

Islam in America Conference

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Introduction

Why are Muslims demonized?

Is Islam so badly misunderstood?

What should Muslims do?

The current strategy is not working

Let's begin by examining the problem

The problem

1933: Gen Smedley Butler: "War is a Racket"

I helped make Mexico... safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street.... I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers... I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

1948: George Kennan, Policy Planning Study 23

We have about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population.... Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity

1983: Creation of National Endowment for Democracy

Created to do overtly what the CIA had been doing covertly for decades

NED funds other organizations, eg CSID

1989: Collapse of USSR

Robert S. McNamara and Lawrence J. Korb told Congress that the \$300 billion annual Pentagon budget could be safely cut in half over the next decade

In the 1960s, Muslims had been romanticized — that changed

1992: Yellow Peril vs Green Peril

The Pentagon selected "Islamic fundamentalism" and "rogue states" as the new bogeymen

1996: Benjamin Netanyahu

The greatest danger the world faces is "Islamic fundamentalism"

2000: PNAC report Rebuilding America's Defenses

"Preserving the desirable strategic situation in which the United States now finds itself requires a globally preeminent military capability... the process of transformation... is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor."

2001: 9/11

The FBI has never claimed that Bin Laden was responsible

Yet most Americans define Islam through the prism of 9/11

Advancing the US agenda

War: Afghanistan, Iraq

War on terror: Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia...

The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice

Since September 11, 2001, the U.S. government has targeted Muslims in the United States by sending paid, untrained informants into mosques and Muslim communities.

This practice has led to the prosecution of more than 200 individuals in terrorism-related case

Mother Jones

The FBI's Network of Informants Actually Created Most of the Terrorist Plots "Foiled" in the US Since 9/11

Curtailing civil liberties for all Americans, and many around world

Arab Spring

Libya

A French film-maker has filmed an interview in which the secretary general of the Libyan League for Human Rights admits that he had "no proof" of the allegations he made before the U.N. Human Rights Commission which led to immediate expulsion of the official Libyan representative and from there to U.N. Resolutions authorizing what turned into the NATO war of regime change.

Syria: Arab League created an Observer Mission

Their report confirms the version of the Syrian government — not that of the West and the Gulf monarchies

Bahrain, Kuwait are a different matter

Iran

Intel agencies say no nuclear weapons program since 2003

Iran has not violated the NPT, the US has

Conclusion

For the most part, Muslims are demonized by certain individuals and groups because it serves their interests — not because Islam is misunderstood

What should Muslims do?

Asking the opposition to stop is futile

Learn from South Africa

Build consensus on goal, strategy

Include diverse points of view

Include non-Muslims

Commitment, courage are essential

Need new agenda

What single event has done the most harm to Muslims?

2000+ engineers, scientists, pilots, military and intelligence personnel don't believe the official account of 9/11

Why are Muslims silent on 9/11?

If a few mosques took up the issue, others may follow