

Free Speech and The Moslem Community in America

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Media outlets are abuzz with news of the Moslem world's rage over the release of the provocative film "Innocence of Moslems". Pundits are quick to condemn the protests across 20 nations, and the gullible and callous citizens of the "West", mimicking pundits who are paid to mislead and misinform, are placing the blame on the aggrieved Moslem community - they simply don't understand how "free speech" works in America . But those who are not intellectually blind see a different reality - the fallacy of free speech.

There is a precedent to curbing free speech when deemed harmful. In a landmark Supreme Court hearing — [Schenck v. United States, 249 U.S. 47 \(1919\)](#), the actions of Schenck, an anti-war individual who had printed and distributed leaflets in order to discourage enlisting servicemen, was not afforded protection under the First Amendment. The issue before the court was whether Schenck's actions (words, expression) were protected by the free speech clause of the First Amendment. [The Court ruled:](#)

"The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing panic." Holmes argued that "The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent."

Since the events of 9/11, the whole Moslem community has been engulfed in panic, death, and destruction through such provocative expressions of "free speech". The United States government, in defiance of this precedent has decided not to prevent such "substantive evils".

The desecration of the Koran in [2002 by Guantanamo prison guards](#) revealed in 2005, caused riots globally and took the lives of 15 people. The lack of inaction by the authorities may have given Florida pastor Terry Jones reason to be encouraged and to burn a Koran on March 20, 2011. Pictures which were posted on his church's website. Shortly thereafter, protests broke out in Afghanistan where a U.N. building was attacked and [12 people killed](#). The government inaction continued. As such, it did not come as a surprise that in February 2012, US forces in Afghanistan burnt copies of Korans at U.S. bases. Angry protests ensued resulting in 30 deaths. [There were no criminal charges against the troops](#), only unspecified administrative punishment.

While the First Amendment enabled insults to be hurled at Moslems, Moslems living in the United States were deprived of "free speech". Moslem students at California State University in Irvine ([UCI](#)) [were suspended for a year](#) for interrupting the speech of the Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. , Michael Oren. The same state allowed the censorship of professors who spoke out against the bombing of Gaza and slaughtering of the Palestinians ([see link](#)).

On October 16, 2004, President George W. Bush signed the Israel Lobby's bill, the [Global Anti-Semitism Review Act](#). This legislation requires the US Department of State to monitor anti-Semitism world wide. (It is noteworthy that 4 years later, Republican candidates ran on a platform of promoting hatred of Islam – -see [HERE](#)). In line with policies of selective “free speech”, and in the same month that no criminal charges were brought against troops in Afghanistan for burning Korans and urinating on Afghan corpses, August 2012, California passed a resolution (House Resolution 35) against criticism of Israel . What is perhaps more revealing than the Resolution itself, is the desire and the power to curb “free speech” ([read Resolution](#)).

In light of the recent examples, is the Moslem world's anger at the United States misplaced when clearly the United States government has the power to curb speech (the most recent case in point being the State of Georgia 's denial of KKK group's application to “Adopt a Highway”)? Perhaps for the protestors, it is hard to understand that the President's kill list allows the assassination of American individuals '[based merely on patterns of behavior](#)' yet he is not able to exercise power to curb speech denigrating Islam.

Why has there been no will to put a stop to these insults and the ensuing violence? One may never know the answer. What is clear is that although the Moslem countries have been grossly violated, their cities bombed, their men, women, and children killed, their spirit has not been crushed. As was brilliantly depicted in a different kind of movie — Gillo Pontecorvo's 1965 production of “The Battle of Algiers”, bombs and guns can crush a man's frail body but not his resistant spirit; ideology will always prevail over bullets.

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