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Denmark recalls diplomats over cartoons

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13 February, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Denmark recalls diplomats over cartoons

In spite of reassurances from Jakarta, the Danish government has withdrawn its ambassador and aides to Indonesia citing security reasons. This comes amid “credible and concrete threats” of reprisals against Danish nationals in the wake of an outpouring of protest against the controversial publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad in Danish newspapers. Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said he was at pains to understand the withdrawal, which he termed as “hasty”, especially given the increased level of protection afforded Denmark’s diplomatic staff. The Danish government reported it would return to Jakarta once political sensitivities had quelled. A spokesman refused to be drawn on the issue of a government apology over the cartoons.

The cartoons, which were first published and caused offence back in September, have triggered angry protests in cities around the globe and have caused great offence to many Muslims. It has indeed further embroiled the Muslim and Christian worlds into yet another battle of ideologies. On the one hand, the Danish cartoonists maintain anything is “fair game” in satire, while Muslims see the caricatures of the Prophet with a time bomb above his head as profane and insulting to the entire Islamic world. The usual suspects have taken the usual sides in the ensuing debate, with Britain’s Tony Blair and President George W. Bush calling the publications unfortunate but going no further. Now would seem an appropriate time to recognize that a whole religion has been affronted and that the Western concept of free speech may need boundaries.

WARM-UPS

1. ANGRY: Talk about the times in the past week or two where you have become angry. What happened? How angry did you get? What were the reasons? What were the reactions? Were there any resolutions?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Jakarta / Denmark / ambassadors / protests / cartoons / hastiness / apologies / causing offence / Muslims / Christians / satire / caricatures / profanity / free speech

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. FREE SPEECH: For which of these subjects do you think there should be rules regarding free speech? Is it OK for anyone to say anything about these subjects??

- God
- Religion
- Kings and queens
- National secrets
- Ruling and opposition leaders
- Racism
- War
- Other

4. OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions on the Danish cartoons?

- a. They are a storm in a teacup.
- b. Yet another example of Christians trampling over other religions.
- c. The Danish government should apologize to the world's Muslims.
- d. A UN convention should be made to provide international rules on free speech.
- e. Free speech is too valuable to give up, even at the expense of offending religions.
- f. The whole world should boycott Danish goods.
- g. Muslims and Christians will never see eye to eye.

5. OFFENCE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "offence". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Denmark has recalled its diplomats from Copenhagen. | T / F |
| b. There are credible and concrete threats of reprisals against Danes. | T / F |
| c. Indonesia's foreign minister said the Danes left at a leisurely pace. | T / F |
| d. The Danish government said it is soon to issue an apology to Muslims. | T / F |
| e. The cartoons were initially published back in September. | T / F |
| f. Muslims and Christians are embroiled in a battle of ideologies. | T / F |
| g. George Bush and Tony Blair have made great efforts to calm things. | T / F |
| h. It may be time to put a boundary on Western free speech. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. citing | confines |
| b. concrete | rash |
| c. reprisals | mired |
| d. hasty | calmed |
| e. quelled | retribution |
| f. embroiled | alluding to |
| g. profane | insulted |
| h. ensuing | blasphemous |
| i. affronted | material |
| j. boundaries | resulting |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. In spite of | to the entire Islamic world |
| b. credible and | to understand the withdrawal |
| c. in the wake of an outpouring | religion has been affronted |
| d. he was at pains | of protest |
| e. refused to be drawn | reassurances from Jakarta |
| f. It has indeed further embroiled | in the ensuing debate |
| g. profane and insulting | may need boundaries |
| h. taken the usual sides | concrete threats of reprisals |
| i. time to recognize that a whole | the Muslim and Christian worlds |
| j. the Western concept of free speech | on the issue |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Denmark recalls diplomats over cartoons

In spite of _____ from Jakarta, the Danish government has withdrawn its ambassador and _____ to Indonesia citing security reasons. This comes amid “credible and _____ threats” of reprisals against Danish nationals in the wake of an _____ of protest against the controversial publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad in Danish newspapers. Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said he was at _____ to understand the withdrawal, which he termed as “hasty”, especially given the increased level of protection _____ Denmark’s diplomatic staff. The Danish government reported it would return to Jakarta once political sensitivities had _____. A spokesman refused to be _____ on the issue of a government apology over the cartoons.

concrete
drawn
reassurances
afforded
outpouring
quelled
aides
pains

The cartoons, which were first published and caused _____ back in September, have triggered angry protests in cities around the globe and have caused great offence to many Muslims. It has indeed further _____ the Muslim and Christian worlds into yet another battle of _____. On the one hand, the Danish cartoonists maintain anything is “fair game” in _____, while Muslims see the caricatures of the Prophet with a time bomb above his head as _____ and insulting to the entire Islamic world. The usual _____ have taken the usual sides in the ensuing debate, with Britain’s Tony Blair and President George W. Bush calling the publications unfortunate but going no further. Now would seem an _____ time to recognize that a whole religion has been _____ and that the Western concept of free speech may need boundaries.

affronted
ideologies
suspects
profane
offence
appropriate
embroiled
satire

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Denmark recalls diplomats over cartoons

In spite of _____ from Jakarta, the Danish government has withdrawn its ambassador and aides to Indonesia citing security reasons. This comes amid "_____ and concrete threats" of reprisals against Danish nationals in the wake of an _____ of protest against the controversial publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad in Danish newspapers. Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said he was at _____ to understand the withdrawal, which he termed as "hasty", especially given the increased level of protection _____ Denmark's diplomatic staff. The Danish government reported it would return to Jakarta once political sensitivities had _____. A spokesman refused to be drawn on the issue of a government apology over the cartoons.

The cartoons, which were first published and caused _____ back in September, have triggered angry protests in cities around the globe and have caused great offence to many Muslims. It has indeed further _____ the Muslim and Christian worlds into yet another battle of _____. On the one hand, the Danish cartoonists maintain anything is "fair game" in satire, while Muslims see the _____ of the Prophet with a time bomb above his head as profane and insulting to the entire Islamic world. The usual suspects have taken the usual sides in the _____ debate, with Britain's Tony Blair and President George W. Bush calling the publications unfortunate but going no further. Now would seem an appropriate time to _____ that a whole religion has been affronted and that the Western concept of free speech may need _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'concrete'** and **'threat'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "CARTOONS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the cartoons.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|---------|---------------|
| • spite | • September |
| • amid | • embroiled |
| • wake | • hand |
| • pains | • debate |
| • hasty | • unfortunate |
| • drawn | • boundaries |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you think the boycott of Danish produce is justified?
- c. Do you think the withdrawal of Danish ambassadors from embassies is too hasty?
- d. Do you understand the anger of Muslims over this issue?
- e. Do you think the Danish government should apologize to Muslims?
- f. Are there things that need to be excluded from free speech?
- g. Would you like to be a diplomat?
- h. Should governments do more to protect the foreign diplomats on their soil?
- i. Do you think it's OK to poke fun at other people's religion and religious symbols?
- j. Do you think there needs to be a UN resolution on free speech and religious intolerance?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think the cartoonists knew they would be creating so much tension in the world?
- d. How angry would you feel if your religion, people or culture were ridiculed by others?
- e. Do you think the cartoon issue is little more than a storm in a teacup?
- f. Do you think Western leaders really understand Islam and Muslim people?
- g. Why do you think Americans and Europeans believe they have the final say on what is right and wrong in this world?
- h. Do you think people are responsible enough to have free speech?
- i. How do you think the cartoon issue will develop?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

INSULTS: In pairs / groups, talk about how you would react if someone insulted the things in the table. Is this different from how you think you should react?

	REACT	SHOULD REACT
Your God / Religion		
Your parents		
Your country		
Your nose		
Your nations monarch or leaders		
Your favorite sports team		
Other _____		

Change partners / groups. Tell each other what your previous partner(s) said.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find information about this story. Look at views from both the Muslim press and non-Muslim press. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. FREE SPEECH: Write the new United Nations Convention on Free Speech. Include in it what can be the subject of satire, humor, criticism etc and what cannot. Show your convention to your partner(s) in your next class. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter from the Danish government addressed to all Muslims. Explain in it why your government can or cannot issue an apology over the publication of the cartoons. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. T f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. citing | alluding to |
| b. concrete | material |
| c. reprisals | retribution |
| d. hasty | rash |
| e. quelled | calmed |
| f. embroiled | mired |
| g. profane | blasphemous |
| h. ensuing | resulting |
| i. affronted | insulted |
| j. boundaries | confines |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. In spite of | reassurances from Jakarta |
| b. credible and | concrete threats of reprisals |
| c. in the wake of an outpouring | of protest |
| d. he was at pains | to understand the withdrawal |
| e. refused to be drawn | on the issue |
| f. It has indeed further embroiled | the Muslim and Christian worlds |
| g. profane and insulting | to the entire Islamic world |
| h. taken the usual sides | in the ensuing debate |
| i. time to recognize that a whole | religion has been affronted |
| j. the Western concept of free speech | may need boundaries |

GAP FILL:

Denmark recalls diplomats over cartoons

In spite of **reassurances** from Jakarta, the Danish government has withdrawn its ambassador and **aides** to Indonesia citing security reasons. This comes amid "credible and **concrete** threats" of reprisals against Danish nationals in the wake of an **outpouring** of protest against the controversial publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad in Danish newspapers. Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said he was at **pains** to understand the withdrawal, which he termed as "hasty", especially given the increased level of protection **afforded** Denmark's diplomatic staff. The Danish government reported it would return to Jakarta once political sensitivities had **quelled**. A spokesman refused to be **drawn** on the issue of a government apology over the cartoons.

The cartoons, which were first published and caused **offence** back in September, have triggered angry protests in cities around the globe and have caused great offence to many Muslims. It has indeed further **embroiled** the Muslim and Christian worlds into yet another battle of **ideologies**. On the one hand, the Danish cartoonists maintain anything is "fair game" in **satire**, while Muslims see the caricatures of the Prophet with a time bomb above his head as **profane** and insulting to the entire Islamic world. The usual **suspects** have taken the usual sides in the ensuing debate, with Britain's Tony Blair and President George W. Bush calling the publications unfortunate but going no further. Now would seem an **appropriate** time to recognize that a whole religion has been **affronted** and that the Western concept of free speech may need boundaries.