

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

**THE MOHAMMED CARTOONS:
EUROPEAN SOCIETY
AND THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

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DR. PHILIP GORDON: Let me start by noting or underscoring that this is actually a collaboration at least between the Center on the U.S. and Europe here at Brookings and the Heinrich Böll Foundation with which we have collaborated a number of times in the past on a range of issues: Europe, and Turkey's role in Europe, Muslims in Europe, and political issues. So it is a pleasure to do that once again. I would like to ask the director of the Heinrich Böll Institute, Helga Flores, to say a couple of words to begin and then we will turn to our panelists.

HELGA FLORES TREJO: Thanks, Phil, and thanks to everybody. During the past few weeks the events in Europe and the Middle East have really grown over us. I think things have grown worse by the day. And right now there is no end in sight yet. While the whole clash is known as the cartoonist controversy there has been really truly very little to laugh about what's going on. We have seen protests from North Africa to South Asia, even more controversial opinions in most Western newspapers, death threats, rumors spreading, and people reacting.

So the question is what are the people so angry about and what is all of this issue about? I think the facts are clear about the publication of the cartoons, and I would let Flemming Rose explain that. But what happened after that is what seems very unclear. It seems that we have the option between supporting freedom of expression on the one hand or supporting religious tolerance on the other.

But are these really the only two issues at stake or are there others? And I would say that there are other issues that we might want to take into consideration while discussing this. And I would just like to give four points for the debate that I think are important to note since the reality is a little bit more complex than that.

I think first that the current conflict has a lot to do on how totalitarian regimes in the Middle East are using this issue to maintain power and of course cover the lack of legitimacy. Second, I think that all of these issues have less to do with religion rather with mob structures that threaten the lives of people which exercise their rights to having a controversial opinion and this cannot – we cannot accept that and we cannot accept that journalists or cartoonists fear for their lives.

However, third, I also think that the conflict is also about the clear-cut anti-immigration sentiments in some parts of Europe, and immigration is increasingly – (inaudible) – and I would say rather simplified in rather culturalistic tones. And I think, fourth, that we have to realize that behind some of the dignified protection of the principle of freedom of expression in the press that we have seen in Europe in the past there has been also some attitude hiding behind it.

So with that I think we have excellent speakers to discuss some of the different issues today and I want to thank Phil Gordon for doing this with us and thank you all for coming.

MR. GORDON: Thank you, Helga. I was initially planning to begin this discussion by trying to give a background and frame the issue. But we actually ended up finding someone who can do that rather better than me. To my left is Flemming Rose, who, as I believe you all probably know, is the culture editor at Jyllands-Posten, the Danish newspaper, that in September of this year decided to run these cartoons that triggered the entire debate.

As you know, Flemming and others took that decision to try to provoke a debate about press censorship and self-censorship. I would say, Flemming, that you succeeded in provoking that debate and we're really looking forward to your view of what that was all about. So Flemming will begin with a few comments on that. But we really have a terrific panel of experienced journalists and commentators to fill in the debates and provide some other perspective.

After Flemming Rose, we'll turn to Ammar Abdulhamid, who is a visiting fellow here at Brookings and the Saban Center for Middle East policy. Ammar is a Syrian scholar working on issues of democracy and human rights, and he can obviously talk a lot about the Muslim reaction to these cartoons. And then following Ammar again is a series of journalists who have worked in different ways on this issue.

David Ignatius, we all know, is a regular columnist for the Washington Post. He wrote about this issue last week. But he is also a former editor both of the International Herald Tribune and the Outlook section of the Post, and, David, we'll probably press you on how you as an editor would see this issue and the whole debate about should they be published in the first place, republished, and so on.

To my immediate right is Claus Christian Malzahn who is the Berlin editor and the editor of Spiegel online, Der Spiegel, a German weekly magazine, a very prominent German weekly magazine. Claus Malzahn has extensive journalistic experience in the Middle East, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and he also recently interviewed the Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen, and maybe he can tell us a little bit about that.

And then finally Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff. He's the Die Zeit columnist, journalist here, and – (inaudible) – another prominent German news weekly, also has extensive experience in the Middle East, and he was the person that The Washington Post turned to for an initial comment, and you probably all read his piece. So, as I say, it's really an excellent, diverse panel of experts on the subject, but we couldn't begin any better way than to turn to Fleming Rose and ask him what this is all about.

FLEMMING ROSE: Thank you. I'll just try briefly to establish a context because I have seen a lot of rumors and errors when this story has been told and retold in the world press over the last, you know, two or three weeks. So it all began in the middle

of September when a Danish writer went on the record in Denmark saying that he had difficulties finding an illustrator for a children's book about the life of the prophet. According to him, three illustrators turned down the offer referring to fear for the consequences, specifically naming the fate of Theo van Gogh, the Dutch film maker who was killed in 2004.

And then there was a second case where Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the Somalia-born Dutch politician who has been living in hiding since von Gogh was killed. She wrote the script for this movie, "Submission." Some of the translators of a critical book about Islam in Western Europe insisted on anonymity when her book was published, a form of self-censorship. And I forgot. The one artist who finally took up the job to illustrate the children's book about the prophet also insisted on anonymity.

And about at the same time there was a case in London at Tate Gallery, a Swedish evangelist artist, John Latham, had an installation, "God is Great," which is depicting the Bible, the Talmud, and the Qur'an torn into pieces and layered in a piece of glass. And the Museum removed that piece of art for fear of insulting some Muslims' feelings, but they did not ask the artist – and he was furious they did not ask the Muslims in Great Britain if they felt offended by this piece of art and they did not ask the police if they saw any threat in executing this piece of art.

And there was a similar case at a museum in Gothenburg, in Sweden, with a painting with a sexual theme and words from the Qur'an on top of it. About at the same time a Danish standup comedian gave an interview to our newspaper saying that he had no problems urinating on the Bible but he did not dare do the same thing with the Qur'an. And then finally in Copenhagen there was a meeting between the Danish prime minister a group of Danish imams, and in that meeting one of the imams called on the prime minister to interfere with the Danish press in order to give a more positive coverage of Islam. That is a call for censorship or a call for using the tools of state power to get what you want into the table.

So there was five, six cases all speaking to the problem of self-censorship and freedom of speech, and that was a legitimate journalistic story that we had to cover. And we choose to cover it in a – well, not very ordinary way. I wrote a letter to 40 members of the Danish Cartoonist Society asking them to draw the prophet as they see him. My intention was to have them appear under their own name and go against this tendency to self-censorship.

So that is why I in fact very neutrally asked them just to draw the prophet as you see him. I did not ask them to make him a laughing stock or to mock him or to make fun of him, but because we do have a tradition of satire in Denmark and, you know, that part of the world, some of the cartoonists in fact did make satirical cartoons. But that is what we do with Jesus Christ and that is what we do with the royal family and that is what we do with public politicians. So in fact the cartoonists were just treating Islam and Muslims in Denmark the same way as they would treat everybody else.

So do I just have one minute? Okay, so my focus was in fact to put focus on this problem of self-censorship. I was not so much focused on this taboo in Islam prohibiting the image of the prophet and it was not my intention to provoke their sensibilities. I was focused on another issue. And then over the last four months before all of this erupted on a global level we had had a very good debate in Denmark about what that freedom of speech imply are the existing limits – you know, were established and are they good enough or do we need to have new limits on the one hand.

And on the other hand, what does it imply to respect other people's religion? What does it imply to have freedom of religion? And to my mind that is the key issue here because we have a growing population of Muslims in Western Europe that definitely have to have other levels of tolerance. But in my view, freedom of religion, and respect for other people's religion implies that when you go to a mosque you do behave in accordance with their taboos and their rules, prohibition.

I would not draw a – make a drawing of the prophet in a mosque, and if I bring my daughter she would be dressed according to that dress code. But I think if any religion tries to impose their taboos on the public domain I think they are not asking of my respect as Muslim, I think they are asking of my submission. And we have about I think 50 different faiths in Denmark and if every taboo should be abased in the public domain in Denmark, Buddhism, Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christians, Hindus, I think Denmark would be a very nasty place to live in.

So I think this is a key point that in fact in a secular society religion have more freedom than in a society where be it any religion has the right to impose their taboos onto the public domain. But I think you have to split the Danish story from the international story that is caused by I don't think – they are not caused by these cartoons; they are caused by other forces and things.

MR. GORDON: Thank you, Flemming. That is a nice transition to Ammar, who can maybe help us understand the reaction in the Muslim world. And obviously we'll come back to Flemming on these points but I want to get everybody in.

Ammar, I mean, that is something I think we're having trouble with here. Westerners just don't really understand – think the publication of the cartoons or rather since the crisis about it emerged, we have had more than a dozen people killed, thousands of people in the streets, boycotts of Danish goods, withdrawal of ambassadors. Maybe you can help us understand the reaction to this?

AMMAR ABDULHAMID: I hope I can. Sometimes I find it difficult myself to understand the level of sensitivity that you have in our part of the world regarding criticism of any kind. And you have a tradition we even reject intellectual criticism in the last century or so, so it's not only cartoons that are censured. Even legitimate academic works that try to revise or suggest a different interpretation of history and how – Islamic history in particular and how the Qur'an emerged or who the prophet was – even these kind of works have tended to generate controversy in their own time.

For instance, even attempts at trying to demystify the image regarding pre-Islamic portraits basically that an Egyptian, also called (inaudible), has tried to make a forced controversy based on accusation of infidelity, and so on. So this is not something new. This is not a new phenomenon. There is a history that behind it that dates 400 years. But at the same time, what you really have to watch, what is unique now is the public outpouring of emotions.

I mean, this is not just a controversy that took place on the level of scholars. It involved the streets, there were people demonstrating, there were people that got killed as a result of that. So what is really at stake here? Now, on the political level we really have to look at it, in my opinion, in two perspectives. The current pressures being directed on many regimes of the Middle East, especially after 9/11, especially with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, with Afghanistan, and the growing pressures in the U.S. administration, in Europe also vis-à-vis the human rights situation, the lack of democracy and reform in many countries like Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, not to mention Syria, you know, which is a very unique examples here because (inaudible) regime change almost.

So it's – basically, you have to look at things in this context: You have to look at the context of political or the establishments in many countries of the Arab world who are being threatened by reforms and by the push reform and the drive reform in Western societies in the United States and in Europe.

So the incident itself, in order to understand it in that context took place in September. Now, what many people don't realize is that months later in October, an Egyptian newspaper called el Fagr, which is widely circulated in Egypt, published the cartoons or some of the cartoons of the prophet on the first page, on Ramadan, and nothing happened. Not a single reaction, not a single letter of protest, nothing. The issue laid dormant for a few more months.

So what really happened during the intervening months? What has happened is lobbying. In fact, what happened is that there was a Danish Muslim, there were Muslims from other countries in Europe lobbying the government, send the people, basically, raising the issue, contacting officials at every chance, opportunity they can get in order to get a condemnation, an official condemnation by one government or another vis-à-vis these cartoons.

So there was a lobby basically from Europe. And that lobby – you have got to look at some of the people in it – it was not really a very sort of reform-minded Muslims in it. You had some people Abu Laban who is a very sort of radical Islam figure. So in a sense someone, you can say, has sensed that there is blood to be drawn here, basically, that this is an opportunity. If he can get some reaction, we can cause a stir, we can raise our profile, we can again galvanize the streets, and, as usual, extremists need these kinds of things in order for them to appeal to a wider to our other people in their own community in Europe, in the Arab streets.

So I would say there is a fight right now going on over the whole of the Muslim community in Europe – a fight between extremists and the moderates. There is also a fight going on in the Middle East, in the Muslim world, if you want to call it this way, between also liberal reformists and between the religious and political establishments that are opposing any kind of reform because of some of our social issues such as gender rights, and minority rights, is it something that the religious establishment does not permit, and because it does involve a measure of involvement in the decision-making process by more and more people and this is something that the political establishment does not like.

So this is a fight for the soul of Arabs and Muslims that's now taking place on two fronts: in the expatriate communities and in the original homeland. You've had the extremist forces on both sides meeting, basically, as a result of an act of lobbying – (audio break) – but, finally, was launched in Saudi Arabia with the boycott of Danish goods and the criticism. You have to look at it within the context of what is happening in Saudi Arabia.

What is happening in Saudi Arabia is the government that has been for the last year or so under a lot of pressure to improve its record on human rights, on public participation, and the decision-making process. So they have had municipal elections that have tried to introduce laws that are more – I'm not saying more friendly to women but less suppressive of women so there are more female figures emerging in the local scene, in NGOs, in business community, making a name for themselves.

So this kind of a drive I think has been angering also a lot of extremists. So I think what happened is that this was an attempt – I'm not sure exactly who started it – either the reformers themselves started to say, okay, by championing in this cause we can throw the public offence in a way from our own reform methods, or it could be the extremists trying to undercut the reformers. I'm not really sure – I'm not in a position to tell exactly what happened, but be that as it may, this is the context in which the whole spark was ignited in Saudi Arabia.

After that it was easy for other regimes to react in the same way. In Syria where the most violent reaction took place, where the Danish Embassy was torched along with the Norwegian Embassy and the Chilean Embassy – that is because they were in the same building. And the reason you have to believe that this is orchestrated is because the Danes have a cultural center in Old Damascus, smack in the middle of the Muslim services neighborhood in Damascus, and nothing happened to that center. The people were not harassed. No one had tried to intimidate them, nothing. So this was an orchestrated move, really. They got people out, the authorities, the religious extremists, and, of course, there was a director from the security figures in Syria. They got them out. There were reports by journalists, by eyewitness journalists, by the way, that someone was actually directing the people with radios. They were directed toward the Danish Embassy and then they were directed toward the Norwegian Embassy basically.

And I'm not sure that they really wanted to torch the embassy completely or not but at that point events took their natural course. You have an angry mob and the angry mob took over.

This is not the first time that we've had this kind of development in Syria. A few years back in 2001 when there was the intifada going on, the second intifada, and there was anger against U.S. policy in this regard – (audio break) – you know, because it's a government-sponsored thing; you really don't want to take any kind of problems, actually hurting a diplomat. So you pick out the right day, which is a weekend, you send the mob, and the mob pops in the embassy or they attack the embassy at that time and they attack the British council and they tore down the flags and then do something along these lines. So we have a history of orchestrating this kind of development in order to sway public attention from the real problems of the time in order to create some kind of mobilization on the streets that is in favor of the regime in the final analysis.

And this is what happened. People feel, okay, the regime has already been mobilizing them on political issues. The United States is interfering. They want to change the regime in Syria. They have put undue pressure on Syria, and now they are getting the Islamic people to rally to that cause as well. We are for Islam, you know. This is wrong what the Danish people did. And you heard from the minister of state – (inaudible) – article also that's very critical of the racist tendencies. And he said, in fact – the article was very interesting. It said Holocaust II, Holocaust part II, you know, that the Muslims are going to suffer if this kind of a trend continues in the West. The Muslims are going to suffer from a Holocaust aimed at extricating all of these Muslims and throwing in them in gas chambers.

This is of course completely ludicrous. I don't need to say that to a group of people in the United States or in Europe. But within the context, unfortunately, we know how simply artist displayed in – (inaudible) – before commented, but in our part of the world, which is already feeling so much pressure from the – to modernize and to reform on a variety of fronts, this comment might actually strike a (inaudible) with some people.

In a sense, you want to believe. There is also this desire. If you want to believe you're receiving a special victimization policy by Europeans, it enhances our feelings of being chosen, you know, somewhat, that we are the righteous community. And at the same time it justifies our desire not to change anything, so we have more and more reasons to stand our ground and to resist the invaders and that we are fighting for our essential – for our existence. It becomes an indispensable issue fighting against reform.

So it is a policy that can work and it is working, but not as effectively as people think.

MR. GORDON: I'm going to stop you there and I'm going to try to get everyone and come back to you on this point. But I want to make sure there is time for discussion. I know there are a lot of views in the room as well. And I think now I would like to turn to Thomas because one of the things that provokes this as global crisis was not just the

events described so far, but when West European newspapers decided to republish the cartoons. And one of the West European newspapers that decided to do that was yours, and you defended that position in The Post. Your take on that.

THOMAS KLEINE-BROCKHOFF: Well, for some in this country, the controversy has been framed as if it was about respect for Muslim traditions and about – am I being understood?

MR. GORDON: Can you hear in the back?

MR. BROCKHOFF: Or rather the lack thereof in Europe. I do agree there is an issue that we have to address in Europe in our attitudes towards our Muslim immigrants. But there is equally important and I think under-appreciated in the debate the issue of respect at gunpoint, in other words of coercion. And that's where freedom of speech comes in and where the issue of self-censorship does become the issue it has been made to be, at least in the European context.

I think there has to be a right to offend. Blasphemy has to be permitted, religion has to be available. Mohammed, save us all from these well-meaning European lawmakers who want to introduce a universal code of conduct for the European media and Mohammed – or God – save us all from these not-so-well meaning Russian lawmakers who want to outright limit the critique of religion, and save us from all of the enforcers and all the enforcement mechanisms that are being dreamt up at this point.

However, that said, what is legal to print doesn't always mean that it's in good judgment to print it. Our guideline in the media can't be offend as much as you can. In fact, there should be no gratuitous offense. That's what responsibility in the press is all about. And I think we try to exercise that in the sense that we do not try to promote religious hatred. We try to – we do these judgment calls on an every day basis, and they are not only restricted to religion.

We don't show body parts after a terrorist attack; we don't show sexually offensive material. All of that is part of our work. And I do not believe – and I'm glad that Flemming is here so I can say this with him being present – that the publications in his newspaper met that standard. It can be. I would understand that rather as a deliberate provocation rather than a neutral, as you put it, Flemming, a neutral way of covering the issue. It seems to be more of a happening rather than of reporting in journalism, and that is what I believe we have to speak to.

Now, the question arises, if that's what I think, why the heck does this guy support his own newspaper in reprinting what I didn't believe was a good idea to print in the first place. Well, we didn't print it at first. Had we seen it at first, as Flemming had permission to of the drawings, we probably would not have printed it because at least one case, makes exactly the connection one doesn't want to be made when we show Mohammed's turban as a bomb. That's the debate where we shouldn't allow a

discussion about (inaudible) fundamentalism (inaudible). That's what I wouldn't call good judgment.

However, months later, this became the biggest story in the world. It's news. It's there. It's everywhere. How would I justify withholding this debate from my readers? And this has become a meta-debate. We debate about what is being debatable. What we debate what is culturally acceptable in our Western societies, and I do think since it's become this big thing that you can show people what this debate is about in a respectful way. That is why our paper – and I think was the right decision to take – to reprint it in one of them, fairly small, not even the main picture of one page, not the one that we found most offensive, but in an attempt to document.

This is not, as (inaudible) said, an attempt at free-speech solidarity. It would be just as demonstrative a point, as I was mentioning before, that we should report and no more.

So I would just – and by the way, the American media do these things all the time. We always change criteria as things become newsworthy. How many times have we seen the breasts of Janet Jackson in an attempt to define what's family entertainment. By the way, this morning the next pictures of Abu Ghraib emerged in the Australian press. Let's see how the debate goes whether we really want to withhold the picture of Abu Ghraib – and by the way, those are the more offensive ones – in an attempt at exactly what?

So I do believe in meta-debates. We deal with educated free societies in which we do have to document what we are talking about. Printing stuff like that doesn't mean you endorse when you frame the context right. However, I do believe, and that is my next point, there is an under-appreciated side in all of this.

Radical Islamists in Europe -- and there are – and Mr. Imam Laban in Copenhagen as the spiritual vector of this whole advertisement lobbying campaign in the Middle East as I mentioned – that is not asking for respect; that is respect at gunpoint. And if cartoonists, even if they are – if printing of it has been ill-advised have to go in hiding for what they have done, if other artists, journalists, cartoonists in Western Europe face the same fate – Hirsi Ali has been mentioned, the case of Shabana Rehman in Norway, a Pakistani-born comedian who dared to show her butt on Norwegian TV. Now, you might think that is childish; maybe it is, but maybe that is what – it's sounds '60ish, but maybe that is what a Muslim woman in Western Europe wants to do for her sexual liberation. I don't know.

But what happened was that her sister's restaurant was sprayed with machine-gunfire, and she at this point is in New York because she is under death threat. So what we're seeing here is comparative to what we're seeing throughout (inaudible), as (inaudible) in your [gesturing toward David Ignatius] article, in comparison to the “n” word here. And it's a question of respect for blacks in this society. But, rather, the appropriate comparison is Salman Rushdie. We're facing several Salman Rushdie type

cases in Europe, and this point it becomes – and I think as Flemming’s newspaper correctly identified the problem that we’re dealing with, although I disagree with the way they dealt with it, the question of self-censorship when cartoonists have to go into hiding.

By the way, the next case happened in Germany 48-hours ago when the German Daily Der Tagesspiegel printed a cartoon which some in Iran felt offended by and again were being with death threats.

CLAUS CHRISTIAN MALZAHN: I have it here. (Laughter.)

MR. BROCKHOFF: So the problem here is that arguments of Western society, arguments that liberalism used with tolerance are being used by those who want to impose intolerance. And I don’t think one should be misled that this is about the depiction of the Prophet Mohammed alone. The cases in which death threats have been – in which journalists and cartoonists are facing death threats in Europe are not only about the depiction of Mohammed, they are the rights of women in this case, it’s about terrorism. There are a whole host – they are about a whole host of issues, and I think it’s rather – here it is rather about what Ammar has said. This is a fight for the soul of European Muslims.

And I think I want to stop right here, although I want to sort of – what the consequence of that should be.

MR. GORDON: We’ll come back to that. I appreciate that. That was great. Why don’t we stay in Europe for the moment, and then we’ll give David the last word. Your magazine did the same..

CLAUS CHRISTIAN MALZAHN: There are two ways to view it, which can deal with it in European newspapers. There was a German newspaper who printed it on the front page, you know, these cartoon where Prophet Mohammed is shown as the godfather of modern terrorism. I don’t know if this was the right thing to do. But, of course, you have to show the images because you have to show what the thing is all about. And we just had a reporter in Cairo, reporting from the Arab street. And if you ask people there about the cartoon, you realize that this has nothing to do with the original cartoons. So this is way beyond it.

We are talking about pictures that show Mohammed as a pig, or whatever. They have never been published by Jyllands-Posten. I agree what my colleague said that I would have – when somebody would have offered these cartoons to me, I would have said no; this is not worth it. And I have to admit that my first reaction of them — would be to say this is not – these cartoons are not – (inaudible) quality-wise. But this is yesterday, you know. This is not a question any more. Now we are in a middle of a debate that is very different. And I think that the way – since you’re in the Arab world in terms of cartoons, it’s very different from Europe.

I think that in Europe, most of the European states who would offer solidarity to Denmark are pretty happy that it did not happen to them. We just have to say that. Even the European Union. I mean, what are they doing? They're doing nothing, you know. Switzerland, neutral as ever – Nestle – I think you all know that – they pointed out in a public declaration that they wouldn't use the milk of Danish cows for their milk powder, or something like that, you know, in the Middle East. That is what they did. And the madness continues as we see in Der Tagesspiegel. There was a cartoon. It's very difficult to explain it, because it's really a very German topic.

The thing is that, on the one side, we see German soldiers guarding the world championship of soccer that we have in Germany this year. On the other side of the stadium, you have the Iranian football team with suicide belts. But the idea was obviously to criticize the possibility of sending German soldiers into a football stadium. So that is the debate about this at the moment.

But if you look at this in Iran, it looks quite different. What you see is the Iranian soccer team as suicide bombers, and the effect was that the cartoonist had to leave. He decided to leave home. He lives somewhere else at the moment because he was threatened. He received e-mails, we are going to kill you, and stuff like that.

That leads to another point. We reprinted the cartoon in the print media. We didn't do it so far in the online edition. Why not? There are German hostages in Iraq. You know, this is a difficult decision that you have to make. I don't think that everybody now has to reprint or print this stuff. I mean this is a decision that you have to make and I don't think that we have to go for some militant liberalism now in this case. I don't think this is good.

Another note from reality – there was an art student in Dusseldorf and she built a sculpture called Aggression. In the middle was the mosque. On the two sides there are minarets that are built as rockets. And she also received threats and to the sculpture, so this is on the one side, I think a product of the freedom of speech in Europe. But when I look, and that is one of the advantages that you have as an online editor – after one hour, you can see what people are really interested in. I won't go into details. (Chuckles.) The media at the moment, it's Islam and it's integration and nothing else. That's the topic in Germany. And I think that is behind this debate in Germany, and this is what people are dealing with. I think we're just at the beginning of this, and fear plays a big role in it.

MR. GORDON: David, your newspaper – indeed, almost all American newspapers – took an opposite position that obviously wasn't your call in this case, but you have experience in this sort of thing. What's your take?

DAVID IGNATIUS: Let me start by making a comment about the reactions to the publication of the cartoons, and then I'll talk about the journalistic issues involved in the publication. The violent reaction these cartoons have provoked is grossly wrong, something that no one should defend. And I think it's important to realize that the intolerance that it shows, in the end it's going to hurt the Muslim world most of all. The

Muslim world, I think, is craving connection with the world, broader debate, freedoms we associate with democracy and openness, and it's just tragic to see the closing of the Muslim mind by people who I think, as earlier speakers have said, are trying to manipulate the situation at a time when it needs to be open, as open as possible.

Let me shift now to the journalistic side and make three brief points. One, I think that to some extent we're creating a false dichotomy between an open, tolerant, anything-goes West where you publish what you like and a closed, intolerant Muslim world. In fact, newspapers in the West, certainly in the United States, are very careful about their readers' sensibilities, and we engage all the time in what is now being described in this context as self-censorship, and I'll explain in a minute how we think about those issues. But to draw this sharp dichotomy, I think misses an important point.

Thomas referred to an article I published last week in the Washington Post in which I said that watching this rage of Muslims about the cartoon seems inexplicable to us as non-Muslims, until maybe as Americans we think about reactions to what we call the "n" word, a word we don't even like to say in public – certainly white people don't like to say in public – because it is attached to slavery and the suffering that African-Americans experienced in slavery. And it's a fact that most major newspapers would not publish that word. They wouldn't even publish a book by a respected law professor at Harvard University that uses that word in the title. The Associated Press stylebook, which is the bible for decisions like this for American newspapers, cautions strongly against use of this word or other words that will offend many readers. So I want you to understand, it's not that the two things are comparable, it's that we have standards that could be described as self-censorship, but they're for powerful reasons.

Second, I want to just briefly talk about the policy of newspapers on what we print and how we get there. The Washington Post has not printed these cartoons. I can't speak for the editors of the Post, but if I were to explain that decision, I think I would say that we publish images that may be offensive to some readers only when we believe that is necessary to serve our readers. So in this case, we think that verbal descriptions of the cartoons that say one cartoon shows the prophet with a turban and a bomb in the turban. Another cartoon shows – that those verbal descriptions are entirely adequate to our readers' needs to be informed. There are other situations where there is a requirement to show the image. The verbal description simply won't have the same impact. And the obvious example would be Abu Ghirab. It is the case that there were brief verbal descriptions of the kinds of abuses that were taking place at Abu Ghirab long before the scandal broke, but it took the pictures to see just how horrific this was. And I think that there is a distinction that one can draw there.

As an editor, when I was running the International Herald Tribune, one of the tough questions I had was whether to show pictures of dead bodies. Many readers really are offended by seeing on the front page of a newspaper a corpse. I once deviated from my general policy of not publishing those photographs when there was an earthquake – I think in Iran – and a baby had died, and the baby's hand was sticking out of the rubble. And it was a horrible image. But it conveyed the suffering, the human dimension of that

story, and I got so many letters from people who were deeply upset by what we had done that I thought that in general that's a good prohibition. You may want to run the image inside the paper, but at the top of the front page, where you may grievously upset and offend, you need to be very careful. And there's nothing to be embarrassed about with that. You know, we're very careful about our use of swear words, not because this is an administration that is conservative, not because the FCC has a policy ban. It's because we put our readers' interests first and we think gratuitously offending readers for no particular point when you could express the same thing without the language that will be offensive is the proper policy.

Just to conclude, I just want to say one brief mention about the kind of journalism that I want to defend passionately, that I think when we're talking about censorship, when we're talking about threats to good journalism, I hate for the debate to be framed in terms of these cartoons, with all due respect, Flemming. There are journalists everyday who are doing things that I think are tremendously courageous. I'll cite a couple. There's a Saudi columnist named Hussein Shubakshi who wrote a column in Sharq al-Awsat called "Why do We Hate the Jews?" This was all about anti-Semitism in the Arab world, and he was taking it on directly, not pulling any punches, saying why is this; where does it come from; what are we doing? He was attacked – imagine for what he wrote. He doesn't apologize. Thank goodness he continues to write his column. But you know that's the kind of journalism that I want to defend, even though it gave offense I'm sure to some of his readers. There is reporting in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz from the occupied territories, in particular by a reporter named Amira Haas who has risked her life again and again to go get the story. Haaretz has suffered, you know, thousands of cancelled subscriptions who are offended by what she writes, and yet it continues believing that the story is essential. That is good journalism. Finally, Ammar is here, so I with a nod to him, I want to note the Lebanese and Syrian journalists who risk their lives every day, every single day to try to tell the truth about Syria, about Syria's role in Lebanon. Some of them, friends of mine, probably of Ammar's as well, are dead now because they exercise that freedom, not because they wanted to test the limits of what you could say, but because they wanted to report the truth. And I think, you know, when we think about this issue – free speech – and our journalistic values, let's think about things like that because I think that's at the center of what our business is about.

MR. GORDON: Okay, thank you, David. Thanks to all of you for great presentations. We have a bit of time for discussion. If I might, let me come back to one or two of the speakers and then open it up to all of you. And first to Flemming, I guess, which is maybe to get your reaction to what some of the others said, particularly Thomas' point. I think several of them made the point, but Thomas put his finger on it by noting that what is legal is not necessarily good judgment. I think that's the question that's coming back to you. As David said, we censor ourselves all the time, every day a newspaper takes the decision that a person has the right to publish something, but if it offends people, it may choose not to. So why did you need to go out of your way to publish something that, of course, you had the right to publish, but might well be offensive? Why not fight this battle on something you felt the need to publish and wanted to show that right – or did you – (audio break) – the serious goal. We don't

sponsor reviews and print cartoons who appear to be – and I think the reason was that it might in fact be – (inaudible). Can you comment on that?

MR. ROSE: Sure. First, I mean I am not a – you know – a free speech fundamentalist. I agree totally with the fact that we, you know, censor ourselves every day. And my newspaper would also not put a pornographic photograph on the front page or show dead bodies. But the point here is that there was an issue. We did not purposefully publish these just to test the limits and sensibilities of Muslims. We published these cartoons because there was a problem and tendency towards self-censorship, and we wanted these cartoonists to appear under their own name and thereby showing that they are not, you know, giving in to that kind of pressure. I mean that is still the point. And I think, if we speak about self-censorship, you know, some people have criticized me in the sense that, you know, you are not writing about the sexual life of the royal family or about politicians' private life. No, but we are not doing that because we respect their privacy and we do not want to interfere into peoples' private life unless there are some very good reasons for doing that. And this is a very different thing. This has nothing to do with privacy. This has to do with this tendency to self-censorship.

And I would also say that, I mean these cartoons are very different. And David said, you know, you can describe them, but in fact there are 12 cartoons, and if you should describe them in detail in order to get the whole picture, you would have to spend a lot of space in the newspaper. There is one cartoon making fun of me, as the cultural editor of Jyllands-Posten, saying that the cultural department of Jyllands-Posten is a bunch of reactionary provocateurs. There is a cartoon making fun of a famous Danish politician who is anti-Muslim immigration, Pia Kjaersgaard, head of the Danish People's Party. She is placed in a lineup, as if she is the criminal. But by printing that cartoon, we are not saying that she is the criminal. There are two cartoons making fun of the children's writer who had problems finding an illustrator for his book, implying that this was a PR stunt from his side. So these cartoons are very different, both in whom they are targeting, and in the way they are depicting the subjects.

There is one cartoon that was printed on the front page of Die Welt with the prophet with a bomb in his turban. I mean I don't think that cartoon is saying that the prophet is a terrorist or that every Muslim is a terrorist. To me, that cartoon is saying that some individuals have taken the religion of Islam hostage in order to commit terrorist acts, and by that, giving them a bad name – their religion a bad name. And I think it's quite odd that people are directing their anger at me and my newspaper. You know, we have not killed anybody. We have not hurt anybody physically. Instead of pointing their anger at these people who call themselves Muslims and commit terrorist acts in the name of the prophet.

And then, the question about the Jesus cartoon a couple of years ago. That is true that a freelancer, you know, approached the Sunday editor with some cartoons that were satirical cartoons of Jesus Christ and they were turned down. But I mean we did not commission these cartoons. We get freelance stories and freelance cartoons everyday, and I don't know on what basis they were turned down, but I can assure you that over the

last two weeks, we went through the archives of the newspaper to look at what had been printed, our cartoons over the years, and we have printed cartoons that are very offensive that might be interpreted as being very offensive towards Jews, towards Christians, towards other religions. I mean the cartoonist who did the cartoon with the prophet with a bomb in his turban four years earlier, he did a cartoon with a David star attached to a bomb, and that was printed on the opinion pages of the newspaper. That same cartoonist also did a cartoon of Jesus Christ on the cross with dollar notes on his body. Also, it was printed on the opinion pages. So I still want to make the point that these cartoons did not, you know, deliberately target Muslims and single them out compared to other religions and other groups. They were treating Muslims and the Islamic faith the same as we treat everybody else in Denmark.

MR. GORDON: Thank you, Flemming. Let me maybe ask one more up here, which I'll put to Ammar, but the others all have experience in the Muslim world and may want to comment as well. But you focused most of your comments, Ammar, on the regime manipulation of this. But are you saying then that the images themselves are actually not terribly offensive when you're a Muslim or a believer sees them? How do they react to such a thing? And linked to that is the issue that I've heard both sides or from different people of how much it mattered that one had a bomb in the turban or was it just the image itself that was powerful – offensive towards Muslims to anybody who saw them?

MR. ABDULHAMID: Let me give you one brief sentence on that. Before actually I have to take a different take on this. After all, I am one of those liberal Arabs who are also being in many ways threatened by the Islamists, so we have to sort of make it sort of a position to – (inaudible) – because I said there is an ongoing battle for the soul of the Arab and Muslim faith, I think for the soul of my son and daughter, basically. So this is not – I'm not a usual figure here. But definitely part of your question, indeed, depiction of the prophet has always been problematic. Generally speaking, the Sunnis in particular don't agree with the concept of depicting the prophet in any way, shape, or form. But despite this, there has been a history in Islam of attempting to sort of depict the prophet as a man. But painting a figure and then have a flame instead of the head or – but there were also occasions when he is clearly depicted, especially by – (inaudible). So and even today in Tehran, there are artists who – there is a woman artist in particular who does make drawings of the prophet. So the issue has been controversial therefore in the history of Islam.

Now, listening here to what Flemming has to say, and to – I think you'll have more sympathy from an Arab liberal than you're having from your colleagues. (Chuckles.) And it's – and I'm not only saying this in a certain capacity. If you look at the blogosphere, by the way, when I noted that the Egyptian newspaper el Fagr printed these photos of this drawing one month after the attack, it was a blogger who in fact noted this event. And the blogosphere has been followed by our niche of the liberals, and you can see that these drawings have been circulated around and a lot of people have been liberal voices from the region, have been independent. Freedom of expression vis-à-vis freedom of discussion – and they're saying well, why not? You know, and it's

basically the Muslims, by supporting or by not standing up to the extremists in Damascus, they are encouraging this image, basically that whereby the holy things of Islam are made to look as if Islam itself and its holy things are also to blame for the acts of terror that are taking place. So there is a fault here on the part of the Muslim community. We should address the problem. Those people in the Damascus streets who went and burned the Danish embassy would also be demonstrating for Sharia tomorrow. They would have no sympathy if the government said tomorrow we are going to enforce Sharia on everybody, and that means your wife and my mother will have to wear a veil even though we don't accept it. So how can I sympathize with them? They're not willing to sympathize with my basic rights.

So the problem is there are also a lot of moderates who have been offended. But the moderates would not take to the streets and demonstrate and burn any buildings. So we have to – the moderates, whether they're in Europe or whether they're in the Arab world were offended because we have to fill this holy image about the prophet is important for them. And at the same time, there is a problem of identity of the state. They feel that their identity is being threatened by a variety of forces, by political despotism, by Western culture that we are adopting, you know, in many ways, and their children are adopting. But they are not finding it in harmony all the time with their own local cultural values, so there is an identity crisis that is going on here, which is why you have censorship about any kind of criticism. And this battle is going to take us decades before it is controlled, and I'm not sure where it is going – where the answers are going to lie. And the liberals might be dumped in fact. But there is an identity crisis we're having, and moderate Muslims are definitely – they feel pressure, but at the same time, instead of rallying and being told to rally beyond extremist forces, they really should take more brave stance in the face of extremism. This is one way we can improve our image, if you want. And we can show confidence in who we are, but the problem is we seem to lack confidence in who we are.

MR. GORDON: Thank you. Anybody want to add anything to that or shall we just go to the audience? There is a microphone – (audio break, tape change.) Introduce yourself before you start.

Q: I am Omar Al-Ghazi (ph). I'm a Fulbright scholar from American University. I think one of the problems in this issue is people from the Middle East tend to be very associative thinkers, associating things that to Westerners might be totally unrelated but in their mind it is all connected. For example, the issue of double standards has been widely reported in the Arab media and the whole thing has been framed as double standards in the way Europe deals with minorities. The issue of banning the head scarf in France was brought up and it was an example of freedom of speech that wasn't allowed also. Al-Manar Television, which is the Lebanese Hezbollah television was banned from Europe on the grounds of being anti-Semitic and also issues about Iraq and Palestine have been brought up. My particular question is about this perception of double standards and what you – Mr. Abudlhamid or anyone else thinks about this. Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Thank you. Anyone want to lay in on double standards? Or shall we take a couple more while you think about that?

MR. ABDULHAMID: Basically, the problem is with the double standard is that we do have our own double standard. As you said, these two issues are not necessarily related. I mean people in our part of the region, because they believe in these conspiracy theories, they find events that are completely separate together. And this is one thing that we have to really look at. The world is not as simple as we try to make it. And the West is not just one country. It's a whole civilizational complex of which you are part. And there are different powers and forces at play here, for instance. But I do agree, by the way, and this is where the point about Muslim integration is important. There is a problem with integration of the Muslim communities in Europe. The Muslim communities come with their own challenges. Very few of them are willing to make the kinds of changes in their rhetoric, in their discourse, in their way of life that would make it easy for them to be integrated. They are not necessarily being asked to compromise their entire value system to be integrated.

But at the same time insistent on let's say, I'll give you the example of Abu Hamza, for instance, the cleric in Great Britain who was arrested awhile ago. He insists on the concept of an Islamic state in Great Britain, for crying out loud. You know, it's – you are rejecting the very values of a society that is hosting you and protecting you from the kind of mayhem you would have faced in the Middle East, and yet you are spitting on these – and you are using this freedoms to spit on the values of this very society. I did not see a lot of Muslims really sort of denouncing people like Abu Hamza. They ignore. They try to say well, he's not one of us and that's it. (Inaudible.) It's not an alternative public stand. There has to be a more sort of a campaign that is meant to draw a new sense of moderate identity for the Muslims that is not inharmonious with the values of the society to which they chose to enter. You know, they are in Europe because they offer these better living conditions, the better political freedoms that they cannot have in their own countries, so they have to one way or another show some kind of appreciation to this kind of a thing that has been offered to them. And at the same time, they have to modify their own values in order to fit this new system. They have to show that kind of respect, so there is a double standard view at the same time. We want to get the state, but we don't want to give anything. That's a problem.

Having said this, yes, I think the decision by the French government to enforce this ban on the veil has been a controversial decision to begin with, and frankly, I was never for it, because in my opinion, it could have encouraged further segregation rather than integration. I much prefer the give and take of, you know, okay, the French kids are not going to have it easy, you know. You accepted the French, the Moroccans and the Algerians, and the Middle Easterners who come into your own community. You've given them citizenship or residency. That has a price. And the price is we have to accept also the price that they have a different belief system that they are observing, and that influence in their manners and their costumes, and if your kids are going to find it strange that at a certain age, a female Muslim girl is going to start wearing a veil and not appropriate with them, that's part of the price you have to pay. There is nothing called

the freedom not to be psychologically challenged or not to have their emotions hurt. (Chuckles.)

MR. GORDON: Thank you. David?

MR. IGNATIUS: On the question of double standards, I just want to mention there is a group of Arab and American journalists that I have been meeting with over the last two years that is sponsored by the Aspen Institute, and we had a very interesting discussion in December in Dubai about anti-Semitic and anti-American stereotypes in the Arab press. And boy, if you want to see appalling cartoons, just pick up an issue of many Arab newspapers and you'll find things that really are outrageous. And anti-Arab stereotypes that appear routinely in the U.S. press and other parts of the Western press. We try to be honest with each other about the kinds of journalistic – you know, I want to say mistakes – bad journalism that was appearing in each of our respective media. It was a really good conversation and I'd love to see more of that. I mean in truth, having these isolated separate discussions isn't really going to get us anywhere. I wish there were more general discussions.

MR. GORDON: Thanks. (Inaudible.)

MR. MALZAHN: Yeah, I think this question of double standards is quite important, and I would feel a lot more comfortable with the whole situation if you would state it more. I'll give you an example. A couple of years ago, I think it was 2000, in the Polish national gallery; there was a sculpture showing a figure of John Paul II struck down by a nuclear weapon. There was – you cannot imagine what happened in Poland. There was not that every day, people went there, covering the face of the Pope and militant demonstrations outside. There was also a letter written to Anda Rotenberg, which was the head of the national gallery, from 100 members of the national parliament saying remove this immediately and if you don't, go back to Israel. He wasn't a Jew. This is five years ago. I cannot remember that the European Union or my government or whoever protested in Poland. Nothing. So let's keep that in mind. It's not solely Muslims.

MR. GORDON: All right, Thomas, do you want to – (inaudible)?

MR. KLEINE-BROCKHOFF: In the process of a lot of us becoming more Danish than we ever thought in America – (chuckles) – in the last couple of weeks, there have been comments about Denmark, and for that matter most of Europe, being practically – having a problem with their immigrants. And they're just referring directly to the double standard. And going even further of depicting Denmark as a quasi-racist country. Let's put this in perspective. Millions of Muslims have come to Europe precisely because these are liberal societies. They are open. They are clearly tolerant. And our freedoms are there to protect precisely these minorities, because without these freedoms, these minorities wouldn't be protected there. That said, we live with enormous sets of double standards and you quoted one of them. I'm not saying, and I think nobody can claim that European societies are dealing in the perfect way with their immigrants. In

fact, having lived here in this country for a few years now, I can attest to the fact that there is a heck of a lot of things that we can learn from this country with respect to immigration and integration.

But one has to remember that we've been confronted with importing people for the past 40 years. We've exported people, especially to this country, for the previous 250, so you can say, well, please ask me again in 300 years how we're doing with immigration. Since we can't wait that long, this cartoon controversy indeed does uncover our own problems, our own double standards, and frankly in our own press, our own lack of knowledge, our own – I don't think in any of our newspapers, my own newspaper I can speak for – certainly does not reflect. We don't look like our society does. We can't turn for guidance to our Muslim editor, as you say. We're not doing a good job here. So the question of respect and the indiscretion, I don't think we're showing enough respect to cultural traditions, to the minorities in our countries.

Having said that, I don't even think the controversy at this point is about respect as it is about impositional things. So we're constantly in this double situation that we don't know what we're actually reacting to.

MR. GORDON: You've all got different points on double standards. But I would say that the ultimate critics of Denmark and the West in the Muslim world have suggested that the double standard is that in the West, if it's some other minority or religious group you can't offend, but you can offend Muslims. That seems to me manifested in truth. I mean look through television, cartoons, books. Read the Da Vinci Code – the idea that now they may offend some people and there may even be protests. But the difference is nobody is saying they're illegal, and the protests are generally non-violent. So that's not a double standard. And that part of the – (inaudible). Let's take some more from the room. We come to the front, and I think the lady, right there.

Q: Hi. I'm Sandy Stern. I'm a New York liberal transplanted down here. What I'd like to mention is – and I think you might agree with me, those who are in journalism on the panel – that you as journalists for newspapers are a few steps behind the released information today. We get television and we get Internet, and we don't have to depend on the newspaper to give us our daily news. Therefore, I look around, I look at the young people today who are absolutely not reading newspapers, and those same young people are not going to their newspaper posts on the Internet. They're into other things. So what I am saying is many of you mentioned the word, we do not want to offend our reader. I think David you were the first person to say that. But really, what we're talking about is selling newspapers and or perhaps inciting your readers. And I think was where your choice should have been considered as more insightful, perhaps dangerous thing. There are many liberals I know who are willing to give up some of their civil liberties in order not to add fuel to the fire. What do you think?

MR. ROSE: Two points. As I said, I bear full responsibility for the publication of those cartoons. And we have had a very constructive debate in Denmark, and I would argue that in fact we have, by publishing these cartoons, accelerated the debate about

immigration. For instance, just one example, my newspaper on January 16th published on the front page and two full pages inside, 49 interviews with moderate Muslims who were saying no anymore to being represented by the radical imams in Denmark. So one consequence of this publication has been that the faces of Muslims in Denmark, they are more different than ever. And the Danish People's Party who are very anti-Muslim immigration, they have for the first time in an internal e-mail to their members said from now on, we have to make a difference between radical and moderate Muslims. This is a direct consequence of the publication of these cartoons.

Then there is this thing about, you know, offending people. I used to be a correspondent in the Soviet Union and in Russia. And there, there was the Central Committee's ideological department who, you know, for many, many years were labeling dissidents and people like Andrei Sakharov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Lev Trotsky as people who offended the values of the Soviet people. And I think, you know, the feeling of insult and offense is very subjective. I think as long as you are operating within the law, you know, people should have the right to offend, because offense – if we do not allow people to offend one another, then those who scream loudest about their feeling of offense will have the right to establish our limits. I mean I am offended by what's in my newspaper every day, and I think when you print speeches by Osama bin Laden, you are offended when you read that as well. But I don't think that you would say that this implies that you should not print these things.

And I think this goes right to the key of the nation of a pluralist society that my limits should not be imposed on you so you will have to accept them as your limits. And I mean I don't think David is serious when he says he does not want to offend his readers. I think a newspaper sometimes has to offend its readers and you have to, you know, feel anger, to feel outrage when you read the newspaper because you want to disagree, you want to discuss with it, and this is exactly what is so important about serious newspapers compared to all the lifestyle stuff, and you know, feel-good magazines and things like that. In Denmark, we have free newspapers now being distributed around the country and they are seen as strong competitors to – (inaudible) – newspapers, but I think exactly this story, it would have been impossible to print that in one of these newspapers for free because there you only put in the newspaper what people want to read, and they are made according to focus groups and things like that.

MR. GORDON: Thank you.

MR. IGNATIUS: If I could just note that what I said, what I mean is that we don't want to offend gratuitously. I mean obviously every day we offend people in one way or another. Just read my email if you want to know how offended people can be. But gratuitously was the word I meant there.

MR. GORDON: Thank you. Bob Leiken and the gentleman here. Let's take a couple. I don't want to offend anybody, but we have to watch the time.

Q: Bob Leiken in the Nixon Center and Brookings. Hello, Flemming. I wanted to ask about the political fallout in the countries that you both come from. Flemming started talking about that. In the Middle East, has this benefited the Islamists? Has it drawn Islamists and Baathists together as appears to be the case in Syria? If so, is that a long-term effect or is the Muslim on the street not going for this? And I guess similar questions need to be Germany – are Germans – where do they stand on this? Do they feel their newspapers should have been publishing, should not have publishing, et cetera? And you know, for all the rest of you. Thanks.

MR. GORDON: This gentleman here has been waiting.

Q: Hi, my name is Kevin Capomoto (sp), and I have a question regarding the topic of integration in Europe of European Muslims. I am afraid I am not that familiar with the situation in Denmark, but I know that in Germany, you've had this eternal debate over Leitkultur and now you have these stories about whether a German state Baden-Wurtemberg should impose naturalization tests asking immigrants how they feel about homosexuals or girls attending gym classes or things like this. My question is, in light of these cartoons and the reactions and counter-reactions on both sides of the Mediterranean, as it were, where do the panelists see the debate over integration in Europe going? Do they see this as a positive factor in stimulating more discussion, not only about the questions of should there be more give and take in the Muslim community, but also some of the feelings more positive and negative in the European countries, or would this lead to perhaps more negative ramifications?

MR. GORDON: Answers to those and concluding comments from any panelists that wishes to answer or conclude. (Inaudible.)

MR MALZAHN: Well, I think it's – I can only speak for Germany because I think that the immigration issue is different in every European state, of course. You cannot generalize it. But for Germany, I think it has a very positive effect. I don't think that it has so much to do with the cartoon debate, but maybe it speeded it up. I think that the conservative government under Helmut Kohl tried to avoid this issue for a long time. Then, the left-wing government took over and at some point, they also avoided the topic. They avoided some problems that had to do with it. So now, as far as what I read and what I see, what we're getting in emails and what people read, I think that for the first time, I would say in Germany, there is really an open unideological debate about immigration. That's a very good thing.

I'll give you an example. There's a school in Berlin in Wedding – that's a worker's neighborhood – with a lot of immigrants living there. And at the school, there were about ten different nationalities. They had huge problems with violence during the schooldays. And then they were starting to discuss – (inaudible) – parents, pupils, teachers, and they came out with the solution, let's talk German during these recesses and everybody was happy with it. And then, something very strange happened. Some Turkish groups protested. Some Green politicians protested. Some Social Democrats – and they were always talking about duty, but this was not a matter of duty. Nobody had

to speak German. It was just something that everybody agreed on. So in fact something that the Green Party especially should be very happy about – but you know, this is a little bit the problem that we are still in this country things like let's not offend, you know, and that is wrong. Let's put the things on the table. And that is happening right now.

MR. KLEINE-BROCKHOFF: What I can see from here living here, there are actually two positive effects of this debate where Christian and I come from. The Muslims – the German Muslim community has come out in this debate, indeed feeling offended by the cartoons, but also supporting the principles of liberal society. You might think that's not a big deal. It is a big deal in a context where immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants have kept quiet in this. So it could be a defining moment in the sense that the principles of liberal society are being reaffirmed by immigrant communities and they are distancing themselves from the radicals so that they can offer the issue – (inaudible.) And conversely, in the sort-of ethnically German side, you can see a split. On the one side, there is certainly and there is the first publications of this – we're at the beginning of this – there will be an anti-immigrant backlash of those who have always thought that Muslims especially don't fit into our society. On the other hand, there's another segment of society in which who think they see the opposite backlash. In questioning ourselves about our own double standards, about our own approach, our own immigration society – so in fact, within my country, it's rather a healthy debate than anything else. What's unhealthy about it you can see in the Middle East.

MR. IGNATIUS: I want to briefly touch on a subject we haven't discussed, which is the political reaction in Denmark and the other European countries in this very long time period between the publication of the cartoon and the crisis that we're now dealing with. And I think, as I read this history, the Danish government in particular kind of blew the Muslim protestors off, as we would say. They just didn't really take them seriously, didn't respond in a creative way, meaningful way to their unhappiness. I used to have a rule when I was a newspaper editor, which was drawn from a study of libel suits. And the study found that the most powerful determinant of whether a libel suit was filed is whether the reporter or editor responded in a meaningful way when the aggrieved party was first contacted. And you know, typical reporter's response is to say, you got this wrong and I stand by my story. And we get very indignant and we start talking about the free press and all this. And the person goes away even madder, like what can they do now except file a libel suit? And I think there's a little bit of that here. People were aggrieved. Political authorities didn't want to talk to them, basically said go away. And we end up in a very unfortunate situation.

MR. ABDULHAMID: And my comment basically is I think this alliance between political authoritarianism and religious extremism in our part of the world, which serves to discredit both parties. The street is conservative, forcefully conservative, too conservative for my tastes. I don't think it will ever be as liberal as I want it to be, not in my lifetime anyway. But it's not Islam as radical Islam as most people think. It's pragmatic. It's conservative. Look at, for instance, the Hamas victory in Palestine. They voted not on the issue of confrontation of Israel or Islamism per se, but on the issue of living standards. This is the basic issue. So this is really what people care about in the

finality. There is a sense of pragmatism in the street. Therefore, this alliance between political authoritarianism and religious extremism is scaring a lot of people. They don't want to see an Islamic state. Many of people they might dream about it and speak about it, most people, and synthesize the very concept, but when they look around and they find the likes of Abu Hamza and Abu Laban and I don't know who, they really get scared. And so they probably even they don't want that kind of Islamism involved. So the reality is the street is not ready for this alliance and the fact that this alliance is emerging right now is going to discredit more the ruling regimes and the religious establishment. And this is a good development.

MR. ROSE: Just a few points, and first I would like to underline that these cartoons, they did not create a new reality. They were just, you know, casting light on problems that were already there and maybe these cartoons served as the vehicle to see things more clear so we have a better understanding of the kind of situation we are in. And I think that definitely is part too. I still think the jury is still out whether this would work in favor of integration or against integration. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the Somalia-born Dutch politician in an interview to my newspaper last week said that this might have accelerated the integration of Muslims into Western Europe by 300 years. I'm not sure whether I would agree on that, but that is at least one point.

Then, impact – suits were filed against the newspaper. Ten Muslim organizations did file suits on two counts – racism and blasphemy. And they were both turned down. And now, they had appeal, but it's pretty – I'm pretty sure that we will not be indicted.

MR. GORDON: Are there laws against those things in Denmark and they were turned down because this didn't meet the standard?

MR. ROSE: There are laws against racism and blasphemy but they considered that this was neither racist nor blasphemy. That there was an influence for the public to see these cartoons. And that they appeared in this country are – I mean we documented that there were these members – (inaudible) – that we were not just provoking Muslims because there are limits.

And then, the reaction of the Danish government – I mean I think maybe you have a point. But I think the picture is a little bit more complicated. In fact, the Danish prime minister refused to meet with eleven ambassadors of Muslim countries because in the letter they wrote to him, they were calling on him to punish my newspaper. And they were publishing this letter in a Danish newspaper at the same time that they sent it to him. So I think if they had operated through traditional diplomatic channels asking for a meeting, they would have been provided that meeting. But he was seeing this attempt as a kind of putting pressure on him in order to take issue with the newspaper. And I think also that it is sort of strange that ambassadors of eleven foreign countries that they are speaking on behalf of a minority in Denmark, are accepting that we are saying that you are strangers. You are not a part of Danish society. So you can have those persons from the outside world. I think in fact that is very insulting to Muslims in Denmark to accept that as a fact.

And then, finally, the Muslim groups in Denmark who tried to, you know, establish a dialogue with the authorities. I mean they had that dialogue. I have had meetings with Abdul Labban , the radical imam and proposed things to him that I would come to his mosque and have a public meeting, and I could speak of freedom of speech, and he would speak about freedom of religion, but he didn't want it. And we have never seen so many Danish Muslims appearing on our opinion pages, and I have been debating them on television and on radio so they have had access to all the institutions of Danish democratic society. But I do think that it would be problematic for the prime minister to have met this radical group. The strong voices for criticism toward newspaper was coming from radical imams and one of the results of the last four months developing story is that they only represent a very small group. And by meeting them, you would give legitimization to them that they do not deserve. So I'm not sure whether it would have been the right thing of the prime minister to have a meeting with these radical imams.

MR. GORDON: Thank you. Let me, before you all leave, thank you all very much for coming. I want to thank Helga and the Böll Foundation for this partnership, indeed for the inspiration and idea behind this meeting, which I thought was really very useful. I also want to thank the panelists for their really terrific presentations and we can applaud them each in their own way for their courage on this issue. So thank you all very much for coming.

(Applause.)

(END)