

4/3/88

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The professor makes the case that Israel's implacable foes, who have thus far failed to destroy it, might resort to nuclear warfare to do so. Whether this indeed is on the agenda of its enemies is not the issue. The issue is that these enemies are portrayed as terror-

Seek alternatives to nuclear weapons

In "Israel's vulnerability to nuclear terrorism" (Globe, March 13), Louis Rene Beres writes, "It is only through political compromise with the Palestinians and through progressive rapprochement with all of Islam that Israel can discover real safety from the terror of the atom."

True enough. He points out that Iran, Iraq and Libya are "taking steps" toward nuclear-club membership, so terrorists might well get nuclear weapons or materials from governments opposed to Israel.

He should have added that Israel is apparently already a member. Certified club members are the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, China and India. South Africa and Pakistan may have nuclear weapons.

To deal with nuclear terrorism in the long term, we need to prevent other governments from getting nuclear weapons. But as long as members of the nuclear club keep it alive, other governments will want in. To help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other governments, and perhaps terrorists, nuclear-club members should do more to get rid of their own nuclear weapons. The US and the Soviet Union promised to do so in the 1968 Nonproliferation Treaty.

Our survival, not just Israel's, depends on using better methods than nuclear weapons to assure our security.

PAUL ANDERS
Cambridge

ists who "are turning to the all-consuming Islamic fundamentalism for direction," and in whom the "unifying message of Islamic fundamentalism can strengthen the linkages between the terrorist groups."

It is reprehensible that the author should have used the well-worn code words of "terrorism" and "fundamentalism" (as well as the inevitable cliché "jihad"), as though these traits are the prerogatives of Moslems.

Fundamentalism is neither unique to Islam nor is it in any sense a direct threat to non-Moslems. Judaism has its counterpart in orthodoxy, and Christian fundamentalism needs no introduction. Terrorism is an act abhorrent to all human beings and is universally denounced by all religions.

Islam is a religion of peace, implying submission to the Will of God. "Jihad" - a misunderstood and misused word - connotes a supreme effort to fulfill God's will, which includes striving for equity, social justice and freedom from oppression. If in this fulfillment death is an outcome, it should be no less alien to human endeavor than dying for one's flag or one's country.

This, however, is not a forum for a dissertation on Islam, but an attempt to understand the motive behind Beres's article. If the intention was to stir up hysteria against Moslem "fanatics," it cannot have failed. If it was a ploy to beef up the US aid package to Israel because of this nuclear vulnerability, it must surely succeed. If it was meant to generate "rapprochement" between the Israelis and "all of Islam," it was indeed based on an untenable premise, that Israel would allow itself to be held "hostage" (to complete the list of code words) to negotiations with "Moslem terrorists."

Regardless of its intent, its anti-Islamic sentiment has reinforced the negative stereotype that we, as minority families, who are attempting to raise our children with honor and dignity, are all too familiar with.

A. C. ASMAL
The Islamic Center of Boston
Wayland

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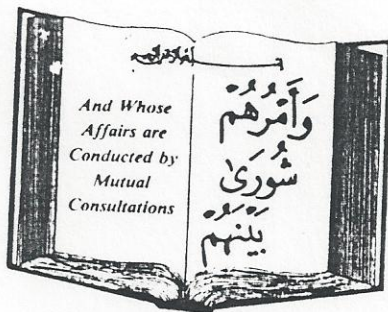
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

470 South Street, Quincy, MA 02169

Telephone: (617) 479-8341

It is the debasement of these beliefs that outraged the entire Muslim world. Muslims feel that the basic principle of the freedom of expression has been grotesquely abused in this instance. The author has used it as a license to cause severe anguish to Muslims by vilification, mockery and slander. In this respect there are legal precedents that have awarded judgement against the publishing of emotionally distressful material.

It is profoundly regrettable that the deep anger that some Muslims felt by the publication of this book has culminated in violence in certain countries. The Islamic Council of New England does not advocate or condone violence or threats of violence in any shape or form.

It is unfortunate that our repeated pleas to the publishers before the publication of the book had been totally disregarded. The Islamic Council hopes that all responsible people, specifically the publishers, book distributors and media will discourage the further promotion of this book. In expressing such a hope we are not attempting to infringe upon any individual's right of expression, but requesting that the legitimate concerns of millions of others be respected.

For the Islamic Council,

Dr Abdul Cader Asmal, Wayland
(PRESIDENT)

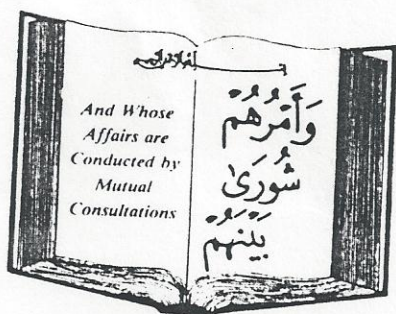
A. C. Asmal

Dr Abdul Karim Khudairi, Quincy

A. Karim Khudairi

Dr Riaz Khan, Worcester

Riaz Khan



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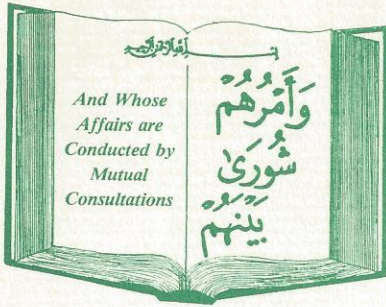
PRESS RELEASE

POSITION STATEMENT FEBRUARY 24 1989

The Islamic Council of New England is the umbrella for a large number of Muslim organizations in New England. The Council would like to make a statement to define its position on the controversial novel, Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie.

The right to the freedom of expression and of religion is upheld as strongly in Islam as it has been enunciated in the First Amendment to the US Constitution. The exercise of this right of free expression is linked to a tolerance for and a respect of the beliefs and moral values of others. Vilification, mockery or distortion of the beliefs and values of any other religion is prohibited in Islam. In contrast, genuine disagreement, criticism and intellectual dialogue are not only acceptable but encouraged.

To place into perspective why the publication of The Satanic Verses generated such a moral outrage among Muslims worldwide, it is important to understand that Islam is a comprehensive religion, in which every facet of the believer's actions is governed by a code of moral, ethical and legal conduct based on the principal tenet that the Quran is the word of God transmitted to Prophet Mohammed through the medium of Arch-Angel Gabriel and that Mohammed himself is the role-model to whom the practical application of the Quranic injunctions has been ordained. Satanic Verses which has been described as an "act of moral vandalism" (Buchanan, Boston Herald, Feb 19, 1989), is in the light of this totally anti-Islamic: it is blasphemous in its depiction of Gabriel, Prophet Mohammed, his wives and his followers; it is hateful in its portrayal of Mohammed (the role-model) as Mahound (the devil); and evil in its attempt to subvert the basic tenet that the Quran represents the total and unadulterated word of God.



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PRESS RELEASE: 3/30/1990: ARSON AT ISLAMIC CENTER.

As an umbrella organization for Muslim communities in New England, the Islamic Council of New England submits this statement to reflect the Muslim reaction to the arson of its oldest and largest mosque.

In extending its sympathy and commitment to its fellow Muslims in Quincy who have demonstrated restraint, fortitude and unshakable resolve, we also express our deep gratitude to church, synagogue, and civic leaders for their immediate denunciation of the act, and for their offers of unsolicited assistance. We are encouraged by the media's sincere interest in reporting our plight, and are reassured by the prompt full scale investigation that has been launched by the local police and the F.B.I.

Cognizant of these measures and appreciative of the spontaneous goodwill, the Islamic Council, nonetheless feels that it would be remiss if it failed to project the Muslim perspective -- of deep anguish and outrage at what was an unprovoked attack on one of our houses of worship, and a gross violation of our constitutionally enshrined right of freedom of expression.

We would hope that our tragedy will not escape the attention of Governor Dukakis or of Senators Edward Kennedy, and John Kerry, who will come forth and condemn this heinous act of terrorism.

We hope that the police authorities will leave no stone unturned to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice, and thereby give us the reassurance that this act was an isolated incident. If in the realization of our worst fears this act represents an Anti-Islamic conspiracy, we have no doubt that we will be accorded the fullest protection.

We hope that the media, which has hitherto shown a relative lack of sensitivity on reporting on issues of concern to Muslims, will be more circumspect henceforth, when, e.g. it reports on random acts of political violence and uses the almost obligatory epithet of "Islamic" to prefix it.

We hope that our tragedy will dispell the current level of disinformation about Islam and help bring together all people of goodwill.

Executive Committee of Islamic Council

Dr Mohammed Arif, President

Dr Abdul Cader Asmal, Chairman of Communications

Dr Mohammed Bajwa

Dr Abdul Karim Khudairi

Imam Shakir Mahmoud

Contact person:

A. C. Asmal

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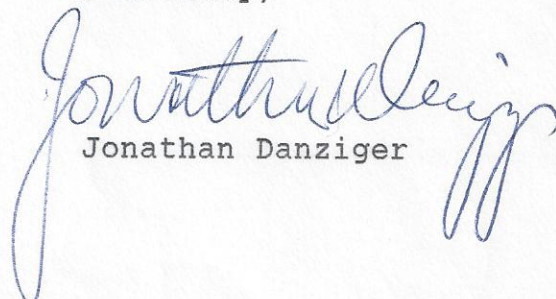
March 26, 1990

Dear Dr. Asmal:

Thank you very much for your recent response to correspondent David Aikman's February 26 report from Tadzhikistan. Given the astonishing events occurring in this Soviet republic, and the extraordinary circumstances under which Aikman found himself there, we thought that a first-person account of his days in Tadzhikistan to be the best way to communicate to readers the violent near-anarchy that holds sway in and around Dushanbe. The flow of information from Tadzhikistan has been stopped almost entirely, and so we relied exclusively here on Aikman's assessments. In truth, we were glad to; we have full confidence in the reliability and fairness of his reporting. Still, we appreciate your registering your concern, and have shared your comments with the appropriate members of our editorial staff. We will be certain to keep your thoughts in mind as we continue to cover developments in Tadzhikistan.

Our thanks, again, for writing to TIME, and best wishes from the editors.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Danziger

Abdul Cader Asmal, M.D.
4 Larkspur Road
Needham, MA 02192
JD:sf

SEP 9, 91 GLOBE Articles on Islam devoid of enlightenment

In this country we celebrate, not just tolerate, our religious, ethnic and cultural differences. With the freedom of expression we share comes an enlightenment to disagree without being disagreeable, and a civility to be critical without becoming malicious.

Regrettably, the articles by Thomas Boylston Adams in The Boston Globe portray Islam in a manner totally bereft of all enlightenment and civility. Replete with age-old misconceptions, they are dressed up to disinform and beguile contemporary society.

As offensive as such unprovoked onslaughts are to Muslims, they are no less objectionable than the continued refusal of the media to recognize the sensitivities of American Muslims in their midst and their failure to provide a forum for Muslims through which to express their perspectives to society at large.

Such perspectives would allow

the inquiring mind to understand that one cannot reconcile hogwash about a religion that is purported to promote terror, to hold a monopoly on fanaticism, to subordinate women, and to espouse a return to medieval times, with facts about it – for instance, that it is the fastest-growing religion in this country.

The inquiring mind would also discover that Islam's central message, of universal brotherhood, of social equity and justice, and of an intolerance of economic and psychological exploitation, is anathema to all who would maintain the status quo (of inequity, exploitation and injustice), exemplified par excellence by the totalitarian despots of many so-called Muslim countries who have failed Islam so abysmally and who cultivate the fodder on which the likes of Adams forage.

A. C. ASMAL, MD

Chairman of Communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

Scorn based on archaic stereotypes

Once more, Thomas Boylston Adams has put cynical pen to paper and written a twisted analysis of Muslim history, based on erroneous sources ("The perils of prosperity," Aug. 24). He is more than welcome to discuss, challenge or oppose any aspect of Muslim faith or behavior, but his accusations of hypocrisy ("Fortunately for the big spenders, Sunni doctors of theology found ways to interpret the Koran and modify some of its more puritanical structures.") are not only unfounded and contradict current Muslim practice, but they are also sure to antagonize every Muslim reader.

Many Muslims in the Boston area still are trying to understand Adams' purpose in writing three articles debasing Muslim beliefs. If he is trying to paint a picture of greedy, materialistic, hypocritical hordes of Arabs slashing their

way to temporary dominance of the Middle East, then he has succeeded. However, where is The Boston Globe's responsibility in verifying the truth of what is printed on its pages? There is certainly no shortage of resources or people in the area who would do so.

We, as Muslims, cannot infringe upon anyone's right to free speech, nor can we blame anyone but ourselves if our behavior leads others to shun or scorn us. But if this scorn is based only on archaic stereotypes stemming from the Dark Ages, when suspicion was the norm, then the door to the free exchange of ideas and information between Muslims around the world and citizens of this country will remain firmly shut. That would be a tragedy.

ALI YOUSSEF

Islamic Society of Boston

Mideast views: Israeli perspective . . .

THE REV. Raymond A. Low's April 12 letter discussed "America's flawed Mideast policy." Let me point out some salient facts as a reminder:

- More than 95 percent of Palestinians no longer live under Israeli control.

- In the recent Camp David gathering, it was Yasser Arafat and his delegation who intentionally rejected all potential compromises that might lead to a genuine and comprehensive peace. Instead, they chose to resort to violence and incitement.

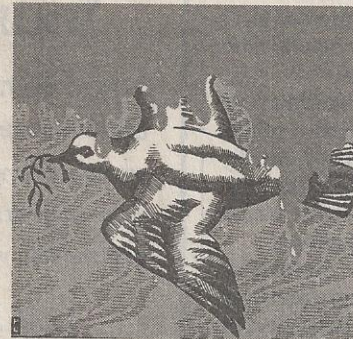
- Israel suffers from constant daily terror perpetrated from within the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Officials in the Palestinian Authority, as well as groups associated with

them, implement most terrorist activities.

- Confronted by vitriolic incitement by the Palestinians, desecration of Jewish holy sites, suicide bombers in Israeli towns and cities, and shelling of civilian settlements, Israel has only one

choice to protect the lives of its people.

- Israel has shown its genuine commitment to peace. What is needed to change is the Palestinian approach. This is our prayer, and we hope that



PAUL LACHINE ILLUSTRATION

Low will join us in this: to teach love, not hatred, and stop the violence and incitement.

ANAT GILEAD
CONSULATE GENERAL OF ISRAEL
TO NEW ENGLAND
Boston

. . . and the Palestinian perspective

THE CASE that David Harris made against the Palestinians in his April 7 op-ed article ("An effort to erase Jewish history") is based entirely on opinions.

In the interest of history it is important to document the Palestinian perspective. In the Palestinian view their land has been misappropriated under a historically unique precedent – that of a fundamentalist religious inheritance. Their dispossession and Israel's refusal to redress it, in contemptuous disregard of international law, coupled with there being no right of return for Palestinians, have created the very diaspora that their occupiers relinquished. It also established a state of existence for them that has turned out to be more degrading than the abhorrent apartheid system.

With the outbreak of the current intifadah, which Palestinians ascribe entirely to the premeditated provocation of Ariel Sharon (regarded by many as a war criminal), they watch with sheer horror the unspeakably disproportionate force directed against civilians. They suffer with anguish and rage over the strangulating siege of their towns and villages. They endure with bitterness the ultimate indignity a victim must bear, that of being blamed for his plight. And they listen with utter disbelief at the deafening silence of US media, which are maintaining a total blackout of this carnage.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
ANWAR KAZMI
ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF
NEW ENGLAND
Quincy

The Globe welcomes correspondence from readers. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number.

Letters should be 200 words or less; all are subject to condensation. Letters sent by US mail should be signed.

Readers' opinions

QUINCY PATRIOT LEDGER
SAT. MARCH 4, 1989

Islamic Council's position on Rushdie novel

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DR. ABDUL CADER ASMAL

Wayland

DR. ABDUL KARIM KHUDAIRI

Quincy

DR. RIAZ KHAN

Worcester

For the Islamic Council of New England

Arab-Americans relieved

Hope harassment ceases now that war is over

By Leigh Hurwitz
TAB Staff Writer

WAYLAND — Arab-Americans are breathing a collective sigh of relief now that a cease-fire has been declared in the Persian Gulf.

Anti-Arab sentiment has been on the rise since Iraq invaded Kuwait last August, according to Leonard Zakim of the Anti-Defamation League.

Many local Arabs, members of the Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland, have been targeted for harassment.

"We were held hostage by the misunderstanding that all Arabs are behind Saddam Hussein," said Dr. Abdul Asmal, spokesman for the Wayland mosque. "We condemned Iraq's annexation of Kuwait and we always prayed for peace."

Asmal pointed out that at least five of the partners in the United Nations coalition are Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"Still, every time Saddam called for a holy war, all Moslems were held accountable. We were held accountable for all of Saddam's actions. It was a very difficult

time for us and we're very relieved that it's over."

Harassed and threatened

The Islamic Center has received several harassing phone calls, according to Asmal. Members of the mosque have been victims of verbal attacks and threats.

An Arab family on the North Shore had a snowball hurled through their front window by vandals, who screamed at them to "get out of the neighborhood." Their children were called "Saddam" by classmates at school.

"We're very nervous, very afraid," said one member of the mosque who lives in Sudbury. To avoid further harassment, she asked to remain anonymous.

To prevent trouble, Wayland police are keeping extra patrols in the area of the mosque, Chief Tom O'Loughlin said.

The Islamic Center did not take a political stand in the war, except to condemn Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Asmal said the mosque's members were split in their support for the coalition's military action.

"Moslems are individuals who have their own feelings about the war," Asmal said.

"Not all Arabs think the same way."

Many of the members have families in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq.

"Can you imagine the anguish of
see **Relieved**, page 10

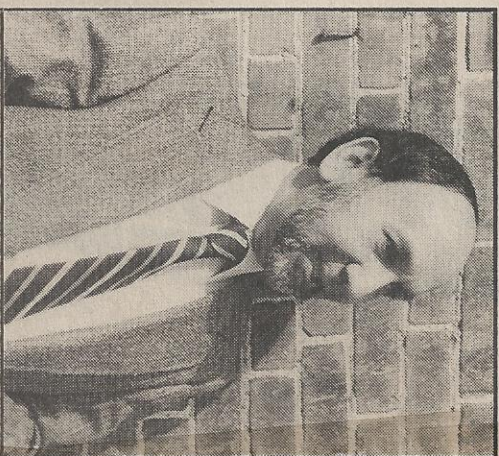


PHOTO BY BRIAN SULLIVAN

Dr. Abdul Asmal says Arab-Americans are "tremendously relieved" now that a cease-fire has been declared.

Arab-Americans 'very afrai

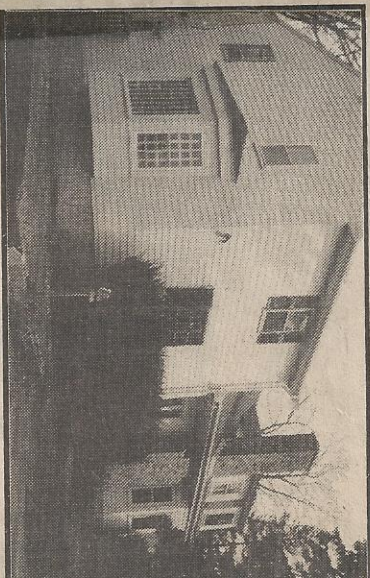


PHOTO BY

The Islamic Center of Boston converted this old h
a mosque and religious school.

RELIEVED, from page 3

knowing your family was being bombed or kidnapped or Asmal asked. "We are grateful that the fighting has end

Hope for lasting peace

Asmal is hopeful that once the dust settles in the Gulf, peace can be forged.

"I hope the countries can sit across the table from each other and talk about how they can all live together in peace. This is the first time a strong diplomatic coalition has formed in the Middle East, which has been embroiled in for centuries," Asmal said.

"If we can gather together for war, we should be able to do so together for peace."

The Islamic Center of Boston, one of only a handful in the state, came to Wayland two years ago. More than 100 families attend weekly prayer services and religious classes. Most of the families are Arab immigrants from Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Others come from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Most of the children were born in America. They attend religious school classes, where they study Arabic and t

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Dr. Lynne V. Cheney,
Chairperson,
National Endowment for the Humanities,
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.,
Washington D.C. 20506.

June 10, 1990.

Dear Dr. Cheney,

As Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities you cannot be expected to be aware of, or assume responsibility for all events taking place in your agency.

It is for this reason that I bring to your attention a report that Bernard Lewis was paid a sum of \$10,000 by the National Endowment to deliver a lecture entitled "Why Muslims Hate America." As a Muslim I find the subject matter of Mr. Lewis's talk offensive and inflammatory, and the evidence that it was sponsored by the the National Endowment most disquieting.

I am unclear on what premise Mr. Lewis bases his assertion, but I for one, as a Muslim, do not hate America, and therefore cannot be included in his sweeping generalization. I can speak with equal conviction for my wife and two teenagers, vouch for the many Muslims in my community, and obtain ample endorsement from my relatives abroad who would love to come to America. Thus, if Mr. Lewis does not reflect the opinions of a random sample of ordinary Muslims, he can scarcely claim to represent the views of so-called Muslim countries. Among these are Saudi Arabia, which recently launched a multi-million dollar exhibition to celebrate its close friendship between our countries, and Pakistan and Egypt, which as recipients of generous aid from the U.S. have little reason to bear antipathy toward us.

It is thus incomprehensible that Mr. Lewis should have been afforded a public forum for his anti-Islamic propaganda and inconceivable that the National Endowment for the Humanities should have allowed itself to sponsor such a blatantly anti-Islamic topic.

As a minority group, Muslims are subjected to

constant negative stereotype and disinformation. To substantiate this point I have included copies of recent correspondence in which I have sought redress from the media, invariably to no avail. That we have to be ever-vigilant, and find it necessary to have to defend ourselves from the machinations or insensitivity of the media is frustrating enough. To discover that the National Endowment for the Humanities apparently endorses such anti-Islamism is demeaning in the extreme.

In your interview with McLaughlin on PBS your many accomplishments were seen to be based on a keen intellect and a strong sense of justice. I write to you in the knowledge that you will investigate the concerns I have expressed, give us the assurance that it is not the policy of the National Endowment to humiliate any one group of citizens, and grant us an opportunity to restore the balance.

Yours sincerely,

Abdul Cader Asmal

Chairman of Communications

Islamic Council of New England

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Correspondence address: 4 Larkspur Road,
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Please send your opinion to L
BOSTON HERALD letters shoul
6/11/90

Saudi Arabia a staunch ally of U.S.

If "Saudi Arabia: Yesterday and Today," were billed as a celebration of Saudi-U.S. friendship, then contrary to Jeff Jacoby's bigoted May 24 column ("Saudi Arabia's show doesn't show it all"), the exhibition was a success. It succeeded in documenting the close relationship between our two countries for over 50 years. Next to Israel, Saudi Arabia has been our staunchest ally in the Middle East, in that it represents a voice of reason in OPEC; supplies our oil needs; and is a key importer of our produce. In promoting their own cause, the Saudis have also helped dispel some of the negative stereotype of Arabs in general, and project a much needed positive image of Islam in this country.

It is therefore especially reprehensible that Jacoby should have exploited the occasion to launch a litany of anti-Islamic sentiments. His innuendo of religious intolerance in Islam is incompatible with the Koranic position, "There is no compulsion in religion," as well as the facts of history.

With regard to "wife-beating," the Islamic position is epitomized in the words of Prophet Mohammed, "The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manner and kindness to his wife."

While I neither defend nor condone Saudi Arabia's national, political or social institutions, I find it indefensible that Jacoby should use the exhibition as a forum to deliver anti-Islamic propaganda.

Abdul Cader Asmal,
Islamic Center
of Boston
Wayland

BOSTON HERALD

6/11/90

Letters to the Editor

US involvement in Saudi Arabia won't help our interests

I wish I could agree with your June 30 editorial "Saudi stability," which argued that because Saudi Arabia is not another Iran, the United States should continue its involvement there.

While a cursory view may reveal little in common between the overthrown secularist regime of Iran and the reigning ultraconservative regime of Saudi Arabia, closer scrutiny exposes a striking similarity between the two corrupt and profligate totalitarian plutocracies exploiting an ever-expanding underclass of the disenfranchised.

The downfall of the secularist shah's regime was brought about by a groundswell of religious zealotry. The challenge to the Saudi regime emanates from a "democratic" left and a "fundamentalist" right.

The assault from the left emanates from disenchanted intellectuals and entrepreneurs who see their country run and ruined by those whom they perceive as nepotistic

and self-indulgent.

The onslaught from the right is spearheaded by reformers and militants, who see a mockery of Islamic law as ostensibly applied by the Saudi regime. To them as the people who primarily inherited Islam's quintessential message of universal brotherhood and social equity, and then providentially given the material wealth to promote this spirit, the perceived corruption, profligacy and decadence are a debasement of the essence of their religion.

Thus, to the galvanized fronts at both ends of Saudi society, the ethics and morality of the elitists who rule them in the name of the ailing monarch meet the standards of neither the West nor Islam. As the Saudis struggle to reassert the legitimacy of their regime against this barrage, the United States is identified as the defender of the status quo.

US involvement in propping up the shah did not serve our interest. Our continued involvement in bol-

stering the stability of a regime whose legitimacy is questioned by substantial segments of its own people, can hardly be expected to better our vital interest, but as things appear, can assuredly alienate the populace and place US troops in a disastrous cross-fire.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Chairman of Communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

BOSTON GLOBE

7/14/96

ers to the Editor

B-4.
8.13.92.

Editorial on Bosnia casts US in the role of accomplice

It is ironic and tragic that in the same edition (Aug. 4) the Globe carried reports of reported death camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina and an editorial proclaiming that "containment of these atrocities may be the only achievable objective for the world." What you are saying is: "Condemn millions of innocent civilians to torture and ethnic purification. Do nothing about the Nazis of 1992."

Too often any racist group is labeled Nazi, to the point at which the word loses its meaning. The hell that was once Bosnia reminds us of exactly who the Nazis were and what they did.

It is patently false that "the rest

of the world, particularly Europe, has been unable to do anything to curb the slaughter." The world has been unwilling. The military power exists to ease the suffering of civilians in Sarajevo. Bosnian officials have pleaded for weapons to defend themselves against the superior weaponry of the Yugoslav army. Instead, the West is trying to negotiate, which is akin to negotiating with Hitler.

If we have the power to save some Bosnians but choose instead a policy of containment, we are, in effect, accomplices to a terrible evil.

SHARON MACHLIS GARTENBERG

Framingham

Attitude toward Muslims explains media's tardiness

The editorial "The cycle of carnage" (Aug. 4) describes the goal of the Serbs to "exterminate or expel all who are ethnically unacceptable."

What it fails to recognize is that the Muslims in Bosnia are in every other way totally indistinguishable from the Christian Serbs and Croats with whom they have lived in peace for centuries. The point that the editorial therefore does not highlight is that this carnage is no mere act of interethnic madness (not that this would reduce the enormity of the crime), but that it is a calculated and heinous act of religious persecution.

of the most hideous order.

The world community would have been less tardy in expressing its outrage at such an atrocity had the media not so systematically desensitized it by portraying Muslims as a monolithic bloc of fundamentalists, with all that this connotes.

As far as the response of so-called Muslim countries to this genocide is concerned, their silence is deafening.

ABDUL ASMAL, M.D.

Chairman of communications
Islamic Council of New England

Muslims follow cover-up of Bosnia with incredulity

At first glance, the headline "Muslim hits West's plan for Bosnia" (Boston Globe, May 24) seems innocuous and innocent. The media have a knee-jerk response when it comes to casting Muslims in an adversarial role against the West. This assertion is made not out of a sense of paranoia but from bitter experience of the duplicity with which Muslims are depicted. The genocide in Bosnia has provided little relief.

Serbian militiamen claim they are helping Europe by "cleansing" it of Muslims, but this is hardly recognized as a neo-fascist crusade of Christian extremists by the very media who find an Islamic fundamentalist at every turn. This mindset makes it easy to identify the "Muslim terrorist" and yet spare the purveyors of such heinous acts as gang rapes, mutilations, raw terror and mindless slaughter of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in Bosnia.

Muslims perceive the downplay-

ing of the atrocities and disinformation on the relative roles of the victim and the aggressor with incredulity and as a symptom of their inability to reconcile the fact that civilized and cultured Europeans are capable of acts of such naked barbarity against other cultured and civilized Europeans who happen to be Muslim.

From a Muslim perspective, the virtual coverup of these crimes against humanity is almost as painful as the atrocities themselves and epitomizes the very logic and morality that paved the way for the Holocaust.

"Legitimizing genocide," Patrick Moynihan's reaction to the new plan for Bosnia, is certainly a more accurate description. At the very least, it respects the elected president of a still-sovereign nation.

SHUA SALEEM, MD, President

ABDUL CADER ASMAL, MD

Chairman of communications
Islamic Council of New England

BOSTON GLOBE 6 JUNE 92

Globe has double standard for Israelis, Muslims

B-G 11.6.94

We endorse the Globe's condemnation of the senseless massacre of innocent civilians in Tel Aviv by an extremist Muslim group ("A depraved attack on peace," Oct. 20). Such acts are totally antithetical to Islam. We extend our condolences to the victims and pledge our commitment to work with people of goodwill to establish peace and justice.

In endorsing the Globe's position we applaud the strong language used - "a crime so evil that sane people cannot understand how human beings could do such a thing" - but express puzzlement by its failure to denounce with such passion the systematic crimes against humanity

committed over the past two years by Serbian chetniks against Muslims. We had noted that in editorializing about the tragedy in Hebron, the Globe refrained from referring to the victims at prayer as "Muslim," and yet when it reported on Bosnia's rejection of the peace plan its headlines screamed, "Muslim rejects West's peace plan for Bosnia."

The portrayal of Muslims as monolithic extremists and the reluctance to acknowledge their victimization serves to dehumanize and marginalize them.

ALI ANTAR, ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

litor GLOBE

Allegations about Sudan have not been proven

Responding to my Aug. 31 op-ed article on terrorism ("US actions put Muslim-Americans in a bind"), Charles Jacobs raised serious allegations about human rights violations by Sudan ("Slavery in Africa: Why don't Arab-Americans speak up?" letter, Sept. 7). If these allegations are substantiated, they demand immediate, universal condemnation.

At this time, however, they are only allegations that have been repudiated as anti-Sudanese, anti-Islamic propaganda. Nonetheless, because of the enormity of the charges against Sudan (state-sponsored famine, slavery, rape, torture, and forcible conversion to Islam), these allegations cannot be brushed aside without a scrupulous and objective analysis.

From a Muslim perspective, no investigation is required to define where Islam stands on two of the charges egregiously linked to the religion.

Nearly 1,400 years ago, Islam advocated the emancipation of slaves as the supreme act of repentance and as the essence of charity. With respect to proselytization, Islam has an uncompromising position on the freedom of religious choice. Any attempt at the forcible conversion of non-Muslims to Islam is in total contravention of this basic tenet.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Chairman of communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

9/25/98

The Globe welcomes correspondence from readers. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Letters should be 200 words or less.

Mail address: Letters to the Editor, The Boston Globe, P.O. Box 2378, Boston, MA 02107-2378. The e-mail address is letter@globe.com.

now the outside world views

FEB 5, 1997

True Islam is opposed to inequity, injustice

Two points in the Jan. 15 front-page article by Diego Ribadeneira, "Questions on the Koran," need clarification.

First, no so-called Muslim "revivalist" has ever questioned the authenticity of what is said in the Koran. What is questioned is its interpretation, and more important, that of the body of Islamic law called the Shariah, only one component of which is derived from the Koran.

Second, lest your readers infer that Muslim revivalists are preoccupied by gender polemics, Muslim scholars of both genders are unified in their commitment to the eradication of the social inequities and injustices noted as occurring in Iraq and Pakistan. While examples of indefensible cruelty are often used to misrepresent the spirit of Islam, these practices are throwbacks from pre-

Islamic times and cultural accretions that have nothing to do with Islam's pristine principles.

In fact, the whole purpose of Islamic "revivalism," occurring in every century since the death of the Prophet Muhammed, is to purge the Muslims of cultural accretions that they themselves confuse with Islamic traditions.

If, in this crusade against social oppression, women appear more vocal on issues directly germane to their well-being, who is better qualified to rebuff the negative stereotyping of women in Islam than Muslim women?

A.C. ASMAL and
MARY LAHAJ
Communications Committee
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

GLOBE

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BOSTON HERALD
6/11/1990

Saudi Arabia a staunch ally of U.S.

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Abdul Cader Asmal,
Islamic Center
of Boston
Wayland

Arab dictators are not good Muslims

Few Muslims would disagree with the Herald's Dec. 16 editorial ("The hypocrites of Islam") that the leaders of so-called Muslim countries (by and large totalitarian despots) are the greatest obstacles to the appreciation of the pivotal truths of Islam in regard to the universal brotherhood of man with social equity and justice. These principles are irreconcilable with the atrocities in Somalia, East Timor, and elsewhere that the Herald describes to these hypocrites.

In highlighting these purported actions of Muslim extremists and hypocrites, the Herald served to caricature Islam, marginalize Muslims in society, and undercut the desperately needed humanitarian support for the Bosnians.

Fifty years ago the Nazis effectively demonized the Jews

and made silent spectators of the rest of the world. If we are not to fail the Bosnians as we failed the Jews, it is imperative that all peoples of goodwill form a coalition crossing racial, national, religious, and ideologic barriers to find a just solution to this humanitarian nightmare. Vilification of Islam for the acts of tyrants and hypocrites does little to spare the world from the horror of what has been termed "The Return of History."

Abdul Cader Asmal,
Chairman of communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

THE BOSTON HERALD, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1993

Islam is committed to peace and respect

The depth of Don Feder's anti-Islamism ("Militant Islam threatens West," Jan. 25) should be obvious to anyone who recognizes the almost pathological hatred he harbors against Hamas, members of which he noted should be "dropped off a cliff with their hair on fire." As a conservative Jew with an ardent concern for Israel, one can understand Feder's anger at the militant group for its derailment of the peace process and accom-

panying embarrassment of the Israeli government.

What one cannot begin to understand is why he should find it necessary to vilify Islam by equating it with Nazism. With one stroke, he attempts to obliterate the history of nearly 12 centuries of mutual accord between Jews and Muslims — a millenium during which Jews saw the blossoming of their "Golden Age" in Muslim lands whilst being subjected to a pariah status elsewhere.

In expressing his repugnance of Hamas and other extremists, it is abhorrent that Feder should launch a malicious diatribe against Islam itself. We condemn violence as an instrument of conflict resolution. Like most Americans, we are committed to the task of promoting mutual respect and understanding, and learning to celebrate our diversity. Feder is dedicated to undermining all this.

Radical rhetoric is as counter-productive to any peace process as is radical action. The world would be a better place without both.

Abdul Cader Asmal,
Chairman of communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Islamic Council of New England

470 SOUTH STREET, QUINCY, MA 02169

STATEMENT ON THE GULF CRISIS : SEPTEMBER 15, 1990.

The Islamic Council of New England represents Muslims from all over the world residing in this part of the country. As a religious organization it has to date refrained from comment on the Gulf crisis which it views as a purely politico-economic conflict. The renewed call for Jihad by Iran which echoes the sentiment earlier expressed by Iraq constrains the Council to break its silence.

Muslims living in this country are U.S. citizens but are also members of a world community, in the same manner as Jews and Catholics are of their respective world communities. However, unlike the latter groups each of which has a designated leadership, the Muslims of the world, while owing some sense of allegiance to their countries of origin on a purely **nationalistic** basis, do not identify with any one country whether it be Saudia Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, or Egypt, as its mouthpiece. By corollary, none of these countries can claim to reflect the views of Muslims at large, or specifically of those in the U.S.

Notwithstanding, for many of the latter who have close relatives living in the crisis area the issues are far from clearcut, highly-sensitive, and heart-wrenching. As outsiders we share their anguish in the tug-of-war of religious and nationalistic tensions. Nonetheless, as a religious organization we have to dissociate the politico-economic event that triggered the confrontation from the religious reaction that threatens to disseminate it.

The basis of the current reaction is the presence of non-Muslim forces in close proximity to the holiest Islamic shrines in Mecca and Medina. The sanctity of the holy places is perceived by Muslims worldwide as being threatened. The fact that these non-Muslim forces came at the behest of Saudia Arabia, that they have subserved a peace-keeping role, and that they are American is of little consequence to those who feel that the Saudis failed in their capacity as Trustees and Protectors of the Holy Land to discharge their responsibility. It is this unease that is now being amplified into a rallying call to Jihad.

As Muslims we cannot and do not condone the aggression of one country against its weaker neighbour, the holding of

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innocent civilians against their will, and the infliction of grievous hardship to countless refugees. By the same token we cannot support the total embargo that deprives the hapless children, mothers, elderly and disabled from access to basic food and medicines.

As Americans we despair for the young men and women of this country who have had to leave the love and comfort of their families and homes and exist in dust and heat so as to protect our "vital" interests and those of a country in which they feel ill at ease.

It would be presumptuous of the Council to suggest a political solution to the complex situation. As a religious organisation, however, it can pray for its quick and peaceable resolution. It can implore all the adversaries to exercise maximum restraint and ignore no possible diplomatic approach. It can call upon all Muslims to avoid inflammatory rhetoric so as at least to contain the crisis. It can plead for the simultaneous release of all foreign nationals, and the lifting of the naval blockade on all essential commodities. It can invite all Muslim countries that are concerned by the presence of non-Muslim troops in the Holy Land to send their own military personnel and equipment to replace the U.S. forces. Finally, it can appeal to Iraq to relinquish its hold on Kuwait, return to its previous borders, and negotiate a settlement with its neighbors. There can be no losers if there is no war.

Mohammed Arif M.D.,
President,

A. C. Asmal
Abdul Cader Asmal M.D.,
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War in the Middle East

UNHOLY WAR

Muslims fear a tarnish on their faith

By Richard Higgins
GLOBE STAFF

Zaida Hassan grew up in Quincy Point as the daughter of Lebanese immigrants when the only safe place to pray was on the family's prayer rug at home. This week she cried at the outbreak of war not only because she abhors violence but because she fears that her faith, Islam, will be blamed.

"Our feeling is no different from other Americans," said Hassan, the receptionist at the New England Islamic Center in Quincy. "No one wished for this war. No one wants to see anyone die. It won't do any good."

Hassan and other Muslims in the area called the war a tragedy and said it did not reflect a conflict between Islam and the West.

"This has nothing to do with Islam," said Imam Talal Eid, the religious leader of the Quincy mosque, which is one of 20 in New England for about 20,000 Muslims. "Every time political leaders like Saddam Hussein are in trouble, they hold up the banner of Islam, but most Muslims don't fall for this."

Several people pointed out that the Koran instructs Muslims to live at peace with their neighbors and forbids the use of *jihad*, or striving for the will of God, to wage an aggressive war or harm innocent peo-

ple. (A holy war is allowed to defend Islam under certain conditions.)

Others said Saddam Hussein had exploited Islam and latched on to pan-Arab issues for his own gain. "What Hussein has done to his own people and to the Kuwaitis is damnable under Islamic law," said Asi Asani, a specialist on Indo-Muslim culture at Harvard University. "It's clear he doesn't express Islamic values as espoused in the Koran."

On the other hand, Asani said, Americans have so distorted the meaning of Islam that they have taken Saddam Hussein's misuse of it at face value. "People seem to think that any time anything bad happens in the Middle East, it's Muslims who are responsible."

Abdul Cader Asmal of Needham, who is a past president of the Islamic Council of New England, said Muslims here "had joined other religious groups in the Boston area praying for a peaceful resolution."

"Now that hostilities have commenced," Asmal said, "we continue to pray for a speedy end to the war with a minimum of casualties, so that soldiers can return to their loved ones and all the people of the Middle East can start afresh learning how to live with one another in peace."

Asmal said it was "deeply upsetting" to see Saddam Hussein posture as a spokesman for Islam and a rallying force for Palestinians. "He sim-

ply uses the fundamentalist line that suits him for the moment."

Samah Jajari of Jordan, a sophomore at Harvard and head of the college's Islamic Society, agreed, saying that her problem with fundamentalists is that they don't observe the "true fundamentals" of Islam, which include a commitment to peace.

Jajari said she felt "overcome with helplessness" at the onset of the war. One thing she did do, however, was to contact Harvard Hillel, the Jewish student center on campus, to discuss the possibility of a joint response. Jajari, whose roommate is Jewish, said such Islamic-Jewish contacts are in a "primitive state" but that she and other students were trying to show "that it could be done."

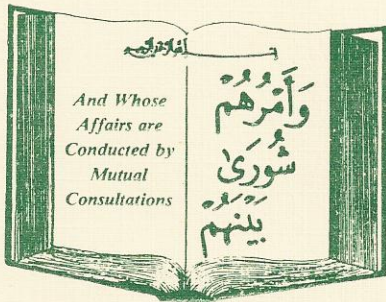
As she spoke, students came into the Islamic Society headquarters for afternoon prayer in the *musalla*, or prayer room. Faithful Muslims observe *salat*, or the practice of prayer, five times a day. Jajari said that the sense of inner peace she gets from her religion "is a great relief and comfort to me."

Dr. Mian Ashraff, a cardiologist and practicing Muslim, said he was upset that the United States had not pursued a peaceful solution more ardently. He also criticized Saddam Hussein's calls for *jihad*. "Saddam Hussein doesn't have the Islamic

background to speak for Islam," Ashraff said. "He tries to use it as a shelter, the umbrella to work under, but clearly represent the Islamic point of view." Ashraff said news accounts imply that all Muslims are equally responsible for the war. Fewer than 20 percent of the 900 million Muslims live in countries; the majority live in the southern rim of Asia. In the world's most populous country, there are about 1 billion US Muslims, approximately the same number as there are Christians.

Many Muslims, both non-Arab, said in interviews that they feel no conflict between their faith and to the United States. They also noted that, for a long time, the dispute between Bush and Saddam Hussein's Iraq began when a Muslim invaded another Muslim and has pitted Muslim against Muslim ever since.

"I'm proud of my Arab heritage," said Hassan, who said her brothers fought in the United States during World War II and during World War I. "Being a Muslim of you. You have to live with it and believe. You can't believe and lead your life another way. It's a sacrifice. But the sacrifice it brings is worth it."



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

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Mr Mortimer B. Zuckerman,
Editor-in-Chief,
U.S. News and World Report,
2400 N Street NW,
Washington D.C. 20037-1196.

4 Larkspur Road,
Needham, MA 02192.
March 26, 1993.

Dear Mr Zuckerman,

As a disciple of Bernard Lewis, it is evident that you have a similar mindset and an identical agenda when it comes to Islam (Beware of Religious Stalinists, U.S. News and World Report, 3 22,93). Bernard Lewis at least relies on half-truths and innuendoes to disinform. You are unabashedly disingenuous. You refer to "radical Islam" rather than extremist Muslims, and imply that the Gulf War was against "radical Islam" (which would make Saudia Arabia and Syria bastions of the West!).

Your editorial against Islam seems dedicated to undermine what most Americans are committed to celebrate viz. our diversity. History reminds us that Hitler first marginalized, then dehumanized, and finally demonized the Jews. By attempting to marginalize Muslims in America, you set the stage for those with less scruples to do the rest.

Your statement that the "World Trade Center bombing is a sentence in the long war between the West and radical Islam", not only prejudices the tragic issue, but epitomizes an aphorism of none other than the Prophet of Islam, "The pen is mightier than the sword". Ironically, when used by the enemies of Islam against Muslims it speaks volumes!

Yours truly,

Abdul Asmal

Abdul Cader Asmal MD PhD
Chairman of Communications

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In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate



AMERICAN MUSLIM FRIENDS OF BOSNIA

P.O. Box 872, Brookline MA 02146 ■ Tel (617) 277-7033, Fax (617) 734-6340

July 10, 1993

MUST THE GENOCIDE GO ON?

The past fifteen months in Bosnia have exposed us to the most savage crimes against humanity since World War II, all because the United Nations, having recognized Bosnia as an independent nation, then proceeded to fail it in every possible way. It failed to provide adequate humanitarian aid. It failed to protect innocent civilians. It failed to allow the Bosnians their legitimate right to self-defense. And it failed to broker a just peace plan.

Aggression has been rewarded. Those with a dream of a Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia have had their dreams come true. Those that wished Europe to be cleansed of a Muslim presence have had their wishes realized. Those that have felt suffocated by overexposure to harrowing accounts of rapes, torture, mutilations and slaughter, can breathe easily again, because Bosnia is under a virtual news blackout.

But those of us who refuse to remain accomplices to the ongoing genocide of innocent and defenseless civilian, who will not endorse the morality and logic that led to the Holocaust, and who cannot claim that 'we did not know', should remain silent no more. In Nuremberg the Nazis stood judgment; in Bosnia the nations of the world are on trial. Please support us to make the United Nations understand this.

M. Q. Ali-Salaam

Mr. M. Ali-Salaam, Chairman

Azwan H. Kazmi

Mr. A. Kazmi, Coordinator

Mohamed Lazzouni

Dr. M. Lazzouni, Executive Director

S. Saleem

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American Muslim Friends of Bosnia

Islamic Council of New England

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Fax: (212) 415-4443

British Ambassador to U.N.: (212) 745-0200

French Ambassador to U.N.: (212) 606-3600

OP-ED

Countering the stereotype of Islam

By Dr. Abdul Cader Asmal
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

As a Muslim, a resident of Needham, and a former second class citizen of South Africa, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the graciousness of the folks in Needham who have provided such a haven in which to raise my family. In particular it is a privilege to thank all the truly dedicated and inspirational teachers who have done so much to bring out the best in my children, and to their peers who welcomed them for who they are.

As a Muslim American I regard it as my duty to correct any misrepresentation about Islam so that society at large has no reason to misunderstand or distrust us. By the same token, I also expect our sensitivities to be respected, and our views presented without duplicity.

The recent bombing at the World Trade Center in which a Muslim is the prime suspect makes it imperative that the Islamic position is unequivocal. The Islamic Council of New England (an umbrella for some 14 Islamic Centers in New England),

which I represent, has expressed its outrage at this mindless act. Acts of terror are antithetical to the principles of Islam and are condemned by Muslims without qualification.

They serve merely to perpetuate the negative stereotype of Islam (a fact of little consequence to extremists). And in this particular instance, the timing from any Muslim perspective makes no sense whatsoever. At a time when the suffering of the Bosnian Muslims is reaching an unbearable level, and the U.S. is the only country that has shown the will to halt the genocide, the last thing that any sane Muslim would wish to do would be to alienate the American people.

If evidence emerges that the atrocity is the product of a mentally deranged individual or of a fringe group, we hope that the media will not denigrate an entire religion for the mindless act of a radical few.

This plea is made not out of a sense of paranoia, but stems from the bitter experience of the duplicity with which Muslims are depicted; thus despite the claims by Serbian militia that they are helping

Europe by 'cleansing' it of Muslims, this is hardly recognized as a neofascist crusade of Christian extremists, by the very media who find an Islamic fundamentalist at every turn.

Such a mindset makes it easy to identify the 'Muslim terrorists' and spare the perpetrators of such heinous acts as gang rapes, mass mutilations, brutal murders, raw terror, starvation and ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in Bosnia, the opprobrium. Terrorism is a diabolical act incompatible with true belief, and no religion can claim redemption through its use.

As a Muslim and a human being I am ashamed to be a silent witness to what has been described as the 'return of history.' 50 years ago we failed the Jews, today it is the Bosnians, tomorrow whose turn will it be? As citizens of the world when we see the suffering of our fellow beings, and we are not moved to feel anguish, to express outrage, or to even ask why, we are in imminent danger of losing our very humanity.

As a member of the human species, I, six months ago cherished the dream that all peoples of goodwill had to form an unprecedented coalition crossing racial, religious, national, and ideologic barriers to find a just solution to this — not Balkan, not European, not Muslim, but humanitarian nightmare. "Time" magazine now writes that Bosnia is finished. My dream is dead. A species of mankind is on the brink of extinction."

Dr. Asmal, a Needham resident, is Chairman of Communications for the Islamic Council of New England.

Facing reality

By William M. Powers
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

MONEY MAZE

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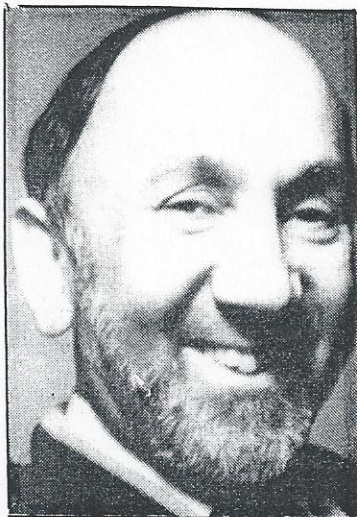


PHOTO BY SHERRY BRIGGS

Dr. Abdul Asmal

Dr. Abdul Asmal is all too acquainted with prejudice. As a member of the Indian community of South Africa, he found himself relegated by the apartheid system to second-class citizenship. Despite this, he excelled in his studies, graduating from college with honors. He went on to London for medical studies, first at the Royal College of Physicians and then at University of London, earning first an M.D. and then a Ph.D. with a specialty in diabetes.

In South Africa Asmal worked at the University of Natal, a school with a mix of races unusual in South Africa. In 1980, he was awarded the South African Medical Council Award, a prestigious recognition previously reserved for the privileged whites. This enabled him to spend a year at the Joslin Clinic in Boston.

"Growing up," Asmal says, "We were inculcated with a feeling of inferiority." His experience at the Joslin was part of what led him to move with his family to the United States. Leaving South Africa was difficult, as he and his wife both had large extended families, but he felt it was impera-

ways to feel that they are as good as anyone," Asmal says. "I did not want them to learn the feelings of inferiority that I did, growing up under apartheid."

The second reason, though not so obvious, was perhaps more important. "People were choosing sides at this time," Asmal says. "You had to be for one and against the other, and I did not feel that this was right."

Asmal lived first in Newton, but when it came time to buy a house, he found that the best value was in Needham.

"I think that this is the most important move we have made," he says. "Especially from the viewpoint of our children's education. I'm very grateful to the Needham school system. My children's achievements have vindicated our decision to come."

Although Asmal is happy here, he is deeply troubled by the frequent media representation of Muslims as bloodthirsty terrorists.

"This portrayal tends to dehumanize Muslims, and this makes it easier for the world to accept what is happening in Bosnia," he says, explaining his concern. "People don't realize that most of us are like anyone else, people just wanting to get on with our lives. Terrorists are just that: terrorists. There's no excuse for this."

Asmal is active in several Islamic organizations, including the Islamic Council of New England and the American Muslim Friends of Bosnia. He has also established liaison with several other religious groups such as the National Council of Churches, the American Jewish Congress (Boston) and the Anti-Defamation League (Boston). He has also been a member of the Interfaith Trialogue of Catholics, Jews and Muslims since 1988.

"We are all on this Earth together," says Asmal. "It is time



In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

AMERICAN MUSLIM FRIENDS OF BOSNIA

P.O.Box 872, Brookline MA 02146 ■ Tel (617)277-7033, Fax (617)734-6340

May 1, 1994

Letters to the Editor
New York Times
New York, NY

Dear Editor:

Mr. A. M. Rosenthal's opinion on the relationship between Bosnia and the Holocaust ("Bosnia and the Holocaust", April 26, 1994) is tied in with two questions:

1. Is this another Holocaust?
2. Are those who moved too slowly to save the Muslims...as guilty as those who moved away from the slaughter of the Jews by the Nazis?

The answer to the first question is *no*, and the answer to the second *yes*.

The genocide in Bosnia can never be equated with the Holocaust. The Holocaust was an experience unique to the Jews who view it as the culmination of a millennium's relentless and brutal anti-Semitism. The horror of it is indelibly etched onto the collective psyche of the Jews, and no one can erase or blur its significance. But if we, as human beings, cannot learn from the universal message of the Holocaust, and we allow "Never again" to repeat itself, then we reduce the eternal truth of the Holocaust to a parochial statement of ephemeral relevance.

Although the genocide in Bosnia cannot be equated with the Holocaust, can the parallels between the two be lost to us so soon? Are we so adept at obliterating from our memory the crimes against humanity that have characterized this humanitarian nightmare - the gang rapes of little girls, their mothers and grandmothers in full view of family members, the mass tortures and mutilations, the concentration camps and 'ethnic cleansing'- acts which compelled Eile Weisel and Henry Siegman, victims of the Holocaust themselves, to cry out in shame at our silence.

Should we get so reductive in our thinking that identity between Bosnia and the Holocaust becomes the prerequisite to dictate a "decent course?" Should we continue to portray the genocide as a "civil war" to justify our inertia? Should we stoop to the level to claim that the Muslims "asked for it" by declaring their independence? Should we have to become disingenuous as to deny that the Muslim and Croats and indeed many of the Bosnian Serbs were united in claiming the sovereignty of Bosnia? Should we even have to deny the valiant efforts of Jewish resistance fighters and soldiers in the Allied armies so as to

sharpen the contrast between the essentially helpless victims of the Holocaust, and the hopelessly outgunned Bosnian "army" ?

There are countless Jews who are deeply troubled by what they see in Bosnia. They can see through the duplicity of those who feign outrage at what was allowed to happen in the Holocaust, and yet recycle the same logic and morality to rationalize their inaction in Bosnia.

Mr. Rosenthal, one Holocaust should last an eternity. If we choose not to learn from our experience, we should not obfuscate the issue by calling a genocide a civil war; crimes against humanity, human rights violations; and war criminals, peace negotiators. If we choose not to defend the defenseless we should not arrogate their right to self-defense. Mr. Nixon may have made some miscalculations in his lifetime, but the truth that he wrote about Bosnia is a legacy that we ignore at mankind's peril.

Sincerely,

Abdul Cader Asmal
Director of Communications
Islamic Council of New England

Anwar H. Kazmi
Coordinator
American Muslim Friends of Bosnia



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 4, 1994

Abdul Cader Asmal
4 Larkspur Road
Needham, Massachusetts 02192

Dear Abdul:

I appreciate hearing your views on the situation in the former Yugoslavia. I am deeply concerned about the continuing aggression there and the atrocities that are still being inflicted upon the people of that region.

I am working closely with my foreign policy team to help resolve the problems that have caused this conflict. Bringing peace and stability to that area of the world is one of my Administration's highest priorities. We face many tough choices in dealing with the tragedy in Bosnia, but it remains my intention to work with our allies on a course that will help repair the damage that this conflict has done to the Balkans and to Europe.

Thank you for your interest in this important issue.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Film stirs Arab-American protests

By MARY JO PALUMBO

Muslim groups in Boston and around the nation are protesting today's opening of "The Siege," the 20th Century Fox film about a terrorist attack on New York City.

Arab-Americans fear the film will increase stereotyping and prejudice, and they decry Hollywood's

Movies

history of casting Muslims as villains.

"We are law-abiding citizens and we are being portrayed as terrorists," said Dr. Abdul Cader Asmal, chair of communications for the Quincy-based Islamic Council of New England and a physician at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Asmal said he hadn't seen the film yet but was offended by promotional trailers. He plans to see it today, he said, "with much trepidation."

"This movie hideously distorts the essence of the religion of Islam, which basically means peace," he said. "The whole essence of our religion is being demeaned. Why should we be picked upon this way and subject to this kind of animosity and hatred? We don't understand it."

The \$70 million thriller starring Bruce Willis, Denzel Washington and Annette Bening involves a series of bombings pinned on Middle East terrorists. Martial law is declared, and Arab-Americans are rounded up and placed in camps, much like Japanese-Americans during World War II.

"This generates deep concern that this movie will provoke serious hate crimes against innocent Muslim-American citizens," said Asmal. "As law-abiding members of society, we appeal to our fellow citizens to denounce this Nazi-style approach of generating hate against Muslims."

The Islamic Center of Boston Youth Group is staging a press conference tomorrow at the Dedham Showcase Cinemas, which is showing the movie.

'We are law-abiding citizens and we are being portrayed as terrorists. . . . This movie hideously distorts the essence of the religion of Islam.'

DR. ABDUL CADER ASMAL, CHAIR OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

ciated with terrorism. People should go to this movie without prejudice in their minds and leave without prejudice."

In addition, the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester will host an educational open house Sunday.

"It's just outrageous," said Jaffer Traish, a member of the Islamic Center of Boston Youth Group and a junior at Belmont High School. "We want to make it clear that we have never tolerated or been asso-

"We're not going to focus on the movie, but will be glad to answer any questions that people may have," said Yousef Abou-Allaban, a psychiatrist at Memorial Hospital in Worcester and president of the Islamic Society of Greater Worces-

ter. "We want to let the public know more about our community."

Nationally, an informational campaign is scheduled today in more than 30 U.S. and Canadian cities.

"What we are doing is not protesting," said Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Washington, D.C. "That would fit the stereotype. We are doing invitational leafletting at theaters around the nation and inviting moviegoers to visit the mosques in

their area. There will be no protests, no signs.

"The movie does have some redeeming qualities, but on balance you get a negative impression of Islam, Muslims and Arabs," said Hooper. "This has a direct negative impact on the lives of our American Muslims."

People can find out about participating mosques on line at www.cair-net.org. To learn more about the Muslim religious call (800) 78-ISLAM.

Stereotyping Islam

I was dismayed to see in the April 22 Globe a gun-toting woman on a march, allegedly commemorating one of Islam's holiest days, Lailatul-Qadr. It is as important to Muslims as Easter is to Christians and Yom Kippur is to Jews.

The Globe could have obtained this information from any one of the numerous Islamic Centers in New England rather than reach to an obscure village in Lebanon. In using this photograph, the Globe has done no more than perpetuate the negative stereotype of Islam and Moslems.

GLOBE
5/1/90

A.C. ASMAL, MD
Weyland

To be published, letters must be signed, and include address and telephone number for verification.

Allegations about Sudan have not been proven

GLOBE 9/25/98

Responding to my Aug. 31 op-ed article on terrorism ("US actions put Muslim-Americans in a bind"), Charles Jacobs raised serious allegations about human rights violations by Sudan ("Slavery in Africa: Why don't Arab-Americans speak up?" letter, Sept. 7). If these allegations are substantiated, they demand immediate, universal condemnation.

At this time, however, they are only allegations that have been repudiated as anti-Sudanese, anti-Islamic propaganda. Nonetheless, because of the enormity of the charges against Sudan (state-sponsored famine, slavery, rape, torture, and forcible conversion to Islam), these allegations cannot be brushed aside without a scrupulous and objective analysis.

From a Muslim perspective, no investigation is required to define where Islam stands on two of the charges egregiously linked to the religion.

Nearly 1,400 years ago, Islam vocated the emancipation of as the supreme act of repentance and as the essence of charity respect to proselytization, Islam an uncompromising position of freedom of religious choice. A tempt at the forcible conversion non-Muslims to Islam is in total travention of this basic tenet.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Chairman of community
Islamic Council of New England

9/25/98

The Globe welcomes correspondence from readers. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Letters shown 200 words or less.

Mail address: Letters to the editor, The Boston Globe, P.O. Box Boston, MA 02107-2378. The e address is letter@globe.com.

"Heaven's Gate"

Invited commentary on a sad event

[Members of the FASE Advisory Board write their thoughts on the Heaven's Gate religious group, their tragic demise, and their particular mix of science and religion.]

I wonder whether Christians in other times and places have enjoyed and practiced the same do-it-yourself freedom that they do in the United States. The Heaven's Gate Christians embraced a set of beliefs pieced inventively together from the "string and button box" of popular culture. Reading it from their Web site, more conventional Christians will find it bizarre and yet eerily familiar. Those who work in the science-and-religion field find further evidence that science and faith do interact, and in ways that compel our attention.

We ask how the Heaven's Gate leaders got so closed off from the wider Church. Partly by choice, probably; it takes too long to attain a position of authority the usual way, when the "recycling of this world" seems immanent. By emphasizing their identity as the one, true something-or-other (biblical echoes), they justify the avoidance of interactions that might have restored their health and balance. All people of faith benefit from interactions with the larger faith community—to avail ourselves of theological teaching and discussion, spiritual friendships, service, worship, and pastoral oversight. The Heaven's Gate Christians were "out of communion," with the result that their interpretations of scripture grew more and more bizarre and self-centered, and their idea of Christian otherworldliness became escapism.

Goodness knows, Christian otherworldliness is alive and well in the more 'standard' expressions of Christianity. Its interpretation deserves some overhaul work, though; and that is a challenge to be taken seriously by those engaged in ministry at the faith/science interface. After all, this is the cosmos we belong to, the only one we know, and the one God loves.

—Barbara Smith-Moran, S.O.Sc.
Concord, MA
astronomer and Episcopal priest

The Heaven's Gate fiasco is, among other things, the result of insufficient agnosticism in matters of faith. Granted the premises which members accepted, it was not difficult (though it was not easy, either) to reach their conclusions. A sign of orthodoxy is, I believe, the willingness to let God be God; it is the capacity to entertain ambiguity and avoid premature closure. The need of some folks to "know" and their incapacity for sustaining anxiety can lead them in bizarre directions.

—Meredith B. Handspicker
Newton, MA
Professor of Evangelism



The Heaven's Gate mass suicide was tragic, yet perhaps inevitable, considering the need of their leader, Applewhite, for gratification through total control and his personal failure to cope with the world in life. Many sought out this charismatic doomsday teacher from empty troubled lives, weak personal faith and/or needs for acceptance. Through his charismatic preaching, he convinced them that he was Christ and assured them of a greater life beyond this corrupt world. He promised salvation to intelligent people, but only through their renunciation of family, possessions, sexuality, faith, will, and even life itself. This self-proclaimed messiah blended science fiction and occultism with distorted scripture in his destructive prophetic message. Fortunately as a faith community, we Christians value life as a precious gift from God, which is not to be destroyed. And in dying for our sins, our Lord Jesus saves us with a promise of life, not death.

—Gail Bucher
Belmont, MA
pharmaceutical chemist and
student for the Diaconate
(Evangelical Lutheran Church)

How do we know that the people of the Heaven's Gate group were wrong? My sense is that what they had to say wouldn't stand up well to scientific scrutiny. But I also think they were making statements outside the realm of science. So how do we know they were wrong?

I think the Heaven's Gate folks were wrong in their distortion of Jesus's call. He called us to make a fundamental change in our lives, a change in orientation, in perspective, not a change of place. Jesus called us to minister to our neighbors, not to leave them. He called us to embrace life in a grateful, loving way, not to abandon it.

—John Lewis
Acton, MA
computer scientist
(Evangelical Church)

It is difficult to find a rational answer to the question, Why should a group of educated, enfranchised, and affluent people chose to self-destruct in the name of religion, when such an act is a rejection of God's cherished gift of life?

Whatever the explanation, the action is an indictment of our present-day civilisation—a civilisation in crisis, increasingly devoid of spirituality, and overrun by an all-consuming self-centered materialism that is unmoved by a global scenario of famine, abject poverty, degradation, disease, oppression, exploitation, devastation of the eco-system, and the threat of nuclear carnage, and is permissive of murder, rape, pillage, and human rights violation in almost all societies.

The blame for the spiritual vacuum must rest with all those who believe in God, for they have allowed their beliefs to become progressively diluted to the extent that in the name of separation of state and church, religion has not only become subservient to the state, but its mention in serious debate has become an oxymoron.

All major religions propagate universal truths. Abraham, the father of monotheism, taught Believers of the One God. Moses the Lawgiver brought us the Commandments to live by. Jesus was the epitome of Compassion and Charity, and the message of Mohammed was that true Peace (Islam) could never be attained without Justice.

To renew our civilisation (and avoid cultic eccentricities) our lives have to develop a sense of purpose. This can only come about when all Believers remember, "Where-soever you turn, there is the Face of God" (Quran 2,115) and unite to inculcate a spirituality that brings back Ethics into our behavior, engenders Compassion in our hearts, and promotes Peace throughout the world.

—Abdul Cader Asmal, M.D.
Needham, MA
Islamic Council of New England

The events at Rancho Santa Fe were both tragic and fascinating—39 people seemed voluntarily to give up their lives to escape the "container" of the body and move

Common ground at Islamic Center

things correct
understandings,
brate similarities

By Susan L. Sherwood
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

ical American visitors to the
ic Center of Boston on Boston
Road in Wayland might be
sed at some of the differ-
they encounter there.

ed in the Judeo-Christian
on, they would probably, for
ple, notice that worshipers
re their shoes before entering
ayer hall. Or that there are
images or carvings of
mmed or any of the other
00 Muslim prophets.

ey stayed a while, however,
might be struck by the many
rities shared by Christianity,
n, and Islam.

ere are a lot of misconcep-
and misunderstandings
Islam," acknowledged Dr. A.
Asmal, an endocrinologist
rmer president of the Cen-
But if the average American
o get close, he would realize
e share a lot of common val-

n example, Asmal, an ethnic
raised in South Africa, said
ns have a great deal of love
sus as a prophet, that they
e in the immaculate concep-
s well as in Adam and Eve.
also believe that Jews, Chris-
and Muslims all descend
the prophet Abraham and
been revealed the same
by God.

ther similarity, according to
nter's current president, Dr.
A. Sayd, a veterinarian who
inally from Pakistan, is the
on of charity.

eral months ago, during Ra-
a, our month of fasting, we
n interfaith group here," he
d. "In talking with the Jews
ame, we mentioned that one
pillars of our faith is charity.
we call 'sadaqah.' They told
t their word for charity is
t, and this is also one of



NEWS FILE PHOTO

Worshippers bow their heads during sunset prayer at the Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland.

in all three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam."

"One of the distinctions, however, is that we do not believe in original sin," Asmal added. "We believe that Adam and Eve both sinned, were forgiven, and were allowed to go on with their lives. We do not believe that Jesus, or anyone, came down to redeem mankind from original sin. Whether you redeem yourself in the eyes of God is entirely up to your own personal performance."

The Center was founded around 15 years ago with the main purpose of educating Muslim children in the faith. The Wayland site was

ilies; today there are more than 100.

The two focal points of the week are Friday noontime prayers and Sunday school for the children of the congregation. Daily prayers are also held at least three times a day, starting before dawn and ending a few hours after sunset.

The congregation is predominantly made up of Muslims from the Middle East and North Africa with an Arabic-speaking background and of those who come from the Indian subcontinent. These two groups are about equal in numbers. The remainder are from all over the world - In-

"There are a lot of misconceptions and misunderstandings about Islam. But if the average American tried to get close, he would realize that we share a lot of common values."

Dr. A. Cader Asmal
Islamic Center of Boston

As for total numbers of Muslims in New England, Asmal said it's hard to determine, though he has heard the figure of 150,000. Many do not live in close proximity to a mosque, so they don't come on a regular basis.

"The days we see most people are when we commemorate the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, and the period of the Haj, the pilgrimage," he said. "It's very similar to Easter and Christmas in the Christian religion."

The Center also makes a concerted effort to keep an open dialogue with the community, often inviting children from local churches and synagogues to visit and exchange ideas. In addition, an international food fair is scheduled for June 6th.

Another community outreach activity recently has been a heavy involvement in collecting medicine and clothing for the Kosovo refugees.



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / PAM BERRY

Mona Saleme (right), 8, and Fay, 2, and Dunia Khudairi, 7, attend yesterday's prayer service.

Testing their faith

Muslim service helps children cope with reaction to Okla. bombing

By Pamela M. Walsh
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

WAYLAND — Despite the initial news reports, the accusations of some of their school mates and the general public, they clung tightly to the simple tenets of their faith.

A practicing Muslim would have no part in something like the Oklahoma City bombing, no matter what the media reports, said Reem Assil, 11, as she waited for her weekly religious instruction yesterday at the Islamic Center in

To reinforce that lesson, and to reassure the children about their faith, the leaders of the Islamic Center organized a special prayer service for the victims of the bombing before their lessons.

Dr. Abdu Asmal said that after the events of the past week, he feared that the children might have "negative feelings about their religion." But during the prayer service he reminded them, "Islam and terror cannot exist together. It is against violence of any kind."

"As Muslims it is our collective duty to cry out in shame when people in Oklahoma are killed," he said.

But despite the reassurances of the adults close to them,

Desensitizing society raises the potential for hate-crimes.

The danger in demonizing Islam

ABDUL CADER ASMAL

There has been a recent upsurge of anti-Islamic sentiment in this country, culminating in acts of arson that have razed mosques and attitudes of xenophobic demagoguery that advocate the rescinding of religious freedom to American Muslims.

Such behavior threatens to marginalize and demonize a substantial minority of our population. To appreciate the origin of anti-Islamism one can begin by examining common terminology that characterizes Muslims.

Though invariably depicted as such, Islam is no more monolithic than Christianity or Judaism. And yet in a sense all Muslims are "fundamentalists" because of their universal belief in the divine origin of the Koran, just as Christians believe in the divinity of Christ and Jews in their covenant with God.

As is true of other religions, "the silent majority" represents most Muslims. Comprising ordinary people in search of a secure job in a safe environment, they raise their families on the spiritual values of Islam. In this way they fulfill their obligation to God. For Muslim reformers this is not enough. They see and denounce the social evils of present-day society, which they ascribe to a surrender to humanist, secular values, and call for a return to Islam for salvation. Their rhetoric resonates with a theme not dissimilar to that of our "fundamentalist" evangelists.

The ranks of religious reformers may also include anti-Western zealots. Often representing disenfranchised, impoverished and illiterate constituencies, they see nothing of redeeming value in the West: Its materialism is an anathema, its capital-

ism is a tool for their exploitation, its democracy is an excuse for maintaining the status quo in their totalitarian states, its free society is a cesspool of social diseases. To them the West is the epitome of evil.

Such a mindset of disenchantment and hopelessness is conducive to the breeding of militant extremism that mobilizes the power of religion as an instrument of radical political change. However, it is worthy of note that the rant of zealots who decry social ills in this country is a far cry from the actions of militant extremists who would take up arms to correct the perceived inequities in their own countries, let alone a foreign one.

In contrast, terrorism in the name of God is condemned by all religions, whether in the murder of an abortion clinic doctor here or in the slaughter of innocent civilians abroad. Although terrorism is antithetical to Islam and has been repeatedly condemned by Muslims, most media continue to search out and identify perpetrators of terror as "Muslim," although the only evidence of a link may be a Muslim-sounding name.

If "terrorist" misrepresents Muslims, "jihad" misleads non-Muslims. In its wider sense jihad depicts a constant inner struggle to overcome one's inherent weaknesses and become a better person. In its restricted sense it means "holy war." In this sense it is a struggle for religious freedom and not one of aggression for territorial or economic gain or for proselytization. When hatemongers assert that Muslims are out to make "jihad" in America, we need to remind our fellow citizens that we do not need to fight for a right we already have.

Muslims in America, more so than in many so-called Muslim countries, have a constitutionally en-

shrined right to religious freedom. Specifically, Muslims are completely free to fulfill their religious obligation; more important, they are free from the imposition of any mandates that are contrary to their beliefs.

The peril in demonizing one-fifth of the world's population certainly does not arise from possibly alienating so-called "Muslim" countries, most of which are allies of the West. Nor is it likely to develop because of any machinations of extremists allegedly plotting "jihad" in America. No believer would ever support such an immoral, let alone such a totally counterproductive, action.

The danger in marginalizing Muslims arises in part from ignoring the existence of the majority, thereby exaggerating the influence of extremists. It also desensitizes society to Muslims, making their suffering and their victim status less consequential, and the potential for hate-crimes against them becomes more ominous. Nowhere has the consequence of such a dehumanization been more tragically witnessed than in "ethnic cleansing" of the Bosnian Muslims. In the rigor mortis of Bosnia, James Carroll sees "something essential to the human soul negated" (op ed, Nov. 29, 1994).

The sinister peril that American society faces comes not from the law-abiding Muslim citizens of this country but from bigots who advocate a policy of neo-McCarthyism against Muslims and who are out to mutilate the Constitution and rescind the religious freedom of Muslim America.

Abdul Cader Asmal is chairman of communications of the Islamic Council of New England.

check the accuracy of the information they are spreading nor the impact that information might have on their readers.

The ad was soliciting support for a San Francisco outfit called Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME). FLAME has been engaged in spreading misinformation about the Middle East for several years. It was the rhetoric of similar organizations engaged in collecting money to support the defense of Yigal Amir, Rabin's assassin. FLAME is directly responsible for spreading statements such as those in the ad designed to undermine the historic Middle East peace process. Their aim is to undermine democracy in Israel by supporting the annexation of two million Palestinians living under Israel's aggressive occupation. They support oppressive Israeli violence and state terrorism. Mr. Lapham, in my mind this puts them in the same ranks as the Arab terrorists that the ad so strongly deplores.

I would be willing to refute every point in their argument based on documented facts and would be more than happy to do so on the pages of your magazine. In the meantime, I hope that next time you will check the facts contained in advertisements published in your magazine.

Mr. Lapham, in the name of peace and decency, let us fight anti-Semitism in all its forms: that which is directed against Jews as a people, and the more subtle type that claims to be helping Jews by denying them a lifetime opportunity for peace. Let us fight the forces of extremism on all sides. Let us help the peoples of the Middle East achieve peace, democracy and prosperity.

I trust that if you look more carefully at the ad you will agree with me. Please do not stake the reputation of your prestigious organization on such a shaky outfit as FLAME.

Fadi V. Nahhas, Cold Spring, KY 41076

Emerson Lacks Objectivity

To *The Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 12, 1996 (as submitted).

I write in response to Mr. Steven Emerson's most recent anti-Islamic diatribe (*WSJ*, Aug. 5, 1996). His anti-Islamic agenda antedated his infamous documentary, "Jihad in America," peaked during the Oklahoma City bombing which he triumphantly touted as more or less the trademark of "Muslim terrorists," and now continues with unabated vitriol, courtesy of the *Journal*.

Mr. Emerson's "investigative report" on terrorism might have been more credible had he even hinted that no race or religion is exempt from the blight of extremists who mortify their respective communities by carrying out mindless acts of carnage against innocent civilians. Rather he reinforced the stereotype that terrorism is a virtual prerogative of Muslims. Sadly, objectivity has not been the yardstick of his journalism. Rather it is based on the collection and use of out-

of-context statements, half-truths and innuendos, and on a judgment of "guilt by association." By contriving the "Rolodex connection" (in which anyone who knows a wrongdoer is himself guilty), Mr. Emerson has woven a web of intrigue in which Islam is projected as the enemy of America, and any Muslim who has the temerity to disagree with his view of the world order is linked to a terrorist group.

Intriguingly, Mr. Emerson's only reference to terrorists other than Muslim was to bemoan the fact that Mrs. Clinton had the gall to entertain "suspect" members of the American Muslim Council, but lacked the sensitivity to reach out to terror suspect McVeigh's representatives! Mr. Emerson's logic escapes us.

The American Muslim Council is a legitimate organization that attempts to represent the views of Muslims in this country. American Muslims are the only segment of our pluralistic society that have to suffer the ignominy of being singled out by their religion for debasement whenever atrocities are committed by any of its adherents. Mr. McVeigh is an individual suspect whose ethnicity and religion have not been impugned in any way. We see nothing incongruous or sinister in the First Lady's actions. On the contrary, hers is a gesture of magnanimity designed to reach out to humanize a substantial minority of Americans that the likes of Mr. Emerson seem hell-bent on demonizing.

Were Islam-bashing not so fashionable and free of recrimination in the media, Mr. Emerson might not have been able to get away with his onslaught against Islam and American Muslims. Bigotry and malevolence are often unrecognized when directed against marginalized people. For a time such sentiments may prevail and effectively brainwash the world now, as they did in the past in Europe, until it was too late and six million souls departed this life.

While Mr. Emerson's Islamophobia may have made Muslims dangerously vulnerable to hate-crimes, his invective will not succeed in intimidating us into submission. This is because of our basic belief that terrorism in any shape or form is totally antithetical to the spirit of Islam. Muslim Americans have condemned and will continue to condemn acts of terror against innocent defenseless civilians in all parts of the world irrespective of who the perpetrators are. As law-abiding citizens we will do all that it takes to bring such culprits to justice.

Though relatively disorganized, lacking in resources and facing a generally insensitive media, American Muslims know that we have our job cut out for us in the same way as many of the minority groups who came before us. We have to reach out to society at large and begin to define ourselves and refuse to be defined by others.

In this "defining" moment I am filled with

a sense of trepidation: what if Mr. Emerson should ever get his hands on my Rolodex! In it he will see in juxtaposition: The Islamic Council of New England, The American Muslim Council, The Islamic Society of North America, the Archdiocese of Boston, The Massachusetts Council of Churches, The American Jewish Congress, the Jewish Community Relations Council and the ADL... seemingly irrefutable evidence of a "mole" infiltrating non-Muslim organizations!

Abdul Cader Asmal, MD, Ph.D, Chairman of Communications, Islamic Council of New England, 470 South Street, Quincy, MA 02169

Reports on Israel Askew

To Mr. James Fallows, *U.S. News & World Report*, Sept. 25, 1996 (as submitted).

Congratulations on your new position. I agree with everything you said in the Sept. 30th issue about how outstanding *U.S. News and World Report* is with one exception—when it reports on ISRAEL.

Whenever there is an article or editorial about Israel I have as much confidence in its objectivity as if the new prime minister, Bibi Netanyahu, wrote it.

The United States, led and encouraged by the pro-Israeli media including *U.S. News & World Report*, continually supports every Israeli policy and action, even though it is in direct violation of the principles upon which this country was founded!

Do you believe in the Ten Commandments? Do you believe in the principles upon which this country was founded, as defined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution? I hope you do, because, if you are honest, you cannot permit *U.S. News* to continue to be so biased, one-sided, and sometimes downright inaccurate in reporting on the Mideast when Israel is involved, as it has been in the past.

John S O'Connor, Seattle, WA

Inflammatory Statements

To "The McLaughlin Group," Washington, DC, Oct. 1, 1996

I watch your show each week. I am a big fan. And this has nothing to do with the fact that we both have the same last name. However, I am a supporter of Palestinian rights and, like you, would also like to see our country act in its own interest in the Middle East, for a change.

I was totally outraged when I heard Linda Chavez make the following inflammatory statements on last week's show:

1. Arafat will not be satisfied until all of the Jews are removed from Jerusalem.
2. We can blame Peres for this violence, for he was the one who let the Palestinians believe that Jerusalem was negotiable, when it is not.

There is something seriously wrong with your program for even allowing such de-

2.29.92 Letters to the Editor

Algerians illustrate what democracy is all about

As a practicing Muslim who sees nothing incompatible in the espousal of democracy, I find the editorial "The tough dilemma in Algeria" (Feb. 16) objectionable on two fronts.

As an American, I find repugnant the double standards by which democracy is prescribed. If by democracy is meant the right of a people to choose a government by the people, of the people, for the people, then the people of Algeria (men and women) have willingly and overwhelmingly chosen their destiny through the ballot box.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult to see how the Algerians could wish a "clerical tyranny" upon themselves. If they have elected to govern themselves Islamically, so be it. If they succeed, they will have de-

vised a model for others to emulate. If they fail, they alone will pay the price for their experiment. As a democratic society, we cannot but applaud their move toward democratization. To do otherwise would be to bolster an illegal regime that violates the human and civil rights of all Algerians.

As a Muslim, I find the parallel drawn between the Islamic fundamentalists (as though they represent a monolithic whole) and Hitler's National Socialists totally outrageous, and saying that the law of the Koran "would mean a totalitarian enforcement of women's subservience" is yet another example of the distortion of Islam.

ABDUL ASMAL, MD
Director of Communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

Conflict in Algeria wasn't initiated by Islamists

Based on our experience with Muslim Algerians who have had to make the gut-wrenching decision to leave Algeria, a country in the midst of anarchy, we can understand the sorrow that Chafik Hadjoudj must have felt ("Democracy is a sin under Islamic regime," letter, June 15).

We cannot, however, understand his baseless allegations that the woes of Algeria have anything to do

with the the teachings of the Koran.

The conflict in Algeria was not initiated by the Islamists - who, in fact, won a mandate to rule the country in a fair and democratic election - but rather by the unscrupulous and totalitarian cronies of some of our allies, who want to preserve the status quo in Algeria.

Had the Islamists been allowed to assume the power they had justly gained, and then, in fact, committed the litany of abuses Hadjoudj accuses them of, Muslims worldwide would have been placed in an indefensible position.

Rather, they are now forced to defend the indefensible - the charges against their religion by an understandably bitter expatriate with a selectively warped view of the world.

It is not true that the Koran would eliminate the fundamental rights of any religious group.

A.C. ASMAL
Director of communications
ANWAR H. KAZMI
Member
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

In-flight reading

I was appalled by the airline's explanation for showing R-rated movies even on flights carrying young children ("R-rated in-flight films irk some parents," Metro, June 15).

A spokesperson said, "We want to achieve a balance" between adults who want something more captivating than juvenile fare and parents who do not want their children exposed to R-rated movies.

To resolve this apparent dilemma, I have a suggestion for adults who want to be captivated during longer flights: Read a book.

HENRY JOSEPH
Cambridge

itor GLOBE
2.8.99.

Columnist was unfair to Arabs

It is reprehensible that under the pretext of exposing anti-Semitism, Jeff Jacoby should yet again make the outrageous claim that it is only the Arabs and/or the Muslims who are guilty of malevolence in the Middle East ("The anti-Semitism the West ignores," op ed, Jan. 18).

The sad reality is that otherwise God-fearing peoples from all sides have adopted a totally divergent understanding of God's will and demonize each other in justification of their claims and acts.

It is indefensible that instead of using his forum to foster understanding, trust and good will, Jacoby chooses to import the hatred of the Mideast to propagate anti-Islamism. Anti-Semitism is ugly, but so is anti-Islamism. Only the targets of bigotry can appreciate the anguish and humiliation such sentiments generate.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Chairman of Communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy
2.8.99

Stereotyping Islam

I was dismayed to see in the April 22 Globe a gun-toting woman on a march, allegedly commemorating one of Islam's holiest days, Lailatul-Qadr. It is as important to Moslems as Easter is to Christians and Yom Kippur is to Jews.

The Globe could have obtained this information from any one of the numerous Islamic Centers in New England rather than reach to an obscure village in Lebanon. In using this photograph, the Globe has done no more than perpetuate the negative stereotype of Islam and Moslems.

A.C. ASMAL, MD
Wayland

► To be published, letters must be signed, and include address and telephone number for verification.

► Address: Letters to the Editor,
The Boston Globe, Boston 02107-2378.

5/11/99

Islam doesn't preach intolerance, violence

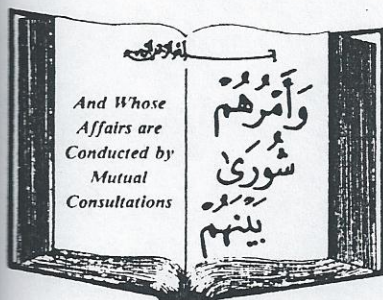
BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE • MAY 21, 1995

If Dr. Rafik R. Attia had not been preoccupied with promoting an anti-Islamic agenda, he would know that over the years Muslims have denounced those undemocratic, oppressive, exploitative and intolerant regimes of so-called Muslim countries for perverting the essence of Islam ("Muslim regimes need a lesson in tolerance," letter, May 17).

For Attia, who grew up in Egypt and understands the turmoil there, it is not merely disingenuous to state that Islam encourages the persecution of non-Muslims, it is malevolent. Terrorism of innocents is totally antithetical to Islam and has always been condemned, especially when perpetrated in the name of our religion.

We had been distressed by Jeff Jacoby's column (op ed, April 25), the springboard for Attia's tirade, in which having identified himself with the sufferings of the Jewish people, Jacoby proceeded to fan the flames of anti-Islamism. We remind Jacoby that to the innocent victim of his invective, anti-Islamism is no less painful or dangerous than anti-Semitism.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL, MD
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

470 SOUTH STREET, QUINCY, MA 02169

TEL: (617) 479-8341

Mr Ken Whyte,
Editor-in-chief,
National Post,
Don Mills,
Ontario, Canada.

August 12, 1999.

Dear Mr Whyte,

Mr Pipe's thinly veiled (sic) attempt to distinguish between the "good" Muslims of traditional Islam and the "bad" ones of "Islamism" is exposed even before he completes the dissemblance, "Whatever index one looks at one finds Muslims clustering toward the bottom." National Post, (8/7/99).

If any other group had been targeted with such hubris there would have been instant and strident outcries of bigotry, racism or antisemitism. One wonders how your newspaper would have responded to an article submitted by a Nazi-type psychopath listing "Judaism" and "Zionism" under the category of "isms". A lot differently one expects and hopes!

With Islam-bashing such a vogue even the most respected of newspapers fail to accord to Muslims the fundamental niceties of civil discourse. We know that Mr Pipes derives a livelihood from promoting Islamophobia. Your paper does not need to feed his frenzy.

Yours truly,

Abdul Cader Asmal
Abdul Cader Asmal Md,

Chairman of Communications.

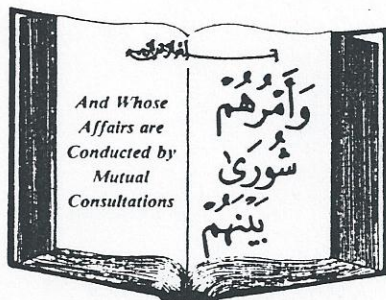
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781 5229000 W

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3. Islamic Center of Merrimack Valley, Salem, NH

7. Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts, Holyoke, MA
8. Islamic Society of Greater Worcester, Worcester, MA

13. Society of Islamic Brotherhood, Boston, MA
14. Islamic Center of the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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470 SOUTH STREET, QUINCY, MA 02169

TEL: (617) 479-8341

Ms Glenda Buel,
Letters to the Editor,
Boston Globe.

April 28, 1999.

Dear Ms Buel,

In its analysis of the blunders made in reaching a peace accord in the Balkans (Boston Globe 4/25/99), the Globe rightfully concludes that regardless of how much more effectively the allies had considered their strategies, the outcome for the ethnic Albanians would probably not have been materially altered. The evidence for this is no further than the recent history of Bosnia where the communities were ethnically homogeneous, and the stated objective of some of the ultranationalists was to cleanse Europe of "the last vestiges of Islam". The repugnant truth is that as at the beginning so too at the end of this millennium a merciless crusade has been conducted against Muslims simply because they are Muslim. It is ironic that in their status as victims Muslims who constitute more than 90% of the Kosovars are euphemistically referred to as "ethnic Albanians". Had they been the perpetrators of such atrocities a label clearly reflecting their Islamic identity would undoubtedly have been used to characterize them.

In the present day crusade the roles may have changed with the protagonist being a neo-fascist dictator, and the main opposition the non-Muslim power of NATO, but the victims remain Muslims. This fact should be recorded indelibly in the chronicles of history, before the fire in NATO's belly for military action smoulders to an ember, the overflowing well of humanitarian compassion runs dry, and the savaged refugees of Kosova are written off as mere statistical casualties of a "civil war".

Yours sincerely,

Abdul Cader Asmal
Abdul Cader Asmal

Anwar Kazmi
Anwar Kazmi.

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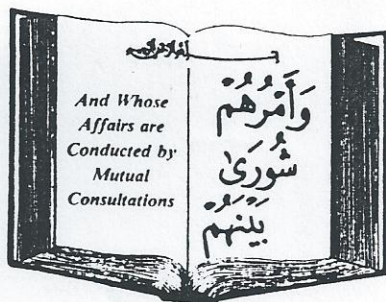
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In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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470 SOUTH STREET, QUINCY, MA 02169

TEL: (617) 479-8341

Ms Glenda Buel,
Letters to the Editor,
Boston Globe.

November 7, 1999.

Dear Ms Buel,

Your editorial (The fragility of Flight, Globe 11/1/99) on the tragedy of Egyptair Fl 990 captures the essence of human suffering. For Muslims, who for over a decade have endured the angst of seeing their religion egregiously linked to every unspeakable act, it also signals a welcome reprieve from the fringe of society.

Undoubtedly Mr Clinton's initial comments on the crash set the standard. By decrying speculation and a rush to judgement the President defined expectations that have been met by all civic leaders, spokespersons for the NTBS and FBI, and above all the media, which have gone out of their way to give a human face to the predominantly Muslim victims and their families.

For this grace the Muslim community is grateful to all our fellow Americans for their display of overwhelming generosity, kindness and support, and conveys its own condolences to the families of the non-Muslims who also perished so tragically.

It is ironic that it sometime takes a tragedy to remind us of our common humanity. May this sad event usher in a future of improved understanding, goodwill and cooperation in which we collectively judge and condemn all acts of inhumanity in one voice.

Yours sincerely,

Abdul Cader Asmal
Abdul Cader Asmal

Anwar Kazmi
Anwar Kazmi

781 522 9000 or 617 724 6208 W
781 444 7995 H

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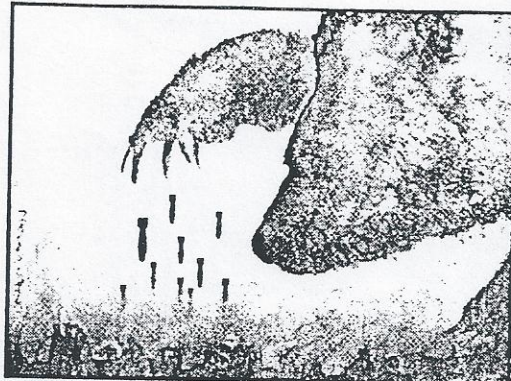
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TWO RECENT LETTERS TO GLOBE

Russian provocateurs in the Caucasus

The Globe's poignant Oct. 8 editorial suggests that while there has been no evidence to link "Islamist" Chechens to the horrible apartment bombings, there are grounds for believing that Russian special forces may have acted as provocateurs in the volatile Caucasus ("Darkness in Chechnya").

By branding the struggle in Chechnya and Dagestan as the work of "Islamists" bent on establishing an "Islamic state," Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's government has not only contextualized it as a threat to accepted hegemony but has also deflected attention from its own machinations, legitimized its cam-



BOB NEWMAN ILLUSTRATION © OP ART

paign of terror, and erased the need for support for the victims.

It is astonishing that the specter of an "Islamic state," with its sinister connotation, should be allowed to obfuscate the issue – the rights of individuals to freedom from tyranny – simply because Muslims are being set up as the bogeymen of the next millennium.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

10.22.99

GLOBE NEWSPAPER
COMPANY, Inc.

Editor

5/5/99
BOBON GLOBE

In the Balkans, victims are Muslim

At the beginning and at the end of this millennium, a merciless crusade has been conducted against Muslims simply because they are Muslims. It is ironic that in their status as victims, Muslims, who constitute more than 90 percent of the Kosovars, are euphemistically referred to as "ethnic Albanians." If they had been the perpetrators of such atrocities, a label clearly reflecting their Islamic identity would undoubtedly have been used to characterize them.

In the present-day crusade the roles may have changed, with the protagonist being the neofacist dictator and the main opposition the non-Muslim power of NATO, but the victims remain Muslims. This fact should be recorded indelibly in the chronicles of history before the fire in NATO's belly for military action smolders to an ember, the overflowing well of humanitarian compassion runs dry, and the savaged refugees of Kosovo are written off as statistical casualties of a "civil war."

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
ANWAR KAZMI
Islamic Council of New England

TALIBANIZATION —

A new emphasis is a "Islamist."



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful



Ms Glenda Buel,
Letters to Editor,
Boston Globe.

December 28, 1999.

Dear Ms Buel,

In two consecutive weeks with articles so bereft of objectivity, accuracy, and journalistic integrity, Colin Nickerson has been given a free hand to demonize Islam.

In his article on slavery (Globe, 12/19/99), Nickerson portrays Muslims as slave traders and racists who condone female genital mutilation and forcibly proselytize animists. That these "facts" are repudiated by the Sudanese government, the UN, and UNICEF, and deemed unworthy of consideration by notable Afro-American leaders including the Reverend Jesse Jackson, evidently have no place in Mr Nickerson's investigative portfolio; no more so than the dubious credentials of Charles Jacobs the controversial president of the American Anti-Slavery Group that finances Christian Solidarity, for his connections with several organizations that have a defined anti-Islamic agenda.

In his report (12/25/99) on the arrest of Algerian nationals on charges of suspected terrorism, he joins the media frenzy with a dearth of facts and a wealth of speculation. Nickerson blurs the distinction between the two further by using the terms: "Algerian radical groups", "Islamic terror organizations", "Islamic radicals", "Swiss-based Islamic group", "terrorist conspiracy" and "international terrorist Osama Bin Laden," interchangeably so as to formulate the preposterous hypothesis of a worldwide Islamic conspiracy to terrorize the millennial celebrations. How the actions of Algerian criminals or hitmen with connections with any "Islamic organizations", including cult leader Bin Laden, could reflect the values of the global Muslim community, or aid the cause of Islam in anyway defy logic. Investigative search for the truth is clearly not in Nickerson's interest. And even if his goal is not to generate a lynch mob hysteria against Muslims, so that if heavens forbid, an act of terror is perpetrated by one of the many previously earmarked millennial or doomsday cults and Muslims are set-up as the targeted suspects and victims, he has come very close to it.

Your urgent attention to this critically important issue is vital. Please call me at the numbers listed below if you have any questions. I thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Abdul Cader Asmal

Abdul Cader Asmal MD
Chairman of Communications.
617 724 6208 or 781 522 9000 W
781 444 7995 H

Anwar Kazmi

Anwar Kazmi
Chairman Humanitarian Relief

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THE MUSLIM OBSERVER
MAY 5, 2000.

Ummah

the muslim viewer
MAY 5-11, 2000

It is easy for Muslim sentiments to resonate with those expressed in a cartoon (Islamic Horizons March/April 2000) that depicts four countries toasting each other from a cauldron labeled "Muslim blood". Such a depiction serves only to reinforce the Muslim paranoia of an international conspiracy to demonize Islam, target Muslims as "Islamists", and wreak mayhem throughout the Muslim world. It also serves to generate extremes of emotion, from the despondency of self-pity and fatalistic inertia to the rage of mindless violence, to the euphoria of a magical reappearance of the glorious caliphate and an instant idyllic "Islamic state" as the cure for the current malady.

Such sentiments of despair, frustration and anger no matter how genuine or justified need to be set aside so as to determine how such a situation has come about. How is it that within the span of a century the Muslims have become the targeted victims of a molley of countries that have little in common, were until recently inimical foes of one another, and with whom paradoxically Muslims had lived in close accord? How is it that the Muslims of today have become the pariah of society, no less so than the Jews were a millennium ago? Who is to blame for our current woes?

As with most questions the answer is in the Quran, "Verily Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves". (13

dy prescribed by the Muslim Observer (April 7-13) may help to alleviate our distress in the interim. It advocates reaching out to people that bear no inherent hostility toward us, specifically to the Sikhs vis-a-vis the act of terror in Kashmir in order to reassure each other that people of goodwill can come together for their common good. It also reports on the position of The Association of

Progressive Study Group (AIPSG), presumably an inter-religious group, on the conflict in South Asia. In the interest of defusing tensions in an extremely volatile situation, the AIPSG makes an appeal to everyone to support and join in the movement of the Indian people for economic, social and national renewal, leading towards democratization of relations between countries, world-wide that would end predatory wars. Such outreach is already undertaken by many Muslim organizations in this country through the forum of "interfaith dialogue". It clearly needs to be expanded into a forum that is inclusive of many other groups especially those with whom Muslims are in discord in search of common ground. This concept is not alien to Islam. The Prophet himself (pbuh) made peace with his most treacherous enemies. Muslims of today do not need to alienate all with whom they disagree.

However, the pill that is perhaps going to be the most difficult for Muslims to swallow is the one that requires us to start communications with one another

obscurantists focusing on the minutiae that separate us, but rather as Believers adhering to the infinitely stronger all-inclusive bond that unifies us. La Illaha Illallah Mohammedur Rasullah

This Quranic prescription for change would be the first step in the creation of a leadership with a vision and a strategy that would unite Muslims and allow them to

develop an agenda of priorities for the betterment of all humanity. Until this is done, with the present Muslim leadership an empty shell universally, the plaintive cries of the devoted believers over the agony of the fractured Ummah will continue to ring hollow.

Abdul Cader Asmal MD
Boston, MA

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN LAS VEGAS, AMIDST THE GAMBLING, PORNOGRAPHY AND ALCOHOLISM, HAS BEEN GIVEN THE TASK FROM ALLAH (SWT) TO BUILD A NON-PROFIT, FULL-TIME, ISLAMIC SCHOOL FOR OUR CHILDREN

The school broke ground this past weekend and we are beseeching our brethren to help us financially to get this school finished for our children.

We are asking one million Muslims to donate \$1.00 each to help us achieve our goal.

Our future school, Omar Haikal's *ISLAMIC ACADEMY*, will be the first of it's kind here in Las Vegas.

Donations should be sent to:

THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION OF NEVADA
2245 N. GREEN VALLEY PARKWAY, SUITE 656
HENDERSON, NEVADA 89014

Our non-profit tax number is 88-0405956 and receipts will be graciously

Please send them to:
20331
Farmington Road
Suite 100,
Livonia, MI
48152
or email them to
themuslims@aol.com

INTRAMUSLIM DIALOGUE

Your publication of a charter (Muslim observer, 5.7.99) for developing a broad-based consensus for Muslim activists is strategically vital to the future of the global Muslim community. The recent formation of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy further underscores the need for Muslims to engage in constructive dialogue.

In order to promote such an agenda the Islamic Council of New England, in 1994 established a forum at our local Islamic centers to involve Muslims at the grassroots level in what we termed "Intra-Muslim Dialogue". The impetus for creating such a forum was the escalating level of suspicion and hostility engulfing the Muslim communities. Whether such discord emanated from the cultural baggage that Muslims tout in the name of Islam, or reflected a failure of accommodation with the challenges of a systematic denigration of Islam is untenable, Muslims can ill-afford the luxury of adherents claiming a monopoly in the interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah and referring to one another as 'kuffar' or 'fundamentalists'.

Such internecine vitriol profits only those with an anti-Islamic agenda.

The forum for Intra-Muslim Dialogue was thus set up to counteract the self-destructive force of ignorance and provide an opportunity for constructive engagement. Topics selected for debate (vide infra) were known to be a source of potential misunderstanding and disagreement between Muslims. Participants with divergent viewpoints were invited to present their opinions based on the Quran and Sunnah in an open forum. There was zero tolerance for name-calling, insults or ridicule by the discussants or from the floor. The

essential goal of the exercise was to widen the horizons of Islamic education from which would emerge themselves to more than one interpretation. No individual or group can claim absolute monopoly on any position that is clearly open to diverse interpretation.

AS the result of such exchanges Muslims in the very least would interact with each other socially! At the same time they would enhance their understanding of their religion. They would appreciate the legitimacy of diverse viewpoints. Muslims would recognize that the accommodation of valid alternative interpretations in no way compromises the fundamentals of their beliefs. They would realize that constructive criticism of an individual's position on an issue should not be construed as an indictment of his or her character. With the acceptance of agreed upon ground rules in civil discourse, Muslims will acquire a greater degree of trust respect and tolerance for one another. Out of this should emerge the understanding that the strength of the bonds that unite Muslims is infinitely greater than the interpretational differences that threaten to divide them. In such a setting the ability to build consensus is without being disagreeable. Implicit is such a disagreement is that the minority though not endorsing will not undermine the efforts of the majority.

In such an open forum there are no losers-only Muslim winners. This paper is offered in the hope that it will stimulate the formation of similar forums elsewhere to help develop a unity that has been so painfully elusive for Muslims.

Abdul Cader Asmal MD PhD
Boston, MA ♦

AUG 6, 1999

The Muslim Observer

DANGER OF BEING CALLED "ISLAMISTS"

THE MUSLIM
OBSERVER
2/11/2000

On November 11, 1999, letters were submitted to individual leaders of twelve pre-eminent Islamic organizations in this country, expressing grave concern about the imminent danger to Muslims of being repeatedly mischaracterized as "Islamists."

This concern arose out of the evidence of the devastation wrought on Chechen Muslims subsequent to their stigmatization as "Islamists." It is evident from the Russian model that once Muslims are branded as "Islamists" their struggle from tyranny, no matter how just, loses its legitimacy; their victimization by any and all means becomes legitimate; and as an "Islamist" threat to accepted hegemony that has to be crushed at all cost, the silence of the media is assured.

To date the Islamic leadership has not addressed the issue of "Islamists," but recently the MPAC strongly decried the relentless use of double standards against Muslims ("Don't label all Muslims 'Terrorists'", The Muslim Observer, 1/14/00). In the light of persistent Muslim protests it is likely that such blatant terminology ("Islamic Terrorist") having accomplished its mission is being supplanted by a more user friendly one ("Islamist") which by its deceptive simplicity can be employed by even mainstream media without appearing to be pejorative towards Muslims. The term "Islamist" is not one used by Muslims to define themselves;

rather is one created by the media with a deliberate vagueness to include Muslims of every shade of the spectrum—from political activists, religious radicals, freedom fighters, terrorists, even common criminals (vis-a-vis the Algerians arrested with great hoopla) to any practicing Muslim. The diabolic brilliance of the term is that it blurs the distinction between "Muslim" and "Islamist" so that inevitably every Muslim is an "Islamist"! Consequently, every Muslim struggle from oppression, be it in Russia or Kashmir, China or Kosova, Algeria or Turkey, becomes an "Islamist" threat, creating a pretext for previously inimical foes to become strange bedfellows against the new-found common enemy.

When Islam was chosen to replace the "evil empire" as a threat to world order, the "Islamist" had to be invented to replace the communist as the bogeyman of the new millennium. For more than 50 years communists were the supreme symbols of hate and fear, and targets of subversion, overthrow or subjugation. Today "Islamists" are being set-up to inherit their mantle. In the face of this cabal can the Muslim leadership afford to maintain its silence?

Respectfully in Islam,
Abdul Cader Asmal MD PhD
Chairman of Communications
of the Islamic Council of New England

Globe has double standard for Israelis, Muslims

B-G 11.6.94

We endorse the Globe's condemnation of the senseless massacre of innocent civilians in Tel Aviv by an extremist Muslim group ("A depraved attack on peace," Oct. 20). Such acts are totally antithetical to Islam. We extend our condolences to the victims and pledge our commitment to work with people of goodwill to establish peace and justice.

In endorsing the Globe's position we applaud the strong language used - "a crime so evil that sane people cannot understand how human beings could do such a thing" - but express puzzlement by its failure to denounce with such passion the systematic crimes against humanity

committed over the past two years by Serbian chetniks against Muslims. We had noted that in editorializing about the tragedy in Hebron, the Globe refrained from referring to the victims at prayer as "Muslim," and yet when it reported on Bosnia's rejection of the peace plan its headlines screamed, "Muslim rejects West's peace plan for Bosnia."

The portrayal of Muslims as monolithic extremists and the reluctance to acknowledge their victimization serves to dehumanize and marginalize them.

ALI ANTAR, ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

Mideast views: Israeli perspective . . .

THE REV. Raymond A. Low's April 12 letter discussed "America's flawed Mideast policy." Let me point out some salient facts as a reminder:

- More than 95 percent of Palestinians no longer live under Israeli control.

- In the recent Camp David gathering, it was Yasser Arafat and his delegation who intentionally rejected all potential compromises that might lead to a genuine and comprehensive peace. Instead, they chose to resort to violence and incitement.

- Israel suffers from constant daily terror perpetrated from within the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Officials in the Palestinian Authority, as well as groups associated with

them, implement most terrorist activities.

- Confronted by vitriolic incitement by the Palestinians, desecration of Jewish holy sites, suicide bombers in Israeli towns and cities, and shelling of civilian settlements, Israel has only one

choice to protect the lives of its people.

- Israel has shown its genuine commitment to peace. What is needed to change is the Palestinian approach. This is our prayer, and we hope that



PAUL LACHINE ILLUSTRATION

Low will join us in this: to teach love, not hatred, and stop the violence and incitement.

ANAT GILEAD
CONSULATE GENERAL OF ISRAEL
TO NEW ENGLAND
Boston

BOSTON GLOBE 12.21.94

Muslims and Jews must continue their dialogue

The Nov. 23 op-ed article by Carol Castiel, "Despite boycott, Mideast conference showed another route to peace," was a timely beginning toward counteracting the spate of recent disinformation about "Islamic anti-Semitism," the culmination of which was the extraordinary injunction by a renowned Jewish academic, Daniel Pipes, that dialogue between Muslims and Jews should be terminated because such encounters served merely to afford legitimacy to Muslim machinations.

Despite immutable theological differences, Muslims and Jews have never been irreconcilable. The op-ed article reaffirms that Muslims were neither the repositories of anti-Semitism nor the perpetrators of pogroms.

On the contrary, in an age when Jews were persecuted in Europe, they found sanctuary in Muslim lands and were able to witness the burgeoning of their Golden Age in Moorish Spain.

That there are conflicts between Muslims and Jews today is sadly un-

deniable, but the origins of the disputes are based on political claims and counterclaims and not on any deep-seated intrinsic enmity.

Many Muslims are pained by what they perceive as an ungrateful payback for their past magnanimity. This is seen in the systematic and relentless demonization of Islam by the media:

It is precisely for this reason that the vision of Rafael Fellah, a Libyan-born Jew, in promoting an ongoing dialogue based on mutual tolerance, respect, and good will, has such urgent appeal. He recognizes that the misguided attempts to marginalize a people in the hope of gaining ascendancy is shortsighted and short-lived.

No other community is judged by the extremists within its midst. Neither should Muslims.

IMAM TAALIB MAHDI
President

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
Chairman of communications
Islamic Council of New England
Quincy

. . . and the Palestinian perspective

THE CASE that David Harris made against the Palestinians in his April 7 op-ed article ("An effort to erase Jewish history") is based entirely on opinions.

In the interest of history it is important to document the Palestinian perspective. In the Palestinian view their land has been misappropriated under a historically unique precedent - that of a fundamentalist religious inheritance. Their dispossession and Israel's refusal to redress it, in contemptuous disregard of international law, coupled with there being no right of return for Palestinians, have created the very diaspora that their occupiers relinquished. It also established a state of existence for them that has turned out to be more degrading than the abhorrent apartheid system.

With the outbreak of the current intifadah, which Palestinians ascribe entirely to the premeditated provocation of Ariel Sharon (regarded by many as a war criminal), they watch with sheer horror the unspeakably disproportionate force directed against civilians. They suffer with anguish and rage over the strangulating siege of their towns and villages. They endure with bitterness the ultimate indignity a victim must bear, that of being blamed for his plight. And they listen with utter disbelief at the deafening silence of US media, which are maintaining a total blackout of this carnage.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL
ANWAR KAZMI
ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF
NEW ENGLAND
Quincy

4.17.2001

The Globe welcomes correspondence from readers. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number.

Letters should be 200 words or less; all are subject to condensation. Letters sent by US mail should be signed.

Mail address: Letters to the Editor, The Boston Globe, 220 North Street, Boston, MA 02110

Columnist quoted Koran out of context

6/08/97 7/2/97

As American Muslims, we take strong exception to Jeff Jacoby's malicious and despicable slandering of the Islamic holy book, the Koran, and the Prophet Mohammed ("PLO propagandists rewrite Jewish history," op ed, July 10). Citing what is purported to be a quote from Surra 2:61 of the Koran, Jacoby claims that the Prophet Mohammed decreed that Jews be "forever consigned to humiliation and wretchedness."

This verse, which Jacoby quotes totally out of context, certainly does not condemn Jews as a people to humiliation and wretchedness. Instead, it refers to a group of Jews who rebelled and transgressed during the time of Moses, thereby inviting upon themselves the wrath of God. At numerous other places in the Koran, there are stories of peoples other than Jews who were punished for their transgressions, just as there are similar stories in the Bible.

The purpose of these stories is not to condemn any particular group, but to remind the readers (i.e., the Muslims) that they should not take their salvation for granted. If a group from among God's chosen

people (i.e., the Jews) can face humiliation and misery for disobeying His commands, so can the Muslims.

It is clear that Jacoby has not bothered to read the Koran. Had he done so, in the very next verse he would have found one of the most eloquent statements about acceptance of and respect for other religious traditions.

After quoting Surra 2:61 out of context, Jacoby then fabricates another lie, namely, that this Surra has been used by Muslim rulers to justify anti-Semitism. Evidence of Jacoby's alleged Islamic anti-Semitism could not be documented by the historian Bernard Lewis.

In fact, Lewis has made the following observation on the subject: "There are few, if any, equivalents in Muslim history to the massacres and forced conversions, the expulsions and the burnings that are so common in the history of Christianity."

A.C. ASMAL and

ANWAR H. KAZMI

Islamic Council of New England

Quincy,

True Islam is opposed to inequity, injustice

Two points in the Jan. 15 front-page article by Diego Ribadeniera, "Questions on the Koran," need clarification.

First, no so-called Muslim "revivalist" has ever questioned the authenticity of what is said in the Koran. What is questioned is its interpretation, and more important, that of the body of Islamic law called the Shariah, only one component of which is derived from the Koran.

Second, lest your readers infer that Muslim revivalists are preoccupied by gender polemics, Muslim scholars of both genders are unified in their commitment to the eradication of the social inequities and injustices noted as occurring in Iraq and Pakistan. While examples of indefensible cruelty are often used to misrepresent the spirit of Islam, these practices are throwbacks from pre-

Islamic times and cultural accretions that have nothing to do with pristine principles.

In fact, the whole purpose of Islamic "revivalism," occurring every century since the death of Prophet Muhammed, is to purify Muslims of cultural accretions that they themselves confused with Islamic traditions.

If, in this crusade against oppression, women appear only as an issue directly germane to their well-being, who is better qualified to rebut the negative stereotyping of women in Islam than women?

A.C. ASMAL

MAR

Communications

Islamic Council of New

Quincy, MA

Desensitizing society raises the potential for hate-crimes.

The danger in demonizing Islam

ABDUL CADER ASMAL

There has been a recent upsurge of anti-Islamic sentiment in this country, culminating in acts of arson that have razed mosques and attitudes of xenophobic demagoguery that advocate the rescinding of religious freedom to American Muslims.

Such behavior threatens to marginalize and demonize a substantial minority of our population. To appreciate the origin of anti-Islamism one can begin by examining common terminology that characterizes Muslims.

Though invariably depicted as such, Islam is no more monolithic than Christianity or Judaism. And yet in a sense all Muslims are "fundamentalists" because of their universal belief in the divine origin of the Koran, just as Christians believe in the divinity of Christ and Jews in their covenant with God.

As is true of other religions, "the silent majority" represents most Muslims. Comprising ordinary people in search of a secure job in a safe environment, they raise their families on the spiritual values of Islam. In this way they fulfill their obligation to God. For Muslim reformers this is not enough. They see and denounce the social evils of present-day society, which they ascribe to a surrender to humanist, secular values, and call for a return to Islam for salvation. Their rhetoric resonates with a theme not dissimilar to that of our "fundamentalist" evangelists.

The ranks of religious reformers may also include anti-Western zealots. Often representing disenfranchised, impoverished and illiterate constituencies, they see nothing of redeeming value in the West: Its materialism is an anathema, its capital-

ism is a tool for their exploitation, its democracy is an excuse for maintaining the status quo in their totalitarian states, its free society is a cesspool of social diseases. To them the West is the epitome of evil.

Such a mindset of disenchantment and hopelessness is conducive to the breeding of militant extremism that mobilizes the power of religion as an instrument of radical political change. However, it is worthy of note that the rant of zealots who decry social ills in this country is a far cry from the actions of militant extremists who would take up arms to correct the perceived inequities in their own countries, let alone a foreign one.

In contrast, terrorism in the name of God is condemned by all religions, whether in the murder of an abortion clinic doctor here or in the slaughter of innocent civilians abroad. Although terrorism is antithetical to Islam and has been repeatedly condemned by Muslims, most media continue to search out and identify perpetrators of terror as "Muslim," although the only evidence of a link may be a Muslim-sounding name.

If "terrorist" misrepresents Muslims, "jihad" misleads non-Muslims. In its wider sense jihad depicts a constant inner struggle to overcome one's inherent weaknesses and become a better person. In its restricted sense it means "holy war." In this sense it is a struggle for religious freedom and not one of aggression for territorial or economic gain or for proselytization. When hatemongers assert that Muslims are out to make "jihad" in America, we need to remind our fellow citizens that we do not need to fight for a right we already have.

Muslims in America, more so than in many so-called Muslim countries, have a constitutionally en-

shrined right to religious freedom: Specifically, Muslims are completely free to fulfill their religious obligation; more important, they are free from the imposition of any mandates that are contrary to their beliefs.

The peril in demonizing one-fifth of the world's population certainly does not arise from possibly alienating so-called "Muslim" countries, most of which are allies of the West. Nor is it likely to develop because of any machinations of extremists allegedly plotting "jihad" in America. No believer would ever support such an immoral, let alone such a totally counterproductive, action.

The danger in marginalizing Muslims arises in part from ignoring the existence of the majority, thereby exaggerating the influence of extremists. It also desensitizes society to Muslims, making their suffering and their victim status less consequential, and the potential for hate-crimes against them becomes more ominous. Nowhere has the consequence of such a dehumanization been more tragically witnessed than in "ethnic cleansing" of the Bosnian Muslims. In the rigor mortis of Bosnia, James Carroll sees "something essential to the human soul negated" (op ed, Nov. 29, 1994).

The sinister peril that American society faces comes not from the law-abiding Muslim citizens of this country but from bigots who advocate a policy of neo-McCarthyism against Muslims and who are out to mutilate the Constitution and rescind the religious freedom of Muslim America.

Abdul Cader Asmal is chairman of communications of the Islamic Council of America.

8.31.98

BOSTON GLOBE

US actions put Muslim-Americans in a bind

ABDUL CADER ASMAL

When faced with past acts of terrorism in the name of Islam, Muslim-Americans have responded with condemnation, expressions of condolence, and a pledge to bring the perpetrators to justice. But the current scene is complicated by the US counterstrike against two Muslim countries not at war with it.

It has created a challenge for Muslim-Americans: how to reconcile an apparent conflict between Islamic principles - "Whoever kills a human being... it shall as if he had killed all mankind (Koran: 5,32) - and national loyalty.

For non-Muslims to be able to appreciate the Islamic perspective, it is imperative for Muslims to define themselves through their mainstream adherents rather than be mischaracterized by the acts of extremists or by those with an anti-Islamic bias.

Muslims are first and foremost God-conscious people, a billion strong, in shades of black, brown, tan, yellow, and white, thriving in every continent and speaking a multitude

of languages. They share the unshakable belief in the oneness of God, the God of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, and in His ordinance that promotes good and prohibits evil.

A Muslim's obedience to his creator transcends loyalty to country of birth or adoption, irrespective of location - be it Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Pakistan, or the United States. This belief in God's omnipotence includes the acceptance of God's absolute justice, a concept that can raise questions about a Muslim's competing loyalties to the temporal and the spiritual.

Muslims living in this country are proud to be Americans. They strive to be loyal citizens and good neighbors. They find in the US Constitution a resonance with some of the fundamental principles of Islam. They rejoice in the social equity and justice - rights that are taken for granted here and denied to so much of the populace of Islamic countries. And yet they are overtaken by a sense of incredulity when they see the double standards by which US Muslim citizens and Islam in general are depicted.

Muslims everywhere are dismayed and frustrated that they continue to be demon-

ized as terrorists while there is no public outrage about the crimes against humanity in places such as Bosnia and Chechnya, where Muslims are victimized.

This issue is not linked with the abhorrent crimes in Africa to minimize the latter's importance, but merely to remind ourselves that human suffering is universal. In a democracy, disinformation sooner or later attracts attention and becomes the subject of civil discourse, debate and revision. In disenfranchised impoverished parts of the world subject to repressive totalitarian regimes, perception of such double standards is exploited by radical zealots to engender hatred, promote their own agenda, and wreak the mindless carnage witnessed.

The United States is the target of this blind vengeance because of its promotion of the status quo in some of the Islamic regimes, its perceived application of double standards against Muslims, and its support of Israel and secular Arab states.

How the slaughter of innocents can ever find a rational justification defies all logic and norms of sanity. But then who can find logic or sanity in the acts of Timothy McVeigh or Baruch Goldstein? And, if sub-

stantiated, Osama bin Laden?

President Clinton made the point to mark that the attack on the Muslim countries of Afghanistan and Sudan was against Islam. We accept that but need convincing that the bombing of Sudan was tactical error. More important, we are full that instead of acting as a deterrent further terrorist action, it will merely strengthen the hand of the extremists, will exploit the ease with which the sovereignty of Muslim countries can be violated to justify an escalating cycle of mayhem.

In the final analysis, the president has upon the information he had. As Americans accept his decision. As Muslims, we question his judgment in trying to reverse injustice with another. In Islam, neither terrorism nor counterattack, irrespective of who the perpetrators are, can be condoned. In Islam the end can never justify the means. This is a fundamental principle we as Muslims have to uphold - even seemingly questions our national loyalty.

Abdul Cader Asmal is a medical doctor in Boston and chairman of communications of the Islamic Council of New England.



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General Medical Associates

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Letters Editor,
JAMA,
515 N State St.,
Chicago, IL 60610.

August 16, 1999.

Dear Sir,

In an article that focuses on the global responsibility of physicians for worldwide human health, the omission of Iraq from the list of countries devastated by war and the ensuing sanctions is conspicuous.

The destruction of Iraqi health services began with the Gulf war that eradicated essential infrastructure including water purification and sewage treatment facilities and basic power supply, and continued with the suffocating sanctions that even ban the importation of chlorine.

The health consequences of the combined war and sanctions have been catastrophic. The infant mortality rate is 92.7/1000 livebirths, and the maternal mortality 117deaths/100,000births². There is an excess of 90,000 deaths per annum in all age groups above the pre-1989 levels due to lack of vital medicines and supplies.³ An overwhelming increase in all types of childhood diseases has resulted from the rampant spread of water-borne infections. ² An unprecedented level of malnutrition has culminated in a 50-fold increase in kwashiorkor and a 30-fold rise in marasmus compared to pre-1989 levels. ² There has also been a marked increase in certain forms of childhood cancers, leukemia birth defects and congenital anomalies thought to be due to the use of depleted uranium. The all pervasive poverty, disease and malnutrition have contributed to new problems of spousal and child abuse and family disintegration, the long term consequences of which are too dreadful to consider ⁴.

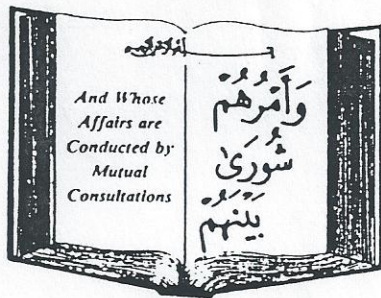
When Secretary of State, Madeline Albright was asked in 1995 whether the deaths of half a million Iraqi children by UN sanctions was justifiable, her response was, "The price is worth it". ⁵

Dr Alan Connolly who visited Iraq in 1998 wrote of his experience, "The physicians of the world must rise up, collectively awakened by the slaughter of children which is Mengelean in its dimensions.. They must act to end the sanctions.. only that will save the next child from dying. To do less is to demean the medical profession".⁶.

Not all may agree with Connolly's recommendations, but few can ignore the tragedy of the Iraqi people - victimized by a repressive regime and choking illegal UN sanctions.

Abdul Cader Asmal MD PhD

1. Iacopino V and Waldman RJ. War and Health JAMA.1999;282:479-481.
2. Eolis S .Healthcare: Observations of a Nurse. In: Clark R,ed. Challenge to Genocide. New York, NY. International Action Center;1998,97-100.
3. Unicef Report. Ibid. 237- 238.
4. Ahmed SM.Healthcare: Hospitals Pushed Back in Time. Ibid. 94-97.
5. Clark R. The Devastation of Iraq by War and Sanctions.Ibid.3-29
6. Connolly A. Healthcare: A Medical Examination .Ibid.105-110



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

470 SOUTH STREET, QUINCY, MA 02169

TEL: (617) 479-8341

Mr Richard Gilman,
Publisher,
Boston Globe,
135 Morrissey Blvd.,
Boston MA.

January 14, 2000.

Dear Mr Gilman,

Enclosed herewith is a petition signed by the local Muslim American community outraged by Jeff Jacoby's repeated and systematic misrepresentation of Islam.

Communications through letters and delegations with the Globe in an attempt to enlighten Mr Jacoby of his misperceptions of Islam have been totally unsuccessful in preventing Mr Jacoby from continuing to spread lies and hate about Islam. As documented in a recent interdenominational delegation* to the Globe we do not believe that Mr Jacoby's remarks constitute random uninformed opinion, but rather an orchestrated attempt to malign Muslims through lies, half-truths, and innuendo, thereby making them highly vulnerable to hate crimes. Parenthetically, the Globe's insensitivity toward Muslims is not limited to Jacoby (see enclosure), but that is another subject.

We trust that in our pluralistic society you will respond to the concerns of the Muslim American community with the same fairness that you accord to other minority groups such as Jews and African-Americans.

Thank you for your concern.

Yours truly,

Abdul Cader Asmal MD PhD
Chairman of Communications of Council
Ass. Clin. Prof. Harvard Medical School
Contact: 7814447995 H or 7815229000 or 6177246208 W

Mohammed Sharif PhD
President of Council
Prof. Economics URI.

- Cc Governor Paul Cellucci
Cc Senator Edward Kennedy
Cc Senator John Kerry
Cc Attorney General Tom Reilly
Cc Professor Elaine Hagopian, ArabAmerican Anti-Discrimination Committee*
Cc Dr Joseph Gerson American Friends Services Committee*
Cc Ms Jennifer Moorehead, Mobilisation for Survival*
✳ Cc local and national Islamic Organisations

COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland, MA
2. Islamic Center of Connecticut, Hartford, CT

7. Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts, Holyoke, MA
8. Islamic Society of Greater Worcester,

13. Society of Islamic Brotherhood, Boston, MA
14. Islamic Center of the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

In addition, I know that Mr. Jacoby has written to your group in the past, indicating his willingness to meet to discuss the issues at hand. He remains willing to meet at your convenience.

I firmly believe that a great strength of the Globe as a newspaper is its willingness to publish different viewpoints on a range of topics. As a general rule, the Globe has not and will not dictate to its columnists what to write -- or what not to write. Please understand that columnists do not have carte blanche; they are reviewed and edited before their columns are printed. But to suggest to them that certain topics are off limits is tantamount to censorship. And that, I also firmly believe, has no place in a good newspaper.

Thank you again for your letter. I am respectful of your point of view and urge you once again to keep the lines of communication open with the editorial page staff and Mr. Jacoby.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard Gilman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard H. Gilman

The Boston Globe

PO Box 2378, Boston, MA 02107-2378

Richard H. Gilman

Publisher

Tel: 617-929-2230

Fax: 617-929-8397

rgilman@globe.com

May 5, 2000

Abdul Cader Asmal, MD
Chairman of Communications
Islamic Council of New England
470 South Street
Quincy, MA 02169

Dear Dr. Asmal:

Thank you for your recent letters. Please be aware that my delay in responding - for which I apologize - in no way means that I am insensitive to your concerns.

Let me provide some caution, however, to some of the content in your letter. I do not believe that the Globe is Anti-Islam. Nor is it pro-Islam. Like other newspapers that try to support free expression over a range of ideas, the Globe attempts to keep its opinion columns open to divergent and different points of view.

Jeff Jacoby is one of several columnists for the Globe, and columnists deal in opinion, with a license to express their viewpoints on a range of subjects. His opinion, however, like those of other Globe columnists, should not be equated with the Globe's editorial policy. Mr. Jacoby's opinion is nothing more than that: Mr. Jacoby's opinion.

In fact, his column appears on what we call the op-ed page. The intent of this page is to present a range of opinions. Columns are often at odds with each other and with the official editorial position of the newspaper. This has happened frequently with Mr. Jacoby.

I am aware that you or representatives of your group have in the past met with Editorial Page Editor, David Greenway and with Op-Ed Page Editor, Marjorie Pritchard. We have also published several of your letters to the editor and op-ed columns. Your points of view, then, are reaching the appropriate editorial staff members, and it appears, at least, that some lines of communication have been established. I would urge you, as I would other groups and individuals in our community who may object to selected items in the Globe, to keep those lines open.

You may wish to submit an article to Ms. Pritchard for the op-ed page. These articles work best if they are not just a rebuttal or a general position paper, but add insight on a particular topic.

THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

470 SOUTH STREET QUINCY MA 02169

The Editor
The Boston Globe
Boston, MA

January 12, 2001

Dear Editor:

Employing the same hypocrisy and dishonesty which have characterized virtually everything he has written about the Middle East, Jeff Jacoby has crafted another completely one-sided, propaganda-style version of events to justify exclusive Israeli control of Jerusalem ("When Jerusalem was divided", 1/8/2001).

While acknowledging that the Palestinian Authority cannot be held accountable for the outrages committed during the Jordanian occupation of East Jerusalem during 1948-67, Mr. Jacoby nevertheless describes in great detail the destruction of the Jewish Quarter of the Old City by the Jordanian Arab Legion between May 15 and May 28, 1948. While he does not specify that, it has been reported that about 2000 Jewish residents were forced to flee their homes.

Regarding West Jerusalem, Mr. Jacoby has only five words in the entire article: West Jerusalem became Israel's capital. However, there is a lot more behind it that was elided presumably because it does not suit his purpose. For example, the portion of West Jerusalem originally inhabited by Jews represents only a small fraction of its area. Nine Arab villages were annexed to create the bulk of the city. One of these villages was Deir Yasin, the site of the infamous massacre by Menachem Begin's Irgun on April 9, 1948 (note Jacoby's chronology of events in East Jerusalem cited above). In fact, 30,000 Arabs had been forced to flee the area of West Jerusalem alone weeks before the first Jewish resident of East Jerusalem was evicted.

In a moment of brutal honesty, Moshe Dayan once said: *We came to this country (Palestine) which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Jewish state here... Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages... There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.* (Haaretz. April 4, 1969). While Mr. Jacoby so eloquently bemoans the desecration of synagogues and of the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives by the Jordanians, he cannot find a single word to even mention the wholesale destruction of mosques, churches and Arab cemeteries carried out by the Israelis.

Mr. Jacoby also refers to the destruction of two Jewish holy sites in the current Intifada implying that the Palestinian Authority cannot be entrusted with safeguarding the Temple Mount. He ignores the role of these religious sites (some of questionable authenticity: Israeli journalist Gideon Samet refers to Joseph's Tomb as being neither a tomb, nor Joseph's) as magnets for machine-gun-toting, racist settlers who terrorize unarmed Arab villagers, and as *raison d'être* for maintaining an apartheid style occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, which have made them focal points of Palestinian anger. Witness, for example, the barbaric three and a half month long curfew imposed on 40,000 Arabs of Hebron for the convenience of 400 Jews, which also seems to have escaped Mr. Jacoby's attention.

Mr. Jacoby also focuses entirely on the Arab track record of the last fifty odd years, a period marred by extraordinary friction between Arabs and Jews because of the dispossession and brutal occupation of the former by the latter. He completely ignores the history of the preceding twelve centuries during which Muslim Arabs ruled over the Holy Land, and established a record of respect for other religious traditions which is exemplary. While Mr. Jacoby may simply lack the honesty to acknowledge this, there are many more individuals of the Jewish faith who are far more fair-minded. Thus, observed Israeli historian Zev Vilnay:

Whenever Jerusalem came under the rule of the Christians, Jews were not allowed to stay or live in it.... On the other hand, whenever the Muslims occupied the city, they would call the Jews in, allow them to live in the city... and they lived in peace. Quoted by Dan Almaghor. Yediot Aharonot. January 29, 1993.

Anwar Kazmi

- i. Anwar H. Kazmi
Director of Humanitarian Relief
Islamic Council of New England

Abdul Cader Asmal

2. Abdul Cader Asmal, MD, PhD
Director of Communications
Islamic Council of New England

FOCUS

September 28, 2001

NEWS FROM HARVARD MEDICAL, DENTAL & PUBLIC HEALTH SCHOOLS



FEATURES

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Biology:

The Case of the

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Mighty Mouse

Shows Off Powers

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Ergonomics

Genetics:

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Induced Cancers

Target Genetic

Achilles Heel

Community:

Aftermath: A

Muslim American

Responds to the

Atrocity of Sept.

11

RESEARCH BRIEFS

COMMUNITY

Aftermath: A Muslim American Responds to the Atrocity of September 11

In light of the vengeful assaults on Muslim Americans following the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the U.S., editor Robert Neal conducted an e-mail interview with Abdul Cader Asmal, an HMS assistant clinical professor of medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, who is the director of communications for the Islamic Council of New England.

Focus: From your perspective as a Muslim American, what was the response of the Islamic community in the U.S. to the Sept. 11 attack?

Asmal: The response was one of unqualified, outright condemnation of the act as totally antithetical to the fundamental principles of Islam and deep condolences to the inconsolable relatives of the victims of the tragedy. There was also a profound sense of disbelief within the Muslim community that an act of such barbarity could have been

"Just as Christianity was not indicted for actions of the consummate

terrorist, Hitler, Muslims would be relieved if bin Laden's acts were divorced from his religious affiliation. His neofascist, anarchist agenda should be identified and crushed as 'bin Ladenism' in the

The (Fruit Fly)
Eyes Have It

conducted by individuals claiming adherence to the same faith.

same way that

Gene Therapy for
the Failing Heart

F: What is the nature of the current threats against Muslim Americans?

Nazism is
condemned in our
world today."
—Abdul Cader

Early Treatment
for HIV Shown to
Be Cost-effective

Asmal: The threats include the possibility of an intensification of the isolated acts of violence that have so far occurred and increasing levels of harassment of those more vulnerable in the community, namely Muslim women who wear a head cover, school children and college students who become easy victims of a generic insensitivity toward a visibly different "other," and men in certain occupations. There is also the risk of long-term suspicion of the loyalty of Muslims and doubts about whether they are "true" Americans.

Asmal

Junk Food May
Increase Risk of
Macular
Degeneration

Dyson
Professorship
Established

At the same time, while we Muslim Americans are fearful of what a handful of angry and misguided citizens may do to us, we would like to express our gratitude to the overwhelming number of people who have been spontaneously comforting and concerned about our welfare.

BULLETIN

Countway Mounts
Exhibit of 15th and
16th Century
Publications

F: How would you characterize U.S. media coverage of the reaction to the attack on the part of Muslims in the Middle East?

Volunteers Needed
to Visit, Escort
Elderly

HMS Hosts
Women's Health
Research
Conference

Asmal: In general the major media outlets, especially Peter Jennings on ABC, have been sensitive in their portrayal of the tragic events, trying to ensure that Islam is not demonized for the acts of what can best be described as a fringe cult. Some local talk shows have had a field day in promoting raw xenophobia; other media, such as WBUR, which I had the privilege of expressing my views on, have reached out to us in the best of American tradition.

HST Offers New
Bioinformatics
Training Program

F: What role can Muslim Americans and the Islamic Council of New England, in particular, play in the American response to the attack?

Memorial Service
to Be Held for
Former HMS Dean
of Student Affairs

Asmal: In as much as one feels irked to have to "explain" an action for which one has no accountability, Muslim Americans while denouncing the act for all its ugliness must do all they can to reach out to our fellow Americans and make them understand that our pain and our outrage is no less than theirs—in fact it may be greater because of the manner in which Islam has been so grotesquely hijacked by people with an evil agenda that misrepresents us and our beliefs.

Honors and
Advances

News Briefs

FORUM

America Attacked

F: If you could send the HMS community and the U.S. at large a single message, what would it be?

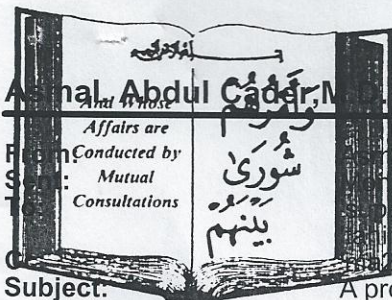
Front Page

Asmal: We stand at your side in condemning this carnage and share this collective pain. The miscreants who have perpetrated these horrible deeds have not only distorted the image of Islam which, God willing, we will be able to re-present in its true image in time, but they have also crushed the hope of millions of Muslims living in so-called "Muslim" countries under totalitarian or tyrannical regimes from realizing their hopes of seeing democracy established within their lifetimes. Of course, it has given non-Muslim countries carte blanche to eliminate any resistance against oppression under the guise of cracking down on terrorism.

The Sept. 11 attacks by so-called Muslims cannot help to promote the peace of Islam by one scintilla. They cannot help to salvage by a single iota the lives of the millions of Muslims throughout the world living in abject poverty and misery.

Beyond the condemnation of terrorism and the expression

of condolences, Muslim Americans have a dire need to be heard by their fellow Americans. They need their fellow Americans to understand the anguish that they are currently experiencing from a collective guilt for an act for which they have no accountability and from a deep sense of shame that the essence of their religious beliefs and practices could have been so grotesquely hijacked by people with twisted minds and an evil agenda.



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Asma, Abdul Cader, M.D., Ph.D.

ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

470 South Street, QUINCY, MA 02169

TEL: (617) 479-8341

day, 4 October 08, 2001 11:56 AM
'pers@atol.com', 'iteld@mediaone.net', 'mosquepraisallah@aol.com',
'irc@neuronet.com'; 'nirdm@aol.com'; 'hossam@ptechinc.com'
'33@columbia.edu'; Asma, Abdul Cader, M.D., Ph.D.

Subject: A proposed press release

PRESS RELEASE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND

OCTOBER 8 2001

In the wake of the horrendous act of terror at the WTC and the retaliatory bombardment of the Afghanistan in pursuit of the prime putative fugitive from justice, Muslim Americans anguish at the facility with which their loyalties to Islam and America are targetted. Muslims were amongst the first in condemning the mindless carnage that cost so many of our innocent citizens their lives. They immediately reached out to convey their deepest condolences to the inconsolable families of the victims of the atrocity. They also appealed to their fellow Americans to understand that while thier outrage and pain were no less than theirs, they as Muslims, also had to grapple with the shame of trying to come to terms as to how the essence of their religious beliefs could have been so grotesquely distorted by persons with an evil agenda. Despite being subjected to acts of senseless harrassment and even bodily harm and murder by individuals with with misdirected rage, or from ignorance or bigotry, overall the Muslim Americans have been gratified by the response from the overwhelming numbers of our fellow citizens with their show of support and compassion.

Now as we enter the second phase of this sad saga, Muslims once again feel the pressure to define themselves as though they cannot be both Muslim and American. There is no basis whatsoever for such a notion as there is nothing irreconcilable between the practice of Islam and the credo of our country, "In God we trust". This applies to all Muslims who live in this country - whether born a Muslim and American by choice, or born American but Muslim by choice!

War is always a regetable way to end a conflict but sadly sometime there is no alternative. While the leaders of the hapless Afghani people left Mr Bush few options, it is the people who will suffer again -people who have been repeatedly victimized over the past 20 years, first by the merciless Soviets, then by a brutal internecine conflict, followed by the repressive Taliban regime, now facing a bombardment from the heavens for reasons, because of a dearth of media, most do not even begin to comprehend. While the concomittant humanitarian gesture may relieve some of the human misery, our hope and prayer is that that the fugitives from justice will be brought to account as soon as possible, with minimal "collateral" damage done to terrified civilians, and no harm to the armed forces that have been commissioned to undertake this dangerous mission. We pray that from these "twin" tragedies we all learn the lessons to make our world "a kinder gentler place."

Abdul Cader Asma
Chairman of Communications

COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland, MA

2. Islamic Center of Connecticut, Hartford, CT

3. Islamic Center of Merrimack Valley, Salem, NH

7. Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts,
Holyoke, MA

8. Islamic Society of Greater Worcester,
Worcester, MA

13. Society of Islamic Brotherhood, Boston, MA

14. Islamic Center of the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

The enemy in the terror war

WHILE PRESIDENT George W. Bush, in his State of the Union address, extolled "Islam's rich history, with its centuries of learning and tolerance and progress," Muslim Americans continue to agonize as to how their religion could have been so hijacked as to promote an evil agenda.

As they grapple with the realization that the perpetrators of the terrors of Sept. 11 were Muslims, they also seek a way to disassociate Islam from an act so antithetical to its essence. For, despite Bush's repeated reassurances that this is a war against terror and not Islam, they struggle to reconcile this view with the none too subtle innuendoes in this country and the widespread perception abroad that in the war against terrorism, the enemy is Islam.

The rubric of an "axis of evil" serves to reinforce a deep uneasiness at the prospect of an unending series of unprovoked forays against earmarked rogue — that is, Muslim — states whose attitudes Americans disdain. That terrorism is in some way a hallmark or prerogative of Islam generates a deep angst among Muslims worldwide.

The notion also absolves a motley of non-Muslim terrorist groups around the world from any culpability for any and every copycat act of terror. More significantly for Muslims, under the pretext of stamping out terrorism, it stifles any nascent legitimate struggle for democracy in a totalitarian so-called Muslim state. Off course the premise also gives carte blanche to non-Muslim countries to crush all legitimate resistance against oppression and tyranny.

In the war against any group whose unifying call is hate, whose target is the current world order, whose modus operandi is the terrorization of civilians, and whose ideology is totally antithetical to that of the religion it claims to espouse, there is an urgent imperative to redefine the battle lines.

The historical precedent for this is clear. Previously, when the consummate terrorist, Adolf Hitler, proclaimed that in exterminating the Jews, he was "doing the Lord's work," his Nazism was never linked with Christianity. Thus now, when a cult figure emerges as a shadowy legend of the Afghan-Soviet war but with a grotesquely radical ideology that he associates with but has no basis in Islam, his ideology should be repudiated as strongly as any linkage between Christianity and Nazism.

Fittingly, the term "binladenism," characterizing its architect, would convey the same repugnance to the world that Nazism had done before — neither religion being impugned for the heinous ideology spawned in its name.

Even to those who were skeptical as to who had orchestrated the details of Sept. 11, the

scope of binladenism has now become apparent. Terrorism was not the end but a means to an end — the means of exploiting the anticipated retribution so as to fabricate a deliberate confrontational "jihad" between Islam and the current world order.

In its execution, binladenism respected neither the message of Islam nor the welfare of its 1.2 billion adherents. On the contrary its architect skillfully exploited the events to confound many in parts of the Muslim world who, though repulsed by his ideology, are still led to believe that he is a scapegoat for the real targeted enemy which is Islam.

With Bin Laden's unceremonious exit, President Bush has declared that "our war on terror is just beginning." If the war against this ideology, of which terrorism is just the means, has any hope of achieving permanent success, there has to be an immediate redefinition of the enemy.

The shift in emphasis from Islam to binladenism as the driving force behind terrorism serves not only to expose the illegitimacy of a cult devoted to the cold-blooded targeting of innocents, but more important it delinks Islam as the enemy.

This would allow Muslims worldwide to breathe a sigh of relief and promote their participation in a common cause, to which many might have been hitherto reluctant to engage in based on their perception of being guilty of being Muslim.

To this end, President Bush's vision in declaring that "all societies want their children to be educated and live free from poverty and violence. No people on earth yearn to be oppressed, or aspire to servitude" has already lashed in on one of the key concerns of oppressed Muslims throughout the world.

The challenge for Muslims is to develop a new vigilance to the insidious usurpation of their religious principles, and to demonstrate zero tolerance against those who might wish to justify the unconscionable in the name of Islam.

This is the very least that Muslims, certainly Muslim Americans, can do to vindicate Bush's statement on "Islam's centuries of learning, tolerance, and progress," and show that these values are not relics of history.

In this defining moment in history, unless Muslims wrest the initiative, they invite the risk of being defined by others as the enemy.

Abdul Cader Asmal is chairman of communications of the Islamic Council of New England.

**It is not
Islam but
binladenism.**



INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune
THE IHT ONLINE

Terrorism is not Islamic

By **Abdul Cader Asmal** The Boston Globe
THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 2005

BOSTON Whether we are American, Nigerian, Indonesian, or British, we look like them, we dress like them, we speak like them and we pray like them. We cannot identify them before they strike. They hate us because we reject their ideology. They would kill us as "infidels." We are Muslims. So are they. But they are terrorists and we are not. That is the distinction. This is where we must make our stand.

As troubling as it is for Muslims to be identified as potential terrorists, the truth is that the terrorists conducting such barbaric acts in today's society are Muslims. That is not to say that they are the only or the biggest terrorists, but they are the most mindless, unpredictable and deliberately merciless. Driven by motives or grievances that they may legitimately share with countless other Muslims, they have devised their own demonic modus operandi that almost all others abhor and are repulsed by. In an open society they bear no distinctive traits.

While the recent terror acts have been committed by Muslims, there is nothing "Islamic" about them. They are totally antithetical to the fundamental principles of Islam and represent a heretical deviation of the religion. When the Sept. 11 Commission went out of its way to define terrorism as not just any generic terrorism, but specifically as "Islamist," this pejorative label, despite the banal niceties of "Islam being a religion of peace," sent a chilling message to Muslims worldwide that terrorism is a hallmark or prerogative of Islam, or that when committed by other groups it is in some way mitigated by intrinsic extenuating circumstances.

The leap from deviant Muslims perpetrating atrocities to a religion being impugned for the sins of its supposed adherents is breath-taking in its audacity. This distinction has become critical ever since the "showdown with Saddam" transmuted into the "war on terror." With the daily mind-numbing imagery of maniacal Muslim "insurgents" savaging troops and civilians alike, a transformation rapidly took place: The problem was just not Muslim terrorists but an "evil" Islam itself. This is a theme broadcast with malevolent glee by talk shows on a daily basis thereby intensifying suspicion, fear, contempt, and hatred of Islam. Demonizing Islam makes it the enemy in the "war on terror."

Ironically, we Muslims have the greatest vested interest in eradicating terrorism. We need to do this to salvage our religion and our self-respect. As long as we are marginalized by the West and taunted by the extremists, we are made to feel as if we were part of the problem rather than of the solution, and our commitment becomes ambivalent. If the so-called war on terrorism has any chance of being won, there needs to be an immediate redefinition of the enemy.

First, to achieve a delinkage between Islam and terrorism, the term "Binladenism" has been suggested. It is an accurate characterization of the architect whose unifying call is hate, whose target is the current world order, whose modus operandi is the terrorization of innocent civilians, and whose fascist ideology directly contravenes the basic principles of the religion it claims to espouse.

Second, it is essential for Muslims to dissociate their legitimate concerns from the terrorist acts that have been perpetrated to justify them. Irrespective of whether Muslims see the victimization of Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Palestine or Iraq, the terrorists can never find justification for their terror tactics. In Islam the end does not justify the means.

Third, because these concerns have been hijacked by a bunch of hoodlums as a pretext for terrorism does not delegitimize the concerns, nor does responding to them in any way justify the terrorism. It would be crass to ignore Muslims' legitimate concerns, or, worse still, to consider any response to them a negotiation with terrorists. Until the issues are addressed, the war on terror will smolder on.

Finally, with a redesigned strategy, the stand against the ideology of terrorism (Binladenism) must be, and will be, united, unwavering, unequivocal and unconditional. The recent fatwa by the Fiqh Council of North America against terrorism is a small first step.

But for Muslims the conviction for such a stand has always been and is direct from the Koran: "Stand steadfast before God as witnesses for justice, even though it is against yourselves." An act of terror is an act of supreme injustice. Its prevention is the moral imperative of every Muslim. Those who fail this basic test should have more to fear than that their civil rights might be infringed. In this stand lies our hope, our security, and our future.

(Abdul Cader Asmal is former president of the Islamic Center of Boston and former president of the Islamic Council of New England. This article first appeared in The Boston Globe.)

7.6.02

GLOBE

Opinion A15

ABDUL CADER ASMAL

What Muslims must do

SEPT. 11 WAS a wake-up call — for Americans to take up arms against terrorism and for Muslims to ask who speaks for them.

The concept for Americans was simple — to identify and neutralize the enemy. The strategy for Muslims has been anything but easy. Paralyzed into inaction by competing emotions of shame and outrage, humiliation and resentment, they have yet to deliver a cohesive response to invidious questions about their religion.

Questions such as:

- Is there something intrinsically violent about Islam that purportedly condones the call to the slaying of their fellow humans, permits the slaughter of innocents, and sanctions suicide as a ticket to martyrdom in pursuit of these goals?

- How can Islam be a religion of peace if it legitimizes such heinous crimes in its name?

If the answers to these questions are in the negative why were the purveyors of such evil not exposed or brought to justice before they could unleash their horror?

The answers to these questions reside primarily in making the vital distinction between the religion and its adherents.

Islam is indeed a religion of peace. Specifically it prohibits aggression, forbids the targeting of civilians, even in times of war, confers a special status upon Christians and Jews, and views suicide as an act against God.

In this context all scriptures taken out of their historical and moral context can be distorted to promote an agenda of evil.

Those who perpetrated the Sept. 11 attacks knew this. Ironically those who now exploit this atrocity to propagate their hatred of Muslims know this only too well. While the terrorists of Sept. 11 were Muslim, they were deviant Muslims; as deviant as those Christians who launched the Inquisition and who in doing the "Lord's work" masterminded the "final solution"; as deviant as those who liken the Palestinians to the exterminable Biblical Amalekites.

Having negated the premise that the psychopathic individuals who orchestrated the Sept. 11 attacks had any legitimacy for their actions in Islam, why then did the "Muslim leadership" not condemn the rhetoric before it translated into carnage?

The intuitive response is that as Islam is neither monolithic nor hierarchical — no single person, country, or organization is empowered to speak on its behalf — neither the secular democracy of Turkey or monarchy of Jordan, nor the theocratic republic of Iran or kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Notwithstanding the obvious ethnic, cultural, and religious plurality within the so-called "Muslim world," the media has long displayed a penchant for portraying Islam as monolithic — the most odious consequence of which has been its subjection to double standards.

Despite protestations that no other religion is defined by its extremists, no other adherents are collectively smeared for the actions of a few, none but Muslims are expected to explain or apologize for the radicalism of its fringe, their objections have fallen on deaf ears.

While the religious background of terrorists of other faiths is either totally ignored (Tim McVeigh) or, if acknowledged, the act is attributed to insanity (Baruch Goldstein), or if neither, all sorts of extenuating motives are sought (the Columbine "shooters"), the affiliations of those sociopaths with the most tenuous of ties to Islam (Richard Reid, Jose Padilla) are unabashedly sensationalized with neither their sanity nor motives brought into question.

Sadly for Muslims such relentless stigmatization culminated in the self-fulfilling prophecy of Sept. 11.

Placed in this inimical position Muslims do not have the luxury of ignoring the baseless charges that other religions are spared. They can either continue to bemoan what they perceive as institutionally legitimized racism or confront the reality.

As demeaning as it is to have to respond to egregious depictions in order to reassert their bona fides, given the crusader attitude they currently face, most recently expressed by the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference, Muslims have no choice. In order to refurbish the image of Islam and rescue countless Muslims around the world who through the mindless actions of Muslims themselves have become the victims of the war on terror, the global community of Islam has to take an unprecedented step — a step to develop an international Islamic jurisdictional council.

Such an organization must be empowered not only to monitor and prosecute those who purvey hate and advocate mayhem, but also to build consensus and become the global voice of Islam that speaks for all Muslims.

Abdul Cader Asmal is chairman of communications of the Islamic Council.

"I don't have fear, or I don't identify it as fear," said Wallace, one of five New Jersey postal workers infected with the bacteria last year. (Bloomberg)

WTC facts

Debris removed:

Concrete and other rubble: 1,460,888 tons
Steel 190,568 tons
Total debris: 1,651,456 tons
Truckloads of rubble 92,675
Truckloads of steel 16,162
Total truckloads: 108,837
More than 1,000 crushed vehicles were removed from the World Trade Center area.

Q&A



Abdul Cader Asmal
Member of the Islamic Council of New England

How have the lives of Muslim Americans changed since Sept. 11?

As an evolving minority in our generous pluralistic society, prior to 9/11 Muslim Americans were just beginning to feel that they were now accepted as part of the

American landscape. Sept. 11 has forever changed that landscape for all Americans. As Americans we share the collective shock, grief, outrage and resentment that has engulfed all of our society in the aftermath of 9/11. As Muslims we also experience a collective guilt for an evil in which we had no role, and a shame that an act so antithetical to our core beliefs could have been perpetrated in the name of our religion. These sentiments that we alone feel are intensified by opportunistic individuals with an anti-Islamic agenda who vilify Islam and thereby provoke contempt for all Muslims. Thus as a consequence of the horror of

9/11, Muslim Americans, instead of feeling welcome at the table, feel more and more like aliens in their own homes.

Do you feel that acts of prejudice toward Muslims have declined since right after Sept. 11 or does widespread discrimination still exist?

The answer to that question has to be prefaced with the remark that in the wake of 9/11, the most sensational experience that Muslim Americans underwent was the spontaneous outpouring of support from ordinary Americans who perhaps sensed our pain, and reached out to us in our mosques and in their

churches to help us deal with our joint suffering. I think the spirit of goodwill represents America at its best.

Sure enough there are episodes of violence, intimidation and discrimination, fueled in some media, but given the enormity of what happened the events were relatively few.

This shift in focus from Muslims who were responsible for the crime, to "evil" Islam though Islam is intrinsically intolerant, is the most disturbing challenge that we as Muslims currently face.

Christina

a year of faith a year of patriotism a year of fear a year of anger a year of

9/11/02

METRO BOSTON

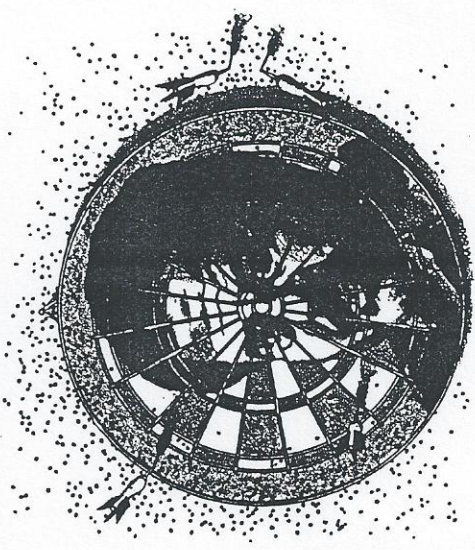
COBSON 11/5/99
The demonization of Saddam Hussein

Muslim Americans agree with David Nyhan that it is hypocritical of Secretary of Defense William Cohen to censure a pumped-up naval officer for a lapse of judgment even as Cohen himself executed the release of weapons of mass destruction

against innocent civilians ("Secretary Cohen, leave the kid alone," op ed, Dec. 25).

It is not difficult to understand officer Chad Rickenberg's sentiments, arising as they did from the demonization of Saddam Hussein and the concomitant demonization of the Iraqi people. The horrendous suffering of the Iraqis caused by eight years of brutal sanctions has received little recognition or sympathy.

With the objective of the air campaign being the undermining of Hussein's power base, the collateral harm done to innocent bystanders is scarcely perceived as



BARRIE MAGUIRE ILLUSTRATION

an act of terror by an audience (including Rickenberg) programmed to recognize terror almost solely within the frame of reference of an Islamic militant hitched to a car bomb.

While we reject the government of Hussein, we could not support the air strikes that will only intensify the agony of civilians. Muslim Americans would have preferred our troops to be safe at home during the holidays.

A. CADER ASMAL
 JAVID MALIK
 Islamic Council of New England
 Quincy

War: catastrophic consequences

AS LOYAL citizens of this country we believe that for the United States to go to war at this juncture without the full backing of the United Nations would have catastrophic consequences — notwithstanding the indictment Secretary Colin Powell made yesterday against Iraq before the Security Council.

For Americans it would mean an intensification of their economic hardships, but this would be overshadowed by the tragic loss of lives in a war against a nation that has yet to be shown to threaten us in any direct way.

For Iraqi civilians, the prospect of facing the onslaught by the US military in what has euphemistically been described as a shock and awe operation is no less terrifying than the life of brutal dictatorship to which they have been subjected for so long.

For the Arab and Muslim worlds such unadulterated war-mongering against the Iraqis with a docile acceptance of North Korea's aggressiveness would look like selective racism and a crusade

against Islam. It would serve merely to reinforce the distorted agenda of extremists and reduce our hopes of eradicating the scourge of terrorism.

Given the level of disinformation about Islam and the contempt with which Muslims are depicted, it might appear unpatriotic for us to challenge the drumbeat to war. On the other hand, our Islamic principles demand that in fearing none but God we should speak out against what we perceive as grave injustices about to be committed.

It would thus be an act not only of disobedience to God but treason against our own country when we fail to express our concerns in what we believe to be in the best interest of our country and the world at large.

IMAM ABDULLAH TAALIB
 FARUQ
 PRESIDENT
 ABDUL CADER ASMAL
 CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNICATIONS
 ISLAMIC COUNCIL
 OF NEW ENGLAND
 Quincy

2/5/03
 Boston Globe



MARCH 2007 ISSUE

1. Message from the Co-Directors
2. CJMR Interview: Anti-Semitism/Islamophobia...Same Coin?
3. Ask the "Other" Forum
4. Guest Column: Carving the Path for Muslim-Jewish Dialogue
5. Focus On: Salaam Shalom Radio
6. Support CJMR

1. MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

Welcome to the second issue of the Center for Jewish-Muslim Relations e-Newsletter. We are grateful for the messages of support and encouragement from our readers in response to our first issue and we hope this month's issue engages our readers and encourages further dialogue. We are dedicating this month's issue to concerns of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and we are honored that two prominent Massachusetts leaders, Dr. Abdul Cader Asmal and Dr. Larry Lowenthal shared their insights with our readers. We thank readers for submitting questions for the "Ask the Other Forum". Two challenging questions were selected to which Dr. Asmal and Dr. Lowenthal agreed to answer for our readers. We hope by tackling some of the challenges to Jewish-Muslim relations we are opening doors for honest dialogue that would go beyond our e-newsletter.

In peace,
David Dolev and Salma Kazmi

2. CJMR INTERVIEW: ANTI-SEMITISM/ISLAMOPHOBIA...SAME COIN?

Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have long created barriers to open dialogue between Muslim and Jewish communities. CJMR posed questions to two community leaders to shed light on the experience of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and particularly examining ways to build on the understanding of both communities.



Dr. Abdul Cader Asmal (left), former President of the Islamic Center of Boston at Wayland and former President of the Islamic Council of New England, and Dr. Larry Lowenthal (right), Executive Director of the Greater Boston Chapter of the American Jewish Committee share their views with our readers.

CJMR: *What is Islamophobia/anti-Semitism and how do local Muslims/Jews experience it?*

Dr. Asmal:

Islamophobia is a term that promotes the fear of Islam and in the process generates hate against its adherents and permits a level of bigoted discourse that civil society would show zero tolerance toward if applied to any other racial, religious or nationalistic group. Since the nightmarish events of September 11th, orchestrated by a Muslim heretic, Muslims had to listen to the refrain, "the terrorists, our enemies, are Muslims". This message has been amplified since the "showdown with Saddam" transmuted into today's catastrophe in Iraq. Thus on a daily basis with every news conference, with every talk show, with every political speech it has become an accepted part of our national discourse to accept Muslims as the "Other", demonize them with impunity, and see them as guilty until proven innocent. The evil attack on September 11th was not perpetrated by Muslim extremists, but it nonetheless provided the pretext for the Neo-conservative movement to execute their so-called "global war on terror" to invade, occupy, and systematically dismantle a country that posed no threat to the US whatsoever. With each passing day of the uncontrollable horror in Iraq – viewed as a crusade by increasing numbers in the Muslim world – more mindless fanatics are driven to kill "the enemies of God", thus multiplying the real threat from enraged Muslims and Islamophobia in parallel.

Asmal, Abdul Cader, M.D., Ph.D.

From: Asmal, Abdul Cader, M.D., Ph.D.
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 9:01 AM
To: Matt Bernstein (E-mail)
Cc: Asmal, Abdul Cader, M.D., Ph.D.
Subject: Response to Jacoby 5/1/07

Mr Matt Bernstein,
Letter to the Editor
Boston Globe.

Dear Mr Bernstein,
I trust you will accept the accompanying letter as a rebuttal to Mr Jacoby's article on the subject of the new mosque being built for the Boston Muslim community
If you have any questions please contact by email or phone
Thank you
Sincerely

Abdul Cader Asmal

It comes as no surprise that Jeff Jacoby, a noted Islam-basher, should now join the witchhunt that his fellow reporters at the Herald and Fox 25 initiated. Despite innuendoes, guilt by association, and half truths they failed to unearth an iota of evidence that could in anyway link the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) with ties to terrorism. Undaunted, Mr Jacoby recycles an 'expose' (Globe 4/25/07) about Abdurahman Alamoudi, a Muslim activist of sorts, known to the ISB, the Clintons and many insider Washingtonians, who in 2003 was convicted of a terrorist plot against a Saudi prince. Jacoby argues desperately to place the burden of proof on ISB for having failed to dissociate itself from a potential 'terrorist' whose mere presence amongst them serves to define Muslims! The Washington luminaries are off course immune to any of Mr Alamoudi's acts and are unimpeachable! This is the preposterous thesis with which Jacoby insults the intelligence of his readers and denigrates Muslims. Mr Jacoby's motive in promoting anti-Islamism is unclear when the rest of the Boston community is rallying behind the Muslims in their quest to establish a first of its kind landmark house of worship in New England. Bigotry has no place in civil society. Perhaps society at large will now, as they did in the ouster of Don Imus, join the Muslim community in saying 'no more' to the bigotry and xenophobia within our midst.

Abdul Cader Asmal
Islamic Council of New England
781 522 9000 or 781 522 9034 (voicemail)
781 444 7995 h

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SPLIT OPINIONS ON ISLAMIC CENTER

GLOBE
JULY 2010

Confident mosque will amplify message of peace

THE JULY 5 "@odds" op-eds on the new Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center could not have stood in starker contrast. Michael Felsen ("Trustworthy community"), president of Boston Workmen's Circle, presents a view of the Muslim community, including the current leadership of the center, with the insight and understanding of the "other" that can only emanate from having reached out to people at a personal level. This is the basis of his call for peace and conciliation.

Dennis Hale and Charles Jacobs ("Leaders are extremist"), who would rebut Felsen's position, depend entirely on the alleged opinions and views of foreign Muslims whom they know of only in the abstract, and who have little or no relevance to the operations of the center or its worshippers. And yet these fear-mongers continue their rant that the center is a cover for so-called extremists out to subvert democracy.

As a past president of the Islamic Center of Boston and of the Islamic Council of New England, I have interacted with a spectrum of non-monolithic Muslims, Christian leaders in the Boston Archdiocese and the Massachusetts Council of Churches, and rabbis and secular leaders of the Jewish Community Relations Council and the American Jewish Committee.

Though not a spokesman for the new center, I feel confident that with its resources it will amplify Islam's true message of peace, justice, social equity, and universal brotherhood to these constituencies and the community at large. When all people of good-will pull together, extremists and purveyors of hate will sink into oblivion.

ABDUL CADER ASMAL

Needham

Wise path wished for Muslim community

THE GLOBE'S side-by-side placement of two op-ed pieces with opposing perspectives on the opening of the Islamic Soci-

ety of Boston Cultural Center allows us to easily contrast their views on the mosque leadership (@odds, July 5).

In the first, Michael Felsen writes about the cordial words he has heard over the years from these leaders and the absence of any words of animosity or hatred. In the second, Charles Jacobs and Dennis Hale write about the well-documented actions of hatred and ill will behind the sweet words. In considering whom to believe, we should ask ourselves: words or actions — which should be taken more seriously?

The writers of both op-eds clearly wish the Boston Muslim community well. I'd like to extend these good thoughts by saying that I wish for the Muslim community that they be done with those of their leaders, teachers, and funders who would take them down the wrong path, and that they find, instead, the wise and benevolent leadership they deserve. And I wish for all of us to have the courage and good sense to acknowledge the difference between the two.

SUSAN KRIEGER

Jamaica Plain

Charges against Islamic center are an affront to entire Muslim community

The Boston Globe

October 13, 2010

AS PAST and current presidents, respectively, of the Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland, we appreciate that the group designating itself as Americans for Peace and Tolerance has found the educational experience at our center to its satisfaction ("Mosque video flap is a case of attacking the messenger," Letters, Oct. 5). As key players in the development of community outreach at our center, we have also had contact with the current leadership of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center and the Muslim American Society. On this basis we have absolute confidence in their integrity and find any suggestion that they would harbor, let alone promote, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, and anti-American diatribes totally contrary to their personal character and the transparent inter-religious outreach they have endorsed.

Though many of the Islamic centers in the Boston area are geographically dispersed for the convenience of their congregants, all of these centers view the ISBCC as their flagship in representing Islam, with an open welcome and community outreach to all. We, therefore, find the allegations made by Americans for Peace and Tolerance against the ISBCC most disturbing and view them as a blanket criticism of all Muslims in the area. We have noted the vendetta waged by this group against the ISBCC for some time, but had hoped that the good will being engendered with other large Christian and Jewish groups would help to diminish their vitriol. Clearly, as this has not been the case, we now openly declare our solidarity with the ISBCC and consider any attacks against it as a denigration of the entire Muslim community.

Abdul Cader Asmal Malik Khan

Wayland

boston.com

THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

Interfaith group rallies on Beacon Hill vs. anti-Muslim rhetoric

*The Boston Globe***By Lisa Wangsness, Globe Staff | September 8, 2010**

A group of local Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders gathered at the State House yesterday to decry what they described as anti-Islamic rhetoric and violence fueled by the controversy over the proposed mosque near ground zero in New York.

The speakers, who included a rabbi, a Catholic priest, a Quaker, several Protestant ministers, and a Muslim leader, likened the recent stabbing of a Muslim cabdriver in New York City and plans by a Protestant Florida pastor to burn a Koran to the persecution of religious dissidents in Colonial-era Boston. The leaders asked the crowd of more than 100 to place stones at the foot of a statue on the State House lawn of Mary Dyer, a Quaker whom the Puritans hanged in 1660 for defying a law banning Quakers from the colony.

"We cannot and will not remain silent in the face of the surge of fear about, and threats against, Islam and Muslim-Americans," said the Rev. Nancy S. Taylor of Old South Church, a United Church of Christ congregation in Boston's Back Bay.

"We denounce terrorism, no matter who it's done by. At the same time, we reject the wholesale equation of terrorism to Islam."

As participants set the stones on the statue, several people read aloud a pledge, written by a group of clergy, that condemned terrorism but affirmed Islam as "an integral and vital part of the American interfaith mosaic."

The statement, which was drafted by religious leaders last week and signed by more than 1,400 people online as of late yesterday afternoon, endorses religious freedom and the right of all religious groups to build places of worship. It did not specifically back the Islamic center proposal in lower Manhattan, but condemned "the cynical use of misinformation and fear-mongering by various politicians, commentators, and media outlets to stir up anti-Muslim prejudice for political or other ends."

The Rev. Hurmon Hamilton, president of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization and pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church, called upon Terry Jones, the pastor of a nondenominational church in Gainesville, Fla., to abandon his plans to burn a Koran on Sept. 11, the ninth anniversary of the terrorist attacks.

"Stop. Don't do it," Hamilton said. "This is not the way."

Standing near the back of the crowd, the Rev. Nancy Dann, a United Church of Christ minister from Amherst and Vero Beach, Fla., held a homemade sign that said "Proud + Love Muslims." Her son and daughter, now grown, converted to Islam years ago, Dann said.

"They love God," she said. "It is so frustrating to me — I think people voicing such opposition to Islam, to Muslims, to the building of mosques, are doing so because of a lack of information."

Addressing the crowd, Abdul Cader Asmal, past president of the Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland and the Islamic Council of New England, drew a distinction between "Islamophobia," which he called "a well-obfuscated, shameless demonization of Islam," and the rational fear Americans and Muslims everywhere have of terrorism.

"Up to now, Islamophobes, with their fear-mongering, have enjoyed a good measure of success," Asmal said. "But now, an increasing number of decent, fair-minded Americans . . . are slowing their momentum and coming to support . . . their Muslim fellow citizens."

Several speakers likened the opposition to the mosque in New York to the persecution their own faiths endured in the past. Rabbi Eric Gurvis of Temple Shalom in Newton recalled that, 60 years ago, when his congregation tried to purchase land to build a synagogue, attempts were made to stop the sale.

And the Rev. Walter Cuenin, the Catholic chaplain at Brandeis, called on Boston Catholics to remember their forebears were persecuted by Protestants.

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Boston, did not attend the event, but in a blog post Aug. 13, he expressed support for the proposed Islamic center in Manhattan. Muslims, he wrote, "have a right to practice their faith," and the mosque "near the site of the attack can be a very important symbol of how much we value religious freedom in this country."

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