



# Rising anti-Muslim sentiment in *USA* America

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A news item quotes Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Mr Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, for having taken up with the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, during talks in Washington DC the matter of Muslim nations being upset with the United States for alleged shabby treatment of Muslim tourists and students as well as the Muslim citizens of America as Washington stepped up anti-terror measures. Mr Kasuri's concern and sincere effort to talk it over is appreciated.

However, I wonder if any advocacy would work with US administration or alternatively some retaliatory measures, just for the sake of argument, could be taken to let Americans face the same kind of humiliation when they visit Muslim states.

The rising anti-Muslim sentiment in the US is an expression of deliberate policy of Bush administration and its actors, most of whom also happen to be Jews. Having found the tragedy of 9/11 an expedient pretext to place a demonised political Islam at the centre of a hegemonic political discourse. This observation of a sociological study further points out that goal of the neo-conservatives is to rationalise the use of unrivaled US military might to conquer and affect regime changes in Muslim countries. Another of their important goals is to build up support for the state of Israel to continue its killings and wholesale exodus of Palestinians from their homeland.

Moreover, the prejudice against Muslims and Islam is not typical of America. The West, particularly the British media and the government follows deliberate policy that reflects clear bias against Muslims, may they be from Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan or those who are citizens of the United Kingdom. The British prejudice is clearly visible in case of Pakistan's readmission into the fold of the Commonwealth. President Musharraf said the Commonwealth

mocratisation and promoting pro-American dictatorial regimes in Asia, Africa and South America. And look at what they have done in the Middle East (Iraq, Afghanistan) and now aiming their war machinery on other convenient and easy targets.

The racist and theologically based fundamentalist policies of the United States are worst than the colonialism of the past. It is very sad that Bush found active support for his militarism, which killed innocent people in Afghanistan and Iraq for the crime they never committed. It is now obvious that the aim was never to catch Osama or to remove Saddam. The Americans were to bring into submission strategically located Muslim states by threats of hunting down the "evil doers". That they have done and September 11 was the perfect pretext for an endless war against the new found enemy in and outside America.

Inside America the media and the establishment is building on fear. As a consequence there has been unprecedented assault on civil liberties. There is nothing now that Americans can be proud of. With the establishment of a police state in America the political dissent has been silenced. Democratic values are no more functional and dictatorship of the few is firmly established. War is their business like nobody's business. For the United States war is an industry and profitable. In such an environment carrying out an honest struggle for democracy and social justice becomes difficult if not impossible.

As the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross has said, "to tackle violations of international humanitarian law committed in armed conflicts, simply paying lip service to the protection of human life and dignity is not enough". It is disgusting to use the term "collateral damage" for such violations.

The concern about negative conse-

should be proud of having a country like Pakistan into its fold and we will not accept any conditionality.

Majority of the people in Pakistan are of the view that Pakistan has done more than what it should have done to satisfy the United States and the UK in the context of war against terror. But it seems that more you do the more you come under pressure.

Writing on the world of Islam today, the American authors mostly Jewish fundamentalist ideologues have projected a thesis whereby they assign a role to United States as the predestined repository of God. With a mission to strike down 'evil' their new found enemy, after the demise of communism and the break up of the Soviet Union. This new found enemy in their own language is the angry, protesting Muslim the world over. This gives rise to ideological and political conflicts turning this world into most dangerous place.

It is no secret that Americans have used for their own ends the Islamic formations, political parties and groups in Islamic countries; which often gave them good hit. But never allowed them to gain control over the post-colonial native regimes. The so-called Islamic revolutions were both sponsored and crushed by agents of America and the West. 'Might is right' seems to be the New World order. It is tolerant of anything but Muslims and Islamic ideology.

Pakistan could come under pressure, as Mr Kasuri has put it, for providing active support to the United States in its war against terrorism. A term which is subjective and only serves the ulterior motives of a superpower which is highly intolerant and ready to destroy those who allow themselves to be entangled in the hegemonic discourses emanating from the only superpower on earth and its state intellectuals. But shall we remain silent on the issue of border incursions and let the American troops intrude in our territory from Afghanistan or shall we be simply registering our protest on this and other issues such as the recent United States bid to recruit men in Pakistan for Iraq. Shall we allow any alien to come to this country and secretly engage in any type of activity, recruitment or sabotage etc.

Americans are rationally irrational and irrationally rational. They care only for their own agenda. So, there is perhaps something more than a friendly advice that Mr Kasuri needs to communicate to Mr Powell. The United States has to put its own human rights record in order before it could point a finger on others, specially, the poor, less developed countries where the primary concern of the state is to provide for peoples basic needs rather than addressing higher ideals like democracy. Democracy and human rights are tools, which Americans have often misused, subverting the process of de-

quences of American policies is well placed. However, rather than worrying about what the United States is doing it would be better if we in Pakistan sincerely work to put our own house in order and to show unity and harmony among the nation. Efforts that Pakistan is already making at international forums for world peace and development may be further strengthened and consolidated. Pakistan stands for tolerance and moderation. Since extremism is a barrier to development the pace of the process of moderation should be accelerated to speed up the process of socio-economic development and to address the problems of poverty, illiteracy, health and moral degeneration.

Most conflicts are caused due to communication problems and style of the communicator. Understanding behaviours is basic to avoiding perceptual biases and interpreting 'reality' and thus managing impression. Since competence is the most important aspect of impression management it has implications for political as well as administrative leadership and professionals who manage the economy and the society. It is rather unfortunate that international relations and decision processes are still guided by ideological and perceptual biases and preconceived ideas.

If tension in international relations were to be minimised or contained scientific approach would be essential to understand and manage behaviours and to ascertain the roots of terrorism and remedy that works to address the crisis.

Mother of all conflicts is the political conflict. The same must be resolved if we wish to see this world happier and a place worth living. I am sure the new Indian administration will view this positively with reference to Kashmir.

The content of this message has significance for the world community, especially those who are interested in people's welfare and peace. This is equally significant for the American administration if they wish to send out positive signals to the people around the world on the basis of feed back.

Finally, Mr Kasuri's point about possible pressures on Pakistan for siding with the United States in its war on terror. Pressures are already there. Bomb blasts in Pakistan and especially the abortive attempts on the life of President Musharraf may be an expression of anti-Americanism as well as an indication to him that war on terror is not our war. It may be "unholy" war or a "crusade". But it is not our war. So, we better be out of it instead of confronting more hardship and misery. Why should our people suffer because of America. Who may or may not be behind the bomb blasts is a separate issue. Those responsible for killing of innocent citizens must, in any case, be traced and punished. We must keep Pakistan's interest in view.