

Muslim Haters Flock Together

By [Eric Margolis](#)

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President Donald Trump's 36-hour whirlwind visit to India this past week was designed to show Americans just how adored abroad their president really is.

Unluckily for Trump, his campaign stop at this behemoth nation of 1.3 or 1.4 billion proved a fiasco.

First came the terrifying Chinese coronavirus that so far has killed less people than the weekly toll on China's dangerous roads, but the whole world went into a panic. The US stock market, the underpinning of Trump's popularity at home, took a crash dive even though the all-knowing president-physician assured Americans that the Wuhan virus was only a cold.

VP Mike Pence, who believes in Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark, was put in charge of combating the new virus.

Next, anti-Muslim riots led by Hindu fanatics in India left large numbers of mostly Muslims dead or injured. A not very well briefed Trump had just lauded India for its harmonious communal relations. The riots were sparked by a virulent anti-Muslim immigration bill enacted by hard-line Hindu Prime Minister Narendra Modi that has caused distress across the nation.

But all was not lost. Trump signed a deal to sell \$3 billion of US arms to India and got a visit to the Taj Mahal. He will very likely want a copy built in Washington. The parade-loving president also viewed a fine display in Delhi of Indian martial prowess.

The latest US military helicopters will be sold on credit to India. They could be particularly useful in the high mountain regions along India's tense northern borders with Pakistan and China.

US President Trump and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi are both flaming populist leaders who play to two popular passions: hatred of Muslims and fear of China. Muslims make up roughly 14% of India's billion-plus population, or some 172 million people.

Trump and American hawks dream of unleashing India against China. India and China have a long, disputed, ill-demarcated border across the high Himalayas and Karakoram mountains that divide them. They are rivals over Tibet, Ladakh and Burma, and Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. India and Pakistan have already fought three wars over Kashmir. But Indians are clever and cautious and will not allow the US to push them into a big war against China.

For more on this topic, my geopolitical analysis of the region, 'War at the Top of the World,'

is available through Amazon and used by general staffs, intelligence agencies, and universities.

As I've long warned, this little-known but highly strategic Himalayan region, the source of India's and Pakistan's major rivers, could well spark nuclear war between them - possibly joined by China. Many Americans could not even find Kashmir on a map and care nothing about a war there that could ignite a nuclear conflict and contaminate the entire globe.

But none of this matters at election time. Trump wants to show he is beloved by the outside world.

He has now forged a very close alliance with the Muslim-hating PM Modi, who is the front man for India's powerful Hindu fundamentalist organization, the RSS, which was modeled in the 1920's after Mussolini's Fascists. Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is denounced as a 'Jewish fascist' by many on Israel's left, has joined Trump and Modi in a de facto anti-Muslim rightist alliance.

At the same time, India has drawn very close to Israel, its principal supplier of arms and nuclear technology. Israel has opened doors for India across Washington. Interestingly, in a quid pro quo almost totally ignored by US media, the Trump White House has allowed massive Indian immigration to the US. There are now an estimated four million Indian immigrants in the US. Most are Hindus. They are designed to offset Muslim immigration and sway US politics in Trump's favor.

There is nothing new in his immigration game. The Democrats encouraged large numbers of Latino and Irish immigrants who reliably voted for them. Many of the Indian immigrants are educated and fairly well-off. They cluster in IT, banking and journalism, bringing much value to both fields.

Instead of heightening tensions between India, Pakistan and China, the US should be helping calm India's ethnic riots and promoting a fair settlement over the Kashmir dispute that has dragged on since 1947. Photo ops of the Taj Mahal are not going to help.

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