



Orwell Would Be Proud

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[Mark Steyn](#)

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My favorite headline of the year so far comes from The Daily Mail in Britain: "Government Renames Islamic Terrorism As 'Anti-Islamic Activity' To Woo Muslims."

Her Majesty's Government is not alone in feeling it's not always helpful to link Islam and the, ah, various unpleasantnesses with suicide bombers and whatnot. Even in his cowboy Crusader heyday, President Bush liked to cool down the crowd with a lot of religion-of-peace stuff. But the British have now decided that kind of mealy-mouthed "respect" is no longer sufficient. So, henceforth, any terrorism perpetrated by persons of an Islamic persuasion will be designated "anti-Islamic activity." Britain's Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, unveiled the new brand name in a speech a few days ago. "There is nothing Islamic

about the wish to terrorize, nothing Islamic about plotting murder, pain and grief," she told her audience. "Indeed, if anything, these actions are anti-Islamic."

Well, yes, one sort of sees what she means. Killing thousands of people in Manhattan skyscrapers in the name of Islam does, among a certain narrow-minded type of person, give Islam a bad name, and thus could be said to be "anti-Islamic" — in the same way that the Luftwaffe raining down death and destruction on Londoners during the Blitz was an "anti-German activity." But I don't recall even Neville Chamberlain explaining, as if to a five-year old, that there is nothing German about the wish to terrorize and invade, and that this is entirely at odds with the core German values of sitting

around eating huge sausages in beer gardens while wearing lederhosen.

Still, it should add a certain surreal quality to BBC news bulletins: "The Prime Minister today condemned the latest anti-Islamic activity as he picked through the rubble of Downing Street looking for his 2008 Wahhabi Community Outreach Award. In a related incident, the anti-Islamic activists who blew up Buckingham Palace have unfortunately caused the postponement of the Queen's annual Ramadan banquet."

A few days ago, a pre-trial hearing in an Atlanta courtroom made public for the first time a video made by two Georgia Tech students. Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee went to Washington and took footage of key buildings, and that "casing video" then wound up in the hands of Younis Tsouli, an al-Qaeda recruiter in London. As the film shot by the Georgia students was played in court, Ehsanul Islam Sadequee's voice could be heard on the soundtrack: "This is where our brothers attacked the Pentagon."

"Allahu Akbar," responds young Ahmed. God is great.

How "anti-Islamic" an activity is that? Certainly, not all Muslims want to fly planes into the Pentagon. But those that do do it in the name of their faith. And anyone minded to engage in an "anti-Islamic activity" will find quite a lot of support from leading Islamic scholars. Take, for example, the "moderate" imam Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who once observed that "we will conquer Euro-

pe, we will conquer America! Not through the sword, but through da'wa" — ie, the nonincendiary form of Islamic outreach.

What could be more moderate than that? No wonder Mr al-Qaradawi is an associate of the Islamic Society of Boston, currently building the largest mosque in the north-east, and also a pal of the present Mayor of London. The impeccably moderate mullah was invited to address a British conference sponsored by the police and the Department of Work and Pensions on "Our Children, Our Future." And, when it comes to the children, Imam Qaradawi certainly has their future all mapped out. "Israelis might have nuclear bombs," he said, "but we have the children bomb and these human bombs must continue until liberation." As Maurice Chevalier used to say, thank heaven for little girls, they blow up in the most delightful way. The British Home Secretary would respond that not all moderate imams are as gung-ho to detonate moppets. Which is true. But, by insisting on re-labeling terrorism committed by Muslims in the name of Islam as "anti-Islamic activity," Her Majesty's Government is engaging not merely in Orwellian Newspeak but in self-defeating Orwellian Newspeak. The broader message it sends is that ours is a weak culture so unconfident and insecure that if you bomb us and kill us our first urge is to find a way to flatter and apologize to you.

Here's another news item out of Britain this week: A new version of The Three Little Pigs was turned down

for some "excellence in education" award on the grounds that "the use of pigs raises cultural issues" and, as a result, the judges "had concerns for the Asian community" — ie, Muslims. Non-Muslim Asians — Hindus and Buddhists — have no "concerns" about anthropomorphized pigs.

This is now a recurring theme in British life. A while back, it was a local government council telling workers not to have knick-knacks on their desks representing Winnie-the-Pooh's porcine sidekick, Piglet. As Martin Niemöller famously said, first they came for Piglet and I did not speak out because I was not a Disney character and, if I was, I'm more of an Eeyore. So then they came for the Three Little Pigs, and Babe, and by the time I realized my country had turned into a 24/7 Looney Tunes it was too late, because there was no Porky Pig to stammer "Th-th-th-that's all, folks!" and bring the nightmare to an end.

Just for the record, it's true that Muslims, like Jews, are not partial to bacon and sausages. But the Koran has nothing to say about cartoon pigs. Likewise, it is silent on the matter of whether one can name a teddy bear after Mohammed. What all these stories have in common is the excessive deference to Islam. If the Three Little Pigs are verboten

when Muslims do not yet comprise ten per cent of the British population, what else will be on the blacklist by the time they're, say, 20 per cent?

A couple of days later, Elizabeth May, leader of Canada's Green Party (the fourth largest political party), spoke out against her country's continued military contribution to the international force in Afghanistan. "More ISAF forces from a Christian/Crusader heritage," she said, "will continue to fuel an insurgency that has been framed as a jihad." As it happens, Canada did not send troops to the Crusades, mainly because the fun was over several centuries before Canada came in existence. Six years ago, it was mostly the enemy who took that line, Osama bin Laden raging at the Great Satan for the fall of Andalusia in 1492, which, with the best will in the world, it's hard to blame on Halliburton. But since then, the pathologies of Islamism have proved surprisingly contagious among western elites.

You remember the Three Little Pigs? One builds a house of straw, and another of sticks, and both get blown down by the Big Bad Wolf. Western civilization is a mighty house of bricks, but who needs a Big Bad Wolf when the pig's so eager to demolish it himself?