

Headlines:

- **Orban: Europe and Islam Don't Mix**
- **UAE Comes to Pakistan's Rescue with \$3b Bailout Package**
- **Forget Xinjiang's Re-education Camps, China's Still a Draw for Muslim Tourists**

Details:

Orban: Europe and Islam Don't Mix

With EU parliamentary elections fast approaching, Victor Orban is staking out that a Christian pitch could win over a European electorate. The last time there were European Union (EU) parliamentary elections, Brexit had not happened, Merkel had not opened the gates to more than a million refugees and Trump wasn't around. Populist right-wing forces were strong but seemed manageable. Fast forward five and years the political scene in Europe could not be more different. With EU-wide parliamentary elections fast approaching in 2019, the battle lines are being drawn, and a new coalition is emerging, and its one that wants to shape Europe in its image. Victor Orban, the Hungarian Prime Minister, is part a crop of EU leaders, alongside his Italian counterpart Matteo Salvini and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz amongst others who are seeking to reshape the EU along a more rightwing agenda. In an interview with the Austrian news portal oe24.at Victor Orban set his stall for what he sees as political overreach by Brussels; saving the "Christian identity of Europe" and halting migrants from coming to European shores. "When we joined the EU, we felt we were still free. Since then, the EU has taken a different approach. I think that's the wrong direction" said Victor Orban. In particular, Orban lashed out at what he sees as the evolution of the European Commission, the central administrative decision-making body of the EU into a "political commission". "It is not the job of the European Commission to lead the EU" Orban added arguing that sovereignty should remain with the member states who are ultimately responsible for running the EU. In 2017 Hungary took no refugees and a little over 3,000 asylum applications were filed. When Victor Orban speaks of the need to tap into and protect the Christian character of Europe he is speaking to a large constituency that resonates further afield than just his country. A recent poll by Pew found that Christian identity remains a "meaningful marker of identity" in Europe even amongst Christians who did not attend church, a fact that politicians ignore at their peril. Far from being a "nominal" aspect of who they are Christianity remains an important reference point. [Source: TRT World]

The European civilization poses a danger for Europeans and the entire population of the world. Europe needs Islam to save humankind from the evils of capitalism and democracy.

UAE Comes to Pakistan's Rescue with \$3b Bailout Package

The UAE announced a Dh11 billion (\$3 billion) bailout package for Pakistan that will help ease Islamabad's balance-of-payment crisis. This could place the country in a better position to negotiate a \$15 billion standby-agreement with the IMF early next year. In a statement, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) said it would deposit Dh11 billion in the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan hailed the UAE's decision. "I want to thank the UAE government for supporting Pakistan so generously in our testing times," Khan posted on Twitter shortly after the announcement. "This reflects our commitment and friendship that has remained steadfast over the years," he added. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi also thanked the UAE leadership and lauded His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme

Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, who is expected to visit Pakistan in January 2019 to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two countries. "We thank His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed for his generous financial support of \$3 billion. This is a manifestation of the close fraternal ties between Pakistan and the UAE which have always stood the test of time," Mahmood tweeted. The ADFD has financed eight development projects in Pakistan with a total value of Dh1.5 billion, including Dh931 million in grants. The funds covered projects in sectors such as energy, health, education and roads. Economists said timely financial assistance from the UAE and Saudi Arabia will stabilise Pakistan's economy in general and the rupee in particular besides easing pressure on Finance Minister Asad Umer, who is negotiating its 13th IMF bailout since 1980s. In late October, Saudi Arabia announced that it would offer \$3 billion to Pakistan in addition to another \$3 billion to buying oil on deferred payments. It has already transferred \$2 billion into the SBP account and the remaining \$1 billion is likely to be deposited next month. Imran Khan also secured a package during his first official visit to China early November, but financial details have not disclosed. Muzzammil Aslam, former CEO of EFG-Hermes Pakistan, said the timely financial help of the UAE will help resolve economic problems of Pakistan in general and the balance-of-payments crisis in particular. "The \$3 billion deposit commitment from the UAE has hedged Pakistan balance of payment crisis," Aslam told Khaleej Times from Karachi. [Source: Khaleej Times]

It is very unlikely that both UAE and Saudi Arabia have given \$6b for free. It remains to be seen whether Pakistan sends troops to bolster the Saudi's post war settlement in Yemen and elsewhere. The real price for taking these loans will soon be revealed.

Forget Xinjiang's Re-education Camps, China's Still a Draw for Muslim Tourists

Beijing is facing growing international pressure to close the camps, which it says are aimed at providing vocational training to stop militancy spreading following a string of attacks in recent years that it blames on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement. But some critics believe the camps are aimed at suppressing the Uygurs' religion and way of life, with many residents complaining that even everyday activities like attending a mosque have become cause for suspicion and surveillance. Despite the tensions, there is little evidence that Beijing's treatment of the Uygurs – who account for about half of the country's 22 million Muslims – is discouraging Muslim tourists like Ismailiya from visiting China. Indeed, not only is China one of the top destinations in Asia for Muslim travellers, its popularity is growing. Indonesian civil servant Farchan Noor Rachman, who runs the travel blog Efener, said the situation in Xinjiang would not stop him from visiting China. "For me as a traveller, I do not only think about one issue in my decision to visit a place." To Rachman, time and money are the determining factors. Muslim travellers spent US\$8 billion in China in 2018, twice as much as in Malaysia and Singapore and even outpacing Thailand, according to market research and certification company Salam Standard, which predicts spending by Muslim travellers to China will grow by about US\$1 billion annually. Much of the current growth is from Asian Muslims, who tend to be less concerned by reports about Xinjiang than their counterparts from the United States and Europe, according to Amina Liu, owner of US-based Halal China Tours. "The Belt and Road Initiative helps people in Asia know China better. China is close to them, it makes them curious," she says. [Source: This Week In Asia]

Muslims tourists are not only people to blame for looking the other way. The real culprits are the rulers of the Muslim world who have forsaken Xinjiang in favour for close business ties.