

# Why Muslims and Refugees Are Presented as Evil

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Spring 2021. The word "fortune seekers" is used in debates in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in the Netherlands. It troubles me, because it is about refugees that Europe does not want, especially those with an Islamic background. I have an uncomfortable feeling of hypocrisy. Because who are the fortune seekers? The answer to that question led me from France, via Afghanistan and African nations, to more insight into how we are connected with these countries, precisely through our prosperity. Much more and deeper than we realize.

If we long for more peace in the world and in ourselves, then it is good to remove some veils that block our view. To see with new eyes. And to make choices that offer perspective and hope.

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I remember our then-Prime Minister Mark Rutte's strikingly strong support for President Macron of France, after the horrific murder of teacher Samuel Paty by an 18-year-old Chechen with Muslim roots. The vehemence of the acclaim surprised me. So too did the immediate response from former education ministers Slob and Van Engelshoven, who instructed schools to show cartoons of Prophet Mohammed in the classes and to speak about our Freedom of Speech (a compulsory lesson component in France). Which raised the question: how do you do that with Muslim pupils?

An expert on the radio gave as an example that she approached Muslim children in her elementary school with the remark "You don't have to be afraid of me." When I heard that I wondered: who is afraid of whom? And why? Are you afraid of someone with whom you feel safe? It seemed the world was upside down. It is the world upside down.

## The start of a search

The reaction in France to the murder also worried me. After the attack, cartoons of Mohammed were projected on large French government buildings for days. Is that an expectable response: showing cartoons that seemed to be the reason for the murder? It looked more like a provocation.

Due to the various reports about the attack, I was less and less able to avoid wondering whether this was really an action by a young 'lone wolf', who had a few hundred euros in his pocket to ask students in another municipality to point out a specific teacher.

We learned from the media that a group of thirty police officers had shot the Chechen youngster on the spot with nine bullets shortly after the murder. I was surprised that in a suburb of Paris there were so many police officers at the scene shortly after the murder.

Besides... why shoot? A young man with only a big knife, but no firearm! Why did he have to die right away instead of going to trial?

***Despite worldwide condemnation from Muslims of the attack, the murder, committed by one Muslim, was being charged on all Muslims and Islam, even in our country.***

The French government appeared to be working on new legislation to restrict Islamic and other religious organizations and institutions. "To strengthen secularism." In reality, it restricts religions, while the premise of secularism is that the state, which is secular, guarantees freedom of conscience and religion for everyone.

Immediately after the murder, an organization that collected information about Islamophobia was banned, and a number of Muslims were threatened with deportation from the country. Was that a normal response to a murder?

The reactions in the Netherlands also seemed exaggerated and I especially missed the nuance, which makes a world of difference. Because, despite worldwide condemnation from Muslims of the attack, the murder, committed by one Muslim, was being charged on all Muslims and Islam, even in *our* country. However, that was not the first time. Since 9/11, more seemed to be going on.

## **Does 9/11 stand alone?**

The hijackers of Saudi descent had not randomly selected the WTC, Pentagon and White House as their targets in 2001. They were *the* symbols of power and wealth of the United States. However, the attacks were and are always presented as an isolated action. Was that actually the case?

The United States, after losing the Vietnam War, in which South Vietnam opted for communism when the war ended, did not want Afghanistan to become communist as well. After a coup in 1978, Afghanistan got a communist-minded president, and had asked for support from the Soviet Union.

The US then decided to support Islamist insurgents against the elected president and then set up a \$ 500 million plan to force the Russians out of the country, with the help of Saudi Arabia (including Osama Bin Laden) and Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI. These wars and tribal battles caused great flows of refugees.

The fact that America itself subsequently occupied the country and focused on Afghan mineral resources, caused bad blood for bin Laden. Reason enough to turn against America from that moment on and against the Saudi Royal Family, which had made him believe that the struggle was about the freedom of the Afghans.

Oil and gas were the primary targets. Sometime later, Karzai became president with the help of the US. He had contacts with the Taliban about oil and gas, and in the US with the CIA. He also played a key role in the "Bush Oil Team."

The resources that are **now** the main concern are uranium (the US has already sent many transport planes full of uranium from Helmand, in Afghanistan, because it is needed for nuclear energy, nuclear weapons and nuclear submarines), silver, gold (used for, among other things, our mobile phones), copper, iron, cobalt and lithium (used in batteries), niobium (used in the manufacture of superconducting steel), emerald, ruby, azure, and other precious and rare minerals. **Raw materials that the prosperous world really wants. They have increased our prosperity! Much of it is also needed for our desired shift to renewable resources and environmental sustainability.** The value of these mineral resources is estimated at approximately US \$ 3 trillion. The 9/11 attacks did not come out of nowhere, they had a history.

So who are the fortune seekers? Are they really the *refugees*?

***Many of the countries from which we have extracted wealth in recent decades are apparently poor, Islamic countries***

## **“Let’s be careful with what we sow, because we will harvest”**

In a 2016 interview, Hillary Clinton indicated that the US did not want to see Central Asia "under communist control." "Let's go and recruit these Mujahideen." She emphasized the US's approval of Saudi Arabia and others, importing the "Wahabi brand of Islam", (the movement to which fundamentalist Salafism is related) "so that we can go and beat the Soviet Union."

As one of the few, Clinton recognized a causal link between 9/11 and what happened in Afghanistan and is *still* happening in other Islamic countries: "Let's be careful with what we sow, because we will harvest."

Many of the countries from which we have extracted wealth in recent decades are apparently poor, Islamic countries. In addition to those in the Middle East, including Afghanistan, also more and more African. Old colonial areas, where we are now mining the treasures from their land. In itself this can be acceptable, provided it is done in a fair, humane and environmentally friendly way, where the local population in particular also benefits from. But the opposite is true.

Because the population sees how 'we' steal their raw materials while they are getting poorer, riots arise, with or without support from neighboring countries in which IS members sometimes seem to be involved (note that researchers doubt this and think that the Islamic State — originally helped by the CIA and likely trained by the Mossad — wants to give the world the idea that it is still very much alive). Many millions of Africans, mostly Muslim, are now on the run. Fortune seekers...?

## **Concealing language**

If you pay close attention, you will see that wherever prosperous countries are involved in conflict situations, there are economic interests. We do not "bring democracy" to really poor countries! Regimes in Islamic countries have been overthrown, wars have been fought. We

have now become familiar with nice-sounding terms such as "Bringing Democracy", "Enduring Freedom", "War on Terror" and "Peace Missions". Just to give us a positive feeling about it.

The result of the first three fabricated excuses is frequently plundered and devastated lands. Peacekeeping missions often cause major conflicts of conscience for military personnel, after they discover the naked truth of these situations.

Our "Development Money" is now being used to help Dutch companies start up businesses in African nations, among others. For example, Heineken received 7 million euros between 2009 and 2019 to help start a brewery in Ethiopia and to grow the raw materials there, which would create jobs for the local population. "Would" — except that it turned out differently. The number of jobs was very little.

When local people in those countries, with no future prospects, rebel or violently oppose this political-economic state of affairs, we do not call it 'defending their interests' or 'standing up for their rights', which it really is. No, politicians and media immediately use terms such as "terror", "terrorists", "jihadists", and Muslim extremism. We frame Muslims as a danger to our economic liberalism, which is our neo-colonialism. **But as for the hundreds of thousands of victims that we made in the defense of our economic interests, we prefer to remain silent.**

Who are the fortune seekers? We are. We. Us. And it's at the expense of our Muslim fellow human beings elsewhere, who often live in poverty and despair, and of those who live here and in other prosperous countries as ordinary citizens like you and me.

## Good and evil people?

A few years ago I saw an American promotional film for defense specialists and other interested parties about the use of drones as a deadly weapon, which could be aimed at the "evildoers" from a long distance, without much destruction. Wonderful solution, right? The packed hall almost cheered. I wondered who decides who is "good" and who is "evil"...

Good and evil people? I remember the statement of the Commander in Chief of the Royal Air Force in a World War II documentary: *"If we had not been victors, we would have been charged with war crimes."*

Why do we keep repeating this "enemy" mindset, and behave like an enemy ourselves when the other party does not want to dance to our tune, and does not allow themselves to be caged by our control, all for the sake of our own interest, our prosperity? Because that's what the wars we fight are about. *"If you're not for us, you're against us."*

Is it because we think we need to get richer? In 2020, the Netherlands was ranked the 14th richest country in the world. Let's instead distribute the wealth in our country a little more fairly. Is it because we want to have power over others? While we often cannot even control just ourselves in how we want to be, what we do, or want to do?

***Can we reconcile the current situation with our humanity? With our concern for new generations? With human rights?***

Freud once said: "People who love power and money so much are really just children. They remain naive all their lives. They become so fixated on idolizing money that they do not engage in the rest of the development they should actually go through to become a good adult person. They don't dare to. They believe in fantasies, fictions. It is difficult for those people to realize what it is all about."

Sometimes leaders are chosen with such traits. The politician with the biggest mouth, or the most beautiful (yet often disguising) words. A leader who reassures us and, of course, helps make us "more prosperous"? Is that what we really want as voters?

When you realize that our prosperity is literally coming at the expense of the standard of living and often even the lives of others, or at the expense of the planet and the environment, wouldn't you rather take a completely different approach? Can we reconcile the current situation with our humanity and with our concern for new generations? With human rights? With our constitution? Above all, can we reconcile it with our conscience?

### **Listen to stories**

What we think we see in the other often reflects what we think and do ourselves. This applies not only to the personal sphere, but also to the political sphere. Listen carefully to what we say about the aggression, the bad behavior or intentions of other superpowers. Nine times out of ten we do that ourselves in one form or another. It's that one finger that points to the other, while three point to ourselves.

We can choose to become truly transparent and fair and no longer blame others for everything, while we barely act much better.

There is nothing wrong with Islam as a religion. Find out for yourself by talking to Muslims. See them the way you want to be seen yourself. Stand next to people who are unfairly condemned, belittled, insulted, or excluded. Whoever they are. Our hearts are big enough for it.

And refugees? Let us not ourselves be the reason they come. Pick up the refugees who have been waiting for years to be admitted, offer them safety, opportunities, and listen to their stories. You will be pleasantly surprised at what you get in return.



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*Translation from original Dutch edited by [Faruk Ateş](#)*