

A Temple and a Mosque; Worship in America

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On August 5, a Sikh temple in Southern Wisconsin was attacked. Six worshippers lost their lives before the gunman was killed. There was an outbreak of condemnation – rightly so. President Obama ordered flags at public buildings to be flown at half-staff and Mrs. Clinton called her Indian counterpart. Mitt Romney offered his prayers to the families of the victims. Left ignored, was the burning down of a mosque in Missouri – predictably so. Worship in America is a political prerogative in sink with U.S. policies.

But India and Indian Sikhs have privileges; so why were Sikh worshippers targeted? It may well be that the perpetrator, Wade Michael Page who allegedly had links to the [white supremacist movement](#) ignored the political relations in favor of his ideology — white supremacy, articulated by President T. Roosevelt who said of America: “[Democracy has justified itself by keeping for the white race the best portion’s of the earth’s surface.](#)”

Or perhaps, as [CNN opined](#), “Sikh’s “unfairly” mistaken for Muslims and targeted.” This would not be the first time, and as Public Radio International (PRI) has reported, [since the events of 9/11, Sikh men have been targeted as Moslems](#). Even the cordial relations with India could not prevent the perception that an Indian Sikh resembles a Moslem and fair target.

Scapegoating Moslems had been planned as early as 1991 (see full article [here](#)). The end of the Cold War had left neoconservatives fearful that with the demise of the Soviet Union, and the splintering of the America’s right wing faction, there would no longer be an unconditional support for a U.S.-Israel alliance. The threat of communism was replaced with the threat of Islam. The promotion and branding of Islam as an enemy came to fruition with the events of 9/11.

In line with this neoconservative strategy, the mainstream media in the US framed September 11 within the context of Islam, ignoring all other inquiry, including the fact that a new U.N. Human Rights Council assigned to monitor Israel was calling for an official commission to study the role neoconservatives may have played in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (New York Sun 1). As neocon Bernard Lewis was busy teaching the concept of ‘[jihad’ versus ‘crusade’](#) 2 Moslem bashing, Moslem killing, and Mosque burning became fair game.

The strategy of demonizing Islam was so successful that in 2008 the presidential candidates centered their qualification for Office on Moslem-bashing. Former New York mayor and the hero of 9/11, Rudy Giuliani, made the threat of ‘Islamic terrorism’ the centerpiece of his campaign. Podhoretz also joined Giuliani (later he joined McCain), as did John Deady who resigned after it came out that he said the following of Giuliani: “He’s got, I believe, the

knowledge and the judgment to attack one of the most difficult problems in current history and that is the rise of the Muslims. Make no mistake about it, this hasn't happened for a thousand years, these people are very dedicated and they're also very, very smart in their own way. We need to keep the feet to the fire and keep pressing these people until we defeat or chase them back to their caves or, in other words, get rid of them." Renowned Evangelical Pat Robertson gave Giuliani his endorsement.³

Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Council, allegedly dissuaded contender Mike Huckabee from "reaching out" to the 'Muslim world'. Mitt Romney, a contender in 2008 and the 2012 GOP presidential hopeful, raised eyebrows when he suggested that mosques be wire-tapped.⁴ For almost a decade, U.S. military officers were being taught to [wage a 'total war' on Islam](#) and target civilians.

The Sikh Temple shooter, Wade Michael Page, a former U.S. Army veteran, is condemned for the violent and meaningless murder of innocent worshippers, but is he alone responsible for this act of insanity? If these killing were truly a case of mistaking Sikhs as Moslems, should those who implement seeds of hatred not be held accountable aslo?

Who will persecute those who taught army officers to kill Moslems - the Commander-in-Chief hopefuls and their advisors who promoted hatred and persecution of Moslems, and the neoconservatives who planted the seeds of hatred among us? Will their deeds be buried with Page? As Jonathan Swift said: "I never wonder to see men wicked, but I often wonder to see them not ashamed."

Notes

1. New York Sun

2 Bernard Lewis, 'Learning the Lingo. Jihad vs. Crusade. A Historian's Guide to the New War', Wall Street Journal (27 Sept. 2001).

3 "The Religion Card; GOP Candidates Play on anti-Muslim Sentiments" The Progressive, Biography Resource Center , USC Feb 2008

4 The Religion Card, Ibid.

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