

## Islamist Perfidy and Western Naivety - Which Is More Lethal?

by Raymond Ibrahim

In a blog entry for Islamist Watch, David J. Rusin shows how the word "jihad" continues to be euphemized in the West. Despite Islamic law's unequivocal portrayal of it as a military endeavor to empower Islam, jihad is still being peddled as "nothing more than a student laboring to pass algebra, a mom driving her kids to soccer practice, or, in the words of the Cambridge study, a civic-minded person engaged in 'lobbying, activism, and writing' — a community organizer of sorts." Rusin concludes by observing: "Why Islamists peddle such specious definitions should be clear. More baffling and disturbing is why they gain traction among so many Westerners."

Indeed, therein lies the irony: Islamist perfidy is only to be expected; Western naivety, on the other hand, which, if anything, should have begun to dissipate in our post-9/11 world, has burgeoned to the point of nearly making the former unnecessary. For while there is no doubt that Islamists (and their misguided Western cronies) distort the meaning of jihad, increasingly, even when the true meaning is in plain sight, America's leaders and media still fail to discern it. In other words, apathy — or willful blindness — regarding jihad has become so deep-seated in the West that Islamists need no longer actively dissemble.

Consider: When President Barack Hussein Obama addressed the Islamic world from Cairo on June 4, 2009, he said: "As the Holy Koran tells us, 'Be conscious of God and speak always the truth' [Sura 9:119]. That is what I will try to do — to speak the truth as best I can, humbled by the task before us." Let us for the moment put aside the fact that Sura 9, from whence Obama quotes, contains the most violent and intolerant exhortations in all the Koran (which is saying something). The problem here is that the original Arabic text of Sura 9:119 says absolutely nothing about "speaking the truth." The word "speaking" is nowhere in the text, and "truth," as an abstract, is a wrong translation for *sadiqin*, which refers to people. The verse most literally translates as "fear Allah and be with the truthful." In other words, Muslims should stand firm with fellow Muslims ("truthful" serving as a Koranic epithet for "Muslims" the same way "believers" often does). It is, as ever, a call for divisiveness — of Muslims (the "truthful") versus infidels (the "false").

Had Obama or his Mideast advisors and speechwriters simply bothered to read this verse in context — verse 9:111, a jihadi all-time favorite, looms just above, promising believers paradise in exchange for their killing and being killed — or if they had bothered consulting mainstream Muslim exegeses, they might have known that this verse is part of a Koranic segment that deals exclusively with *fighting infidels*: Muhammad and several Muslims were preparing to invade Byzantine territory; some Muslims wanted to stay behind. It was then that Allah/Muhammad threatened them with this verse to "fear Allah and be with the truthful" (i.e., join ranks with your fellow Muslims on the warpath). Sentences later, this exhortation culminates in one of the most famous calls to violence in all the Koran, regularly evoked by modern-day jihadis: "O you who believe, fight those infidels who dwell around you, and let them find harshness in you!" [9:123].

Incidentally, the infidels mentioned here are the Christians of Byzantium (or in Arabic, *al-Rum*, "the Romans"). That modern-day jihadis, such as Osama bin Laden, often liken the United States to Byzantium, which for long thwarted the caliphate's expansionist designs into Christendom, makes Obama's choice of verse — "be[ing] with the truthful" — further ironic.

Speaking of infidels and irony, here is a more recent, a more comical, anecdote: On September 11, 2009, NPR ran a story called "For NYC Muslims, a New Kind of Police Attention," which tells of how "the NYPD hosts an annual Ramadan program, during which the police get to know members of the Muslim community and Muslims are free to speak their minds." Lest the theme of this story eludes you, words such as "outreach," "diversity," and "building bridges" predominate.

Here's the problem (first brought to my attention by the *Washington Times*' Diana West): In the audio version of this report (around 0:25-0:50), the NPR narrator says that "there was not an empty seat to be had at the NYPD's auditorium at One Police Plaza. NYPD brass, Muslim clerics, and community members all stood and listened to the cadences of the call to prayer from the NYPD's imam, Khalid Latif. While this is being said, you can hear part of the imam's Arabic recitation from the Koran in the background.

The narrator's enthusiastic talk of NYPD brass standing in awe of the "cadences of the call" makes it difficult to discern exactly which verse is being recited. Only the last few words — *qawm al-kaffirin*, "nation of infidels" — are crystal clear, raising red flags. Thanks to my trusty Arabic-Koranic concordance, I have placed this phrase as part of Koran 2:286, which supplicates Allah "to make us [Muslims] victorious over the nation of infidels." Bear in mind that, from an Islamist point of view, the United States is the "nation of infidels" par excellence.

And there it is: From an American president who publicly defines his mission by quoting a jihadi-related verse, to American-Muslim leaders who publicly pray for the subjugation of non-Muslims (in the middle of an NYPD auditorium, no less), it is clear that the ultimate threat comes more from Western carelessness and indifference — in a word, naivety — than it does from active Islamist machinations. In short, Islamists peddling misleading interpretations for the word "jihad" is but the very tip of the iceberg.

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