

Headlines:

- **Muslims Worried as Austria's Party Leaders Put Spotlight on Islam**
- **Rohingya crisis: Saudi Arabia Stays Silent on Growing Humanitarian Disaster Despite Oil Interests and Historic Ties**
- **Pakistan's New Leader Criticizes US Policy while Praising China in UN Speech**

Details:

Muslims Worried as Austria's Party Leaders Put Spotlight on Islam

As Austrians grow more openly hostile towards Muslims, major political parties are deliberately brandishing Islamophobia in the Catholic majority country ahead of next month's parliamentary election. A torch-lit procession of ultra-nationalists gathered recently on the outskirts of Vienna to listen to fiery speeches on the anniversary of a 17th-century victory over Muslim Ottomans. "Today we have to defend our homeland again," thundered the leader of the Identitaren movement. While the small extremist group is on the fringes of politics, nearly a third of Austrians told a recent survey they would not like to live next to Muslims -- a higher figure than in Germany, France, Switzerland and Britain. National newspapers warn of "spiralling refugee costs", Muslim "rapists" and impending Islamist assaults, in response to a record influx of migrants and jihadist attacks across Europe. Despite a largely successful integration model, traditionally centrist parties are tapping into these fears to win votes in the country of 8.75 million people. Encroaching on far-right territory, the popular new leader of the conservative People's Party (ÖVP), Sebastian Kurz, wants to slash migrant benefits and shut all Islamic kindergartens, which he says create "parallel societies". His party was instrumental in prohibiting foreign funding of mosques and pushing through a ban on the Muslim full face veil, due to enter into force in October. That paid off with the ÖVP stealing top spot in opinion polls for the October 15th election. The far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) is now battling for second place with the Social Democrats (SPÖ). The FPÖ meanwhile claims that "Islam has no place in Austria" and has vowed to replace the integration ministry with a department for the "protection of the homeland and dominant culture". "When parties address the issue of Islam, it's always in a negative context," said Vienna City councillor Omar al-Rawi who previously worked as integration representative for Austria's Islamic Community, a key Muslim group. "The populist undertone is always present. It's a shame because Austria used to be a success model for how to deal with Muslims," the 56-year-old from Baghdad told AFP. Austria was the first European country to recognise Islam as an official religion in 1912 following its annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today Islam is the fastest-growing religion, with around 700,000 Muslims in the country -- twice as many as in 2001. Turks make up almost half of them, followed by Bosnians, Chechens, Syrians and Afghans. There are now more Muslim than Catholic children in Vienna's state primary schools. [Source: The Local]

Austria is fast becoming a nation that once again sees itself as the vanguard in defending Europe from Islam. Unlike the siege of Vienna 1683, today Austrians want ironclad measures against Muslim refugees that are direct consequence of Europe's interference in Muslim lands.

Rohingya Crisis: Saudi Arabia Stays Silent on Growing Humanitarian Disaster Despite Oil Interests and Historic Ties

When Rohingya Muslims fled persecution and slaughter in Burma in past decades, tens of thousands found refuge in Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest sites. This time around, Muslim leaders from the Persian Gulf to Pakistan have offered little more than condemnation and urgently needed humanitarian aid. The lack of a stronger response by Muslim-majority countries partly comes down to their lucrative business interests in South East Asia, experts say. Much of the Middle East is also buckling under its own refugee crisis sparked by years of upheaval in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan. More than 500,000 people — roughly half the Rohingya Muslim population in Burma — have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh over the past year, mostly in the last month. The United Nations human rights chief has described Burma's military crackdown and allied Buddhist mob attacks as “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.” Saudi Arabia is already home to around a quarter-million Burmese people who took refuge in the kingdom under the late King Faisal in the 1960s. The kingdom pledged \$15 million in aid to the Rohingya this week. As the world's biggest oil exporter, Saudi Arabia competes with Russia to be China's top crude supplier. Expanding its footprint there requires Burma's help. A recently opened pipeline running through Burma, also known as Myanmar, carries oil from Arab countries and the Caucasus to China's landlocked Yunnan Province. The 771-kilometre (479-mile) pipeline starts at the Bay of Bengal in western Burma's Rakhine state, from where most of the Rohingya have been forced out. In 2011, a subsidiary of state oil giant Saudi Aramco and PetroChina, an arm of China's state-owned CNPC, signed a deal to supply China's southwestern Yunnan Province with up to 200,000 barrels per day of crude oil, just under half of the pipeline's capacity. Saudi Aramco did not immediately respond to a request for comment on shipments through the pipeline. “One could argue that Saudi Arabia is less likely to be outspoken on this (Rohingya) issue because it actually relies on the Burmese government to protect the physical security of the pipeline,” said Bo Kong, a senior associate at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies who has written about China's global petroleum policy. The pipeline became operational in April following years of delays. It allows tankers to bypass the Strait of Malacca, cutting typical voyages by about seven days. A natural gas pipeline from Burma's Shwe gas field runs alongside it. Daniel Wagner, founder of consulting firm Country Risk Solutions, said Saudi Arabia is moving ahead with its economic and political agenda in Burma and Southeast Asia, yet can still “claim to have stood the moral high-ground” by previously taking in refugees and providing financial aid. “The important point is that natural gas and oil flows through Rakhine state,” he said. [Source: The Independent].

The House of Saud has a despicable record, when it comes to protecting the rights of Muslims. The Saudi regime is actively involved in Syria and Yemen in spilling Muslim blood. Does the plight of Rohingya Muslims matter when lucrative oil contracts are at stake with China?

Pakistan's New Leader Criticizes US Policy while Praising China in UN Speech

Pakistan's new Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, in his first address before the UN General Assembly on September 21, rejected the new US war strategy in neighboring Afghanistan while praising China's growing economic role in the region. An important component of the White House's recently unveiled strategy to try to win the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan was a threat to withdraw aid and other support for Pakistan if Islamabad does not shut down what US officials say are Afghan Taliban "safe havens" on its territory. "Taliban 'safe havens' are located not in Pakistan, but in the large tracts of territory controlled by the Taliban in Afghanistan," Abassi said, repeating Islamabad's warning that Pakistani is "not prepared to be anyone's scapegoat." Abassi said Islamabad is ready to work with Kabul to "end all cross-border attacks," and it will continue pursuing its domestic war against terrorists, which he claimed has "cleared out tribal areas of almost all militant groups" at the cost of thousands of civilian and military lives. "What Pakistan is not prepared to do is to fight the Afghan war on Pakistan's soil. Nor can we endorse any failed strategy that will prolong and intensify the suffering of the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan," he said. "Apart from the people of Afghanistan, Pakistan and its people have suffered the most from four decades of foreign intervention and civil wars in Afghanistan," he said. "These wars have blighted our country with the flow of extremists and terrorists, guns and drugs as well as an influx of millions of refugees." "Having suffered and sacrificed so much," he said, "it is especially galling for Pakistan to be blamed for the military or political stalemate in Afghanistan." Abassi asserted that neither side of the Afghan conflict will be able to win the war through military might, making peace negotiations the only way to end the 16-year conflict. "No one desires peace in Afghanistan more than Pakistan," he said, noting that his country currently hosts over 3 million refugees from Afghanistan. While criticizing White House policies in his speech without specifically naming the United States or US President Donald Trump, Abassi spoke with warmth about China's leader and Beijing's growing role fostering economic growth in his country and the South Asian region. "The vision of shared growth spelled out in Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road initiative offers a solid path to prosperity and a model of South-South cooperation worthy of emulation," he said. "Pakistan's economy has recorded a remarkable revival in the past four years. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will further contribute to our economic upsurge," he said. "This will expand exponentially as the Pakistan-China partnership extends beyond energy and transportation to many other sectors," he said. "Pakistan's integration into the Eurasian Belt and Road network will provide a firm foundation for Pakistan's rapid economic development." [Source: Washington Post]

For too long have Pakistani leaders railed against the US, and advocated good relations with China. The truth is that both China and America are using Pakistan for their own interests. It is no good to roar like a lion only; the time has come to show teeth.