



NDAAs



UNDER SIEGE:

News analysis documenting relevant issues facing the world today



ISLAMOPHOBIA



**and the
Israel Lobby**

Under Siege:

NDAA, Islamophobia and the Israel Lobby

News analysis documenting relevant issues facing the world today

A Final Call research project

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Introduction

The well-financed “anti-Sharia” movement that opposes the building of mosques in the United States, fueled by acerbic rhetoric spewing from the mouths of political leaders and media personalities has been allowed to spread unchecked. Now, a dangerously Islamophobic climate exists for Muslims in the U.S. and abroad.

The leadership of the Religious Right with their symbiotic partnership with conservative elected officials makes no exceptions for any particular cultural nuances or unique belief systems. To these Apostles of Hate, Islam is the enemy.

This report aims to deliver a truthful and direct presentation of the existing legal and political threats facing followers of Islam in the United States, regardless of race or ethnicity.

The Final Call uses state-of-the-art production technology and its content offers readers in-depth original reporting and news analysis. With hard-hitting coverage of national and international news, no other newspaper tackles the most controversial issues as aggressively as The Final Call.

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The Final Call aims to be an essential source of information for those seeking uncompromised reporting in today’s arena of corporate driven media.



The 2012 National Defense Authorization Act

Laying the foundation for targeting and jailing political dissenters in America

On January 22, 2009, newly inaugurated President Barack H. Obama proudly issued his first three executive orders, one of them, a directive requiring the infamous Guantanamo Bay prison facility to be closed within one year.¹

Nearly three years later, Guantanamo Bay remains open with prisoners being held without trial, and a new law enacted with the stroke of his pen could mean more American citizens will be joining them soon.

With people partying worldwide in naïve bliss on New Year's Eve, December 31, Pres. Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act giving the military extraordinary sweeping powers to detain United States

citizens indefinitely without trial. The law has been widely condemned by civil libertarians, activists, and American citizens who see this as further evidence of the erosion human rights, which began post 9/11 under then-President George W. Bush.

“The fact that I support this bill as a whole does not mean I agree with everything in it. In particular, I have signed this bill despite having serious reservations with certain provisions that regulate the detention, interrogation, and prosecution of suspected terrorists,” said Pres. Obama in a statement.²

Ironically, when Pres. Obama issued the order to close Guantanamo Bay in 2009, he said he desired to “restore the standards of due process and the core constitutional values that have made this country great even in the midst of war, even in dealing with terrorism.” His signing the NDAA into law does exactly the opposite, and critics believe America has witnessed one of the most tragic reversals of civil liberties in its history.

“President Obama’s action today is a blight on his legacy because he will forever be known as the president who signed indefinite detention without charge or trial into law,” said Anthony D. Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union. “The statute is particularly dangerous because it has no temporal or geographic limitations, and can be used by this and future presidents to militarily detain people captured far from any battlefield.”³

During a Jan. 9 in studio interview with radio host Cliff Kelley of WVON 1690AM in Chicago, The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan delivered his thoughts on the NDAA in response to a question posed by a caller.⁴

“That act signed into law by our president is an act that is destined to stop those of us who speak truth to power,” said Min. Farrakhan. “It’s aimed primarily

at a man that they know they have not been able to control. So I warn the government—you can do what you want with me—but Farrakhan is going to be found being faithful to the truth that will free the minds of our people, and whatever the consequences, I warn you, when you come after me, God will come surely after you,” he added.

Despite the White House spin, there is no way around it, this law curtails freedoms, has disappointed his supporters, and opens the door further for abuse.

The xenophobic and islamophobic rhetoric spewed from the mouths of several leading Republican candidates for president has raised the possibility that while Pres. Obama claims he will not use the law to indefinitely detain American citizens, future presidents could use the act he signed into law, to do exactly that.

Critics cite this as a key concern because according to political analysts, Pres. Obama’s reelection in 2012 is not guaranteed.

Polling data from Real Clear Politics shows 70 percent of the American people think the country is on the wrong track. American displeasure with the economy could cause a majority of voters to vote for a change in direction. Additionally, many liberal voters who supported Mr. Obama as the candidate for “change” in 2008 have been disappointed as he has hawkishly increased America’s global militarism after winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009.

Attorney Abdul Arif Muhammad, General Counsel for the Nation of Islam and the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan read the entire bill paying special attention to the wording in sections 1021 and 1022, the most controversial parts dealing with those subject to military detention. Although the wording seems to suggest American citizens would not be covered, it leaves the door open should another president come into office with another interpretation, he added.

“It is important to note that President Obama himself upon signing the bill, issued a three page presidential policy statement specifically raising concerns about the constitutionality of those provisions, especially as they relate to American citizens. As the commander-in-chief, the bill authorized him to promulgate regulations to implement the law. He specifically says in his presidential statement that he would not promulgate and implement any rules or regulations that would specifically impact American citizens and their constitutional rights,” Atty. Muhammad continued. “The mere fact that he had to make this statement upon signing the bill is clear evidence of problems with the law.”

What also has many disturbed is that after originally saying he would veto the bill, Pres. Obama quickly signed it into law, forcing critics to wonder if he will keep his word relating to not using the law to indefinitely detain citizens.

“It’s not that I believe that the president is disingenuous, but there’s been a number of times during his presidency where he has quickly changed his position based on minimal political pressure,” said Dawud Walid, executive director of the Michigan chapter of the Council of American Islamic Relations. “If he said he was going to give people in Guantanamo Bay due process and civilian trials, and then backtracked on that, he’s already set a precedent for me to think that he could backtrack on his written promise regarding NDAA.”

In a recent opinion piece titled “Obama’s Failed Human Rights Moment,” Jonathan Hafetz, professor at Seton Hall School of Law and author of the book “Habeas Corpus after 9/11: Confronting America’s New Global Detention System” wrote: “The danger, however, is that the NDAA will embolden those who wish to argue that the next terrorism suspect arrested in the U.S. can be locked away in a

military jail without charge or trial. The ramifications of domestic military detention should concern anyone concerned with abuse of government power,” Prof. Hafetz continued. “Could soldiers seize and imprison a person arrested at his home in say Lincoln, Nebraska, for writing a check to a group that supported al-Qaeda? Or a doctor in New York who sent medical supplies to an organization in Kenya that provided humanitarian aid to a group in that country deemed to be affiliated with al-Qaeda? Rather than making clear that the government does not have this power, the NDAA creates more uncertainty.”⁵

A majority of the 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus voted against NDAA, but not all. Two Democratic CBC members from Texas, Rep. Shelia Jackson-Lee and Rep. Al Green both voted in favor of it. Inquires requesting comments from both were not returned by Final Call press time. Rep. Jackson-Lee sits on the House Committee on Homeland Security chaired by Rep. Peter King (R-NY).

Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) told The Final Call he voted against it because in his opinion, the NDAA does not represent the country’s principles.

“There was a lot of conversation about whether this was ‘Act 2’ or ‘Phase 2’ of the Patriot Act which we thought trampled on the rights of the American citizens,” said Rep. Cleaver. “We all grew up with the belief based on the Constitution that we were innocent until proven guilty and to have people detained, whether it is in this country or another country—which is another issue with this legislation—without any kind of trial, and to detain people indefinitely is not what America stands for,” he added.

Though not discussed in the mainstream media, nor by Pres. Obama's spokesmen, in the hundreds of sections of the bill totaling over 500 pages, the NDAA contains provisions for continued funding for the war in Afghanistan.

“That war—the longest in U.S. history—has cost thousands of American lives, untold Afghan civilian deaths, and hundreds of billions of dollars. As an original cosponsor of the Responsible End to the War in Afghanistan Act, I believe the only defense money we spend on Afghanistan should be for the safe and orderly withdrawal of U.S. forces,” said Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) in a statement after voting against the NDAA.⁶ “Second, we should not be codifying post-9/11 security measures that threaten civil liberties. Everyone from the ACLU to the FBI has expressed concerns about the bill. By preventing the military from transferring detainees to U.S. prisons, the bill essentially ensures that Guantanamo Bay will never be closed,” he added.

According to the worldwide human rights organization Amnesty International, 171 detainees remain held there.

Even foreign nations weighed in criticizing America's human rights record. Also citing the continued operation of Guantanamo Bay, Russia's Foreign Ministry harshly criticized the Obama administration's human rights record accusing them of hypocritically scolding other nations about rights abuses, while curtailing the freedom of its own citizens. According to news reports, the 90-page report directly slammed Pres. Obama for “legalizing indefinite and extrajudicial custody and the return of court martials.”

For months, troubling questions have been raised by Muslims as the net of those at risk of being labeled “domestic terrorists,” or having “ties to terrorists” is broadened to include just about anyone.

According to recent guidelines distributed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to military surplus stores in the state of Colorado, some legal activities could result in an overzealous, or fearful storeowner reporting customers to the FBI. Under the heading: “What Should I Consider Suspicious?” things such as insisting on paying for purchases with cash, shaving off a beard or changing the color of one’s hair could warrant a phone call to the Joint Terrorism Task Force in that area.

With the terrible weather experienced in the year 2011, it would not be surprising to discover an increasing number of self-reliant and forward thinking people purchasing and storing food and supplies in the event of a weather emergency, however, according to the FBI’s guidelines, anyone purchasing weatherproof match containers, Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), flashlights or gas masks could be suspect.

Furthermore, as it relates to Muslims, the well-publicized “foiled plots” and prejudicial trials appear to be energizing a well-financed “anti-Sharia” movement that opposes the building of mosques in the U.S. To the intellectually incurious, political operatives such as GOP presidential candidates Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich, and former candidates Michele Bachmann and Herman Cain give the movement a patina of legitimacy.

Fueled by the hate-filled Islamophobic writings and rhetoric espoused by those classified by the [Center for American Progress](#) as “misinformation experts,” many Americans are victims of the virulent anti-Muslim propaganda that has been allowed to spread unchecked.

Right-wing conservative writers like Daniel Pipes at the Middle East Forum, Jewish blogger Pamela Geller and her patron, Robert Spencer of JihadWatch,

along with the bloviating rhetoric espoused by media personalities such as Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck have created a dangerously xenophobic climate for Muslims in the U.S., and abroad.

When 32-year-old White blonde-hair blue-eyed Norwegian Anders Breivik gunned down dozens of youth in July, he saw himself as a soldier in the battle to prevent the “Islamic Colonization of Europe.” In his heavily footnoted manifesto, Mr. Breivik echoed the views of those spearheading the persecution of Muslims here. Mr. Spencer’s writings were cited 162 times, Ms. Geller’s blog was cited 12 times. Both denied responsibility for inciting Mr. Breivik to murder, while at the same time accusing Muslim writers, lecturers and scholars of inciting “terrorism plots” that have never even materialized.

A 2010 study released by Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill titled “Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans” found that while a tiny number of Muslims may have been angered and possibly “radicalized” following the events of 9/11, “the vast majority of Muslim-Americans reject radical extremist ideology and violence.” The researchers did however, find a significant increase what they termed “anti-Muslim bias.”

Following the drone killing in Yemen of American citizen Anwar al-Awlaki, Mr. Mohammed Shafiq, Chief Executive of the UK-based Ramadhan Foundation spoke out against Al-Qaeda but warned against the Obama administration’s escalating number of extrajudicial assassinations.

“Al-Qaeda’s ideology of violence and killing is evil and has no justification in Islam and we in the Muslim community abhor this ideology as our Islamic duty,” said Mr. Shafiq. “Human rights should not be disregarded when it comes to alleged terrorists but the process of law should be followed,” he added.

Lawyers for the American Civil Liberties Union have monitored cases involving many individuals classified as “terrorist sympathizers” for their obvious First-Amendment implications as well as the potential for abuse.

Mr. Walid believes the “material support for terrorism” designation or accusing persons or groups of being “affiliates” of terrorist groups is “too ambiguous” and demonstrates a “lack of transparency” dealing with how individuals and groups are labeled by government and law enforcement officials.

“My concern in the language is in the ambiguous word ‘affiliates.’ Affiliates can be detained, and an affiliate is a very loose term like—what does that mean? That’s what really bothers me and this isn’t something that Muslims alone should be worried about—people of other faith traditions (also) because it’s very easy that someone could be put on a list and classified as a so-called ‘sympathizer,’” Mr. Walid added.

Could a scholar or researcher who has read “controversial” literature and published commentary regarding it or any author espousing views considered by some to be “radical” be snared in the net of being classified as a potential terrorist? Could an internet blogger posting what may be considered “unpopular” political views find themselves in the same situation? Any American citizen who has attended an educational facility or even a seminar overseas—especially in one of the regions considered by the U.S. to be a “haven for terrorists”— could possibly find themselves on a terrorist watch list, even if they have not been involved in anything remotely related to terrorist acts.

Analysts say jailing people simply for the power of their ideas while using circumstantial evidence such as travel habits is a slippery slope unrepresentative of the noble ideals espoused by the Obama administration. It also ignores the role of

America's unpopular foreign policy related to the Muslim world as well as unpopular military action in Muslim lands as reasons for growing angry dissent domestically and internationally.

“The Muslim world is boiling,” said editor of The Arab Journal, Ali Baghdadi. “Obama went to Turkey—which is an Islamic country—and spoke in Istanbul, he went to Egypt and spoke at Cairo University, he told the entire Muslim world that the United States is not an enemy of Islam and he promised to have change, he promised to have hope, and everything was nothing but a lie. The man may have good intentions but he doesn't have the strength to stand up to the Israeli lobby and he does not have the power to stand up to big business and the war industry,” he said.

In a recent interview while in Saint Kitts during his Caribbean Tour, Minister Farrakhan, said it was “unfortunate” that Pres. Obama is now seen by many as an “extension of George W. Bush” and his administration's unpopular policies.

Mr. Walid agreed, saying not only is he disappointed in Pres. Obama, he is disappointed in many of the traditional Black civil rights leaders and organizations for their failure to challenge the president on this issue and others like it.

“I'm disappointed in our Black civil rights leaders and organizations that raised a number of concerns very vocally regarding President Bush and his administration's erosion of civil liberties in America but they've been deafly silent on a number of these issues as it relates to Obama,” said Mr. Walid. “If we are to be a people about justice, we have to hold people accountable.”

Citing the Gulf War under George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and most recently, the U.S.-led NATO military aggression

resulting in the removal and assassination of Col. Muammar Gadhafi, Atty. Muhammad said the Minister's consistent outspokenness on behalf of the oppressed has placed him as the sole voice of justice and therefore, a possible target of this law.

“The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan has always been a person who has exercised his first amendment constitutional right to free speech to raise a voice of dissent against America's foreign policies that are unjust to oppressed peoples,” said Atty. Muhammad. “The question becomes, whether or not his exercise of his right to express his dissent can be interpreted under this law to be a justifiable basis to detain him in military custody without benefit of his constitutional right to trial.”

Last February, during his Saviours' Day 2011 keynote address, Minister Farrakhan presciently and prophetically spoke about this very subject relating to the history of his teacher, the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad, with direct references to events that he may experience in the near future in an attempt by the U.S. government to neutralize him.

“These are my words for our brother president, Barack Obama: In 1942, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was sent to prison because President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued an Executive Order to take him off the streets when America was prosecuting a war, and America needed some Black bodies to go and fight a war even though there was no benefit for us in fighting such a war. And now, the Zionists are pushing President Obama to go to war with Iran over some suspected nuclear power that the Israelis have that Iran does not have,” said Minister Farrakhan. “Do you think that they're afraid of my voice? Yes they are! I don't have any guns. What I have is something in my mouth that's more powerful than guns! While most of you with “guns” can't shoot straight anyway, with The

Truth that I speak, I don't miss a soul! Allah's Truth finds you wherever you are! If America goes to war, President Obama, like President Roosevelt, may be forced to sign an Executive Order that he's not fully in agreement with, to take Farrakhan off the streets; and charge him with 'sedition' and 'treason.'”⁷

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America Hijacked!

Who loses when the country's political reality, finances and foreign policy are dictated by lobbyists?

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan in a recent message to nearly 4,000 on the campus of Prairie View A&M told the naked truth about America's corrupt political system.

“When you become a governor or a senator—somebody in political power, you don't see the power behind the power,” the Minister said. “The real power is not what you see. The real power is the unseen reality that moves what you see.”⁸

The unseen powers in America's political system are the advisers and lobbyists operating in the shadowy corridors near decision-makers in Washington D.C.

In 2007, Professors Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer's groundbreaking work titled, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" opened many eyes to the powerful influence of the Israel lobby in America. Since then, more have come to the realization that like-minded groups of wealthy donors pour money into the political system with the goal of electing officials that will govern in the best interests of the moneyed few.

The rapacious greed and fraud committed by highly placed members of the global financial services industry within America's economic hierarchy has been revealed and the Occupy Wall Street movement is a sign of the anger and dissatisfaction that is boiling just under the surface.

Recent polling data from Real Clear Politics shows that nearly 82 percent disapprove of the job being done by the U.S. Congress and over 73 percent believe the country is on the wrong track. Much of this dissatisfaction seems to arise from feelings that the American political system only benefits wealthy campaign donors and only responds to powerful lobbying groups.

One of the groups accused of hijacking the American political system is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Leading the Israel-first lobby, AIPAC with its 100,000 members uses political leverage to shape American foreign policy. According to its website, AIPAC believes: "These efforts are critical to Israel's security and to American interests in the Middle East and around the world."

AIPAC also relies heavily on its contacts with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, an umbrella group composed of 52 national Jewish organizations working on Israel's behalf.

To AIPAC, it doesn't matter whether the president is a Democrat or a Republican, or which political party dominates the U.S. Congress. At AIPAC's annual conference, both parties bow in deference to the powerful lobby and will kowtow to its demands. Republicans and Democrats have been engaged in political gridlock during President Barack Obama's entire tenure in office, but when it comes to Israel, there is total agreement. To use the president's words, the relationship between America and Israel is "sacrosanct."

Some activists have called for shutting down powerful lobbying groups like AIPAC and its tax-exempt appendage, the American Israel Educational Foundation (AIEF) which sponsors annual trips to Israel.

During this year's summer recess—with congressional approval ratings in the teens—instead of going back to their districts to deal with the needs of their constituents, 81 members of Congress went on a trip to Israel.

House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) led the Democrats and House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) led Republicans straight to Israel. Among those making the journey was Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-IL) along with 47 freshman congressmen who were just voted into office in 2010. Some question whether the time and resources could be better used.

According to the [U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation](#), the total amount of military aid to Israel, for fiscal years 2009-2018 will reach \$30 billion. The share of that financial burden for the state of Illinois is approximately \$1.47 billion. In the state, that amount of money could provide 17,916 households per

year with affordable housing grants, or 24,493 job seekers per year with green jobs training or, 43,627 children per year with early reading education or 1,194,940 people per year with primary health care.

In an article titled “Robbing Peter to Pay Israel,” Josh Ruebner, national advocacy director for the group took Rep. Jackson to task for the trip.

“Nearly 20 percent of the constituents of Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL) live under the poverty line, and nearly 15 percent are unemployed. Jackson’s congressional district, covering parts of the south side of Chicago and its southern suburbs, has been hit harder than many others by the crises plaguing the economy. Many of his constituents are looking at even more cutbacks in social services, higher prices for food and fuel, and ever scarcer jobs,” wrote Mr. Ruebner.⁹ “Constituents should be irate that members of Congress accept fancy trips from AIPAC-affiliates and contributions from AIPAC-inspired political action committee (PACs) that result in the United States prioritizing weapons to Israel above our basic economic rights,” he continued.

According to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Labor, the unemployment rate in America hovers near 9 percent. Black unemployment stands at nearly 16 percent.

By contrast, according to Bloomberg, Israel’s unemployment rate has reached historically low levels declining to 5.5 percent in the second quarter.

America’s national debt is heading speedily towards \$16 trillion. According to economists, each U.S. citizen’s share of the national debt is approximately \$48,300. The total U.S. debt, which includes households, businesses, state and local governments, financial institutions and the federal government is close to \$60 trillion—approximately \$180,201 per citizen, \$682,827 per family.

At a recent fundraiser in Manhattan, speaking before wealthy campaign donors at the residence of Jack Rosen, chairman of the American Jewish Congress, Pres. Obama defended his administration's policy towards Israel, and pledged his commitment to Israel's security.

“No ally is more important than the state of Israel,” Pres. Obama was quoted as saying in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. “We don't compromise when it comes to Israel's security,” he added.

In 2008, Mr. Obama got over 80 percent of the Jewish vote and needs support on that level to win re-election in 2012. Despite winning the Nobel Peace Prize, critics describe Pres. Obama as being hawkish after ramping up drone attacks in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. All of the Republican obstructionism seems to have pulled the “change candidate” to the political right while the conservatives have become even more xenophobic and militaristic.

Alison Weir, president of the Washington D.C.-based [Council for the National Interest](#), told The Final Call, Pres. Obama's extrajudicial assassinations, inability to obtain justice for the Palestinians, and Iran are perfect examples of how the Israel lobby—using its shadowy influence through political operatives—hinders conflict resolution and causes war.

“Obama was elected because people wanted a candidate of change. They wanted what he represented—an unbigoted nation where an intelligent African American could be and would be president without race preventing it. That's what people voted for, but then we have that person who got that mandate then continuing policies or increasing policies that were unacceptable,” said Ms. Weir.

The same groups that pushed America towards war in Iraq have now set their sights on the Islamic Republic of Iran, she said.

“They are no threat to Israel, they don’t have any nuclear weapons and I think it’s unlikely they’re trying to develop them, (but) it’s plausible, there’s every motivation to develop them when you’ve got a neighbor (Israel) that has nuclear weapons and has a history of invading,” said Ms. Weir. “Think if you had a neighbor that had a hundred machine guns and had a habit of invading all his neighbors you’d think ‘I’d better get at least one machine gun.’”

It appears as if the efforts of the Israel-first lobby and the gay rights lobby have been successful, as many of their talking points have become central pillars of America’s foreign policy.

Pres. Obama recently issued a directive through his Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ordering U.S. agencies located internationally to use foreign aid on behalf of gay rights.

In a Dec. 6 speech by Secy. Clinton delivered at the European headquarters of the United Nations (UN) in Geneva, Switzerland , she also announced that \$3 million would go to establish a Global Equity Fund that would be used along with the considerable diplomatic power of the U.S. to work on behalf of LGBT rights.

The Republican Jewish Coalition held a Dec. 7 forum at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. with six of the Republican presidential candidates all doing their best to prove they will be “Israel’s best friend” in the White House, maintaining America’s “unwavering and unshakeable” support.

Of the Republican candidates for president, only Rep. Ron Paul said he would cut all foreign aid, including aid to Israel.

“On foreign aid, that should be the easiest thing to cut,” said Rep. Paul in a televised debate two months ago. “To me, foreign aid is taking money from poor people in this country and giving it to rich people in poor countries.” As a form of retaliation, Rep. Paul was not invited to participate in the forum sponsored by the RJC.

All the other Republican presidential hopefuls are trying to outdo themselves in pledging fealty to Israel, described as America’s “special ally” and “only friend” in the Middle East.

During this time of American economic insecurity, skyrocketing debt and rising income inequality, hard questions are being asked regarding whether this “relationship” with Israel has now become a liability.

At a recent forum discussing the topic, Dr. Norton Mezvinsky, president of the Washington D.C.-based think-tank, the International Council for Middle East Studies, said the “exclusive and discriminatory” nature of Israel has a detrimental effect on America in terms of diplomacy and national security. This is especially clear when looking at the Palestinian conflict, he said.

“The Zionist character of the state of Israel is the central conflict of the Palestinian problem,” said Dr. Mezvinsky.

Many Muslim countries disagree with America’s one-sided policies designed to protect the interests of Israel, and others reject America’s global expansion and military actions. Some outspoken leaders such as Hezbollah’s popular leader Hassan Nasrallah refers to Israel as the “American project in the Middle East.”

An increasing number of foreign affairs analysts believe Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu wants the U.S. to conduct a strike on Iran's nuclear development facilities, which they insist are being used to create nuclear weapons. Though he has taken a strong rhetorical stance against Iran, Pres. Obama's reticence to act militarily—in this particular case—could be another reason for tense relations between the two leaders.

More than fearing attack from Iran, Dr. Mezvinsky said, Israelis should be concerned about the demographic shift taking place resulting from their low birth rates, and the high birth rates of the Palestinians.

Zionism is a political movement which began in the late 1800s with the goal of creating a Jewish homeland. In 1897, Theodor Herzl brought together the First Zionist World Congress in Basel, Switzerland and out of that came the group known as the World Zionist Organization. Through ardent advocacy, influence peddling, violence and dispossession of the indigenous people of the land, what is now known as modern Israel came into existence in 1948.

Dr. Mezvinsky says Herzlian political Zionism—"a secular brand of Jewish nationalism"—visibly manifests itself in the powerful political sway of evangelical Christian Zionists, and the lengths to which candidates will go to appease the Israel-first lobby.

For example, borrowing rhetoric from intolerant Zionist settlers in Israel, Republican presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich referred to the Palestinians as an "invented" people in an interview with Steven Weiss of The Jewish Channel. Despite widespread international condemnation, when questioned at a Dec. 10 GOP presidential debate in Des Moines, Iowa, Mr. Gingrich stood by his comments.

Experts like Dr. Mezvinsky are not surprised by anything that comes out of the mouths of American politicians concerning Israel.

“Especially in a presidential election year, candidates go as far as they think they can—there’s almost no limit to how far they will go—with praise and support for the State of Israel.”

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Killing Bin Laden: Hit, Execution or Justified Military Action?

Questions and inconsistencies remain after killing of Osama bin Laden

Even as U.S. President Barack H. Obama met May 6 with members of the Special Forces team responsible for the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound, inconsistencies continued to emerge bringing into question the Hollywood action type narrative disseminated by his administration.

At the same time, Pakistani officials have rejected America's roundabout assertions that they've engaged in double-dealing regarding the Al-Qaeda leader's whereabouts.

CIA director Leon Panetta told reporters the U.S. chose not to inform Pakistani military officials about the planned raid on Osama bin Laden's compound because they feared members of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) would compromise the mission by sharing details.

In a May 5 press briefing, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir categorically denied accusations of complicity and reiterated Pakistan's rights as a sovereign nation.

"Now first of all as far as Pakistan is concerned issue of sovereignty I think there should be no mistake what the people of Pakistan, the Parliament of Pakistan and the leadership of Pakistan hold dearest to them is their dignity, their honor and make no mistake the nation as whole and our state institutions are determined to uphold our sovereignty and safeguard our security. I think construing all this in any other manner is wrong, simply wrong," said Mr. Bashir. "This whole theme of complicity has surfaced periodically at times motivated to pressurize Pakistan to do more. The mantra of do more we have seen over the years has surfaced. It is easy to say that the ISI and elements in the Government are in cahoots with. This is a false hypothesis. This is a false charge. It cannot be validated on any account. It flies in the face of what Pakistan particularly the ISI has been able to accomplish more than any other agency including the CIA," Mr. Bashir added.

Riots erupted around Pakistan on May 6 in places such as Karachi and Abbottabad, where Mr. Bin Laden was found and killed. Anger was kindled not

only by the death of Osama bin Laden, but the blatant disrespect of their nation by military forces at the behest of the U.S. government.

The Hunt for Osama bin Laden

After nearly 10 years, two wars, trillions of dollars and thousands of lives lost, President Obama stood before the world and proclaimed something none of his previous predecessors could: Osama bin Laden—the Western world’s face of terror—had been killed.

“Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, and a terrorist who’s responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children,” said Pres. Obama in a message delivered from the East Room of the White House and beamed throughout the world late evening May 1. “Today, at my direction, the United States launched a targeted operation against that compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. A small team of Americans carried out the operation with extraordinary courage and capability. No Americans were harmed. They took care to avoid civilian casualties. After a firefight, they killed Osama bin Laden and took custody of his body.”¹⁰

President Obama said killing or capturing Mr. Bin Laden was “the top priority” of his administration’s war against terror and once he determined that there was sufficient intelligence to take action, he would authorize an operation to “bring him to justice.”

Raucous celebrations broke out in Washington D.C. around the White House and in Times Square in New York near “Ground Zero,” the site of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center Towers. Chants of “U.S.A! U.S.A!” were heard along

with groups singing the National Anthem and “God Bless America.” Celebrations continued into the early morning.

However, that euphoria was short lived once inconsistencies began to develop and unanswered questions remained following the Obama administration’s narrative of what took place in the military town of Abbottabad.¹¹ During a May 2 briefing by senior officials from the Obama administration taking place just after midnight via conference call for journalists, it was stated that there was a firefight, and subsequently Mr. Bin Laden was killed.

Later that day, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan held a press conference in which Mr. Brennan said in response to a question regarding considering taking Mr. Bin Laden alive, “The concern was that Bin Laden would oppose any type of capture operation. Indeed, he did. It was a firefight. He, therefore, was killed in that firefight and that’s when the remains were removed.” Later, clarifying further Mr. Brennan said, “He (Bin Laden) was engaged and he was killed in the process. But if we had the opportunity to take him alive, we would have done that.”

According to Al-Arabiya News, a Pakistani government official reportedly said a 12-year-old daughter of Osama bin Laden said the men captured him alive then shot him dead in front of her and family members.

Mr. Brennan was also questioned regarding a point of information floated by Obama administration officials that one woman inside the compound was killed after being used as a human shield.

“There was family at that compound, and there was a female who was in fact in the line of fire that reportedly was used as a shield to shield bin Laden from the incoming fire,” declared Mr. Brennan.

[This assertion was later proven to be false](#), and as details continued to emerge, it was determined that there was no firefight and an unarmed Osama bin Laden was shot in the chest and head. His body was later taken to the ocean and dumped. According to Obama administration officials, this was done consistent with Islamic burial requirements and rituals.

Imam Dawud Walid of Masjid Wali Muhammad in Detroit, Michigan said if those in charge of the operation were truly concerned with handling the body according to Islamic law, [they would have turned the body over to the family of Osama bin Laden](#) to allow them to determine what to do going forward.

“Specific information hasn’t been made public about Mr. Bin Laden’s so-called Islamic burial, but in terms of traditional Muslim protocols, it is not acceptable to perform a sea burial,” Imam Walid told The Final Call. “Having the (funeral) prayer being said in English and then having a body disposed at sea is outside of traditional Islamic laws,” he added.

In a May 3 briefing held by Pres. Obama’s Press Secretary Jay Carney it was said Mr. Obama and his top national security aides received minute-by-minute updates on the operation in Pakistan. Pictures were circulated in the media appearing to show that they were able to watch in real-time as events transpired, however, CIA director Leon Panetta, was quoted in the UK’s Telegraph and in an interview aired on PBS saying there was a 20-25 minute period in which they were unable to determine what was going on inside from the live feed on the helmet mounted cameras of the soldiers conducting the raid. The entire operation reportedly lasted approximately 40 minutes.

In addition, Mr. Panetta and Mr. Carney said it was the Navy SEALs “on the ground” rather than Mr. Obama, who ultimately made the decision to kill rather

than capture Osama bin Laden. This creates even more doubts regarding the dramatic and daring narrative of the raid delivered by the Obama administration.

In a May 9 column titled “Obama’s Hollow Victory,” outspoken British-born journalist Yvonne Ridley said the way Osama bin Laden was killed and the manner in which the body was disposed of makes it seem as if the U.S. feared bringing him to trial.

“This actually made the most powerful nation in the world look incredibly weak and cowardly; too afraid to put OBL on trial as was done with Second World War Nazi leader Adolf Otto Eichmann. For those who don’t know or want a reminder, Eichmann was captured, drugged and kidnapped in Argentina by Mossad agents in 1960 after fleeing Germany and living in hiding after the Second World War,” writes Ms. Ridley. “The trial caused huge international controversy, as well as an international sensation but it was broadcast live with few restrictions so the whole world could see justice being done.”

Imam Walid doubts that capturing Osama bin Laden was even an option.

“It appeared they had strict orders to shoot to kill,” said Imam Walid. “I don’t think the Navy SEALs had any intention of bringing him in for questioning,” he added.

Extrajudicial Assassination as Policy

With the killing of Osama bin Laden, the continued targeting of Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi, along with the removal and execution of long-time Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, it appears as if the United States of America’s foreign policy consists primarily of using military force to eliminate those in the way of strategic geopolitical interests.

A recent NATO airstrike in Libya killed one of Col. Gadhafi's sons, 29-year-old Seif al-Arab, and three of his grandchildren, all under the age of 12 according to a government spokesman. In the case of Saddam Hussein, in a display of U.S. military might described by then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as "Shock and Awe," the people of Iraq were punished, Saddam Hussein was hunted down, humiliated and then subsequently executed by hanging.

America's use of military force seemingly at every available opportunity and willingness to use torture has many concerned that their nation—viewed globally as an imperialist power—is operating in an unrestrained manner despite whatever noble sounding motives are being used to describe her military interventions.

"I wish the president could offer the country a greater 'achievement' than a death. End the wars, now that would be something to celebrate," author and political analyst Ali Abunimah told *The Final Call*. "If Obama uses Bin Laden's killing as (an) opening to rapidly end America's wars then it will be worth something. I doubt he will though."

Over the past few years, extrajudicial assassination as an operational strategy was primarily used by the Israeli government through its IDF and its intelligence wing, The Mossad. Increasingly, the United States government is choosing to move away from diplomatic discussions and—like Israel—ignoring the rule of international law opting to use its influence within the United Nations and NATO, to bring forth circumstances which will produce desired regime change.

"The Obama administration came in with certain objectives when it came to rule of law (such as) shutting down the Guantanamo facility and ending torture, but it didn't buy into the entire rule of law project," John Feffer, co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the Washington D.C. based Institute for Policy Studies told *The*

Final Call. “The entire rule of law project would be bringing the U.S. into compliance with the internationally accepted rules of law and that was a bridge too far for the Obama administration.”

Mr. Feffer said instead of the Obama administration completely outlawing extraordinary rendition—the abduction and secret transfer of a person from one nation to another usually for the purpose of torture—they chose to rely more heavily on the use of unmanned drones in order to simply kill those who would ordinarily be targeted for extraordinary rendition.

“The evolution of the Obama administration’s policy has been towards targeted assassinations, towards extrajudicial killing in part because, not only does it get around the questions of rule of law internationally, it actually gets around some of the political challenges here in the United States going up against opponents in Congress. If we simply run a policy of targeted assassinations, we don’t actually have to sit down with folks in other countries to negotiate settlements nor do we have to sit down with folks here in Congress to negotiate messy compromises about the use of U.S. force overseas,” said Mr. Feffer.

Jeremy Scahill, author of “Blackwater: The Rise of the World’s Most Powerful Mercenary Army” has conducted groundbreaking research and reporting dealing with America’s covert wars abroad. He told Democracy Now! April 2 that President Obama “has really continued and doubled down on the Bush administration policy of targeted assassination.”

Calling America’s Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) “the most elite force within the U.S. military,” Mr. Scahill said the group is in charge of global assassination campaigns striking out at “high value targets” as determined

by the U.S. government. In this case, the “high value target” was Osama bin Laden.

Mr. Scahill said he found it “disgusting” and “idiotic” that many were cheering outside the White House celebrating Mr. bin Laden’s death while ignoring the reaping of the seeds sown by America’s foreign policy over the years.

“Let’s remember here, hundreds of thousands of people have died. Iraq was invaded, a country that had nothing to do with--nothing to do with Osama bin Laden. The United States created a presence in Iraq by invading it, made Iran a far more influential force in Iraq than it ever would have been. We have given a grand motivation to people around the world that want to do harm to Americans in our killing of civilians, our waging of war against countries that have no connection to, and by staying in these countries long after the mission was accomplished,” Mr. Scahill told Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!

“The reported killing of Osama bin Laden by a CIA operation in Pakistan represents neither justice nor victory, and should be no cause for celebration,” said a May 2 statement from the War Resisters League. “This hateful euphoria demonstrates a nation bent on revenge, not justice.”

Writing from Amman, Jordan, Phyllis Bennis, an author and fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies weighed in after hearing news of the raid.

“Assuming that was indeed the case, this raid reflects the brutal reality of the deadly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that preceded it and that continue today, 10 years later—it wasn’t about bringing anyone to justice, it was about vengeance,” Ms. Bennis writes.

An Afghanistan exit?

Many were surprised that Osama bin Laden was found and killed in Pakistan, not in the caves of Afghanistan or its mountainous tribally governed regions. Since bin Laden's alleged presence in Afghanistan was the primary reason for the nearly decade long military involvement there, many wonder if it is finally time to end U.S. involvement there.

On October 7, 2001, "Operation Enduring Freedom" began in Afghanistan. Its goals according to the Bush administration were to locate, capture or kill Osama bin Laden, the members of his leadership cadre and end the Taliban's stronghold in the region. Nearly 10 years later, after inheriting the war, Pres. Obama has committed to significantly reducing the number of troops in Afghanistan in July of this year.

According to the NATO International Security Assistance Force, there are a little over 90,000 American troops there currently. According to congressional records, the Afghanistan war costs the United States close to \$300 million a day. According to the Pentagon, under the proposed fiscal year 2012 budget, the combined cost for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan hover around \$117.8 billion.

After eluding the American military for nearly a decade, human intelligence, military intelligence and geospatial intelligence all went into developing the strategy zeroing in on a compound in Abbottabad, a military town deep inside Pakistan, where Mr. Bin Laden met his fate.

Following the attacks of 9/11 on the World Trade Center and The Pentagon, Pakistan received U.S. foreign aid amounting to nearly \$18 billion. Pres. Obama in February 2010 requested an additional \$3 billion bringing the total to over \$20 billion.

Despite the financial help and outwardly cordial diplomatic relationship, members of America's JSOC were dispatched to kill Osama bin Laden without consulting the Pakistani government or military, a point of contention for some.

Is America safer now?

Before the House Judiciary Committee on May 3, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder warned of possible "retaliatory attacks in the United States or against our interests overseas" and said the fight against terrorism is "far from over."

"Through the use of robust military, intelligence, and law enforcement operations, this administration has sent a clear and unequivocal warning to those intent on harming the American people: you will be pursued; and you will be brought to justice," said Mr. Holder. "Although we all can be proud of Sunday's successful operation—and we can all be encouraged by the way that thousands of Americans have joined together at this defining moment in our fight against terrorism—we cannot become complacent."

As for whether Al-Qaeda withers away and dies like a headless snake, or ideological heirs emerge to carry on Osama bin Laden's "holy war," Mr. Feffer's opinion is that the group—not being very powerful to begin with—was used to achieve a variety of political goals in the U.S.

"We have cooperated with Al-Qaeda in magnifying its threat. It's in the interests of Al-Qaeda to seem stronger than it is and at certain points it has been in the U.S. interests for Al-Qaeda to seem stronger than it is," said Mr. Feffer.

Forums popular with jihadists posted a statement recently reportedly from Al-Qaeda acknowledging the death of its leader and vowing revenge.

Some analysts say Mr. bin Laden's longtime number two man, Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahiri already acknowledged as the theological and philosophical leader of Al-Qaeda will emerge as the world's most wanted terrorist. Others suggest American-born Anwar al-Awlaki, currently said to be a leading figure of Al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) based in Yemen.

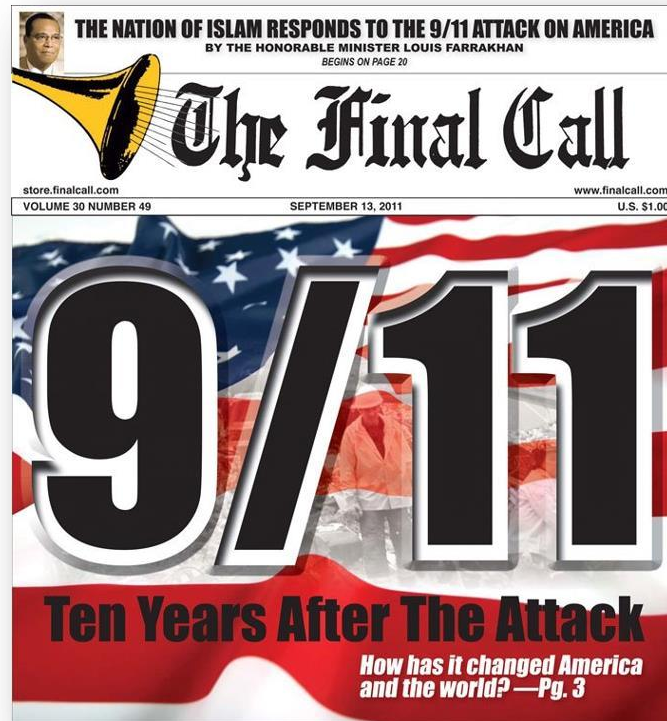
"It's possible over time that we will see bin Laden transformed into exactly what he wanted which is a martyr and a legend that inspires people around the world," said Mr. Feffer. "This is the way he would have wanted to go out rather than be captured and put on trial and that sort of thing. As far as Osama bin Laden is concerned, this is the kind of exit strategy he wanted," he added.

Mohammed Shafiq, director of the UK-based Ramadhan Foundation, a group working to provide a more positive image of Islam and Muslims, appealed for "calm and extra vigilance." Reflecting the views of many, he said he would have preferred a trial for Osama bin Laden.

"Osama bin Laden has been responsible for preaching hatred and using terrorism to kill innocent people around the world and it would have been more suitable for him to be captured alive and put on trial in an international court for the crimes he has committed," said Mr. Shafiq. "Every human should be held responsible for their actions in a court of law and Osama bin Laden is no different."

RELATED ARTICLE ARCHIVED ONLINE:

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Has The Truth Been Told About 9/11?

Calls for probe ignite controversy, but many still say September 11 tragedy needs investigation

After President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke before world leaders and the international press at the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly, an uproar followed and the United States expressed outrage at his remarks.

The U.S. media widely reported that the Iranian president accused the U.S. government of killing U.S. citizens in an attack on the World Trade Center in New York on the fateful day of Sept. 11, 2001.

But the world leader's questions and message were much more nuanced and important than that—his core assertion was that a horrible attack that killed some 3,000 people and the U.S. response changed the world:

- The U.S. has embarked on a bloody and expensive “War on Terror” that has claimed thousands of lives and cost trillions of dollars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Security measures and the specter of terrorism have changed the functioning of law enforcement and military policy worldwide, affecting immigration, communication, banking, commerce and travel.
- Restrictions on religious freedoms for Muslims have been proposed and even demanded in some Western countries.
- Civil liberties have been under assault as the nations of the earth engage in an “anti-terror” battle where the enemy is most often associated with Islam or is a shadowy assailant whose existence has been used to justify nearly anything—from torture to secret prisons to confinement without charges to the inability to confront one's accuser or even know what one is charged with.

President Ahmadinejad argued the changes in the world were so tremendous that the United Nations should be allowed to explore what happened on Sept. 11. “It was said that some 3,000 people were killed on 11 September for which we are all very saddened. Yet, up until now, in Afghanistan and Iraq hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, millions wounded and displaced and the conflict is still going on and expanding,” he noted.

He added that there are three schools of thought about the attack, which include terrorist outsiders attacking the United States; elements within the American government who wanted justification to remake the Middle East politically and protect Israel and to use conflict as a way to help revive a sagging

economy, and it was carried out by a terrorist group but was taken advantage of by the American government.

“The main evidence linking the incident was a few passports found in the huge volume of rubble and a video of an individual whose place of domicile was unknown,” Mr. Ahmadinejad noted. “Would it not have been sensible that first a thorough investigation should have been conducted by independent groups to conclusively identify the elements involved in the attack and then map out a rational plan to take measures against them?”

“It is proposed that the United Nations set up an independent fact-finding group for the event of 11 September so that in the future expressing views about it is not forbidden,” the Iranian leader said. He added that next year Iran will host a conference to study terrorism, how to confront it and invited officials, scholars, thinkers, researchers and research institutes of all countries to attend.

Following condemnation of the Iranian leader by his State Dept., President Barack Obama objected to the Sept. 23 speech in a BBC interview. “It was offensive. It was hateful. And particularly for him to make the statement here in Manhattan, just a little north of Ground Zero where families lost their loved ones,” said the American president.

President Ahmadinejad said at a Sept. 24 New York press conference that “his remarks were not meant to hurt the feelings of Americans.”

The newspaper Haaretz reported upon his return to Tehran, the Iranian president said, “The reaction (by President Obama) was very amateurish, if there is nothing to hide, just present the relevant documents to the fact-finding team so that we can all together fight against the involved terrorists. I just raised one simple question and it is not right that whoever raises a question is insulted afterwards.”

Still Mr. Ahmadinejad was mocked by most mainstream American news organizations, but not everyone accepts the “crackpot idea” characterization. Many believe a full and complete investigation of 9/11 is still needed.

“The truth is the truth regardless of the messenger; and the truth of the matter is that what really happened on September 11, 2001 is an issue that people cannot run away from,” said Ramsey Clark, a former U.S. attorney general and co-founder of the International Action Center and founder of IndictBush.org.

“I don’t think you can reject the issue because of the messenger,” Mr. Clark added. “History does require that the facts have a proper review.”

However, Mr. Clark believes the United Nations is too “fragile” an institution to conduct such an investigation. “It’s not noted for its boldness” due to American domination, he noted.

“The only public figures that are vilified by the press at the UN for raising controversial questions—the alleged enemies of the empire—are Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez and Iran’s Ahmadinejad,” said Mike Berger, a spokesman for 9/11Truth.org.

Mr. Berger said doubts about the official explanation of the events of Sept. 11 are “increasing.”

“The speculations that surfaced on the Internet directly after the attacks were considered theories until recently,” added Mr. Berger.

“But now, nine years later people are saying that the story we have been told just isn’t true; and more and more people seem to be asking who is capable of a real investigation into what happened on 9/11—people say they don’t believe the U.S. is capable—it would take an organization such as the UN,” he said.

His organization sponsored a 2007 Zogby International poll that showed 51 percent of Americans wanted Congress to probe then President George W. Bush and his Vice President Dick Cheney and over 30 percent wanted an immediate impeachment for war crimes.

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan has also said the 9/11 tragedy should have a full investigation. Since 9/11, Muslims in America been watched, searched and had their homes broken into by authorities, he said in response to a question from interviewer Abderrahim Foukara of the Al-Jazeera TV network.

“September 11th was very, very strange: Nineteen Muslims were put before the American public and the world two days after this heinous attack. Qur’ans were found, but before this, the neo-cons that were surrounding President Bush, who were the architects of something called a ‘Project For The New American Century,’ said that America needed something like ‘Pearl Harbor’—9/11 was America’s new Pearl Harbor—[to summon the American people in their anger](#) and horror over what happened; now there are too many strange things that we question,” the Minister continued.¹²

“The American people, I believe, are being deceived by a government that was absolutely afraid of the growth of Islam in America. And they needed something to gather the American people, and under Zionist influence, stop the spread of Islam, stop funding for legitimate Islamic projects, and frighten the immigrant Muslims in America so that they would not speak up,” Min. Farrakhan said.

“Muslims should raise questions about the commonly accepted version of the events that transpired resulting in the tragic events of 9/11 which led to this

iron-fisted crackdown on Muslims in America and worldwide,” said Min. Farrakhan in another September interview with Al-Jazeera.

Questions should be asked, say activists

Others say a political message was wrapped in the Iranian leader’s words. “His message is intended to improve his standing in the Muslim world,” said the Council on Foreign Relations, in a position paper published after the speech. “He has worked hard to cultivate his image as a Pan-Islamic populist leader who is not afraid to stand up to the West.”

David Slesinger, congressional team leader for [Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth](#), told The Final Call the way the Iranian president phrased his argument was excellent.

“He is simply saying that it is not inappropriate for the nations of the world to ask for an international investigation. There is clearly a suppression of the facts,” Mr. David Slesinger said.

“We want to address the evidence about what caused the fall of the three towers, not conspiracy theories.”

“The media has dismissed anyone who raises questions concerning 9/11 by saying that these people are simply ‘conspiracy theorists’ and we are responding saying, ‘if you stick to the evidence it is worthy of investigation,’ ” Mr. Slesinger said.

On Sept. 9, Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth held a press conference in Washington, D.C., at the National Press Club hoping to bring awareness to 1,270 architects and engineers calling for a “new investigation” emphasizing the

importance of the discovery of chemicals used for explosives in World Trade Center dust.

On Sept. 10, the organization traveled to Capitol Hill to deliver a petition supporting a “real investigation” into the destruction of the three World Trade Center towers to each of the 541 members of Congress.

Back in April at a meeting of over 150 lawyers, legal scholars and human rights campaigners appointed Mr. Clark as the chairperson of their international campaign to investigate war crimes committed by officials from the administration of former President George W. Bush.

The coalition said that they have been driven by the fact that the U.S.-sponsored borderless war against an ill-defined enemy has expedited economic collapse, driven totalitarian legislation and generated a great deal of animosity against the U.S. throughout the world.

If we are to preserve the peace of the world, we must challenge the myths purveyed by the Bush administration about 9/11, said Mr. Berger. “The question facing our movement is how to get justice,” Mr. Berger said. “We do know that we do not have the power in the U.S. to get basic discovery of the facts; and we know this because of the fiasco of the 9/11 Commission report.”

The commission also known as the Kean-Hamilton Commission started to probe the 9/11 tragedy on Nov. 26, 2002 and released its final report, formally named “Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States” on July 22, 2004. The probe started 441 days after 9-11 and it drew some criticism.

The Council on Foreign Relations in Aug. 2004 said that the 9/11 Commission report lacked specifics. Many 9/11 survivors and many 9/11 victim family members have expressed significant criticism of the 9/11 Commission Report.

The Bush administration has never offered a detailed and documented account of its claims about the events of 9/11, Mr. Berger said.

“Both the U.S. Congress and the Kean-Hamilton Commission have protested the Bush administration’s lack of cooperation with their inquiries into 9-11,” Mr. Berger noted.

“I don’t think they are going to find much difference in any facts that the government would now release nine years later,” commented Greg Taylor of Staten Island, N.Y., who lost his brother Darryl, 52, in the collapse of the World Trade Center towers.

“I have bought all of the tapes and listened to all of the studies and I know the best time to investigate a crime is then, when it happens,” Mr. Taylor said. “All that I am sure about is that my brother is not here.”

“The whole Muslim thing is what America does best, fanning fears; that’s why people must think for themselves. I would like to see the mosque built near the site of Ground Zero. I do know that I resent anyone using my brother’s death to spread fear,” Mr. Taylor told *The Final Call*.

“The UN should have investigated 9/11 a long time ago,” said Larry Holmes, an organizer for the anti-war organization Bail Out the People Not the Banks. He has led “Hands off Iran” protests and anti-war protests in New York and other cities.

Mr. Holmes has also taken part in grassroots tribunals and investigations trying to uncover any role the U.S. government may have played in the attacks on 9/11.

“Until all of the facts are brought out into the light of day, we will continue to watch our government seize upon the pretext of 9/11 for U.S. campaigns of racial defamation against Arabs and Muslims, and for sweeping police state measures, and for war,” Mr. Holmes warned.

“The metaphysical significance of the speech given by President Ahmadinejad is that it represents the sentiment around the world,” Mr. Holmes said.

Ramsey Clark, a former high ranking law enforcement official, said Americans have to demand the truth and justice. “It is the imperative responsibility of the American people to relentlessly pursue investigation, indictment and prosecution of those responsible for 9/11 inside of the U.S.,” said Mr. Clark.

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Muslim Leaders Speak Out Against Bigotry, Hypocrisy and Intolerance at National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Decry anti-Islam climate in U.S., call on country to reject historic hatreds

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan recently joined several Black American Muslim leaders to address the controversy surrounding the proposed building of an Islamic center near Ground Zero in New York, as well as the general attitude of mistrust and intolerance toward followers of Islam.

The members of the Coalition of African American Muslims, which included the Minister, urged a rejection of anti-Islam hatred and religious intolerance, while connecting the disdain for their faith to America's old history of

hate. But, they said, out of the negative attacks on a beautiful way of life comes an opportunity to teach and spread the truth—despite severe opposition.

“This world is not ignorant to the beauty of Islam,” said Minister Farrakhan. “The fear is that Islam will change the religion of the slave that they took it from and make him a bright light of a brand new civilization,” he said at a Sept. 2 press conference held at the prestigious National Press Club and broadcast live worldwide via Internet webcast.

Imam Abdul Malik of Islam on Capitol Hill, a youth advocacy group, agreed saying Islam is under attack by bigots who fear that which is different. “Islam does not mean terrorism,” said Imam Malik. “The real issue is the rise of Islam,” he added.

There are an estimated 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide. Minister Farrakhan pointed out that in close proximity to where the Islamic center is to be built, there are sex shops, peep shows, strip clubs and other immoral activities not being protested by those who say the Islamic center will violate hallowed ground and disrespect the memories of who died in Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. Those who oppose the center contradict the very principles outlined in the United States Constitution which guarantee freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of assembly, the Minister said.

International media outlets such as PressTV, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and the India Globe and Asia Today newspapers asked questions and observed as the leaders decried the atmosphere of intolerance created by extremist right wing media talk show hosts, unscrupulous special interest groups, ill-motivated politicians and prominent conservative evangelical leaders.

Opponents have made plans for the center a major political and social question, holding protests at the proposed site, and quizzing political leaders from New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg to President Obama about their positions on the issue. Violence has also erupted: A Muslim cab driver in New York survived a vicious, bloody knife attack as the debate has grown vitriolic, contemptuous and falsely condemned Islam as a religion of hate and enemy of America. Mosques and Islamic centers in different parts of the country have been vandalized and a site for a center in Tennessee was torched. One pastor has announced plans to publicly burn copies of the Holy Qur'an—the book of scripture of Muslims—on Sept. 11.

“We know when people start burning books, it’s not a great leap for them to begin burning people. History has shown us that,” said Islamic scholar Imam Zaid Shakir of the Zaytuna Institute. An entire industry has developed which profits from fostering the Islamophobic climate in America today, said Imam Shakir.

“I think what we have to realize is that there is a lot of money first of all that’s been spent to create that climate of fear and suspension and mistrust towards Muslims,” said Imam Shakir. “The books have been cranked out and there are major media outlets that are behind that effort of demonizing Muslims.”

Islam a force for good, liberation

Asma Hanif, chair of the Washington D.C.-based Council of Muslim Organizations, spoke about her difficult experience as a Muslim woman raising children and interacting with family members who have heard media misreports about Muslims.

“As I stand here, I think about the fact that I’m an African American Muslim woman born and raised in this country. I think about all of the family members that I have who are listening to the words that are being said about me personally,

because they know I am their daughter; I am their sister; I am their mother; I am their niece; I am all of these things. But, if you listen to the media, they say I'm a terrorist, or I'm oppressed, or I'm a bad person," said Ms. Hanif.

"I'm not oppressed! I dress this way because I love it!" Ms. Hanif continued. "In fact, if the truth be known, the only oppression I have ever seen was growing up Black in North Carolina! Islam liberated me as a Muslim woman!"

The severe economic crisis along with the sensationalized coverage of the "underwear bomber" in Detroit, the Ft. Hood shootings, the alleged Times Square attempted car bombing and other highly publicized alleged terrorist plots have contributed to fear mongering and hatred.

The controversy, however, is also creating curiosity and inspiring others to learn more about Islam, observed Imam Shakir and Imam Siraj Wahhaj, amir of the Muslim Alliance in North America, agreed.

"That which is happening right now and across the country with hatred against Muslims, I'm telling you, there's good," said Imam Wahhaj. "All over America people are asking 'Teach me about Islam.'"

Coalition aims to bring solutions

The Coalition of African American Muslims, a group formed within the last month, sees offering solutions to these problems and giving a voice to the growing number of Blacks in America who are followers of Islam as part of its mission. The coalition said it was willing to work across racial, ethnic, religious and other divisions to combat rising hatred in America and help steer the country onto a proper course.

Islam has deep roots within the Black community, in fact, a significant number of followers of Islam in America are Black people who came to Islam as a result of the work of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. In later years, due to the influence of prominent representatives such as Malcolm X, the late Imam W.D. Mohammed and Minister Farrakhan, Blacks have continued to embrace Islam.

Coupled with America's legacy of racism, slavery and Jim Crow laws, Blacks have undergone an experience that has prepared them for leadership roles in a society still suffering from bigotry, racism and inequality present at the birth of the nation, said the Muslim leaders

"We're not new to this. This is the same toxic soup of hatred and bigotry, just served in a different bowl," said Imam Mahdi Bray of the Muslim American Freedom Society. The rights advocate described how he endures "Driving While Black" and "Flying While Muslim."

"This is not the climate in which we want to operate," said Mr. Bray.

Nisa Islam Muhammad, who has spearheaded outreach and education efforts regarding the religion of Islam and was one of the lead coordinators of the press conference, said its time has come. "It's a great day to be a Muslim," said Ms. Muhammad.

Lessons for world present in America

Minister Farrakhan said the world is looking to America for leadership, and watching to see how America handles this particular religious issue. A nation's highways, bridges and roads do not determine its greatness; a nation's greatness is determined by its righteousness, he observed.

“She (America) started wrong. Slavery was wrong. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was not right. The dehumanization of an entire people was not right,” said Min. Farrakhan. “One-hundred and fifty years of Jim Crow was wrong. How do you right a wrong like that?”

“When we go to the cause of all causes, we can’t blame the agents of God’s cause—we have to look at God and ask him why he permitted it,” said Min. Farrakhan.

If Black people rise above emotion into God’s thinking, they will see persecution was preparation for a future mission and duty to humanity after trial in the furnace of affliction, the Minister said.

“We have a unique historical prospective in terms of being people who have fought against racism in this country, bigotry, and attempts to relegate us to second class citizens for centuries,” added Imam Shakir. “That bequeathed in our genes a certain resilience and a certain combativeness that is really lacking from this current discourse. I think bringing that voice to bear will be for the service of our brothers and sisters. Not as an alternative voice, not that we have all the answers, but saying that we have a unique perspective and I think that unique perspective will be galvanizing for the overall Muslim community.”

“I personally think that the Muslims in America have a great role to play not only in Islam in America but really Islam all over the world,” said Imam Wahhaj. “We have to show our brothers and sisters and the rest of the Muslim world how to deal with differences. How to have doctrinal differences and yet sit together at the table and have discussion and have dialogue and not bloody each other’s noses, not kill each other.”

Discussing the sectarian violence going on in many places of the world, between Muslims, Imam Wahhaj said he is disheartened when he hears about it.

“It sickens me when I hear about a masjid (place of worship) blowing up and 60 or 70 people dying, it just doesn’t make sense and it is so hard for me to imagine that these are really Muslims doing it,” said Imam Wahhaj. “I think our brothers and sisters in the East and the rest of the Muslim world could learn a lot from African Americans in the United States.”

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Al-Jazeera's Abderrahim Foukara Interviews Minister Louis Farrakhan

Discusses 9/11, Islamophobia and challenges facing Muslims in America

[Editor's note: The following article contains excerpts of an interview that took place on September 10, 2010 at the National House in Chicago, Illinois.]

Abderrahim Foukara (AF): Minister, the situation of Muslims in this country: Of late, there's been a wave of "Islamophobia" in light of the project to erect the Islamic Center in New York; the United States is on the verge of mid-term election. In all these circumstances, how do you see the conditions of Muslims in the United States today?

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan (HMLF): Since 9/11, Muslims in America have been the victims of FBI watching Muslims, arresting Muslims, breaking into Muslim homes. Muslims have suffered in the airports; being stopped because of their names. Searched once, searched twice; and sometimes even if they spoke Arabic, something would come up that might even deny them a flight.

Since 9/11, the way the government has acted toward Muslims, many Islamic scholars who would come to the United States to lecture, have found it difficult. And some, even now, do not wish to come because of what they have to go

through to enter the United States. So the climate is getting increasingly more difficult.

AF: You said the “so-called Muslims” in reference to the people who are supposed to have carried out those attacks. Does that mean you don’t believe that 9/11 [was] carried out by Muslims? Or, does that simply mean that they think that you’re Muslims, but you, personally, Minister Louis Farrakhan, don’t think that they are the right kind of Muslim?

HMLF: I’m not here to be a judge of Muslims. September 11th was very, very strange: 19 Muslims were put before the American public and the world two days after this heinous attack. Qur’ans were found, but before this, the Neo-Cons that were surrounding President Bush, who were the architects of something called a “Project For The New American Century,” said that America needed something like “Pearl Harbor”—9/11 was America’s new Pearl Harbor. To summon the American people in their anger and horror over what happened; now there are too many strange things that we question.

Five of the 19 so-called terrorists are alive and well in Saudi [Arabia]. Tell me: If airplanes crashed into the building, scientists have said that the amount of heat from the fuel in the planes could never melt steel. It would take something else. Those buildings fell in free-fall, like you see implosions that are controlled demolition. The Second Tower fell, there was no plane that attacked the third tower, but it, too, fell, heh? Something is wrong with that picture.

The American people, I believe, are being deceived by a government that was absolutely afraid of the growth of Islam in America. And they needed something to gather the American people, and under Zionist influence, stop the spread of Islam;

stop funding for legitimate Islamic projects, and frighten the immigrant Muslims in America so that they would not speak up.

Lastly, I want to say, sir: There has to be in the future some real independent investigation of 9/11. Why do you say that, Farrakhan? Hitler blew up The Reichstag to gain power both militarily and politically over the German people. After 9/11 was done, the Patriot Act was passed; many of the American civil liberties were being curtailed. And so, Mr. [Larry] Silverstein, a few years before, bought the World Trade Center for a little over \$3 billion. That building was filled with asbestos. It was not safe for dwelling.

He had in a clause in the contract that should a terrorist attack take place, he would be paid. So he made a fortune from that event. People had put-options on American Airlines, on United Airlines. For what? See, these are things that make me suspicious that this never was Osama Bin Laden, but it was something designed, and 3,000 deaths mean nothing to a political agenda that wishes to deceive the American people, and stop the spread of Islam in America.

AF: Minister, many people in the Arab world, in the Muslim world, believe in the things that you have said just now. But there are also a lot of other people who think that this is “conspiracy theory,” and that no matter how un-democratic the American political system may seem to be: For the government of the United States to commit such crimes as you said against its own people, in the kind of society and system that Americans live in, would be total lunacy.

And therefore, what you’re saying may seem to compound the problems that Muslims have not just in the Muslim world, but particularly here in the United States.

HMLF: If truth, and the search for truth, will compound the problem, then Allah Himself is the truth. And the Qur'an teaches if what is done is the weight of an atom, and hidden in the earth yet will Allah bring it forth. The Bible says the same thing. You cannot deceive the people forever!

America, the government: How did we get control of Cuba? Was it not a government plot to attack a ship called the "USS Maine" in the Cuban harbor, and claim that it was the Cubans, or the Spanish, who did this, so that they could go to war with Spain and take Spanish territories? This is a fact! Lyndon Johnson lied to the American people about an incident in the Gulf of Tonkin, and it sent American children to war in Vietnam. And thousands of lives were lost on the basis of a lie!

Now, you are a Muslim! And I am a Muslim! I believe in the Qur'an! Satan is not an accident. He's real. Satan is at the head of conspiracies against The Righteous. The Christians also believe that there's such a thing as a "devil," and a "devil" will work with others to deceive the people!

The people of America and the people of the world, are being deceived, and have been deceived. And it's only somebody that has been taught of God; that believes in God and will stand up for the truth, that will reveal that truth even if it costs his life.

AF: Minister Farrakhan, as you know, a lot of the Families of the victims of the 9/11 attacks will hear what you're saying, and they will obviously be totally outraged. A lot of people in the Muslim world will hear what you're saying, and they will say, as long as we don't have ultimate evidence to support what you're saying, "Minister Louis Farrakhan is trying to mislead us."

HMLF: You've already been misled!

AF: What you could say to them to help them deal with that question?

HMLF: Well, let's look at facts. Let's call together an independent group of scientists and scholars to examine the evidence if so many people believe what I am saying, both in America and in the Muslim world. And there is some government commission that has done their so-called work, and they said, "Yes. It was these terrorists," but let's have a commission of inquiry! What is wrong with that? If so many people believe it, you can't dismiss it, and say, "Well, these are just 'conspiracy theories.'" No!

When this thing came up in New York, it came out in the New York Times in December. This is eight, nine months later. Why didn't this "hue and cry" come up after it was announced in December? So now you have 70-something percent of the American people not in favor of that mosque. Why?

Why is it that we could send aid to Haiti, aid to other places? Pakistan is suffering! Pakistanis are dying—but the aid is not there! Why? Is it because we're tired of sacrificing for the destruction of human life? Or, is it because they are Muslims, and our government is presently sending drones in to bomb areas of Pakistan? I think, as a Muslim, that we need to open our eyes. There's nothing wrong with questioning government decrees—that's the blessing of living in America. I'm not being irresponsible for what I am saying. I'm asking for answers! And we, the American people, deserve answers!

It wasn't only those few White families that died in that attack! It was Muslims, it was Christians, it was Jews, it was Hindus, it was Buddhists, it was people from all over the world! How, then, would single out Muslims and say, "You are too close to this. This is hallowed ground."

What makes it “hallowed,” see? Is this your determination, that it’s now “holy ground”? What about all of the lives that were lost in World War I, the lives that were lost in the Civil War? The soil of America is soaked with blood! All of this should be hallowed ground against war and violence!

AF: The issue of the Islamic Center in New York: Is the problem in Americans who are opposed to having the center at such close proximity to the site of the 9/11 attacks? Or is the problem actually in the Muslims themselves, who should have had their finger on the pulse of the American people, so that they would know and think and act strategically?

HMLF: I cannot blame the Muslims for believing in the Constitution of the United States of America, that guarantees freedom of religion, freedom of assembly. So if they believed in that supreme law of the United States, they could not foresee the anger, the vitriol that would build as a result of their desire to build that cultural center in which, they say, would be a place of worship for Muslims, Christians and Jews; a place of fellowship. I think it’s a wonderful idea.

And I thought Imam [Feisal Abdul] Rauf handled himself on CNN the other night in a magnificent way, and when they asked him, “If you knew that it would bring about this, would you have done it?” And I think after thought, he said, “No. I would not have done it.” It’s not his fault for believing in America more than America believes in its Constitution. But, now that the hue and the cry has arisen, the next step, of course, is his. I liked what he said; he didn’t want to embolden “radicals.”

The lady on television that lost a member of her family: She’s not a “radical.” You could listen to her, she’s not an “extremist.” She’s a good American woman. But there are others that take the sentiment, the emotion, the hurt, the pain of the

American people, and raise it to a level where, now, having a mosque there is like quote-unquote a sign said, “Spitting on the grave of those who lost their lives that day.”

So, I don’t blame the Muslims for not seeing what they could not see; what they did not expect. Nor do I blame the innocent Americans who have been ill-affected by anti-Islamic propaganda.

AF: What is the state of bridges between African American Muslims and Muslims of Arab descent, or of Asian descent?

HMLF: Well first, my dear brother, we have to understand what has happened to Black people in America. Many of us who came to this country in the hulls of ships: We did not come seeking the “American Dream.” We were slaves. But, we were slaves not in the sense that the Qur’an speaks of “slavery” or, that slavery existed in other parts of the world.

We were chattel slaves, we came with Islamic names, and African names; Islamic culture, African culture, Islamic history, African history, and all of that was stripped from us, so that out of all of these Black people in America, none of us speak our original language, none of us wear our original names. None of us worship the God that we worshiped before we came, or were brought, to America. So now, we are in a state, if you don’t mind my saying—of jahiliyya—abominable ignorance.

I know we have an African American president, many brilliant Black men and women in government. They are not the “norm.” They are out of the norm. It’s the masses of Black people that are suffering. So, the masses of us in ignorance really need Islam. We need a civilizing message.

Unfortunately, there are Palestinians, who are Christians, Palestinians who are Muslims, some of them come in our community, they set up their business. They sell liquor, they sell pork, they abuse our women. This is not the way of Allah, and Islam. So in many cases, the Blacks in the ghettos don't have a favorable opinion of Arabs. And, Black people have been fed that Arabs were involved in the slave trade. That Arabs misused Africans. That Arabs abused, and have this superior thought over Black people. So, the bridge-building is difficult. But it is being built.

An Arab came to us from Mecca—Fard Muhammad. We love that Man with a pure, unadulterated love, because He came and offered us not only Islam, but a methodology to raise us from a savage state. We thank Allah for Him.

I am a Muslim! I thank Allah for the Arabs, because of all the people that have received divine revelation, the Arab has kept the Qur'an pure. So, for me, there is a bridge; and we will continue to work on building that bridge. But there also is a racist poison that exists in the Arab mind that was seen in the time of the prophet: When Bilal accepted Islam, he was persecuted by the early Muslims. So this sense that we are "inferior," that we are "less than" White Arabs, or, other Arabs, or Muslims—that feeling will be done away with as we rise into civilized Islamic behavior and culture.

So I am hopeful. In fact, I know that a bridge will be built between us and the Arab world; us, and the Islamic world, because Allah has said it. And Allah speaks the truth.

AF: Do you subscribe to the notion held by some Muslims who say that when they look at the ills that plague Muslim societies today, in the Muslim world; and they compare them with some of the problems that Muslims face in this

country, they have greater hope for the future of Muslims in this country than they do for the future of Muslims in the Muslim world?

HMLF: Well, I can understand that. The constitutional guarantees of this country are superior to the nationalistic constitutions that are in the Arab and Islamic world.

There are many wonderful things in our world of Islam that the West could learn from. And there are many wonderful things in the West that our Islamic world can learn from. So Allah says He's the Lord of the East and the West, and in Surah—"The Bee"—we take the best out of this world, and the best out of our world, and produce a healing.

So, you know, the hope of Islam is that every race, every ethnicity, every people that are on this Earth will one day live under a Universal Government of Peace, where all of us can exist as brothers and sisters. That's the hope of Jesus Christ. That's the hope of Prophet Muhammad. And that is the reason for the Coming of Mahdi: To master the Day of Religion, that all of these divisions that have created so much hatred, that these divisions will be obliterated by The Presence of a Supreme Truth.

And the Qur'an says, "When truth comes, falsehood vanishes. And falsehood is forever a vanishing thing."

AF: When you're talking about the inflamed situation in the Muslim world with regard to the way that [there's] Islamophobia in the United States, how do you rate President Barack Obama's handling of the Terry Jones issue?

HMLF: First, during Iftar at the White House, when President Obama said that these Muslims should be able to build a mosque or center wherever they would

desire, Mayor [Michael] Bloomberg agreed; Rabbi [Marc] Schneier, and others that are with Rabbi Schneier, agreed.

There are many Christians and Jews, and members of other faith traditions that felt that he should be free to build that mosque. But the more they said that, the greater the “anti-feeling” developed.

Reverend Jones, who admitted he never read the Qur’an, he doesn’t know that in the Qur’an we believe that Jesus, the son of Mary, is The Messiah. He doesn’t know of our respect and honor for Jesus and the Christians. And, Allah’s respect and honor for them that is seen in the Holy Book. However, that poor young man, or, older man who wished to burn the Qur’an, has inflamed the world.

How did it inflame the world? Here’s a man in some non-descript part of Florida, with a very small congregation, and the media blew him up, and the incident. If we paid him no attention, even if he burned 100 Qur’ans, he would not have affected the world. But such an act of disrespect of Islam, and a billion, six hundred million Muslims: Once it becomes viral, then the whole world sees it, it inflames...and you know, people act out of what they think they know or believe. That man was acting out of a state of ignorance about this book, Qur’an, and about what Islam is.

So when people act out of their ignorance, the thing that disturbed me more than Rev. Jones, was the fact that somebody like Franklin Graham didn’t weigh in on this. Or, Pat Robertson of the 700 Club didn’t weigh in. The Pope, all the way from the Vatican weighs in, but strong religious leaders in America didn’t say anything—the strongest. And it’s like they’re encouraging this. So thanks be to God! I pray that he will not burn the Qur’an.

But in closing our discourse: This is not new. When the Americans occupied Iraq, what happened at Abu Ghraib? Were not Qur’ans flushed in toilets, and urinated

on? Not only there, but in Guantanamo Bay, under American supervision? Were not Iraqi women raped, and men forced into homosexual acts in Abu Ghraib? So much so that the president refused to release the pictures that they have of what happened, because he knew that if he released those pictures, it would bring about terrible results within the American society, not just with Muslims.

So there's a hatred that's building. And it didn't start with Rev. Jones. His idea of burning the Qur'an—we have to go back to eight, nine, 10 years ago with the horror of 9/11 and all of the propaganda that came up about Islam and Muslims.

I am not sure that I heard everything that President Obama said. But if he spoke to the issue, you know, he's the highest elected official in the land.

Naturally, to bring him out to speak against this—General Petraeus, [Defense] Secretary [Robert] Gates, these are people that know something about the Islamic world, they know something about the Islamic zeal for the Qur'an, the Islamic zeal for Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. So when you do things to stimulate that—and American interests are all over the world!—you're stirring up something that could be disastrous.

And so to say that “fear”—someone on CNN was saying they're trying to stoke fear in the American people. Look: If you're intelligent, you don't jump into a lion's den, and say, “I'm not afraid!” Well, you won't be in there long. So the idea is intelligent people fear consequences of their actions!

This is very unintelligent; and the whole world of intelligence spoke against it! So if it happens, I pray that the Muslim world will see it like this: This is a man whose hatred of Islam drove him to disobey the guidance of all those who advised him.

And the Islamic world should not feel that if he burns this Qur'an, that that is the consensus of all Americans. Take the consensus from the Pope, the president, the European rulers and leaders who have Muslims throughout their nations: They don't want to see anything like that, and neither do the masses of the American people.

AF: Minister, thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

HMLF: No, I appreciate you and your questions.

End Notes

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