

Headlines:

- **Trump Supporters in South Carolina would Ban Islam and Shut Mosques**
- **US Envoy Says West is Not at War with Islam**
- **Afghanistan is on the Brink**

Details:

Trump Supporters in South Carolina would Ban Islam and Shut Mosques

As Donald Trump prepares for the next Republican contest in South Carolina, new polls underscore a support base in the state for the tycoon that is often homophobic, largely Islamophobic and deeply conservative. Data collated just days before Republicans on Saturday cast their votes for a presidential nominee, suggests a full 44 per cent of the tycoon's supporters think Islam should be banned in the US, 40 per cent would shut down mosques and around 60 per cent said a national database of Muslims should be established. The data, compiled by the North Carolina-based Public Policy Polling, found that 16 per cent of Mr Trump's supporters believed white people were a "superior race". This was more than any of the other candidates' supporters. The poll found Mr Trump far ahead of his Republican rivals as he seeks to seize on the momentum of his huge win in New Hampshire and coming second in Iowa. The poll put him on 35 points, compared to 18 per cent for Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, 10 per cent for John Kasich and seven points for both Jeb Bush and Ben Carson. "Donald Trump doesn't seem to have lost any support in South Carolina following Saturday night's debate," said Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling. "He has a pretty consistent across the board lead with the different segments of the Republican electorate." [Source: The Independent]

Trump is not a minority candidate as portrayed by the mainstream media. His extreme views on Islam resonate with many Americans, and just goes to show how Islamophobic America has become, since President W Bush launched a new crusade in the Muslim world.

US Envoy Says West is Not at War with Islam

President Barack Obama's point-man for Muslim communities has called for re-doubling efforts to debunk the myth propagated by those who seek to justify violence through religion that the West is at war with Islam. "Militarisation of religion is very dangerous as it takes away all the wonderful redeeming spiritual aspects which are the very basis of a religion," said Shaarik Zafar, the US special representative to Muslim communities, at a roundtable with Pakistani journalists on Wednesday. "It is a dangerous, dangerous game whenever people try to militarise religion. And right now, you have seen it in your part of the world that there are rising sectarian tensions," he said. Zafar, who is of Pakistani origin, was appointed in as a special representative at the US Department of State in July 2014. He is responsible for driving US Secretary of State John Kerry's engagements with Muslim communities around the world. Zafar, nonetheless, pointed out that religion and religious people could play an important role in society outside of theology. "When it comes to making strong statements on issues of health, such as vaccination programmes, resolving disputes, and other things, religious people have been playing an incredibly important role. And so we have to recognise that." He pointed out that the only way to counter those who were using religion to promote violence was to highlight voices which called for peace and tolerance. The US envoy highlighted that despite their overt differences and varying narratives, most terror

groups, including the likes of al Qaeda and Da'ish, promote the narrative that the West was at war with Islam. "The single thing that they do, one commonality, is the false claim that there is a war against Islam and that is being waged by the West and their allies, including the government of Pakistan," Zafar said. [Source: Pakistan Tribune].

Zafar is no different to the Pakistani leadership that has tried but failed to convince the Pakistani people that the West is not at war with Islam. Indeed one has to look no further than the intensity of drone strikes in FATA under the Obama administration to draw an obvious conclusion that America is at war with Islam.

Afghanistan is on the Brink

Afghanistan is worse off today than it was before the 2001 U.S. invasion, according to a report released last month by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). The Taliban now controls about 30 percent of Afghanistan — more than it controlled at any other time since 2001. Public confidence in the Afghan national unity government is waning because of continued attacks in Kabul and the threat of violence from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The economy is in free fall. The partial withdrawal of foreign military infrastructure means that hundreds of thousands of people are now unemployed or soon will be. Corruption among government leaders remains rampant. In Kabul people don't need a 230-page report to understand the deteriorating security situation. On Feb. 1 a Taliban suicide bomber killed at least 20 police officers in an attack near a police complex, wounding 29 others. It was the latest in a series of assaults in the Afghan capital this year and yet more proof that the U.S.-led "war on terrorism" is not working. A more effective way to combat violent extremism is to offer something in its place, and I don't mean weapons. Every time a suicide bomber detonates his charge in Kabul, I am reminded that Afghanistan must do a better job on the battlefield of ideas. That is the only war in which we stand a chance of winning. Young people in Afghanistan are looking for opportunities, hope and inspiration. And if they can't find those things, they will leave. They are already fleeing the country in unprecedented numbers. "Afghans accounted for 20 percent of the million-plus migrants to the European Union in 2015, second only to Syrians fleeing their own civil war," the SIGAR report said. Afghanistan issued more than 2,000 passports a day in Kabul last year, a sixfold increase over 2014, mostly to men and women under the age of 30, according to SIGAR. And last fall Afghanistan's Refugees and Repatriations Ministry launched a social media campaign in an effort to stop the exodus of young people. "Don't go," the ads implored. "Stay with me. There might be no return!" But many Afghans would rather take their chances in another country than stay in or return to their homeland, where the odds are stacked against them. If 14 years of foreign intervention and billions of dollars in international aid have taught us anything, it is that answers to Afghanistan's problems are not going to come from abroad. If we are to build a lasting and sustainable democracy, we will have to do it ourselves. [Source: Aljazeera]

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ﴾

"Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of Allah . So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved - unto Hell they will be gathered."
[TMQ: Al Anfal: 36]