مشروع الكويت
ملخص ما نشر في الصحف المحلية ليوم الأحد الموافق ٢٧ مارس ٢٠٠٥
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CONSPIRACY THEORIES

We are not all terrorists

By Badrya Darwish

Thanks to the FBI for ruling out any Islamist connection with the refinery explosion in Texas last week. In spite of the FBI saying the accident was not a terrorist attack, in fact not even an attack at all, there are groups who tried their best to link the accident to Muslim radicals, sending emails and repeatedly pointing to 'suspected Islamist groups'.

There are groups who are determined to link any accident that takes place anywhere on earth to Muslims. They are determined to tarnish the name of Islam in any possible way. Who are these people? Who stands behind them? And what is their aim? Thank God for the Islamic world that 16-year-old Jeff Weise did not carry any letter relating to Islam in his name - like an M (Mohammad) at the beginning, middle or end. I feel sad for the victims and their families of the Red Lake, Minnesota tragedy.

But I am also disgruntled with the way the Western media covers such tragedies. I am angry with their double standards and the way they cover Muslims and Islam. That the media mentioned the boy's ethnic roots - American Indian and/or Chippewa - happened only because the shooting took place on an Indian reservation.

Just imagine if that boy had been Muslim! I guess all the newspapers would have appeared the next day with nothing less than 'Muslim Terrorist Boy Executes Students in School Day Massacre' and the TV stations will be carrying it for months to come, repeatedly calling him a Muslim terrorist, digging into his roots, when he came to the States and if he's related to bin Laden or Al-Qaeda.

The scrutiny of his family and even his neighbours would have been overwhelming by the media and authorities.

Every time something bad happens, the first thing people in the States want to do is blame a Muslim. It has become a stereotype - we are all bomb-strapped, suicide-bent anti-American terrorists. That millions of Muslims each do not blow themselves up goes unnoticed. That no one even thought to mention the religious affiliation of the boy who killed nine others and himself this seems just a tad unfair.

Why does the media get to decide in which case religion is an important fact worth mentioning and when it's not? Why must the media always identify any Muslim who commits a crime with his religion before his name, but you never see "Pentecostal Mass Murderer" or 'Buddhist Car Thief' or 'Southern Baptist Rapist' in the headlines? Who do you think benefits from this appalling image of Muslims? It could be just coincidental but then that sounds too much like a conspiracy theory.

Sceptics assured northern oilfields' profits will not be shared

Energy minister gushes forth on 'Project Kuwait'

By Zainab Al-Doukali

KUWAIT: Kuwait will once again push the controversial Northern Oil Fields project to the Cabinet, the energy minister announced yesterday. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said the project, which plans to bring in international oil companies to develop Kuwait's northern oilfields, will be presented to the Cabinet during the next few months. The project aims to achieve an increase in the daily oil production to 900,000 barrels per day, while the current production stands at 345,000 bpd. Sheikh Ahmad held yesterday an open discussion with a number of media figures and personalities to discuss and present their opinions about "Project Kuwait" at the Sheraton Hotel.

The minister assured that foreign companies involved in this project will not share the profits of the oil reserves. "The foreign company that will run the project is not a partner, but it will just run the project. We will use the latest technologies presented by this company in to benefit from the natural oil reserves in the northern fields in Abdali, Ratqa, Rawdatain, and Sabriya. We are looking forward to increase the production level from four to five millions barrels in order to meet international demands."

"Project Kuwait" is a $7bn, 25-year plan, first formulated in 1997 by the SPC, to increase the country's oil production with the help of international oil companies. According to Sheikh Ahmad, "the Cabinet rejected the project earlier because of a lack of precise information. We corrected all the earlier mistakes, and we tried to make up what we lacked. In spite of all the parliamentary and media pressures we faced, we were able to prepare the full file of the project to be presented to the Cabinet. We talked to several authorities and specialists to see if we should present this project to the Cabinet or not. We decided at the end of the day to present it and await their decision."

Kuwait sits on an estimated 96.5 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, around 8 per cent of the world's total, and around 1,600 producing oil wells. Dr Ahmed Al-Dayeen, a writer in one of the daily papers, noted the Cabinet is the only party that will decide if this project will be approved or not. "It is only the Cabinet's decision to approve it or not, and we cannot ignore this fact."

Ahmed Al-Athbi, head of the Northern Oil Fields project, said that involving the Cabinet is the right step. "The Cabinet is a partner when it comes to the decision about approving such a project. That's why we want to present the project to the Cabinet, and we have prepared all the needed information about it."

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KUWAIT: Energy Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd Al-Sabah speaks during a discussion on 'Project Kuwait' at the Sheraton Hotel yesterday. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

Saudis raze Hindu temple, deport three

RIYADH: Saudi religious police have destroyed a clandestine makeshift Hindu temple in an old district of Riyadh and deported three worshippers found there, a newspaper reported yesterday. Members of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, or religious police, Thursday stumbled across a room converted into a temple while raiding a number of flats suspected of being used to manufacture alcohol and distribute pornographic videos, pan-Arab Al-Hayat said.

"They were surprised to find that one room had been converted into a Hindu temple," it said. A caretaker who was found in the worshipping area ignored the religious police orders to stop performing his religious rituals, the paper added. He was deported along with two other men who arrived on the scene to worship. All forms of non-Muslim worship are banned in ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia, which is home to Islam's holiest shrines.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an advisory panel, last month urged the US government to impose sanctions on Saudi Arabia, as well as Vietnam and Eritrea, for violating religious rights. Last year, the US State Department for the first time named ally Saudi Arabia, as well as Eritrea and Vietnam, "countries of particular concern" in its annual report on religious freedom. A list previously included China, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea and Sudan. — AFP

Energy minister gushes forth on 'Project Kuwait'

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The fields, which the Kuwaiti government intends to open to foreign investment, are all currently operating in northern or western Kuwait, including Rawdatain, Sabriya, Ratqa, Bahra, Minagish, and Umm Gudair. Sheikh Ahmed assured that the Kuwaiti laws do not allow oil ownership by any foreign company. He added: "The revenues of the project belong to the coffers of the country. After producing the oil, the state receives it and it is free to sell it and market it as it wishes and the foreign company has nothing to do with it. I assure to you that there are no foreign pressures on this project. It is just for the good of the country."

A detailed presentation about the nature of the project and all the details about the role of the foreign company was presented to the audience to get a general idea about the project. Deputy Manager of the project Hashim Al-Refae noted, "There is a need to develop the northern fields for several reasons. We cannot depend on Burgan field alone to achieve the required production levels. Also, developing such fields will take a long time, so it is better if we start from now."

The contract that will be signed with the foreign company (if it is approved by the Cabinet) will have Kuwaitis comprising sixty per cent of the workforce. Sheikh Ahmed stated, "This part of the contract will give Kuwaitis the opportunity to be trained by this expert company. Employees of Kuwait Oil Company are free to choose to stay where they are or to move to the northern project."