

COMMENTARY

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SECTION B

'Homegirl in a hijab' returns

Linda Sarsour, an activist venerated by the left, does more damage

By Daniel Pipes

What to make of Linda Sarsour of Brooklyn, lead plaintiff in the lawsuit against President Trump's immigration order and the new, seemingly ubiquitous symbol of the hard-left-radical Islam alliance?

The Obama White House designated her a "champion of change." New York City's Mayor Bill de Blasio sought her endorsement. Vermont's Senator Bernie Sanders used her as a surrogate in his presidential campaign. She served as a delegate to the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

She appeared on major television shows and The New York Times ran a long puff piece calling her "a Brooklyn homegirl in a hijab." David Brock's Media Matters for America advocates for her. She was one of four lead organizers of the anti-Trump Women's March on Washington. Actress Susan Sarandon and Rep. Keith Ellison endorse her. Ms. Sarsour, in brief, is "venerated by leftists," observes Muslim reformer Shireen Qudosi. And Islamists too: for example, Al-Jazeera celebrates her.

Ms. Sarsour plopped herself into my life in March 2010 when she confused me, Daniel Pipes, with PipeLineNews.org, a "boutique news service" that had run a critical article on her calling her a "Hamas sympathizer." She responded by showering me with mock gratitude for the attention ("THANK YOU Mr. Pipes!"). Noting her error, I wrote a sarcastic response ("Sarsour ought to shower PipeLineNews.org, not me, with her affections"). When she did not acknowledge her mistake, I took an interest in her career.

I learned that Ms. Sarsour frequently errs without later correcting herself. She wrongly portrayed the murder of Shaima Alawadi as resulting from hatred of Muslims when in fact Alawadi's Muslim husband, Kassim Alhimidi, honor-killed her. Worse, she faked a hate crime against herself, scoring political points nationally by portraying a mentally ill homeless man as a violent racist.

I learned about Ms. Sarsour's paranoid loathing for the U.S. government. She portrayed would-be underwear bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab as a CIA agent, implying that the federal government murders Americans to frame Muslims. She also off-handedly claimed Muslim "kids [are] being executed" in the United States, presumably by the government.

I learned about Ms. Sarsour's promotion of Islamism. She endorsed Saudi Arabia because the application of Islamic law there brings such alleged benefits as paid maternity leave and no interest payments on credit cards. She signaled support for jihad warfare by making its pointed index finger gesture, its symbol.

I learned about Ms. Sarsour's vicious attacks on Israel. She encouraged stoning the Israel Defense Forces. She posed for a photograph with Salah Sarsour, a Hamas operative jailed by the Israeli authorities in the 1990s. She acknowledges having many male relatives in Israeli prisons.

I learned about Ms. Sarsour's ignorance of history. She promotes a fantasy notion of Islam's founder, Muhammad: "Our prophet was a racial justice activist, a human rights activist, a feminist in his own right. He was a man that cared about the environment. He cared about animal rights.... He was also the first victim of Islamophobia." Her musings on American slavery caught my eye: "The sacrifice [that] the black Muslim slaves went through in this country is nothing compared to Islamophobia [sic] today."

I learned about Ms. Sarsour's low reputation among her should-be allies. Debbie Almontaser, an Islamist colleague, disparaged her immodesty and lack of humility. Feminist Aki Muthali called her a racist (read again that quote about black slaves). The anti-Zionist Ihkrahs website also accused her of harboring "an ugly racism towards African-Americans." Additionally, it characterized Sarsour's public persona as "a masquerade inundated with pretense and exaggeration"; it portrayed her as fake religious; and it found her lacking a moral compass or having "genuine convictions or principles."

I learned how Ms. Sarsour answered critics with vitriolic vulgarity. Typical of her charm and grace, she said of Brigitte Gabriel and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, two leading anti-Islamists (and the latter a victim of female genital mutilation), "I wish I could take their vaginas away — they don't deserve to be women."



ILLUSTRATION BY LINAS GARSYS

I learned that Ms. Sarsour, a plain, ill-dressed woman in a lumbering hijab, indulges in coquettish vanity. She publicly boasts of her "striking good looks," announces "I am beautiful," and raves about "Such a beautiful photo taken of me." Ms. Sarsour also clumsily self-inflates, for example, by referring to herself as one of the "amazing people."

This long record of incompetence, extremism, vulgarity, and eccentricity makes me wonder how Islamists and leftists jointly swoon, as they do, over Linda Sarsour. If she's their vaunted star, conservatives can rest easy.

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Two-faced Google

It publicly cozies up to Trump while privately calling for his impeachment

By Kelly Riddell

Google, or rather its parent company Alphabet, got used to dominating Washington under President Barack Obama's rule. Perhaps, that's why they'd like to see President Donald Trump impeached.

"Some of us may need to adopt Pence 2017 bumper stickers," Google's cofounder Sergey Brin joked at a company sponsored anti-Trump protest — the biggest demonstration from a Silicon Valley corporation this week — in response to Mr. Trump's controversial immigration executive order.

More than 2,000 Google employees attended the protest on Monday, with it becoming a trending topic on Twitter with the hashtag #GooglersUnite. The rally came 24 hours after Google donated \$2 million to the ACLU and Immigrant Legal Resource Center, to help fight Mr. Trump's executive order, which was matched by \$2 million in donations from Google employees.

The week prior, Google lawyers flooded the California office of Sen. Dianne Feinstein, demanding she oppose Sen. Jeff Sessions' confirmation as attorney general.

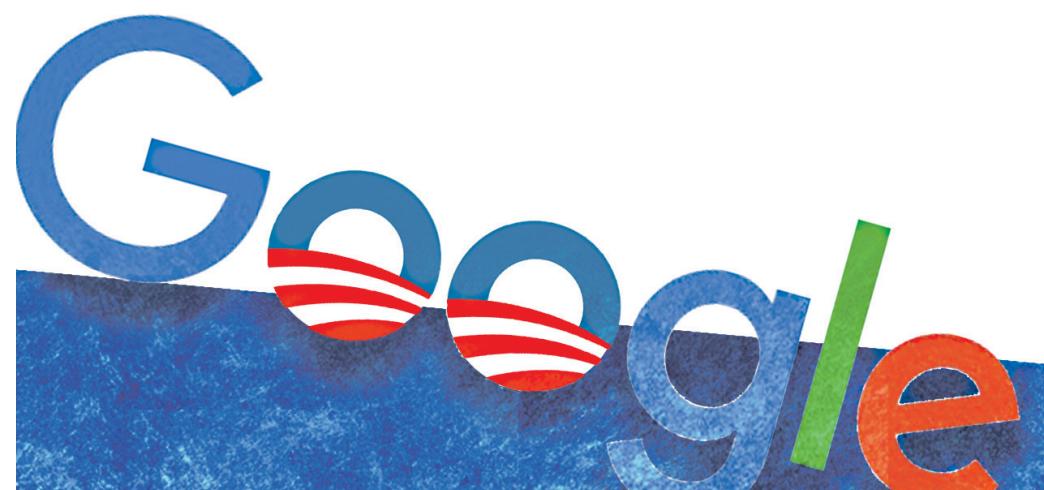
After investing millions ingraining itself within the Obama White House, Google is suddenly on the outside looking in with the Trump administration — and it clearly has Google rattled — protesting Mr. Trump in private, and then publicly trying to cozy up with him the next.

Eric Schmidt, Google's former CEO and chair of Alphabet, has

traveled to Trump Tower at least twice to meet with the president and his team, but hasn't made any real progress.

Maybe that's because last week — before Mr. Trump signed his immigration order — Mr. Schmidt told Google employees that the Trump administration is "going to do these evil things as they've done in the immigration area and perhaps some others."

Google's corporate mantra is "don't be evil."



And yet, like any firm, Google needs to make money, and it's benefited from peddling soft influence in the nation's capital. Now that a new sheriff is in town, Google needs to at least pretend to play nice — or all be lost.

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The coming test of Donald Trump

Donald Trump is about to get a tough test of his presidential leadership, with no true-or-false or multiple choice questions. Every new president gets the test, usually administered by international creeps and bad guys. There's no nudging the answers. Reality is the teacher, grading on a steep curve, and presidents pass or fail. There's no soft grading.

Iran is determined to build the Islamic bomb, and the mullahs got Barack Obama's number early on. Two days after the new president took the oath of office, Iran welcomed him by firing a medium-range ballistic missile believed capable of carrying a nuclear weapon, in defiance of United Nations Resolution 2231 which endorsed Mr. Obama's one-sided deal with Iran. The missile traveled 630 miles, well within range of inviting targets, before exploding. The Iranian government said the test was a success.

A series of tests last year, conducted by Iran's Revolutionary Guard, caused the usual international concern. Several of the missiles bore the favorite threat of the mullahs, in this case with the slogan painted on the missile in Hebrew, of "death to Israel."

This, too, was considered by several of the signatories of the West's deal with the mullahs to be in violation of Resolution 2231.

President Obama's deal with Iran was meant to restrain the mullahs' nuclear-weapons attempt to build the Islamic bomb, but in fact only delays it, if it does even that. The UN resolution "calls upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic-missile technology."

The mullahs were once barred from developing ballistic missiles, but Mr. Obama softened the restrictive language during negotiations. These were some of the negotiations that President Trump, as a candidate, scorned as the work of "stupid" people who do not know how to negotiate. Mr. Trump wrote the book on "The Art of the Deal," and promised if elected to hire negotiators who meet his standards.

Mr. Obama prefers talk, none of it tough unless he's talking to Republicans and others of the conservative persuasion. Barack Obama was particularly good with words dispensed from a safe space somewhere behind the action. That's where he said he likes to lead from.

Mark Twain observed that "action speaks louder than words, but not nearly as often," and there's a growing consensus in the U.S. Senate that Mark Twain's observation is a perfect description of the Iran policy Mr. Obama bequeathed to his successor. Lots of talk, with lots of wiggle room, with a minimum of positive action.

The mullahs, eager to see how the Donald differs from his predecessor, were in a mocking mood Thursday. A top adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of everything in Iran, disdained the American president as "an inexperienced person." The spokesman, Ali Akbar Velayati, said "this is not the first time an inexperienced person has threatened Iran. The American government will understand that threatening Iran is useless. Iran does not need permission from any country to defend itself."

The mullahs are fluent in both bluff and bluster, and



Rex Tillerson

just because they say something does not make it so. Fake news and alternate facts are a staple, like honey and sheep's eyes, of the Arab diet. In fact, the wise men in the foreign ministries, the think tanks, the academy and the pundits in the West think Iran is only one the places where a test of Trump resolve might be hatched.

By some educated guessing, China, stung by Mr. Trump's invective during the campaign and afterward, might be plotting to draw the U.S. Navy into a confrontation in the South China Sea, where it has built and heavily fortified islands raised from the sea. Rex Tillerson, the new secretary of State, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that China's island-building was illegal and "akin to Russia's taking of Crimea."

He promises action. "We're going to have to send China a clear signal that island-building stops, and your access to those islands is not going to be allowed." We're beginning to see why Donald Trump likes him.

Or the real test of the new president might be from his "friend," Vladimir Putin. This would be a test of Russian resolve and dark ambition vs. instinct and cunning of a tough guy who trusts the seat of his pants. Everyone knows that Mr. Putin is up to no good, eager to seduce Donald Trump and bind him to his agenda. But the Donald, despite what the critics and haters think and say, is nobody's patsy. He built his empire in the toughest city in the world, contending with hostile unions and city officials to build a vast business empire. That's why he's so contemptuous of bureaucrats who get their way only because they're backed by the punitive power of government.

The testing of Donald Trump will tell a lot to a lot of us.

Wesley Pruden is editor in chief emeritus of The Times.