

Headlines:

- **Trump Pushes Dark View of Islam to Center of America's Policy-Making**
- **Hamas Leader Ends 'Successful' Visit to Egypt**
- **Trump Travel Ban, Other Pressures Lead Pakistan to Rein in Islamist Militants**

Details

Trump Pushes Dark View of Islam to Center of America's Policy-Making

It was at a campaign rally last August that President Donald J. Trump most fully unveiled the dark vision of an America under siege by "radical Islam" that is now radically reshaping the policies of the United States. On a stage lined with US flags in Youngstown, Ohio, Trump, who months before had called for a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslim immigration, argued that the United States faced a threat on a par with the greatest evils of the 20th century. The Islamic State (IS) was brutalizing the Middle East, and Muslim immigrants in the West were killing innocents at nightclubs, offices and churches, he said. Extreme measures were needed. "The hateful ideology of radical Islam," he told supporters, must not be "allowed to reside or spread within our own communities". Trump was echoing a strain of anti-Islamic theorizing familiar to anyone who has been immersed in security and counterterrorism debates over the past 20 years. He has embraced a deeply suspicious view of Islam that several of his aides have promoted, notably retired Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn, now his national security adviser, and Stephen K. Bannon, the president's top strategist. This worldview borrows from the "clash of civilizations" thesis of political scientist Samuel P. Huntington and combines straightforward warnings about extremist violence with broad-brush critiques of Islam. It sometimes conflates terrorist groups, like al-Qaeda and the IS, with largely nonviolent groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots and, at times, with the 1.7 billion Muslims around the world. In its more extreme forms, this view promotes conspiracies about government infiltration and the danger that Shariah, the legal code of Islam, may take over in the US. The executive order on immigration that Trump signed last Friday might be viewed as the first major victory for this geopolitical school. And a second action, which would designate the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist political movement in the Middle East, as a terrorist organization, is under discussion at the White House, administration officials say. [Source: *New York Times*]

Trump is continuing the crusade declared by George Bush, and expanded under Obama. It is envisaged that the intensity of the crusade will increase under Trump. Banning Muslim is just the first step in many measures to be unveiled soon.

Hamas Leader Ends 'Successful' Visit to Egypt

Hamas, the ruling Palestinian movement of the Gaza Strip, concluded a "successful" visit to Egypt on Friday, according to Egypt's state-run news agency, the first visit by the group's top leader in over three years. Hamas top official Ismail Haniyeh and his delegation departed Egypt to return to Gaza after talks with the country's security and political authorities, including intelligence chief Khaled Fawzy, Egypt's MENA reported. The two sides discussed the Jewish entity's blockade of Gaza, Palestinian reconciliation and the lingering power outage in the strip. The agency quoted Hamas' statement as saying the talks will have

"positive results" on the situation in Gaza. It said that the delegation stressed that it doesn't interfere in Egypt's internal affairs. "The Egyptian brothers have presented a comprehensive vision on all issues ... such vision will have positive results on the Egyptian and the Palestinian people," it said. The agency gave no further details on future arrangements. But Haniyah posted on his Twitter saying after arriving in Gaza that the relations with Egypt will witness "paradigm shifts." Egypt's relations with Hamas deteriorated since the 2013 military ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi, who hails from the Muslim Brotherhood group, Hamas' mother movement. Authorities accused the group of supporting militants to carry out attacks in Egypt. For most of the past decade, Egypt has been a quiet partner with Israel in the blockade on Hamas-ruled Gaza, stifling the economy and largely blocking its 2 million people from moving in and out of the territory. [Source: ABC News]

It appears Sisi is keen to reassert Egypt's influence over Hamas in anticipation of new directions from the Trump administration. However, anything short of a complete liberation of Palestine from foreign occupiers will produce the same situation witnessed for the past seventy years.

Trump Travel Ban, Other Pressures Lead Pakistan to Rein in Islamist Militants

To U.S. and international officials, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed is a terrorist who orchestrated a bloody urban siege that killed 166 people in India in 2008. But to his many devout followers in Pakistan, he is a champion of Islamic values and Kashmiri independence from India. To U.S. and international officials, Shakil Afridi is a courageous man who helped the United States track down and kill Osama bin Laden in 2011. But to many Pakistanis, he is a traitor who sold his services to a Western adversary of Islam and should remain in prison. Therein lies the conundrum facing Pakistani officials today as they scramble to forestall punitive actions by the Trump administration — and ease pressure from other foreign partners, including China — without provoking turmoil at home, especially among Muslim militants the state has long coddled as proxies against India. Suddenly confronted with a U.S. president who has declared war against Islamist extremism and has expressed little interest in the long history of political accommodation and security alliances between Washington and Islamabad, officials here are seeking a middle ground that may no longer exist. The disarray was evident in clashing public statements by two government officials concerning the draconian travel ban imposed by Trump last week on all visitors from seven Muslim-majority countries. White House aides suggested last week that ban might be expanded to include Pakistan and other countries with terrorist links. On Saturday, Pakistani media outlets quoted a White House spokesman telling the BBC that there are “no immediate plans” to add Pakistan, Afghanistan or Lebanon, but warning that this could change if the countries stop complying with U.S. requests for information. Foreign Ministry spokesman Nafees Zakaria, addressing a news conference Thursday, noted deferentially that “it is every country's sovereign right to decide its immigration policy.” He said Pakistan looks forward to continuing its “long-standing and cooperative relations” with Washington. The crackdown on Saeed and his group, which has been allowed to function freely for the most part, is seen by many here as a hasty conciliatory gesture to the new administration in Washington. But Pakistani officials insist it was the product of long internal deliberation — and further proof of a permanent shift from official tolerance for extremists who once served as Pakistan's deniable agents in India and Afghanistan. [Source: *Washington Post*]

Pakistan has a long history of apprehending and handing over militants and innocent civilians to America. What Pakistanis will like to know if there will be any more Aafia Siddiquis handed over to the US to please the Trump administration??