

Islam and the 9/11 Wars: Steven Jones Interviews Kevin Barrett

How many Afghans have fled their country due to the 9/11 wars?

One source estimates that there are about 2 million Afghan refugees in Iran (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070611/text/70611w0026.htm>). Another report estimates that there are 1.3 million Afghan refugees from the US invasion and occupation currently living in Pakistan.

How many Iraqis have fled their country due to the 9/11 wars?

According to the BBC, more than two million Iraqis have fled their country due to the US invasion and occupation (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6916791.stm).

Where are these refugees -- and what conditions are these families living under? Food, shelter, cooking -- what would the refugees appreciate receiving from 9/11 researchers who wish to help them?

Perhaps the best source to approach with these questions is <http://www.forcedmigration.org/>. They could direct you to the NGOs that are in the front lines of the refugee crisis.

Any data on how many fled as loners, how many as families?

I can't find any. But I would assume that the majority fled as families, since most live in family units and if one has to flee, they all probably do.

Approximately what proportion of Muslims question the US-official 9/11 story?

Roughly 80% worldwide, and 60% in the US, do not just question the official story of 9/11—they reject it. A recent Pew Survey, which found that American Muslims were generally moderate and mainstream on most issues, also found that “just 40% of Muslim Americans say groups of Arabs carried out (the 9/11) attacks” (<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/483/muslim-americans>). This almost certainly understates the real figure, since many American Muslims who are convinced that 9/11 was an inside job are unlikely to reveal this to a stranger.

Do they feel singled out as enemies of the USA? If so, why? Oil? Resistance to the New World Order? Threat to Israel?

I think there's a general feeling among Muslims that the USA is in Israel's pocket, and that Zionism is driving the current wave of Islamophobia. Most Muslims think that pro-Zionist Jews are disproportionately represented among decision-makers in America's media, financial, and academic circles, and that the Israel lobby controls US Middle East policy. Studies I've seen seem to largely bear this out. Unfortunately many Muslims, like other human beings, tend to think in stereotypes, so their natural and justified anger about Zionist influence on US policy sometimes turns into bigotry against Jews, which is extremely unfortunate. Also, it is possible

that many Muslims overestimate the importance of Zionism, and underestimate the importance of oil and geostrategy, as a factor behind the ongoing US imperial abuse of the Middle East.

Do Muslims hate Americans because of their freedoms?

No, they want some of those same freedoms -- before they're gone ;)

Before 9/11, Muslims generally loved the USA (while loathing its unqualified support of Zionism). Since 9/11, America's standing in the Muslim world has plummeted, mainly because America is no longer viewed as a free nation that supports freedom around the world.

What are Islam's major tenets?

First, its discourse on God:

1) Oneness/holism/unity: "tawhid" or "making it one." This translates theologically as the "oneness of God." We are supposed to focus on this oneness of the source of all being, and avoid worshipping anything less...even the greatest prophets such as Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Islam suggests that Christianity erred by falling into the worship or deification of Jesus and splitting the one God into a trinity.

2) The eternity and transcendence of God. Eternity: God is beyond time, space, and causality, being the source of these things and everything else. Transcendence: God is beyond all human description. The common exclamation "Allahu akbar" means "God is greater" – greater even than our greatest conception of Him.

3) The "tangible manifestations of God," meaning the way God presents Himself to us, begin with mercy and compassion, and continue through the so called "99 names of God" which are actually not names, but relational descriptions of a human-God dyad. God's ultimate relation to humans is mercy and compassion, but at times God can seem the majestic, the lover, the terrifying, the wise, etc.

Then its discourse on the proper human orientation toward God:

Awed submission/surrender; gratitude; humility. Submission/surrender is acted out bodily in the five daily prayers. Gratitude is also central. The opposite of a good muslim is a kaffir, a word sometimes translated as "unbeliever" or "infidel" but whose root meaning is *ungrateful*. Someone who denies God and refuses to be amazed at creation is considered ungrateful, the opposite of the way one should be. Humility is also important—the main human villain in the Qur'an is Pharaoh, whose sin is arrogant pride.

Direct, not indirect, worship of God. There is no clergy in Islam because the Qur'an criticizes Jews and Christians for falling into the worship of rabbis and priests, and letting them get between the believer and God. In Islam any competent believer can lead the prayer, and decisions are made by scholarly consensus, not by priestly authority or office. Ultimately the individual and community have to choose which scholars and interpretations to follow.

How strong are family ties among Muslims?

It varies, just as in other religions. There are about 1.5 billion Muslims living all over the world, hailing from dozens of very different cultures. In general, though, Muslims put a strong emphasis on family ties. The family is a much more important source of authority than the state in most Muslim cultures, and its ties bind far more tightly than non-Muslim American family ties do. The relative strength of loyalty to religion and family, and the relative weakness of loyalty to the state, has good and bad effects in Muslim cultures. A good effect is that Muslim countries aren't very good at building war machines...which has a bad side in that it leaves many Muslim countries open to invasion and exploitation by resource-hungry predator nations. Europeans colonized and looted almost the whole Muslim world starting in the 19th century, mainly because the Europeans were much more efficient, technologically-advanced mass murderers. Currently most of the resource-rich Muslim nations are directly or indirectly colonized, and their resources are being stolen by foreign banks and corporations and their local lackeys. Figuring out how to defend their land and their resources, despite their strong family and religious values and weak states, is a central problem for many of the world's Muslims.

Historical contributions from Muslims?

Muslims helped create pre-modern medicine (big names include Rhazes and Avicenna). They were leading chemists (the biggest name is Jabir/Geber who advanced/perfected evaporation, sublimation and crystallization). They were the leading navigators through the time of Columbus and had accurate maps with latitude and longitude and a correct model of the size and shape of earth. They invented the decimal system and algebra, and developed and spread the use of paper around the old world (paper had been invented by the Chinese). They invented the cannon and probably small arms. They invented coffee, the university, and the hospital, as well as the water-mill and windmill, and some say they developed experimental science, by improving on Hero's *Mechanics* and systematizing experimental inquiry. Da Vinci is said to have discovered Hero's work via the Islamic world.

A quote from the Oxford History of Technology: "There are very few technological innovations between 500 A.D. and 1500 that do not show some traces of the Islamic culture." Interestingly, those were the years in which knowledge developed in a balanced, harmonious fashion, in accordance with our spiritual nature, and at a reasonable pace. Since then we've been accelerating toward disaster as science has been sundered from soul.

Are there any Muslim universities?

Almost all Muslim countries have universities, just like any other country. Unfortunately the universities in most Muslim countries are a bit less developed and equipped than those in wealthy countries like the US, Europe and Japan.

Historically Muslims seem to have invented the university as it comes to us in the European tradition. There were many Muslim universities in the European dark ages. When universities appeared in Europe in the Middle Ages they were following the Islamic model.

Is Iran a "bad" country, seeking nuclear weapons so they can annihilate Israel or the US?

Hardly. Iran, unlike Israel, is a signatory in good standing to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Its religious authorities have ruled that nuclear weapons are prohibited by Islam. Even if Iran wanted and was able to get nuclear weapons they could not threaten the USA with its thousands of nukes, or Israel with its 400-plus nukes. If Muslim countries obtain nuclear weapons, that is in spite of Islam, not because of it. The USA does not maintain a gigantic stockpile of nuclear weapons because of the teachings of Jesus, nor does Pakistan have a tiny stockpile because of Islam.

The real reason why Israel is so paranoid about a nuclear-armed Iran is that Israel wants to keep its regional nuclear monopoly, which allows it to strike anywhere in the region at will. Why the US supports Israel in this crazy position is hard to understand—it certainly has nothing to do with America's own national interest, which would be better served by an alliance with the Palestinians and the oil-producing Muslim nations.

The whole Middle East lives under the sword of Damocles of Israeli nukes. Israel has a history of reckless military aggression and complete disregard for the lives of non-Israelis. It slaughters hundreds of children by sniper fire as a matter of policy (British Medical Journal). It stages false flag attacks regularly—notable examples include the Lavon affair (botched), the USS Liberty incident (botched), the Achille Lauro and Entebbe hijackings (successful), and the recent assassination of Hariri (successful).

Israel has violated more UN sanctions than every other country on earth combined. It is the only country on earth to keep grabbing more and more territory by military aggression in the post-World War II era. It was the only country that officially approved of torturing people until Bush joined in under pressure from Israel-firsters like Dershowitz. In short, Israel is a rogue regime brimming with nukes, and the people of the Middle East desperately need to either make their region a nuclear free zone by disarming Israel, or develop a nuclear deterrent against Israeli aggression. If Iran or any other adversary of Israel had such a deterrent, Israel would not be able to use its nuclear weapons against its neighbors. That is why most of the people of the Middle East support adversaries of Israel developing a nuclear **deterrent**, despite the fact that nuclear weapons are terrible and perhaps unlawful in God's eyes.

What are your feelings about extremists? Are they worse among Muslims than other religions?

No, US Christian and Jewish extremists are much worse. US-Zionist extremists have murdered a million Iraqis since 9/11 in a Nazi-style war of aggression in Iraq. There is a fair bit of conservatism and bigotry and small-mindedness and stupidity among Muslims, but not much extremism given the situation we're in. On the contrary, most Muslims meekly allow the Palestinian genocide to continue, while allowing a fascist American neocon regime to dominate their region and steal their oil. Here in the US hardly any Muslims are "extremist" enough to work for 9/11 truth, even though 60% of US Muslims and 80% of Muslims worldwide know it was an inside job. In short, Muslims are so timid and moderate that they are allowing themselves to be ruthlessly exploited and murdered by the millions.

Do Muslims feel that war with Christians is proper, the only way to resolve the touted "clash of civilizations?"

Absolutely not. Very few if any Muslims have any desire to make war on Christians or Jews, who are viewed as fellow people of the book, and who have been traditionally tolerated and protected and often encouraged to maintain their own faiths. The Islamic doctrine of just war is very similar to the Christian one: War is only justified in self-defense. Palestinians and Iraqis defending themselves against aggression and occupation are widely viewed as fighting a just war. But Muslims attacking, invading or occupying Christian countries would not be.

There is some debate among Muslims about whether it is possible to fight just wars in the modern era. Today's weapons are so terrible that their use ensures that large numbers of innocents will be butchered—and Islam prohibits the killing of non-combatants. From a Muslim point of view, having an air force to drop large bombs on people, inevitably killing many non-combatants, would seem to be prohibited. Targeting enemy soldiers who are occupying ones country, on the other hand, would seem to be acceptable and perhaps mandatory, since the Qur'an tells us to fight against those who attack us and drive us out of our homes. From a classical just war perspective, whether Christian or Islamic, the people of Palestine and Iraq are fighting a just war against those who have waged predatory aggressive war against them. At the same time, all large-scale wars waged by states, using highly destructive and hence indiscriminate weapons, would seem to be prohibited by just war theory. Thus a moral approach to the problem of defending the community from military aggression, from a traditional just war perspective, would be to follow the Swiss model and arm the entire civilian population in order to deter aggression.

(Note: for an LDS perspective regarding Muslims, see:

<http://www.lds.org/portal/site/LDSOrg/menuitem.b12f9d18fae655bb69095bd3e44916a0/?vgnnextoid=2354fccf2b7db010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCRD&locale=0&sourceId=b056b850e318b010VgnVCM1000004d82620a &hideNav=1>)

Appendix: I Finally Made the Slow-Fly List

By Kevin Barrett, <http://mujca.com>

What does it take to get on the no-fly list?

I've got all the qualifications and then some.

I'm an Irish Muslim anarchist (1) —that's three strikes against me already.

I think the two worst terrorist groups in the Middle East are the Israeli Defense Forces and their US military proxy—and I do not hesitate to voice that opinion, including under FBI interrogation.

And I devote most of my time and resources to spreading the news that 9/11 was an inside job.

For more than a year, I have been flying all over North America lecturing on 9/11. I usually wear the 9/11 WAS AN INSIDE JOB t-shirt Alex Jones gave me when I go through airport security. I tip the security people in deception dollars, and sometimes give them DVDs. I always make a point of urging the pilots and stewardesses on my flights to check out <http://pilotsfor911truth.com>

Despite all this, I somehow failed to make the no-fly list, or even the slow-fly list...until now.

Yesterday I flew home from New York, where I had spoken at the conference sponsored by <http://ny911truth.org> and participated in the ground zero events organized by <http://wearechange.org>.

At the Newark Airport ticket counter I saw the clerks' eyes widen as they saw me come up on their computer screens. They called their manager over. It took them twenty minutes instead of the usual two to get my baggage checked.

At the security checkpoint, my name was flagged and I was body-searched while they went through every inch of my carry-on bag.

Then while dozing at the gate I was awakened by a slightly gruff voice: "Are you Kevin Barrett?" I opened my eyes and found myself surrounded by three people, two men and a woman, flashing FBI badges. "Would you mind coming with us for a few moments?"

At the security room the lead agent said "I've checked out your stuff on the web and saw you on Fox." My response: "So you're just bringing me here to get my autograph, right?" All three of them cracked up. Then the lead agent pulled himself together. "Is this yours?" he said, brandishing a beat-up spiral notebook. I admitted that it was. "Do you know where we got it?" "I must have forgotten it on the plane when I got off last Friday." "Why is there Arabic writing in it?"

I explained that I had grabbed an old notebook as I left the house with the intention of writing my New York speech on the plane. The old notebook happened to be one I had used during Arabic classes a decade ago.

The lead agent showed me a page of my own Arabic writing in the notebook. "Why is that word circled in red ink?" I told him that maybe I had made a mistake in grammar or wording, and that either I or my teacher had circled it. I read the sentence aloud and translated it for him: "One day long ago, before the modern age had begun..." The word for modern, *asri*, was circled with red ink. I admitted I had no idea why. It looked fine to me. Maybe the problem was that the expression "modern age," *al-asr al-asri*, was not idiomatic?

The agent ended the Arabic lesson and asked about the other strange stuff in the notebook. I sheepishly remembered that it included some bizarre little cartoons I had drawn, along with a

draft of an unfinished play about the death of Vincent Van Gogh, *A Murder of Crows*. An extract:

ARTAUD: And what is the earth below complaining about under the wings of the splendid crows? Splendor for Van Gogh alone, no doubt, and on the other hand the splendid augury of an evil that can no longer touch him? The sky is low, brooding, purplish shoulders bruised by lighting. The weird gloomy fringe of the void surging up after the flash.

ACTOR: Van Gogh had a lot of doubles—doppelgangers. He had a brother, also named Vincent, who was born exactly one year to the day before he was.

ARTAUD: Yes, but did the brother die exactly one day to the year after Vincent was born? Van Gogh released his crows, black microbes of suicide spleen, a few centimeters from the top and the same at bottom of his canvas.

ACTOR: But Sweetman thinks all this Freudian bullshit about his dead brother...

ARTAUD: ...following the black gash of the line where the flapping of their rich feathers threatens with suffocation from on high the reswirling of an earthly storm.

ACTOR: Is just a cheap romantic legend, built on the idea of the artist-as-martyr, nailed together with psychoanalytic claptrap.

ARTAUD: In every psychiatrist there lurks a revolting and sordid atavism that makes him find an enemy in every artist, in every genius...

It goes on and on like this. I wondered whether the FBI had analyzed my unfinished play for hidden messages. “A murder of crows” does sound kind of fishy...maybe the crows, those proverbial death-birds, stand for airplanes...and they’re jet black, like Osama’s new beard...maybe “Van Gogh” is really Osama, and the “murder of crows” will be death flights into US targets...the whole play could be one long coded message, left in an airplane magazine holder to be passed on to a courier headed for Osama’s cave in Afghanistan. What else could explain these pages and pages of impenetrable drivel? Too bad the FBI doesn’t train its agents in literary criticism, they’d find all kinds of great stuff in my unfinished play that even its author never realized was there.

After remarking on the suspicious stuff in the notebook, the agent changed tack. Gruffly, he announced that he was disturbed by some of my internet essays. I explained that I was just doing my patriotic duty to expose the 9/11 coup d’etat and re-establish constitutional rule. He asked whether I flew around the country saying these things. I said yes. He asked if anyone accompanied me on my travels. I said no, I usually travel alone to speaking engagements. He asked me where I had been staying in New York. I told him I stayed with fellow 9/11 activists. He said “We know you were at St. Mark’s church.” Then he asked me point-blank: “Are you a terrorist?”

My response: “To answer that, we have to agree first on what terrorism is. Let’s define it as ‘killing or hurting civilians for political or military purposes.’ Well, the biggest terrorist group right now is the US military, and the nastiest one is the Israeli IDF—they kill children by sniper fire as a matter of national policy. (2) Don’t forget that a million people have been murdered in Iraq, most of them civilians.”

That wasn’t the answer he wanted. “Do you belong to any terrorist group? Have you been to Iraq?”

I explained that I was working against terrorism and had never been to Iraq. I told him I oppose hurting or killing people except in the most clear-cut cases of self-defense. I told him I was working to catch the terrorists who blew up the World Trade Center and murdered 3,000 people, and that he and his FBI colleagues might want to consider joining me in that effort. “You guys must know this stuff, if you’ve looked into it at all,” I said. They didn’t deny it. In fact, they looked slightly uncomfortable. I urged them to visit <http://patriotsquestion911.com> and see what some brave former FBI, CIA, NSA and military people had to say about 9/11.

I asked them what they thought of Osama’s fancy new beard, and they just sort of shook their heads. I said that as an Arabist-Islamologist, my professional opinion is that “religious” Muslim men, especially self-styled extremists, are unlikely to dye their beards. As I understand it, dying the hair or the beard is pretty much a no-no in serious Islam, at least for men. Like tattoos, gold jewelry, and silk clothing, hair-dye for men is considered vain, and, in most varieties of Islamic law, either discouraged or prohibited. For this and other reasons, the latest video, like all the others since 2001, is almost certainly bogus.

Hitting my stride, I explained to them that Philip Zelikow, the main author of the preposterous *9/11 Commission Report*, is a self-described expert in “the creation and maintenance of public myths.” I pointed out that Zelikow co-authored a 1998 *Foreign Affairs* article on the likely political and cultural effects of a massive Pearl Harbor style terrorist event such as the destruction of the World Trade Center. In that article, Zelikow noted that such a mythic event would split time into a before and an after. The after, of course, was the “whole new world” of post-9/11 terror hysteria. “That’s why we’re here in this room right now,” I said. “We’re living in Zelikow’s ‘after’.”

I told them it was ironic that they were interrogating me about the notebook I had used to write a speech entitled “It’s the Constitution, stupid!” I summarized my speech for them: The Constitution is under attack by neocon fascist madmen, and the prime political task of this election season is to save it. All of us who have signed oaths to “defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign *and domestic*” had better start taking those oaths seriously. I summarized Bush’s recent executive orders giving himself absolute power in the event of an emergency that he himself can define in any way he wants. “This country is on the wrong road,” I concluded, “and we’ve got to turn things around.” I didn’t sense all that much disagreement from my audience of FBI agents.

The lead agent asked me about my teaching situation at the University of Wisconsin. I told him that I had been turned down for a tenure-track job at UW-Whitewater, even though I was the

only qualified candidate, purely because of my political views. I added that I might be back at UW-Madison in the spring, but that it would be a tough choice for the university, given all the pressure they've been under.

On this issue the FBI team seemed sympathetic. They ended the interview by thanking me and wishing me luck in my academic career.

I, too, wish them good luck in their efforts to prevent terrorism and bring terrorists to justice—starting with the true perpetrators of 9/11.

On the flight home, I reflected that my encounter with the FBI had been a classic “teachable moment.” Maybe 9/11 truthers should leave Arabic writing in airliner magazine pockets more often. But if you do, you'd better remember to give yourself an extra half hour next time you need to catch a plane.

* * *

(1) Though I have been substituting “moderate libertarian” for “anarchist” lately, in hopes of broadening my appeal in case I should suddenly decide to run for office, I still have a secret passion for Emma Goldman & Isabelle Eberhardt.

(2) While hundreds of Palestinian children are killed on streets, in schoolyards, and in other public places by Israeli snipers in an ongoing massacre of the innocents, the soldiers involved are not brought to justice, suggesting that this genocidal behavior is a nationally-sanctioned policy, not a series of hundreds or thousands of “aberrations.” See the two articles linked and extracted below.

“Palestine: the assault on health and other war crimes”

From *British Medical Journal*:

http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/329/7471/924?ijkey=c7b88fe81cf2cba4710713e3fed9e54a3c506f68&keytype2=tf_ipsecsha&eaf

Two thirds of the 621 children (two thirds under 15 years) killed at checkpoints, in the street, on the way to school, in their homes, died from small arms fire, directed in over half of cases to the head, neck and chest—the sniper's wound. Clearly, soldiers are routinely authorised to shoot to kill children in situations of minimal or no threat...

from Chris Hedges, “Gaza Diary” :

<http://www.doublestandards.org/hedges1.html>

The camp waits, as if holding its breath. And then, out of the dry furnace air, a disembodied voice crackles over a loudspeaker.

'Come on, dogs,' the voice booms in Arabic. 'Where are all the dogs of Khan Younis? Come! Come!'

I stand up. I walk outside the hut. The invective continues to spew: 'Son of a bitch!' 'Son of a Whore!...'

The boys dart in small packs up the sloping dunes to the electric fence that separates the camp from the Jewish settlement. They lob rocks toward two armored jeeps parked on top of the dune and mounted with loudspeakers. Three ambulances line the road below the dunes in anticipation of what is to come.

A percussion grenade explodes. The boys, most no more than ten or eleven years old, scatter, running clumsily across the heavy sand. They descend out of sight behind a sandbank in front of me. There are no sounds of gunfire. The soldiers shoot with silencers. The bullets from the M-16 rifles tumble end over end through the children's slight bodies. Later, in the hospital, I will see the destruction: the stomachs ripped out, the gaping holes in limbs and torsos.

Yesterday at this spot the Israelis shot eight young men, six of whom were under the age of eighteen. One was twelve. This afternoon they kill an eleven-year-old boy, Ali Murad, and seriously wound four more, three of whom are under eighteen. **Children have been shot in other conflicts I have covered – death squads gunned them down in El Salvador and Guatemala, mothers with infants were lined up and massacred in Algeria, and Serb snipers put children in their sights and watched them crumple onto the pavement in Sarajevo – but I have never before watched soldiers entice children like mice into a trap and murder them for sport.**