



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

**A Gagged Society and a
Gagged Alliance**

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Be careful whom you bed-down.
You may not like their positions.
----anon

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Three weeks ago, I posted a report criticizing America's educational institutions for their promoting politically correct speech at the expense of curtailing free speech. It is available at Blog.UylessBlack.com by scrolling to the section titled "Customs and Cultures in America" and clicking on the link: "Suppressing Free Speech."

In that report, I did not address the legitimate free speech issues of bullying, hate speech uttered on playgrounds, nor false or slanderous words. My point was that we as a society are going to the extreme in forbidding words or phrases that are a necessary part of human education and study---especially in the class rooms at learning institutions.

This report adds balance to this other essay. It makes known my gratitude for the First Amendment. It expresses my relief that I was born in a country that protects free speech. To make these points, I will focus on one of America's allies, a country that curtails free speech; one that both supports and undermines this alliance: Pakistan.²

Doubling Down on Bedding Down

"Be careful whom you bed-down. You may not like their positions." While the United States and Pakistan are sleeping partners, they are reluctant bed mates. It is a dysfunctional romance. They mistrust each other, often showing outright disdain for their relationship.

Often as not, they misuse their arrangements. Pakistan is known to support elements of the Taliban; elements who kill Americans in Afghanistan. Because of the lack of confidence in Pakistan, the United States kept Pakistan in the dark about its raid on Osama bin Laden in Pakistan itself.

It is hard to imagine: Without informing this ally, the U.S. violated Pakistan's borders to kill an enemy who was living unfettered in a prominent enclave near a respected military institution. This bizarre relationship is almost beyond belief. We have an ally who supports factions whose mission is to kill our soldiers. Yet we keep each other at bay. We are afraid of their supposed loose-cannon control of their nuclear weapons. They are insulted that we are afraid. It is an alliance built on disdain and distrust.

Pakistan and its Blasphemy Practices

Anon also offers, "Sleep only with those you trust. Otherwise, your pockets will be emptied while you slumber." America's pockets are being picked by Pakistan. We pay this country billions of dollars in "aid" money, essentially an enticement to stay in bed with us.³ Or

¹ Thanks to Google for the image on the cover about suppressing speech.

² During my on-going research and study---and in discussions with my former Pakistani business associates, I have come across many examples that can be cited in this narrative. Unless noted otherwise, I use one source, as it captures the essence of the situation. See "Bad Mouthing," *The Economist*, November 29, 2104, 37. I am paraphrasing this article. If I source more than a few words directly, they are placed within quotation marks.

³ Much of this money is targeted for support of the Pakistani military cleaning out the Taliban in West Pakistan. At the same time, it is well known that elements of the Pakistani high-level intelligence services are sympathetic to the Taliban. See <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/isi-terrorism-behind-accusations/p11644>.

perhaps more accurately, stay out of bed with our competitors. Meanwhile, Pakistan sneaks out of the covers to do business with people who routinely attack Americans. But this relationship goes beyond the pale. At what point do we draw the line? Whom do we coddle at the expense of our values?

At what point do we declare a country's values to be so different from ours, we cannot embrace them as allies? Be careful with the last question. We were in an alliance with Stalin during times when he was murdering millions of innocent Russians. Before we toppled Sadaam Hussein, we gave him considerable support.

Contradictions

In examining possible violation of blasphemy laws, Pakistani judges are reluctant to examine the evidence because this evidence might contain phrases or words that are considered "profanities." By their utterance, the court in which they hold forth might be judged by Muslim mullahs (religious leaders) to be blasphemous, and therefore put them in court as defendants!

George Orwell, come forth. The very evidence that should be used to help a defendant cannot be used because it might be offensive to the ears of the jurists or the public. The defendant is not allowed to defend his case because his defense might entail using unacceptable words.

It is the same sort of situation cited in the earlier report in this blog in which a respected scholar in America was castigated for using the n-word to teach about its implications. But in Pakistan, word misuse can have severe consequences:

- " 'Blasphemy' can now include spelling errors by children or throwing away a visiting-card bearing the name 'Muhammad' ."
- An owner of a television channel was sentenced to 26 years in jail for showing a popular song about the prophet. The song was broadcast as part of a light-hearted program. There can be nothing light-hearted about the serious business of subjugating an entire population for the mullahs to control their religious subjects.
- In 2011, Salman Tasser, the governor of a province in Pakistan was killed by one of his bodyguards because he called for mercy for a Christian woman who was in trouble with authorities.
- A man who was arrested for alleged blasphemy, was "killed by an axe-wielding policeman."
- Earlier this year, a lawyer was "shot dead in the city of Multan for representing a man who was accused of insulting a prophet." *The Economist* did not elaborate on the fate of the alleged insulter. We can assume he is not in good health.
- "Countless vendettas can be settled in a blasphemy allegation."

- A Pakistani court sentenced a woman to death for committing an act of blasphemy against Muhammad. If she is pardoned, the Muslim clerics have vowed to take to the streets, launch a jihad against the Pakistani government and the entire world, and kill all the blasphemers.⁴

A Dilemma

The U.S. relationships with Pakistan are controlled by the White House, Congress, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense. Since Pakistan first acquired nuclear weapons, these branches of the government have been reluctant to rock the boat for fear of the politically fragile Pakistan succumbing to anti-American groups, perhaps even terrorists. As a consequence of this apprehension, America nurtures a dysfunctional alliance.

Pakistan is known to have permitted one of its noted nuclear authorities to get away with offering some of Pakistan's nuclear knowledge and wares to other countries.

A well-known seller of nuclear weapons is the Khan Research Laboratories, operating out of Pakistan. It was caught in the act of trying to sell Libya a \$100 million nuclear arsenal package. It was also accused of providing weapons information and nuclear weapons components to Iran, North Korea, and perhaps Syria and Saudi Arabia. After being caught, the Khan operators received a slap on the wrist from Pakistan's leaders.⁵

Under other conditions where Pakistan might have been declared another axis of evil, some citizens would declare these actions were worthy of a police action.

What to do with this so-called alliance? Likely, nothing. As with Pakistan's severely gagged society, America's choices for dealing with Pakistan are gagged as well. There are times when we cannot choose our bedmates. Or at least we cannot choose to divorce them.

⁴ "The Road to Renewal," *The Economist*, January 16, 2013, 54.

Also, <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21570677-after-centuriesstagnation-science-making-comeback-islamic-world-road>.

⁵ William Langewiesche, "The Wrath of Khan," *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 2005, 63.