

Headlines:

- Islam is a “Malignant Cancer”: New US National Security Adviser
- Dutch Lawmakers Debate Limited Ban on Muslim Headwear
- A Hard Winter: Afghan Refugees Return from Pakistan

Details:

Islam is a “Malignant Cancer”: New US National Security Adviser

US president-elect Donald Trump famously said in a CNN interview last March that “Islam hates us.” In this light, his pick for national security adviser is pitch perfect. Retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn served as Trump’s national security adviser during the campaign and agreed Friday (Nov. 18) to continue on. Flynn, a registered Democrat, served as head of the US Defense Intelligence Agency before he was ousted in 2014. Since then, he’s been a brash critic of President Barack Obama and the national security establishment’s approach to defeating terrorism - and he’s made no secret of his disdain for Islam. “Islam is a political ideology...it definitely hides behind this notion of it being a religion,” Flynn said in a speech at the annual conference of ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim grassroots organization in the US. “It’s like cancer...a malignant cancer in this case.” Flynn also serves as an adviser for the group, which was founded by Brigitte Gabriel, a leader of the anti-Islam lobby in the US. Flynn has described Gabriel as “incredibly courageous.” At other times, Flynn has been more careful to specify that “radical Islam” is the source of his ire. He led the charge in excoriating Democrats for not using the words “radical Islamic terrorism,” and published a book this summer called *The Field of Fight: How We Can Win the Global War Against Radical Islam and Its Allies*. In it, Flynn writes that “*without a proper sense of urgency, we will eventually be defeated, dominated, and very likely destroyed by Muslim militants... They are dead set on taking us over and drinking our blood.*” His rhetoric rarely distinguishes between extremism and ordinary Muslims; instead, Flynn insists that Muslims have “*banned the search for truth*” because they believe the Quran, Islam’s Holy Book, is infallible. Flynn rivals Trump in his penchant for posting frequent and controversial messages on Twitter, a primary vehicle for his anti-Muslim rhetoric. In one of his most notorious tweets, Flynn wrote that the “fear of Muslims is rational.” The national security adviser appointment does not require Senate confirmation, even though the role offers the potential to significantly shape US foreign and military policy. Critics say that Flynn’s anti-Islam rhetoric spells trouble for the US. Flynn is “*convinced that all Muslims who practice traditional Islam are a security risk. That is not only untrue but extremely dangerous,*” says Will McCants, Director for the Brookings Project on US relations with the Islamic world and the author of *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. The effect will be to alienate many of the world’s Muslims, he says, and send them “into the arms of jihadist recruiters” who contend “*America seeks to destroy their religion.*” [Source: Quartz]

Ever since September 11, US officials have become more open in their vitriol towards Islam. Yet, despite this venom, many Muslims around the world still continue to think that America and the West will somehow treat them fairly.

Dutch Lawmakers Debate Limited Ban on Muslim Headwear

Dutch lawmakers on Wednesday debated a limited ban on face-covering headwear worn by some Muslim women that would outlaw the veils in places such as schools, hospitals and on public transportation. Only a few hundred Muslim women in the Netherlands wear concealing niqabs or full-face burqas, but successive governments have still sought to ban the garments, following the example of other European countries such as France and Belgium. Interior Minister Ronald Plasterk said the Dutch proposal did not go as far as the complete bans in those countries. He called the legislation “religion-neutral,” but conceded that the debate about people

wearing burqas on Dutch streets had played a major role in the proposal. Plasterk said that in a free country like the Netherlands people should be allowed to appear in public with their faces covered, if they want to, but that in government buildings and in health and education settings such as hospitals and schools, people need to be able to look each other in the face. It was not immediately clear when lawmakers would vote on the issue. If the legislation passes Parliament's lower house as expected, it must also be approved by the Senate before becoming law. A small group of people wearing full-face veils watched the debate from the public gallery. Independent lawmaker Jacques Monasch, called the burqa "a symbol of oppression of women" and objected to the presence of the veiled spectators in the gallery. One opponent of the legislation, Fatma Koser Kaya of the centrist D66 party, said the law was unnecessary because many institutions in the Netherlands already have independent authority to stop women from wearing burqas and niqabs in certain situations. "What are we banning today?" she asked. "This is symbolic lawmaking ... because in practice it already happens." [Source: Associated Press]

The Dutch are no longer using their ideological precepts to debate the ban on the niqab. Freedom of religion permits Muslim women to wear the niqab in private and public. However, Dutch lawmakers cite fear and security to justify the partial ban. This only proves that Western liberalism is unworkable in practice.

A Hard Winter: Afghan Refugees Return from Pakistan

Caught in the middle of political tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan are some two million Afghan refugees - registered and unregistered - who now face the option of either returning voluntarily or being deported from Pakistan. And it couldn't happen at a worse time. Winter in Afghanistan can be bitterly cold. The country is also experiencing a spike in violence, with increased attacks from the Taliban and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) fighters, leading to peak levels of civilian casualties and internal displacement as people flee the fighting. Returnees at the UNHCR processing centre get a quick lesson in defusing explosive devices. The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, is also concerned about refugees returning to a country that is among the most affected by undetonated landmines - an enduring legacy of the Soviet invasion. According to the UN Mine Action Service, 1,587 communities in 257 districts across the country are affected. The UNHCR is offering returning Afghans training in how to spot and defuse a mine. Although the return to Afghanistan was voluntary for all those who are registered as refugees, the distinction between their situation and those who are unregistered and deported by the Pakistani authorities can be arbitrary. Some families describe how some of their members were registered with the UNHCR but others were not, largely because they had been unable to complete the paperwork. Some had registered but failed to get their refugee cards renewed, leaving them ineligible for the UNHCR's help on their return to Afghanistan. Pakistan has repeatedly justified the move to deport registered and unregistered Afghans on the grounds of national security, accusing some Afghan refugees of posing a threat. This has led to a crackdown on the two million Afghans living in the country, leaving them with little option but to return. According to MoRR data, as of October 15, a total of 191,946 Afghans who are not registered with the UNHCR have returned to Afghanistan. Of this, roughly 20,000 had been deported, or roughly 2,000 each month this year. Projections by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the agency charged with helping unregistered refugees and deportees, suggest that by the end of the year, the number of undocumented returnees - those not registered with the UNHCR - will increase by 97,636. NHCR numbers indicate that roughly 350,000 registered Afghan refugees have already returned this year - making the total number of Afghans returning from Pakistan over half a million. Another 50,000 refugees are going to return to Afghanistan by the middle of December. [Source: Al Jazeera].

Once Afghans and Pakistanis were unified and fighting the Soviet Union, and today both are victims of America's war against Islam.