

Media Wars:

The Battle to Shape Our Minds

Walter Donway and Vinay Kolhatkar

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Other books by Walter Donway:

Not Half Free: The Myth That America Is Capitalist by Walter Donway, with a preface by David Kelley. Romantic Revolution Books: New York, 2015.

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A Sharia London

The Frankenstein Candidate

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Daniel Pipes on Islamism's War on the West

By Vinay Kolhatkar

Daniel Pipes is president of the Middle East Forum. His bi-weekly column appears regularly in the *Washington Times* and in newspapers around the globe, including *Israel Hayom* (Israel), *L'Opinione* (Italy), and the *Australian*. His special interests include the role of Islam in public life, Turkey, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and U.S. foreign policy. He is an affiliated professor at the University of Haifa.

CBS Sunday Morning says Daniel Pipes was "years ahead of the curve in identifying the threat of radical Islam." "Unnoticed by most Westerners," he wrote, for example, in 1995, "war has been unilaterally declared on Europe and the United States." The *Boston Globe* states that "If Pipes's admonitions had been heeded, there might never have been a 9/11."

He received his A.B. (1971) and Ph.D. (1978) from Harvard University, both in history, and spent six years studying abroad, including three years in Egypt. Mr. Pipes speaks French, and reads Arabic and German. He has taught at Harvard, Pepperdine, the U.S. Naval War College, and the University of Chicago. He has been affiliated with Princeton and Stanford universities. He served in five presidential administrations between 1982 and 2005, including two presidentially-appointed positions—vice chairman of the Fulbright Board of Foreign Scholarships and board member of the U.S. Institute of Peace. He was director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1986-93.

Daniel Pipes (DP) kindly offered *The Savvy Street*, represented by Vinay Kolhatkar (VK), an engaging Q&A which contains some of his key insights into the phenomenon of Islamism.

VK: Does Islam's canon foment terrorism?

DP: I've stopped using the word *terrorism*, finding it meaningless because no two people agree on its definition. So, let me re-ask your question: Does Islam's canon foment jihadi violence? Yes. Islam is premised on (1) the superiority of Islam, (2) the need to spread its message, and (3) the legitimacy of force to do so. These fundamentals of faith have been apparent from Muhammad's time to the present, though not everywhere and not at all times.

VK: Is a gay-friendly, women-friendly Islam possible?

DP: Of course. Every faith evolves. Centuries ago, who could have imagined homosexual and female Christian bishops? Looking at Islam's present tells us little about its future.

VK: How big is the intrusion of Islamism into the U.N.? What are the consequences of such intrusion?

DP: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has 56 member-states (plus "Palestine"), 47 of which have a majority Muslim population. This is roughly a quarter of the United Nations membership and in the amoral game of give-and-take that lies behind most votes, that bloc can get nearly the entire 193 governments to back it or at least abstain on issues it cares about. Take the vote against moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem: 9 in favor, 128 against, 35 abstentions, and 21 not present. It also permits the forwarding of Islamist initiatives, such as U.N. General Assembly Resolution 16/18 adopted to prevent criticism of Muslims or Islam. This influence led to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres amazingly stating that "One of the things that fuel terrorism is the expression in some parts of the world of Islamophobic feelings and Islamophobic policies and Islamophobic hate speeches."

VK: How significant is the risk of Sharia law intrusions into Western legal systems?

DP: This process has already begun. For instance, polygamy has made rapid progress as a legitimate life-style option. While laws banning female genital mutilation are on the books, famed lawyer Alan Dershowitz has offered his services for a doctor to be tried for conducting FGM surgeries. Fashion houses have taken up hijabs and even jilbabs. Mosques manage to ban alcohol within a wide perimeter. First-cousin marriages proliferate, with attendant genetic problems. Interest-free banks grow.

VK: Do Islamists fund major political parties in the West? What is the impact of such actions?

DP: My organization, the Middle East Forum, has focused on precisely that question in the United States in its Islamist Money in Politics Project. The thousands of entries here, dating back to 1979, reveal many patterns. For example, 90 percent of Islamist donations go to Democratic candidates. Obviously, the goal of these donations is to make Islamism acceptable. The liberal-left being more sympathetic to this goal, it receives the bulk of the donations. And it's worked. Rare are the liberal-left voices anymore that stand up to Islamism.

VK: How can the West best deal with the threat of jihadi violence?

DP: By addressing the core ideas behind the resort to violence, such as: living by a medieval code, the superiority of Islam and Muslims to other faiths and believers, the validity of force and coercion to spread the faith, and the notion of God giving specific orders.

VK: What's the best way for the West to avoid seeping Islamization: open debate on Islam's canon calling for reform, exposing Islamist political donations, encouraging apostasy within Islam, immigration policies designed to uncover Islamists, or all these and more?

DP: I'd stay away from encouraging Muslims to leave Islam, but the other ideas are all good. However, there's a more fundamental priority, which is to convince the liberal-left that Islamism presents a threat. So long as this huge segment of Western populations largely remains blind to the Islamist threat, the measures you propose have limited utility.

VK: Is there something intrinsic to Islam that the Western mainstream media wishes to hide?

DP: Yes. The mainstream media, and the Establishment in general (what I call the 6Ps - police, politicians, press, priests, professors and prosecutors) pretend that the Sharia, a medieval law code that calls on Muslims to engage in actions deeply at odds with modern ways, does not exist. This leads them to the inane conclusion that living according to the Sharia is in opposition to Islam. The most spectacular instance of this is the absurd debate on the question whether jihad is Islamic, akin to asking whether the pope is Catholic. And in that discussion, the most extravagant statement was by former Vermont governor Howard Dean, who said of the *Charlie Hebdo* attackers, "They're about as Muslim as I am."

VK: Are you familiar with the case of Tommy Robinson (U.K.)? Do you have a view on it?

DP: I spent much of a day with Tommy in December 2017 as he took me around his hometown of Luton. He is knowledgeable, draws a distinction between Islam and Islamism, and is a leader. Toffs should

get over their class bias against him and the authorities must treat him fairly. I hope the outrageous treatment he suffered on May 25 – being arrested, denied a lawyer, tried, sentenced, and dispatched to prison, all within a few hours – serves as a wake-up call to the British public.

VK: What should be the U.S. policy toward Saudi Arabia?

DP: Had you asked me this before 2015, I would have answered, keep a distance, bargain hard, root out the evil influence. Since the coming to power of King Salman and his all-powerful son Muhammad, however, I answer differently: Focus on helping Muhammad's radical reforms succeed.

VK: What's your view on the Iran nuclear deal?

DP: A scandalous attempt by the six participating governments to defer the problem of Iranian nuclear weapons for about a decade – to when current office holders will presumably no longer be in charge. It is an obnoxious farce.

VK: Did President Assad gas his own citizens or was that brought about by Islamic militant groups to foster an ousting of Assad?

DP: The Syrian regime has more than once gassed its subject population, full stop. More generally, however repugnant the Islamist groups, the regime has carried out the great majority of killings in Syria, both before and after the civil war began in 2011. It is a monstrosity.

VK: Thank you for your time, and for speaking truth to power. We wish you the best in your endeavors.

Adjunct:

On September 9, 2015, this is what Daniel Pipes wrote of the Iran nuclear deal:

“The drawbacks of the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" are so numerous that listing them requires more space than the 159-page treaty itself. In very brief, the JCPOA offers the tyrants in Tehran over the next 10-15 years more money, more legitimacy, more arms, and an approved path to nuclear weaponry. As an Israeli analysis sums up the problem, “the agreement unilaterally and unconditionally grants Iran everything it has been seeking without any viable quid pro quo.”

“To make matters worse, the deal includes no provisions that Tehran stop supporting violent groups, end its aggressive plans to conquer neighbors, eliminate the Jewish state, or deploy an electromagnetic pulse weapon against the United States. Indeed, so confident are the mullahs of their position, they never paused from expressing these bellicose intentions and insist that Americans remain their enemies. The country's tyrant, "Supreme Leader" Ali Khamene'i, even published a book during the negotiations about destroying Israel. In short, the deal makes war with Iran more likely.”