



# Islam Not The Driving Issue

BY MIMI HANAOKA  
Los Angeles Times (MCT)

The chaotic violence that killed U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three American staffers in Libya, and that resulted in a mob storming the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, has been garbed in religious language and references. However, the religious rhetoric from all corners distracts from the real issues: serious domestic political fragmentation in Libya and Egypt in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, and America's place in the region.

Media attention has focused on a polemic 14-minute movie trailer for "Innocence of Muslims" posted on YouTube, which prompted protests in Benghazi and Cairo. The film was allegedly produced by Sam Bacile, who has identified himself as an Israeli Jew. In the *Wall Street Journal*, Bacile called Islam a "cancer" and claimed he raised \$5 million from about 100 Jewish donors to fund the film, details that only intensify the film's polemic power.

The trailer, translated into Arabic and viewed thousands of times in the Middle East, portrays the prophet Muhammad as, among other things, a child abuser. Florida pastor and provocateur Terry Jones, who burned the Quran in 2011, claims to have screened the film; a self-described Christian militant in California claims to have consulted on it.

As news reports, punditry and Internet reactions fly, the violent response to the trailer in Libya and Egypt will undoubtedly be portrayed as generic Muslim rage rooted in a theology that inspires a special rage and hatred against the West. If more demonstrations erupt in Muslim countries after Friday prayers, there will be further temptation to understand any protests as primarily religious in nature.

But there are other ways to understand what's going on. The deadly attack in Libya may have been separate from the video protests, preplanned by extremists. In any case, the anti-American demonstrations do not necessarily exhibitions of generic Muslim theological rage as much as they are outbursts occurring for specific reasons in the particular and destabilized local contexts of the post-Arab Spring Middle East and North Africa. And more protests following Friday prayers in these countries are likely to be as much a sign of newfound political engagement as religious zeal.

The Arab Spring produced a complex matrix of political instability in Libya and Egypt, with enormous economic and social reverberations in those nations and their geopolitical relationships and strategies. The anti-American violence in Benghazi and Cairo is mostly a reflection of weakened central governments in the wake of the toppling of long-standing dictators and amid the jockeying for power of a host of actors and organizations.

If the reaction was generically Muslim in nature, Saudi Arabia, the most notable bastion of Sunni orthodoxy vehemently opposed to any depictions of Muhammad, would be the place where the trailer and the film would be expected to first spark controversy. Yet it wasn't a flash point. Nor have we heard a peep of protest from Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman or Kuwait, Persian Gulf countries with relatively strong central governments that retained a firm grip on power during the Arab Spring.

As the exuberant democracy movements and revolutions in Libya and Egypt transition to the painstaking reality of establishing law and order, the new regimes have to find their feet and their place in the world. The recently elected governments in Libya and Egypt and other countries will work for many years to reestablish law and order, a task complicated in Libya by the deluge of arms floating around the country after the brutal civil war. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, the entrenched military power holders, and secular organizations and individuals will compete to speak for the new state.

At such a time, using religion alone to explain what's happening is counter-factual and counterproductive. Individuals, mobs and militants on all sides, in the United States as well as in Egypt and Libya, will try to dwell on Islam. Easily inflamed mobs in the Middle East may set back democratization efforts and strip the remade nations of foreign economic investment, tourism and the geopolitical support they need. In America, provocateurs will try to influence public opinion in divisive political times. It is important that policymakers and the news media remain clear-headed that the real issues are instead mostly local and always political.

Mimi Hanaoka is an assistant professor of religious studies and Islam at the University of Richmond in Virginia. She wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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## OPINION | WE SAY

### An Example For All



THUMBS DOWN to the passing of Sister Consuelo Chavez, who died last week of pancreatic cancer at age 90. Sister Consuelo was well known for her active role in the community, particularly as a Spanish teacher at Mount Marty College and for her translation and other work with area Hispanics. The nun also spent seven years working at a Guatemala mission. She was proud of her Hispanic heritage and helped newcomers, particularly immigrants seeking to build a new life in their new homeland. As Father Thomas Wordekemper said at her funeral, the Benedictine nun served people from all walks of life, providing a Christian witness.

### Tis The Season



THUMBS UP to Homecoming activities at Yankton High School, which included Thursday night's coronation of royalty. The festivities today (Friday) include the 2:30 p.m. parade through downtown Yankton, the pre-game feed at Crane-Youngworth Field and the 7 p.m. football game with Eastern South Dakota (ESD) conference rival Aberdeen Central. The Bucks' football fortunes are flying high so far this season with a 3-0 mark, and the team looks to keep its perfect season going strong. Homecoming is an autumn ritual, and we encourage fans to take part in the activities at their local schools.

### Election Attention



THUMBS UP to the continued attention given the area in the 2012 national election. First, it was Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama at Morningside College in Sioux City, then Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. Most recently, Libertarian Party vice presidential candidate (retired) Judge Jim Gray spoke at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Gray not only spread his party's message, but he also urged the audience to use social media to get the Libertarians a spot in the televised national debates.

### You Know The Drill



THUMBS UP to last weekend's disaster drill at Chan Gurney Airport in Yankton. It's not that we are cheering on disasters, even mock ones, but we see it as an important way of keeping our emergency personnel in practice should, Heaven forbid, the real thing occur. Drill coordinator Cherie Hoffman and Yankton County Emergency Manager Paul Scherschlight listed a number of positive things that came out of the drill, including the testing of equipment. Even the "victims" enjoyed their role in the exercise. We salute all of the responders who not only take part in the drills but step up for actual emergencies.

## ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

### LATEST RESULTS:

**A new study has found that repealing "don't ask, don't tell" did not harm the military. Now that it's a year since the repeal occurred, do you support the policy change?**  
Yes .....54%  
No .....40%  
Not Sure .....6%  
**TOTAL VOTES CAST** .....461

*The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.*

### CURRENT QUESTION:

**According to a new Pew Research Center report, a third of Americans see themselves in the lower-middle or lower class — up from a quarter of Americans in 2008. Do you see yourself as being in the lower-middle or lower class?**

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## TODAY IN HISTORY

### By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Sept. 14, the 258th day of 2012. There are 108 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Sept. 14, 1814, Francis Scott Key was moved to write a poem after witnessing how an American flag flying over Maryland's Fort McHenry withstood a night of British bombardment during the War of 1812; the poem, "Defence of Fort McHenry," later became the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner."

**On this date:** In 1712, Italian-born French astronomer Gian Domenico Cassini, discoverer of four of Saturn's moons, died in Paris.

In 1812, Napoleon Bonaparte's troops entered Moscow following the Battle of Borodino to find the Russian city largely abandoned and parts set ablaze.

In 1829, the Treaty of Adrianople was signed, ending war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

In 1861, the first naval engagement of the Civil War took place as the *USS Colorado* attacked and sank the Confederate private schooner *Judah* off Pensacola, Fla.

In 1901, President William McKinley died in Buffalo, N.Y., of gunshot wounds inflicted by an assassin. Vice President Theodore Roosevelt succeeded him.

In 1927, modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan died in Nice (nees), France, when her scarf became entangled in a wheel of the sports car she was riding in.

In 1941, Vermont passed a resolution enabling its servicemen to receive wartime bonuses by declaring the U.S. to be in a state of armed conflict, giving rise to headlines that Vermont had "declared war on Germany."

In 1964, Pope Paul VI opened the third session of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, also known as "Vatican II." (The session closed two months later.)

In 1972, the family drama "The Waltons" premiered on CBS.

In 1982, Princess Grace of Monaco, formerly actress Grace Kelly, died at age 52 of injuries from a car crash the day before; Lebanon's president-elect, Bashir Gemayel, was killed by a bomb.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy, appeared together on radio and television to appeal for a "national crusade" against drug abuse.

In 1991, the government of South Africa, the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party signed a national peace pact.

## FROM THE BIBLE

*He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you. 1 Peter 1:20. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*

## YOUR LETTERS

### Deception And Lies

Fernande Colette Bitsos, Yankton

The "flexible pole" Paul Ryan has been like the tide, waving North and South, East and West trying to reply to the media when confronted, to more evasive and distorted lies about "proven" facts over and over again. Mitt Romney is tainted too, flip-flopping about his 'own' health care ... flip-flopping about abortion ... flip-flopping about gay rights ...

This was seen VERY recently on TV while he was governor. However, "Pole" Ryan wins the crown when genuine facts hit him in the face.

His ambition is to lie over and over again to become vice president with his pockets stuffed with millions of dollars for his 1 or 2 percent donors, so they may be rewarded with favors with out-sourcing jobs and gambling casinos in China ... their millions safely away in Switzerland or Bermuda to avoid paying taxes here in the USA ... and of course, keeping their tax credits here in the USA while raising them on the working class. But which working class — the ones in China, India and South America on their 50 cents per hour? Of course not.

The flexible "Pole" Ryan and Flip-Flopper Romney, masters of deception and lies. Wake up America.

### Support Appreciated

Heather Jensen and Austin Anderson's Family

We want to thank the commu-

nity for the overwhelming amount of support the community gave us for the 2nd Annual Austin Anderson Fight This Cancer Poker Run Benefit Sept. 8.

Because of the generous donations and amount of people that showed up for the event, it was a great success and we were able to raise a good amount of money to go to Austin for continued treatment expenses while he continues his battle with cancer.

We want to specifically thank sponsors for the event: Kozy's Inn Bar for hosting the event; and the poker stops: Bunyan's, Waddy's Bar and Grill, My Bar, The Buckhorn and Wild Bill's.

Thank you to the poker hand sponsors Lyons Specialized Transport, JB Heating and Cooling, Rogers Yamaha and Hansen Briggs Advertising.

A special thank you to all those that provided auction items and donated their time to help, especially Roger and Christine Irwin and Melissa Cowman. Also, thanks to the Yankton Fire Department for making Austin an honorary firefighter, and to Yankton's McDonalds and Frito-O-Lay for donating items for the meal.

Finally, thank you to all of Yankton's media — KVHT, WNAX/104.1 The Wolf, KYNT/KDAM and the *Press & Dakotan* for helping with advertising the event.

Without everyone's donations and warm hearts, this benefit would not have been possible.

Thank you to all who partici-

pated and have open hearts for Austin's healing for their continued support.

### Venture Grant Helps

Yankton Youth Soccer Association

Yankton Youth Soccer Association would like to send a big thank you to United Way for their generous Venture Grant to YYSA to help offset the cost of repairs needed for the water pump at the Lewis and Clark Soccer Complex fields.

This pump is removable and will support the maintenance of our fields for many years to come.

YYSA would also like to invite the community to visit the Lewis & Clark Soccer Complex and enjoy the beautiful fields Yankton youth presently use. Visitors often comment on the beauty and the location of the fields. Free parking, trees, the location and easy access are among the positives.

The only drawbacks are the lack of restrooms and running water.

Please help support YYS soccer by attending home games Friday the 14th and Saturday the 15th, as well as their last home game on Sept. 29th.

The Yankton Youth Soccer Association is an all volunteer organization that serves the youth of Yankton and the surrounding area. The public is encouraged to become involved with our activities.

tacking private individuals or businesses.

n Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

n Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to [views@yankton.net](mailto:views@yankton.net).

## OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

n Please limit letters to 300 words or less. (During political campaigns, letters related to the campaign may be limited to 150 words.) Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

n In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters at-

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