims, witnesses said.

Of the 127 persons killed this week in Muslim-Christian fighting across the country, 80 died in the southeastern city of Onitsha.

Cartoons: violence again in Nigeria

Army deployed in many States; toll 34 amid curfew in two cities

KANO (NIGERIA): Nigeria imposed a curfew and tightened security in two northern cities on Tuesday after violence between Muslims and Christians claimed at least 34 lives.

A spokesman for the Government of the State of Bauchi, where 10 persons were killed on Monday after the supposed "desecration" of the Koran by a school teacher, said a dawn-to-dusk curfew had been imposed to pre-empt further clashes.

"The Government of Bauchi has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the [capital] after yesterday's violence," Government spokesman Mohammed Abdullahi said.

"A joint police military patrol has been going on since yesterday and will continue until order is fully restored," he said.

Protest banned

According to the Nigerian Red Cross, 24 others died on Saturday in the States of Borno and Katsina during violent protests against the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed which first appeared in a Danish newspaper.

Naomi Moses, spokeswoman for the State of Gombe which on Monday banned a planned protest against the cartoons which many Muslims deem offensive, said it had also imposed curfew.

"Soldiers have been drafted to keep order and prevent any violence," she said.

In Borno, the Government said the State was calm after Saturday's



AGITATED MOOD: Demonstrators are stopped at the door to the office of the student newspaper *Tar Heel* by editor-in-chief Ryan Tuck (right) at the University of North Carolina on Monday. The demonstrators planned a sit-in in support of Muslim students' demand for a printed apology for a cartoon the daily published on Prophet Muhammed in its February 9 edition. — PHOTO: AP

clashes when Muslims, after being dispersed by police, vent their ire on Christians and attacked them.

"Normalcy has returned. Soldiers have been deployed to strategic locations in town and for a variety of sects and denominations. Northern Nigeria is overwhelmingly Muslim, and is fast becoming a hotbed of religious clashes in the country. — AFP

Time for reason and restraint

Uttar Pradesh Haj and Minority Welfare Minister Yaqoob Quereshi went outrageously over the top – violating the law and all norms of propriety and decency – in announcing a cash reward of Rs.51 crore for the head of the ‘cartoonist’ who drew offensive caricatures of Prophet Muhammed. Elements like Mr. Quereshi revel in scoring a succession of own goals against secular democracy and the interests of Muslims worldwide. Such ‘edicts’ tend to reinforce the stereotyping of Muslims and to fuel Islamophobia. There is no question that the cartoons – a dozen of them published originally in the Danish right-wing newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, which has now come up with a full-scale apology, and republished in European newspapers with crass disregard for the consequences – were intended to cause hurt. The caricatures of the Prophet – one of them, as it turned out, portrayed him as a terrorist – were commissioned in order to provoke and presumably to test the limits of tolerance. It is worth noting that violence escalated only after the cartoons were deliberately reprinted on February 1. More provocation ensued in the form of a T-shirt carrying the Prophet’s caricature, worn by an Italian right-wing Minister. Within India, there was little reaction until television started beaming images of protests elsewhere in the world. But by and large, despite attempts by fanatical elements to stir up trouble, Indian Muslims have been commendably restrained.

The U.P. Minister was not even well informed on the basic facts. The caricatures of the Prophet were drawn, not by a single cartoonist but by 12 of 40 cartoonists who were stupidly invited by the Danish newspaper to “draw Muhammed as they see him.” The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board quickly distanced itself from the Quereshi statement, characterising it as an attempt to “incite passion” and gain “cheap publicity.” This response contrasts with the unacceptable refusal of the U.P. Government to rebuke the Minister, let alone sack him. The Danish cartoons were crude, racist, and calculated to inflame. But the way to counter them was a reasoned and sustained exposure of Islamophobia and legal redress where possible. (After all, David Irving, the British historian and Nazi apologist, has just been sentenced by a Vienna court to three years in jail for exercising his ‘freedom of expression’ to deny the Holocaust.) Writing in the *Jurist*, an eminent Muslim African-American law professor, Bernard K. Freamon, argues that the publishers of the cartoons are punishable under Section 266b of the Danish Penal Code. The section provides for criminal prosecution and conviction for dissemination of any communication by which a group of people is “threatened, insulted or degraded on account of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin or creed...” A counter movement, grounded in law and reason, is clearly the answer. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mulayam Singh must make an example of Mr. Quereshi by throwing him out of his Ministry.

THE HINDU

Iran calls for end to cartoon rage

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Brussels: Iran's foreign minister has called for an end to violent protests over cartoons of Prophet Mohammed that have swept across the Muslim world after the images were published in several European newspapers.

"We should try to cool down the situation. We do not support any violence," Manouchehr Mottaki said on Monday.

Speaking to reporters in Brussels, Mottaki added that freedom of expression must be exercised with sensitivity and the values of people and nations must be fully respected.

It was unclear what effect Mottaki's call for restraint would have though. While protests have been tapering off in many Muslim nations, they have been escalating in Pakistan, Nigeria and Libya.

At least 26 people died in weekend rioting in two Muslim states in northern Nigeria over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed and a planned constitutional amendment, the Red Cross said on Monday. Eleven persons also died in rioting at the Italian consulate in Benghazi, Libya.

And in Pakistan a radical Islamic leader was freed from house detention on Monday and immediately urged more nationwide protests

against the cartoons.

Qazi Hussain Mahmad, president of the Mutahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) religious party alliance, was arrested in Lahore on the weekend to prevent him leading a rally in the capital, Islamabad, on Sunday.

Police arrested about 400 people in all, including 10 lawmakers, and used tear gas to disperse several hundred demonstrators in an attempt to prevent protests in Islamabad, witnesses and police said.

After chairing an MMA meeting in Islamabad on Monday, he called publication of the cartoons in Europe "part of the clash of civilisations led by (US President George W) Bush."

"Therefore our movement is against Bush as well as against Mush," he told a news briefing, referring to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, a key ally in Bush's war on terrorism.

MMA Secretary General Fazul-ur-Rehman said the alliance planned a countrywide protest on Friday, another in Lahore on Sunday, and a nationwide general strike on March 3.

He added that other protests would take place in Karachi on March 5, and in Quetta on March 7. AP



Manouchehr Mottaki

PM's remarks anger Australian Muslims

Sydney: Australian Prime Minister **John Howard** has criticised the minority of Muslims who "rave on about jihad" and have "extreme attitudes" towards women, saying they do not fit into Australian society.

Islamic leaders immediately condemned the remarks as "offensive and ignorant", saying they would fan the flames of prejudice against Islam.

Howard's comments were made in interviews in December for a book by journalists from The Australian newspaper to mark his 10th anniversary in power next month, the paper reported on Monday. He later defended his comments as his "right and duty" to express his thoughts.

The book quotes him as saying Muslim immigration to Australia had presented problems not seen in previous waves of migration from Europe and Asia. "I do think there is this particular complica-

tion because there is a fragment which is utterly antagonistic to our kind of society, and that is a difficulty," Howard said.

"I think some of the associated attitudes towards women are a problem. For all the conservatism towards women and so forth within some of the



Mediterranean cultures, it's as nothing compared with some of the more extreme attitudes." Howard told reporters, "I stand by those comments that there is a small section of the Islamic population in Australia that, because of its remarks about jihad, remarks which indicate an extremist view, that is a problem.

The president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Ameer Ali, said the Muslims referred to by Howard represented only a "tiny fraction" of the community. "There is also a tiny fraction of Australians who believe in white supremacy," Ali said. AFP

THE HINDU

ব্যঙ্গচিত্রের প্রতিবাদে বিক্ষোভ, ভাঙচুর, গুলি, উত্তাল লখনউ

লখনউ, ১৯ ফেব্রুয়ারি: বিক্ষোভ স্লোগান, ভাঙচুর, গুলির সেই একই ইতিবৃত্ত।

গত কয়েক দিন ব্যঙ্গচিত্র নিয়ে বিশ্ব জুড়ে যে কাণ্ড চলছে আজ ফের তার পুনরাবৃত্তি হল লখনউ শহরে। উন্নত জনতা শহরের এক পাঁচতারা হোটেলের ও কফি শপে ব্যাপক ভাঙচুর চালায়। শূন্যে গুলি ছুড়ে, পটকা ফাটিয়ে বিক্ষোভকারীরা তুমুল প্রতিবাদ জানায়। বিক্ষোভ দেখানো হয় বিধানসভার সামনেও। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে সাম্রাজ্যবাদীদের কাছে আত্মসমর্পণের অভিযোগ এনে তুলোধোনা করেছেন মুসলিম নেতারা। ব্যঙ্গচিত্রের প্রতিবাদে তাঁরা মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশের ভারত সফর বাতিলের দাবি করেন।

শহরের ঐতিহাসিক তিলেওয়ালি মসজিদে জমা হয়েছিল বিক্ষোভকারীরা।

ডেনমার্ক, ব্রিটেন ও মার্কিন-বিরোধী স্লোগানে সভা উত্তাল হয়ে ওঠে। সভায় উপস্থিত মুসলিম নেতারা বুশের সফর বাতিলের পাশাপাশি ডেনমার্ক থেকে ভারতের রাষ্ট্রদূত ফিরিয়ে আনার দাবি জানান। জনতা এর পর মারমুখী হয়ে ওঠে। স্থানীয় পাঁচতারা হোটেলের দরজা-জানলার কাচ ভেঙে জিনিসপত্র তছনছ করা হয়।

হোটেলের লাউঞ্জে বেশ কিছু দেশের পতাকা টাঙানো ছিল।

সেগুলিতে আগুন ধরিয়ে দেশের জনতা। পোড়ানো হয় জর্জ বুশের কুশপুতুল।

বিধানসভার সামনে জমায়েতে 'ইসলামের বিরুদ্ধে চক্রান্তের অভিযোগ তোলেন বিশিষ্ট শিক্ষাবিদ মৌলানা কালবে জাওয়াদ। তাঁর বক্তব্য, "দুর্ভাগ্যবশত ভারত সরকারও এই চক্রান্তে সামিল। তারা আমেরিকার কাছে আত্মসমর্পণ করে বসে আছে। বুশকে আমন্ত্রণ জানানো মানে দেশের ২০ কোটি মুসলিমকে অপমানিত করা।"

সমাবেশে ইরান প্রসঙ্গে ভারতের ভূমিকারও কড়া সমালোচনা করা হয়েছে। মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের সফর বাতিলের দাবি জানিয়ে তাঁরা প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাছে একটি স্মারকলিপি পাঠিয়েছেন।

ব্যঙ্গচিত্রীর মাথা কেটে আনতে পারলে ৫১ কোটি টাকা ইনামের ঘোষণা করেছিলেন উত্তরপ্রদেশের হজমন্ত্রী ইয়াকুব কুরেশি। এ হেন উস্কানিমূলক বিবৃতির জন্য কুরেশির বিরুদ্ধে কড়া ব্যবস্থা নেওয়ার দাবি জানিয়েছে বহুজন সমাজ পার্টি। ব্যঙ্গচিত্র বিতর্ক নিয়ে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার অস্বাভাবিক রকম উদাসীন বলে সমালোচনা করেছেন দলীয় নেত্রী মায়াবতী। তিনি বলেন, জাতীয় স্বার্থে বিষয়টির দ্রুত সমাধান প্রয়োজন। কিন্তু কেন্দ্র গা বাঁচিয়ে নিছক দর্শক হয়ে রয়েছে। —পি টি আই

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Anger in South Asia as cartoon protests flare

FAISAL AZIZ

KARACHI, FEBRUARY 17

ANGER against cartoons of Prophet Muhammad flared anew in Asia on Friday in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Adding their voice to the crisis, former US President Bill Clinton and French President Jacques Chirac said it was a mistake to publish the cartoons.

In Pakistan, police fired tear gas and detained more than 100 protestors on Friday. At least 10 were detained for blocking a highway in Karachi and hurled stones at vehicles.

Clinton, on a private visit to Pakistan, said he saw nothing wrong with Muslims demonstrating in a peaceful way, but he feared an opportunity to improve understanding had been squandered. "This is not a time to burn bridges; this is a time to build them. This is an enormous opportunity, because most people are horrified that this occurred."

"I am appalled by what happened as a result of these cartoons," Chirac said. "I am in favour of the freedom of the press as a pillar of democracy. But I am equally for respecting everyone's sensibilities."



Police tries to detain protesters during a rally against the publication of Prophet cartoons in Karachi on Friday. AP

In Dhaka, police stopped thousands of Muslims from trying to besiege the Danish embassy and put barricades on streets leading to the diplomatic areas. Undeterred, the nearly 10,000 protesters demonstrated on the streets, burning Danish flags and effigies of Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

In Hong Kong, about 2,000 Muslims shouted slogans and waved posters against the cartoons. The march was the first of its kind by Muslims in Hong Kong in years.

—Reuters

Price of 'blasphemy'

► PESHAWAR: A Pakistani cleric offered a Rs 1.5 million reward and a car for anyone who kills the cartoonist who drew Prophet Muhammad. Mohammed Yousaf Qureshi, prayer leader at the Mohabat Khan mosque in Peshawar, said at the mosque and the Jania Ashrafiya religious school that he will give the reward.

Meanwhile, the government on Friday put under house arrest the founder of Lashkar-e-Toiba Hafeez Saeed, who now heads Jamaat-ud-Dawa for violating a ban on rallies. —Agencies

করাচিতে মিছিল, ব্যঙ্গচিত্র-বিতর্ক চুলছেই

করাচি, ১৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি: ব্যঙ্গচিত্র নিয়ে বিক্ষোভ অব্যাহত পাকিস্তানে। অবশ্য তার তীব্রতা কিছুটা কমে এসেছে। ইসলামাবাদ, লাহোর ও পেশোয়ারের পর এ দিন ছিল করাচির পালা। তবে হাজার দশেক লোকের এক শান্তিপূর্ণ বিক্ষোভ মিছিল বার করা ছাড়া সে রকম কোনও প্রতিবাদ দেখায়নি এই শহর। করাচির সর্বত্র আজ নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থাও ছিল চোখে পড়ার মতো।

জামাত অহল-ই-সুন্নত নামে এক ছোটখাট সুন্নি মুসলিম গোষ্ঠী এই বিক্ষোভ মিছিলের আয়োজন করে।

প্রায় দশ হাজার লোক মিছিলে যোগ দেয়। অনেকের মাথাতেই ছিল সবুজ পাগড়ি এবং হাতে লাঠি। কারও কারও হাতে সবুজ পতাকাও দেখা গিয়েছে। বিক্ষোভকারীদের মোকাবিলায় পুলিশ ও আধাসামরিক বাহিনী মিলিয়ে প্রায় পাঁচ হাজার সশস্ত্র জওয়ানকে মোতায়েন করা হয়েছিল। বাড়তি সতর্কতা হিসাবে কয়েকটি মার্কিন বহুজাতিক সংস্থা করাচিতে তাদের দফতরের সাইনবোর্ড কালো কাপড়ে ঢেকে রাখার ব্যবস্থা করে।

ডেনমার্ক-বিরোধী স্লোগান ছাড়াও 'দোষী' ইউরোপীয় রাষ্ট্রগুলির সঙ্গে সব

সম্পর্ক ছিন্ন করার দাবি তোলা হয় আজকের মিছিলে। জনতার আবেগকে গুরুত্ব না দিলে পরিণতি মারাত্মক হবে, পাক সরকারের উদ্দেশে এমন হুমকিও ছুড়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে।

এর মধ্যে আবার মার্চ মাসের গোড়াতে পাকিস্তান সফরে আসছেন মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশ। সেই প্রেক্ষিতে মুসলিম দলগুলি ৩ মার্চ দেশ জুড়ে ধর্মঘটের ডাক দিয়েছে। ফলে শ্যাম ও কুলের মধ্যে ভারসাম্য বজায় রাখাই এখন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের সামনে সব চেয়ে বড় পরীক্ষা। —এ পি, রয়টার্স

3 more die in Pak protests over cartoons

Rampaging Mobs Gassed In Peshawar, NWFP

Peshawar (Pakistan): Three people died and outlets of a Norwegian phone firm, a US fast food restaurant and banks were set ablaze in Pakistan on Wednesday in violence against cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad in European newspapers.

Police said one man was killed in exchange of fire between student protesters and police in the eastern city of Lahore. Two people, including a young boy, died during protests in the main northwestern city of Peshawar.

Police fired tear gas in Peshawar and several other towns of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) to disperse crowds who attacked two franchises of Norwegian mobile telephone firm Telenor, a KFC fast food outlet, as well as banks and cinemas.

The protests came a day after two people were killed in violent protests in Lahore and despite a province-wide ban on protests in the city announced by its chief minister, Pervez Elahi, who warned on Tuesday that violators faced "an iron hand".

NWFP chief minister

Mohammad Akram Durrani blamed the violence on provocateurs he did not identify, while the police chief in the town of Tank pointed to supporters of Afghanistan's radical Taliban guerrillas. "Some saboteurs have penetrated into protesters and are re-



Protesters burn a police van during a demonstration in Peshawar

sponsible for this violence," Durrani said.

At least one policeman was wounded in an exchange of fire between police and protesters in Tank. Protesters also torched music shops and internet cafes in the town close to a tribal region bordering Afghanistan troubled by Al Qaida-linked militants in recent years. "The protest was proceeding peacefully before armed supporters of the Taliban penetrated and started firing at the police and burning music shops," said local police chief Attiqullah. Agencies

Thousands storm Pak diplomatic enclave

Indian mission car attacked in toon protest

PRESS Trust of India
Lahore, February 14

PROTESTS AGAINST the publication of Prophet Mohammad's caricatures in European newspapers flared up in Pakistan on Tuesday with thousands of angry demonstrators storming the diplomatic enclave in Islamabad and attacking US fast food outlets, banks and government buildings here.

At least two persons were killed and nearly 50 injured when police fired to control the rampaging crowd that targeted McDonald's, Pizza Hut and KFC outlets here, besides government buildings, banks and a five-star hotel. They also torched two cinema halls. In Islamabad, the protesters, mostly students, stormed the high-security diplomatic enclave, damaging cars, including one belonging to the Indian High Commission.

Some stones were also thrown at the Indian mission but sources said it was not the target of the protesters and there was no damage to the building.

Angry demonstrators damaged several cars bearing diplomatic number plates parked outside a nearby hotel, including one belonging to the Indian High Commission, sources said. The front and rear

windcreens of the Indian diplomatic car were smashed by the mob but nobody was hurt, they said.

They also smashed windows and hoardings outside a branch of the Standard Chartered Bank before police dispersed them using tear gas shells and water cannon. Interior minister Aftab Khan Sherpao said a guard fired the shots. Two people died.

"It is a serious development. We are grieved over the loss of precious life," he told the local Geo TV.

The protesters, mostly belonging to Islamist parties, also targeted several hotels, including the five-star Holiday Inn, and the office of Norwegian cell phone company, Telenor in Lahore.

Witnesses said police fired tear gas shells to disperse a crowd that tried to storm the Punjab provincial assembly building. In Islamabad, the protesters also ripped down portraits of President Pervez Musharraf and visiting Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, besides demonstrating outside parliament. They burned effigies of George Bush and the Danish PM. Some 200 legislators also held a five-minute silent protest outside the diplomatic enclave.

Reports of protests also came from northwestern city of Peshawar where around 1,500 people held separate rallies and burnt tyres.

AFP



RAGE Police fired tear gas (above) to drive out some thousands who stormed the heavily guarded diplomatic enclave in Islamabad on Tuesday in protest against cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad.

DAMAGE The protesters also attacked Holiday Inn hotel and Pizza Hut, KFC and McDonald's. They damaged over 200 cars, two banks, dozens of shops and a large portrait of President Pervez Musharraf.

Pak protesters storm diplomatic enclave over cartoons

Islamabad: Police fired tear gas to drive out students who stormed into the heavily guarded diplomatic enclave in Islamabad on Tuesday as violent protests erupted in Pakistan against cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad.

In the eastern city of Lahore, police fired tear gas, shot into the air and baton-charged protesters who ransacked a McDonald's franchise and set fire to outlets nearby of KFC and

Norwegian mobile phone firm Telenor, witnesses said.

Demonstrators set vehicles on fire and about 2,000 staged a sit-in near the provincial assembly, where a small fire broke out briefly. Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao said guards at a bank that came under attack shot dead two men.

The protests were the most serious in Pakistan—the second-most populous Muslim na-

tion—since European newspapers republished cartoons of the Prophet that first appeared in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten last September. Many Muslims believe it is blasphemous to depict the Prophet.

Up to 400 students stormed past armed police guarding the diplomatic enclave in Islamabad and reached the Indian high commission, which is next to the British high commission,

before being driven back by volleys of tear gas.

The protesters smashed windows of cars and a branch of British bank Standard Chartered and shouted "Death to Denmark" and "Expel European ambassadors".

The diplomatic enclave is home to many European embassies as well as that of the US, but not that of Denmark. It is fenced and barricaded and guarded by armed police.

It was the first time protesters have breached the diplomatic enclave since security was dramatically increased in 2002. Extra police have been posted on roads around embassies and diplomatic residences outside the enclave since the cartoon row re-erupted.

A spokesman for the heavily fortified Indian high commission appeared unaware of the protest. "There's no problem here," he said, while a

spokesman for the British high commission called it a small protest which had not reached the embassy. "It's of no real concern to us," he said.

Water cannons were used to disperse students protesting on the main road outside the diplomatic enclave, where the foreign office and French embassy are located. Later, a crowd of about 3,000 shouted anti-American slogans outside parliament.

Muslims want democracy with Shariah: Gallup poll

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The embers that flew out of the World Trade Centres on 9/11 burnt a gaping hole in the precarious dialogue between the West and the Islamic world. Since then, there's been much bluster about understanding the Muslim mind and Islamic sensitivities. Little has happened on that front and with Bush's war on terror only new polarisations have formed and old stereotypes dusted out. In this context, a sweeping survey of the Islamic world by the US-based Gallup Organisation for the first time provides a window into how Muslims ranging from Java to the un-governed hills of northwestern Pakistan think about democracy, the Shariah and about the

which many observers would see as irreconcilable with the rule of Shariah. In Saudi Arabia, seen as the most rigid Islamic system, 40% of the respondents said they wanted women to step out of their homes, drive to work even serve at the highest levels of government.

The recent controversy of the cartoons has pitted the Muslim world against a West that says all it's doing is protecting freedom of expression. But the survey, contrary to the impression created by the protests, shows that a majority of Muslims want freedom of speech, religion and assembly. Across those surveyed between August to October 2005, the majority perception was that the West treated the Muslim world with disrespect. Things could be better un-



West. The survey of 80% of the world's Muslim population spread across 10 countries (India was not included), into which TOI won a sneak preview, shows that Muslims overwhelmingly have a lot of goodwill about Europe and the West in spite of the blazing margins which are captured by the media torching flags and storming embassies.

Gallup, which intends to publish the entire findings as a monograph later this year, released only a few trends, but these were good enough to discern a huge appetite for democracy, albeit with the rider that it should have an Islamic flavour. The respondents found no contradiction between their yearning for democracy and their strong religious beliefs but said they wouldn't settle for a government of clerics.

To what extent Muslims want the mosque and the state to be separated wasn't clear, but a thumping 79% of those polled across Asia and the Middle East clearly said they wanted the Shariah to be the source of legislation. This opinion was roughly the same for men and women. It was only in Kemal Attaturk's secularised Turkey, where the figure dropped to its lowest — 57%. Gallup gave the margin of error as 3%.

But with the same ferocity, the majority also supports women's rights to vote, drive as freely as men and participate in government, issues

of world's Muslim population spread across 10 countries (minus India) surveyed

across Asia & Middle East want the Shariah to be source of legislation

of Saudi Arabia favours women's emancipation, wants them to work, drive

derstood, they all felt, if the West stopped regarding their own faith as better than Islam and dropped associating Islam with terrorism.

Approximately 830 million people were surveyed by Gallup across the following predominantly Muslim countries: Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Attacking Islam

Insensitive cartoons invite frenzied backlash

By JAVED ANAND

You do not have to be a particularly devout Muslim to feel deeply hurt or offended by cartoons of Prophet Mohammad that have inflamed the Islamic world. The contention that any depiction of the Prophet is per se unacceptable in Islam is debatable. But some of the controversial 12 cartoons originally published by a Danish paper several months ago, and now being published all over in a rare gesture of media solidarity, are undoubtedly grating on religious sensibilities.

One of them shows the Prophet with a bomb tucked in his headgear. Another shows him entreating his followers, "Stop, stop, we have run out of virgins"! Yet another goes with the legend, "Prophet, deaf and dumb, keeping women under thumb". And another shows him on the go, blinkered, sword in hand, leading two burqa-clad women; all you can see of the women is terror in their eyes.

Taken together, what do these cartoons add up to except an image of the Prophet as a bloodthirsty, misogynist tyrant? An original Osama bin Laden, if you please, whose followers today are bent on forcing all Muslim women behind the veil and who show not the least qualm in blowing-up infidel men, women and children to bits, all in pursuit of virgins in the promised paradise.

Enraged Muslims across the globe protesting against such insults to the Prophet fail to recognise that what they are dealing with here is not blasphemy but demonising. It's in the same league as proclamation of a prominent Bajrang Dal leader some years ago that there can be no peace as long as the Qur'an was around. The same sentiment continues to be reiterated by other prominent members of sangh parivar every now and then. Here as with the Danish cartoons the issue is not blasphemy per se but insidious demonising of an entire community.

Were the Danish cartoons a depiction of Osama or his ilk, no one could or should have complained. But when terror and enslavement of women are projected as synonymous

with Islam, all Muslims stand demonised as a dangerous multitude of bloodthirsty vermin. Faced with such hate propaganda, Muslims have every right to, and they must, protest. But the forms of protest that many Muslims and even governments have chosen — mindless economic boycott of Danish products, snapping diplomatic ties, torching embassies, issuing death sentences against all Danish and Norwegian citizens, raging mobs taking to streets with banners and placards calling for butchery of enemies of Islam — are



enormously self-damaging. Through such misguided deeds, Muslims end up affirming the very image of their community that they are ostensibly outraged about.

What do the agitating Muslims want? In an open letter addressed to "Honourable Fellow Citizens of the Muslims World", dated January 30, Carsten Juste, editor-in-chief of the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten, has explained that "we are strong proponents of the freedom of religion and because we respect the right of any human being to practice his or her religion, offending anybody on the grounds of their religious beliefs

is unthinkable to us. That this happened was, consequently, unintentional".

This obviously is not enough for the agitators. Ideally, they would like to see cartoonists, editors and proprietors of the newspaper hanged in public. At the very least they want an exemplary government crackdown on Jyllands-Posten. Some have reportedly also called for new international legislation making the death sentence obligatory for all blasphemers, blissfully unaware that many western democracies have done away with capital punishment altogether even for the worst crimes imaginable.

Fortunately, unlike Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria or Egypt, Denmark is a functioning democracy. Like other democracies, it too does not hold the right to freedom of expression as absolute. Last August, for example, Danish authorities withdrew the broadcasting licence of a Copenhagen radio station for three months because it called for the extermination of Muslims. That, according to the authorities, was clear incitement to violence (against Muslims) and therefore actionable.

We may argue with the Danish on where the Lakshman rekha be drawn between freedom of expression and its abuse for incitement to violence against targeted groups. But we must also ask ourselves why we remain silent when any number of mullahs and assorted jihadis (Fadi Abdullatif, spokesman for Danish branch of the militant Hizb-ul-Tahrir, is one of them), shamefully misuse the hospitality and freedom of western democracies to openly incite Muslims to violence against fellow citizens. And we must be thankful that countries like Denmark don't have laws like Pakistan's notorious blasphemy law that is a curse for religious minorities and the press.

Addressing a gathering of faithful during Friday prayers, Qatar-based Shaikh Yusuf Alqarzadi, a highly respected religious leader, condemned the burning down of Danish and Norwegian embassies. Exhorting Muslims to eschew extremism, he appealed to them to express their unhappiness over the offensive cartoons in a "decent" and "civilised" manner. "I cannot condone destruction and arson because they are against basic human decency and the teachings of Islam", he said. May Allah add power to Alqarzadi's voice.

The writer is editor of Communalism Combat.

T-shirt row on campus, debate in AMU: Islam and modern living

VARGHESE K GEORGE
ALIGARH | FEBRUARY 11

MOURNERS had gathered for the Moharram procession outside the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) hostel named after its founder Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Chants invoking the martyrdom of Imam Hussain grew louder, muffled in precise intervals by heavy thuds of chest-beating.

Inside the hostel — which was exactly where the Muslim reformer started the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental School in 1867 that later on became AMU — another group of students were in the middle of a heated discussion, about being Muslim. Too frequently, their identity is called to question — controversial cartoons of the Prophet across the seas touch their lives as much as the debate about what a Muslim woman should wear. There is consensus on one thing — those who abused and harassed a woman student last week for wearing a T-shirt should be punished. There is no consensus on the other question, though.

"T-shirt is unislamic," said a student. Countered another: "But there was no T-shirt when Islam began. Scriptures only talk about how a woman should cover herself,



there is nothing specifically about the T-shirt or veil. It also talks about how men should dress — which we don't abide by."

Within these four walls, these students were reinterpreting Islam — *ijtihad* as it is called - for a modern living. Noman Hyder, a political science student, says such discussions are increasingly frequent on the campus, prompted by global and local events in close succession.

They agreed on a "fundamental faith" in Islam and the need for change but differed on what was "fundamental" and the extent of change. Sajjad, for instance, drew attention to the fact that the Prophet had opposed the *burqa* in his discussions with companions. He, however, insists he is only quoting Moroccan author Fatma Mernissi. Minhajuddin thinks since

the Prophet had conceded to the companions' opinion, that is a closed chapter. But these are questions they need to answer every now and then.

"Muslims perceive themselves as being under watch, and events reinforce this perception. I went to the national archives in Delhi. After seeing my identity card, I was searched everyday, whereas my Hindu friends were not," said Aziz Faisal. "Have you ever seen a news report about an Irish, Sikh or Tamil terrorist mentioning the school he went to? Any report on Muslim terrorist is not complete without the madarsa he went to."

There is, however, consensus that "mere learning of the holy books is not the knowledge Allah wants his followers to earn". "True, Muslims must learn worldly subjects too. Too much emphasis on *deen* at the cost of *duniya* has put us backward," they admit.

President of AMUSU, Abdul Hafeez Gandhi, perhaps, represents the majority view. "AMU is after all, a Muslim university and women are expected to abide by Islamic norms. Many parents send their girls here, confident of its character."

At the end of the debate, students concluded that the movement is forward. After all, "radio and TV were declared *haram* initially".

INDIAN EXPRESS

93 17/2 2005

Perils of polarisation

To say that the cartoons published in Denmark "offended" Muslims around the world understates the effect on sensibilities that have not attained the high detachment of the West in matters of religion. People were not offended: they were insulted, hurt and angry. That the question was turned swiftly in the West to a matter of "freedom of speech" only further alienated those already bitter about Western contempt for and mistreatment of Muslims, and the conflation of Islam and terror.

That it all occurred on the day that Nick Griffin of the British National Party had been acquitted, despite having called Islam "a vicious, wicked faith", compounded the damage. What Jack Straw or other emollient government figures said was less important than the shrill self-righteousness of the media, which contributed so swiftly and thoughtlessly to a spiral of incomprehension and mutual mistrust.

The small demonstration in London on 3rd February, with placards urging the butchering of enemies of Islam, beheading and massacres, also quickly took over from the issue of the wrong Muslims felt had been done to them: combined with the "torching" of Danish embassies and burning of flags (BBC news said the people of Denmark were bewildered that a small country could have created such a furor), this effectively smothered the injury to Muslims.

It became a question of criminalising those who were also expressing their freedom of speech, by making themselves as offensive as possible in the process. The student Omar Khayyam dressed as a suicide bomber became the principal story; and the discussion about whether to prosecute those who had incited and inflamed racial hatred was also a convenient displacement from the central issue.

"Nick Him" yelled the *Sun* above a photograph of Omar Khayyam on Saturday, 4 February. That a handful of extremists should have become the public face of Islam in Britain showed the further degradation, both of reporting on, and of the declining relationship between, majority and minority communities.

The story of Omar Khayyam became even more complex, when it was revealed that he had been out on licence serving the second part of a sentence for dealing in cocaine and heroin. Indeed, this unfortunate individual is an emblem of conflicted young Muslims in the West: the choice between being part of a criminal network or belonging to an extremist religion dramatises the options open to many young Bangladeshi and Pakistanis in contemporary Britain: this unhappy youth seems to

NEW VISTAS

JEREMY SEABROOK



A protester listens to an Imam in Durban who said: "We should boycott all goods and products of Danish companies and internationalise the movement against blasphemy." AFP

have thought he could combine the two ~ seeking, perhaps, redemption in religion, instead of the rehabilitation he might, in a better world, have been provided with. The verdict on Abu Hamza, whose preachings of hatred of the West in the Finsbury Park mosque, for which he received a seven-year jail sentence, could not have come at a more unfortunate moment.

For here we have the making of martyrdom. It is all very well to say that everyone is equal under the law, but it is clear that Nick Griffin and Abu Hamza are not equal, since the one can get away with inciting hatred and the other cannot. The argument ~ sinuous and slippery ~ then became one about how long the police had known about the cleric's activities and why action had not been taken earlier. Behind this lurks the idea that the home-grown bombers were not really home-grown, but had fallen under the sway of charismatic extremists such as Abu Hamza. Someone else, other than an upbringing in this flawless country, must be the cause of anyone so misguided as to sacrifice their lives, if only they can indiscriminately take others with them to some grisly paradise of the imagination.

The focus is always removed again from the story that originally ran about taboos on pictorial representations of the Prophet, let alone caricatures. The media maintain a roving spotlight, not resting long enough on any single

issue for this to be discussed with the kind of reason and coolness which is supposed to distinguish us from less rational societies. You can feel the power of growing global polarisation. We are in the grip of unstoppable forces. It seems the scenario is already written; it remains only for the actors to play out their allotted role. Donald Rumsfeld made this explicit when he said Western democracies are locked in a life or death struggle comparable to that against Communism or fascism. "The enemy has designed and distributed a map where national borders are erased and replaced by a global extremist Islamic empire."

Well, here is another strange turn of events. Who has contributed more to the erasing of national borders than the USA and Western transnational corporations? A supraterritorial power of global finance and a single global economy have been established on earth, a kind of profane Caliphate of universal greed. We are told that we live in an interdependent world, that we are all in this together; but when Muslims behave as though this were true, they are accused of setting up an empire, to rival that envisaged by Mr Rumsfeld and the malignant conspirators of global privilege.

A dream of global Islamic unity is forbidden, while the nightmare of global economic integration is unavoidable. The emergence of a particular militant Islam (and it should be remembered that there is a world of difference between piety, militancy, fundamentalism and terrorism) is a reaction to the disgracing of all secular ideologies, to the junking of all alternatives to the reconstitution of a Western imperial order.

When social hope is cancelled, where will people look for succour if not to other-worldly ideologies, which they will drag down from the sky and impose with all the vehemence of their powerlessness and loss upon this world?

Who are the initiators of these savage developments? Who are the actors in these murderous scenarios? Who declared war on all cultures and ideologies save that which underpins the grotesque excesses of globalisation?

You cannot reverse the consciousness that has been kindled in the world. You may work to change it; but the status quo ante is never going to be restored. Nor is the adversary going to be eliminated, no matter how far a war foretold may stretch into the distant future. The declaration by the US defence establishment, with its \$550-billion budget, that we are in a different kind of war, is only partly true. These are wars of religion, as opposed to wars engendered by the secular ideologies of Communism and fascism. Only the hatreds remain constant.

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ক্ষমার দাবি বনাম বিক্ষোভের নিন্দা, দ্বন্দ্ব চলছে

কুম্বালা লামপুর, ১০ ফেব্রুয়ারি: ব্যঙ্গচিত্র-বিতর্কের জেরে পশ্চিমী দুনিয়ার সঙ্গে আরব দেশগুলির দ্বন্দ্ব আরও প্রকট আকার নিচ্ছে।

ওই ধরনের ব্যঙ্গচিত্র প্রচার বা রাখার উপরে সম্পূর্ণ নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করেছে মালয়েশিয়া। 'অর্গনাইজেশন অফ দ্য ইসলামিক কনফারেন্স'-এর চেয়ারম্যান মালয়েশিয়া ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপার জন্য একটি সংবাদপত্রকে নিষিদ্ধও করে দিয়েছে। বাংলাদেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রী বেগম খালেদা জিয়া ব্যঙ্গচিত্রের জন্য উপযুক্ত স্তরে ক্ষমা চাওয়ার দাবি তুলেছেন। বাংলাদেশ, আফগানিস্তান, পাকিস্তান, তুরস্ক, শ্রীলঙ্কা, জর্ডন, ফিলিপিন্স, মালয়েশিয়া-সহ বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন প্রান্তে আজও বিক্ষোভ অব্যাহত ছিল।

বিক্ষোভ হয়েছে ভারতের ভোপাল, শ্রীনগর, ছবলি-সহ বিভিন্ন শহরেও।

বাংলাদেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রী খালেদা জিয়া বলেছেন, "ব্যঙ্গচিত্রগুলি সারা পৃথিবীতেই মুসলিমদের ভাবাবেগে আঘাত করেছে। এর জন্য অবিলম্বে উপযুক্ত মহল থেকে দুঃখপ্রকাশ এবং ক্ষমাপ্রার্থনা করা হবে বলে আমরা আশা করছি।" ঢাকায় আজই

ডেনমার্কের দূতাবাসের সামনে হাজার দশেক লোককে ঠেকাতে হিমশিম খেয়েছে পুলিশ। ব্যঙ্গচিত্র প্রকাশ করায় ডেনমার্ক সরকারি ভাবে ইতিমধ্যেই দুঃখপ্রকাশ করেছে কিন্তু ক্ষমা চাইতে রাজি হয়নি।

মুসলিম দুনিয়ার বিভিন্ন দেশে

বিভিন্ন মহল থেকে যখন ক্ষমাপ্রার্থনার দাবি উঠেছে, অস্ট্রেলিয়ার প্রধানমন্ত্রী জন হাওয়ার্ড তখন বলেছেন, ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপিয়ে 'অপরাধ' যত না হয়েছে, বিক্ষোভ তার চেয়ে অহেতুক বহু গুণ বেশি হয়েছে। অস্ট্রেলিয়ার কাগজে ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপানোর উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা

ব্যঙ্গচিত্র-বিতর্ক

চাপানোর কথাও উড়িয়ে দিয়েছেন হাওয়ার্ড। অপর দিকে, জাকার্তায় ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপায় একটি সাপ্তাহিক পত্রিকার সম্পাদকের বিরুদ্ধে ধর্মদ্রোহিতার মামলা করেছে ইন্দোনেশিয়ার পুলিশ।

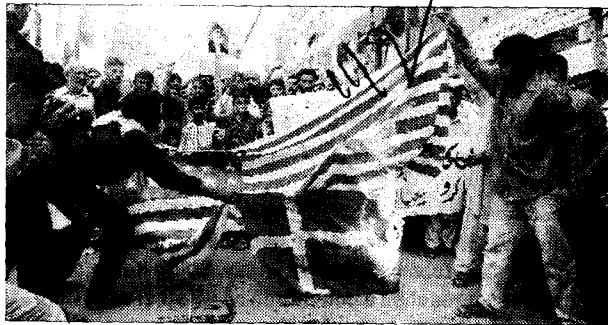
দুনিয়া জুড়ে বিক্ষোভ আর নতুন করে রক্তাক্ত চেহারা নেয়নি বটে, কিন্তু রক্তপাতের ছমকি দিয়েছে ইসলামিক

জিহাদ। ইজরায়েলে আত্মঘাতী বোমা-হামলায় সিদ্ধহস্ত এই সংগঠনটি বলেছে, "এখনও অবধি আমরা দাবি করেছি, বিভিন্ন সরকার যাতে ক্ষমা চায়। কিন্তু তারা যদি ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপা চালিয়ে যায়, তা হলে তাদের পায়ের তলার মাটিটাই জ্বালিয়ে দেব।"

ডেনমার্কের যে সংবাদপত্রের সম্পাদক ব্যঙ্গচিত্রগুলি ছাপানোর জন্য চেয়ে পাঠিয়েছিলেন, তাঁকে এ বার ছুটিতে পাঠানো হয়েছে। তিনি ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছিলেন, এ বার ইচ্ছা নিধনের উপরে ইরানি ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপাবেন। এর মধ্যে ডেনমার্কের একটি টিভি চ্যানেলে একটি সমীক্ষা প্রচারিত হয়েছে। সেখানে ৫৮% মানুষ জানিয়েছেন, ইমামদের উস্কানিতেই এত গণ্ডগোল বেধেছে বলে তাঁরা মনে করেন।

AMIRUL HAQUE PATRIKA

Norwegian editor apologises for prophet cartoons



Pakistani Shi'ite Muslims burn Danish and US flags during a protest rally in Karachi on Friday. Reuters

AGENCIES

OSLO, FEBRUARY 10

THE editor of a small Christian newspaper in Norway apologised on Friday for offending Muslims by reprinting caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in January.

At a news conference, *Magasinet* editor Vebjoern Selbekk said he regretted publishing the cartoons on January 10 because he had not foreseen the pain and anger they would cause among Muslims.

"I reach out personally to the Muslim community to say that I am sorry that their religious feelings were violated by what we did," Selvik said. "It is also only right for me to admit that I, as the editor, did not understand how offensive it was to publish the copies."

The Christian newspaper was among the first newspapers to reprint the drawings that were first published in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in September, saying it was defending free speech.

Selvik made his apology at a news conference, where he appeared with the leader of the Islamic Council in Nor-

way, Mohammed Hamdan, and Norwegian Labour Minister Bjarne Haakon Hanssen.

Hamdan stressed that Islam values forgiveness and that Selvik, who has received scores of death threats, was now under his protection. "Selvik has children the same age as my own. I want my children and his children to grow up together, and live in peace and friendship," Hamdan said.

Meanwhile, the *Jyllands-Posten* editor who commissioned cartoons has been sent on holiday after suggesting he would print Iranian cartoons of the Holocaust.

"The editors have told Flemming Rose to take a vacation because no one can understand the kind of pressure he has been under," *Jyllands-Posten* editor Carsten Juste told *Berlingske Tidende* newspaper. Juste was not available for comment.

Flemming Rose, *Jyllands-Posten*'s Culture Editor, told CNN on Wednesday he would consider publishing proposed Iranian cartoons of the Holocaust. The newspaper later made a public apology and played down his comments.

FEB 10 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

Cartoon fury refuses to end

Nairobi, Feb. 10 (Reuters): Kenyan police opened fire at hundreds demonstrating against cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad today, wounding at least one person, as protests across the Muslim world showed no sign of abating.

Police in Bangladesh beat back about 10,000 angry protesters marching on the Danish embassy in Dhaka and demonstrators also took to the streets in Afghanistan, Jordan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad, which has carried out several suicide bombings in Israel, threatened more violence and a leading Saudi Muslim cleric called for no mercy in punishing anyone mocking the Prophet.

"So far we have demanded an apology from the government. But if they continue their assault on our dear Prophet Mohammad, we will burn the ground underneath their feet," Islamic Jihad leader Khader Habib said.

Kenyan riot police fired live rounds and tear gas to prevent hundreds of stone-throw-

ing protesters from reaching the Danish embassy. One man was shot in the thigh, a witness said.

Tens of thousands of Muslims have demonstrated in West Asia, Asia and Africa over the cartoons first published in Denmark, then other countries in Europe and elsewhere. At least 11 people have been killed in the protests.

One cartoon showed the Prophet Mohammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban. Muslims consider any portrayal of the prophet blasphemous, let alone one showing him as a terrorist.

"We demand stiff penalties without leniency against those who deride the Prophet Mohammad," Abdel-Rahman al-Sudeis, a prominent Saudi Arabian cleric in Islam's holiest city of Mecca, said. "With one voice, millions of Muslims around the world are defending the Prophet of God."

With tensions running high and copies of the cartoons cropping up in newspapers around the world, authorities moved to clamp down on the media and try to calm believers.

Malaysia slapped a blanket ban on circulating or possessing cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad. In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, police were questioning an editor after his tabloid, *Peta*, published a caricature of the prophet.

In a separate development, the Danish newspaper editor who commissioned the cartoons was sent on holiday after suggesting he would print Iranian cartoons on the Holocaust.

In Tehran, where protesters this week pelted the Danish embassy with petrol bombs, a senior cleric said Iran's arch enemy the US was behind the trouble.

"The anger shown by Muslims is a holy anger," Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami said. "But I am calling on religious men not to attack foreign embassies ... They want their embassies set on fire so they can say they are innocent."

The Danish government has expressed regret over the publication of the cartoons, but has refused to apologise saying that is a matter for the newspaper.

**BILLION AND FOUR
HUNDRED MILLIONS...
AT YOUR SERVICE,
OH PROPHET MOHAMMAD**



Shias during a protest in Beirut. (AFP)

ব্যঙ্গচিত্রেও বিরোধ আমেরিকা-ইরানে

ওয়াশিংটন ও কন্দহর, ৯ ফেব্রুয়ারি: পরমাণু বিতর্কের পরে এবার ব্যঙ্গচিত্র নিয়েও সরাসরি বাগবন্দে জড়িয়ে পড়ল আমেরিকা ও ইরান।

ব্যঙ্গচিত্রের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদ আন্দোলনে ইরান বড় ভূমিকা নেওয়ার পর পশ্চিমী দেশগুলো সে দেশের সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে বিক্ষোভে উস্কানি দেওয়ার অভিযোগ তুলেছিলই। কাল মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস অভিযোগ করেন, “ইরান এবং সিরিয়াই মুসলিমদের খোঁচাচ্ছে।”

ইরানের পাশাপাশি সিরিয়ার বিরুদ্ধেও সম্রাসে মদত দেওয়ার অভিযোগ ইদনীন তুলেছে আমেরিকা। পাল্টা জবাব দিয়েছে ইরানও। সে দেশের এক ভাইস প্রেসিডেন্ট বলেন, “এই অভিযোগের কোনও ভিত্তি আছে না কি? রাইসের মন্তব্য তো শতকরা ১০০ ভাগই মিথ্যা।”

সপ্তাহ ধানেক পর ব্যঙ্গচিত্র নিয়ে বিক্ষোভে অবশ্য আজ উত্তাপ অনেকটাই কমেছে। হিংসাত্মক ঘটনা ঘটেনি। সব থেকে বড় বিক্ষোভ মিছিল হয়েছে বেইরুটে। সেখানে আশুরা উপলক্ষে প্রায় পাঁচ লাখ লোকের মিছিল ব্যঙ্গচিত্র বিরোধী বিক্ষোভের চেহারা নেয়। মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বিরুদ্ধে স্লোগান ওঠে। তবে তা শান্তিপূর্ণই ছিল।

তিন দিন ধরে রক্তক্ষয়ী বিক্ষোভের পরে আফগানিস্তানের পরিস্থিতি আজ অনেকটাই শান্ত ছিল। তবে এই বিষয়ে হুমকি দিয়ে উত্তাপ বাড়ানোর চেষ্টা করেছে তালিবান গোষ্ঠী। তাদের এক কমান্ডার দাবি করেছে, ইসলাম অবমাননার প্রতিশোধ নিতে ১০০ জঙ্গি মানব বোমা হওয়ার জন্য নাম লিখিয়েছে। মুল্লা দাদুল্লা নামে এক সিনিয়র কমান্ডার ঘোষণা করেছেন, যে শিল্পী ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র একেছেন, তাকে

মারতে পারলেই পুরস্কার এক কিলোগ্রাম সোনা। আর ডেনমার্ক, জার্মানি অথবা নরওয়ের সেনাকে মারলে পাঁচ কিলোগ্রাম সোনা। বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশের মুসলিম মহল থেকে সংযত হওয়ার আহ্বান জানানো হয়েছে আজও। সিঙ্গাপুরের পাঁচটি মুসলিম প্রতিষ্ঠান হিংসাত্মক ঘটনার নিন্দা করেছে। তেমনই ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়নের তরফে সংবাদমাধ্যমকে সংযত হওয়ার অনুরোধ জানানো হয়েছে। মালয়েশিয়ার যে কাগজে ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপা হয়, জনতার প্রবল চাপের মুখে সেটি সাময়িক ভাবে বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হয়েছে।

আজ পোপ ষোড়শ বেনেডিক্ট দেখা করেন আমেরিকার ফার্স্ট লেডি লরা বুশের সঙ্গে। লরা জানান, বেইরুট এবং দামাস্কাসে বিক্ষোভের ঘটনা নিয়ে উদ্বেগ প্রকাশ করেছেন পোপ।

Taliban puts price on cartoonist's head

9/11-14

Kandahar/Geneva/Washington/Jakarta: About 100 militants have enlisted to become suicide bombers in Afghanistan since the appearance of "blasphemous" cartoons of Prophet Mohammed, a top Taliban commander said on Thursday. Mullah Dadullah, one of the Taliban's most senior military commanders, said his group had also offered a reward of 100kg of gold to anyone who killed people responsible for the drawings.

"More than 100 mujahideen have enlisted to carry out suicide attacks," the fugitive Dadullah told AFP by telephone from an unknown location.

The targets would be "infidels", said the commander, who is believed to be close to the Taliban's wanted leader Mullah Omar. He added: "The Taliban will give 100 kilograms of gold to one who kills the cartoonist." Gold of 5kg would go to anyone who killed a soldier from Denmark, Germany or Norway—among the countries where the cartoons have appeared.

Meanwhile, three United Nations human rights experts on Wednesday condemned the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed, provoking a storm in the Muslim world. However, the UN experts said the resulting violence was the wrong way to protest the cartoons.

Appeals for calm went largely unheeded as police shot dead four more protesters during rioting in



A protestor in Jakarta

Afghanistan, bringing the worldwide death toll to 13.

President George W Bush condemned the anti-cartoon violence but admonished the media to be more "thoughtful" of others. However, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice charged Iran and Syria, two frequent targets of the Bush administration, with using the row to stoke sectarian feelings.

An Iranian Vice President on Thursday denied claims by the US government that Teheran was inflaming Muslim anger over the cartoons. "That is 100% a lie," said Isfandiari Rahim Mashae, who was visiting Indonesia. Russia's President Vladimir Putin, in an interview with Spanish papers, slammed the cartoons as a provocation, equating them with child pornography. He called on Denmark, where they were first published, to "ask for forgiveness". Agencies

UK mag shows cartoon:

British magazine *Liberal* published one the controversial cartoons on its web site on Wednesday despite warnings from police about the likely reaction. Scotland Yard chiefs called an emergency meeting to discuss the development.

Editors quit for freedom:

The editors of a New York alternative newspaper, *New York Press*, resigned on Wednesday over the publishers' refusal to carry the cartoons. Harry Siegel, editor in chief of the *Press*—the city's second-largest free weekly—said the paper had betrayed its principles by not reprinting the cartoons.

UAE varsity fires prof:

An American professor who taught at a university in the UAE was fired for distributing copies of the cartoons to her students, a colleague said on Wednesday. "She had distributed copies of the cartoons to her students so they could debate it, but that led to a complaint and she was fired," a colleague of Claudia Kiburz said.

Peacekeepers attacked:

Peacekeepers sent to Hebron in 1994 packed up and left after Palestinians, angry over the offensive cartoons, attacked their headquarters. About 60 observers, many of them Scandinavian, fled Hebron on Wednesday after about 300 Palestinian protesters overpowered their police and stormed the three-story building. Agencies

CONFLICT ■ Has started a complex debate over what a liberal democracy should be

Cartoons pit West against Islam

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID, FEBRUARY 9

THE images have been shocking: a mob pouring over the ruins of a fire-gutted Danish embassy. A British Muslim protester's banner urging "Behead those that insult Islam."

The firestorm that has swept the globe since European newspapers published satiric cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad is an alarming demonstration of the growing friction between Islam and the West. There is also complex debate over what a liberal democracy should be.

With the threat of Islamic terrorism in Europe and the West are grappling with questions like how to set the limits of freedom, and what cultural values immigrants must adopt as the price of admission.

"It is very difficult for a liberal democracy to deal with those that want to completely undermine the fabric on which liberal democracy is built," said Richard Whitman, a senior European analyst at Chatham House, a London think-tank.

The battlelines between Islam and Europe have been hardening for years, spurred



Muslim students carry anti-Denmark signs during a protest against Muhammed cartoons in Jakarta. AP

on by global conflicts and local discontent. From the grim housing projects of Paris, to the large ethnic-Pakistani community of Leeds, in England, high unemployment, discrimination and a lack of acceptance have fostered a sense of persecution and exclusion from society.

Some see darker forces behind the recent popular protests. The US military in Afghanistan said it is examining whether extremist groups may be inciting the cartoon protests.

Many in the Islam world see

a double standard when it comes to free speech—outlawing Holocaust deniers and cracking down on other acts of anti-Semitism.

While Iranian Vice President on Thursday denied claims by the US government that Tehran was inflaming Muslim anger over cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that have been published in newspapers around the world.

"That is 100 per cent a lie," said Isfendiyar Rahim Mashae, one of several Iranian Vice Presidents. "It is without attribution."

New York newspaper editorial team resigns

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 9

THE editorial team at the *New York Press* resigned after the weekly newspaper decided not to run the cartoons.

Editor in Chief Harry Siegel, Managing Editor Tim Marchman, Arts Editor Jonathan Leaf and City Hall Bureau Staffer Azi Paybarah resigned on Tuesday. The four were among the small number of employees who put out the paper with freelance contributors.

Paybarah said that the package of stories about the cartoons was put together on Monday and was read by management. On Tuesday, toward the end of the day, the editorial team was told that the cartoons would not run.

Since the package would have included criticism of other newspapers for not running the cartoons, for the press to do the same would have made the writers appear to be hypocrites, Paybarah said.

"Whenever there's inter-

ference with the ability to tell a story of this magnitude, it puts into jeopardy all future stories," said Paybarah.

Meanwhile, several leading Russian editors judged that publishing cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed was a mistake they did not plan to copy. "Mockery or humiliation of religious principles or symbols are simply out of the question," the *Moskovsky Komsomols* daily's Chief Editor Pavel Gusev said on Wednesday, adding that criticising officials and believers of various religions was a different matter if done respectfully.

The cartoons "would definitely not appear in our newspaper under any circumstances as I have no right to insult anyone in such a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country as Russia," *Noviy* *Izvestia* daily's editor Valery Yakov said.

The chief of Russia's Journalists Union Vsevolod Bogdanov said, "Publishing the cartoons was a mistake, as this served as a tool for fomenting conflict."

Mecca link to protests

HASSAN M. FATAH

Beirut, Feb. 8: As leaders of the world's 57 Muslim nations gathered for a summit meeting in Mecca in December, issues like religious extremism dominated the official agenda.

But much of the talk in the hallways was of a wholly different issue: Danish cartoons satirising the Prophet Muhammad.

The closing communique took note of the issue when it expressed "concern at rising hatred against Islam and Muslims and condemned the recent incident of desecration of the image of the Holy Prophet Mohammad in the media of certain countries" as well as over "using the freedom of expression as a pretext to defame religions".

The meeting in Mecca drew minimal international press coverage even though such leaders as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran were in attendance. But

on the road from quiet outrage in a small Muslim community in northern Europe to a set of international brush fires, the summit meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference — and the role its member governments played in the outrage — was something of a turning point.

After that meeting, anger at the Danish caricatures, especially at an official government level, became more public. In some countries, like Syria and Iran, that meant heavy press coverage in official news media and virtual government approval of demonstrations that ended with Danish embassies in flames.

In recent days, some governments in Muslim countries have tried to calm the rage, worried by the increasing level of violence and deaths in some cases.

But the pressure began building as early as October, when Danish Islamists were

lobbying Arab ambassadors and Arab ambassadors lobbied Arab governments.

"It was no big deal until the Islamic conference when the OIC took a stance against it," said Muhammad el-Sayed Said, deputy director of the Ahrum Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo.

Sari Hanafi, an associate professor at the American University in Beirut, said that for Arab governments resentful of the western push for democracy, the protests presented an opportunity to undercut the appeal of the West to Arab citizens.

The freedom pushed by the West, they seemed to say, brought with it disrespect for Islam.

He said the demonstrations "started as a visceral reaction — of course they were offended — and then you had regimes taking advantage saying: 'Look, this is the democracy they're talking about.'"

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2006

Needless and nasty controversy

A year ago, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said: "When the world is compelled to coin a new term to take account of increasingly widespread bigotry — that is a sad and troubling development. Such is the case with 'Islamophobia'." This phobia seems to be on the rise, as the publication of vicious cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammed by a Danish newspaper, and their re-publication by several newspapers across Europe, have demonstrated. At a time when Muslims across the world feel deeply offended by prejudiced stereotypes of Islam post-9/11, the cartoons have not just been insensitive, they have been downright provocative. In the first instance, they offend the strong belief among Muslims that the Prophet must not be depicted in any way. The Koran prohibits idolatry or giving shape or form to Allah, who must not be objectified. But the specific prohibition on graphic or other depictions of the Prophet derives from his *hadiths* to the effect that neither his grave nor anything connected with him should, after his death, become an object of worship. Aside from this, the cartoons promote hate by suggesting that Islam preaches violence and terrorism. While *Jyllands-Posten*, the newspaper that originally published the cartoons, responded with a quick apology, other European newspapers, notably in France, decided to republish the cartoons on the ground that they were defending freedom of expression. Freedom of expression is supremely important. But surely it does not require its champions crassly to cause offence to the faith and beliefs of an identifiable group. At the end of the day, the European newspapers have to reflect on the consequences of their actions: eight killed, many more injured, and the anger of hundreds of millions of Muslims worldwide re-fuelled.

On the other side, the violent reactions in the Muslim world, against all manner of targets, including the Dutch embassy in Lebanon, have been uncalled for. From Europe to West Asia to South Asia and South-East Asia, the steady ramping up of the protests smacks of orchestration by elements in countries with Muslim populations that are out to squeeze political mileage out of the situation. Extremism feeds extremism, and the anti-cartoon protesters have played right back into the hands of the Islamophobes. The image of a Muslim in London made up as a suicide bomber, and the open threats of another 7/7 by marching demonstrators, have evoked anger across Britain, which is struggling to contain Islamophobia in the aftermath of the underground bombings. Commendably, British newspapers displayed a rare unanimity in deciding not to reproduce the cartoons. The protesters in London should have paused to think about that, just as they should have in New Delhi. It is still not too late for both sides — the European media and the militant protesters — to step back and prevent the controversy from growing into a full-size, hugely divisive, and ugly confrontation.

THE HINDU

ব্যঙ্গচিত্র-বিক্ষোভে উস্কানিদাতার খোঁজ শুরু, উঠছে মিশরের নাম

সীমা সিরোহি • রোম

ও সংবাদসংস্থা • কাবুল

৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি: মতপ্রকাশের স্বাধীনতার নামে লড়াই চলছেই। এত বিক্ষোভ, রক্তপাতের পরেও বিতর্কিত ব্যঙ্গচিত্র যেমন প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে, তেমন ইহুদিদের ব্যঙ্গ করে পাল্টা ব্যঙ্গচিত্রও অব্যাহত। ওয়েবসাইটে হিটলারের শ্যাসঙ্গী হিসেবে অ্যান ফ্র্যাঙ্কে দেখিয়েছে একটি অভিবাসী মুসলিম প্রতিষ্ঠান। ফলে উত্তাপ কমছে না। আজও আফগানিস্তানে বিক্ষোভকারী ও পুলিশের সংঘর্ষে প্রাণ হারিয়েছেন চার জন।

আর সপ্তাহখানেক ধরে এই বিরামহীন বিক্ষোভ-বিতর্ক চলার পরে আন্তর্জাতিক মহল মুখ ফিরিয়েছে নতুন একটি প্রশ্নে। ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপা হয়েছিল গত সেপ্টেম্বরে। অথচ তা নিয়ে বিক্ষোভ শুরু ফেব্রুয়ারিতে। কেন?

মার্কিন দৈনিক ওয়াল স্ট্রিট জার্নাল-এর নিজস্ব তদন্ত অভিযোগের তির ঘুরিয়ে দিয়েছে আরব দুনিয়ার কিছু রাষ্ট্রদূত এবং ধর্মীয় নেতাদের দিকে। পত্রিকাটির দাবি, রাজনৈতিক এবং ধর্মীয় স্বার্থ চরিতার্থ করার জন্যই মুসলিম দেশগুলোতে উত্তেজনা ছড়ানোর ব্যবস্থা করেছিলেন এঁরা। বিশেষত ডেনমার্ক মিশরের দূত মোনা ওমর অস্তিয়াই এতে বড় ভূমিকা নিয়েছেন বলে অভিযোগ। প্রতিবেদনটি অনেকটাই নির্ভর করেছে আহমেদ আবু লাবান নামে এক প্যালেস্তাইনি চরমপন্থীর দাবির উপরে। লাবানের দাবি, ডেনমার্কের সংবাদপত্রে বিতর্কিত ব্যঙ্গচিত্রগুলো প্রকাশের পরে তিনি আরব দুনিয়ার বিভিন্ন রাষ্ট্রদূতের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করেন। পশ্চিমী দুনিয়ার বিরুদ্ধে নথি তৈরি করে তা প্রচারের ব্যবস্থা করেন। এ ক্ষেত্রে বিভিন্ন দেশের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করায় প্রধান ভূমিকা নিয়েছিলেন মিশরের দূত।

কিন্তু কারণটা কী? লাবানের দাবি, “পশ্চিমী দেশগুলিকে পাল্টা চাপ দেওয়া এবং দেশে নিজেদের ধর্মনিষ্ঠ মুসলিম হিসেবে তুলে ধরার সুযোগ কোনও সরকারই ছাড়তে চায়নি।”

লাবান নিজে ডিসেম্বরে প্রেসিডেন্ট নির্বাচনের আগে কায়রোতে যান। পশ্চিমী ঘেঁষা বলে প্রেসিডেন্ট হোসনি মুবারক দেশে খুবই সমালোচিত। লাবানের অভিযোগ, পশ্চিমের বিরুদ্ধে ইসলামি ভাবাবেগ উস্কে দেওয়ার জন্য ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ব্যবহার করেছিল মুবারক পক্ষ। যদিও হালফিলের বিক্ষোভের বাইরেই রয়েছে মিশর এবং সৌদি আরব। বিশেষজ্ঞদের মতে, মিশর বা সৌদি আরব পশ্চিমী দুনিয়াকে খুব চটাতে চায় না। নিজেদের প্রয়োজন মিটে গেলে বিক্ষোভ নিয়ন্ত্রণে রাখার ক্ষমতাও তাদের আছে। কিন্তু অন্যান্য মুসলিম দেশে বিক্ষোভ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা যাচ্ছে না।

যেমন আফগানিস্তানে। তালিবান গোষ্ঠী ফের মাথা তুলছে সেখানে। আমেরিকা-সহ পশ্চিমী দেশগুলির বিরুদ্ধে ক্ষোভও তলে তলে কম নয়। বিশেষত একটি ফরাসি সাপ্তাহিক আজ আবার ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপায় ক্ষোভে ঘৃণা ছড়িয়েছে। জাবুল প্রদেশে বিক্ষুব্ধরা প্রথমে পুলিশের গাড়ি জ্বালায়, পরে মার্কিন

সেনা ঘাঁটিতে হামলা চালাতে যায়। তখন গুলি চালায় পুলিশ। চার জনের মৃত্যু হয়। এই নিয়ে

আফগানিস্তানে হত ৪

সেখানে ১১ জন প্রাণ হারালেন। প্যালেস্তাইনে আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যবেক্ষকদের সদর দফতরে পাথর ছোড়ে জনতা। বাংলাদেশেও বিক্ষোভকারীরা ডেনমার্কের পতাকা পোড়ায়।

এই পরিস্থিতিতে একযোগে শান্তি রক্ষার আবেদন জানিয়েছে ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন, রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ এবং মুসলিম দেশগুলির সবচেয়ে বড় সংগঠন অর্গানাইজেশন অফ দি ইসলামিক কনফারেন্স (ওআইসি)। অবস্থা সামলাতে বিবৃতি দিচ্ছেন পশ্চিমের রাষ্ট্রনেতারা। প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশ যেমন দুতাবাসে হামলার নিন্দা করেছেন, তেমনই বলেছেন মতপ্রকাশের স্বাধীনতা পালনে দায়িত্বের পরিচয় দেওয়া উচিত। ধর্মীয় ভাবাবেগকে আঘাত করার প্রবণতার সমালোচনা করেছেন ফ্রান্সের প্রেসিডেন্ট জাক শিরাক। অবশ্য ডেনমার্কের প্রধানমন্ত্রী জানিয়েছেন, দেশের সংবাদমাধ্যমের হয়ে ক্ষমা তিনি চাইবেন না। তবে আলোচনা হতেই পারে।

প্রতিবাদের ভঙ্গি

ইসলামের পয়গম্বরকে লইয়া ডেনমার্কের একটি পত্রিকায় অঙ্কিত ব্যঙ্গচিত্রের প্রতিবাদে বিশ্বব্যাপী মুসলিম সমাজে ক্ষোভ ছড়াইয়া পড়িয়াছে। কোনও ধর্মের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা তথা প্রাণপুরুষকে ব্যঙ্গবিক্রপ করিলে সেই ধর্মান্বলম্বী মানুষরা আহত হইবেন, ইহা অস্বাভাবিক নয়। মতপ্রকাশের স্বাধীনতা ব্যক্তির মৌলিক অধিকারের ওতপ্রোত অঙ্গ হইতে পারে, কিন্তু সেই স্বাধীনতার প্রয়োগ অন্যদের ধর্মীয় আবেগ ও স্পর্শকাতরতাকে যাহাতে আহত না করে, তাহা সুনিশ্চিত করাও বাঞ্ছনীয়। সেই নিরিখে, ডেনমার্কের পত্রিকাটি ইসলাম ধর্মান্বলম্বীদের তুঙ্গ স্পর্শকাতরতাকে উপেক্ষা করিয়াছে। এ ব্যাপারে আর একটু দায়িত্ববোধের পরিচয় দেওয়া হইল না কেন, সেই প্রশ্ন উঠিতেই পারে। অন্যান্য ধর্মের ক্ষেত্রেও বিভিন্ন সময়ে বিভিন্ন উপলক্ষে ধর্মপ্রাণদের এই স্পর্শকাতরতা দেখা গিয়াছে। বিভিন্ন ধর্মের অনুরাগীরা তাঁহাদের আরাধ্য বা উপাস্যদের বিষয়ে ব্যঙ্গবিক্রপ সহ্য করিতে পারেন নাই। প্রতিবাদ করিয়াছেন, ক্ষোভ প্রদর্শন করিয়াছেন। ব্যক্তির স্বাধীনতার কোনও সীমানা ধার্য না করিয়াও গণতান্ত্রিক সমাজে সেই স্বাধীনতা প্রয়োগে সতর্ক হওয়া কত জরুরি, এ ধরনের ঘটনা তাহাই দেখাইয়া দেয়।

এ কথার অর্থ এই নয় যে, এ ক্ষেত্রে যে প্রতিক্রিয়া ব্যক্ত হইয়াছে, তাহা সঙ্গত। বিভিন্ন মুসলিমপ্রধান রাষ্ট্রে ডেনমার্কের দূতাবাস আক্রান্ত হইয়াছে। সেখানে ব্যাপক ভাঙচুর, অগ্নিসংযোগ, লুণ্ঠপাট চলিয়াছে। ইউরোপীয় যে কোনও দেশের দূতাবাস কিংবা ইউরোপীয় বা মার্কিন দফতর, পণ্যবিপণি, বিমান সংস্থার অফিস ও কর্মীরা আক্রান্ত, লাঞ্ছিত। আফগানিস্তানে উপর্যুপরি দুই দিন 'নেটো'র দফতর আক্রান্ত হয়, গুলিগোলা চলে এবং আট জন আফগান নিহতও হন। গোটা পশ্চিম এশিয়া, উত্তর আফ্রিকা এবং দক্ষিণ ও দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়া— অর্থাৎ মুসলিম-অধ্যুষিত সব দেশ— এবং ইউরোপের মুসলিম-অভিবাসী অঞ্চলেই প্রতিবাদ তথা বিক্ষোভের চেহারা এক ও অভিন্ন। এই প্রতিক্রিয়া কি পয়গম্বরের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা প্রদর্শনের প্রকৃষ্ট পন্থা? শান্তির ধর্ম ইসলামের ইহাই কি আসল চেহারা? ইসলাম-বিরোধীরা তো ঠিক ইহাই প্রচার করিয়া থাকে। পয়গম্বরের মর্যাদা উদ্ধার করিতে গিয়া প্রতিবাদীরা কি সেই প্রচারকেই বিশ্বাসযোগ্য করিয়া তুলিতেছেন না?

এ ব্যাপারে নিরক্ষর, দরিদ্র, সাধারণ মুসলিমদের উস্কাইয়া তুলিতে নেতিবাচক ভূমিকা লইয়াছেন গোঁড়া মোল্লা-মৌলবি। তাঁহারা অন্য সব কিছুর মতো এই ব্যঙ্গচিত্রের মধ্যেও 'জায়েনবাদ'-এর ইহুদি ষড়যন্ত্র আবিষ্কার করিয়াছেন। অন্য অনেকে ইহার মধ্যে ক্রুসেড যুগের খ্রিস্টীয় ইসলাম-বিরোধিতার অবশেষ খুঁজিয়া ফিরিতেছেন। যোলা জলে মাছ ধরার এমন সুযোগ তো সহসা আসে না। মৌলবাদীরা তাই পারিলে ইহাকে নব পর্যায়ের একটি জেহাদের উপলক্ষ করিয়া তোলেন। সৌদি আরব, ইরান ও সুদানের মতো ইসলামি রাষ্ট্রও মেঠো প্রতিবাদের দায়িত্বজ্ঞানহীনতায় গা ভাসাইয়াছে। ইরান তো ডেনমার্কের সঙ্গে পত্রপাঠ যাবতীয় কূটনৈতিক সম্পর্কই ছিন্ন করিয়াছে। ব্যঙ্গচিত্রকর ও পত্রিকা-সম্পাদকের বিরুদ্ধে মৃত্যুদণ্ডের ফতোয়া জারি হইয়াছে। ইসলামের দুই পীঠস্থানের রক্ষক এবং ওয়াহাবি ইসলামের প্রবক্তা হিসাবে সৌদি আরবের পাশ্চাত্যবিরোধী অবস্থান গ্রহণের বাধ্যবাধকতা থাকিতে পারে। কিন্তু পরমাণু গবেষণা বিতর্কে কোণঠাসা ইরান কেন আগ বাড়াইয়া মুসলিম জনরোষ প্ররোচিত করিতেছে? এ ভাবেই কি ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়নের বিরুদ্ধে মোল্লাতন্ত্র তাহার আক্রোশ মিটাইতে চায়? আশার কথা, বহু স্থানে ইমামরা বিক্ষুব্ধদের শান্ত থাকিতে, জেহাদি জঙ্গিদের প্ররোচনায় সাড়া না দিতে আবেদন জানাইয়াছেন। সংস্কারপন্থী, উদারনীতিক মুসলিমরা সমূহ সঙ্কটে। ইসলামের অঙ্গনে বহু স্বরের জন্য তাঁহাদের সংগ্রাম এ ঘটনায় ধাক্কা খাইতে পারে।

Cartoons: Khamenei sees Israel's hand

19-15 8/2 ✓

Two more killed in Afghan protests

Atul Aneja

DUBAI: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has accused western newspapers of collaborating with Israel by publishing cartoons of Prophet Muhammed, which have triggered an outcry across the Islamic world.

Addressing air force personnel, Ayatollah Khamenei said the caricatures amounted to a "conspiracy by Zionists who were angry because of the victory of Hamas," the Islamic group, which won by a wide margin in the recent Palestinian elections. The comments have followed violent protests in Iran on Monday when large crowds attacked the Danish and Austrian embassies with petrol bombs, stones and firecrackers. The cartoons were first published in a Danish newspaper in September. Newspapers in other European countries including France carried them in the name of freedom of expression.

Challenging the argument, leading Iranian daily *Hamshahri* has invited foreigners to participate in a cartoon competition on the Holocaust. "Does the West extend freedom of expression to the crimes committed by the United States and Israel, or an event such as the Holocaust? Or is its freedom only for insulting religious sanctities?" asked the daily.

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki had spoken to his Danish counterpart, Per Stig Moeller, and asked Denmark and other European governments to "compensate for their mistake" of publishing the cartoons. The Ministry also summoned the Bulgarian Ambassador to protest the publication of the caricatures by Bulgarian newspapers.

NATO base attacked

Protests appeared to gather momentum in Afghanistan, where hundreds of demonstrators attacked the NATO base of Maymana, where a large Norwegian contingent has been deployed.

The NATO forces resorted to firing, resulting in the death of two protesters and injury to 13. Police used batons to disperse a crowd, which stoned the Danish embassy in Kabul, while clashes were also reported from Heart and Pulikhumri, north of Kabul.

Seeking to put a lid on the protests, the Turkish and Spanish Prime Ministers have written a joint article in the *International Herald Tribune*, where they have appealed for calm.

In Dubai, visiting U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called upon Muslims to accept the apologies offered by the Danish newspaper and to act with "calm and dignity."

08 SEP 2006

THE HINDU

Moderate Islam has lost its voice

Moderate Muslims, from Denmark to the Middle East, are caught in the vice of a manufactured conflict.

Tabish Khair

WHEN I first saw them, I was struck by their crudeness. Surely the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, could have hired better artists. And surely cartoonists and editors ought to be able to spot the difference between Indian turbans and Arab ones. In some ways, that was the essence of the problem to begin with. It is this patronising tendency – stronger in Denmark than in countries such as Britain or Canada – that decided the course of the controversy and coloured the Danish reaction.

One could see that the matter would take a turn for the worse when, late last year, the Danish Prime Minister refused to meet a group of Arab diplomats who wished to register their protest. In most other countries they would have been received, their protest accepted. The Government would have expressed “regret” and told them it could not put pressure on any media outlet as a matter of law and policy. In their turn, having done their Muslim duty, these diplomats might have helped lessen the reaction in their respective countries. By not meeting them, the Prime minister silenced all moderate Muslims just as effectively as they would be later silenced by militant Muslims around the world.

Like many other moderate Muslims, I too have been silent on these cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed and the ensuing protests. Not because I do not have anything to say, but because there is no space left for me either in Denmark or in many Muslim countries.

This does not appear so to many Danes. Here the local controversy seems to be raging between two “Danish Muslim” public figures: Abu Laban, the Copenhagen-based imam who has coordinated much of the protest, and Nasser Khader, a member of the Danish Parliament. Mr. Khader, liberal, clean-shaven, is posited against the bearded Abu Laban and seen as standing on the side of such “Danish” values as freedom of speech and democracy. He is supposed to represent sane and democratic Muslims. On the other hand, there is repeated talk of kicking Abu Laban out of the country.

In actual fact, of course, both Mr. Khader and Abu Laban make it even more difficult for moderate Muslims to be heard. Abu Laban is not afraid of being kicked out of Denmark, because it is not his political territory. Similarly, Mr. Khader does not depend on Danish Muslim votes for his survival in politics; he depends on the votes of mainstream Danes, and his politics are geared towards that end. The Prime Minister’s refusal to meet the diplomats was also partly the result of local political considerations: his government is supported by the xenophobic and anti-Islamic Danish People’s Party.

So much for Denmark, where complacency and smugness have reached extraordinary heights. In Muslim

countries too we meet a similar string of local considerations. Surely the tensions between Hamas and Fatah played a role in the disturbances on the West Bank? Surely, some of the reactions – especially in Syria – were the working out of Islamic and pro-Iraqi frustrations on one of the allies of the U.S. invasion of Iraq?

One could, of course, follow the *Qur’an’s* injunction against portraying Allah or Muhammed without forcing it on people who do not share one’s faith. But then the question arises: why should people who do not share one’s faith bother with images of one’s Prophet? For the sake of freedom of expression, said *Jyllands-Posten*. The only thing expressed by the cartoons, however, was contempt for Muslims.

Modern phenomenon

But why, you might ask, should Islamic fundamentalists be worried about respect from a west that they mostly find unworthy of emulation? The answer to this lies in the histories of Islamic fundamentalism and European imperialism, aspects of which are horribly interlinked.

As a reaction to European imperialism and, later, a political development of the west’s fight against communism and socialism, Islamic fundamentalism is a quintessentially modern phenomenon. Hence, in their own way, Islamic fundamentalists are much more bothered about the opinion of “the west” than a person like me!

The Danish Government should have apologised long before it did – but was right not to act against *Jyllands-Posten*. Freedom of expression is necessary not because it is a God-given virtue, but because if you let the authorities start hacking away at it you are liable to be left with nothing. But along with the right to express comes the duty to consider the rights of others. This applies as much to *Jyllands-Posten* as to the mobs in Beirut.

Between the Danish Government and Islamist politicians, between *Jyllands-Posten* and the mobs in Beirut, between Abu Laban and Mr. Khader, the moderate Muslim has again been effectively silenced. She has been forced to take this side or that; forced to stay home and let others crusade for a cause dear to her – freedom – and a cultural heritage essential to her: Islam. On TV she sees the bearded mobs rampage and the clean-shaven white men preach. In the clash of civilisations that is being rigorously manufactured, she is in between. And she can feel it getting tighter. She can feel the squeeze. But, of course, she cannot shout. She cannot scream. Come to think of it, can she really express herself at all now? – ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006

(Tabish Khair is associate professor of English at Aarhus University, Denmark, and author of *The Bus Stopped* [Picador].)

Cartoon rage consumes 4 more

Agence France Presse

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Afghanistan), Feb. 7. — Violent protests against caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed escalated today, with four demonstrators killed during an attack on Nato troops in Afghanistan, and a renewed assault against the Danish embassy in Teheran.

Nine people have been killed since protests erupted worldwide, seven in Afghanistan, and one each in Somalia and Lebanon.

The Afghan protesters were killed today when some 700 demonstrators attacked Norwegian Nato troops in Maymana, lobbing grenades into their compound.

Denmark, where the offending cartoons were first published, absorbed the brunt of Muslim anger, with attacks on diplomatic outposts, threats of economic boycotts, and the expulsion of Danish aid organizations from Chechnya.



A Palestinian militant of the Islamic Jihad movement spews benzene to set a Danish flag on fire on Tuesday. — AFP

Attempts by Western leaders, religious figures and international bodies to appease Muslims infuriated by what they see as the blasphemous portrayal of their prophet seemed to have fallen on deaf ears, as anti-Western protests became more virulent.

Fresh protests erupted today in Niger, where sev-

eral thousands demonstrated in the capital Niamey, as well as in Iran. Positions in the West hardened, too, with key officials expressing impatience with the continuing violence and demanding that foreign governments protect their embassies and consulates from rampaging mobs.

A few have suggested

that some Muslim states — Iran and Syria in particular — have needlessly inflamed religious passions.

In what has become an act of editorial defiance, another European newspaper, the *Nacional* in Croatia, published the offending cartoons today. A decision by several New Zealand

Ayatollah erupts

TEHRAN, Feb. 7. — The West's publication of Prophet Muhammad's cartoons was an Israeli conspiracy motivated by anger over Hamas' win in the Palestinian elections. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said today Mr Khamenei also praised the government's sharp curbing of the access of UN inspectors to Iran's nuclear facilities in response to the decision to report the country to the UN Security Council. The restricted access "corresponds to the Iranian people's dignity and honour," the Ayatollah said. — AP

media outlets to publish the controversial cartoons put the country's people at risk, Prime Minister Ms Helen Clark said today. Three New Zealand newspapers and two television channels have reproduced the cartoons.

Denmark today warned its nationals in Indonesia to leave the country.

THE STATESMAN

8 02 2006

Cartoon row: European Union plans media debate

Brussels: European Union officials want to launch a debate with media bosses about the outrage sparked off by the newspaper cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, as Europeans struggle to balance cherished rights to free speech with the need to calm rising Islamic fury.

The issue is due to be discussed at a round-table meeting in the coming months as part of a wider EU drive to prevent the radicalisation of Muslim opinion. Officials stress the talks have been planned since September, well before the furor over the cartoons became a factor in the debate on press coverage of racism, xenophobia and terrorism.

The idea for the conference dates back to September, when the EU published an anti-terrorism paper, which recommended an examination of the media's role. The following week, the Jyllands-Posten daily, one of Denmark's largest newspapers, first published the caricatures. No date has yet been set for the round table meeting with EU policy makers, journalists and broadcasters.

EU spokesman Friso Roscam Abbing said on Friday the meeting would "be touching on very, very difficult and complex issues, which are on the one hand freedom of expression and on the other respect for opinions and religion and what the role of the media is."

Some hope a debate between media players could lead to a voluntary code of conduct on how to cover such issues. But EU officials insist they are not suggesting new rules to gag the media. "It is not up to us to recommend anything to the press," European Commission spokesman Johannes Laitenberger said.

On Monday, Laitenberger told reporters that EU governments were consulting on a further response to the violent protests against the cartoons. "No grievance, perceived or real, justifies acts of violence such as those perpetrated over the weekend," he said.

Iran snaps trade ties with Denmark

Oslo/Teheran: Denmark says it holds Iran responsible after its Teheran embassy was attacked by hundreds of people protesting against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. The attacks came as Iran said it was cutting all trade ties with Denmark. Several hundred angry Iranians hurled stones and fire bombs and were forced back by police with tear gas.

Meanwhile, Iran has announced snapping of all trade ties with Denmark, Iranian Commerce Minister Massoud Mirkazemi was quoted as saying by the Iranian student news agency ISNA. "All



trade ties with Denmark were cut," he was quoted as telling a news conference.

He said from Tuesday Iran would stop any Danish goods from entering its customs areas. Iran imports \$280 million worth of goods from Denmark a year. Agencies

The EU's Justice and Security Commissioner Franco Frattini launched the initiative in September to look at ways to counter the growth of extremism among Europe's Muslims.

He said then the EU should look at building on existing rules which prohibit incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality in broadcasts. He expressed concern that negative stereotyping of Muslims in the media could lead to increased feelings of alienation and exacerbate tensions.

Frattini said last week that the release of the cartoons was "imprudent", but his spokesman said the European Commission would not ask media not to publish such drawings.

"The clear answer is 'no,'" his spokesman Roscam Abbing said, cit-

ing the "absolutely fundamental nature of the right of freedom of expression."

The European Convention on Human Rights, which is binding on 46 European nations including all 25 EU members, states that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers."

However, the convention allows nations to impose restrictions "in interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others." AP

PROTESTS ■ Danish embassy in Tehran attacked for second day Iran daily holds Holocaust cartoons competition

REUTERS

TEHRAN, FEBRUARY 7

IRAN'S best-selling newspaper has launched a competition to find the best cartoon about the Holocaust in retaliation for the publication in many European countries of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad.

The daily paper *Hamshahri* said the contest was designed to test the boundaries of free speech—the reason given by many European newspapers for publishing the cartoons of the Prophet.

"A serious question for Muslims... is this: 'does Western free speech allow working on issues like America and Israel's crimes or an incident like the Holocaust or is this freedom of speech only good for insulting the holy values of divine religions?'" the paper said on Tuesday.

"Hamshahri, far from any conflict-seeking attitude or illogical behaviour, has called on the artists of the world to use free speech to send cartoons on these issues to take part in the contest," it added.

Davoud Kazemi, who is in charge of the contest, said that each of the 12 winners would have their cartoons published and receive two gold coins (worth about \$280) as a prize.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad provoked international condemnation last year by calling the Holocaust a "myth" and saying Israel should be "wiped off the map."

Meanwhile, dozens of hardline religious students pelted the Danish embassy in Tehran with stones and petrol bombs on Tuesday in a second successive day of violent protests in Iran over cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad.

About 20 protesters managed to climb over the high wall protecting the embassy compound, where a tree appeared to have been set ablaze.

Those who entered were



Protestors threw petrol bombs at the Danish Embassy in Tehran and tried to break into it on against the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad. Reuters

ejected by police. It was not clear whether they had entered the embassy building itself, which was abandoned by embassy staff on Sunday.

Dozens of riot police kept an eye on the protesters outside the embassy compound who chanted "Death to Denmark" and ripped up Danish flags.

Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller called his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki "and demanded in clear terms that Iran does all it can to protect the embassy and Danish lives," a spokesman said.

He said "Iran will be held responsible for any damage to Danish interests," the foreign ministry spokesman said.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said Mottaki had instructed the Interior Ministry to protect diplomatic missions.

"Citizens are free to protest, however the territories of diplomatic facilities should not be violated," Asefi was quoted as saying by state television.

Iran has also raised duties on Danish-flagged shipping and could ban Danish shipping entirely from its ports, newspapers reported on

Tuesday.

Danish shipping and oil company AP Moeller-Maersk is likely to be most affected by the measure, announced by Iranian Commerce Minister Masoud Mirkazemi.

The EU stepped up pressure on Arab and Muslim countries to control protests over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad, reminding 19 nations of their treaty obligation to protect diplomatic missions.

In a strongly worded statement issued late on Monday, EU President Austria said it had instructed its embassies in the Middle East, Asian and African countries to demand increased security measures for European citizens and premises after a wave of anti-European violence by angry Muslim protesters.

Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik said national authorities must take the necessary steps to ensure security.

"The authorities in Egypt, Algeria, Ethiopia, Iran, Jordan, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE and the Palestinian Territories were also reminded of their obliga-

Protests worldwide

■ LONDON: A British man who dressed as a suicide bomber and took part in a protest in London against the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad was arrested on Tuesday at the instigation of the Home Office. Newspaper pictures of Omar Khayam wearing what looked like a suicide bomber's body harness and of protesters carrying placards with slogans such as "Massacre those who insult Islam" had provoked calls for the police to act. Police said Khayam, who was on parole at the time of the protest, was arrested in Bedford for breaching his parole conditions and had been returned to jail.

■ ANKARA: Turkish security forces arrested a high school student on Tuesday over the killing of an Italian Catholic priest and Turkish television said the teenager had confessed to a crime which has shocked this Muslim nation. The student told police he was influenced by cartoons lampooning the Prophet Mohammad, NTV commercial television said. The report could not be immediately confirmed. The state Anatolian news agency said the student, aged 16, had been carrying a 9 mm pistol when he was captured in the Black Sea city of Trabzon, where Andrea Santoro, 61, was gunned down on Sunday while praying.

■ VATICAN CITY: The head of the Vatican body responsible for Inter-Faith Relations on Tuesday called for calm and restraint among Christians and Muslims as protests continued across the Islamic world against cartoons satirising the Prophet Mohammed. "We all have the responsibility not to increase the tension and to calm spirits on both sides," said British archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, adding that Vatican would seek a dialogue with Muslim leaders. "We will speak to our Muslim partners to see, together with them, what we can do," said Fitzgerald. —Agencies

tions under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations to protect the diplomatic missions of the EU Member States," the statement said.

Cartoon protests reach India

NEW DELHI, Feb. 6. — Riot police fired tear-gas and water cannons here today at students of Jamia Millia Islamia protesting the publication of cartoons of Prophet Mohammad in European newspapers. Separately, Islamic groups in Kashmir called a strike that shut down Srinagar. Police said no arrests had been made but the president of the Jamia students' union claimed that 15 students had been arrested as they shouted slogans and burned Danish flags. Around 150 students assembled outside the local police station demanding their "release". In Srinagar, Muslim groups, separatists and traders enforced a one-day strike to "protest the hurt caused to Muslim sentiments by some Europeans in the name of freedom of speech," the Kashmir Bar Association said in a statement. A member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Khalid Rasheed, today appealed to the Centre to take up with Denmark the



A procession organised by students of Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi. — AFP

publication of "derogatory" cartoons of Prophet Mohammad in a newspaper of that country. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh earlier

expressed his anguish to the Denmark government over the "blasphemous" action. — SNS & Agencies

Another report on page 3

THE STATESMAN

7 FEB 2006

Prophet cartoon clash claims first blood

4 killed in Kabul as Vatican calls for calm

ASSOCIATED Press
Kabul, February 6

AFGHAN SECURITY forces opened fire on demonstrators on Monday, leaving at least four dead, as increasingly violent protests erupted around the world over the published cartoons of Prophet Mohammad. Pleas for calm have come forth from politicians all over as well as the Vatican.

The worst of the violence was outside Bagram, the main US base in Afghanistan, with Afghan police firing on some 2,000 protesters as they tried to break into the heavily guarded facility, said Kabir Ahmed, the local government chief.

Two demonstrators were killed and five were injured, while eight police also were hurt, he said. No US troops were involved in the clashes, Ahmed said.

Afghan police also fired on protesters in the central city of Mihtarlam after a man in the crowd shot at them and others threw

stones and knives, interior ministry spokesman Dad Mohammed Rasa said. Two demonstrators were shot to death, and two police were hurt.

In Kabul, about 200 people tried to break down the gate of a the Danish diplomatic mission but failed. The protesters then threw stones at the mission and beat some officers guarding it, as well some guards at a nearby house used by Belgian diplomats. Police later used batons and

Hijab row brews in Britain

THE CASE of a Muslim schoolgirl who won the right to wear a head-to-toe dress in class is back in the spotlight as an appeal has been filed in the House of Lords. The Court of Appeal had held that Shabina Begum was unlawfully excluded from her school for attending classes in a hijab. Now, five Lords are being asked to review the human rights implications of the case.

HTC, London

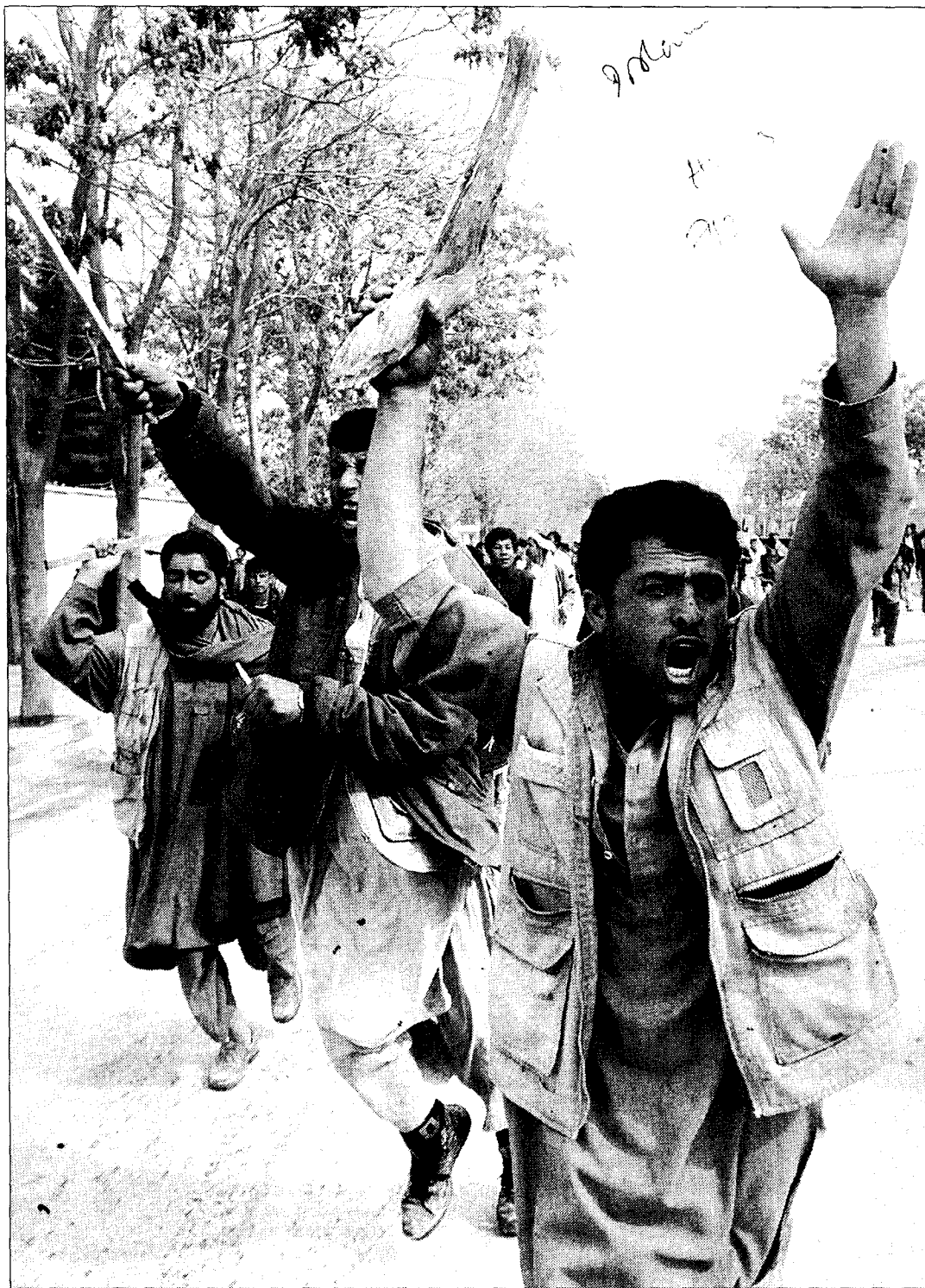
rifle butts to disperse demonstrators walking toward the presidential palace.

Some protesters moved toward the main American base in city and threw stones that smashed windows of a guard house. Police standing amid the protesters watched but did not intervene.

About 200 demonstrators in Iran threw stones at the Austrian embassy in Tehran, breaking windows and throwing fire bombs that started small fires. The demonstration lasted two hours, but police quickly extinguished the blazes and stopped some protesters from throwing stones.

Lebanon, meanwhile, apologised to Denmark a day after thousands of rampaging Muslim demonstrators set fire to the building housing the Danish mission in Beirut to protest the series of cartoons satirising Islam's holiest figure.

The European Union issued stern reminders to 18 Muslim countries that they are obliged under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations to protect foreign embassies, and Austria called in a top representative of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to express its concern.



Muslim protesters run through a Kabul street shouting anti-Denmark slogans on Monday.

The world reacts...

Lebanon apologised on Monday to Denmark after protesters set fire to its diplomatic mission in Beirut on Sunday.

Danish soldiers on patrol in Iraq came under attack on Monday, but escaped unharmed.

The behaviour of Muslim demonstrators in London was "completely unacceptable," 10 Downing Street said on Monday. It also pledged "full support" for any action the police may take.

Croatia's main Muslim party has called the cartoons a form of "terrorism". "Freedom of the Press is only a pretext for of media terrorism," said the Party of Democratic Action.

Protesters in Indonesian cities demanded that Denmark apologise. Police fired warning shots to disperse 300 Muslims protesting outside the Danish consulate in Surabaya.

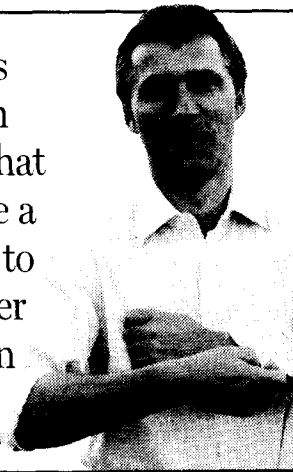


Iranian anti-riot police stand guard outside the damaged Austrian embassy in Tehran on Monday.

Pakistan summoned envoys from nine European countries on Monday and lodged a protest over the cartoons.

What makes the situation dangerous is that extremists use a wrong action to justify another wrong action

Jens Stoltenberg
Norwegian Prime Minister



Anti-Jew pictures posted on the Net

ASSOCIATED Press
Amsterdam, February 6

A BELGIAN-DUTCH Islamic political organisation posted anti-Jewish cartoons on its website in response to the cartoons of the prophet Mohammad that appeared in Danish papers last September and offended many Muslims.

The cartoons were posted on the Arab European League's website late on Saturday. It was not working Sunday morning because of exceeded bandwidth.

The site carried a disclaimer saying the images were being shown as part of an exercise in free speech rather than to endorse their content — just as European newspapers have reprinted the Danish cartoons.

One of the AEL cartoons displayed an image of the famed Dutch holocaust victim, Anne Frank, in bed with Adolf Hitler, and another questioned whether the Holocaust actually occurred.

Dyab Abou Jahjah, the party's founder and best-known figure, defended the action on the Dutch televi-

sion programme *Nova* on Saturday. "Europe has its sacred cows, even if they're not religious sacred cows," he told the programme.

Denying the Holocaust is illegal under most European hate speech laws, which outlaw intimidating or inciting hatred toward groups on the basis of their ethnic, cultural, religious or sexual identity. Complaints about alleged hate speech are common but prosecutions are rare and convictions very rare.

The AEL espouses non-violence but has gained a reputation for extremist

views, and opposes Muslims integrating with non-Muslims.

It promotes the participation of Muslims in political dialogue in European countries, but is internally divided as to whether or not to participate in elections directly.

It stood in Belgian elections in 1999 and 2003 under different names but failed to get more than one per cent of the vote.

The Dutch arm has had problems finding a leader and has said it has no immediate plans to participate in elections.

Danish paper rejected Jesus sketches

GWLADYS Fouché
London, February 6

JYLLANDS-POSTEN, the Danish newspaper that first published the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad that have caused a storm of protest throughout the Islamic world, refused to run drawings lampooning Jesus Christ, it has emerged on Monday.

The Danish daily turned down the cartoons of Christ three years ago, on the grounds that they could be offensive to readers and were not funny.

In April 2003, Danish illustrator Christoffer Zieler submitted a series of unsolicited cartoons dealing with the resurrection of Christ to *Jyllands-Posten*.

Zieler received an email back from the paper's Sunday editor, Jens Kaiser, which said: "I don't think *Jyllands-Posten*'s readers will enjoy the drawings. As a matter of fact, I think that they will provoke an outcry. Therefore, I will not use them."

The illustrator told the Norwegian daily *Dagbladet*, which saw the email, "I see the cartoons as an innocent joke, of the type that my Christian grandfather would enjoy. I showed them to a few pastors and they thought they were funny."

He said that he felt *Jyllands-Posten* rated the feelings of its Christian readers higher than that of its Muslim readers.

But the *Jyllands-Posten* editor in question, Kaiser, said the case was "ridiculous to bring forward now. It has nothing to do with the Mohammad cartoons." "In the Mohammad drawings case, we asked the illustrators to do it. I did not ask for these cartoons. That's the difference," he said. "The illustrator thought his cartoons were funny. I did not think so. They would have offended some readers, not many."

The decision smacks of "double-standards", said Ahmed Akkari, spokesman for the Danish-based European Committee for Prophet Honouring, the umbrella group that represents 27 Muslim organisations that are campaigning for a full apology from *Jyllands-Posten*. "How can *Jyllands-Posten* distinguish the two cases? Surely they must understand," Akkari added.

The Guardian

ব্যঙ্গচিত্র বিক্ষোভে সামিল ইরান, ইরাকও

তেহরান ও রামাদি, ৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি: ব্যঙ্গচিত্র বিতর্ক ক্রমশ তীব্র হচ্ছে। প্রতিবাদে মুখর হয়ে উঠেছে ইসলামি দুনিয়া। বিক্ষোভে সামিল হয়েছে ইরাক, ইরান, লেবানন, সিরিয়ার মতো দেশ।

ইরান বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র হামিদ রেজা আসেফি সংবাদমাধ্যমের প্রতিনিধিদের বলেন, “ডেনমার্কের ইরানি রাষ্ট্রদূতকে তেহরানে ফিরে আসতে বলা হয়েছে।” তাঁর মতে, “স্বাধীনতার সঙ্গে দায়িত্বেরও সম্পর্ক থাকা উচিত।”

যে সব সংবাদপত্র ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছেপেছে তারা ক্ষমা না চাইলে ইরানে তাদের সাংবাদিকদের কাজ করতে দেওয়া হবে না বলে জানিয়েছে সংস্কৃতি মন্ত্রক। ইরান এ-ও জানিয়েছে, যে সব দেশে ওই ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপা হয়েছে সেই দেশগুলির সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যিক সম্পর্কের ব্যাপারে বিবেচনা করার জন্য একটি কমিটি তৈরি করা হচ্ছে।

ইরাকে ওই সব দেশের নাগরিকদের উপরে এবং ডেনমার্কের সেনাবাহিনীর উপরে হামলা চালাবে বলে হুমকি দিয়েছে একটি জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী। রামাদিতে এই ব্যাপারে লিফলেটও বিলি করেছে তারা। বিদেশিদের বিরুদ্ধে ফতোয়া জারি করার জন্য তারা সব আরব দেশের

ধর্মীয় নেতাদের আবেদন জানিয়েছে। তাদের আরও দাবি, বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হোক সব দূতাবাস। ইরাকি ইসলামি সেনাবাহিনীর তরফে জানানো হয়েছে, ওই সব দেশের সঙ্গে যে সংস্থাগুলির লেনদেন চলে এবং যে সব দোকানে ডেনমার্ক ও নরওয়ের পণ্য বিক্রি হয়, সেগুলির উপরেও আক্রমণ চালাবে তারা।

উত্তপ্ত লেবাননের জনতাও বিস্কুর হাজার হাজার লোক পতাকা নিয়ে মিছিলে যোগ দেন। ডেনমার্কের কনসুলেটে আজ আগুন লাগিয়ে দেন তাঁরা। ভিড়ের মধ্যে নিরাপত্তা বাহিনীকে কাঁদানে গ্যাস ছুড়তে হয়। এ সব হিংসাত্মক কার্যকলাপের নিন্দা করেছেন দেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রী। অন্যতম সুন্নি নেতা মহম্মদ রশিদ কাবানি জানান, প্রতিবাদের এই সব পন্থা ইসলামের ভাবমূর্তিকেই নুষ্ট করছে। বিক্ষোভের একই প্রতিক্রিয়া দেখা গিয়েছে সিরিয়ার জর্নতার মধ্যে। সেখানেও ডেনমার্ক, এবং নরওয়ের দূতাবাসে আগুন লাগিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। সুইডেনের দূতাবাসেও হামলা চালানো হয়। অন্য দিকে, বিতর্কিত এই ঘটনার জন্য যারা দায়ী, তাদের বিচারের দাবি জানিয়ে শান্তিপূর্ণ মিছিল করেছেন কয়েক হাজার আফগান জনতা।

— রয়টার্স

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

1-6 FEB 2006

Cartoon fire engulfs Danish consulate in Beirut

AGENCE France-Presse
Beirut, February 5

THE DANISH consulate in Beirut was set ablaze on Sunday, in clashes in which at least 28 people were injured, as the row over controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed spiralled out of control.

The Danish government called on its nationals to leave Lebanon after demonstrators set fire to the building housing its consulate, only a day after a similar attack against the Danish and Norwegian embassy buildings in neighbouring Syria.

Both Copenhagen and Oslo began evacuating their nationals from Lebanon and Syria on Sunday, while Western nations ratcheted up security across the Muslim world.

The 12 cartoons at the heart of the furore were first published last September by the conservative Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* and later by other European and Western media, fuelling Muslim anger.

Denmark on Sunday roundly blamed Syrian security forces for failing to prevent the violence at its embassy in Damascus. "Syria failed in its duty. It is

completely unacceptable that the embassy was not protected," Foreign Minister Per Stig Møller said. The US also said that the Syrian government had

try without government knowledge and support," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said in a statement.

In Beirut on Sunday, protesters attacked property and shops in the Christian area of Ashrafiyeh, throwing stones, breaking windows and overturning cars. Police tried to rebuff crowds in front of the consulate with tear gas. There were

chaotic scenes as hundreds of protesters marched through the area, knocking down barricades. Stones were thrown at a church as Islamic leaders were seen appealing for calm.

The violence follows similar scenes of rage on Saturday in the Syrian capital where crowds stormed the building housing the Danish embassy in Damascus, setting it on fire.

No staff were in the embassy premises, which is on the third floor of a building also housing the Swedish embassy on the second floor and the Chilean mission on the first.

Some demonstrators then went on to the nearby Norwegian embassy building, where they set fire to the second floor after sack- ing the offices and throwing furniture out of the window.

Adding newsprint to immigrant fire

The real war is between Europe's anti-settler groups and Muslims

CRAIG S. SMITH
New York, February 5

EUROPEANS hoisted the banner of press freedom last week in response to Muslim anger over a dozen Danish cartoons, some of them mocking the Prophet Muhammad. But something deeper and more complex was also at work: The fracas grew out of, and then fed, a war of polemics between Europe's anti-immigrant nationalists and the fundamentalist Muslims among its immigrants.

"One extreme triggers the other," said Jonas Gahr Store, Norway's foreign minister, arguing that both sides want to polarize the debate at the expense of the moderate majority. "These issues are dangerous because they give the extremes fertile ground."

How did it begin? Oddly, with a decision by a Danish newspaper to commission, and then print, cartoons portraying the Prophet in whatever light cartoonists chose to put him. The newspaper's culture editor, Fleming Rose, says he intended simply to see if cartoonists were self-censoring their work, out of fear of violence from Islamic radicals.

But the violence that erupted did not take place in a political vacuum. Hostile feelings have been growing between Denmark's immigrants and a government supported by the right-wing Danish People's Party, which has pushed anti-immigrant policies. And stereotyping in cartoons has a notorious history in Europe, where anti-Semitic caricatures fed the Holocaust, just as they feed anti-Israeli prop-

Death threat

AN AL-Qaida-linked group in Iraq has threatened to attack the interests of European countries where cartoons depicting the Prophet were published, and to hack to death Danish nationals. The Islamic Army in Iraq told "all *mujahideen* to capture Danes and cut them into pieces".

AFP, Paris

aganda in West Asia today.

The reaction to the cartoons was clearly deliberate. A group of Denmark's fundamentalist Muslim clerics lobbied the embassies of 11 mostly Muslim countries to demand a meeting with Denmark's prime minister. When he refused, the clerics took their show on the road.

The clerics inflamed the response by including in their presentation far more offensive cartoons that never appeared in any newspaper, some depicting Mohammad as a paedophile, a pig or engaged in bestiality.

The result: Outrage. And there was agonising over what it meant for both Press freedom and tolerance. Rose offered a distinction between respecting other people's faith, which he favours, and obeying someone else's taboos, which he said society has no obligation to do.

Whether or not he achieved his goal, it was clear that it had helped extremists on both sides who would keep Europe and the Muslim world from understanding each other.

The New York Times

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 6 FEB 2006

Danish, Norwegian embassies set ablaze as Muslim anger spreads

Islamic leader threatens "Rushdie type" fatwa against journalists

Jamie Doward, Bartle Bull, Gaby Hinsliff and Mark Townsend

LONDON/DAMASCUS: The increasingly bitter row over reaction to the publication of a series of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed reached a new level of intensity on Saturday night after protesters set fire to the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria.

A prominent Islamist leader in Britain threatened to issue a fatwa similar to the one issued against Salman Rushdie, the author of *"Satanic Verses"*. Police in London signalled that they will launch an investigation into the behaviour of protesters who called for "beheading" persons who backed the publication of the cartoons.

Demonstrators in the Syrian capital, Damascus, defied tear-gas and water cannon to enter the Danish embassy and replace the country's flag with another which read: "No God but Allah, Mohammad is His Prophet."

Rising tension

The embassy, which had been empty when attacked, was a charred hulk.

The Norwegian embassy was still burning. As well as the dramatic scenes in Damascus — not known for its Islamic militancy — rising tensions among Muslims over the publication of the cartoons in Denmark, threatened to boil over across the globe.

In London, 700 Muslims held a second day of angry protests



BREATHING FIRE: The Danish embassy set ablaze by protesters in Beirut on Sunday. The Danish and Norwegian missions in Damascus, Syria, were also torched. — PHOTO: AP

outside the Danish embassy, many holding placards glorifying the events of July 7 and 9/11.

Police said that arrests could follow after investigations into the behaviour on Friday of some

protesters who demanded the massacre of "those who insult Islam". The protesters may have breached laws against inciting religious hatred or inciting terrorism. In Iran, the President or-

dered his Commerce Minister to study cancelling all trade contracts with European countries whose newspapers had published the cartoons.

The Hamas leader, Dr Mahmoud Zahar, told the Italian daily *Il Giornale* that the cartoons were an offence that should be punished by death.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw attempted to calm the situation, insisting the trouble was caused by a "few hot-heads".

Journalists warned

It is understood that a number of those identified by the London police were already known for holding militant views, including Anjem Choudary, a key ally of Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed, the exiled leader of the radical Islamic group Al-Muhajiroun who described the July 7 bombers as "the fantastic four".

Mr. Choudary warned the row over the cartoons was set to escalate. "The Danish journalists and others who followed suit, I don't think they're going to be able to live peacefully from now on," Mr. Choudary told *The Observer*. "A fatwa will be issued, there will be people around the Muslim world who will take that very seriously and what happened to Salman Rushdie is going to happen to the journalists."

Mr. Choudary's comments came as senior Muslim leaders denounced the nature of the protests. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006

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THE HINDU

Muslims and media frenzy over cartoons

Hasan Suroor

ANYBODY READING and watching the British media these days would think that Muslims have unleashed a *jihad* on Europe and the "hordes" are waiting at the gates following the publication of a series of offensive cartoons of Prophet Muhammed in several European newspapers.

Some of the reporting has been quite breathless marked by alarming reports of Muslim "fury" sweeping the world and even more alarming headlines such as "Cartoon Wars and the Clash of Civilisations" in *The Times*. The fact is that the "fury" has been rather low-key and much of Europe, where the row erupted, has remained largely quiet — at least so far.

It would be naïve to expect that there would be no Muslim reaction to the cartoons. Yes, there have been protests and some hotheads, who see such controversies as a godsend opportunity for them to grab headlines, have even indulged in violence — like storming the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria. But these are isolated incidents. Protests in other countries, including most of the Islamic world, have been mainly peaceful despite attempts by extremist elements to inflame passions. The scale of the "backlash" has been a lot more restrained than the Muslim reaction to such issues in the past.

In Britain, Muslims rather disappointed the media by refusing to play to the script that would have seen them intensify their protests after last Friday's prayers. Journalists who rushed to Bradford, which has a large and traditionally volatile Muslim population and was the scene of some of the most violent demonstrations against Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* in 1989, returned disappointed as nothing happened there. One correspondent ruefully reported: "It [a protest] may yet happen but on yesterday's evidence the local Muslim community has grown weary, or perhaps wary, of taking too high-profile a stance on controversial Islamic issues."

The issue is not whether Muslims are right or wrong to be upset but whether or not they have the right to peaceful protest when they feel, rightly or wrongly, that their religious feelings have been hurt.

In London, a protest march attracted only a handful of people, mostly belonging to known radical groups. Ordinary Muslims publicly distanced themselves from the provocative slogans raised by some demonstrators. Privately, of course, even liberal Muslims say they are upset over the cartoons — even more upset that despite protests newspapers across Europe (with the exception of the British media) chose to reprint them in the name of "solidarity" with the Danish paper, *Jyllands-Posten*, which first published them more than four months ago.

Ziauddin Sardar, one of the most progressive British Muslim scholars, said he had spent a "lifetime criticising Islam and Muslims" but was "absolutely infuriated" by these cartoons describing them as a "provocative and premeditated insult to Islam."

"What people must remember is that we are watching the repetition of an argument that took place in Europe during the thirties. Then we were discussing the right to depict Jews in cartoons with racial stereotypes. Now, we are discussing the right to show Muslims," he warned.

The issue, however, is not whether Muslims are right or wrong to be upset but whether or not they have the right to peaceful protest when they feel, rightly or wrongly, that their religious feelings have been hurt. Or is it the case that any hint of dissent by Muslims is to be held unreasonable and against Western values?

Jewish groups routinely protest against the

slightest perceived hurt (remember the uproar when Prince Harry wore a Nazi uniform at a birthday party, and the campaign against the London Mayor Ken Livingstone for an allegedly anti-semitic comment?), and quite rightly it is regarded as their legitimate right. So, why can Muslims not protest without being dubbed fundamentalists, intolerant, anti-free speech, etc?

Ironically, Muslims have been attacked even by the leader of a right-wing Christian group that itself led a nasty campaign against the BBC, including issuing personal threats to its executives, for screening *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, which, it said, hurt Christian sensitivities. Muslims alone, it would seem, have forfeited the right to be offended, and to protest.

As *The Guardian* columnist Gary Younge pointed out: "If newspapers have the right to offend then surely their targets have the right to be offended. Moreover if you are bold enough to knowingly offend a community then you should be bold enough to withstand the consequences, so long as that community expresses displeasure within the law."

Mr. Younge noted that Muslims were being "vilified twice — once through the cartoon, and again for exercising their democratic right to protest."

And that's the crux. By and large, at least so far, the Muslim protest has remained within the law. Newspapers have sought to invest the current row with "echoes" of the Rushdie affair but

the contrast between the two could not have been more stark than the events of the past week have shown.

In the Rushdie case, there was a religious *fatwa* to kill the author; at least one translator was murdered by Muslim zealots; and even mainstream Muslims joined in the macabre act of book-burning. This time, the campaign is led essentially by extremists. The 12 Danish cartoonists, whose works sparked the controversy, are reported to have gone into hiding fearing for their lives but it is not because they have received any threats but because of the climate of fear whipped up by media frenzy.

Unlike in the Rushdie affair, when even non-Muslim countries including India banned the "offending" novel, this time at least one newspaper in the heart of the Muslim world — Jordan's *Al-Shihan* — reproduced the cartoons telling Muslims: "What brings more prejudice against Islam? These caricatures or pictures of a hostage taker slashing the throat of his victim?" That its editor was sacked is a different matter. What is significant is that he had the courage to stand up and be counted, but the West simply refuses to acknowledge the change in the Muslim mood.

No knee-jerk reaction

It is important to remember that, on this occasion, the Muslim reaction has been anything but knee-jerk. The cartoons first appeared in September last year but nothing happened and the issue was sought to be resolved through diplomatic means with Ambassadors of some Muslim countries complaining to the Danish Government and calling for an apology. The row became public only when the cartoons were reproduced last month, first by a Norwegian newspaper and then other European papers to assert their right to free speech. Saudi Arabia recalled its Ambassador from Denmark, a boycott of Danish goods started and public protests were held.

Much has been made of the boycott of Danish goods in some Arab countries but is a boycott not part of legitimate protest? When Americans can boycott French wine and cheese because of the French Government's refusal to support the invasion of Iraq, why can't people in another part of the world do the same to register their protest?

Coming to the cartoons. I doubt if many Muslims even in Europe, let alone elsewhere, have seen them. I have. Neither as works of creative imagination and nor as political comment do they merit the sort of attention that has been bestowed on them in recent days. They are crude, badly drawn, and simply trite. The difference of opinion is not over the quality of the cartoons, which have been almost unanimously described as "offensive." The debate is whether free speech should be curtailed because it might offend some people.

Indeed, if Muslims were able to get over the mental block that any visual depiction of the Prophet is unacceptable (there are various interpretations on this even among Muslim scholars), they would also dismiss these caricatures for what they are: a needless provocation best ignored. It is precisely because Muslims are known to "take offence" more readily that they have become a soft target for anyone who wants to provoke them in order, then, to portray them as intolerant and worse. Every time Muslims react to provocations they contribute to the perception that they are fundamentally intolerant and that their beliefs and conduct are incompatible with the modern secular world. They can turn blue in the face protesting that this is a stereotype but nobody is likely to listen to them in a climate which, for reasons that are too well known to bear repetition, is not on their side.

Having said this, the row does not reflect too well on Western attitudes either and as historian Andrew Roberts said: "While there is a need for a genuine discussion about the rights of the West to define its own boundaries of free speech, these cartoons are purposely provocative and unnecessary. ... Western civilisation loses out if these insulting images are the best critique [of Islam] that we can make." Clearly, engaging other cultures in a battle of ideas would require more than crude comic strips.

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ভাবমূর্তি বদলাতে মুসলিমদের পাশে দাঁড়াল আমেরিকা

ওয়াশিংটন, ৪ ফেব্রুয়ারি: ব্যঙ্গচিত্র-বিতর্কে সাড়া পড়ে গিয়েছে বিশ্ব জুড়ে। কিছুটা অপ্রত্যাশিত ভাবেই মুসলিম দুনিয়ার সমর্থনে এগিয়ে এসেছে আমেরিকা। এই ঘটনায় ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করে ডেনমার্ক সরকারকে চিঠি লিখেছেন ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহও।

ইসলাম বিতর্কিত ব্যঙ্গচিত্র ছাপার অভিযোগে জর্ডনের এক ট্যাবলয়েডের সম্পাদক জিহাদ মোমানিকে আজ গ্রেফতার করা হয়েছে। কালই তিনি চাকরি থেকে বরখাস্ত হয়েছিলেন। খোঁজ চলেছে আর একটি সাপ্তাহিক পত্রিকার সম্পাদকেরও।

এ দিকে, মার্কিন বিদেশ দফতরের মুখপাত্র কার্টিস কুপার জানিয়েছেন, “ব্যঙ্গচিত্রগুলি মুসলিম ধর্মবিশ্বাসে আঘাত করেছে।

মত প্রকাশের স্বাধীনতা মানে কারও বিশ্বাসে আঘাত করা নয়।” এই বিবৃতিকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছেন মার্কিন মুসলিমরা। তবে মার্কিন সংবাদপত্রে বিতর্কিত চিত্রগুলি ছাপা হয়নি। ফলে বিদেশ দফতরের এই ‘হঠাৎ’ বিবৃতি অনেককেই অবাক করেছে। কোনও কোনও মহলের মতে, এই ভাবে মুসলিম দুনিয়ায় নিজেদের ভাবমূর্তি উজ্জ্বল করার চেষ্টা করছে আমেরিকা। তবে ব্যঙ্গচিত্রের সরকারি সমালোচনা ইরাক যুদ্ধের দাগ কতটা মুছে ফেলতে পারবে, তা নিয়েও প্রশ্ন উঠেছে।

ব্যঙ্গচিত্র নিয়ে দুনিয়াজোড়া বিক্ষোভ-বিতর্কে উদ্বিগ্ন রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জও। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের মহাসচিব কোফি আন্নান সংবাদ মাধ্যমকে সতর্ক করে বলেছেন, বাকস্বাধীনতা কখনওই নিরঙ্কুশ নয়।

ডেনমার্কের যে সংবাদপত্রে ব্যঙ্গচিত্রগুলি প্রথম ছাপা হয়, তারা এর মধোই মুসলিম সমাজের কাছে ক্ষমা চেয়েছে। আল্লানের অনুরোধ, এই ক্ষমাপ্রার্থনা স্বীকার করে নিন। ইন্দোনেশিয়ার প্রেসিডেন্ট সুসিলো বামবাং ইউধোয়নো এবং মালয়েশিয়ার প্রধানমন্ত্রী আব্দুল্লাহ আহমেদ বাদাউইও দেশবাসীকে সংযত থাকতে অনুরোধ জানিয়েছেন। আজ সিরিয়ার রাজধানী দামাস্কাসে নরওয়ে এবং ডেনমার্কের দূতাবাসে আগুন ধরিয়ে দেওয়া হয়।

উত্তপ্ত ইউরোপও। কাল সন্ধ্যায় লন্ডনে মিছিল করে ফ্রান্স, জার্মানি এবং ডেনমার্কের দূতাবাসের সামনে বিক্ষোভ দেখানো হয়। এমনকী ‘৭/৭ কাণ্ডের পুনরাবৃত্তি হবে’ জাতীয় হুমকিও দেন তাঁরা। ব্রিটিশ বিদেশমন্ত্রী

জ্যাক স্ট্র অবশ্য ইউরোপীয় সংবাদপত্রে ওই

ব্যঙ্গচিত্র প্রকাশের কড়া নিন্দা করেছেন। ওই ছবি ছাপার জন্য হুমকিও পেতে শুরু করেছে হল্যান্ডের একটি সংবাদপত্র। দফতরে বিস্ফোরণ ঘটানো হবে বলে ই-মেলে হুমকি দেওয়া হচ্ছে। মুসলিম জনতা ক্ষুব্ধ নিউজিল্যান্ডের দু’টি সংবাদপত্রের উপরেও। প্যালেস্তাইনের অধিবাসীরা বলেছেন, এমন চললে খোদ লাদেনকে আসরে নামতে হবে। ব্যঙ্গচিত্র-বিতর্ককে কেন্দ্র করে স্পষ্টতই দু’ভাগে ভাগ হয়ে গিয়েছে ইউরোপীয় দুনিয়া। আন্তর্জাতিক সাহিত্যিক ও প্রকাশকদের গোষ্ঠী ‘পেন’ মতপ্রকাশের স্বাধীনতার সপক্ষে সায় দিলেও জানিয়েছে, খোলাখুলি আলোচনার মাধ্যমে গোটা ব্যাপারটির নিষ্পত্তি হোক।

- 5 FEB 2006

ANADABAZAR.PAKISTANA

Execution calls add fuel to cartoon fire

ASSOCIATED Press
Gaza City, February 4

RAGE AGAINST caricatures of Islam's Prophet poured out across the Muslim world on Saturday, with aggrieved believers calling for the execution of those involved, burning embassies, storming European buildings, and setting European flags on fire. In its first official comments on the caricatures, the Vatican called the cartoons "unacceptable provocation."

"The right to freedom of thought and expression ... cannot entail the right to offend the religious sentiments of believers," the Vatican said.

Thousands of Syrians set fire to the Danish embassy in Damascus on Saturday. The protest started out peacefully but then, people broke through police barriers and used the concrete barricades protecting the embassy as ladders to climb inside the building and set it on fire.

Iran reprisal

IRANIAN PRESIDENT Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has ordered the cancellation of economic contracts with countries where the media carried the cartoons.

Lebanon fatwa

RADICAL CLERIC, Omar Bakri Mohammad, has issued a fatwa from his hideout in Lebanon that all editors who showed the cartoons must be killed.

Editor arrested

A JORDANIAN tabloid editor was arrested on Saturday after his newspaper published the controversial cartoons.

Some removed the Danish flag and replaced it with a green flag printed with the words: "Mohammad is the messenger of God."

A South African court, meanwhile, barred newspapers from

reprinting the pictures. In Munich, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she understood Muslims' hurt, but denounced violent reactions.

A Hamas leader told an Italian newspaper on Saturday that the cartoons were an "unforgivable insult" that should be punished by death. "We should have killed all those who offend the Prophet and instead here we are, protesting peacefully," Mahmoud Zahar told Italian daily *Il Giornale*.

In Gaza City, demonstrators hurled stones at a European Commission building and stormed a German cultural centre, smashing windows. Protesters also burned German and Danish flags, and called for a boycott of Danish products.

In Copenhagen, Muslims clashed with police after they were stopped from boarding a train to go to a demonstration north of the Danish capital. Some of the demonstrators threw bottles at police but no one was injured.

- 5 FEB 2006

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

European papers reprint blasphemous cartoons

Editors claim right to freedom of expression

Luke Harding and
Kim Willsher

BERLIN/PARIS: Newspapers in France and Germany on Wednesday reprinted caricatures of Prophet Muhammad, escalating a row over freedom of expression that has already sparked widespread protests in the Muslim world.

France Soir and Germany's *Die Welt* published cartoons which first appeared in a Danish newspaper. The caricatures, printed last September in Denmark's *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper and reprinted by a Norwegian magazine, have provoked uproar across West Asia.

There have been angry protests in several countries, including in Turkey on Wednesday, as well as a boycott of Danish goods. Saudi Arabia has withdrawn its Ambassador in Copenhagen, while Libya has closed its embassy.

On Monday, gunmen from Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade briefly occupied the E.U.'s office in the Gaza Strip, demanding that Denmark and Norway apologise. The front page of the daily

France Soir, however, carried the defiant headline: "Yes, we have the right to caricature God," and a cartoon of Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim and Christian gods floating on a cloud. Inside, the paper ran the drawings.

The Centre-Right *Die Welt* also ran the caricature on the front page, reporting that Muslim groups had forced the Danish newspaper to issue an apology.

Outrage in Muslim world

The outrage in the Muslim world was hypocritical, the paper said, pointing out that Syrian television had depicted Jewish rabbis as cannibals.

Roger Koppel, editor-in-chief of *Die Welt*, said he had no regrets. He told the *Guardian*: "It's at the very core of our culture that the most sacred things can be subjected to criticism, laughter and satire."

Muslim groups in both countries, however, were furious. "It's odious and we totally disapprove of it," Dalil Boubakeur, the president of the French Muslim Council, said. "It's a real

provocation towards the millions of Muslims in France."

On the Internet, Iraqi militant groups have threatened attacks against Danish troops, while Muslim hackers have tried to shut down the Danish newspaper's website.

On Wednesday, Carsten Juste, the editor of *Jyllands-Posten*, which first published the cartoons, said his only regret was that his enemies had "won".

Asked whether he made a mistake in publishing the cartoons, he said: "Had we known that it would lead to boycotts and Danish lives being endangered as we have seen, then the answer is no."

The row comes at an unpropitious time for Europe. It follows the murder by an Islamist fanatic of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh and rioting in France last year by mainly immigrant youths. France's Muslim community is western Europe's largest, with an estimated 5 million people; 3 million Muslims live in Germany. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006

The varied faces of political Islam

In the absence of egalitarian secular alternatives, the masses in West Asia are turning to Islamist forces.

Atul Aneja

THE VICTORY of Hamas in the recent Palestinian parliamentary elections follows a trend in the last one year of political Islam, in its various shades, acquiring high visibility in West Asia. In Iraq, the Shia religious parties had won impressively despite efforts by the United States to boost the prospects of rival groups. And in Iran, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, a new generation leader who promised the poor a better deal under Islamic revolutionary principles, was elected President.

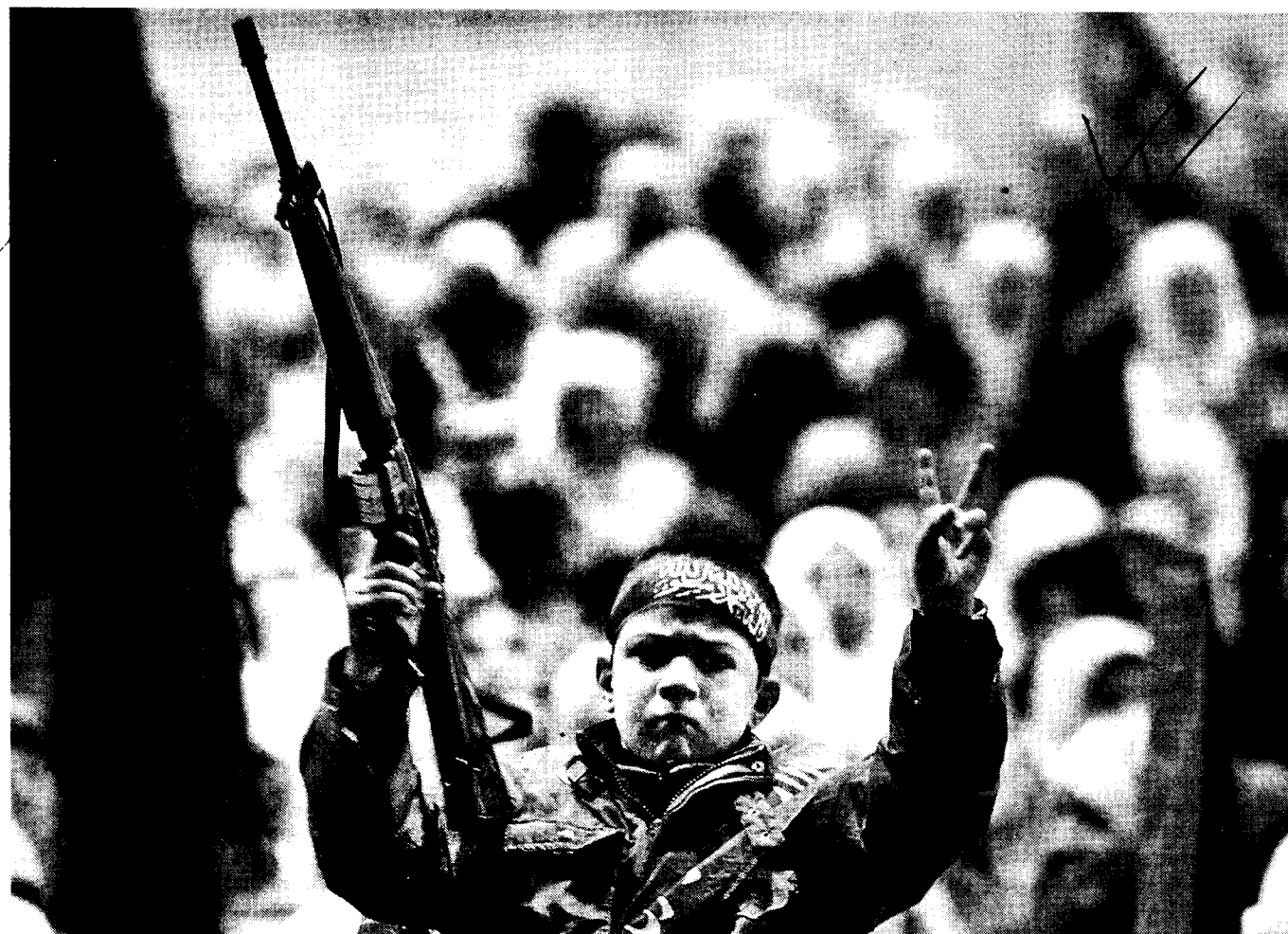
In Lebanon, the poorly represented Shias made a strong showing under Hizbollah, a battle hardened Islamic militant group with strong ties with Iran, when general elections were held last year. Saudi Arabia also conducted its first experiment with democracy when it allowed men to vote in municipal elections nationwide. The results did not surprise many — Islamists swept the polls. The Egyptian elections saw the Muslim Brotherhood winning 88 out of the 150 seats it chose to contest.

While it is tempting to assume that a single Islamist juggernaut is engulfing West Asia, in reality local conditions have thrown up a wide variety of groups whose activities are largely uncoordinated. Most of these outfits are not known to have any active links with terrorist groups such as like Al Qaeda.

In the Palestinian territories, the Fatah party formed by the late Yasser Arafat, which lost heavily to Hamas, was seen as corrupt and self-centred. In the Palestinian Street, it was commonly heard that Fatah's top leaders had cornered millions of dollars in western aid.

Many young voters were unable to identify with the "foreign" Palestinian old guard, which had arrived in the territories from Tunis following the Oslo accords of 1993. The Fatah did its best to woo voters by projecting Marwan Barghouti, the Charismatic young local leader now languishing in an Israeli jail, by plastering his posters in several towns and cities during the campaign.

In contrast, Hamas had developed an excellent community service network. The assassinations of its top leaders, Sheikh Yassin



POPULAR BACKING: A Palestinian boy holds up a toy rifle during a rally in support of Hamas in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Monday. — PHOTO: REUTERS

and Abdelaziz Rantisi, by Israel also turned the emotional tide in its favour. Finally, Israel's unilateral Gaza withdrawal played into the hands of Hamas, which claimed its militant campaign had forced the Israelis to quit.

Unlike the dramatic rise of Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood began to challenge political authority in Egypt much more slowly. Israel's defeat of the Arabs led by Egypt in 1967 was a turning point. It provided the Brotherhood the first major opportunity to acquire significant political influence. It was a common perception in Egypt then that Israel's unmatched religious zeal was responsible for the Arab defeat and that, therefore, Islam was the right antidote.

With the emergence of Anwar Sadat, Nasser's successor, the crackdown against the Brotherhood somewhat eased. Repression resumed with a vengeance when Hosni Mubarak took over. But with Mr. Mubarak's

rule benefiting only a small elite, the Muslim Brotherhood began to make fresh political inroads, by projecting itself as an alternative to the secular brand of Nasserite socialism, and Mr. Mubarak's pro-American, "free-market" economics.

The rise of Shia dominated political Islam has taken a different route in Iraq. The Shias have faced discrimination since the establishment of Ottoman rule in 1638, as the minority Sunni community has ruled it since then. Many of them faced serious deprivations under Ba'ath party rule, but the community developed an intricate underground support network during these years. The Shias have made a serious effort to fill the political vacuum following the end of Baathist rule resulting from the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the recent elections, the Shias won nearly 80 per cent of the seats in their established strongholds in Iraq.

The Sunnis, on the other hand, have converged on religious organisations after political and military suppression by American forces began. The Sunni religious bonds were reinforced after the Americans indiscriminately bombed Fallujah and reports about the torture of the largely Sunni inmates in the Abu Ghraib prison hit international headlines.

Not surprisingly, the Sunni religious Iraqi Accordance Front won an impressive number of seats in the Sunni dominated areas during the polls.

While the causes of Islamist resurgence have varied, it needs to be emphasised that this phenomena masks the assertion of the long suppressed aspirations of the underclass. In the absence of credible secular and egalitarian alternatives at the moment, Islam is fast emerging as the vehicle for self-expression and mass mobilisation in West Asia.

THE MUSLIM

01 FEB 2006

Imam had received three consignments last year: Cops

Packets May Have Contained Explosives

By Somit Sen & Mateen Hafeez/TNN

Mumbai: Maulana Ghulam Elahi Baksh Yahya, the imam arrested recently for links with the Lashkar-e-Taiba had received three consignments in 2005, some of which are suspected to have been explosives, sources said.

Officers of the anti-terrorist squad (ATS) are now grilling the imam to find out where he kept the packets or whom he gave them to. "We suspect that the consignments were to be part of the mission which the terrorists were planning to carry out in Mumbai," an officer said.

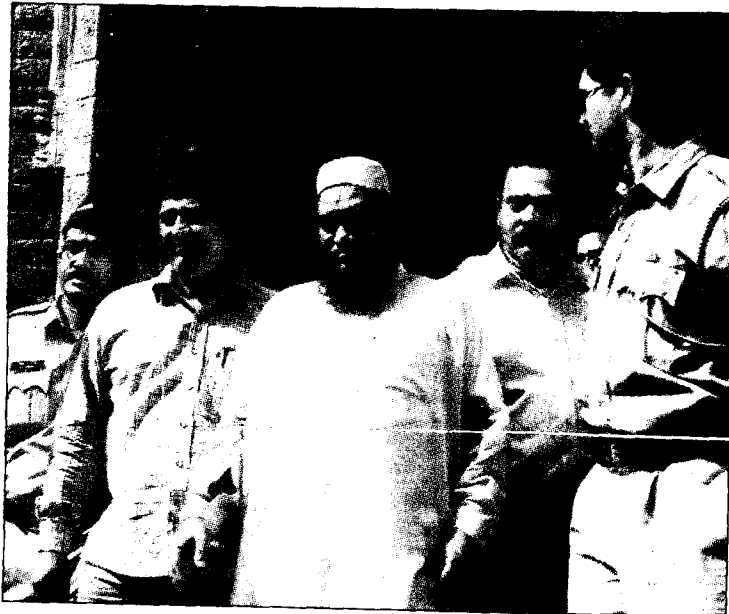
The ATS suspects that at least four modules were to arrive in the city from Kashmir to carry out a series of blasts planned in July-August. The first module, comprising three LeT members, was arrested in Nagpada on January 6 and the cops recovered detonators, timer switches, electronic circuits and pistols from them.

TOI had reported on Sunday that the second module, which was assigned the task of smuggling explosives, was believed to have entered Mumbai. "The imam is now being grilled about the whereabouts of the second module as he was the key contact person for the various modules in the city," an officer said. One more person, suspected to be a close aide of the imam, has been detained and he will be shown as arrested in the next few days.

The ATS has evidence to show that the imam was in regular touch with LeT's northern commander Salauddin over the phone for about a month. Said an officer, "We have found Salauddin's contact number stored in the cellphone seized from the imam. Besides, Salauddin's phones have been tapped last year and there is evidence of

him talking to the imam on various occasions—three to eight times a day and for thrice a week," a police source said.

Sources said one of the three terrorists, Mohammed Ramzan (now in police custody), had come to Mumbai on at least two earlier occasions accompanied by a few LeT members. The terrorists had taken shelter in Haj House, where the imam allegedly arranged for their stay for three days. "The imam had also



The imam is now being grilled to find out where he kept the packets

provided shelter to LeT members in the nearby Musafirkhana for four days during Ramzan last year," an officer stated. Ramzan and his accomplices Arshad Hussain Badru and Khursid Ghani Lone were produced in the Mazgaon court on Monday, and were remanded to further police custody till January 20.

A team from the Jammu and Kashmir police will now seek their transfer to Kashmir for further investigations.

Cleric had faced opposition in Haj House

By Mateen Hafeez/TNN

Mumbai: Suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba agent, Maulana Ghulam Elahi Baksh Yahya (44), had faced opposition as the imam of the Haj House mosque.

In July last year, a section of Haj committee employees had boycotted him saying it was unIslamic on his part to lead namaz. They wrote a letter to the chief executive officer of Haj House, Abdur Rasheed Mir

It added that many worshippers did not follow Yahya in the prayers, resulting in them having to go outside Haj House to offer prayers at other mosques. The complainants also offered Rs 50 each per month from their salaries and said a collective amount of Rs 3,000 would be paid to any other full time imam.

A copy of this complaint was also sent to the director (Haj) of the Union external affairs ministry. In opposition to this, a source said the dispute was not because of Yahya, but because he would lead the prayers as per the Hanfi sect and not the Sunni sect. "Most people who come to perform namaz are from the Hanfi sect and the complaint was sent based on a dispute between sects," he said.

Meanwhile, three NGOs—the Mumbai Aman Committee, Ulema Council and Jamiat-ul-Ulema—who promised to provide legal aide to Yahya, will approach the state human rights commission.

Said Dawood Khan, member of Human Rights League, an NGO, "As per law, a person is innocent until proven guilty. Baksh is an accused and not a criminal. The family have almost been ostracised and we will fight for them to get justice."

The police, on January 6, arrested Arshad Hussain Badroo, Khursheed Gani Lone alias Lala and Mohammed Ramzan Qazi alias Haji for suspected terror links.

An official of the Haji Mohammed Saboo Siddik Musafir Khana Trust, who is in charge of booking rooms, was also summoned by the ATS on Monday to record his statement. "Yahya had told me that Haji's friends would come and stay in room number 19 on January 15. They didn't come and I gave this room to other guests," he said.

Lashkar

2005

The New York Times

January 8, 2006

Denmark Is Unlikely Front in Islam-West Culture War

By DAN BILEFSKY

COPENHAGEN - When the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, including one in which he is shown wearing a turban shaped as a bomb with a burning fuse, it expected a strong reaction in this country of 5.4 million people.

But the paper was unprepared for the global furor that ensued, including demonstrations in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir, death threats against the artists, condemnation from 11 Muslim countries and a rebuke from the United Nations.

"The cartoons did nothing that transcends the cultural norms of secular Denmark, and this was not a provocation to insult Muslims," said Flemming Rose, cultural editor of Jyllands-Posten, Denmark's largest newspaper, which has declined to apologize for the drawings.

"But if we talk of freedom of speech, even if it was a provocation, that does not make our right to do it any less legitimate before the law," he added in an interview from Miami. He spent months living under police protection in Denmark.

As countries across Europe grapple with how to assimilate their growing Muslim populations in the post-9/11 world, Denmark has become an unlikely flashpoint in the escalating culture wars between Islam and the West. The publication of the cartoons in late September has provoked a fierce national debate over whether Denmark's famously liberal laws on free speech have gone too far.

It also has tested the patience of Denmark's 200,000 Muslims. Many of them say the cartoons reflect an intensifying anti-immigrant climate that is stigmatizing minorities and radicalizing young Muslims.

In Norrebro, an ethnically mixed neighborhood of Copenhagen where the philosopher Soren Kierkegaard is buried and where kebab stands dot the tree-lined streets, Imam Ahmed Abu-Laban, a leader among Denmark's Muslims, bristles at what he calls the "Islam phobia" gripping the country. He asserted that the cartoons had been calculated to incite Muslims because it was well known that in Islam depictions of the prophet were considered blasphemy.

"We are being mentally tortured," Imam Ahmed said at his mosque, an anonymous building that looks more like an apartment complex than a house of worship. "The cartoons are an insult against Islam, an attempt by right-wing forces in this country to get a rise out of the Muslim community and so portray us as against Danish values."

Mr. Rose, once a journalist in Iran, said he decided to commission the cartoons for Jyllands-Posten when he heard that Danish cartoonists were too scared of Muslim fundamentalists to illustrate a new children's biography of Muhammad.

Annoyed at the self-censorship he said had overtaken Europe since the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered last year by a Muslim radical for criticizing Islam's treatment of women, Mr. Rose said he decided to test Denmark's free speech norms.

The cartoons were published amid the growth of an anti-immigrant sentiment in Denmark, reflected in the rise of the far-right Danish People's Party. The party, which holds 13 percent of the seats in the Danish Parliament, has helped to push through the toughest anti-immigration rules on the Continent, including a rule preventing Danish citizens age 24 or younger from bringing in spouses from outside Denmark.

Soren Krarup, a retired priest and leading voice in the party, said the Muslim response to the cartoons showed that Islam was not compatible with Danish customs. He said Jesus had been satirized in Danish literature and popular culture for centuries - including a recent much-publicized Danish painting of Jesus with an erection - so why not Muhammad? He also argues that Muslims must learn to integrate.

"Muslims who come here reject our culture," he said. "Muslim immigration is a way for Muslims to conquer us, just as they have done for the past 1,400 years."

Muslim leaders say that such talk helped create the atmosphere that allowed the cartoons to be published. And they contend that it is alienating the people the Danish People's Party says it wants to assimilate.

In a sign that some Muslims are becoming radicalized, Danish counterterrorism officials say more young Danish Muslims are being drawn to Hizb ut-Tahrir, or the Party of Liberation, which seeks the unification of all Muslim countries under one leader and Shariah, the Islamic legal code. The group, which distributes literature at mosques and on the Internet, is banned in most of the Muslim world, as well as in Russia and Germany.

But because its main weapon is ideology rather than explosives, Danish officials say, it is allowed to operate in Denmark under the same permissive rules that allowed the publication of the cartoons. Under Danish law, inciting someone to commit an act of terror is illegal, but spouting vitriol against the West or satirizing Muhammad is not. The State Prosecutor's Office investigated the group in spring 2004 and decided not to ban it because it had not broken the law.

The free speech debate and the concerns over Hizb ut-Tahrir swept through Denmark's public schools last month when the imam's 17-year-old son, Taim, was expelled from Vester Borgerdyd School, after teachers overheard him giving sermons calling for the destruction of Israel and assailing Danish democracy during Friday Prayer at the school. The imam said his son became radicalized after being recruited by Hizb ut-Tahrir.

He said he opposed his son's sermons and had told his son to leave the house for defying him. But he also criticized the ruling that followed: a committee of mostly Christian rectors banned Friday Prayer at public schools across Denmark.

"They are trying to turn Denmark into a banana republic," said Imam Ahmed. "How is it O.K. to publish the cartoons, yet my son is portrayed as an ayatollah?"

At Vester Borgerdyd School, where the walls are lined with photographs of smiling students in Muslim dress, the headmistress, Anne Birgitte Rasmussen, said that Taim Abu-Laban had attracted a following and that she had feared his sermons would raise tensions among the school's more moderate Muslims.

"The tone of the political debate in this country, the talk about Muslims and immigrants, is making it very difficult for us," she said.

Mr. Rose, the editor, said free speech, no matter how radical, should be allowed to flourish, from all varieties of perspectives.

"Muslims should be allowed to burn the Danish flag in a public square if that's within the boundaries of the law," he said. "Though I think this would be a strange signal to the Danish people who have hosted them."

Lashkar link snapped up

OUR BUREAU

12/6
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Jan. 3: Investigators probing last week's terror attack at Bangalore's Indian Institute of Science today claimed a breakthrough with the arrest of a suspected member of a Pakistan-based militant group from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

Bangalore police chief Ajai Kumar Singh said a city police team picked up Abdul Rehman, a 35-year-old self-styled commander of the Lashkar-e-Toiba in south India, late on Sunday from Nalgonda, a town that appears to be the training ground for new terror recruits.

Two years ago, the police had shot dead Azam Ghori, an agent of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, who operated from Nalgonda, about 100 km from Hyderabad, and ran several terrorist modules in north India.

"We have information that he (Rehman) is the leader of the Lashkar-e-Toiba's operations in south India," Singh said.

Rehman was produced before a magistrate in the Karnataka capital and remanded in police custody for 14 days. But he was not paraded before the media and the police also refused to release a photograph of the suspect.

It is not yet clear whether Rehman was involved in the strike that killed a professor and

wounded four others. "It is too early to say whether he was the mastermind or just an abettor," the commissioner told a news conference.

Singh said he was "confident" that "interrogation will reveal details of the attack", though Rehman was proving to be a tough nut.

"He is a trained militant. They are trained not to give away anything. He seems to have stock answers for everything and revealed very little," he added.

The officer said Rehman, who operated under various names like Dr Rehman and Abdul Hameed, paid several visits to Saudi Arabia. "It is being ascertained whether he was in the city on Wednesday (the day of the attack) and who actually staged the attack," he said.

The police suspect that Rehman could have driven the getaway vehicle. Sources said Bangalore police zeroed in on him following a tip-off from central agencies.

Singh refused to say whether Rehman was an Indian national. "His passport has been seized. It is being verified. We cannot reveal any details now."

The commissioner said no arms or ammunition was seized from the suspect. Only some documentary evidence was found. "We cannot reveal anything now," he repeated, but added that investigations were on the "right track".



Police commissioner Ajai Kumar Singh at the news conference in Bangalore.

Picture by Shashi Kiran K

washingtonpost.com

Protests Spread in Afghanistan

At Least 3 Killed During Clash in North Over Depictions of Muhammad

By Griff Witte
Washington Post Foreign Service
Wednesday, February 8, 2006; A15

KABUL, Afghanistan, Feb. 7 -- Violent protests spread Tuesday across Afghanistan, where at least three demonstrators died in a clash with NATO soldiers and hundreds rampaged through the capital, trashing U.N. vehicles and throwing stones at buildings used by international agencies, visitors and troops.

Tens of thousands of Muslims demonstrated in parts of the Middle East, Africa and Asia, continuing to vent their rage over European newspaper cartoons mocking the prophet Muhammad. Some Muslim clerics and governments called for calm, while others seemed to encourage the vengeful outpouring.

In Tehran, crowds attacked the Danish Embassy with gasoline bombs and stones for a second day, while Iran's best-selling newspaper launched a competition to find the best cartoon about the Holocaust. Iran's government said the European cartoons had unleashed an "Islamophobic current which will be answered."

The European Union demanded increased security for European citizens and facilities in a number of countries where anti-Western violence has broken out in the past several days, and Denmark urged its citizens to leave Indonesia. Danish flags were burned in several cities Tuesday, and several consulates were attacked Monday.

A large Indonesian group, the Islamic Defenders Front, said that more protests were planned for Wednesday and that the issue had unified the country's Muslims. But both President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the chairmen of the two largest Muslim civic groups appealed for calm. Din Syamsuddin, chairman of one group, said that the anger was natural but that the "violence is against Islam."

In Denmark, where the cartoons were first published, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen appealed for "calm steadiness" and dialogue with Muslim countries. He called the controversy "a growing global crisis that has the potential to escalate beyond the control of governments."

"I want to appeal and reach out to all people and countries in the Muslim world," Rasmussen said, stressing Denmark's long support of "freedom of religion" and its record as "one of the world's most tolerant and open societies." He said, "Let us work together in the spirit of mutual respect and tolerance."

Rasmussen, speaking directly to the public for the first time since attackers began torching Danish

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diplomatic missions in various countries, blamed the violence on "radicals, extremists and fanatics" and said the vast majority of Denmark's 200,000 Muslims did not support the protesters.

He repeated that while he was sorry Muslims had been offended, he could not apologize for a Danish newspaper exercising its right to free speech. He said he had been surprised by how quickly "lies and misinformation" about the Danish situation had spread around the world via cell phones, text messages and Web blogs.

The Iranian daily paper Hamshahri said its cartoon contest was designed to test the boundaries of free speech -- the reason given by many European newspapers for publishing the cartoons that mocked Islam's holiest figure.

"Does Western free speech allow working on issues like America and Israel's crimes, or an incident like the Holocaust, or is this freedom of speech only good for insulting the holy values of divine religions?" the paper asked. In some European countries, it is a crime to deny that the Holocaust happened.

In London, British news media reported that Omar Khayam, 22, who had caused controversy when he dressed as a suicide bomber during a weekend protest, was arrested for violating parole in a drug case.

In Pakistan, thousands of demonstrators marched in the northwest city of Peshawar, burning effigies of Rasmussen and chanting, "Hang the man who insulted the prophet." The rally was led by the entire provincial cabinet. The chief minister, Akram Khan Durrani, said that the cartoonists should be punished "like terrorists" and that "it is our official and religious duty to register our outrage against this blasphemous act."

In Afghanistan, the fresh protests and fatalities came on the same day that a suicide bomber detonated his explosives outside police headquarters in the southern city of Kandahar, killing at least 12 and wounding 14. The Taliban Islamic militia asserted responsibility for the bombing, which was one of a spate of recent suicide attacks in the south and did not appear related to the demonstrations.

The most confrontational protest Tuesday occurred in the northern Afghan city of Meymaneh, where protesters threw stones and grenades at a NATO compound that primarily houses Norwegian soldiers doing reconstruction work. That protest and several others occurred in regions not usually associated with religious extremism or violence.

At least three protesters were killed in the Meymaneh clash, but it was unclear how they died. A NATO spokesman said that they had been killed by a grenade thrown by a fellow protester and that "at no stage have NATO forces used lethal force." But there were other reports that NATO troops had fired into the crowd.

The spokesman said a crowd of about 300 gathered outside the compound and gradually became more hostile, throwing stones and trying to get inside. He said troops responded with tear gas and warning shots, but the crowd torched nearby vehicles and buildings, fired shots and threw grenades.

Afghan officials said the situation remained tense, and British troops were being rushed to Meymaneh to help restore order. International military spokesmen said that Afghan police had helped their forces patrol and secure the area and that the protests were not related to the performance of Norwegian troops.

"This was a manifestation of a phenomenon that is taking place beyond Afghanistan as well," a spokesman said. The Afghan deputy provincial governor, Sayed Ahmed Sayed, said the protest began

after a local religious council met and condemned the Danish cartoons.

Large protests also took place in the far western city of Herat, where 8,000 people marched in the streets, and in the northern city of Pol-e Khomri. There were also reports of protests in half a dozen other towns, with swelling crowds and sporadic stone-throwing but no serious injuries or deaths.

But violent demonstrations erupted in Kabul, where a small, angry mob grew quickly and as many as 1,000 men marched through the streets in search of Western targets to attack. During a rampage that lasted several hours, protesters trashed U.N. vehicles and threw stones at U.N. buildings, the U.S. Embassy compound, a NATO headquarters and private homes in a neighborhood popular among Westerners.

The protesters tried to gain access to several heavily fortified compounds -- including the U.S. military base -- but were pushed back by security forces. They shouted slogans such as "Down with the USA!" "Down with Bush!" "Down with the Jews!" "Down with the Christians!" and "Long live Islam!"

At one point, Afghan soldiers fired warning shots into the air. No one was killed, but several security officers were injured by rocks and numerous protesters were hurt when the police began beating them. At least 15 people were arrested.

Mohammed Rahim Seddiq, 23, a baker who described himself as a protest organizer and who was later arrested, said it was "the duty of every Muslim" to protest against the United States and Denmark. "We want to teach a lesson to the infidels that they should not repeat this," he said.

A U.S. military spokesman, Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, said U.S. military officials had sent representatives to speak with Afghan leaders in the aftermath of a rally Monday in which protesters tried to force their way onto the American military base in Bagram, north of the capital. Three protesters were killed when Afghan security forces opened fire.

"Our message was that they should judge us on what we're doing here, not on what some cartoonist is doing somewhere else," he said. O'Hara repeated that the United States has labeled the cartoons "offensive."

Correspondents Kevin Sullivan in Copenhagen and Ellen Nakashima in Jakarta, Indonesia, and special correspondents Kamran Khan in Karachi, Pakistan, and Javed Hamdard in Kabul contributed to this report.

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Hundreds in Iran Protest Muhammad Drawings

By NASSER KARIMI
The Associated Press
Tuesday, February 7, 2006; 1:09 AM

TEHRAN, Iran -- Hundreds of angry protesters hurled stones and fire bombs at the Danish Embassy in the Iranian capital Monday to protest publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. Police used tear gas and surrounded the walled villa to hold back the crowd.

It was the second attack on a Western mission in Tehran on Monday. Earlier in the day, 200 student demonstrators threw stones at the Austrian Embassy, breaking windows and starting small fires. The mission was targeted because Austria holds the presidency of the European Union.

Thousands more people joined violent demonstrations across the world to protest publication of the caricatures of Muhammad, and the Bush administration appealed to Saudi Arabia to use its influence among Arabs to help ease tensions in the Middle East and Europe.

Afghan troops shot and killed four protesters, some as they tried to storm a U.S. military base outside Bagram _ the first time a protest over the issue has targeted the United States. A teenage boy was killed when protesters stampeded in Somalia.

The EU issued stern reminders to 18 Arab and other Muslim countries that they are under treaty obligations to protect foreign embassies.

Lebanon apologized to Denmark _ where the cartoons were first published _ a day after protesters set fire to a building housing the Danish mission in Beirut. The attack "harmed Lebanon's reputation and its civilized image," _ebanese Information Minister Ghazi Aridi said.

In the Iranian capital, police encircled the Danish Embassy but were unable to hold back 400 demonstrators as they tossed stones and Molotov cocktails at the walled brick villa. At least nine protesters were hurt, police said.

About an hour into the protest, police fired tear gas, driving the demonstrators into a nearby park. Later, about 20 people returned and tried to break through police lines to enter the embassy compound but were blocked by security forces.

As the tear gas dissipated, most of the crowd filtered back to the embassy, where they burned Danish flags and chanted anti-Danish slogans and "God is great."

Two trees inside the embassy compound were set on fire by the gasoline bombs. The embassy gate was burned, as was a police booth along the wall protecting the building.

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The Danish Foreign Ministry said it was not aware of any staff inside the building, which closed for the day before the demonstration.

Ambassador Claus Juul Nielsen told DR public television in Denmark that the protesters vandalized the ground floor of the embassy, which included the trade and the visa departments.

The crowd, which included about 100 women, ignored police orders to disperse and kept hurling fire bombs until being hit by tear gas. The crowd dispersed by midnight.

Also Monday, 200 members of Iran's parliament issued a statement warning that those who published the cartoons should remember the case of Salman Rushdie _ the British author against whom the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a death warrant for his novel "The Satanic Verses."

The angry demonstrations in Iran recall the Nov. 4, 1979, seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran after the Islamic revolution that overthrew U.S. ally Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

The students who held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days faced little or no police resistance in the post-revolutionary turmoil that had brought Shiite theologian Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and an Islamic government to power.

There has been a wave of protests across the Islamic world over caricatures first published in September by a Danish paper. They have since been reprinted by other media, mostly in Europe.

The drawings _ including one depicting the prophet wearing a turban shaped as a bomb _ have touched a raw nerve in part because Islamic law forbids any illustrations of the Prophet Muhammad for fear they could lead to idolatry.

In a meeting with local authors, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad condemned the cartoons and addressed the West: "Insulting the Prophet Muhammad would not promote your position," the official Iranian news agency quoted him as saying.

The Bush administration urged Saudi Arabia to help stem protests. "Certainly the leaders of the Saudi government might be individuals who might fulfill that role," spokesman Sean McCormack said. "There are others in the region who also might fulfill that role as well."

White House spokesman Scott McClellan issued a broad appeal to "all governments to take steps to lower tensions and prevent violence."

The worst of the violence in Afghanistan was outside Bagram, the main U.S. base, with Afghan police firing on some 2,000 protesters as they tried to break into the heavily guarded facility, said Kabir Ahmed, the local government chief.

Two demonstrators were killed and 13 people, including eight police, were wounded, he said. No U.S. troops were involved, the military said.

Afghan police also fired on protesters in the central city of Mazar-i-Sharif after a man in the crowd shot at them and others threw stones and knives, Interior Ministry spokesman Dad Mohammed Rasa said. Two protesters were killed and three people were wounded, including two police, officials said.

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February 8, 2006

Iran

Contest for Cartoons Mocking the Holocaust Announced in Tehran

By NAZILA FATHI

TEHRAN, Feb. 7 — Iran's largest newspaper on Tuesday announced an international competition for Holocaust cartoons to retaliate against the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in Danish newspapers last year.

The daily newspaper Hamshahri, which is run by the capital's municipal government, said the competition was co-sponsored by the House of Caricatures, a Tehran exhibit hall for cartoons. It said further information would be announced next week.

The paper said it wanted to see whether freedom of expression extended to mocking the Holocaust. It invited foreign cartoonists to enter the contest.

"The serious question for Muslims is whether the West extends freedom of expression to the crimes committed by the United States and Israel, or an event such as the Holocaust," the daily said. "Or is its freedom only for insulting religious sanctities?"

In a twist on the way some Americans renamed French fries "freedom fries," the Commerce Ministry called for changing the name of Danish pastry to that of a flower named after Muhammad, according to the Iranian Student News Agency. The idea was proposed in a letter to the ministry, the press agency said.

The cartoon contest announcement came a day after hundreds of demonstrators hurled stones and gasoline bombs at the Danish Embassy here.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, praised the protests in a speech on Tuesday, comparing the cartoons to questioning the Holocaust. "In this freedom, casting doubt or negating the genocide of the Jews is banned but insulting the beliefs of 1.5 billion Muslims is allowed," he said of Western press freedom, according to the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

"The reaction of the Muslim world was in time, and they were right to react this way," Ayatollah Khamenei was quoted as saying. "This anger is not targeted at Christians but at those who planned this conspiracy."

The ayatollah was referring to the reaction of European leaders last year after Iran's conservative president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called the Holocaust a myth and called for the destruction of Israel.

The Foreign Ministry has announced that it plans to hold a seminar to examine the veracity of the

Holocaust but has set no date for it.

washingtonpost.com

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February 7, 2006

Muslim Protests Against Cartoons Spread

By CARLOTTA GALL and CRAIG S. SMITH

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan, Feb. 6 — Muslim anger over Danish cartoons that satirized the Prophet Muhammad continued to swell across the Middle East and elsewhere in the world on Monday, turning violent in Afghanistan, where at least five protesters died and more than a dozen police officers and protesters were wounded.

As the unrest gained momentum, European diplomats worked the telephones and fanned out across the Muslim world, urging their counterparts to issue statements that might help calm the unrest that had destroyed the Danish Consulate in Lebanon and the Danish and Norwegian Embassies in Syria on Saturday.

On Monday, protesters turned out in Turkey, Indonesia, India, Thailand and even New Zealand, where newspapers recently reprinted the cartoons. A teenager died in Somalia on Monday when the police set off a stampede by firing into the air to disperse protesters.

Crowds in the Iranian capital, Tehran, set fire to the Danish Embassy and broke the windows of the embassy of Austria, which now holds the presidency of the European Union. Thousands of students demonstrated in Cairo.

The diplomacy was complicated by other international issues and domestic politics in countries where protests have occurred, with the most significant demonstrations localized in what Cristina Gallach, a spokeswoman for Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, called "very peculiar" places, including Iran, Syria and the Gaza Strip.

Iran, for example, is facing international pressure to halt its nuclear program, and Syria has been isolated internationally since the assassination of Lebanon's former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, last year.

Ms. Gallach said Monday, "What we have to ask is that Arab leaders, and Arabs themselves, who see the importance of having good relations with Europe and the Western world, come out and speak clearly about the importance of not letting the situation deteriorate to the point that the only one who suffers is moderate Islam."

She said Mr. Solana had spoken to leaders of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as representatives of the Arab League and diplomats in several Arab countries. European Union representatives have also called on government ministers across the Muslim world.

Arab governments have met the growing wave of protests with tacit acceptance, if not support, while seeking to prevent violence.

Qatar's Chamber of Commerce said it had halted dealings with Danish and Norwegian delegations, urging other Muslim states to follow suit. In cities where protests are unheard of, like Dubai, demonstrations against Denmark have been held openly. In some, demonstrators were bused in, paid for by the government. An official at a religious affairs ministry in the United Arab Emirates, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "You have no choice but to join the chorus. Anyone who doesn't speak up will look as if they tacitly accept the prophet to be insulted."

Ihsan Bu-Huhleiga, a Saudi economist and member of the Shura consultative assembly, said, "It seems like the Danes did not take the issue seriously at all in the beginning."

The Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten originally published the 12 cartoons last September, and they were republished in European news media in the last week.

Danish diplomats see an even heavier hand in some of the violence. "Syria has failed to protect a diplomatic mission," said Thomas May, consulate general for Denmark in Dubai, adding that "if you look at the pictures, you can see that the security people turned their backs" after the attack on the embassy in Syria.

"Everybody was hoping that when the newspaper came out with an apology, and our prime minister came out with a personal apology, this would have cooled things," he said. "What more can we do?"

The worst violence on Monday occurred in Afghanistan, outside the main American military base at Bagram, north of Kabul, when 1,000 protesters clashed with Afghan policemen guarding the outer gate.

Kabir Ahmad, Bagram's district chief, said an estimated 5,000 people, gathered by local clerics, had demonstrated peacefully in nearby Charikar before some of them moved to the base.

Three protesters were killed in the ensuing violence, and one died later. Five others were wounded as the police struggled to keep the protesters from breaking through the gate. Eight police officers were wounded.

Another protester was killed in Mehtarlam, east of Kabul, as hundreds of people demonstrated. The Interior Ministry attributed the death to gunfire from the crowd. Two policemen were wounded there. The Associated Press reported two protesters killed in Mehtarlam.

In Kabul, angry youths threw stones at the Danish, British and French Embassies and the United Nations head office.

President Hamid Karzai has urged the Afghan people to forgive those responsible for the cartoons. "We must have as Muslims the courage to forgive and not make it an issue of dispute between religions or cultures," he said Friday.

In Iran, which has already withdrawn its ambassador to Denmark and is reviewing trade ties with the countries where the cartoons have been published, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Monday criticized the argument of freedom of speech that European newspapers used to justify publishing the cartoons.

"If your newspapers are free, why do not they publish anything about the innocence of the Palestinians and protest against the crimes committed by the Zionists?" the semi-official Mehr news agency quoted him as saying.

Meanwhile, several hundred Iranians attacked the Danish Embassy in Tehran, hurling firebombs and chanting, "God is great," and "Death to Israel," while the police watched.

As the facade of the building burned and young men managed to climb around the razor wire protecting the diplomatic compound, a voice broadcast by loudspeaker told the crowd that the cartoons were a Zionist conspiracy, orchestrated by those "afraid of our fundamentalism."

The police eventually fired tear gas into the crowd, but the protesters soon began throwing gasoline bombs again.

As the fires began to rage again, a newspaper editor affiliated with the Iranian Basiji militia, which organized the protest, arrived to calm the crowd. He urged protesters to remain outside the embassy for a week to show their anger, but asked that they stop throwing firebombs because "it will be used against us."

One day after violent demonstrations led to the destruction of the Danish mission in Lebanon and the resignation of Lebanon's interior minister, Hassan al-Sabaa, Lebanese politicians called for patience.

Many expressed fears that the protests could become a catalyst for renewed sectarian tensions, and put the blame for Sunday's violence on outsiders, especially Syrians, a sentiment echoed by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, who called the protests "an attack against Islam and the principles of the Holy Koran."

Residents of Achrafieh, a predominantly Lebanese Christian neighborhood that saw the worst of the violence, swept the broken glass from their cars. Passers-by stopped to peer at the gutted hulk of the Danish Consulate, and at the windows of a Maronite church that had been pelted with stones.

About 400 protesters turned out for an evening counterdemonstration, calling for unity among Lebanese Christians and Muslims.

Toufic Abdou, 20, a law student and Lebanese Forces member who attended the counterdemonstration, said: "Yesterday, the protesters destroyed a church in a Christian area. They say that they were Lebanese Muslims, but they weren't. They were actually Syrians and Iranians. We are here to say that the Christians of Lebanon are here to stay."

Peaceful protests continued Monday in Turkey, though a Catholic priest was shot dead on Sunday in the Black Sea port of Trebizond by a young man shouting, "God is great!"

Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, speaking Monday on television, criticized the violence around the world. He said that a free press was necessary, but that "this does not mean that everyone is entitled to say or write anything, without any limits, or do whatever comes to his mind without considering the consequences."

Carlotta Gall reported from Kandahar for this article, and Craig S. Smith from Paris. Reporting was contributed by Sebnem Arsu from Istanbul, Hassan M. Fattah from Beirut, Somini Sengupta from New Delhi and Abdul Waheed Wafa from Kabul.

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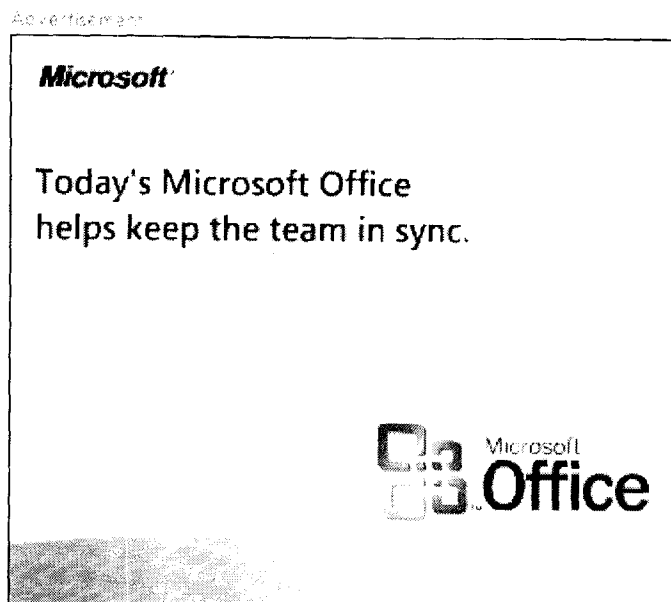
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Cartoons Spark Burning of Embassies

Syrians, Angry at Drawings of Prophet Muhammad, Target Danes and Norwegians

By Karl Vick
Washington Post Foreign Service
Sunday, February 5, 2006; A15

ISTANBUL, Feb. 4 -- Outrage among Muslims around the world over cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad again erupted into violence on Saturday, as crowds in Damascus, Syria, set afire the embassies of two countries where newspapers published the images forbidden by Islam.



The embassies of Denmark and Norway were badly damaged by demonstrators shouting "God is Great!" as police fired tear gas and water cannons, news reports said. In the Palestinian territories, protesters burned tires and threw rocks at offices of the European Union, and a leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas, was quoted as calling for the death of those responsible for the caricatures.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church added its voice to Western governments condemning publication of the images. "The right to freedom of thought and expression . . . cannot entail the right to offend the religious sentiment of believers," the Vatican said in a statement.

The controversy showed no signs of abating as newspapers reprinted the cartoons, triggering fresh protests. In the West, each new incident fueled curiosity about the provocative images in question -- a series of 12 cartoons that a Danish newspaper commissioned in September to directly challenge Islam's ban on depicting the prophet. The cartoons not only pictured Muhammad, who Muslims believe carried the word of God from a mountaintop 1,500 years ago; several also lampooned him, with one artist rendering his turban as a bomb.

After Muslims began protesting this past week, newspapers in Germany, France and Norway reprinted the cartoons, calling the issue a matter of free expression. But the Bush administration and other Western governments declared that publication served no purpose except offending the world's 1.1 billion Muslims, many of whom already feel aggrieved. Global surveys taken before the cartoon controversy showed that Muslims overwhelmingly believe the U.S.-led war on terror is in fact a war on Islam.

"It's interesting how our ambassadors in Europe see this issue so differently than ambassadors in Islamic countries," said a European diplomat in Turkey, where reaction to the cartoon flap has been relatively muted. "Those in Europe see it as a free speech issue," he said, while diplomats in Muslim countries are agitated.

The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity to share confidential diplomatic traffic. The diplomat quoted a cable from his country's Cairo embassy that read: "I can't de-escalate. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not something I can sell here if it is in conflict with Islam."

In the United States, major newspapers, including The Washington Post, chose not to reprint the images on grounds they would give offense. In South Africa, the high court barred Sunday papers from reprinting them. CNN International reported that two newspapers in New Zealand did publish the images, but the channel blurred footage of the papers.

"We should have killed all those who offend the prophet and instead here we are, protesting peacefully," Mahmoud Zahar, a leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, was quoted as telling the Italian daily Il Giornale on Saturday, according to the Associated Press. Hamas won control of the Palestinian Authority parliament in elections last month.

The Reuters news agency reported the government of Iran had appointed a committee to explore bans on trade with countries where the cartoons had been published. Last year Iran quietly imposed a similar ban on at least one country, South Korea, that had voted against it at the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In Damascus, peaceful protests at the Danish and Norwegian embassies grew violent after demonstrators broke through police lines. Both buildings were empty at the time they were overrun. Denmark warned its citizens to avoid the country.

"The situation for Danes in Syria has developed negatively in the past hours," a Foreign Ministry statement said. Norway also warned its citizens away. That country previously pulled aid workers and diplomats out of the West Bank after protests.

Demonstrations were also reported in Pakistan, Britain, Iraq and Bethlehem in the West Bank. In the West Bank town of Hebron, about 50 Palestinians burned a Danish flag and demanded a boycott of Danish goods, chanting "We will redeem our prophet, Muhammad, with our blood!" they chanted, the AP reported.

There were scattered counter-demonstrations, such as one outside Copenhagen where about 50 right-wing protesters held Danish flags and shouted, "Denmark for Danes!" the AP reported. Italy's ANSA news agency reported that about 50 supporters of the right-wing Northern League offered Danish beer and biscuits to passersby in Milan.

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