



## UN-istan

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Islamic fundamentalism is the global terrorists' driving ideology. Sadly, there are no influential Muslim voices with the will and the power to move the focus of the Muslim world toward purging itself of the barbaric tendencies that spring from the dark dogma of reactionary Islam.

We see regular paroxysms of rage directed at the West all over the Muslim world. They are in reaction to satirical cartoons, a critical speech by Pope Benedict XVI, or other perceived verbal slights that dare to call into question the peaceful nature of Islam. But where was the outrage from any influential Muslim clerics, political leaders or the Muslim masses on the streets against the Sunni suicide bombers who snuffed out the lives of 118 Shia pilgrims last week, including innocent women and children? As usual, there was none.

The few brave Muslim reformers who dare to decry what has gone wrong in the Muslim world are routinely ignored. For example, a "summit" of self-described intellectual "secular" Muslims held in Florida last week to denounce the tyranny of Muslim orthodoxy received virtually no notice in the mainstream press. The secular leftists in the West dismiss such critiques as inauthentic pandering to Westernized values. They believe in cultural diversity for its own sake and in moral equivalency, even if between a world view that uses its religion to justify suicide bombings and subordination of women and a world view that emphasizes the value of innocent life and the equal right of all individuals to live in freedom. For their part, the reactionaries who dominate the centers of power in the Muslim world have, as expected, ignored what the Muslim intellectual reformers had to say. Indeed, a *fatwa* justify-

ing the killing of Muslim intellectuals as being apostates was issued three years ago and, as far as we know, remains in effect.

The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), with a membership of 57 Sunni and Shia Muslim countries and headquartered in Saudi Arabia, purports to represent the “moderate” voice of Islam to the world but in reality it is a façade for Islamic propaganda. It is the second largest inter-governmental group in the world after the United Nations, where it has official observer status on a reciprocal basis. Other than some general appeals for the end to sectarian violence in Iraq and condemnation of terrorism in the abstract, the OIC is silent on putting the blame for the slaughter of innocent Muslim pilgrims precisely where it belongs - on other Muslims. Instead, the OIC squanders most of its energy condemning the West for defaming Islam whenever terrorism is in any way linked with adherents of their religion.

At the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Conference member states usually vote in unison, controlling about 30 percent of the total votes in the General Assembly. While as a group they pay less than 3 percent of the regular annual budget of the United Nations, they have managed to exercise an outsized amount of influence in the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies over how the UN deals with such issues as Palestine, terrorism and human rights. Next on their agenda is a permanent Islam seat on the Security Council. Iran has already been designated as the OIC’s preferred candidate for election to the Security Council in 2008. In their eyes, the Iranian presi-

dent’s threat to annihilate another member state does not disqualify Iran from representing Islam on the one UN policy-making body that is supposed to protect international peace and security.

The UN Human Rights Council, which the OIC members dominate directly or indirectly through their ideological allies, singles out Israel for a raft of trumped up human rights violations. At least six UN bodies spend considerable time on Palestinian issues, spewing forth a stream of resolutions and investigations meant to vilify Israel.

The OIC members have succeeded at the UN in redefining terrorism to *exclude* acts by suicide bombers who are said to be freedom fighters resisting Zionist or Western “occupation.”

With their handpicked representative from Bahrain who was elected president of the current session of the General Assembly, the OIC members also continue to press their demands for the passage of a resolution that criminalizes insults of their religion. They are on their way to reaching their goal with the adoption last year of their draft resolution on Combating Defamation of Religions by the Third Committee of the General Assembly. That resolution emphasizes that the right to freedom of expression should be exercised within limitations as prescribed by law.

In short, the Organization of Islamic Conference bloc has been able to manipulate the UN’s machinery to turn the liberal Western vocabulary of racism, oppression, genocide, tolerance and multiculturalism against the critics of reactionary Islam. Indeed, while

our secular left campuses have become playgrounds for the Islamists' propaganda, the United Nations has turned into the Islamists' favorite stage to act out their conspiracy drama of imagined Zionist and Western crimes against them. It is a sequel to The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the forged Russian tract which purported to describe a Jewish plot to achieve world domination and is still believed in many parts of the Muslim world, particularly the Middle East. Zionist Israel and its protector, the United States, are cast at the UN as the arch villains who are conspiring to take control of the world. The defenders of the Islamic faith are cast as the saviors, fighting against the Zionist conspiracy and for the right of the poor downtrodden Palestinians and other victims of Western-inspired oppression to resist their oppressors by any available means including violence.

The denouement, as scripted by the Islamists, would be the eventual triumph of Sharia over Western values in which the UN Charter and human rights treaties are reinterpreted to fit within the framework of Islamic divine law. The Islamists would victoriously raise their crescent moon and star flag over the headquarters of the United Nations, which for all intents and purposes should then be renamed UNistan.

This could well be the path on which the UN is eventually headed unless the Western democracies that make up a minority of the UN's membership today wake up and fight back with the unambiguous support of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. One hopes that the new Secretary General will prove to be more independent

than Kofi Annan, who turned into the Islamists' marionette. The early signs are mixed. Ban Ki-moon did strongly condemn the slaughter of the Shia pilgrims. He has taken a more positive stance toward Israel than Annan did, and he made it one of his first orders of business upon assuming office to sternly rebuke Iran for its rhetoric on the Holocaust and its call for the elimination of Israel. However, the OIC is trying to exert its influence on Ban Ki-moon behind closed doors. He was scheduled to meet with OIC representatives last week in New York, but the outcome of the discussions has so far been kept under wraps. Meanwhile, the UN's bureaucrats continue in a business-as-usual mode to cover up for the Islamists. For example, at this year's annual meeting of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women, the American delegation's suggestion of a panel on the subject of "State-Sanctioned Mass Rape in Burma and Sudan" was rejected. A senior advisor to Ban Ki-moon asked the U.S. delegation to move any such panel away from the UN. The deputy director of the UN's Division for the Advancement of Women opposed the panel idea outright because it "would be perceived as offensive to named member states."

If the Organization of Islamic Conference members want any meaningful influence at the world body, then they should pay commensurately for the privilege rather than continue to get a free ride. If not, then their collective General Assembly vote should be recalculated to reflect their relative contribution to the UN's regular budget. Only then can the U.S. and a handful of other democracies that are keeping the UN financially afloat be

able to prevent the inmates from running the asylum. We should also support the intriguing proposal of a group known as The Free Muslims Against Terrorism to have the UN Security Council set up an international tribunal for the purpose of prosecuting clerics or other religious leaders who issue *fatwas* that are calculated to incite violence.

Unfortunately, the United States will have few supporters in this battle for what little is left of the United Nations' soul. Most of our European allies are too afraid of the Islamists or

too economically beholden to them to take a moral stand. Indeed, some are in danger of being done in by their own large Muslim populations who have taken advantage of their hosts' liberal political and social welfare systems to foment trouble - the same tactic the Islamists are using at the UN.

Without real reform soon to restore a measure of sanity to Turtle Bay, we should just cut our ties altogether with UNistan and try to start all over again with a new organization of like-minded democratic states.