

Arsalan Iftikhar and Trump's Reign of Terror

by Hugh Fitzgerald

The Muslim hysteria is upon us. I don't mean hysteria *about* Muslims, for none is discernible; rather, it is the hysteria *of* Muslims, or many of them, their expressions of supposed terror – in the newspapers, the airwaves, and the Internet – over what a President Trump will do. These reports of “terrified” Muslims are appearing all over the place, short on facts but long on fear. For what exactly has Trump said or done to strike such putative terror? He's suggested that the vetting of Muslim migrants leaves a lot to be desired. Given how many Muslims have been admitted to the United States in how short a time, and given that our government has been a positive hindrance to those of its agents who would like to find out more about the ideology of Islam, and given, too, how hard it has been to read the minds of Muslim migrants, at least some of whom we have good reason to believe (see New York, Washington, Fort Hood, Boston, Chattanooga, Orlando, San Bernardino, or outside this country, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Madrid, Moscow) may be intent on sowing murder and mayhem among the Infidels, doesn't Trump; have a point? On December 7, 2015 (for Muslims, a date which will apparently live in Trump-infamy), Donald Trump called “for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on.” This was apparently beyond the pale, as “far-right” or as “white nationalist” (the newly-fashionable term of opprobrium for anyone who voted for Trump) as all get-out.

Was it really? What exactly had Trump called for? It had not escaped Trump's notice that since 9/11/2001 there have been nearly 30,000 terrorist attacks by Muslims around the world,

and that quite a few of those terrorists have the habit of quoting from the Qur'an and Hadith to justify those attacks, while others remain quiet about their plans; officially, we in the Western world (see Tony Blair, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Pope Francis, Angela Merkel) are all encouraged to believe that these attacks "have nothing to do with Islam." But *res ipsa loquitur*, as the lawyers like to say, the thing speaks for itself. Confusion is piled upon confusion when it comes to Islam. And since many people seem still to be unfamiliar with what is in the Qur'an and Hadith, and many in the American government, as elsewhere in the West, are fearful of offending Muslims by suggesting there might be something in those texts to worry about (which is why Robert Spencer found himself a pedagogue *non grata* as far as those now running the Homeland Security industry were concerned, when he insisted on reading the texts rightly), so it was perfectly sensible for Trump to say that in these matters the government has a duty to "figure out what the hell is going on" before even more Muslims are admitted, given the life-and-death stakes. There is nothing outrageous about that. Just because so many others have been derelict in their duty is no reason for Trump to score easy points by following suit.

One example, among so many, of hysterical fear-mongering is provided by Arsalan Iftikhar, a Muslim "international human rights lawyer," who the day after the election was quick off the mark with a piece in the *Washington Post* that appeared under the scare headline "[Being a Muslim in Trump's America is frightening.](#)"

Now I haven't – have you? – noticed any round-up of Muslims en masse, heard about any raids on mosques and madrasas, or gestapo-knocks in the night at the homes of Muslim families. That's right – more than a full week has gone by since the election, and yet nowhere in this country has a single Muslim been subject to a single raid. In France on July 16, two hundred mosques were raided. A few days ago, there were nearly

200 raids on mosques, offices, and homes of Muslims, in Germany. But in the United States since the terrifying Trump was elected? Nothing at all, and not the slightest suggestion of similar raids to come once Trump is actually sworn in. The only “terrifying” thing since Trump’s election has been this unending series of articles telling us that we have a positive duty to rally around Muslims, give them moral and other kinds of support, lest they feel any anxiety about their position in American society, for that would never do. And if non-Muslims for some reason feel anxiety? Well, they have it coming to them.

The “terrified” Arsalan Iftikhar, having been hounded into appearing in *The Washington Post* (try getting into *The Washington Post* if you are the least detectable bit unsympathetic to Islam and its adherents) offers a piece that is instructive, though not in the way that he imagines.

Here’s his first sentence:

In the seismic aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, there is only silver lining [sic] for millions of women, African Americans, Hispanics, people with disabilities and 7 million American Muslims like me. Now, every minority demographic group in the United States must now feel a sense of collective urgency to mobilize together for the future of our multicultural society based on what we witnessed during this presidential election.

The first thing to notice is that he starts his piece with a Big Lie casually tossed off. He inflates – more than doubles – the number of Muslims in the United States, from the 3.3 million in the latest Pew Report to “7 million American Muslims like me.” Iftikhar doesn’t justify this number, doesn’t explain why it should be accepted instead of the numbers in the Pew Report. Where did he get this figure of 7 million Muslims? He plucked it from the air, he made it up. He

wants you to believe that there are more than twice as many Muslims in this country than any reputable compiler of statistics has suggested; by next year, you may see Iftikhar suggest, with the same casual authority, a figure of 7.5 or even 8 million Muslims. Muslim numbers must be inflated; the more numerous they are, the more politically powerful they will be. Of course, at the same time, Muslims are being depicted as a persecuted and powerless minority. Iftikhar, like so many Defenders of the Faith, wants it both ways.

In the same first paragraph, Iftikhar attempts to convince us that there is a commonality of interest between Muslims and every other group whom he thinks Trump has insulted. So he wants “millions of women, African Americans, Hispanics, people with disabilities” to make common cause with “Muslims like me.”

But a moment's thought would make any fair-minded person realize that it is bizarre to think that men who adhere to the relentlessly misogynistic faith of Islam and “millions of women” can “make common cause.” Why do I call it “relentlessly misogynistic”? According to the Sharia, Muslim women can inherit half as much as men (Qur'an 4:11); their testimony is worth half that of a man (2:282); polygamy is licit (Muhammad, the Perfect Man, allowed himself twelve or fourteen wives, depending on whether or not one sex slave is counted as a wife) and so are female slaves, “those whom your right hand possesses”; a Muslim man is allowed to beat his disobedient wife, though “lightly”; a Muslim man need only pronounce the triple-*talaq* to divorce his wife; and women are described in the Qur'an as inferior to men, for “the men are a degree above them” (2:228); and in the Sahih Bukhari (6:301) “[Muhammad] said, ‘Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man? They replied in the affirmative. He said, ‘**This [is because of] the deficiency in her intelligence.**’”

And why should those lumped together as “Latinos” – almost all of them Christians – decide to make “common cause” with

Muslims, who regard themselves as the “best of peoples” and Christians and Jews as the “vilest of creatures”? Hasn’t the unending spectacle of Christians being attacked and murdered in Pakistan and Afghanistan, in Egypt and Nigeria, in Iraq and Syria, in Libya and Algeria, in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, in Bangladesh and Kosovo, and Ethiopia and the Sudan, done enough to dissuade Latinos from being manipulated into supporting Muslims on the basis of a factitious commonality of interests? Any “Latino” – a word one uses with many reservations – need spend only a few minutes scrolling through [the record of Muslim attacks on Christians in recent years](#), in several dozen countries all over the world, to see what’s so sinister about Iftikhar’s proposed alliance. And what contempt he must have for those whom he thinks will forever remain unaware of that record.

As for African-Americans, what common cause should they make with Muslims when black African Christians are being kidnapped and killed by Boko Haram in Nigeria, as they had previously been killed before the days of Boko Haram, since the late 1960s, with more than a million massacred in the “jihad” (the word used by Colonel Ojukwu in the Ahiara Declaration to describe the Muslim war on Christians), that is, the Biafra War of 1967-69? What common cause should African-Americans make with those Muslim Arabs who raped, looted, and murdered their way through the villages of black African Christians in the southern Sudan, for more than 20 years, until international pressure finally led to the creation of a separate Republic of Southern Sudan? Will African-Americans forget that Nasser sent Egyptian Migs to bomb Nigerian Christian villages? And will they overlook Darfur, where Muslim Arab raiders, the Janjaweed, seized property from black Africans, and killed them by the tens of thousands, even if they were fellow Muslims, because they were black Africans and not Arabs? Arsalan Iftikhar chooses not to recognize that not only are Muslims “the best of peoples” and Unbelievers the “vilest of creatures” but that within Islam, Arabs are seen as

superior to non-Arabs; this “universalist” faith actually is a vehicle for Arab supremacism. Hence the attacks of Muslim Arabs on Muslim blacks in Darfur. The attempt of Muslims, including Arsalan Iftikhar, to presume that others should be their natural allies overlooks the ideology of Islam, where Muslims are the “best of peoples” and Arab Muslims the best kind of Muslim.

Iftikhar again:

In addition to his blatant [misogyny](#) and [anti-immigrant xenophobia](#) during his presidential campaign, we have also seen Donald Trump’s political campaign successfully [normalize Islamophobia](#) as part of the current national Republican Party platform as it exists today.

As to “blatant misogyny,” please see above the discussion of how women are regarded and treated in Islam, and compare that institutionalized misogyny, which is fixed forever in the Qur’an and Hadith, with an unseemly handful of sentences expressing individual bad taste and locker-room bragging.

Has Trump exhibited “anti-immigrant xenophobia”? Has he expressed hatred of foreigners? He has not. Or opposition to legal immigrants? He has not. Again and again he has distinguished illegal immigrants from legal ones, has merely maintained that he thinks the laws concerning immigration deserve to be obeyed, that every country has a right to decide whom it wants to allow in (immigration is not, *pace* Pope Francis, a right but a privilege) and to bar or expel those who refuse to observe the laws put in place to regulate immigration.

As for Arsalan Iftikhar’s predictable charge of “Islamophobia,” the correct response to this remains always the same: the word “Islamophobia” properly describes the *irrational* fear (and hatred) of Islam. There is plenty of evidence – in the Qur’an and Hadith, in the history of Muslim

conquest over the past 1400 years of many non-Muslim lands and the subsequent subjugation of many non-Muslim peoples, and in the observable behavior of Muslims toward non-Muslims all over the world today – that fear (and hatred) of Islam is not irrational for well-informed Unbelievers to feel. All this evidence is being downplayed or ignored in the Western world by the political and media elites who keep insisting that there is nothing about Islam to worry about, and in the countries of the West, political and media elites have convinced themselves that whatever problem may arise is merely a justified Muslim response to, and resentment of, how they are treated in the West, and the more understanding and welcoming we Unbelievers are, the more all manner of things shall be well. It's up to us, not to Muslims, to solve whatever problems arise. And no one asks the simple question: Why? Why should the Western world have to accommodate Muslim demands, change its laws and customs in order, it is forlornly hoped, to better "integrate" Muslims?

The possibility that there are problems with a large-scale Muslim presence not just in "Trump's America" but in Hollande's France, and Merkel's Germany, and May's United Kingdom, and that those problems are not susceptible of solution, given that they have their origin in the Qur'an, which is regarded by Muslims as immutable, and which clearly teaches permanent hostility toward all non-Muslims, is too disturbing for many non-Muslims to allow themselves to acknowledge. So they don't, and instead allow the arsalan-iftikhars to peddle their taqiyya wares of victimization without fear of refutation.

Here's what Iftikhar reports as an example of what he considers a nasty little response by Trump:

In a rare display of journalistic pushback, after Trump once confirmed to reporters that he would set up a database for Muslim Americans, an NBC News reporter asked him point-blank in response:

“Is there a difference between requiring Muslims to register and Jews in Nazi Germany?”

“You tell me,” Trump replied while walking away.

Iftikhar thinks the meaning of this exchange is obvious: Trump, embarrassed by the reporter’s piercing question, which pointed up a supposed similarity between Trump’s plan for having a database for Muslims, and the registration of Jews in Nazi Germany, did not know how to reply, and could do no better than “you tell me” and – presumably mortified at having of the similarity of his plan and that of the Nazis pointed out – then walked away.

I read this exchange quite differently. I read it as Trump being so disgusted by the comparison that he did not think it deserved anything more than being turned back against its asker. His “you tell me” meant “you tell me what similarity could there possibly be between the ‘database’ that might be set up to identify those Muslims most likely to engage in terrorist attacks and the registration the Nazis required of Jews in order to better round them up to be killed.” What kind of idiocy must someone possess to suggest that proposals for keeping track of Muslims in the West by means of “databases” (already being used by the anti-terrorist police in Europe), which presumably would contain such obviously relevant information such as whether the subject logs onto Islamic websites, or has travelled to IS-held parts of Syria, Iraq, or Yemen, or spent a lot of time at a mosque that is known for the dangerous views of its imam, given that there have been nearly 30,000 terrorist attacks by Muslims around the world since 9/11/2001, have *anything* in common with the Nazis forcing entirely inoffensive Jews, who were no threat to anybody, to register with German authorities so that they could be more easily seized and, as ultimately happened, murdered? A database designed to prevent mass murder is very different from a database intended to facilitate mass murder.

Far from being, as Arsalan Iftikhar thinks, horrific, Trump's answer was one of his finest moments, because, he knew, only one decent reply was possible: "You tell me." What Arsalan Iftikhar describes as admirable "journalistic pushback" was, in fact, an example of moral myopia. I'm not sure there's a prescription strong enough to correct that level of impairment.

Meanwhile, we can all wait for the Reign of Trump Terror to begin, with the knocks at midnight, and the sound of mechanized tumbrils rolling, and for America to become – why, it's halfway there already, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, *mein damen und herren* – the new Nazi Germany, and Muslims will be, why, according to them they already are, the new Jews, and what will we tell our children we did in this time of testing? Did we stand with the brave truth-teller Arsalan Iftikhar or with the likes of Donald Trump?

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