

Commentary: Ungodly Saudi missionaries

By Arnaud de Borchgrave
UPI Editor at Large

Washington, DC, Jan. 31 (UPI) -- Muslims in the United States should "behave as if on a mission behind enemy lines." Not the admonition of a crank or a freak from the lunatic fringe, but Saudi-funded religious pamphlets distributed to mosques throughout America. Says who?

Freedom House, one of the oldest human rights groups in the United States and currently headed by James Woolsey, who was CIA director during the first Clinton administration. The organization conducted a one-year study of the kind of "hate propaganda" the Saudi government has paid to print and distribute to U.S. mosques. The 89-page report, based on 200 Saudi documents and released by Freedom House Jan. 28, was titled, "Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Fill American Mosques."

One mosque where Freedom House researchers found evidence of Saudi Wahhabi skullduggery is three miles from where the World Trade Center used to be. Muslim newcomers to America are told Wahhabism, the official creed of the Saudi kingdom, is the only true religion. Anyone who doesn't conform to the postulates of Wahhabism is an apostate.

The Freedom House report says, "in a book published by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, and collected from the Al Farouq Mosque in Brooklyn, Saudi Arabia's official religious leader, the late Bin Baz, authorizes Muslims to kill converts to Islam who violate sexual mores on adultery and homosexuality." Worshipers at Al Farooq are told, "If a person says I believe in Allah alone and confirms the truth of everything from Muhammed, except in his forbidding fornication, he becomes a disbeliever. For that, it would be lawful for Muslims to spill his blood and to take his money."

The Brooklyn mosque was a favorite of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind sheikh, who was the ringleader of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, on his fund-raising tours in the late 1980s. Several co-conspirators in the Landmark bomb plot (whose targets were the United Nations and New York City's tunnels) also used Al Farooq as a safe meeting place.

Several of the 200 documents obtained by Freedom House, were prefaced, "Greetings from the Cultural Attaché of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Washington."

Saudi spokesmen were quick to deny wrongdoing and to condemn "extremism and hateful expression among people anywhere in the world." Freedom House's Nina Shea, the organization's director of its Center for Religious Freedom and the editor of the report, said incriminating literature was collected from mosques and

Islamic centers in Los Angeles, Oakland, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, New York and Washington, including the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in Fairfax, Va. The clerics in charge of these mosques, reached by phone, denied everything, explaining: "Without tolerance, Islam cannot survive."

Some of the documents in the Freedom House report advised Muslims in the United States on how to put down Jews and Christians by refusing to shake hands or to congratulate them on their religious holidays. Muslims who convert to another religion "should be killed because they have denied the Koran."

The credibility of official Saudi denials could be judged by the provenance of the materials examined -- the Saudi Embassy in Washington, the Saudi Education Ministry, the Saudi Air Force and other official branches of the Saudi government.

Beginning in 1979, after the revolutionary Shiite clergy in Iran overthrew the monarchy and panicked the Saudi royal family, Wahhabi "missionaries" were given a free hand and countless billions to spread their anti-Shiite faith all over the world. Beginning in 1989, following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Wahhabi clergy began funding Pakistan's madrassas, Koranic schools where hatred of America, Israel and India is taught to this day.

The Saudi royal family belatedly recognized last year that Wahhabism was sowing the seeds of the kingdom's destruction. More than 1,000 imams were summoned to a meeting in Riyadh and told they could no longer use the words jihad (holy war) and jihadis (holy warriors) in their Friday prayers under penalty of detention and rehabilitation. They soon found a way around the ban by preaching it was every Iraqi's duty to oppose the U.S. occupation of their country.

Shea correctly observed the Saudi royals "have worked out an arrangement that exports the conflict within their own society."

The Saudi royal family also feels protected against the kind of democratic tidal wave that swept over Iraq last Sunday. Wahhabism -- the strictest interpretation of the Koran -- could easily emerge victorious with a new standard bearer: Osama bin Laden.

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