

The Arrogance of Pakistan



by Gary Fouse

On Friday, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, the interim prime minister of Pakistan, addressed the General Assembly of the UN in New York and demanded that member nations pass legislation outlawing Islamophobia. This from a country with a deep history of persecuting Christians and other non-Muslim minorities. When it comes to arrogance andchutzpah, it is hard to outdo Pakistan. This from the very country that sheltered Usama bin Laden for years after 9-11. There was a very good reason why our government did not advise Pakistan that he had been located in their territory and that we were sending in a Navy Seal team to take him out.

For years now, the 56-nation member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the largest voting bloc in the UN, has demanded international laws against defamation of Islam. In

Pakistan itself, blasphemy against Islam and its prophet is a capital offense. In recent years, Christians in Pakistan have been accused of blasphemy against Islam, which has resulted in their arrests, lynching, and riots all over the country. Just recently, Christian churches and neighborhoods in Pakistani cities have been set on fire over rumors of some Christian(s) committing blasphemy.

And it's not just Christians and non-Muslims who have been targeted. The Ahmadiya Muslims, a sect largely based in Pakistan, have been routinely persecuted due to the fact that they claim a 19th-century prophet subsequent to Mohammad. Ahmadiya are not allowed to publicly claim they are Muslim.

The recent spate of Koran burnings in Scandinavia has highlighted the issue and once again brought it to the fore. A Koran burning (which I think is ill-advised) is guaranteed to elicit a violent response from many Muslims, both at the scene of the event and around the world. That leads to more fears of Islam, fears that are well-grounded given world events.

When Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State, she met at least twice with the OIC behind closed doors in Istanbul and Washington to discuss proposed laws against Islamophobia and anti-Islam speech. What exactly was said we don't know (as it is in so many issues with Mrs. Clinton), but she publicly stated that while freedom of speech was an issue, her country would do everything to "shame" Islamophobes. This from a woman who has no shame.

The sad fact is that there is a good reason for Islamophobia (which in my definition does not include a hatred of all Muslims). It is not just the horrific events happening all over the world in the name of Islam, 9-11, ISIS, and thousands of murderous attacks since that day, but the entire 1400-year-old history of Islam. You cannot expect all this intolerance bloodshed *not* to result in a genuine, well-grounded fear of Islam.

Were the OIC to protest against the targeting of innocent Muslims in the West as retaliation for 9-11 and other terrorist attacks by the jihadists of the world, I would support that. But for this organization, which basically consists of dictatorships and dysfunctional nations like Pakistan to demand that we abolish our freedoms and our ability to criticize Islam-or any religion for that matter- is unacceptable.

Even if Islam were somehow to undergo a modern-day Reformation and abolish all the violence and intolerance it currently practices, a free democratic nation could not outlaw criticism. In the US, people criticize Christianity every day. Anti-Semitism is on the rise, but even anti-Semitic speech is protected unless it directly incites violence. The Islamists could care less about those forms of phobias. In virtually all Muslim-majority countries, religious minorities are routinely persecuted. And yet, Pakistan and the OIC have the chutzpah to demand that only their religion be protected from any and all criticism.