

Hoekstra, Hoekstra, Read All About It

by Hugh Fitzgerald



By now we have all heard about Peter Hoekstra, the new American ambassador to the Netherlands, who was repeatedly questioned by Dutch journalists on January 10 about a statement he had made in 2015: “There are cars being burned. There are politicians that are being burned,” he said then, at a conference hosted by a conservative group. “And yes, there are no-go zones in the Netherlands.”

He was immediately attacked for these remarks, and when asked – repeatedly – to name a no-go zone in the Netherlands, failed to offer any answer.

When the journalists began to ask Hoekstra about his remark that “politicians are being burned,” he again failed to

answer.

At that point, Roel Geeraedts, one of the journalists present, asked Hoekstra about a John Adams quote – Adams was America’s first ambassador to Holland – that was mounted over a fireplace right behind the new ambassador.

“Hoekstra said he had read the quote, which expresses Adams’s hope that only ‘honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.’”

“If you’re truly an honest and wise man, could you please take back the remark about burned politicians or name the politician that was burned in the Netherlands?” Geeraedts asked.

“An uncomfortable silence followed the question.”

Several more times other journalists repeated the question.

Still no answer was forthcoming.

“Thank you,” Hoekstra said, and the meeting ended.

It had been a disastrous performance, no doubt.

Hoekstra has [since apologized](#).

“On Friday [January 12] Mr. Hoekstra finally admitted to Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf that he had made the remarks, to a right wing gathering in the US, and said he was “shocked” by them.

“That was a wrong statement. That was just wrong,” Mr Hoekstra said, adding that “clearly that was an inaccurate statement.” [He was speaking about his “no-go zones” remarks.]

“That one shocked me personally ... because while you know there have been other issues in other countries in Europe, you know that has never been the circumstances here,” he

said.

“I mixed up countries. I was wrong. I can’t recall how that could happen. I know: I was wrong,”

But his apology was not right, either, as it focused on his “no-go zone” comment, for which there is some support, and not on the statement about the “burning” of politicians, for which there is none. Not everything Hoekstra said could be dismissed out of hand, although – piling confusion on confusion – a chastened Hoekstra appeared all too willing to do so.

Hoekstra had originally mentioned the “burning of cars” by Muslim vandals. No one had asked him about that, possibly because those journalists knew full well that after France and Sweden, the [Netherlands has the highest number of car-burnings by Muslims](#).

As for “No-Go zones” in the Netherlands, Hoekstra has been unable to identify them by name, but that does not mean they do not exist, as he now says. Despite his current claim, there is evidence that such zones exist in the Netherlands, though not nearly as widespread as in France and Sweden and Germany. Apparently the Dutch government agrees with what Hoekstra originally said, and not with the dismissive journalists, nor with his subsequent abject apology, for earlier this year it [released a list of 40 “no-go” zones](#), mostly Islamic.

The Kolenkit area in Amsterdam is the number one Muslim “problem district” in the country. The next three districts are in Rotterdam – Pendrecht, het Oude Noorden and Bloemhof. The Ondiep district in Utrecht is in the fifth position, followed by Rivierenwijk (Deventer), Spangen (Rotterdam), Oude Westen (Rotterdam), Heechterp/ Schieringen (Leeuwarden) and Noord-Oost (Maastricht).

These are places where at least some of the following can be

found: riots on a regular basis, extremely high crime rates, including street robberies, sexual assaults, attacks on businesses owned by non-Muslims, places where women feel it dangerous to walk alone, Jews and Christians may feel the need to hide their crosses or kippas, homosexuals may be attacked, DHL van drivers are reluctant to enter, vandalism of all kinds is rampant, including shop windows broken, trash cans overturned, the burning of cars for "fun," especially on national holidays, firemen find they need police protection, and the police themselves are not welcomed, but treated as an occupying force.

It is too bad that Ambassador Hoekstra, during his encounter with the journalists, did not have at hand that Dutch government list of problem neighborhoods, and it's too bad, in his subsequent apology, that he so sweepingly dismissed the possibility of any no-go zones in the Netherlands. Perhaps he could issue a more detailed and considered report. He might refer to that Dutch government list, but also raise the issue of when what is called a "problem" neighborhood become a no-go zone. Who decides what is a "no-go" neighborhood? The government, which in so many countries, including the Netherlands, appears to have a stake in minimizing fears of Muslims, and in under-reporting Muslim crime and hostility to non-Muslims? Or should we rely on reports by women, Jews, Christians, homosexuals, and others who have been made fearful? As part of his apology, Hoekstra could have said that he had wrongly conflated several European countries with no-go zones, instead of keeping them separate in his mind, and thus had confused the Netherlands with [France](#), with [Germany](#), and [Sweden](#). which, he can add, "all of which have no-go zones."

He ought to repeat that there needs to be a discussion over just how much mayhem, rioting, crime, attacks on non-Muslims, hostility to the police or firemen, is required for any locale to be considered a "no-go" zone. "Surely no one can object," he can disingenuously continue, "to having such a discussion."

And whatever else it does, such a public discussion will force even the pollyannas to admit that there is mayhem, rioting, increased crime, and every kind of attack on, or intimidation of, non-Muslims, in Muslim neighborhoods – and that public admission is itself of value.

As to his original remark made about the “burning” of politicians, Hoekstra should certainly have expressed his regrets, and then, instead of that sweeping mea maxima culpa he provided, he should have offered an explanation for his mistake. He could have explained that when he made his original comments, he had had in mind the murders of the politician Pim Fortuyn, and the political activist Theo van Gogh, for being “anti-Muslim,” that he had retained the image of the Jordanian pilot burned alive by ISIS earlier that same year (2015), and had gotten things confused, for which he apologizes. He could have corrected his statement thus: “Political figures in the Netherlands have been threatened, and some have been murdered, for being outspoken in their criticism of Islam. I wanted to express my anguish at this but having been struck earlier that year [2015] by the burning to death of Captain Muath Al-Kasasbeh, I misattributed their deaths to ‘burning,’ which was, of course, both incorrect and indefensible, and for that I am sorry.”

That makes sense. For surely the most important part of Hoekstra’s remark was not how those political figures were murdered, but that they were murdered at all for merely expressing their views on Islam.

To sum up so far: yes, in the Netherlands each year there are about two thousand cars burned by Muslims, the most in Europe after France and Sweden; yes, there are places in the Netherlands, according to a report of the Dutch government itself, that could be considered No-Go Zones; no, there have been no political figures in the Netherlands who were “burned” to death, but several who were murdered for their criticism of Islam – and surely that is what matters most.

That is what Hoekstra's apology should have included.

Finally, he can refer to that lapidary statement by John Adams, that was pointed out to Ambassador Hoekstra by one of the Dutch reporters, which was clearly meant to serve as a reproach, the wish that "honest and wise men ever rule under this roof."

Hoekstra might have used that as justification for ending his own "apology" thus:

"I was grateful to have my attention directed by Mr. Roel Geeraedts to the quote from John Adams carved over the fireplace in the American embassy. Not everyone is aware that his son, John Quincy Adams, had an even more extensive connection to the Netherlands. He accompanied his father in diplomatic missions to the Hague between 1780 and 1782. He even studied at Leiden University. And he served as the U.S. Minister to the Netherlands from 1793 to 1796, having been appointed by George Washington. So John Quincy Adams had a close connection to the Netherlands. Deeply knowledgeable in history, he is best known for what he did, long after he was president, in the Amistad case. A firm abolitionist, Adams successfully argued in 1841 before the Supreme Court for freeing the black slaves who had killed the captain of the Amistad, the slave ship on which they were being transported, and then had tried, but failed, to have it set sail for Africa. It was a great victory by 'Old Man Eloquent' for the anti-slavery movement. All his life John Quincy Adams was a stout defender of liberty and human rights, an early advocate for abolitionism, an enemy of every kind of oppression. He was also our most learned president; he knew the 1,200-year history of Islamic conquest and subjugation of non-Muslims. The horror at injustice and oppression that he felt for the slaves in the Amistad case can be seen, too, in his "Essay on Turks," which includes his studied judgment of Islam. Some may, in this squeamish age, find that essay shocking in its forthrightness, and would no doubt wish to prevent his words

from becoming known, would even block them if they could. Others, however, may find his views salutary and bracing.

“Here is an excerpt, so that you may judge for yourselves:

“In the seventh century of the Christian era, a wandering Arab [i.e., Mohammed] of the lineage of Hagar, the Egyptian, combining the powers of transcendent genius, with the preternatural energy of a fanatic, and the fraudulent spirit of an impostor, proclaimed himself as a messenger from Heaven, and spread desolation and delusion over an extensive portion of the earth. Adopting from the sublime conception of the Mosaic law, the doctrine of one omnipotent God; he connected indissolubly with it, the audacious falsehood, that he was himself his prophet and apostle. Adopting from the new Revelation of Jesus, the faith and hope of immortal life, and of future retribution, he humbled it to the dust, by adapting all the rewards and sanctions of his religion to the gratification of the sexual passion.”

“He poisoned the sources of human felicity at the fountain, by degrading the condition of the female sex, and the allowance of polygamy; and he declared undistinguishing and exterminating war, as a part of his religion, against all the rest of mankind. THE ESSENCE OF HIS DOCTRINE WAS VIOLENCE AND LUST: TO EXALT THE BRUTAL OVER THE SPIRITUAL PART OF HUMAN NATURE.” [capitals in original].

“Between these two religions, thus contrasted in their characters, a war of twelve hundred years has already raged. That war is yet flagrant; nor can it cease but by the extinction of that imposture, which has been permitted by Providence to prolong the degeneracy of man. While the merciless and dissolute dogmas of the false prophet shall furnish motives to human action, there can never be peace upon earth, and good will towards men. The hand of Ishmael will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him. It is, indeed, amongst the mysterious dealings of God, that this

delusion should have been suffered for so many ages, and during so many generations of human kind, to prevail over the doctrines of the meek and peaceful and benevolent Jesus..."

"The precept of the koran is, perpetual war against all who deny, that Mahomet is the prophet of God. The vanquished may purchase their lives, by the payment of tribute; the victorious may be appeased by a false and delusive promise of peace; and the faithful follower of the prophet, may submit to the imperious necessities of defeat: but the command to propagate the Moslem creed by the sword is always obligatory, when it can be made effective. The commands of the prophet may be performed alike, by fraud, or by force."

Hoekstra could have concluded thus:

"Yes, I know people seldom express their views in such strong terms anymore. But was John Quincy Adams, the celebrated defender of black slaves, wrong in his description of Islam? Did he grasp its essence, or was he wide of the mark? That, surely, needs to be discussed, and not just here in the Netherlands, but all over the Western world."

"Thank you."

A final suggestion:

There is one person, an American citizen, an articulate defender of the United States, fluent in Dutch as well as English, who might have been appointed as the American ambassador to The Netherlands, and who can still be appointed, should Ambassador Hoekstra be relieved of his duties. That person is Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

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