



Trump suggests fallen soldiers' families are to blame for his contracting COVID-19

By: Aysha Qamar

A day after what people are calling the "Rose Garden Superspreader," Donald Trump welcomed Gold Star families (relatives of U.S. military members who died in the line of duty) to the White House. Like other events Trump has participated in, masks were out of sight despite the increasing number of coronavirus cases nationwide. But that isn't the alarming part of the story: The week following both events, Trump and at least 10 members of his administration tested positive for the virus after attending the White House Rose Garden event on Sept. 26.



Despite ending up in the hospital because of his symptoms, Trump of course claimed the virus is overexaggerated and nothing to worry about. While gasping for air,

Trump still remains too stubborn to admit the reality of the virus and how he got it. In an interview with Fox News Thursday, he suggested that he may have gotten

the virus after meeting with some Gold Star families. Trump claimed that at least 35 families "came up to" him and told him stories about

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Why Muslim-Americans Should Vote for Biden

By Yousuf Ali

In November, the country is going to take a crucial decision which will shape its course for many years to come. I'm of course referring to the presidential election between the incumbent Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden. In order to get a sense of the importance of this election, we need only look at the state of the country and the



world itself. Because of incompetent and inefficient leadership, the world is currently paralyzed by a pandemic which has killed 100s of thousands of people world wide with America taking a disproportionate amounts of death.

Without a doubt, some harm from this virus

was unavoidable, but the blatant disparate impact against the United States makes it so we cannot exempt the leadership from a significant portion of the responsibility for these deaths. In addition, when deciding how to vote, we have to be clear about one thing, only

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Hindutva Ganged Up Against Rashida Tlaib



By: Dr. Aslam Abdullah

Bhutada family in Sugarland, TX, was the major donor for Brenda Jones, challenging Rashida Tlaib in Michigan for the simple reason that Tlaib was a Muslim Palestinian. They supported Jones because they hated Muslims.

Why is Hindutva lobby

that claims to represent Hinduism against a Palestinian-American Congresswoman, Rashida Tlaib? Did she ever speak against Hinduism? Did she ever criticize Hindu idols? Did she ever talk about a word against Hindu Americans or Hindu Indians? No one can

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Niraj Antani: Hindutva's Republican in Ohio

By: Pieter Friedrich

When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump took the stage together at last year's "Howdy, Modi" event in Houston, Texas, a rising young star in the Republican Party filmed from a seat near the front.

It was "incredible being with 50,000 fellow Indian Americans in Houston," wrote Ohio State Representative Niraj Antani, who was one of the few Indian-American elected officials to join the event. Like Modi's previous two mega-receptions in the US — in California in 2015 and in New York in 2014 — this was one that was vociferously protested. While the stadium was packed with cheering supporters of the controversial prime minister, up to 15,000 protested outside.

Only a week before the 22 September 2019 event, over 60 lawmakers



were predicted to attend, but less than half of that ultimately showed. Out of the five Indian-Americans in US Congress, only Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi attended, warmly shaking hands with Modi on stage as the two met for

the third time. Perhaps the only other federal or state level Indian-American politician present was Michigan State Representative Padma Kuppa, who moderated a post-reception panel. Protestors outside were particularly galvanized

by the Modi regime's draconian lockdown in Jammu and Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority region in Hindu-majority India, just a month earlier. On 5 August, the government scrapped the constitution's Article 370, which had granted

the region semi-autonomy for the previous 74 years as the condition for its accession to India. The action was accompanied by a mass arrest of the entire civil society — political, religious, even business leaders — and

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www.MuslimObserver.com

Established in 1998

FOUNDER

A. RAHEMAN NAKADAR, M.D.

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dr. Aslam Abdullah

dr.aslamabdullah@gmail.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Aysha Qamar

editor@muslimobserver.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Javeria Ahmed

marketing@muslimobserver.com

COPY EDITOR

Nida Ashraf

samana@muslimobserver.com

CHICAGO COORDINATOR

Mujeeb Osman

chicago@muslimobserver.com

HOUSTON COORDINATOR

Ilyas Choudry

houston@muslimobserver.com

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AFMI's Virtual Convention a stunning success, Draws a worldwide audience.

By: TMO Staff

The American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin (AFMI) held its 30 annual convention through web connecting speakers from India, the US, and Saudi Arabia, with an audience drawn worldwide. The six-hour-three-session conference heard 19 speakers over two days on the theme of Safety, Strength, and Solidarity. Among the guest speakers were

- Dr. Mustapha Faizan (India),
- Dr. Khaled Al-Maena (Saudi Arabia),
- Dr. Sana Qutubuddin (NY),
- Mr. Najme Minhaj (CA),
- Sunita Viswanath (NY),
- Ms. Julia Shearson (OH),
- Dr. Aslam Abdullah (CA),
- Miss Ayesha Renna (India),
- Dr. Fatima Ahmed (MI),
- Dr. Maryam Ahmed (VA),
- Dr. Mohammed Shaahab Uddin (IL),
- Prof. Nadia Ahmed,
- Babu Bhai Khalfan (NY)
- Seba Patel (NY)
- Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib (MI).

AFMI speakers included Dr. Farida Ejaz (Chair, AFMI Convention), Dr. Abdur Rehman Nakadar (Founding Trustee), Dr. Akber Mohammed (President, AFMI), Dr. Muhammad Sanaullah Khan, Mr. Saeed Patel, and Dr. Aslam Abdullah.

Rabia Khan of managemysystem.com choreographed the convention with input from Ayub Khan, an Afmi past president.

The presentation and speeches of speakers would soon be available on Facebook



Dr. Faizan Mustafa (India)



Mr. Khaled Al-Maena (Saudi Arabia).

and youtube.com. The speakers focused on five major issues related to the theme. They were educational upliftment, human rights, youth and women empowerment, interfaith dialogue, and political participation. Dr. Khaled called for a change in Muslim thinking with intensity in educational upliftment, emphasizing science, technology, and sports. Dr. Faizan Mustapha refuted the narrative that Muslims were responsible for Hindutva's rise and urged the younger generation to focus on education.

Dr. Sana Qutubuddin (NY) gave a detailed account of Hindutva forces in India and the USA and urged the audience to work with democratic groups to

restrain and expose them.

Dr. Najme Minhaj (CA) referred to the life of the Prophet to make education a priority. At the same time, Sunita Viswanath (NY) clarified the distinction between Hindutva and Hinduism and asserted that the Hindutva forces under Modi and the RSS violated Hinduism's fundamental principle of the entire world as one family. Ms. Julia Shearson (OH) of CAIR explained the nature of interfaith and the strategies to promote religious communities' dialogue. Dr. Aslam Abdullah (CA) laid down the divine character on human rights.

Miss Ayesha Renna (India) talked about issues related to youth

empowerment. Dr. Fatima Ahmed (MI), and Dr. Maryam Ahmed (VA), in their joint presentation, urged the younger audience to join the AFMI and

Dr. Mohammed Shaahab Uddin (IL), in his motivational remark, called for sacrifice and commitment for a better and educated Muslim Indian community.

Prof. Nadia Ahmed urged Muslims to get involved in electoral politics and make their voices heard. Babu Bhai Khalfan (NY) introduced his book project to motivate young Muslims to become high achievers. Seba Patel (NY), a young journalism graduate, focused on women's participation in all aspects of life. Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib (MI) assured her continued support to the cause of human rights.

Dr. Farida Ejaz, Dr. Akbar Muhammad, Dr. Nakadar, and Dr. Sanaullah explained AFMI's role in bringing about 100 percent literacy to India's Muslims. They talked about preserving the dignity of Muslims of India, defending human rights, engaging in interfaith dialogue, and empowering youth and women in social work.

AFMI holds two major conventions annually, one in the US and the other in India. This year the US convention was expected to be in Cleveland, OH, but due to COVID-19, the committee decided to hold it virtually. AFMI's annual Indian convention would now take place next year as India's health conditions are not conducive for it this year.

Saudi Arabia Reopens Mecca

By: Zaid Aleem

The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia has finally reopened the doors of Islam's holiest site in Mecca on Oct. 4, marking the end of restrictions placed in March 2020 as a result of the novel coronavirus pandemic. As the world continues its battle against the pandemic, the Saudi Government has decided to stagger the re-opening in phases; allowing no more than 6,000 pilgrims a day to enter the Grand Mosque currently to perform the Umrah and limiting this to only Saudi citizens and residents.

The second phase of the reopening will come in effect on Oct. 18, where up to 40,000 residents and citizens of the Saudi Kingdom will be allowed for prayers and up to 15,000 to perform Umrah. Contingent on the global situation, Muslims from across the world



may be able to perform the Umrah by November 1, 2020. According to the Saudi Hajj Minister, groups of 20 to 25 individuals will each be accompanied by a health worker and medical teams in case of emergency.

Arrangements are in place to sterilize and clean the premises of the mosque multiple times a

day. An online application was launched by the authorities for interested residents to sign up to reserve a date and time to avoid over-crowding, Al Jazeera reported. To keep people at a distance from each other and avoid spreading the virus, strips of tape have been stuck to the ground around the Kaaba, showing people where to walk.

The Grand Mosque is one of the holiest sites for Muslims from all over the world and attracts about 2.5 million pilgrims a year for a week-long ritual that is mandatory once-in-a-lifetime for able-bodied Muslims. In contrast, this year saw about 1,000 pilgrims that took part in this holy journey after they were tested for the virus and

quarantined.

Despite acting quickly and closing down the borders, as of this report, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has seen more than 337,000 positive cases and over 4,900 COVID-19 related deaths, data from John Hopkins University found.

Honoring Ginsburg

By: TMO Staff

She had a voice, and she amplified it, had a logic, and used it. She had a passion for justice and equality, and she displayed it. She committed to human dignity, and she fought for it until her last breath. Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-2018) served the U.S. justice in a long career as an attorney, professor, advocate of gender equality, and, ultimately, a Supreme Court Justice.

Born to a Ukrainian immigrant father and New York-born mother, Ginsburg was the second of the two daughters. Her mom wanted her to be a history teacher. Still, the mother's death before her high school graduation led to a different path that not only changed her life but the lives of millions who earned for gender equality, justice, and human dignity. She went to law school after the birth of her daughter and faced discrimination based on gender. Several times the faculty or the judges rejected her. At Harvard school of law, one professor told her,



"what are you doing in law school, and why are you wasting a man's seat in the class."

As an attorney, she advocated gender equality. She fought for equality in wages, and she also fought for a father's right to receive the pension of his deceased wife for taking care of their children. She challenged the military norms to hire men only, and she challenged an Oklahoma statute that set different minimum drinking ages for men and women.

In the country's judi-

cial history, the court imposed intermediate scrutiny on laws discriminating based on gender. At her intervention, the court changed the validity of voluntary jury duty for women on the ground that that participation was a citizen's vital governmental service and not optional for women.

In law, she built cautiously on precedent rather than pushing the Constitution towards her vision. Ginsburg advocated using foreign law and norms to shape U.S. law in judicial opinions,

which many of her conservative colleagues rejected. She believed that wisdom is not the monopoly of the U.S. only.

Clinton nominated her as Supreme Court Justice in 1993. From August 10, 1993, until September 18, this popular iconic served as a reason and justice voice. Her service will remind the coming generation that nothing can prevent them from rising to the top and changing the world.



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The Lebanese Predicament

by *Bashshar Haydar*

Recent protests in Lebanon have shown a strong and widespread rejection of the status quo in the country's politics. But if that is the case, why do voters in the country seem to keep electing the same political parties and leaders they think are corrupt and incompetent?

During French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Beirut in the wake of the devastating Aug. 4 explosion, a Lebanese journalist directed blame at Macron for meeting with people the journalist described as corrupt Lebanese political leaders. Macron's reply was, "Don't blame me for that; you voted for them."

Macron's apt observation raises a serious question that most Lebanese people evade. Voting ballots in Lebanese parliamentary elections are, barring a small number of exceptions, properly counted. Elections are relatively competitive, and the Lebanese media is free,

diversified, and vocal. Moreover, Lebanese laws and practices place limited barriers to the establishment of new political parties. Lebanese democracy is not, then, a fake or semi-fake democracy, as is the case in countries like Syria, Iran, Egypt, or Russia. Yet in the latest parliamentary elections, held in 2018, only one seat out of 128 was won by an anti-establishment candidate.

So why do the Lebanese keep voting for leaders they say they want to get rid of? The answer lies not in the country's electoral laws but in a mutual unwillingness for rival communities to make sacrifices in order to effect change.

Complex Politics

Two common explanations are normally offered for this phenomenon, but they are neither independently nor jointly satisfactory. One explanation blames the country's electoral laws, which include the shape and size of elector-

al districts as well as the representational system. It is true that various Lebanese electoral laws implemented in the past two decades have been unsatisfactory. In many cases, these laws were designed to cater to the needs and interests of the ruling political class. Nonetheless, if a sizable majority of the Lebanese wanted change, these laws would not by themselves have thwarted such a wish. This is true regardless of the gerrymandering of electoral districts and regardless of whether one adopts a majoritarian or proportional representation system, both of which have been tried.

The other explanation often given for the inability of Lebanese democracy to deliver change is the system of strict sectarian quotas in the parliament. But this still does not explain why a majority of voters is unable to elect different political leaders and parties than the ones they vote for over and over. The allocation

of seats to sects, and sectarian voting as such, should not prevent the majority in each sect from turning the tables on corrupt and inefficient leaders and replacing them with better alternatives from within the same sect.

Lebanese politics is hardly a straightforward affair, but despite its complexity, one can plausibly assert that had there been a majority in favor of political reforms, they would have materialized. The only possible explanation for the lack of change is the lack of a majority for it.

This lack does not imply that the Lebanese are not sincere in asserting their dissatisfaction with the ruling elite. To understand the predicament of the Lebanese, it is helpful to see them as people trapped in a kind of a Prisoner's Dilemma where reasonable people cannot avoid making non-optimal choices. The dilemma for the Lebanese is that it is risky

for them to abandon or weaken their current community leaders unless they are assured that members of other communities will do the same. Without such an assurance, the group that abandons its leaders when others do not will emerge as a loser.

Given the lack of unified opposition, voting for unestablished candidates is likely to scatter the votes on various competing alternatives. This scattering weakens the relative political power of the group in question unless the other groups also abandon their established leaders and also scatter their votes.

Missed Opportunities

In October 2019, people took to the streets demanding change in response to worsening economic conditions. The demonstrations evidenced a strong and widespread rejection of the status quo. They also provided an opportunity for rival communities to

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Turkey Challenging Russia's Monopoly in the South Caucasus

by Eugene Chausovsky

An escalation in fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region has coincided with Turkey's becoming more directly involved in the conflict – including by allegedly sending in Syrian mercenaries. Ankara's more direct engagement has made the intensifying conflict all the more unpredictable. More importantly, it is an indication that Turkey is now playing in the Caucasus – a region that has been part of Russia's Near Abroad.

Fighting has ramped up once again between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh in what has become an increasingly unpredictable environment shaped by the geopolitical effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest round of fighting is particularly serious given its larger scale and scope outside of the usual conflict zone, as well as an increased political and security involvement on the part of Turkey. The growing internationalization of the conflict – including the alleged involvement of Turkish-facilitated mercenaries from Syria – raises the potential for other major players like Russia to get more directly involved and risks rippling out beyond the Caucasus.

Given the strategic nature of the region as a transcontinental energy and infrastructure hub that is susceptible to foreign influence, the United States should work with both local actors and external players – including Turkey, Russia, and Washington's allies in Europe – to reach a diplomatically mediated cease-fire and prevent an escalation and spread of the conflict.

Intensifying Conflict

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan has escalated into violent clashes for the second time within the past four months. The scale of the latest fighting, which broke out Sept. 27, is more deadly than the previous clashes in July, with hundreds of soldiers



and civilians from both sides reportedly killed and countless more wounded. The scope is also larger, with clashes taking place along numerous areas of the Line of Contact and well beyond, including Stepanakert, the largest city in Nagorno-Karabakh, and in Ganja, Azerbaijan's second-largest city.

As with the previous flare-up in July, it is unclear exactly what specific action triggered the latest escalation. Efforts at mediation by the likes of Russia, France, and the United States have so far fallen flat, though Armenia said on Oct. 2 that it was open to a cease-fire brokered by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Azerbaijan, for its part, has made Armenia's withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh a precondition for a cease-fire, and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said Oct. 5 that Turkey must be involved in any future peace process over Nagorno-Karabakh. As of this writing, fighting continues along the front lines.

The same general conditions that affected the environment during the July fighting still stand: Both the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments are facing greater political and economic pressure due to the impact of COVID-19. This is particularly the case for Azerbaijan, which

saw large protests take place in Baku that were both specific to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and eventually took on a broader anti-government tone. On a more strategic level, both Baku and Yerevan still face a clash of national imperatives when it comes to Nagorno-Karabakh: Armenia wants to preserve the status quo of its control over the territory and surrounding areas, while Azerbaijan wants to retake those territories. As diplomatic efforts have failed to produce any traction in recent years and COVID-related pressures have piled up this year, Baku has become more assertive in challenging the status quo from a military standpoint.

Turkey's Growing Involvement

However, a unique factor has emerged in this latest bout of fighting that could change the conflict: the role of Turkey. While Ankara has long been an important player in the Nagorno-Karabakh theater, serving as the main backer and strategic partner for Azerbaijan, it has until now been secondary to Russia, which has served as Armenia's security guarantor (Russia has 5,000 troops stationed in Armenia); as principal mediator of the conflict; and as a supplier of weapons to both the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Moscow has refrained

from intervening directly in Nagorno-Karabakh clashes, but it has been understood that the Kremlin has had significant influence over the shape of the conflict and could become more directly involved if it so chooses.

Now, in the latest escalation of fighting, Turkey has significantly raised its profile in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It has been much more aggressive in its rhetoric backing Azerbaijan, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan encouraging Baku to "liberate its territories" in Nagorno-Karabakh and calling on Armenia to cede its occupation of the territory. Turkey has also been accused of significantly increasing its weapons supplies to Azerbaijan, and it has been reported (though denied by Turkish and Azerbaijani officials) that Turkish soldiers and aircraft have been directly involved in the fighting.

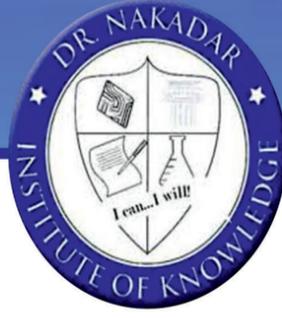
But perhaps the key point of difference this time around is the widespread allegations of the involvement of mercenaries from Syria that Turkey has reportedly facilitated to the conflict zone. According to various reports, up to 1,000 Syrian fighters employed by a private Turkish security firm have been re-deployed to Nagorno-Karabakh. These fighters were reportedly offered three- to

six-month contracts at a salary of 10,000 Turkish lira (\$1,285) per month to guard observation posts and energy facilities in Azerbaijan near the Line of Contact. Some fighters were reportedly transferred to Nagorno-Karabakh in mid-September, several days or even weeks before the latest outburst in fighting – insinuating that this escalation could have been planned by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Both Turkey and Azerbaijan have vehemently denied the reports of Syrian mercenaries being involved, and Ankara had previously accused Armenia of deploying Syrian and Kurdish militants on its side of the conflict. However, there seems to be less evidence for the latter allegations as compared to those tied to the Syrian mercenaries on the Azerbaijani side, which has been cross-verified by several sources. Thus, it is difficult to verify the precise nature of these allegations, but it is becoming increasingly clear there is at least some veracity to them.

Turkey has numerous possible motivations to increase its involvement in the region. The Turks are hemmed in by the Russians in Syria, and the Azerbaijani/Armenia conflict gives Ankara leverage in broader dealings with the Kremlin. It also is a way for Erdogan

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Why Are America's Progressive Arab Movements Supporting Trump?

By Nafeez Ahmed

Donald Trump is scared that he will lose on 3 November. Behind that fear is something even greater; most of all, he is scared that the Muslims are coming. And he's right. What other reason could there be for Trump's quiet but inexorable effort to capture the Arab American vote during this campaign?

That effort focuses predominantly on Michigan, one of a few crucial swing states including Ohio and Florida. How Michigan's quarter of a million voters of Middle Eastern-heritage vote will be pivotal in determining who wins the White House. After all, Trump won by razor-thin margins in 2016. Just 107,000 votes across those three swing states effectively decided the election.

That's why in August, John Akouri – who chairs the Lebanese American Chamber of Commerce – was appointed Co-Chair of the Trump-Pence Presidential Campaign in Michigan as part of a grand strategy to divide the Arab vote. Akouri has played this role supporting Republican candidates many times before to great effect. In the 2016 elections, it was Akouri who helped to ensure that Trump won the state of Michigan from his rival Hillary Clinton, by fewer than 11,000 votes.

Now he is set to play the same role again. Since his appointment, he has met personally with both Trump and Pence, as well as Republican Party chairwoman Ronna McDaniel; Donald Trump Jr of the Trump Organisation; and Lara Lea Trump, Trump's daughter-in-law and campaign advisor, among many other top Trump officials and advisors.

There is an even bigger ace up Trump's sleeve, though: an unwitting and unlikely ally in the form of parts of America's major progressive Arab and Muslim movements. Since early September, there have been a series



of accelerating attacks against EMGAGE – the largest American Muslim political action committee (PAC) mobilising a million Muslim votes in support of Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden – by a number of progressive Arab American groups. However, these attacks could end up gifting Trump an election-deciding victory in Michigan, as well as other important swing states.

When the NGO American Muslims for Palestine, for instance, puts out a call “prohibiting” Muslims from working with EMGAGE, it risks sealing not just the fate of American Muslims, but of all minorities across the United States, and of Palestine itself. It is effectively encouraging American Muslim voters to stay at home on 3 November, doing Akouri's job for him. This could kill the Biden campaign at the most crucial time.

The challenge has been brought to the fore in the past week. Following Trump's refusal to commit to a peaceful transition of power after the elections – justified by the idea that the Biden campaign might “rig” postal ballots – the president moved rapidly to consolidate control over the Supreme Court with his nomination of Federal Appeals Court Judge Amy Coney Barrett to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died on 18 September. This was

after admitting that his core strategy would be to take disputed election results to that very Court.

All of this suggests that Trump already anticipates losing the presidential election, but only by margins sufficiently narrow that would permit him to justify overturning a Biden victory through a Supreme Court under Republican control. As former Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Well wrote in an urgent letter to his friends and family: “The only way that I can see that this threat can be eliminated is to vote for Biden. It will not be enough to just not vote for Trump. Any basis for a contested election can only really be eliminated by the election not being close.”

In other words, the only way to remove Trump from office is to widen the margin of victory to such a degree that contesting the results becomes so transparently implausible as to be politically impossible.

In 2016, the biggest reason that Trump won is because registered Democrat voters simply didn't turn out on election day. Learning from this lesson, right now EMGAGE is leading the only mass campaign to mobilise a million American Muslims to vote against Trump in the forthcoming election, with grassroots efforts focusing on Michigan, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio,

Florida, Georgia, New York, Illinois, Texas and California. If those voters are led to believe that working with EMGAGE is equivalent to betraying the Palestinian cause, we should not be surprised if their disillusion leads them not to vote at all on 3 November.

Curiously, the anti-EMGAGE campaign began with the activist Professor Sami Al-Arian who helped George W Bush win the state of Florida. On 20 August, in a video released by the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in Florida, Al-Arian – currently exiled in Turkey after enduring a decade-long process of persecution under what many civil rights groups considered to be spurious terrorism charges – complained about EMGAGE: “We need to expose those people inside us trying to take credit for something they do not deserve. I have seen some of these people today they're trying to promote Biden and to speak on behalf of the Muslim community, particularly an organisation like EMGAGE... which they try to dance with Zionists and try to infiltrate our community and claim they are going to bring a million votes.” [sic]

In this video, Al-Arian appeared to explicitly oppose the idea of bringing American Muslims out to vote for Biden, but offered no meaningful alternative as to how to

prevent a Trump second term. This may not ultimately be surprising, because before he fell out of favour with the US authorities, Al-Arian was very much like Akouri.

He campaigned vigorously on behalf of the Republican Party at mosques and Muslim cultural centres, and would later boast of how the Muslim vote was responsible for Bush's victory in Florida by very tight margins: “We certainly delivered him many more than 537 votes.” Al-Arian would go on to join the Bush administration's American Muslim Council, and participated in meetings at the White House complex with Bush advisor Karl Rove. His flirtations with Republicans did not cease even after all the draconian measures against Muslim communities at home and abroad post-9/11. At some point after 9/11, he was reportedly meeting in private with Republican power broker Grover Norquist, a man with whom he appeared to have worked closely.

Al-Arian's urging of American Muslims to boycott EMGAGE was followed by a series of stories by Electronic Intifada, arguing that various members of EMGAGE's leadership had engaged previously with Jewish groups with close ties to Israel. American Muslim support for EMGAGE's election campaigning was thus equated with a betrayal of Palestine.

But is it really the EMGAGE campaign that represents the fundamental existential threat to Palestinians at this time? While Biden's approach to the Palestinian question may well be disappointingly tepid in many respects, it is still far ahead of Trump's, and superior to any previous Democrat Party policy on Israel-Palestine.

Bernie Sanders' Jewish outreach director, Joel Rubin, has described Biden's Middle East

Cont. on page 12

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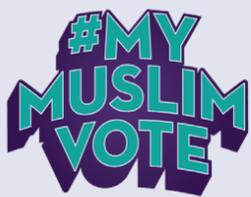


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WHEN WE ALL VOTE

The Squad questions why death threats against Republican lives are taken more seriously than theirs

By: TMO Staff

Tweets hoping that Donald Trump dies have been circulating on Twitter since last Friday, after Trump tweeted confirming he tested positive for COVID-19 on Oct. 2. But instead of ignoring them, as Twitter does for many comments and threats directed at people of color, the social media giant retweeted a post mentioning that tweets referencing death wishes are against its policies. “Tweets that wish or hope for death, serious bodily harm or fatal disease against *anyone* are not allowed and will need to be removed,” the post said.

The post quickly garnered criticism, with many accusing Twitter of having a double standard when it comes to threats affecting white individuals and people of color. Democratic Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley, and Rashida Tlaib—known as ‘The Squad’—joined the conversation to express their views on the issue as well. All four women of color serving in the House have faced a number of threats due to their identity and ideology. “So... you mean to tell us you could’ve done this the whole time?” New York Rep. Ocasio-Cortez tweeted in reply to the announcement.

Minnesota Rep. Omar, who has received countless threats as the first hijab-wearing member



of Congress, replied to the same announcement with a gif that read, “Excuse me?” Omar has made headlines throughout her fledgling career in Congress for being targeted by Trump, his supporters, and other Republicans for not being American enough. False tweets have consistently been aimed at her, in which she has been depicted not only as burning the American flag but as a perpetrator of the Sept. 11 attacks.

While Twitter claims that anyone who encounters abuse should report it immediately in order for it to be addressed, according to The Hill, Omar has repeatedly taken to Twitter to share death threats, including one in August 2019. The policy is not new and death threats have always fallen under the category of abuse behavior policy on the

site. However, disparities are clear when it comes to which posts get removed and flagged, and how often. “We hear the voices who feel that we’re enforcing some policies inconsistently. We agree we must do better, and we are working together inside to do so,” Twitter’s Safety account noted.

Additionally, Trump has repeatedly called for Omar and other members of the squad to “go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came” in his history of racist and xenophobic tweets. Yet no action has come as a result of his and his supporters’ repeated racist attacks, nasty language, and threats. Although it should not matter, while Rep. Omar came to the U.S. as a young refugee, Reps Pressley, Tlaib, and Ocasio-Cortez were all born in the U.S.—

meaning the ‘disastrous’ country Trump would like them to return to is his own.

“Seriously though, this is messed up,” Michigan Rep. Tlaib said in her own response. “The death threats towards us should have been taking [sic] more seriously by @TwitterComms.”

According to CNN, a quick search on Twitter still results in tweets from users calling for the death of the four congresswomen, with a majority specifically addressing Tlaib and Omar. “I hope you both hang for TREASON!” one tweet said.

Members of the Squad weren’t the only ones noticing the difference in how the social media site responded to alleged threats against Trump. “Does this also go for Black and Brown women who have long been and

continue to be harassed and threatened with assault and death on this platform or nah? I think no. Because I see those same accounts still up. Still causing harm. Your *anyone* is disingenuous,” filmmaker Ava DuVernay said on Twitter.

A spokesperson for Twitter addressed the criticism to CNN and said: “At Twitter, it is our top priority to improve the health of the public conversation, and that includes ensuring the safety of people who use our service. Abuse and harassment have no place on Twitter.” Additionally, they said their policies “do not tolerate content that wishes, hopes or expresses a desire for death, serious bodily harm or fatal disease against an individual or group of people. If we identify accounts that violate these rules, we will take enforcement action.”

Funny how a quick search on Twitter finds abuse against the congresswomen easily, but the social media site claims that such content is removed when seen. Twitter clearly has a double standard. If that weren’t true, content about the Proud Boys and other hate groups would also violate their terms and conditions. Violence isn’t tolerated in most spaces—until it comes to Black and brown lives. Twitter needs to do better. We, as America, need to do better.

The Taliban Deal & U.S.-Jihadist Negotiations

By Kamran Bokhari

The Trump Administration’s agreement with the Afghan Taliban represents the first-ever substantive peace negotiation effort between the United States and a jihadist movement. The intra-Afghan dialogue component of this process will prove to be extremely difficult because the country is about to undergo another regime change. Assuming the negotiations succeed — which is not a certainty — and given that the Taliban want to alter



the current Afghan state into a theocracy while the other side wants to

preserve as much of the current democratic setup as possible, the likely

compromise will be a Sunni Afghan version of the Islamic Republic of

Iran.

Washington needs to ensure that the negotiating process does not break down as well as that the Taliban are counterbalanced by its opponents. More importantly, this experiment with the Afghan Taliban could serve as a template for future negotiations with nationalist jihadists in other theaters as a way to counter transnational jihadist forces such as ISIS and al Qaeda.

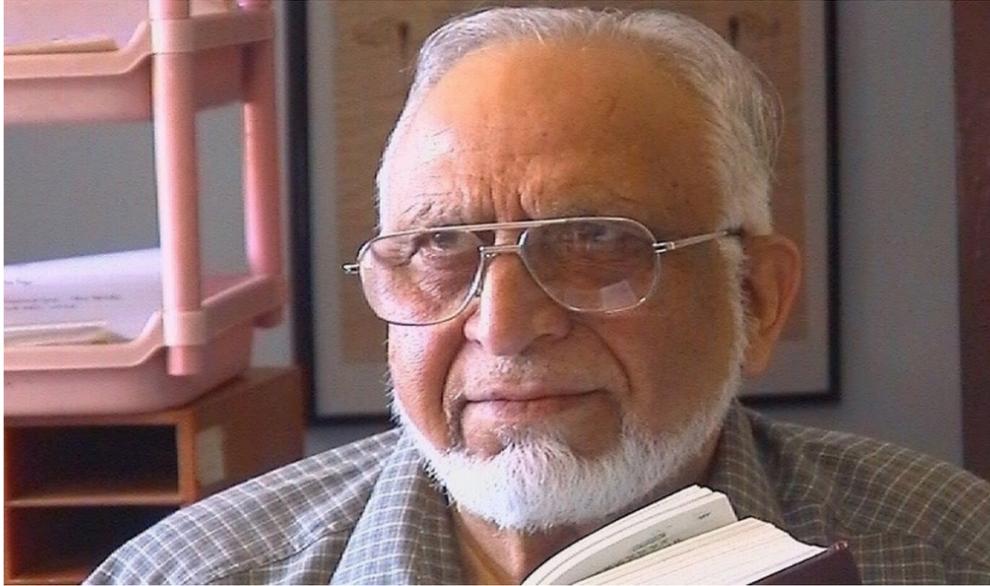
Dr. Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad: Australia's Most Honored Muslim

by Dr. Aslam Abdullah

Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad migrated to Australia 50 years back in 1971. He is a founder and member of various organizations in Australia and worldwide. On his exemplary service to the community, he has been awarded the medal of the order of Australia in 2020.

It was the winter of December 1992, the deadliest winter of India. On the sixth day of this unforgettable month, Hindu nationalists raided the 16th century Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. They demolished it brick by brick, leading to a chain of events that forever changed the country. That day's events would lead to pogroms against Muslims in which 2,000 Indians got killed.

The American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin was in Delhi for its annual Convention to recognize the highest achievers in tenth and 12th grades from



India. The education of Muslims was the central theme, but the reference of the demolished mosque was inevitable. The first day sessions focussed on the general plight of Muslims. One of the speakers gave a comprehensive talk on conditions leading to the demolition of the masjid. He broke down several times describing the illiteracy, poverty, powerlessness, and persecution of Muslims in independent India. Concluding

his speech, he asked Muslim leaders and intellectuals, "why did they let this happen? And asked their counterparts in the Hindu community, "how long will you continue to let it happen." The audience was mesmerized and speechless. After the speech, there was absolute silence, which still rings in my ears until this day.

That was Dr. Qazi Ashfaq Ahmed, an Australian citizen of Indian Origin. A caring man,

a dedicated community leader, a humanitarian in its real sense, a Quranic scholar, a passionate patriarch of a large family, and a compassionate intellectual, whom Australia recognized this year worthy of a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), the highest honor given to a civilian in the country.

Dr Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad OAM, 90, is a retired professor of mechanical engineering. A Quranic scholar and long

time community leader received on Tuesday 8 September 2020 by Margaret Beazley, the NSW Governor.

The award was announced on 26 January earlier this year. The investiture ceremony, delayed due to the pandemic, took place in September at the Government House in Sydney under COVID-19 restrictions.

Dr. Ahmad, professor and head of the department of mechanical engineering in Kashmir, was forced to leave his job and arrived in Australia in 1971 and has been at the forefront of building Islamic institutions, founding community organizations, and promoting interfaith harmony for almost half a century. He is a close family friend. His son, Zia Ahmed, runs Australia's most famous Muslim newspaper, the Australian Muslim Times.

"I feel very honored but also glad that the

Cont on page 12.

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Data finds COVID-19 cases on a rise in the U.S.

by Zaid Aleem

To date, the novel coronavirus pandemic has impacted more than 37.5 million people globally. Additionally, over a million deaths have been tied to this deadly pandemic which seems to be on the rise again in the U.S., according to data from Johns Hopkins University Center for Systems Science and Engineering. According to CNN, 31 states as of Oct. 12 have reported a

rise in COVID-19 cases compared to the previous week. Of these, nine states have reported record high COVID-19 hospitalizations including Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

These worrisome figures follow a couple of months of steady progress. The national hospitalization figures were at a high of close to 52,000 cases per

month in July and fell by over 20,000 the next two months, according to a website that serves as a data source to John Hopkins and the White House. Despite the positive trends at the time, the absolute number of hospitalizations, cases and deaths remained high.

Additionally, as schools, colleges and many states reopen after being shut for most of the summer to contain the spread, it

has increased the interaction and physical contact between people. This naturally leads to this increase in cases.

As of this report, only three states — Maine, Texas and Washington — have had fewer new cases compared to the previous week, CNN reported. The remaining 16 states are relatively steady. As the 2020 presidential election quickly approaches, public gatherings and events related

to it including political rallies and watch parties are a cause of concern.

The next couple of weeks need to be closely monitored to avoid a surge in cases. As flu season begins and temperatures drop more in-person interactions will transition from indoor to outdoor spaces.

Cont. from page 11.
Dr. Qazi Ashfaq

tradition of recognizing community leaders and volunteers is alive and well because they are the backbone of a cohesive society," Dr. Ahmad said.

"Community-based ventures can't survive without the passion and dedication that volunteers bring.

"While government services are essential, community-based delivery of some of those services achieves a lot more than throwing lots of money can ever do.

"This is a value that I sought to instill in my family — that while excelling in their profession is important, they aren't complete without the free time, effort, and money they contribute for the betterment of the community."

Some of his most significant achievements have been working with

like-minded people to establish the national bodies for Muslims in Australia and Papua New Guinea, student organizations, interfaith groups, and the annual Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair.

The 90-year-old said he had loved living in Australia since he arrived in 1970. "When I came to Australia to do my Ph.D. at the University of Sydney, I was overwhelmed by the support and friendship shown to me by Australians, including our original inhabitants and owners of the land, those with European ancestry and more recent migrants," he said. "I knew very early that Australia would be our new home."

Dr. Ahmad said he didn't know who nominated him for an OAM.

"The person has not revealed themselves to me, but I can still be and am grateful for their ac-

knowledgment and effort for making the nomination," he said. "So I would like to say thank you.

"Initially, I was perplexed, and I inclined to withdraw. "However, the history of Muslims in Australia and their efforts to establish themselves within the wider community must be better known. Through this recognition of my humble efforts, I feel this will help in that objective."

Dr Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad is a retired engineer and academic by profession, having earned his degrees at Aligarh Muslim University, India, University of Wisconsin, USA, and University of Sydney, Australia.

He is the founder of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), Islamic Foundation for Education and Welfare (IFEW), Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair (MEFF), and many other community organizations

and institutions.

He is a pillar of the interfaith communities in Australia and internationally in India, Malaysia, UK, USA, and Saudi Arabia.

Born in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, in India on 12 December 1930, he lost his father when he was two years old, and four when his mother passed away.

In his young age, he got involved in India's freedom movement. He met and worked with Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, first education minister of India, and Dr Zakir Hussein, who became India's President.

Ashfaq Ahmad and his wife Jamal Ara have six children, three boys (Zia, Najm, and Manar) and three girls (Fauzia, Sadia, and Najia). All of them were born in India before they migrated to Australia.

In 1959-60, he obtained MS in engineering from the University of Wisconsin and later completed his PhD while on a University of Sydney scholarship.

For eight years before migrating to Australia, Professor Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad, served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and acting Principal at Regional Engineering College in Srinagar, Kashmir.

Due to political interference, he was suddenly terminated from his job in 1969 and framed with anti-national charges. Therefore, he left India for Australia in 1971.

Dr. Ahmad, 90, now has an extended family of over 70 people, the majority living in Sydney, Australia, and is a father, grandfather, and great grandfather.

Cont. from page 8.
progressive Arab

platform as "the most realistic and most progressive of its kind" among Democrats, for the first time encompassing explicit opposition to settlements, condemnation of unilateral annexation, unequivocal support for a "viable" Palestinian state, and even protecting free speech that is critical of Israel, including around the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

In comparison, what does Trump offer Palestinians? Middle East experts recognise widely that Trump's "peace plan" is on track to destroy any chance of a

viable independent Palestinian state. Progressive American Jewish communities see the plan as a rubber stamp for "permanent occupation". Even Alon Liel, Israel's former Ambassador to South Africa and ex-head of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, says that the Trump plan "looks a lot like apartheid".

By seeking to neuter the most prominent American Muslim voter initiative in history at this crucial time, these progressive groups are on track to make the Trump vision to end Palestine a horrifying reality. They thus endanger the very cause that they champion. In the name of the Palestinian cause, they

are unwittingly encouraging Arab and Muslim minority voters to disengage from the electoral process. This would guarantee a Trump victory.

It is crucially important to reflect on what this really means, given that we are at one of the most pivotal points in American and global political history. A Trump second term will reinforce the dangerous normalisation of white supremacism; embolden the crushing of Muslim, black and ethnic minority rights; accelerate the unconstitutional erosion of checks and balances in US democracy; and intensify the lurch toward dangerous climate change, while all but throwing Palestin-

ians into the sea.

The Democrat Party is far from an ideal alternative to the age of Trump. Yet it is only by removing Trump from office that there can be any hope at all of beginning the urgently needed process of repairing America's broken democracy.

Americans have just five weeks to go before the election. They can still snatch the White House out of Trump's hands, but to do so Arab and Muslim opinion leaders in the US need to take stock of what is at stake, and stop cannibalising each other. The urgent focus has to be on getting everybody out to vote to prevent Trump from

stealing the 2020 election.—

This article was originally published by the Middle East Monitor but was removed from their website within 48 hours.

Dr Nafeez Ahmed is an investigative journalist who tracks what he calls the "crisis of civilisation". He has written for VICE, the Guardian, the Independent, The Atlantic, the New York Observer, the Times, the Sunday Time and Byline Times, among many other publications. He is founding editor of the crowdfunded media platform INSURGE INTELLIGENCE.

Cont. from page 2.
Niraj Antani

severing of all communications. Before that, however, Modi was already a deeply polarizing figure. From 2005 until he was elected as prime minister in 2014, he was banned from entering the US due to his alleged involvement in an anti-Muslim pogrom while he was head of the Indian state of Gujarat.

Thus, most Indian-American elected officials opted not to attend “Howdy, Modi.” Yet Antani was one of the few exceptions. The thread connecting the young Republican to Democratic politicians like Kuppa and Krishnamoorthi was a shared donor base that transcended party lines.

Modi belongs to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party birthed by a paramilitary called Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which has a US wing known as Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS). Rishi Bhutada, the official spokesperson for “Howdy, Modi” and son (and employee) of HSS-US Vice-President Ramesh Bhutada, has donated \$1,000 to Antani’s campaigns. Subhash Gupta, President of HSS-Houston, has donated \$500. Vijay Pallod, an HSS activist and former governing councillor of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) — the US wing of India’s VHP, itself the religious wing of the RSS — has donated \$200. All three, who live in Texas, are also donors to Krishnamoorthi (in Illinois) and Kuppa (in Michigan).

Since the Houston event, Antani — who is now running for Ohio State Senate after three terms in the State House of Representatives — has been outspoken in support of Modi’s agenda.

In August 2020, Antani praised Trump for having “stood with Prime Minister Modi in the United States” and applauded him

for “neutrality when it comes to [the Citizenship Amendment Act] and the abrogation of 370.” Human Rights Watch had warned that CAA — legislation passed in India in December 2019 — “discriminates on religious grounds in violation of international law” and the US Commission on International Religious Freedom had explained that the law was “setting a legal criterion for citizenship based on religion.” Congressman Khanna spoke against CAA, saying, “I don’t think India should be discriminating who they’re going to give expedited citizenship based on faith.” Amnesty International, denouncing the lockdown in Kashmir, had warned that “a complete clampdown on civil liberties is only likely to increase tensions, alienate the people and increase the risk of further human rights violations. Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal introduced a resolution calling on India to “end the restrictions on communications and mass detentions in Jammu and Kashmir as swiftly as possible.”

Passage of CAA sparked nationwide protests of millions in India, which were echoed in protests by hundreds in the US — where many had already been protesting the annexation of Kashmir — and yet Antani (an Ohio state legislator) decided it was expedient to stand with Modi (a pogrom-tainted foreign leader).

“Democrats are taking these anti-India positions regarding CAA and the abrogation of 370,” claimed Antani in August. In September, he added, “The Democratic position on abrogation of Article 370 and the CAA has caused a swathe of Indian-Americans to be more supportive of Republicans.”

Perhaps that is what motivated someone like Sudhir Shah — a Florida-based national councillor of the Over-

seas Friends of the BJP, which recently registered a foreign agent in the US — to donate \$250 to the Ohio politician.

Antani’s support for some of the Modi regime’s most contentious policies may be what makes him a welcome presence at Hindu nationalist events in the US. In November 2019, he was a speaker — alongside Kuppa — at a conference in Boston hosted by the VHPA. “Why any Indian or Hindu American would ever support an elected official who has spoken against the revocation of 370 is beyond me,” he said at the event.

The VHPA, notably, is so extreme that the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions refused to co-sponsor an event with it due, in part, to the group’s links to its mother organization, the VHP. Labeled by the CIA in 2018 as a “religious militant organization,” the VHP has been linked to an anti-Christian pogrom in 2008, the anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat in 2002, and a number of other incidents of violence against Indian religious minorities. As a subsidiary of the RSS, the VHP shares its parent organization’s goal of turning India into a “Hindu nation,” which has been articulated by — among others — VHP Joint General Secretary Swami Vigyananand in 2014, who declared: “We shall set up in Bharat [India] a Hindu State, which will be our nation-state.”

Vigyananand is the founder of the World Hindu Congress, a conference which held its second iteration in Chicago in 2018. The event, like “Howdy, Modi,” was deeply controversial. As it featured a keynote speech by RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat, it was protested both inside and outside. The venue’s main conference room was, for the conference, renamed “Ashok Singhal Hall” in memory of the long-serving VHP

chief who died in 2015. Singhal was infamous for having described the 2002 Gujarat pogrom as a “successful experiment” which would be “repeated” all over the country.

Countless Indian-American elected officials of Hindu faith were invited to attend, including Congressional Representatives Ro Khanna and Tulsi Gabbard, California Assemblymember Ash Kalra, North Carolina State Senator Jay Chaudhuri, Illinois State Senate candidate (now Senator) Ram Villivalam, and Chicago City Alderman Ameya Pawar — all of whom declined and some of whom actually denounced the event.

Among the handful of Indian-American politicians who did attend — as in the case of “Howdy, Modi” — were Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and Ohio State Representative Niraj Antani.

Both were keenly aware of the fact that the event was controversial. “Some of us, including myself, were targeted to withdraw from this conference,” said Antani at the event. “Unfortunately, some did not show up.”

In fact, among those who did not show up was Tulsi Gabbard — despite her own strong associations with the RSS-BJP both in US and in India since the dawn of her congressional career — backed out of the conference, declaring it a “partisan Indian political event.”

Money talks, however. While Antani has received generous donations from Hindu nationalist activists in Texas, no one has been more financially supportive of his campaigns than Shekar Reddy and Mihir Meghani. Neither of whom, incidentally, live in Ohio.

Reddy has been (and possibly still is) on the advisory board of the Florida chapter of Ekal Vidyalaya, a “single-teacher school” project of the VHP in India which, reportedly, selects

teachers “only if they subscribe to the RSS way of thought.” He is also a long-time organizer for the VHPA. Meghani, a former governing councillor of VHPA who is also described by sociologist Prema Kurien as “an activist in the VHPA and HSS,” has a relationship with the RSS tracing back to the 1990s when workers in the paramilitary, according to his account, helped arrange a clinical rotation for him in India as he was completing medical school. Between the two of them — and their wives — they have donated over \$50,000 to Gabbard.

Reddy and Meghani are also Antani’s largest donors. Since 2018, from Florida, Reddy has donated \$5,000 to the Ohio politician. Meghani, from California, has donated \$17,000.

In fact, over the past three years, Niraj Antani has received approximately \$26,000 in campaign financing from nine out-of-state donors who are distinctly identifiable as either leaders in US affiliates of the RSS or pro-Modi activists or both.

Antani first entered the Ohio House of Representatives in 2014 when he was 23. He’s now seeking higher office. His ambition to use his election to one office to leapfrog into a more powerful one is obvious — and, of course, typical of a politician. What’s not so typical of a state legislator is to be heavily funded by out-of-state donors, let alone donors affiliated with groups that support a religious nationalist agenda in a foreign country.

As they go to the polls, Ohio voters may want to consider why — in the face of protests against rapidly increasing human rights violations in India — Niraj Antani proudly joined “Howdy, Modi” or why he

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editor@muslimobserver.com**

**Cont. from page 1.
Rashida Tlaib**

attribute a single statement or sentence, Tlaib uttered against Hindu people, Hindu culture, or Hindu religion.

Yet in the Michigan March Democratic Primary, Hindus mostly, those belonging to religio-fascist groups such as Hindu Swayamsewak Sangh (HSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Hindu American Foundation (HAF), not only contributed considerable sums to Tlaib's opponent, Brena Jones, but also made phone calls to Hindus living in the MI District-13 to ensure her defeat by voting 100 percent against her.

In their campaign to defeat Tlaib, they accused her of all sorts of things. They told their members that Tlaib was a Hindu hater, supporter of Muslim terrorists, and a danger to India's interest in US Congress, an enemy of Israel, India's best friend in the Middle East.

They saw in Jones an opportunity to unseat her in the Primary, and they mobilized their resources in cooperation with AIPAC and other Zionist organizations within the Democratic party.

Hindu donors of Jones included both Republicans and the Democrats.

It is essential to understand the contribution techniques of Hindutva groups in the US. The HSS, HAF, and VHP control most Hindu temples and Hindu communities, especially those run by Gujaratis and people from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra states from West and South India. The temples collect huge donations weekly, mostly in cash. Reports are the money is under-reported, as part of it ends up with these and similar organizations' officials. The individuals keep the money and contribute to political candidates from their account. The non for Profit groups cannot make political contributions legally, but this method enables them to bypass the legal restrictions.

With the FBI's help, the election commission and the IRS should investigate these practices as they amount to election fraud.

The Hindu individuals who contributed to Jones are well known for their anti-Islam rhetorics and their close connection with India's Prime Minister, Modi's organization RSS, responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. They are reportedly known for their hatred against Muslims and their approval of Muslims' lynching and

raping of Dalit women. Interestingly, none of the five people who contributed \$2800 to Jones were from Michigan.

One of them is Bharat Barai, a medical practitioner in Munster, IN, about whom one of his patients said, "I have nothing good to say about him, and the other said that "this office is ridiculously slow and unprofessional in my opinion."

Three of the give contributors come from the Bhutada family located in Sugarland, Texas. Ramesh, Rishi, and Shradha Bhutada contributed \$8,400 to Jones. The family owns Star Pipe company and reported an annual sales of \$166.27 million with \$57 million profit. The company is a manufacturer and distributor of iron products for the water and wastewater industry. One of its customers was critical of its practices when he posted the following on their website.

"Do not load at this location. They ordered 14 feet of space for their shipment when the driver showed up; the load was not ready. They didn't pay layover and the next day made us wait until noon and told us that their product would not fit in the space they have requested. Horrible service do not even waste your time picking up-

loads from their location. Very unprofessional."

The fifth contributor is from Fremont, CA, a medical emergency doctor with Kaiser Permanente. He is a significant donor of organizations spreading the RSS ideology in the US. Many patients are reportedly fearful of visiting him because of his anti-Muslim and anti-Christian postures. It is important that such patients write to California Medical Board and the Kaiser Permanente management.

Shekhar Reddy, from plantation, FL, is with the Republican Party. He also contributed \$2,800. His employer is Wilton Discount Liquor.

The contribution was a concerted effort among the six hate mongers, among many others. All of them contributed on July 22, 2020, 13 days before the Primary. Records of the donor's phone conversation reveal that Meghani and Bhatuda were the mastermind who received RSS operatives' instructions in India. The two had several conversations with people in India a few weeks before giving the contribution. It requires further investigation to establish direct interference of foreign fascist groups in the US election.

The half dirty dozen's goal was to eliminate Tlaib and any other Muslim candidate, including Ilhan Omar, in the primaries. Hindutva hate mongers in Minnesota helped her opponents in the Primary. Regardless of their votes and money, both Tlaib and Omar won their primaries comfortably.

The Hindutva groups in the US are on a religious mission to halt Muslim presence in the US congress. They have enlisted the support of white supremacists and right-wing activists. By eliminating Muslims from the Congressional scene, they hope to create a more decisive lobby for Hindutva led Modi government. The fascists in India intend to annex the Pakistani side of Azad Kashmir, strip Muslim Indians of their citizenship, and secure a seat in the UN Security Council as a permanent member. Muslim opposition to India on human rights issues is an obstacle for the Hindutva.

In Texas-22, their candidate is Sri Preston Kulkarni, who is making rounds to mosques and Islamic centers showing a progressive face. However, anyone aware of Hindutva fascist tactics knows the difference between a mask and a real look.

**Cont. from page 6.
Turkey Challenging
Russia's Monopoly**

to showcase at home that under his leadership the country has become a great power, with Turkey becoming more active and assertive recently in its foreign policy throughout its periphery, from the Eastern Mediterranean to North Africa to the Levant. Ankara has also begun to take advantage of the Russian weakness in the Black Sea Basin region.

What is clear is that such an involvement by Turkey will cause the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, which had been relatively contained by external forces, to become much more unpredictable. It could also put further strain on the relationship between Moscow and Ankara, opening Nagorno-Karabakh as

a third theater in which Russia and Turkey are fighting (either directly or indirectly) on opposite sides, along with Syria and Libya. Russia and Turkey have so far been able to manage their differences in these respective theaters, maintaining significant cooperation in both the energy and security spheres, but this could certainly be subject to change.

The situation on the front lines in Nagorno-Karabakh remains fluid, but the more direct involvement by Turkey could create unexpected ripple effects throughout the region and beyond. Russia's position will be a particularly important factor, with Moscow having to weigh a more assertive stance in the event that its efforts at mediation and reaching another cease-fire do not

bear fruit in the near future. Russia's decision to avoid direct military engagement over Nagorno-Karabakh could therefore be reconsidered in the event of a more active Turkish role.

Recommendations

While the United States does not have the kind of direct military ties and interests in the Nagorno-Karabakh theater as do the likes of Russia and Turkey, the conflict nevertheless has numerous important implications for Washington. One is a potential spillover effect into U.S. ally Georgia, which is involved in NATO training and combat missions in several theaters. A larger conflict also could disrupt energy flows, with the Caucasus serving as a key oil and natural hub to Europe via the southern energy corridor. Then

there is the unpredictability that a larger-scale conflict could have on areas where the United States has more direct interests, such as Syria and Iran.

Taking this potential for escalation into account, the United States should work with local actors and international players to push strongly for a diplomatically mediated cease-fire between Armenia and Azerbaijan brokered by the OSCE in order to avoid such a scenario. While Russia, and increasingly Turkey, have the hard power and willingness to influence events on the ground more so than the United States and EU countries like France, a further internationalization of the conflict would only make it more unpredictable and destabilizing for the region and potentially beyond.

Eugene Chausovsky is a Nonresident Fellow with the Center for Global Policy. Previously, he served as Senior Eurasia Analyst at Stratfor for 10 years. His work focuses on political, economic, and security issues pertaining to the former Soviet Union, Europe, and Latin America. He tweets at @EugeneChausovsk.

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**Cont. from page 1.
Fallen soldiers**

their children or parents and while doing so “come within an inch of my face, sometimes.” But of course, he is so polite that he cannot tell them to “back up, stand 10 feet,’ you know?”

“They want to hug me, and they want to kiss me. And they do. And, frankly, I’m not telling them to back up. I’m not doing it,” Trump told Fox News’ Maria Bartiromo. Considering that a number of Trump staff and supporters tested positive following the Rose Garden event, it is ridiculous for Trump to blame these families and continue avoiding accountability. To make matters worse, according to The Washington

Post, none of the families attending the event were contacted about possible transmission, whereas the White House contacted those who attended the Rose Garden event following Trump’s positive test results.

Not only did Trump suggest that he may have contracted the virus from Gold Star families, but he belittled the conversations he had with the families when he recalled them during his interview. According to Trump, families would approach him to “tell me a story about, ‘My son, sir, was in Iraq.’ Or, ‘He was in Afghanistan.’ And, ‘Sir, he did this, and he did that, and then he charged in order to save his friends.’ And, ‘Yes, sir, he was killed, but he saved his friends. He’s

so brave, sir.” When expressing that they love to show him affection, he added, “It’s a dangerous thing, I guess, if you go by the COVID thing.”

It is clear Trump will blame anyone but himself for the consequences of his actions. After contracting COVID-19, he has portrayed himself as unphased, claiming that upon looking at the numbers he “figured that probably at some point I’d catch it ... I meet a lot of people. I have to. I’m the president of the country. I can’t hang around in a basement, so I figured there would be a chance that I would catch it,” Trump told Bartiromo.

Trump has continuously been spotted without a

mask and disregarding social distancing recommendations. While at this time it has not been confirmed where and when he contracted COVID-19, he has been out and about since the start of the pandemic. Photos of both his Rose Garden fiasco and the Gold Star families event depict attendees without masks, but as the “leader” of this country, Trump should have worn a mask nevertheless.

This isn’t the first time Trump pinned COVID-19 spread on military officials. After Trump’s aide and adviser Hope Hicks tested positive for the virus on Oct. 1, Trump told Fox News’ Sean Hannity that members of the military or law enforcement were to blame for White House infections, Busi-

ness Insider reported.

“It’s very hard when you’re with soldiers, when you’re with airmen, when you’re with the Marines, and the police officers,” he said. “When they come over to you, it’s very hard to say, ‘Stay back. Stay back.’ You know, it’s a tough kind of a situation. It’s a terrible thing.” So Trump believes not only do military officials not have any physical boundaries, but their families don’t either. “It is very, very hard when you are with people from the military or from law enforcement and they come over to you,” Trump continued. “They want to hug you, and they want to kiss you because we really have done a good job for them. You get close, and things happen.”

**Cont. from page 1.
Vote for Biden**

one of two people will become president, Joe Biden, or Donald Trump.

We can complain about the unfairness of the two-party system all day long, but good decisions are based on how things are, not how we want them to be. For that reason, we must look at the records of both Biden and Trump and decide which is better for the Muslim community and the country in general. After performing that analysis, Biden emerges as the clear choice.

Firstly, let’s make it clear that whatever issues we may have about how Bernie Sanders was treated in the primary or the inherent unfair-

ness of the two-party system do not change the fact that the choice is between two candidates. While there may technically be more than 1 ballot, the fact is that no third party candidate has ever won the presidential election since at least 1856, and there is no good reason to vote for 1 in a national election since it would have no positive effect but as a deranged expression of outrage or protest. At the end of the day, this is not the chactionoice of a person who wants to make a difference. It certainly is not a productive method of protest or activism.

If these people wanted to truly make a difference, they would find more productive ways of doing politics rather

than simply wasting their votes on candidates they know will not win. Before doing any of this, it is important to prevent Trump from doing further harm by voting for the only thing standing in the way of doing that, Joe Biden.

While many Muslims raise legitimate criticisms of Biden, there can be no doubt that his record concerning their issues is far better than that of Trump’s. For example, let’s take the issue of Uyghurs. These people are undergoing what can only be described as a modern genocide reminiscent of what we saw against Jews during the Holocaust. What was Trump’s first reaction? According to his former national

security advisor John Bolton, it was to oppose any retaliation out of fear it would upset any new trade deals. Sure, there were sanctions that came later, but the revelations of the initial reaction cast doubts upon the intentions and long term sustainability of such actions if these human rights abuses against Uyghurs persist.

If we contrast that with Joe Biden, he made it an explicit part of his campaign even bringing it up during campaigns. The consequence of this is that we have clear words to hold Joe Biden to if he is elected where we have at best mixed signals if Trump chooses to give China a free-pass. Furthermore, Biden spoke directly to one of the

premier Muslim organizing groups, Emgage even quoting a famous hadith, where as Trump has only given, at best, token support to Muslim rights. In fact, he has done several things to undermine their rights including passing his infamous travel ban and appointing two supreme court justices which denied a condemned Muslim inmate an Imam to be present at his execution in Alabama.

Contrary to the meaningless clichés of all “politicians “being the same”, these are areas in which Biden could make a difference, and that difference is worth voting for. With that, I appreciate your time and hope you will consider voting for Biden in November.

**Cont. from page 5.
Lebanese Predicament**

publicly signal to each other their readiness to turn the tables on their political leaders and thus provide mutual assurances to each other. Unfortunately, this opportunity was not taken up.

In particular, the Shiite community, which constitutes about a third of the Lebanese population, did not as a whole signal a willingness to abandon its political leaders. Although many Shiites joined the demonstrations, their overall participation was markedly less visible than that of other communities. Fewer and smaller

demonstrations took place in Shiite-dominated areas than in Sunni and Christian ones.

There are two main reasons for the Shiites’ reluctance to fully join the demand for change. The first is their allegiance to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. The second is the sense of empowerment Shiites enjoy as a group due to Hezbollah’s formidable military capabilities. While most Shiites are willing to voice strong criticisms of some of their leaders, they refrain from expressing such attitudes toward Nasrallah. Even Nabih Berri, the leader of the other competing

Shiite party, recognizes Nasrallah’s special status and has maintained an unbreakable alliance with him for the past two decades. The sanctity and immunity given to Nasrallah by the Shiites cannot be overlooked by the other communities and enters into their political calculus.

The fact that the Shiite community is unified behind an unquestionable leader puts them in a politically stronger position than all the other groups. This in turn makes it difficult for other communities to further weaken their political leadership when the Shiites show little sign of willingness

to reciprocate. While the Lebanese strict sectarian quota system does not allow any sect to lose in the formal sense, the bargaining positions of the sectarian leaders can be considerably stronger or weaker depending on the degree of the sectarian solidarity they enjoy.

Although all stand to gain considerably from holding their current political leaders accountable, not all communities make equal sacrifices in order to reach this situation. In relative terms, the Shiites stand to lose more than others by changing the status quo. They would lose their unique military

advantage and, with it, their political one. This remains true even though changing the status quo would improve the conditions of the Shiite in absolute terms, at least when seen from the perspective of alleviating the dire economic hardships that do not spare the Shiite community. Sadly and irrationally, however, relative advantages often have more psychological pull than absolute ones.

Dr. Bashshar Haydar is a Professor of Philosophy and the Mohammad Atallah Chair in Ethics at American University – Beirut.

First published on CGP.

An Appeal from AFMI



burnt house

Houses and business destroyed, a man stands among the ruins, looking at his own burnt house



Many Religious places were also targeted

AFMI is currently assisting the victims in coordination with the local organizations.



AFMI has been in the forefront of providing COVID-19 relief in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Ranchi, Indore, and other towns and cities.



Truck carrying relief material



AFMI working with the local organizations has provided the food/supplies for the relief of those unfortunate migrant workers, of all hues, (irrespective of their religion, caste or creed, or gender) following the nationwide lockdown which has led to mass human migration.

This appeal is to help these displaced Muslims, let us help them to be on their feet again. Donate generously to rebuild the lives of the victims of terror

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