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From: "Chris Doyle (CAABU)" <doylec@caabu.org>
To: "Chris Doyle (CAABU)" <doylec@caabu.org>
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Subject: CAABU British Broadsheet Summary - Monday 9th October 2006

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The response to Jack Straw's 'anti-veiling' article continues today. Cabinet ministers have continued to distance themselves from Straw's opinion, with John Prescott saying that the former Foreign Secretary's article could cause "considerable difficulties" (The Daily Telegraph) and "may damage relations rather than improve them" (The Guardian). It is argued that with the bulk of Muslim opinion holding that veiling is not obligatory, accusations that Straw's views are 'anti-Islam' have been defused (The Times / The Guardian / The Independent) Straw's article has generated some debate: can one be forced to be 'free', especially if two parties have different conceptions of freedom (Janet Daley, The Daily Telegraph)? On the issue of cultural norms what, if any, coercive right exists between the majority and the minority (Yasmin Alibhai-Brown in The Independent)? And, is the veil too obvious a target for a cause of separation? Perhaps it is socio-economic parity that is the most important factor, not whether someone covers her face (Madeleine Bunting in The Guardian).

The Times reports the news that a terror suspect eluded 'capture by allegedly disguising himself as a Muslim woman dressed in a burka'.

Yesterday saw a "ferocious battle" between the US military and the Mahdi Army militia in which "thirty Shia militiamen" died (The Times). At the same time the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee warned that the "US was on the verge of losing control of Baghdad" (The Times). Meanwhile, in what is the highest casualty rate since Fallujah in November 2004, 776 American troops were wounded in Iraq last month (The Independent). The Daily Telegraph reports on how Sunni Iraqis under threat from Shia militias are learning Shia history and religious customs to survive at the militias' checkpoints.

In brief: Former Home Secretary David Blunkett reveals divisions within the Cabinet and with the US over the Iraq war (The Guardian); Failure to achieve an Israeli victory in Lebanon has seen Israeli PM Ehud Olmert's poll ratings crumble and signs of fracture in his Kadima-led coalition: to the end of political survival it seems he is courting the right-wing Israel Our Home party for a new coalition member (The Daily Telegraph); the recently deployed Lebanese army will receive money for new weapons and equipment from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states (The Financial Times); and The Times has a story from the olive groves of the West Bank, where a local rabbi is helping to protect Palestinian farmers and their harvest from violent Israeli settlers.

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The Daily Telegraph

News

Prescott tells Straw he is wrong over removal of veils
 Graeme Wilson

"John Prescott said yesterday that Jack Straw's call for Muslim women to discard the veil could increase prejudice and damage community relations.

The Deputy Prime Minister said he feared his colleague's intervention could lead to "considerable difficulties" and said he had expressed his worries in private to Mr Straw, the Leader of the

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Commons."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/10/09/nprescott09.xml>

Beleaguered Olmert courts Right-wingers

Tim Butcher

"Israel's beleaguered prime minister Ehud Olmert has admitted approaching a Right-wing secular party as a possible coalition partner.

With his current coalition under threat, Mr Olmert, who won the general election in March at the head of the centrist Kadima party, has put out feelers to Avigdor Lieberman, leader of Yisrael Beitenu (Israel Our Home).

The move indicates that Israel's dalliance with centrist politics will end soon."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/10/09/wisrael09.xml>

Sunnis learn Shia customs to bluff Baghdad death squads

Ahmad Ali and Oliver Poole

"Sunnis in Iraq are studying Shia religious history and customs to enable them to bluff their way through illegal checkpoints set up by Shia death squads.

Relatives and neighbours meet to share knowledge on the 12 imams revered by Shias Muslims, test each other on the dates of Shia festivals or advise on where best to buy fake IDs with Shia names, in case they are challenged at gunpoint. Websites have also been established to help Sunnis learn how to pass themselves off as Shia."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=GUBBSLSIH4WKTQFIQMFSFF4AVCBQ.xml=/news/2006/10/09/wiraq109.xml>

Secret RAF sorties keep Iraq border troops on the go

Thomas Harding

"RAF Hercules transport aircraft are flying secret missions into the heart of insurgent territory in Iraq to re-supply long range desert patrols.

Up to three sorties a week are being flown into Maysan province. The large but agile aeroplanes land on hastily constructed airstrips to deliver food, fuel and ammunition to cavalry soldiers operating far from friendly bases.

The missions have enabled troops from the Queen's Royal Hussars battlegroup to double the time spent watching the porous border with Iran for smugglers carrying bombs, guns and cash to fuel the insurgency in Iraq."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/10/09/wiraq09.xml>

Comment

Freedom is for all to enjoy - whether you like it or not

Janet Daley

"...Islamic women are presenting a challenge to our modern political settlement that is likely to bring the entire edifice into question. So long as we all had more or less the same cultural assumptions and historical baggage, we could leave some bits of our modern political philosophy in conveniently ambiguous confusion. Now the matter is going to have to be settled as a matter of urgency.

Does an individual's right to practise his (or her) religion take precedence over the right to legally enforced sexual equality? In other words, in a free society, do you have the right to refuse some of the freedoms that are on offer? Do women, for example, have a right not to be liberated in the social and economic ways that the law states that they should be?"

[http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/10/09/do0901.xml&sSheet=/opinion/2006/10/09/ixopinion.html)

[xml=/opinion/2006/10/09/do0901.xml&sSheet=/opinion/2006/10/09/ixopinion.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/10/09/do0901.xml&sSheet=/opinion/2006/10/09/ixopinion.html)

Letters

Behind the veil

(Three letters on whether Muslim women should wear the niqab)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?menuId=1588&menuItemId=-1&view=DISPLAYCONTENT&grid=P8&targetRule=0>

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The Financial Times

News

OPEC chief calls for immediate output cut

Carola Hoyos

"The president of Opec on Sunday called on members of the cartel to put into immediate effect an agreement to cut output by 1m barrels a day, underscoring the group's determination to curb falls in the oil price.

In a letter whose contents were revealed to the FT, Edmund Daukoru, Nigeria's oil minister, urged his fellow ministers to implement their country's share of the pro-rata quota reduction.

A communiqué announcing the measure, which reduces Opec's quota to 27m barrels a day, is expected on Monday, ending any doubts that the group is intent on stopping prices from falling much below \$60 a barrel."

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/49296ee0-56f6-11db-9110-0000779e2340.html>

Gulf Arab cash to bolster Lebanese army

Roula Khalaf

"With US blessing, Gulf Arab states are promising financial help for Lebanon's armed forces in the aftermath of the war between Israel and Hizbollah.

Strengthening the 50,000-strong but poorly equipped Lebanese army is crucial to efforts to stabilise the country and eventually convince Hizbollah to disarm.

The Shia group argues its military wing is needed to defend Lebanon in the absence of a strong army and that it would only discuss disarmament as part of a broader defence strategy for the country.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/092fd530-5733-11db-9110-0000779e2340.html>

Comment

Do not sacrifice principle to the new tyrannies

Ronald Dworkin

(This article requires a subscription to view)

"[Politicians of both main parties] want to jail people, who might be innocent, for 90 days without charge, which is a substantial punishment likely to damage the prisoners' lives even if they are released. They want to deport aliens who may be innocent to countries where they might be tortured and killed and to introduce evidence in UK trials that foreign torturers have obtained. They ridicule judges who stand in their way and demand that the law be changed to give them licence to do what they want."

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/aa6293b2-5700-11db-9110-0000779e2340.html>

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The Guardian

News

Blunkett: how feuds rocked the cabinet

- Dissent over Blair's plans for Iraq war

Nicholas Watt and Julian Glover

"The memoir...provides a vivid account of the chaos and rows within Mr Blair's war cabinet in the run up to the Iraq conflict in 2003.

Mr Blunkett, who was a member of the war cabinet, relates how ministers asked Mr Blair searching questions about the conflict and the lack of preparations for the post-war reconstruction. Donald Rumsfeld, the US defence secretary, is singled out for particular criticism by Mr Blunkett, who claims he enjoyed too much power in George Bush's notoriously divided first-term administration..."

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/labour/story/0,,1890918,00.html>

Prescott leads ministers disagreeing with Straw over call to remove Muslim veils
Will Woodward

"Jack Straw was looking increasingly isolated yesterday after the deputy prime minister, John Prescott, and other senior politicians said they disagreed with his call for Muslim women to remove their veils. Mr Straw, leader of the Commons, was praised for raising a debate about the veils worn by some Muslim women, which he described as a "visible statement of separation". The Muslim Parliament of Great Britain endorsed his move. But Mr Prescott and the health secretary, Patricia Hewitt, joined cabinet colleagues Ruth Kelly and Peter Hain in distancing themselves from Mr Straw's decision to ask women to uncover their faces."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,,1890806,00.html>

Muslim veil poses problems in court

Marcel Berlins

"The issue of Muslim women's veils has ramifications for our trial system. The question is: should women witnesses be asked to remove the full veil when giving evidence in court? A QC friend faced the problem at the Old Bailey recently. One of the often-cited arguments for retaining the jury system is that jurors, using their common sense and experience of life, are good at assessing whether or not a witness - including an accused - is telling the truth."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,1890965,00.html>

Comment

Jack Straw has unleashed a storm of prejudice and hatred

Madeleine Bunting

"...[The niqab] is the response of a minority who feel that they are living in a hostile climate. Straw's comments have unleashed a storm of prejudice that only exacerbates the very tendencies which prompt some Muslims to retreat. They undermine efforts within the Muslim community to build more self-confidence, to encourage tightly knit communities to reach out. They have elevated the situation of a tiny minority of women who are often the most fearful anyway into a national problem - even that they form a barrier to successful integration...There are many far more important barriers to successful integration. Two-thirds of children from families of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are growing up in poverty. More than 20% of all Muslim youths between 16 and 24 are unemployed. In many areas, the desire of second generation Muslims to integrate is being stymied by "white flight" from residential areas and white families using parental choice in education to avoid schools with large numbers of Asian pupils..."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1890698,00.html>

How not to have a debate: Ministers need to listen more to Muslims - and avoid grandstanding to the scared majority

John Denham

"...We live in insecure times. Tough measures to challenge those we fear are popular. But ultimately government won't be thanked if we make people more scared and no safer.

It's not that we shouldn't discuss these issues. But how we conduct the debate does matter. Three weeks ago I joined Muslims and non-Muslims brought together by Southampton's local council of mosques. It was illuminating and full of passionate discussion, and was organised by those committed Muslims whose virtues are often extolled by politicians - the ones who are challenging bad theology and poor politics every day. Their frustration at the government's handling of events, which so often makes their job more difficult, was tangible..."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1890702,00.html>

Letters

Religion and the right to speak out

(Four responses to Timothy Garton-Ash's article "The struggle to defend free expression is defining our age" (to read, please go to: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1887692,00.html>))
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,,1890682,00.html>

The Independent

News

Amis condemns Muslim extremists as 'miserable bastards'

Guy Adams

Martin Amis has launched an attack on "miserable bastards" in the British Muslim community, accusing them of trying to destroy multicultural society by failing to "fit in" with other faiths. Young men in late adolescence were being targeted and brainwashed by extremists into joining the "death cult" that was behind last year's London bombings, he said.

<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/news/article1822165.ece>

US casualty rate in Iraq is worst since Fallujah

Andrew Buncombe

"The number of US troops being wounded in Iraq is now at its highest level for two years as American forces are confronted by increasing sectarian violence and a continuing insurgency. Figures released by the Pentagon show that 776 soldiers were wounded in action in Iraq last month."

http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article1822196.ece

Comment

We don't live in an Islamic republic, so I will say it - I find the veil offensive

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

(This article requires a subscription to view)

"...A liberal nation has no obligation to extend its liberalism to condone the most illiberal practices, as long as it ensures genuine equal standards for all. Much of Europe still treats Muslims as undeserving inferiors, as underdogs; Muslims are victimised, feared, hated and excluded. Our own government has not tackled the racism or the disadvantages. Instead it blames us for failing to stop terrorism. The media lurches drunkenly between pandering to Muslim separatists and maligning us all as the aliens within. It is hard to be a Muslim today. And it becomes harder still when some choose deliberately to act and dress as aliens..."

http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_a_l/yasmin_alibhai_brown/article1822224.ece

Letters

The veil is a barrier to understanding

(Six letters concerning the wearing of the niqab, from both Muslim and non-Muslim correspondents)

<http://comment.independent.co.uk/letters/article1822193.ece>

Israel and Resolution 242

(A letter regarding Israel's post-Six Day war offer to withdraw to its pre-1967 war borders)

<http://comment.independent.co.uk/letters/article1822193.ece>

The Times

News

Suspect in terror hunt used veil to evade arrest

Sean O'Neill and Anthony Browne

"A male suspect in a major anti-terrorist investigation in Britain escaped capture by allegedly disguising himself as a Muslim woman dressed in a burka, The Times can reveal.

The man, who was wanted in connection with serious terrorist offences, evaded arrest for several days as police searched for him across the country.

The fact that a fugitive remained at large after disguising himself in an Islamic dress which covered his face will further fuel the debate sparked by Jack Straw, Leader of the House of Commons, about the wearing of the veil."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2395178,00.html>

Police 'exaggerated evidence' against British 9/11 suspect
Sean O'Neill

"Police and prosecutors are facing allegations that they misled a judge and grossly exaggerated evidence against the only man to be detained in Britain over September 11, The Times has learnt. There is renewed scrutiny on two fronts of the role played by Scotland Yard and the Crown Prosecution Service in making unfounded claims that Lotfi Raissi trained the 9/11 hijackers."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2395400.html>

Muslims not trying to fit with society, says Amis
Ben Hoyle

'Muslims are not doing enough to engage with Britain's otherwise thriving multicultural society, Martin Amis has said.

Commenting on the recent row over Islamic veils, the author said at the Festival: "The only element that's not fitting in is Islam. Who else is not fitting in?"

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2395302.html>

US raises new options as forces battle Mahdi Army
James Hider and Tim Reid"

"US forces killed 30 Shia militiamen in a ferocious battle in the south of Iraq yesterday, sparking warnings that further challenges to the Mahdi Army militia could plunge the entire country into fighting.

The US military and its Iraqi Army allies suffered no casualties in the fighting in Diwaniyah, 80 miles south of Baghdad. But the Americans did lose an Abrams battle tank, the first such loss to a Shia militia since the US fought the Mahdi Army to a standstill in Najaf during an uprising two years ago."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,7374-2395153.html>

Rabbi leads defence of Palestinian olive groves
Ian MacKinnon

"The olives are stunted, the trees in poor condition. At the top of a ladder, stripping fruit from high branches, the Palestinian farmer Omar Karni is in his element, working his way up a dusty olive grove that has been in his family for generations.

For the first time in four years, the family has been able to harvest the crop. Last time Mr Karni tried, radical Jewish settlers set fire to the tinder-dry land and beat him as he fled...Rabbi Ascherman, co-director of Rabbis for Human Rights, will spend the six-week olive season rising at dawn with other volunteers to put his life on the line to protect Palestinian farmers from armed Jewish settlers.

Without the Jewish cleric, the farmers would be fired upon or beaten, their harvest stolen and ancient trees - some dating from Roman times - felled with chainsaws..."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,251-2394974.html>

Comment

Why Muslim women should thank Straw

Saira Khan

"...Nobody should feel threatened by [Straw's] comments; after all, the debate about veils has been

raging in the Islamic community for many years. To argue that non-Muslims have no right to discuss it merely reinforces the idea that Muslims are not part of a wider society. It also suggests, wrongly, that wearing the veil affects only Muslims. Non-Muslims have to deal with women wearing a veil, so why shouldn't their feelings be taken into consideration? I would find it impossible to deal with any veiled woman because it goes so deeply against my own values and basic human instincts..."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,1072-2394934.html>

Letters

A UN force is a false hope in bloody Iraq

(Four responses to Toby Dodge's argument for the establishment of a UN protectorate in Iraq - to read the original article, go to <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,1072-2388886.html>)

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,59-2394882.html>

Muslim women and the draw of the veil

(Six more contributions to the great veiling debate)

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,59-2394891.html>

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Chris Doyle

Director

CAABU (Council for Arab-British Understanding)

"Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance" A lecture by Professor George Saliba - 19 October - for details:

http://www.caabu.org/index.asp?homepage=events&article=events&detail=george_saliba

Why not sponsor me this Sunday to help Palestinian and Lebanese children?

<http://www.justgiving.com/chrisdoyle>

see the CAABU section on the current Israel-Lebanon conflict

<http://www.caabu.org/index.asp?>

[homepage=key_issues&article=israel_lebanon&detail=crisis_july2006](http://www.caabu.org/index.asp?homepage=key_issues&article=israel_lebanon&detail=crisis_july2006)

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[homepage=membership&article=member_applications](http://www.caabu.org/index.asp?homepage=membership&article=member_applications)

1 Gough Square, London, EC4A 3DE

Tel: 020 7832 1310

Fax: 020 7832 1329

www.caabu.org

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