

## Headlines:

- **France: Burkini-Wearing Mother told to Pay Pool Cleaning Fees**
- **Trump Administration considers Privatising War in Afghanistan**
- **Pakistan Dismisses US Assertions Fighting Terrorism 'Selectively'**

## Details:

### France: Burkini-Wearing Mother told to Pay Pool Cleaning Fees

A woman who wore a burkini to swim in a communal pool has reportedly been told to pay a considerable fine to fund cleaning costs at the facility. The woman, named as Fadila, decided to go for a dip at the private residence renting with her family near Marseille in the south of France. But after she entered the water a member of staff allegedly told everyone else to leave the pool. The owner later called her husband and asked him to stop her from swimming for the remainder of their stay. He is also alleged to have told the couple that they must foot the €490 (£440) bill for the pool being emptied and cleaned and pay damages because it was out of use for two days. The building's syndicate also filed a report saying a woman wearing a burqa had entered the pool on 21 July and when someone asked her to get out she had refused. "I was stunned because no one stopped me or said anything at all," Fadila told the charity United Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF). "I was disappointed, shocked, wounded by the fact that someone could be so hypocritical and wicked because of a burkini." The couple refused to pay the bill, but the owner allegedly removed the fine from their account without producing an invoice. CCIF said Fadila's burkini could not have caused a hygiene issue as the swimsuits are specifically adapted for swimming. Last summer, fines were imposed on women wearing burkinis in the southern French town of Cannes. France's highest administrative court later ruled that "burkini bans" being enforced on the country's beaches were illegal and a violation of fundamental liberties. This week, two British women said they were left humiliated after being told to leave a private swimming pool in Portugal because they were both wearing burkinis. [Source: Independent]

**The West has left no stone unturned in their efforts to defame Islam and make life difficult for Muslims living amongst them. What is even more hypocritical is that France is the harbinger of freedom and yet it openly denies those freedoms to Muslims. Such ideological consistencies illustrate how Europe is fast becoming bankrupt of ideas in its fight against Islam and has to resort to force to control the behaviour of Muslims.**

### Trump Administration Considers Privatising War in Afghanistan

Donald Trump's administration is said to be considering radically changing the way it conducts war in Afghanistan, and may move away from the US military running the show in favour of laying that responsibility on private contractors. The unprecedented proposal would put 5,500 private contractors in charge of advising the Afghan military in the 16-year-old war that Mr Trump has inherited from his two predecessors. Most of those contractors would be former Special Operations troops, though their private contractor status would likely mean they are not bound by the same rules of engagement as the US military. There are an estimated 8,400 US soldiers currently in Afghanistan. Erik Prince, the founder and former CEO of private contracting company Blackwater USA, has put forward the plan. Speaking to USA Today, he said he had met frequently with administration officials to discuss his plan. However, with misgivings by Mr Trump's National Security Adviser H R McMaster and Defence Secretary James Mattis it is unclear whether there would be a way forward for such a plan, despite Mr Trump's frustration at the lack of progress in the country. At least one senior official, chief strategist Steve Bannon is said to be open to the use of private contractors. Contractors working for Blackwater were involved in a deadly incident during the Iraq War, when contractors open-fired in Baghdad's Nisour Square while escorting a US convoy in 2007, killing or injuring at least 31 Iraqi civilians. Those events led the State Department to revoke the company's license to operate in the country. One of the contractors recently had a murder charge overturned and a new trial ordered over the incident, while three others who had been handed 30-year prison terms after being convicted of

voluntary manslaughter will be re-sentenced after their prison terms were voided. Defence lawyers argued the convoy was under fire from insurgents, a claim prosecutors denied. But - in addition to accountability concerns posed by giving broad agency to non-military, private contractors to conduct war - such a revised strategy in Afghanistan could send the wrong message in Afghanistan, Vanda Felbab-Brown, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, told The Independent. International troops have been involved in Afghanistan for 16 years, following an invasion in October 2001. However, over the past year the Taliban have made gains and violent attacks have increased in a number of areas - leaving few signs of the stability the US craves. It would be a "political signal to Afghanistan... including the Taliban, that the United States is really not willing to stick it out," Ms Felbab-Brown said of the plan over privatisation. "So, I think the will of the Taliban will be strengthened and the will of those who resist the Taliban will be weakened." Mr Prince — whose sister is Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos — has argued that the US should cede control of the fight in Afghanistan to private contractors because, as the efforts there lack leadership. The efforts aren't working, he says, and the Pentagon is spending a lot of money to do it. His plan is to establish a "viceroy" in Afghanistan that would correspond with American troops there, and has said that the basic set up should be modelled after the British East India Company. He says that the plan costs a fraction of American military involvement, and could work around what the Department of Defence. Private contractors could also stay long-term without the political risks associated with having troops on the ground. [Source: The Independent].

**Unable to win the war in Afghanistan, the US is now seeking to hire mercenaries to fight its war in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Muslim world. Clearly, this sends the message that the US has had enough and now wants to exit the war by handing it over to Blackwater mercenaries.**

### **Pakistan Dismisses US Assertions Fighting Terrorism 'Selectively'**

Pakistan has dismissed latest U.S. assertions it is "selectively" fighting terrorist groups or allowing insurgents to use Pakistani soil for plotting attacks against Afghanistan. U.S. National Security Adviser McMaster told an American news station Saturday that the Trump administration wants regional countries, particularly Pakistan to stop providing "safe haven and support bases" to the Taliban and Haqqani Network. "Pakistan has taken action against all the terrorist elements without discrimination. We have never allowed nor will anybody ever be allowed to use Pakistan's soil against any other country," Foreign Ministry spokesman Nafees Zakaria told VOA when asked for his comments on McMaster's assertions. The spokesman went on to say that Pakistan and the United States have been cooperating in counterterrorism such issues came under discussion when the acting American envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan visited Islamabad last week. "We have clarity in this regard, having suffered unparalleled loss of lives of tens of thousands of our citizens and billions of dollars to Pakistan's economy that we have to eradicate the menace completely and we shall continue to fight the terrorists, irrespective," Zakaria said. Afghan and U.S. officials have long alleged that Pakistani security forces are fighting anti-state militant groups on their soil but not moving against insurgents plotting cross-border attacks. McMaster in his Saturday's interview reiterated those concerns. "This is, of course, you know, a very paradoxical situation, right, where Pakistan is taking great losses. They have fought very hard against these groups, but they've done so really only selectively," he said. President Trump's administration has not yet announced details of its new Afghan strategy and McMaster also declined to discuss any details, though he asserted the president has taken some important decisions. The strategy is reportedly also exploring a new approach towards Pakistan that could see more U.S. pressure to address the issue of militant safe havens, expanding drone strikes, reducing aid to Islamabad and downgrading Pakistan's status as a major non-NATO ally. [Source: Voice of America]

**Since 2001, the Pakistani military brass has put its faith in joining America's war on terrorism in return for money and NATO status. 16 years on and as predicted by many Pakistanis the US is about to turn on Pakistan and prosecute the war inside the country. Rather than sever ties, the Pakistani military leadership is still holding out hope that the new US strategy will continue to pay their blood wages and safeguard Pakistan's territorial integrity. This delusion is endangering the security of the country and brings closer US plans to dismember Pakistan.**