

Middle East Conspiracies, Ignorance Hide the Truth

Wednesday's edition of *The Washington Post* features an important story that lifts the veil of unreality and political correctness that surrounds our understanding of the Middle East. Remember the vicious Taliban assault on Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani school girl who courageously spoke out against extremism and in favor of educating girls? Well, it turns out that many Pakistanis believe that was an American operation—despite the Taliban's very public claim of responsibility.

And that is, of course, merely the tip of the iceberg regarding popular Pakistani conspiracy theories. *The Post* blandly notes that "Pakistanis love a good conspiracy theory" without noting how utterly vicious and malignant those theories are.

And it's not just Pakistan. In Iraq we saw a deadly green-on-blue attack justified in Iraqi cities by the popular (and utterly fictional) notion that the American victim was a child-killer and child-rapist. Insurgents blamed their own suicide bombs on American air strikes, accused Americans of forcibly converting Muslims to Christianity, and of generally committing acts of "blasphemy" regardless of their relationship to real-world events.

Popular Muslim beliefs regarding the history and conduct of Jews are simply grotesque (Holocaust denial and blood libel are staples of the Arab world). Sept. 11, 2001 trutherism is conventional wisdom with millions who literally believe Mossad concocted the whole event to trick America into a new round of crusades.

The simple fact of much of the Middle East is that the pump

is *always* primed for a riot. Riots in response to Western “outrages” are rarely spontaneous but instead shrewdly generated under circumstances calculated to minimize our response.

Political imams can always get the crowd; the trick is to get the crowd under circumstances designed to elicit garment-tearing apologies and concessions from Americans instead of swift and decisive offensive or defensive action. When we apologize for months-old YouTube trailers and jail filmmakers, the only thing we really do is teach jihadists they can manipulate a superpower.

The YouTube explanation for Middle Eastern violence was *never* credible—and not just in Libya. Put simply, we were played.