

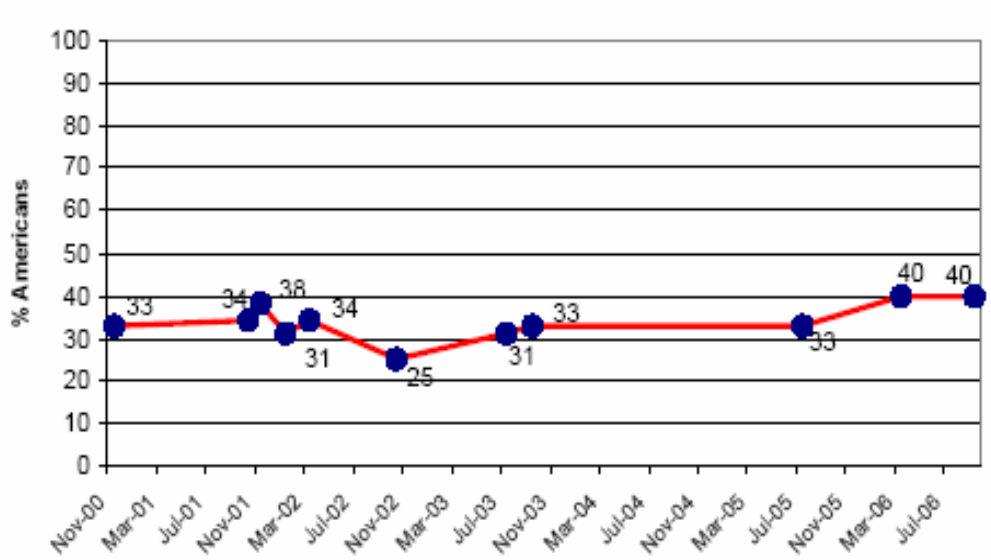
CHAPTER III

ISALAMOPHOBIA: POST 9/11

This chapter will show how people in the west perceived idea of Islamophobia after the “9/11” incident; as the graph shown below

Figure 1: Percentage of Americans feeling “Knowledgeable” About Islam

26

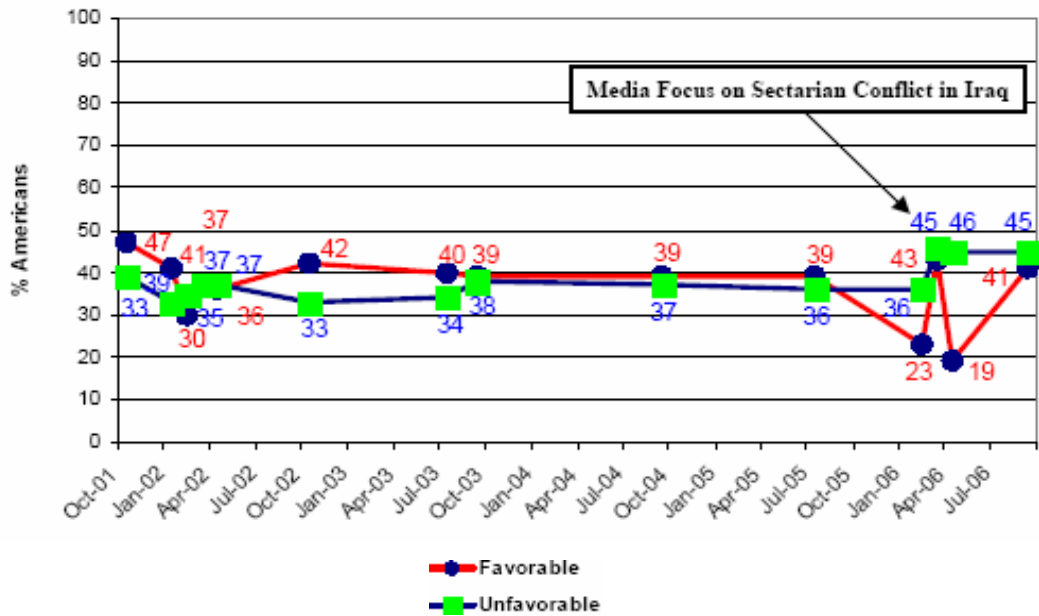


Reported self-knowledge has marginally increased since 2000. According to most current data available, 51% of Americans know the “Islamic equivalent to the bible” is the Koran and 48% know that Allah is “the name Muslims use for God” (Pew, July 2005)

Figure 2: Percentage of Americans “Favorable” and “Unfavorable”

²⁶ Erik C. Nisbet and Yasamin Sarraf Miller, “Lessons for Arab Public Lessons for Arab PublicDiplomacy Diplomacy” (paper presented at Survey Research Institute, Cornell University, Cairo, Egypt, February 6, 2007).

Toward Islam



Favorability highest immediately after “9/11”, since then, consistently hovering around 40%, or hovering 30%, depending on question wording. Substantial increase in unfavorable opinion since March 2006

Table 1: Mean Favorability Ratings 2002

Most Favorable	Least Favorable
Egypt (59%)	Iran (12%)
Turkey (47%)	Palestinian Authority (13%)
Jordan (43%)	Libya (22%)
Indonesia (40 %)	Iraq (24% - post 2003)

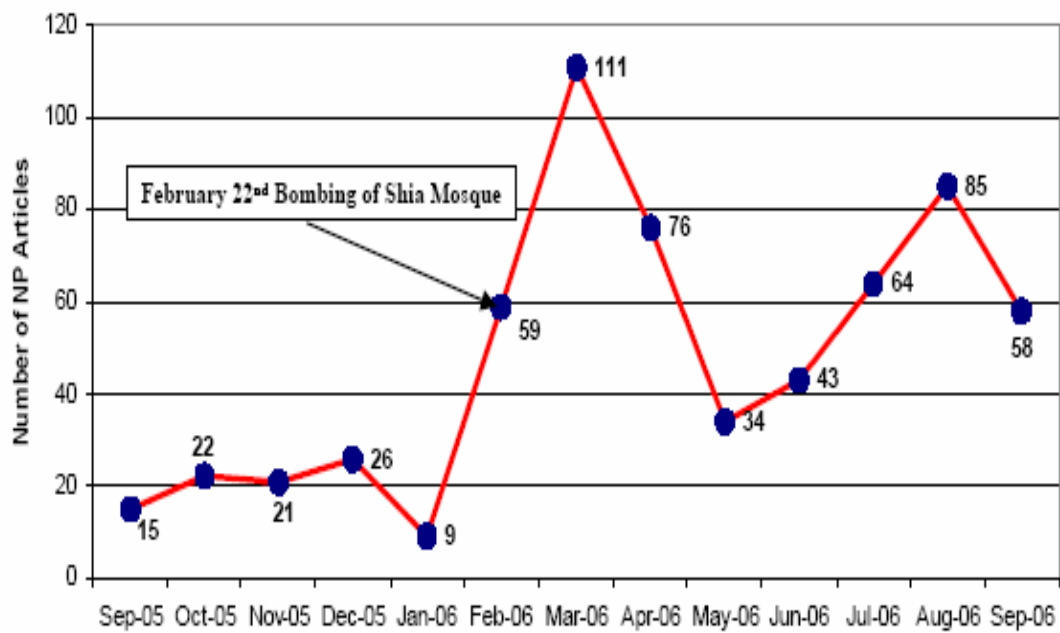
The Mean Favorability for 15 Islamic Countries is @30% .

Winners and Losers before/after “9/11”

“Losers” - Saudi Arabia dropped from 47% to 30%; Palestinian Authority dropped from 22% to 13%

“Winners” - Libya increased from 11% to 22%; Iraq from 9% to 24%.

Figure 3: Number of Monthly Newspaper Articles on Sectarian Conflict in Iraq



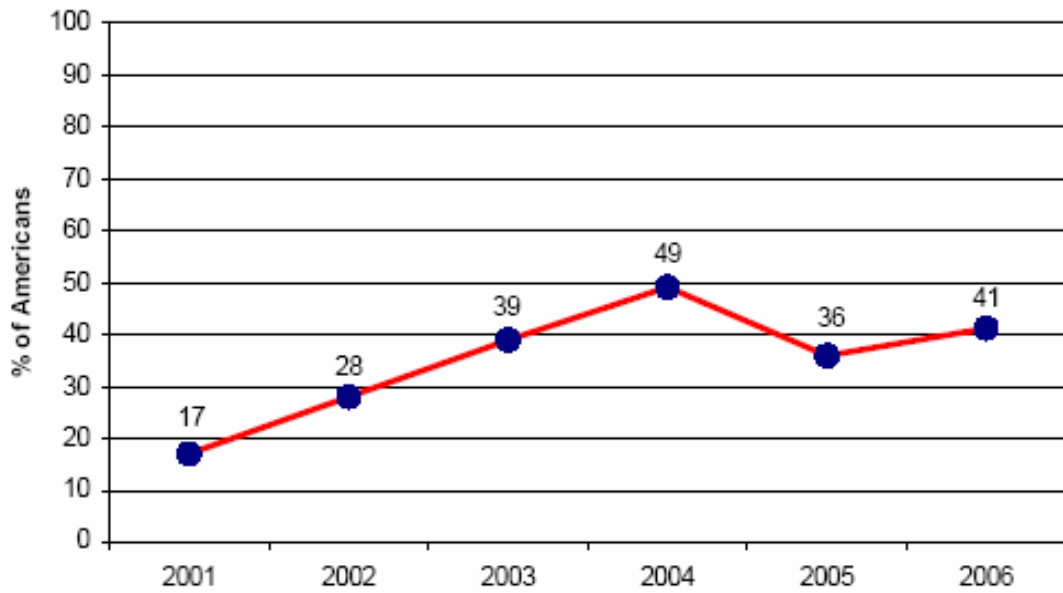
Key word Boolean search of “Iraq” and (“sectarian” or “civil war”) in headline or lead paragraph; Newspapers include *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *LA Times*, *USA Today*.

Table 2: Perceptions about Muslim

Positive traits	Cornell 11/04	pew 05/06
Tolerant	26%	28%
Respectful towards woman	17%	19%
Devout	*	67%
Generous	*	26%
Modern	21%	*
Honest	*	44%
Negative Traits		
Hateful	35%	*
Violent	49%	45%
Fanatical	43%	45%
Dangerous	47%	*
Selfish	*	27%
Greedy	*	24%
Immoral	*	19%
Arrogant	*	35%

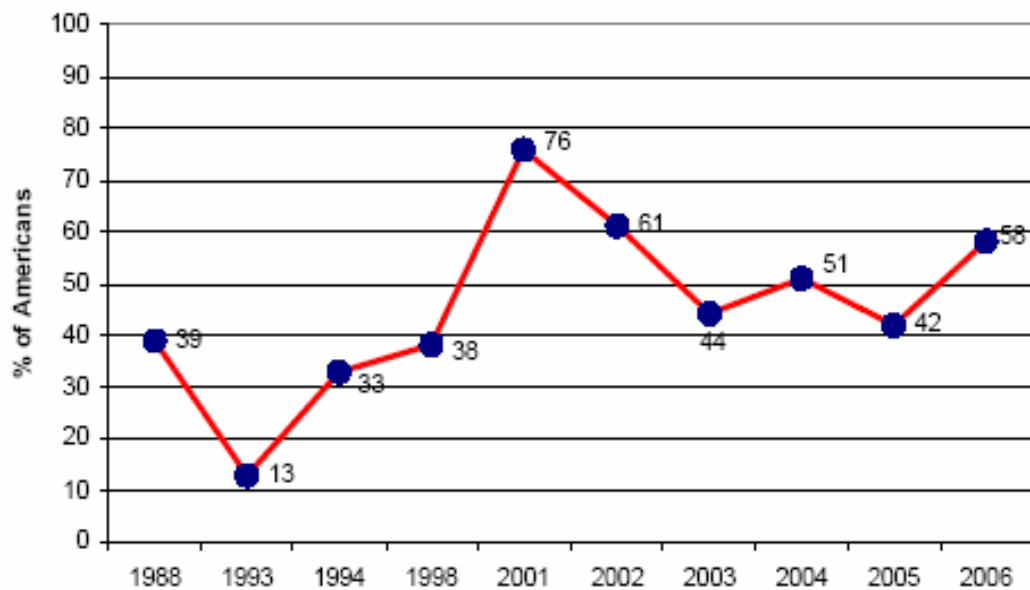
Note: reverse coded from Cornell poll which read “oppressive toward woman”

Figure 4: Percentage of Americans That Believe Islam Encourages Violence



Americans Annual averages based on 20 surveys from 2001-2006 Belief that Islam encourages or promotes violence more so than other religions has steadily risen since 2001, reaching a high in 2004, but again rising in 2006.

Figure 5: Percentage of Americans “Threatened” by Islamic Fundamentalism



Americans felt most threatened from Islamic Fundamentalism immediately after “9/11”. Since then there has been some variability immediately after “9/11” but rose again recently to 58% ,20 points higher than prior to “9/11” 2001.

Arab/Muslim Public Diplomacy Strategies Individual predispositions

Individual Predispositions

1. Promote inter-faith dialogue– both local and national
2. Emphasize common value orientations between Islam/Christianity
3. Muslim American organizations should identify, and be outspoken, on common domestic social policy stances with Christian organizations.
4. Identify/recruit credible conservative & Christian opinion leader for counter- cues.
5. Community-based, teach political educational/cultural programs that increase knowledge and social interaction of Islam

Two polls released on March 9, 2006 indicate that almost half of Americans have a negative perception of Islam and that one in four of those surveyed have extreme anti-Muslim views.

The results of the two polls – conducted by Washington Post-ABC and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)²⁷ – are not unexpected as anti-Muslim and anti-Islam campaign continues unabated since “9/11” by print and electronic media along with politicians, religious leaders as well as the government policies that have reinforced Islamophobia which may be defined as “alienation, discrimination, harassment and violence rooted in misinformed and stereotyped representations of Islam and its adherents.”

The two polls come at a time of increasingly charged atmosphere: the proposed takeover of six US ports operations by a Dubai firm; the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with little sign of ending; the election of Hamas in the Palestinian territories; and, above all, the violent protests across the Muslim world against Danish cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad.

According to the Washington Post-ABC News poll, a growing proportion of Americans are expressing unfavorable views of Islam, and a majority now say that Muslims are disproportionately prone to violence. The proportion of Americans who believe that Islam helps to stoke violence against non-Muslims has more than doubled since the attacks, from 14 percent in January 2002 to 33 percent today, the poll indicated.

The CAIR survey showed that only six percent of Americans have a positive first impression of Islam and Muslims. A majority of the respondents in CAIR's survey said they would change their views about Islam and Muslims if they

²⁷ Abdus Sattar Ghazali, “How to tackle the rising Islamophobia in US?”, *American Muslim Perspective* (AMP), March 15, 2006, http://www.amponea.ghazali.net/html/rising_islamophobia.html.

perceived that: 1) Muslims condemn terrorism more strongly; 2) Muslims show more concern for issues important to ordinary Americans; 3) Muslims worked to improve the status of women, and 4) Muslims work to improve the image of America in the Muslim world.

There can be no two opinions that Americans' attitudes about Islam and Muslims are fuelled mainly by political statements and media reports that focus almost solely on the negative image of Muslims and Islam. Politicians, authors and media commentators are busy in demonizing Islam, Muslims and the Arab world since 2001.

American Muslims have responded to the challenge with a massive outreach campaign to remove the negative image. American Muslim groups have repeatedly condemned terrorism of any kind. The (CAIR) "Not in the Name of Islam" public service announcement campaign, a fatwa against terrorism by the North American Muslim religious leaders and an online petition drive rejecting violence in the name of Islam are but a few examples.

However, the latest polls affirm that so far the intensive Muslim outreach campaign has produced little or no positive results. Why? Because there is no ease in the Islamophobia drive by media, some politicians and the establishment, now Islamophobia is not only more widespread but also considerably more mainstream and highly regarded. The events of "9/11" were used as an excuse to greatly magnify the hostility toward Muslims in the United States and cover it in pseudo - patriotism.

The panic surrounding the approval of a Dubai firm to manage six American ports demonstrates how Islamophobia was used by some politicians to force the cancellation of a normal business deal. Surely handing control of some operations at the U.S. ports to an Arab company had more to do with politics than security. Exploiting the security concerns

The intensive outreach has so far failed to make any significant depression in the biased public opinion because the government initiatives that have reshaped

public attitudes about racial profiling and created a harsh backlash against the Arabs and Muslims who are the prime targets of the post “9/11” reconfiguration of American laws, policies, and priorities.

Now take the example of high profile arrests and “terror” trials of Muslims. Americans only get a negative image from these trials where secrecy prevails. A federal judge in New York issued a highly unusual classified ruling on March 10, 2006, denying a motion for dismissal of a case against two leaders of an Albany mosque who are accused of laundering money in a federal terrorism sting operation. Because the ruling was classified, the defense lawyers were barred from reading why the judge decided that way.

The troubling results of the Washington Post-ABC and CAIR polls are not surprising in this atmosphere of fear and hatred against the Muslim community created in the name of national security. The CAIR also conducted a survey in 2005 that brought similar results. One wonders what will be the result of a poll next year if media continues an unbiased posture towards the Muslims perceived threat to national security is being used for political purposes and most of all the government continues its anti-Muslim policies here and abroad.