



**Women's Foreign Policy Group
Authors Series Event
Washington, DC
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Ayaan Hirsi Ali
Author of *Infidel*
Resident Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

Maxine Isaacs:

Thank you very much.

I'm Maxine Isaacs, the Chair of the Women's Foreign Policy Group. Before I introduce our wonderful guest this evening I want to introduce some of my fellow Board members. They are Vice Chair Gail Kitch, Dawn Calabria, Treasurer, Donna Constantinople and Susan Rappaport. I want to very briefly mention a program that we're going to be doing on May 2nd at the United Nations. It's very exciting. The new U.S. Ambassador to the UN will be our luncheon speaker. And if you're interested, please give one of us a call or go to the website.

It is my great honor and privilege to introduce Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the author of *Infidel*. If you haven't read it I know that you will because it's a phenomenal book and a phenomenal story that she tells. She says to call her Ayaan, but Ms. Hirsi Ali was born in Mogadishu, Somalia. She escaped an arranged marriage and moved to the Netherlands where she became a Parliamentarian, serving in the Dutch Parliament from 2003 to 2006. In the Parliament she worked on furthering the integration of non-western people into

Dutch society and on defending the rights of women. In 2004 with the director Theo van Gogh she made *The Submission*, a film about the oppression of women in conservative Islamic cultures. And I'm sure all of you know the tragic story of what happened to Theo van Gogh and what followed from that. He was assassinated for having made that film and our guest has been considerably endangered and threatened since that time as a result of that as well.

She is now a Washingtonian, which is wonderful. She works at the American Enterprise Institute researching the relationship between the West and Islam, women's rights and Islam, violence against women propagated by religious and cultural arguments and Islam in Europe. Ayaan Hirsi Ali was named one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in 2005, one of the Glamour heroes of 2005 and Reader's Digest's European of the year. She's also received numerous and well deserved human rights awards. And now please help me welcome our guest Ayaan Hirsi Ali. (Applause.)

Ayaan Hirsi Ali:

Thank you very much. Thank you all for accommodating me. One of the things that the Dutch told me about Americans is that they never stop working, and I've experienced this the last time that I was in the United States and on book tour. Another experience that I am having with the book tour is I am repeating my life story over and over and over again to different audiences. So what might seem exciting to you seems to me like I am a broken record. And I figured, as I always get the questions on the female genital mutilation, being forced into marriage, what happened in our household, I decided to tell a different story in my book to the audiences I meet, and that is the story of how

this book, how *Infidel* came about.

In 2001 in November I was 32 and I had just graduated from university. I had started my first job with a think tank of the Dutch Labour Party. And graduating at the age of 32 is very late. Having your first job in the Netherlands at the age of 32 is very late. But I had started university for all sorts of reasons you will read in the book at the age of 25. So ladies and the few gentlemen who are present here, let me take you back to a moment on the day that I turned 32.

I attended one of the first debates in Amsterdam regarding the 11 September 2001 attacks in New York and Washington. The debate was organized by the publishing house Van Genneep. I'm sure Cynthia Schneider, who was the esteemed Ambassador from the U.S. to the Netherlands at the time knew who they were. And the title of the evening debate was "Islam and the West: Who needs a Voltaire?" And so between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m., I listened to five of the six speakers propose a Voltaire for the West. The West, it was said, was arrogant and imperialist and cruel and took without giving. America was most evil of all and Americans under control of the Jews were responsible for all of the conflicts in the world today. It was bad, it was said, that innocent people were killed in airplanes and in buildings on the 11th of September, but if Americans did not want to be attacked again at home or abroad then Americans had to change their foreign policy. Islam was a good civilization and only a source of peace. No Voltaire was required there. Only one speaker at the debate disputed these claims. His name Afshin Ellian, an Iranian-Dutch professor, a professor at the University of Amsterdam, pleaded for a reformation of Islam and asked Muslims to embark on a process of enlightenment. I was frustrated listening to the other five speakers talk of Muslims only

as victims. I agreed with Mr. Ellian, and he was outrageously outnumbered. So when the audience was allowed to join in I stood up and supported him, and I ended my plea with “the West has countless Voltaires, please allow us just one.”

Then it was time for the break. The organizers of the event and various other intellectuals and journalists circled around me and started to question me eagerly.

“Who are you?”

I said, “I am Ayaan.”

“Ayaan who?”

“Just Ayaan. The rest of my names are difficult.” And at that time it didn’t seem appropriate to tell them my bloodline.

“Where have you come from?”

“Somalia.”

“Are you still a Muslim?”

“Of course,” I stammered, because dressed in trousers, head uncovered, holding a glass of wine in my hand, I was not a convincing picture of a Muslim.

“Well,” I shrugged, “a liberal Muslim.” And at the time I was not aware of the inconsistency in the word liberal -- the compound words liberal and Muslim.

“Where did you learn to speak Dutch so fluently?”

“Well, I have lived in Holland for almost ten years,” and at the time I thought there aren’t many places where you learn Dutch.

Then one of them came out and said, “Will you write an article for my newspaper in which you explain on your intervention about allowing you Muslims a Voltaire?”

“All right,” I said. “I will show the article first to my boss,” because that’s how

we did things at the Labour Party think tank.

The strangers circling around me continued to question me, interview me, publish my articles and weeks later the guy who first asked me to write an article introduced me to a publisher. That is in early 2002, and I think that's about March. She and I had a conversation that is not in *Infidel*. She asked me what I thought of the debate on the relationship between Islam and the West. I said, "you know, you guys," meaning the Westerners, "you have developed from stages of superstition, ignorance and cruelty to societies that put an emphasis on reason, knowledge and humanity; you have created manmade institutions and you repair and improve them as time goes by, but we Muslims haven't done that yet; we live in tribes; we long for a utopia; our dream is to build a social order based on Koran, follow the edicts of Allah and look up to the prophet Mohammad for moral guidance."

It is quite a journey, I told her, to let go of the dream of a society designed by God. "You don't understand the theory," I said, "you have to know it, you have to live it."

She asked me, "tell me how you did that; tell me about your journey?" So I told her where I was born, about my family, how we lived and how I came to Holland.

She said, "that is the book you're going to write; tell us about your own journey from being a member of a clan to how you have adapted to our society; tell us what it is still that you value in the moral framework that you got from your parents, what you don't like about your old way of life; tell us what you don't like in Holland, what you appreciate and why."

"You overestimate the Dutch person, Ayaan," she said. "No one has the time to

read through such papers. Conflicting values, you will frighten your audience with terms such as ‘empirical data,’ ‘consistency,’ and ‘conclusion.’”

“But your story will give us an insight into a world that is closed for us.” She caught onto my hand and she continued. “Do you think we know what goes on behind those closed doors in Amsterdam West? We don’t. Those curtains will open if the girls who live behind them tell us their stories. That will create awareness, questioning and eventually change. And Ayaan, that is how we Westerners changed, we told each other our intimate stories, our experiences of injustice, of brutality and we shared our methods of survival.”

My publisher stood up and gave me books written by feminists in the 20th century, books written by men who wrote in a detailed manner about what it meant to live in a state of oppression, mental oppression inflicted on them by their father at home, priests in the church and the policemen on the streets.

This was all well and good, I thought. My publisher was a persuasive woman who cared about the world. But I did not want to write a self-help book based on my life story. I thought that was pathetic. I wanted to establish myself as an academic, as a researcher. I wanted to propose a theory, set about data gathering, make a case based on consistent argument and conclusions, and move on to the next assignment. I had just graduated for God’s sake.

I felt lucky that the Wiardi Beckman Foundation, the Labour Party think tank, had asked me to look into the question why did the integration of large numbers of Muslims fail. So what did I do? I gathered anything that had been written on the subject since 1979. I concluded that most researchers overlooked the cultural and religious variables.

I looked for and found theorists who took these variables seriously. I concluded that for the integration of non-Western immigrants to be a success -- non-Western immigrants is a euphemism for Muslims -- a shift in mentality must occur from being a member of a tribe to becoming a citizen.

Education directed at this shift of mentality must be put in place, that the best place to start is by emancipating women, and that for all of the above to be successfully achieved the multiculturalist approach must be dropped. Human beings are equal; cultures are not.

For non-Western immigrants or Muslims to live by the values in the Dutch constitution, they had to discard those tribal and Islamic values that were in conflict with the rule of law. And these were the acceptance of man-made laws as opposed to divine dogma when the two clash, respect for the liberty of the individual, his property and choice of life (and especially hers), equality before the law and equal opportunity between men and women, gays and heterosexuals.

Ladies and gentlemen, there was nothing original in my articles. Everything had been said and written before. But all the same I generated great interest with my, I thought, redundant articles and interviews.

When I wondered why the works of great thinkers who were consistent, precise and eloquent were not as much in demand, the answer always seemed to be, "but they are men, and worse still, they are middle aged, and worst of all, they are white." If I still look puzzled after such remarks, then the female or young male with unwashed hair who asked for the interview would be kind enough to elaborate and say, "you know, they tend to be racist; be careful they don't use you as a ventriloquist for their abhorrent ideas."

Besides my publisher there were my ever-decreasing Muslim friends and family. They said, “you are selling out; don’t hang the dirty laundry outside; you are like a Bounty.” And Bounty, you know, is a brand of chocolate in the Netherlands. The inside is white and the outside is chocolate.

“Defend the rights of women, but never bring it in connection with Islam,” is what my father told me when fellow Somalis complained to him. And others told me, “You only want to be liked by the white people,” and so forth. When I pointed out, you’re confusing race with religion, that went unnoticed. When I pointed it out I was told again, you are imitating the white men. I left Holland and Europe with the impression that in the 21st century, no misfortune is greater than being male, middle aged and white, and very soon you here in the U.S. might start a charity to rescue them.

This is the background to the telling of the story of *Infidel*. Nowhere in Europe can an immigrant on the left side of matters, and that is where I am, join in a debate on the most pressing issues of our time without having to either join in a chorus of victimhood, we, the immigrants, especially those who are Muslim are victims of racism, Islamophobia, imperialism, and most recently colonial feminism; pity us. And let’s bring in our most backward beliefs and practices under the banner of multiculturalism or pay and perish because your forefathers were slave traders, colonizers and racists, or, we should make public every detail of our lives in order to convince our peers. So instead of going towards academia, I write *Infidel*.

“Talk about your journey to the West, try and recall your childhood. Tell it so that we can understand it. Put a face to the statistic, 140 million women who have undergone genital mutilation is too much to stomach. One woman among us whom we

see, relate to, who is one of us having undergone that terrible experience will move us into legislation perhaps.”

But then I asked, “what about the United Nations records, the immigration numbers, scholarly works, the numerous NGOs helping in these countries, what about the number of victims of honor killings in Holland, France, the U.K.? What would the story of one more person add to all those numerous stories?” My friends convinced me that my story would be a story with a face, the story of someone who we know, someone who made the journey and succeeded in becoming one of us with no mental or social despair. And thus I was elevated, catapulted from being a recent graduate to being an icon, but an icon of what?

In debating Islam and the treatment of women within Islamic nations, my friends need a Muslim, preferably a woman, to agree with or to disagree with. The current debate on Islam in the West is not about the left and the right. It’s not about the conservatives and the progressives or liberals. To me in Europe it seems that it is a debate within the left. And I serve the purpose of an icon or perhaps a measure of some sort; on which side of me do you find? If you radically agree with Hirsi Ali, you are an extremist. If you radically disagree with Hirsi Ali, you are an extremist too.

I often recall the evening on Islam in the West and “Who Needs a Voltaire.” What if I hadn’t opened my mouth? What if I had just defended the good things about Islam?

In *Infidel* you will read about my journey from a tribal Islamic life to my fourteen years in Holland as a resident and a citizen, my journey of emancipation from the pressing fear of hell, from the stifling social control of the family and the clan, my

journey towards becoming an individual and perhaps most interestingly of all, my sexual self-emancipation.

It is one story, and as life stories go it's very subjective. It's not about empirical data but about likes and dislikes, about prejudices and learning to discard them, about the frightening adventure of putting aside the model framework that my parents gave me and adopting those of the "Great Satan" summarized in the motto, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Thank you. (Applause.)

Question:

I'm Marcia Wiss from Hogan and Hartson. I also teach at Georgetown. Given the fact that you're left of center, why are you at the American Enterprise Institute?

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

That's a very good question. Why? By the way, there is also a trend. I started with the Labour Party on the left in the Netherlands and when I would mention the position of Muslim women in the Netherlands my Labour friends would tell me, "but we can't do that, we have to take and attend to the entire group of people, all the non-Western immigrant groups must be emancipated together."

And specifically discussing the oppression of women within minority communities or individuals within minority communities had become for left-wing parties, left-wing movements, very, very difficult as the idea of multiculturalism had been put forward implemented.

I'm not saying that that's the same in the United States. I don't know very much about the United States. Next to you, by the way, is the woman who took me to the American Enterprise Institute.

So before we go to the story of the U.S. I think the story in Europe was -- and I'm not the only one. There are more and more Muslim women and Muslim men who first, like all of us, started out with the left or the liberals and who are now moving to the more conservative parties because they listen, because they respond, because we think that they understand and hear us.

And then the story of how I came to the United States -- I explained to Cynthia in, what was it, the spring of 2005, that I wasn't going to be a candidate for the elections in 2007 in May if the cabinet lasted that long and that I wanted to go look for some academic place here in the United States.

We went to Georgetown. We went to Johns Hopkins Institute. We went to the RAND Corporation. We went to the Brookings Institution. And then Cynthia said, "I'm going to take you to my friend at the American Enterprise Institute," and I cringed. And you said, "Don't be so prejudiced." (Laughter.) And I met this guy called Norm Orenstein.

The answer is they responded and they are responding to this issue. And the conservatives in the United States, Republicans, this is a mainstream party. In Europe you have right-wing, anti-Semitic, Nazis, anti-immigrant parties hijacking the debate on immigration and Islam on the one side and on the other side radical Islamist groups that only want to use violence or indoctrinate young men into taking on a violent role, hijacking the same debate, and the mainstream parties, the labor parties, the liberal

parties, the other conservative parties abandoning that holding. And I think that's more tragic than here in the U.S.

Question:

I'm just interested in your views on multiculturalism. We have a big debate going on in Australia as well, and there are a number of radical organizations for instance that are preaching some rather dogmatic principles that created a lot of angst within the community. What is your answer? Is it for them to be kicked out of the country, to be kicked out and the citizenship revoked? What is your answer to that?

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

My answer to that is that immigration is a voluntary process. I was not forced to go to the Netherlands. I went to the Netherlands seeking a better life. And I assume that every individual that abandons his homeland and everything and moves either to the U.S., Australia or Europe from a Muslim country is in search of a better life.

And I think the answer is not to create borders and lock them and say we don't need immigrants and so on and so forth but to negotiate with those individuals who are coming in that the countries that they come to, the better life that they're seeking has been established based on a set of values and principles, and to make these people promise, just like they're going to abide by the law, to at least understand, learn those values or not act in violation of those values.

I've been to a ceremony in the United States of the nationalization of Christopher Hitchens, and I saw that he took an oath and what it meant to become an American

citizen. When I took my citizenship of the Netherlands I was asked if I had two passports, 500 guilders and if I could prove that I had been in the country legally for five years. As I had all three things, I just got my passport. It was much harder getting my driver's license. Being a student, it was much harder getting a bottle of wine from the grocer. It was really such an easy thing. So to individuals who are coming in from countries where these values are things that you don't take for granted, if you don't explain it to people -- and if on the other hand because of this multiculturalism issue you tell them, "it's okay, you can keep your values and so on," and then from one day to the next you say, "you can't," people experience that as being unfair, singling them out, and that's exactly what the radical Islamists wanted to do.

Patricia Ellis:

Can I just follow up on that? How would you compare the policy in the Netherlands with France where everyone who comes in is supposed to be, and they know, become French, and that is their argument about the veil and everything? And then, since you have been here and living here, besides attending this ceremony, how can you contrast what it's like?

Obviously you're in a very special situation, but if you could, just give us your feelings at looking at what the situation is like for immigrants. We have so many of them coming from all over the world.

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

Yes. Well, on the question of France and the French attitude towards immigrants,

the French will say, if you are coming to the Republic, you are just a citizen of the Republic, it really doesn't matter what your color is, it doesn't matter what your religion is; what counts is you are a citizen of the Republic or a subject of the Republic. The thing is the French just never enforced it and never practice it. They were preaching republicanism and practicing multiculturalism. They allowed these banlieues to be built where immigrants would go to, and they would happily house them there. They had no immigration plan. Actually I think it's someone like Sarkozy who is introducing one or wants to introduce one.

And I think that is the combination of just saying things like we are republicans and you are a member of the Republic, that's not going to help issues. They did not practice it. There were no facilities for that. The French, they just have a certain approach to economy, the 35-hour work week, you can never fire anyone, all these things, all supposedly civilized and so on, is a detriment not only to their own youth but mostly affects in a very negative way immigrants.

Addressing that issue means for any politician, for the media, for everyone, that you are going to annoy the unions. The unions and the politicians get into this impasse. And in France you have a demonstration or you have -- I know I'm making a caricature of that, but the story of the immigrants in France is far more complicated than just them saying that you are a member of the Republic. I think you are not.

And then Europe and the U.S., my observation, which is a superficial one, and you are right, my immigration from Europe to the United States is a very luxurious one. I cannot say that I've been in the asylum-seeker centers if you have one in the United States. I don't know what it is to sneak through a border or to try to sneak through a

border between Mexico and the U.S. I don't know what it is to spend years and years in this country as an illegal immigrant cleaning people's houses and being unsure of your life. I don't know all of that. I haven't spoken to any of those immigrants. But from what I observe, in the luxurious way that I came into this country and compare it to the debate that is going on in Europe, it's that it seems as if Americans debate the issue which is less complex than in Europe, but they debate in a very mature way. When I read the newspapers discussing the fact that maybe you should give illegal immigrants who have been in the country for that many years citizenship, that alone is such a mature approach of saying, we have to solve this problem.

We need borders, but how much of a border? Building a wall, is that the answer? No, that's not the answer. That kind of debate is not the sort of debate that I am used to in Europe. And you know, if you have people sitting across from each other calling themselves racists and xenophobes and ending the debate in a very emotional way, what is not working for you is that it's not. In the U.S., whatever you decide, you're going to have a federal law so that for any immigrant it's clear, whether he's in California or in New York or in the center of the country, that law applies to him.

In the EU now you have 23 countries with 23 different visa policies, immigration policies, naturalization policies, border policies and so on. I can't make head or tail of it. The only good news is because the situation has become now very, very serious, we are probably moving towards -- and I don't know if that's going to be implemented well -- but moving towards more and more countries saying there should be an EU immigration policy, and an EU border policy.

Question:

I'm Pauline Baker. I'm with The Fund for Peace which is a nonprofit organization and I also teach at SAIS, the School of Advanced International Studies. I saw you recently on a TV program with Steve Colbert. My question goes to some comments you made there on Islam and how you characterize Islam. It sounded like your comments where you said, all people are equal but not all cultures. And it seemed to me that your comments on that show were summarizing Islamic stereotyping as a less worthy culture, a less worthy civilization and not talking about fundamentalist interpretations of Islam and more liberal interpretations of Islam. And you still say you are a Muslim, and obviously a liberal Muslim, so what do you mean when you say, "not all cultures are equal"?

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

When I say not all cultures are equal, I mean, for instance, that the Western culture is superior to the Islamic culture. What we have come to call Western, and I am against it, what we have come to call Western culture, actually is universal human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

And if you see the people today who, within the United Nations are trying to edit that declaration, they are the Arabs, Muslims, and they want to -- at least they are arguing in terms of Islam, like it doesn't agree with Islam, this group doesn't -- we want to edit it this way, the Chinese -- they want to devise a certain code of human rights that is only applicable to their own people. A culture that has produced that, saying that editing human rights so that some of us are more equal than others, to me, if I take other criteria -

- human rights -- is inferior to a culture that goes out there into those countries defending those universal individual human rights.

When I talk about Islam I always try to make a distinction between Islam as a doctrine such as Christianity as a doctrine or communism as a doctrine, liberalism as a doctrine, as a body of ideas, and Muslims. And I acknowledge that Muslims as individuals are varied. You will find an individual who is liberal, an individual who doesn't care about whatever political issue of the day is in discussion, another individual who is very radical and will take a lot of what Islam is. But Islam as a body of ideas is definitely not compatible with the human rights. And that's -- if we take the yardstick of human rights, it's not compatible with that. We can be clear on that, and I think we can -- the evidence at least today as it is obvious, it just shows that Islam as a body of ideas is not compatible. It is bad for women. It is bad for the human being. It is bad for imagination, bad for science and therefore bad for progress.

Question:

Then why are you still a Muslim?

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

I'm not a Muslim. I've become an infidel. I was born a Muslim.

Question:

I'm Claudette M. Christian from Hogan and Hartson. Ayaan, your remarks were very interesting. You mentioned honor killings and we seem to be reading more about

them, whether they're in Brooklyn, New York, Toronto or Amsterdam. And I want to help. How can the West reconcile in our criminal justice system these killings which are often deemed religious or cultural?

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

Yes, thank you very much. I think by going back to such -- if you as a liberal, the sort of liberalism that I have come to accept as the best possible, not perfect, but the best possible, having or providing the best possible recipe for human beings to live together in peace, takes as its starting point the individual. The problem with multiculturalism and other collectivist theories is they take the group or the culture as a starting point.

The thing with honor killings is if you take the individual as your starting point, you're going to say, "we don't care about your religion, we don't care about your culture, you're not going to kill this person and if you do kill this person you're going to have to deal with the law, you will go to court and to jail."

Now my experience in the Netherlands, I don't know about the U.S. yet, is we discovered that an honor killing was plotted by more than the person who actually committed the killing. So you have a whole family gathering, following a girl, spying on her, establishing that yes, she had committed a crime, she had held hands with a boy, she kissed him, she took a sip of alcohol and so on, and all of these adding up and the family sitting together and coming together to the conclusion that she should be killed because that's the only way to cleanse the honor.

Not only do they make the decision but they also point out who is going to do the killing. And according to Dutch law if you are a minor the punishment you get for killing

a person is nil. So the family among themselves would point out the youngest son, 16, 17, 18. That person would be then given the gun and so on. And in all the court cases in which -- up to today -- that is changing, but up to today, the only persons who are punished for an honor killing were the ones who pulled the trigger or put the knife into the girl and all the others got away with it.

And I think as globalization goes on, as immigration goes on, as cultures intermingle, it is up to Western societies to have the foresight to anticipate that such cultures are coming and to make sure that first of all people are educated on the law and that second, that not only the individual who pulled the trigger is punished, but everyone else who is involved.

Question:

Cynthia Schneider from Georgetown University and the Brookings Institution. Ayaan, could you talk a little bit about your work in Parliament, trying to change the laws and actually set up societal structures to help Muslim women in the Netherlands? Because you know, I think it's so funny when you say one culture is not as much to be esteemed as another culture. You know, we all sort of gulp and think, "well, no, no, we're not supposed to say that," you know, and we're going to find the good stuff, and there's got to be a way here that they can all be equal.

And maybe a more useful way to look at it is, what does this really mean in terms of people's lives, just particular practices and what you concretely did to try to change that because that also had an impact on your decision about what you're going to do with the rest of your life.

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

Yes. I'll start with, first of all, how the rule of law helped me to defend myself against my own culture. I left an arranged marriage. When my husband came looking for me, Sylvia, the social worker at the asylum-seeker center told me that you can go to the police. So for the first time in my life I was in an environment where I could actually appeal to the state to defend me against a norm within my culture, a family norm.

Now having internalized that, I became an interpreter a year or two later. And I interpreted for Somali Muslim women and the hospital, the policemen, women's shelters and so on, and the stories would always be -- I just always ended up with this bad taste in my mouth when there is a conflict between a woman and her husband or a girl and her father that when the father says, "it's my culture to remove a girl from school," or to force her into marriage or to stop her from going outside, or "she didn't ask for permission" or he would beat her. When he said, "it's my culture," or "it's my religion," the social worker, the teacher and so on, would say, "I can't do anything about this; I'm going to call a mediator from someone from within your culture," and in that way abandoning the true victim. So that is from my point of view.

What I did in Holland was I tried to concentrate on three things in Parliament. And one was to create awareness for the existence of this type of cultural and religious dogmas within the country and the girls, the sort of girls they affected, little girls that were genitally mutilated on the kitchen table or taken away in the summer and mutilated elsewhere.

Not only the honor killings but the process leading to an honor killing we just

talked about, the gathering and what did the girl do. And almost all the time the families would argue she has become westernized. So you have a girl appealing to the state and appealing to the equal rights article in the constitution and being turned away because her culture is different and not being served by the law.

So first there is that awareness. Then there is philosophical clash of course between what the government proposes to do and what it actually does. And then changing or creating measures to educate the police, the teachers, the neighbors on, say, protecting these girls, creating a safe haven for them, helping them complete their educations when they run away from home, creating an alternative social network and ultimately trying to punish the perpetrators, because if it doesn't go you have to have the carrot and stick, which in Europe is very, very difficult.

The stick is difficult; the carrot is not difficult, getting a stick out and saying, "you can't just take your wife to Morocco and leave her there and get another wife and make use of the same law, make use of revocability of freedom and equality to suppress and oppress women and young girls."

Question:

I'm Kathleen El Maaroufi. I am an American but I'm married to a Moroccan. My husband was the former Moroccan Ambassador to the United States. And so I've lived a lot of years in the Muslim world, but when you talk about honor killings or genital mutilation, that's really not Islamic. I can understand your objection to those and why Western societies, the United States or Europe, should not allow those to go on because they're culturally important but illegal. But is that Islamic? I mean it may be Islamic --

African Islam is sometimes different or in some countries Islam -- but in the Koran for example there's no reference to the right of honor killing nor is there any on genital mutilation.

Ms. Hirsi Ali:

Genital mutilation and honor killings are not written in the Koran. They have not been as far as there are any records of what the prophet Mohammad said, who is a guide to every Muslim today, there is no record of him saying, "engage in honor killings," or "practice female genital mutilation." But what you will find in the Koran and what you will find in the Hadith, the sayings and doings of the prophet Mohammad, is "flog the adulterer and the adulteress 100 times." That is the Koran. And in the Hadith, "stone them," and then the precise procedure for stoning. And there is this emphasis on virginity before marriage and trying to prevent a woman from becoming an adulterer, and by the way, also a man, even though men are allowed to have more than one wife. That's the theory.

In practice, as the prophet himself gave the example of, the policy of whether a woman engages in adultery or loses her virginity before -- whether virginity is lost, whether people don't engage in premarital sex or not, it's done through the woman. In the Koran, she has to stay in her house, lower her gaze, confine herself to her house, and if she must leave the house, a girl or a woman must ask for permission; a girl, her father, a woman, her husband.

And this all goes on. And then comes the moment. The same sort of following and spying on men is not there as you have noticed during your years in Muslim

countries. It's only girls and women who are in this way kept. Islam was founded -- having become an atheist comfortably now I can say -- culture is not the product of religion but religion is the product of culture. Islam was founded in an Arab tribal culture. The concept of honor, which you will find in the Koran many times, is elevated to that. If you look at female genital mutilation, the countries where female genital mutilation is practiced, you will see that even though it predated Islam and communities have practiced and still practice it that are not Islamic, that it is prevalent in Muslim countries. And that is, if you go from Indonesia to Somalia to Egypt to parts of Saudi Arabia, parts of Iraq, the only reason that is given is virginity, to ensure the virginity. So the Islamic dogma insisting on no premarital sex and ensuring the virginity of the girl, if that is taken out of the way, the practice will disappear.

And I do understand that most Muslims will defend Islam to their last day but then if they don't want to link the dots then it's up to us women who born into it or who are brought into it to link those dots and say we don't want to have anything to do with it.

Ms. Isaacs:

Okay. I'm really sorry that I have to cut this off, but let's give Ayaan a wonderful round of applause. (Applause)