Table of Contents

“The Victor”........................................................................................................................................3

Responses to the Prophet Mohammad Cartoon Competition .......................................................... 6

“Prison for Advice”: The Arrest of Sheikh Safar al-Hawali by the Saudi Regime as Seen on Social Networks ........................................................................................................................................................................... 9
From the Editors

The Doron Halpern Middle East Network Analysis Desk is happy to present the July issue of Beehive. The first article in this issue discusses the results of the presidential elections in Turkey, which ended with Erdogan’s unsurprising victory. The consequences of his win became clear the very next day with the enactment of controversial presidential decrees, issued against the background of the well-publicized arrest of the leader of a Turkish sect, which appears to have been timed to distract public attention from other events. We continue with the declaration by the Dutch Party for Freedom that it would hold a contest in parliament for caricatures of the Prophet Muhammed. This led to widespread protests by Muslims on online networks, including some identified with terrorist organizations; the protests were accompanied by open threats against those concerned. The issue concludes by reviewing the discourse surrounding the arrest of a Saudi cleric, Sheikh Safar al-Hawali, in the wake of an electronic book he published, which contains advice to the Saudi regime reflecting his opposition to its domestic and foreign policy.

Beehive will be on hiatus in August, and will return in September.

Enjoy!
“The Victor”

Dr. Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak

Since the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, Turkey has experienced dramatic changes in its political system. The declaration of a state of emergency immediately after the coup attempt and the referendum held in April 2017 gave President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan broad powers without instituting an adequate system of checks and balances on that power. This fact made the presidential election held on 24 June 2018 especially fateful. At the end of an election campaign in which Turkish president enjoyed the full cooperation of the media, Erdoğan had won 52.3% of votes and thus defeated his opponents in the first round. Shortly thereafter, he enacted several controversial presidential decrees that will impact the quality of life in Turkey, in spheres including culture, law, and higher education.

As expected, the Turkish elections were the subject of widespread public attention on social networks. Erdoğan’s supporters celebrated the victory, using slogans like, “The man of the people is the president of the people” (picture 1), and sharing photographs of victory celebrations in city squares, with the hashtag, “To continue” (#Devam), which is considered a response to the hashtag “enough” (#Tamam).1

Although Erdoğan’s victory was expected, some in the opposition had hoped for a reversal, in the wake of the emergence of Muharrem İnce as leader of the Republican People’s Party, and the perception that he might be capable of defeating Erdoğan and leading the masses. Not surprisingly, many of the users who identified with the opposition cast doubt on the credibility of the election results, and accused Erdoğan of fraud. They shared pictures of the rally of millions that İnce held in Istanbul on June 23, the day before the elections, in order to demonstrate his supporters’ enthusiasm for their candidate.2 The disappearance of İnce on the night of the elections, until noon the next day, spawned conspiracy theories. According to one of the many scenarios floated on social networks, İnce was kidnapped by Erdoğan’s supporters, and had received concrete threats against his family. Another version claimed that it was İnce’s own supporters who confined him, to prevent him from contacting the Turkish media, because they were being threatened by Erdoğan’s supporters.3
The uproar on social networks climaxed on the night of the election with the publication of a brief message, “The man won,” which journalist İsmail Küçükkaya leaked to the media in İnce’s name. For his part, İnce claimed that the remark was made in a conversation between friends, and was not intended to be a public announcement. He used a Turkish word for “man” that is recognized as a nickname for Erdoğan, and is parallel in meaning to the Yiddish “mensch.” In the eyes of Erdoğan’s supporters, İnce’s use of the term attests to his agreement with Erdoğan, which led them to ridicule İnce. İnce’s supporters, on the other hand, saw this as further proof that he was being held by the president’s men, who had pressured him to disseminate the message in order to damage his reputation among his followers. Either way, the day after the elections, İnce rejected this claim, and accepted the results of the elections, both at a press conference and via his Twitter account. His statement did not prevent his supporters from continuing to challenge the results. Users distributed videos showing Erdoğan’s enthusiasts celebrating by firing Kalashnikov rifles and pistols into the air, and claimed that İnce recoiled from the possibility of exchanging fire that could lead to civil war. Therefore, he chose to accept the results, but only to maintain peace among the people.

Under heavy suspicion, on July 9th Erdoğan began to function officially as president of the country with broad executive powers. The speeches he made that day in parliament, his visit to the tomb of the founder of the Republic of Ataturk, and the impressive ceremony held in his honor at the presidential palace in Ankara accompanied by the Mehteran Orchestra (also known as the Military Band of the Ottoman Empire) heralded a new chapter in the history of Turkey, which may now become more centralized than ever. The next day, the qualms were realized when President Erdoğan signed controversial orders, including the closure and confiscation of the state theaters and the National Library; the appointment of judges to the Administrative Court, including some without any legal education; the appointment of university rectors who are not professors; and so forth. These orders came into force under the state of emergency, which expired a few days later, on July 19. In this manner, Erdoğan prevented future appeals, which are proscribed by the provisions of the Turkish constitution concerning orders issued during a state of emergency.

While many users were protesting the edicts, the Turkish online sphere was shocked by an extraordinary incident that diverted public attention. Adnan Oktar, the leader of a controversial religious sect – who is also known to the Turkish public as “Adnan Hoca” or “Harun Yahya” – was arrested in a Turkish police operation on the morning of July 11. Oktar’s contempt for Islam and his polygamous lifestyle, the former made particularly evident by his television programs featuring women dancing while reading quotations from the Koran, aroused the wrath of many Turks. Oktar is also remembered as a figure identified with Turkish anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism during the 1990s, when he published books and periodicals on Israel and Judaism, in which he denied the Holocaust. After the attacks on the
World Trade Center in New York he discontinued these activities, in part so he could raise funds from evangelical Christians, and to avoid being categorized as a radical Islamic preacher.

Although public excoriation of the detainee traditionally follows every arrest covered by the Turkish media, the response to Oktar’s arrest was exceptionally extensive, because he had provided so many reasons for such antagonism. For a time, it seemed that the entire Turkish network was united against Oktar, with only a few voices supporting him. The latter claimed that the arrest had been made at the request of Great Britain, based on Oktar’s claims that the British nobility opposes him and had directed the plan to arrest him because his efforts to strengthen Turkey are contrary to the British desire to weaken it. In any case, it is clear that Turkish users are pleased with the downfall of Oktar whom they consider a disgrace to Islam and women’s rights. Some even shared pictures showing Oktar and his deputies with senior Israeli officials, including the prime minister, cabinet ministers, members of Knesset (picture 2) and rabbis, who are unaware of his past. Many users used these as a pretext for accusing him of spying for Israel, and claiming that his Israeli visitors had transferred huge amounts of money in return for his services. Consequently, Oktar became a virtual ‘punching bag’ on social networks, which in turn displaced discussion of the controversial presidential decrees.

The new orders, and their gradually dissipating reverberations on social media, indicated that Turkey under Erdoğan’s new presidential regime is preparing for drastic changes that could move it in a more centralized and conservative direction. Erdoğan, an incomparable strategist in his field, chose to set-up a temporary diversion – the arrest of Oktar – to enflame public discourse, and thus reducing the angry reactions to his presidential decrees. Thus, Erdoğan proved once again that he has no rival in Turkish politics, and will be able to continue conducting the orchestra, dictating the public agenda in Turkey, and being the sole victor at the ballot box.
Responses to the Prophet Mohammad Cartoon Competition

Dr. Ariel Koch

On June 12, the Dutch Party for Freedom, led by Geert Wilders and known for its opposition to Islam and Muslim immigration to the Netherlands and Europe in general, announced that it would hold a contest for caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in its offices in the Dutch parliament. They decided to hold the contest after receiving approval from the National Coordinator of Counterterrorism and Security (NCTV), approval which was apparently predicated on the assumption that the parliament building is a secure location. The initiative quickly provoked furious responses and calls for its cancellation that were shared on social networks, as well as overt threats from Islamic extremists against Wilders and other contest participants.

In recent years, organizations and people identified with Al-Qaeda and other Salafi-Jihadi movements have threatened anyone who, in their view, sullies the honor of the Muslim prophet. A particularly conspicuous example was the November 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van-Gogh by Muhammed Bouyeri, a young Dutchman of Moroccan origin, in Amsterdam. The pretext for the murder was a short video produced by Van-Gogh, “Submission,” in which a woman is shown naked except for a veil concealing her face. In a scene that aroused angry reactions from many Muslims, she recites verses from the Koran that also adorn her body. Bouyeri stabbed Van-Gogh several dozen times in the presence of stunned passers-by, and then impaled a five-page manifesto justifying his act on the corpse.

In the years that followed, various newspapers and magazines in Europe published cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammad, either to protest Van-Gogh’s murder and/or out of a desire to promote discussion of the possibility of criticizing Islam, and/or to attack Islamic extremists. One of the most memorable examples, published in the Danish newspaper Jyllandes-Posten in September 2005, depicted the Prophet with a bomb-shaped turban on his head. These, and other incidents, led to angry demonstrations around the world and at Western embassies in Islamic countries, as well as Muslim legal rulings (“fatawa”) authorizing the killing of the artists, as happened after distribution of the video “Innocence of Muslims,” which presented the prophet in a grotesque manner on YouTube in 2012.

In March 2013, an Al-Qaeda affiliate in the Arabian Peninsula published a list of individuals accused of insulting the Prophet Muhammad, for the express purpose of encouraging readers to harm them. This list, which appeared in the tenth edition of the organization’s online terrorism magazine, Inspire, included Muslim authors such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Salman Rushdie, who were exiled from their countries because of the criticism of Islam; cartoonists from Sweden and Denmark who drew scornful depictions of the Prophet in
various magazines; American pastor Terry Jones, who burned the Koran and called on others around the world to do likewise; and Stéphane Charbonnier, editor of the French magazine Charlie Hebdo, which published cartoons of the prophet.

The calls fell on attentive ears, and in January 2015 the brothers Said and Chérif Kouachi attacked the offices of Charlie Hebdo, killing 12 people, including Stéphane Charbonnier. Al-Qaeda’s affiliate in the Arabian Peninsula took credit for the attack. Four months later, two supporters of ISIS opened fire at people viewing the Jihad Watch Muhammed Art Exhibit and Cartoon Contest in Garland, Texas, which was organized by Pamela Geller, a right-wing American activist who battles what she calls the “Islamization of America.” One person was wounded before the attackers were neutralized by an armed guard. In 2015, four secular bloggers who critiqued radical Islam were assassinated in Bangladesh in attacks attributed to Ansar al-Islam Bengala, an affiliate of the al-Qaeda branch for the Indian subcontinent.

Therefore, the aggressive responses to the cartoon competition launched by the Dutch Party for Freedom were unsurprising. Protests were circulated using the hashtag “#StopBlasphemousCartoonContest.” Among the reactions were those of Pakistani users who called for the closure of the Dutch Embassy in Pakistan. Similarly, a picture showing the Dutch parliament and the Dutch flag in the upper frame, with Muslim horsemen with swords drawn in the lower part, accompanied by text reading, “You started it in Parliament. We will finish it in Battlefield [sic]” (picture 3). Another example, published by a Twitter account called “Bint al-Fakir” stated: “There is a line between freedom of speech and ‘hate speech.’ Geert Wilders’ dogs cross it. Wait for a Tanveer Qadri or Amir Cheema to teach you a fitting lesson. See you soon.” Amir Cheema, of Pakistani origin, planned the murder a German journalist who published caricatures of the Prophet on March 20, 2006, while Tanveer Qadri, also of Pakistani origin, stabbed Asad Shah, a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect, on March 24, 2016 in Scotland, after the latter posted videos on YouTube claiming he was a prophet.

Responses to the contest also came from accounts affiliated with the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. On one channel of the Taliban Pakistan, someone wrote in Urdu and English: “If heresy against a person who is holy to 1.25 billion people around the world isn’t terrorism, there is no terrorism in this world.” The statements were accompanied by
hashtags “#StopTerrorismbyGeertWilders,” #ourprophetourhonour, “#ceasedutchembassy,” and “#NoToNetherlandproducts.” On a Taliban-affiliated Telegram channel in Afghanistan, Wilders’ picture appeared on “wanted poster” with the caption “Wanted dead/slaughtered,” with the promised reward for the killing listed as “Jannah” or paradise (picture 4).27 On another Taliban-affiliated channel, Wilders was depicted in orange overalls, reminiscent of those worn by prisoners being executed in ISIS videos, and the caption: “Soon, very soon. The lions of Islam are coming for you, cowardly Wilders.”28 Similar words were also published on a Telegram channel identified with the Taliban in Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda: “We shall kill and incite against all those who attack our beloved Prophet, even if we have to sacrifice every last drop of our blood. Oh, dirty infidels, we will show you the fire in this world.”29 Despite the volume of content originating in Pakistan and Afghanistan, it is important to note that protests were voiced across the Muslim world.

Events from the past few years prove that the threats to harm editors and participants in cartoon contests focused on Islam and the Prophet Muhammad, as well as the artists and sponsors, magazines and journals do not end with inflammatory rhetoric. Jihadist extremists are interested in avenging every insult to the dignity of the Prophet Muhammad, and win sympathy from all Muslims. Despite this, the people and organizations being threatened, especially those from the right-wing, remain steadfast and continue to take inflammatory steps, often to raise political capital, attract attention and confirm the existence of an “Islamic threat” to the West, as they define it.
“Prison for Advice”: The Arrest of Sheikh Safar al-Hawali by the Saudi Regime, as Seen on Social Networks

Dr. Michael Barak

In early July 2018, the Saudi regime arrested Sheikh Safar al-Hawali, his brother, and his three sons because he wrote a book, which was circulated via social networks, that condemned the pro-Western policies of the Saudi kingdom. The arrest ignited a wave of protests from the opposition, both in Saudi Arabia and beyond its borders, primarily from the Muslim Brotherhood in Qatar. The latter group is exhibiting mounting discontent with the suppression of religious symbols by the Saudi regime, including arrests of leading sharia (Muslim religious law) scholars, like al-Hawali. Supporters of the regime launched a parallel counter-campaign, aimed at justifying the detention, while spreading threats that the regime would act harshly against any subversive element in the kingdom. Al-Hawali’s arrest should also be considered against the background of the wave of arrests initiated last September by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, which targeted opposition figures who dared criticize the royal family.

In the 1990s, Sheikh Safar al-Hawali was known as one of the leaders of the “awakening sheikhs” (Shuyukh al-Sahwa), an activist, Sunni fundamentalist movement that challenged the pro-Western policy of the Saudi royal family. That policy was especially irksome during the First Gulf War when the royal family allowed the United States to land military forces on Saudi soil, as part of its fight against the Iraqi ruler, Saddam Hussein, a decision that was backed by the Wahhabi religious establishment. Al-Hawali and other clerics outside of that establishment opposed the presence of non-Muslim forces in Saudi Arabia and collaboration with those they considered “infidels,” an act understood as treason. Imprisoned for his criticism, al-Hawali was released after making a commitment not to take part in opposition activity. Recently, he again censured the regime in a book The Muslims and Western Civilization (Al-Muslimun wal-Hadhara Al-Gharbiyya), which includes contains a list of advice to the Royal House of Saud regarding its domestic and foreign policy, which al-Hawali believes undermines the stability of the throne. These include, among other things, the obligation to remain loyal to the Islamic religion and oppose attempts by the United States to impose a model of “moderate Islam” on Saudi Arabia. He criticizes the trend towards normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, stressing that Zionism is the ultimate enemy even surpassing the Iranian threat, and opposes transferring funds to Arab rulers such as al-Sisi, rather than channeling them for the benefit of the young people in their countries, who are suffering from rising unemployment.

News of Al-Hawali’s arrest was disseminated on social networks but ignored by the official Saudi media. While many claimed that al-Hawali was arrested for publication of the book, users close to ruling circles initially denied that he had been arrested at all. Later on, they
claimed that the book had not actually been written by the sheikh, or alternatively, that the publication of the book in an electronic version, rather than in print, meant that there were no grounds for arrest.\textsuperscript{31} These claims can be understood in the context of the desire of people allied with the government to minimize the weight of the criticism in the book.

Instead, the regime’s supporters in Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies accused al-Hawai of undermining the existing order and supporting terrorist elements such as ISIS because of, among other things, his call for the regime to instill the idea of jihad in young people instead of nurturing their ostensibly hedonistic culture. From their perspective, al-Hawai is preaching violence and terrorism, and went astray when he accused the Saudi royal family of being lax in observing the precepts of jihad, because the royal family had been a major supporter of the Afghan jihad against the Soviet Union in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{32} Saudi journalist Sa’ud al-Fozan skillfully described it: “How many Saudi mothers lost their only child, how many fathers lost their sons in Afghanistan, Syria, and elsewhere, in the name of the terrorist’s jihad? I ask, did any of his [al-Hawai’s] sons fight in the jihad [he preaches]? Tell me about one of his sons who participated in his false jihad, and I will tell you about a thousand youths who were killed because of his lectures that were of no benefit to our nation.”\textsuperscript{33} The regime’s supporters further warned the public of al-Hawai’s extreme thought, and described him as belonging to Khawarij an early Islamic sect that espoused violence rather than tolerance. Others argued that it would be better for him to remain in prison, to prevent him from provoking a quarrel that could lead to civil war.\textsuperscript{34} Some even called for him to be executed as an example to others who preach violence.\textsuperscript{35} These and other criticisms were frequently shared using the hashtag “Terrorist al-Hawai and Sons.”\textsuperscript{36}

The opposition voices on social networks, primarily people identified with the Muslim Brotherhood in Qatar and Yemen, demanded that the Saudi regime release al-Hawai immediately. Some of them, such as Sheikh Ali al-Qara Dar’i, a religious scholar from Qatar, wrote that the regime ought to be ashamed of arresting a sick, old man, and sarcastically remarked that the price for giving advice to the ruler is a prison (picture 5).\textsuperscript{37} He claimed that the Saudi regime sees fit to gag scholars of sharia, while the religious leadership maintains its silence, but this does not guarantee the regime’s stability, as one user wrote: “The ruler may have forgotten or pretends to forget that the throne will not remain forever, whether he asks for advice or not.”\textsuperscript{38} Qatari journalist Jamal Rayyan depicted this skillfully in a cartoon showing a free crow asking a caged parrot why he was in

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{poster5.png}
\caption{Poster shared on Twitter and Facebook. The text alongside the picture of Sheikh Safar al-Hawai reads: “The price for giving advice is a prison.”}
\end{figure}
prison. The latter responds: “Because I speak!” (picture 6). Other users interpreted the arrest as an extension of the wave of arrests initiated by the Crown Prince, which they consider the opening round of a war against symbols of religion and larger Saudi society, whose citizens have been detained. According to many users, continuing this policy will ultimately undermine the Saudi royal family and lead to its downfall. Opposition parties called upon Muslims in Saudi Arabia to break their silence and protest against tyranny of thought and the suppression of freedom of expression. One user warned: “Those who remain silent today will pay for it tomorrow, and might also be sent to the prison.” An Egyptian user identified with the Muslim Brotherhood stressed that the situation in Saudi Arabia also prevailed in other Arab countries: “The Arab regimes from the Mediterranean to the Gulf aren’t legitimate regimes, rather they are heretical regimes that deny Islam... They do not allow citizens to protest... We are currently under full occupation... We should not deal with the occupation with advice and patience, but rather with killing and fighting. Even though we don’t currently possess weapons, we can at least advise Muslims to prepare themselves intellectually and materially for the next round against these hypocritical dogs and pigs!”

Some opposition voices chose to relate to the contents of the book, published excerpts and justified the claims raised in it, using hashtags like “the arrest of al-Hawali and his sons” and “al-Hawali’s life in danger.” One user stressed the importance of the principle of jihad: “If the Shi’a send their sons to protect their brothers and fight against the Sunnis, why don’t Sunnis do the same?” Another user agreed with al-Hawali that the regime should strengthen Islamic studies in the kingdom, and even noted that it would be good for the education system in Saudi Arabia to learn from the one established by ISIS. On July 22, Twitter and Facebook accounts were opened to gather information about the reasons for al-Hawali’s arrest and his health.

The discourse surrounding the arrest of Sheikh Safar al-Hawali expresses a struggle for the consciousness of Saudi citizens. On one hand, elements opposing the regime, including the Muslim Brotherhood, represent the monarchy as a repressive regime that acts against the principles of Islam and against religious scholars who defend those principles at the cost of their freedom. On the other hand, the regime is waging a war against its critics in order to remove any threat to the legitimacy of the royal family, and no less to the traditional alliance between the Saudi regime and the Wahhabi religious establishment. Furthermore, its
actions in cyberspace shows the importance that the regime attaches to online platforms as tools for shaping public opinion. The network discourse also reveals the voices of Saudi critics who express dissatisfaction with the regime’s policy on both domestic and foreign policy issues.

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