

Headlines:

- **More Latinos are Becoming Muslims: 'Islam is not as foreign as you think'**
- **Pakistan Opposition Warns Over Central Bank Governor Appointment**
- **China's War on Islam**

Details:

More Latinos are Becoming Muslims: 'Islam is not as foreign as you think'

The group, which formed in 2001 to provide Qurans, pamphlets, and videos to people who wanted to learn about the religion in their native language, has seen 160 Spanish-speakers convert in the Houston area in the last three years. And its visit to Philadelphia coincided with new statistics released from the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Social Policy and Understanding that show Hispanics are the fastest-growing group in the nation to embrace Islam. In 2009, only 1 percent of Muslims identified as Hispanic, the institute said. By 2018, it was 7 percent, according to its annual report, "American Muslim Poll: Predicting and Preventing Islamophobia." There are 250,000 Latino Muslims in the United States, according to Islam in Spanish. "That's a 700 percent growth in less than 10 years, and no other group has grown at this rate," Dalia Mogahed, the institute's director of research, wrote in an email. Among other findings in the survey: Hispanics and Jews hold the most favorable views toward Muslims, while white evangelicals hold the least favorable. Growth in Islam is only partially due to conversion, she said, but it's also due to a high birthrate among Muslims. "But the reasons people who convert give as to why they are attracted to Islam are that Islam emphasizes a personal and direct connection with God," she wrote, "without the interference of an institution or clergy." Other reasons that Latinos have converted to Islam are varied: from the hip-hop culture of the 1990s when teenagers wore Malcolm X hats and read about the civil rights leader, to spiritual searches for a religion that rings true to them, to a resurgence in Latinos exploring their Andalusian roots, when Muslims governed Spain for 700 years until 1492. "I tell people that Islam is not as foreign as you think," said Imam Isa Parada, leader of a Houston mosque where sermons are in Spanish. [Source: Phily.com].

Despite Trump's Islamophobic rants and his efforts to ban Muslims from entering America, Islam continues to grow across all sections of American communities. Islam's rise amongst Latinos is familiar to Islam's rise amongst America's black and white communities. No doubt, Islam will again pose a challenge to Trump's attempts to run for a second term. However, this time the domestic challenge of Islam could upset the politics at home.

Pakistan Opposition Warns Over Central Bank Governor Appointment

Pakistan's opposition accused Imran Khan's government of turning the country into "a colony of the IMF" as it threatened to fight the appointment of a former fund official as central bank governor. Reza Baqir was named as head the central bank on Saturday, part of sweeping changes made by Mr Khan to Pakistan's economic leadership as the government tries to stitch together terms for an IMF loan and contain a debt payment crisis. Mr Baqir, who last served as the IMF's senior representative in Egypt, replaced Tariq Bajwa, who was removed as central bank governor on Friday amid a row over how Pakistan should manage the rupee. The prime minister also on Friday replaced the head of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the main tax collection agency, after it failed to meet tax collection targets during the first three quarters of the financial year to June. Pakistani government officials have told the FT that the IMF wants Pakistan to float the rupee, which is now tied mainly to the US dollar. Some government officials fear this will further devalue the currency, which has weakened by around 34 per cent against the dollar since late 2017. On Sunday Pakistan's main opposition political party, the PML-N or Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz said it planned a series of protests in parliament over economic

policies. “Imran Khan’s government has turned Pakistan into a colony of the IMF,” Ahsan Iqbal, general secretary of the PML-N told the FT. “If this government has imposed an IMF man on the central bank then it is clear they have succumbed to IMF policies.” Last month, Mr Khan replaced Asad Umar, the finance minister, over his failure to reach an agreement with the IMF after negotiations over several months. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, a former World Bank official who has served as minister under two previous Pakistani governments, was appointed as adviser on finance and head of the finance ministry. Leaders of Mr Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party played down the opposition’s threat. A minister in Mr Khan’s cabinet on Sunday told the FT that with the fasting month of Ramadan due to begin in Pakistan on Monday or Tuesday, “people will not come out on the streets”. “Already, people have seen the true face of the opposition and they [opposition] have no popular following. They destroyed Pakistan’s economy during their tenure and now we are forced to head to the IMF for rescue,” the minister said. [Source: Financial Times (FT)]

Pakistan’s economy has been subservient to foreign powers, especially IMF since the 1980s Both the government, and the opposition have been in one way or another collaborators with the IMF and have eroded the country’s economic sovereignty.

China’s War on Islam

According to research by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, there are 28 such massive detention camps in Xinjiang, most built within just the last several years. In them is believed to be up to one million ethnic Uighurs, a Turkic-speaking minority in China that is overwhelmingly Muslim. After months of denying the rumors, Chinese government officials confirmed that the camps exist, asserting that they are part of a broader policy to ‘de-radicalize’ Uighur terrorists and their sympathizers. In reality, Beijing is waging a war on Islam, using paramilitary and policy power, along with new laws, to suppress Islam and turn its adherents into secularized Chinese citizens. Islam came to China in the 7th century along with Silk Road trade. It coexisted largely peacefully with Chinese authority and other religions, yet the shifting borders of China’s far west meant that Chinese control over Muslim majority lands waxed and waned with different dynasties. With the expansion of the Qing dynasty into today’s Xinjiang, official repression of the Uighurs and of Islam became more regular, and an unstable state of affairs continued after the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949 and Xinjiang was established as one of several ethnic-majority autonomous regions. Of the province’s 23 million people, the Uighurs comprised approximately 11 million. Another 10 million Muslim Hui, who have assimilated more into Chinese society, also live largely in the western and northern provinces of China. Over the past decade, the repression of Islam has dramatically increased. In Beijing’s telling, the state is simply reacting to Islamic terrorists. Beijing’s actions against Islam go far beyond mere counter-terrorism, however. Xinjiang essentially has become a police state with pervasive surveillance, and access for foreigners is strictly controlled. According to the independent non-profit Radio Free Asia, Chinese authorities demolished more than 5,000 mosques in 2016-17 alone. Since 2014, over one million Chinese have been relocated into Xinjiang to both proselytize secular values and report on ‘subversive’ behavior by Uighurs, which can include not watching state-run television. Men with beards have been forcibly shaven and women’s long skirts cut, while alcohol and tobacco have been forced onto the shelves of unwilling shopkeepers. More darkly, forced swabbing of Uighurs for DNA samples has been reportedly widespread, all apparently designed to create a massive database to better control the population. And then there are the re-education camps. Beijing has also begun to crack down on the better-integrated Muslim Hui community, which traditionally was allowed far more freedom to establish madrassas and operate mosques, indicating that this is a broader campaign against Islam itself. [Source: American Spectator]

No matter how hard the Chinese authorities try, they will never be able to stamp out Islam from China. However, the silence of the Muslim world towards the treatment of Muslims in Xinjiang is deafening, and illustrates that the rulers of the Islamic world have given China, Europe, Russia and America a free hand to suppress their Muslim populations.