

American Desecration Fuels Outrage Throughout Muslim World

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PEJ News - As new tales of abuse emanate from freed prisoners of Camp X-Ray in Guantanamo Bay, more outrageous than the torture, sexual humiliation, and deprivation suffered by "detainees" there is the desecration of the Holy Koran by interrogators. Revelations that U.S. soldiers placed copies of the sacred book in toilets has sparked massive protests from Islamabad to Indonesia, but the most vehement demonstrations are in Afghanistan, where at least nine protesters have been shot dead. [-lex} &nb](#)
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It had to happen; the "[Muslim Street,](#)" as the pundits say, is in an uproar over the reported desecration by U.S. interrogators in Guantanamo of the Holy Koran. To Western sensibilities, it may seem baffling that the ill-treatment of a text is more upsetting than the gross violations meted out to the uncounted Muslim prisoners of America's burgeoning global prison network, but to Muslims the Koran is considered the literal word of Allah and treated with deep reverence. That reverence is protected by law in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where demonstrations are most vociferous. In these places, [d](#)
[efilement of the text is a capital offence.](#)

In Afghanistan, nine protesters were killed yesterday, bringing the toll to sixteen dead in two days of reaction there to the news of the violation. But, revulsion and anger are apparent in more moderate Muslim countries, including those allied with the United States and their self-declared "War on Terror." Indonesian officials demanded Washington punish those responsible for their "immoral action[s]," [while Pakistan has called for a probe](#) of the alleged incident.

The U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice has tried to calm the situation, saying these reports are "abhorrent to us all," and is assuring a full investigation will be made. But her [reassurances have not silenced](#) large and angry protests in Afghanistan and Pakistan, two of the shakiest of America's Muslim nation allies.

And, in Afghanistan especially, where a garrison of nearly 19,000 U.S. and several thousand international troops, including more than two thousand Canadians, are yet to gain control of the country, the resurgence of anti-American sentiment, already profound, is particularly unwelcome.

This could tie-down U.S. troops in the country making reinforcement of Iraq

