



Lahore, Pakistan: Muslims Killing Muslims

George Washington warned Americans about entangling alliances with the Old World. Perhaps one reason is exemplified by last Friday's attack in Lahore, Pakistan, by Islamic extremists against a sect of Islam that rejects some tenets of the Islam practiced by most Muslims. The terrorists hit two mosques crowded with worshippers, killing scores of the minority sect.



Attacks on Christians and Jews in the Islamic world are, grimly, too common to rate a news story. Most informed people these days also know about the ancient hostility between Shia and Sunni Muslims, which has resulted in violence and in profound mistrust.

Less well known are attacks upon smaller sects of Islam, some of which are little known in the West. Alawis, for example, are a large minority of the population of Syria, and among its adherents are the Assad family. Alawis celebrate some Christian holidays and, although their rites are secret, are widely believed to be influenced by historical Christianity in the Middle East. Most Muslims consider Alawis to be apostates.

The Ahmadis just murdered in their Lahore mosque believe that Ghulam Ahmad, who died about one hundred years ago, is the providential figure believed by Christians, Jews, and Muslims to return and foretell the end of the world, as well as being a preordained figure in Hinduism, the Bahaism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism. There are about four million of these Muslims in Pakistan, and millions more around the world.

The tenets of Ahmadis are profoundly less militant than those of Sunni or Shia Muslims. Its adherents raise funds for the relief of those in distress through its Humanity First Foundation. If Islam was going to evolve from a religion of the sword into a religion of peace, then sects like the Ahmadis would seem to be the best vehicles. But, although Ahmadis exist in large numbers in Pakistan and although they consider themselves Muslims, their doctrinal differences are enough to enrage other Muslims to murder and to mayhem.

How America or even American ideals can prevail in an ancient land like Pakistan, near the home of so many world faiths and yet demonstrably unable to prevent acts of terrorism against its own Muslim citizens, is very problematic. How America can absorb as legal or illegal immigrants people raised in values so profoundly contrary to the ideals of tolerance in our nation's Judeo-Christian heritage is also very hard to see.

Americans, privately, have done much to help other people around the world. Most Christians know of other Christians who have done missionary work in Africa or Asia. Millions of Jews and Christians in America contribute to charities to help those in desperate need. There is no doubt that these private good works make a difference.



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on May 31, 2010

But can American government transform nations knotted in historic traditions of internecine war and intolerance? The efforts of the last 50 years are not encouraging. What America can do best for the world is to be America, a beacon of what mankind can achieve.

Photo of a casket containing a victim of the May 28 attack against a minority sect in Pakistan: AP Images



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