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MILITANTS ASSASSINATE PAKISTAN'S MINORITY MINISTER

The Taliban claims responsibility for killing the Cabinet's only Christian Minister Shahbaz Bhatti.

MY COMMENT: IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS MURDERED A MUSLIM LEADER LAST MONTH FOR SUPPORTING THE ELIMINATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR BLASPHEMY. BHATTI WAS NOT KILLED BECAUSE HE WAS CHRISTIAN BUT BECAUSE HE TOO, SUPPORTED THE REMOVAL OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR BLASPHEMY.

THIS EXPLAINS, IN PART, HOW ISLAM IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS VICELIKE GRIP OVER THE PEOPLE.

An Islamic expert tells Channel 4 News he's "deeply distressed" at the situation in the country. 42 year old Mr Bhatti, the Minister for Religious Minorities, is the second top official killed this year for opposing a controversial blasphemy law.

He had just left home on his way to work in a residential area of Islamabad when three gunmen surrounded his car and sprayed it with at least 25 bullets. Eyewitnesses and police said the gunmen dragged Mr Bhatti out of his car and shot him several times before escaping in a white Suzuki.

Mr Bhatti was taken to the nearby Shifa Hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival. He had been shot eight times and his driver was also seriously injured.

Earlier, Pakistani TV channels showed pamphlets at the scene of the killing that were attributed to the Pakistani Taliban warning of the same fate for anyone opposing the blasphemy law.

MY COMMENT: I WOULD HAVE AGREED THAT ONLY THE TALIBAN SHOULD BE BLAMED FOR THESE MURDERS - EXCEPT THAT - MORE THAN ONE POLL IN PAKISTAN HAS SHOWN THAT THE MAJORITY OF PAKISTANI MUSLIMS SUPPORT THE DEATH PENALTY FOR BLASPHEMY. SO THE PEOPLE, THEMSELVES, SUPPORT THE KILLERS.

One of the world’s leading Islamic scholars - the Oxford Univeristy professor Tariq Ramadan- told Channel 4 News he was deeply distressed and worried at the situation in Pakistan. He said that this is not the way of Islam, it is crazy, it is mad, and it is a case where religion has been politicised by leaders in the country. The religious leaders in the country need to condemn these actions in the most vociferous of manners."

MY COMMENT: BUT IF THEY DO, THEN THEY TOO RUN THE RISK OF BEING MURDERED BY THE SUBHUMAN PIECES OF CRAP THAT CARRIED OUT THE KILLINGS.

Ramadan added that, whereas the people of North Africa and the Middle East are rising up for freedom, there seems to be a very worrying state of affairs in Pakistan. This is a descent into madness.

MY COMMENT: NO ONE EVER SAID IT WAS GOING TO BE EASY. MANY MUST DIE TO FREE HUMANITY FROM THE CONTROL OF EVIL HUMANS.

RELIGION IS ONLY PART OF THAT EVIL, BUT, IT IS A BIG PART.

Mr Bhatti - who headed the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance - had previously requested extra security after receiving a number of death threats after he vowed to reform the blasphemy law. Shots had also been fired at his house in Islamabad by unknown assailants.

Police Chief Wajid Durrani insisted that the Minister had been provided with proper security but said he was not accompanied by his security detail when the attack happened. Security has now been stepped up on all main roads in Islamabad

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani visited the hospital and offered condolences to Mr Bhatti's grieving relatives. "Such acts will not deter the government’s resolve to fight terrorism and extremism," he said, adding that the killers would not go unpunished."

A spokesman for President Asif Ali Zardari expressed similar sentiments by saying, that this is a concerted campaign to slaughter every liberal, progressive and humanist voice in Pakistan."

In London, Prime Minister David Cameron said it shows what a huge problem we have in our world with intolerance.

MY COMMENT: MR. PRIME MINISTER, YOU LEFT OUT, THAT WE ALSO HAVE A HUGE PROBLEM IN OUR WORLD ... WITH "ASSHOLES."

"I will send not only our condolences but our clearest possible message to the government and people of Pakistan that this is simply unacceptable.”

The Foreign Secretary, William Hague, called it a cowardly attack on a democratically elected Government Minister and an attempt by extremists to silence free speech and debate in one of the world’s largest democracies.

He added, "Mr Bhatti’s death is a tragic loss for Pakistan and for all people who believe in human rights and freedom of speech."

The Vatican called the murder of the politician "unspeakable” and said it was worried for Pakistan's estimated five million Christians. Meanwhile the two most senior figures in the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and the Archbishop of York John Sentamu, called on Pakistan’s government to protect minorities.

This further instance of sectarian bigotry and violence will increase anxiety worldwide about the security of Christians and other religious minorities in Pakistan, and we urge that the government of Pakistan will do all in its power to bring to justice those guilty of such crimes and to give adequate protection to minorities.

Mr Bhatti had been a vocal opponent of the controversial blasphemy law along with the liberal governor of Punjab province, Salman Taseer, who was shot by his own bodyguard in January.

The governor had backed a private member's bill in parliament by Sherry Rehman to amend the blasphemy law in an attempt to make miscarriages of justice less likely and remove its death penalty.

Death threats

After Mr Taseer's assassination, Bhatti said he was also receiving death threats, telling reporters that he was "the highest target right now." But he had insisted that he would not be intimidated. Mr Bhatti said "I cannot trust security ... I believe that protection can come only from heaven, so these bodyguards can't save you."

MY COMMENT: THERE IS A NAME FOR PEOPLE WHO RELY ON HELP FROM HEAVEN TO SAVE THEM ...

THEY ARE REFERRED TO AS "THE DEARLY DEPARTED."

Pakistan's law against blaspheming Islam carries the death penalty. While no one has ever been executed, thirty people who’ve been accused have been lynched by mobs.

MY COMMENT: THOSE WOULD BE THE MOBS THAT WE ALWAYS SEE ON TV CARRYING THE SIGNS THAT SAY, "ISLAM - THE RELIGION OF PEACE."

Ten blasphemy cases were reportedly heard in court in the 58 years between 1927 and 1985, but since then more than 4,000 cases have been handled.

MY COMMENT: BEFORE YOU CHRISTIANS GET TOO SMUG AND LOOK DOWN YOUR NOSES AT MUSLIMS, GOOGLE BLASPHEMY AND YOU WILL LEARN THAT THE LAST PERSON CONVICTED IN AMERICA FOR BLASPHEMY WAS CONVICTED ... IN THE 20th CENTURY. BUT NO, HE DIDN'T GET THE DEATH PENALTY.

The law has been in the spotlight since November when Christian mother of five Aasia Bibi was sentenced to hang for making derogatory remarks about the Prophet Mohammed. Bibi was set upon by a mob, arrested by police and sentenced on November 8.

Politicians and conservative clerics have fiercely debated whether Bibi should be pardoned. But following Taseer's death, the government has made it clear it does not support reform of the blasphemy law.

MY COMMENT: SO IT ISN'T JUST THE TALIBAN TO BLAME. THEY MERELY ENFORCE THE LAWS THAT THIS SICK SOCIETY BELIEVES IN. AN ENTIRE NATION LIVING IN THE 10th CENTURY. HOW UTTERLY PATHETIC. NOW YOU KNOW THE REAL PRICE OF RELIGION.

Critics of the blasphemy law say it is being abused to persecute minorities during personal disputes. Before his death Mr Bhatti had worked to form inter-faith projects to try and resolve disagreements.

MY FINAL COMMENT: THAT LAST SENTENCE SHOWS JUST HOW VALUABLE A MAN BHATTI WAS. HE REPRESENTED THE FUTURE WHILE PAKISTAN IS MIRED IN THE PAST.

THIS ARTICLE MAKES ONE WONDER WHY SOME PEOPLE HAVE SUCH A DIFFICULT TIME UNDERSTANDING THAT WE EVOLVED FROM BARBARIC APELIKE CREATURES. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE THAT SO MANY ARE STILL ... BARBARIC APELIKE CREATURES.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT #1

ARGENTINE ANT GENOME SHEDS LIGHT ON A SUCCESSFUL PEST

A RESEARCH TEAM LED BY SCIENTISTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, AND SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY HAS UNLOCKED THE GENETIC CODE OF THE HIGHLY INVASIVE ARGENTINE ANT, PROVIDING CLUES AS TO WHY THIS SPECIES HAS BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL.

THE GENOME OF THE ARGENTINE ANT -- THE TINY BROWN INSECT THAT HOMEOWNERS SO FREQUENTLY FIND MARCHING EN MASSE THROUGH THEIR KITCHENS -- IS AMONG A TRIO OF ANT GENOMES BEING PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL, PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES. THE OTHER TWO ANT SPECIES ARE THE RED HARVESTER ANT AND THE RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT.

IN ADDITION, THE GENOME SEQUENCE OF A FOURTH ANT, THE LEAF-CUTTER ANT, IS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLICATION IN THE JOURNAL, PLOS GENETICS.

AMONG THE FOUR ANT GENOMES BEING REPORTED, THE ARGENTINE ANT AND THE FIRE ANT, BOTH NATIVE TO SOUTH AMERICA, HAVE ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES IN REGIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, WREAKING HAVOC WITH THE NATIVE BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE WAY.

THE ARGENTINE ANT IS A SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN BECAUSE OF ITS ENORMOUS ECOLOGICAL IMPACT. WHEN THE ARGENTINE ANTS INVADE, THEY DEVASTATE THE NATIVE INSECT COMMUNITIES WHILE PROMOTING THE POPULATION GROWTH OF AGRICULTURAL PESTS. THIS GENOME MAP WILL PROVIDE A HUGE RESOURCE FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED IN FINDING EFFECTIVE, TARGETED WAYS OF CONTROLLING THE ARGENTINE ANT.

IN ALL, THE RESEARCHERS MAPPED 216 OUT OF 251 MILLION BASE PAIRS AND 16,344 GENES IN THE ARGENTINE ANT. THE HUMAN GENOME HAS ABOUT 3 BILLION BASE PAIRS AND ABOUT 23,000 GENES.

COLONIES OF ARGENTINE ANTS IN THEIR NATIVE HABITAT ARE TERRITORIAL AND AGGRESSIVE, HELPING TO KEEP THEIR POPULATIONS IN CHECK. IN CONTRAST, PREVIOUS RESEARCH REVEALED THAT INVASIVE POPULATIONS OF ARGENTINE ANTS ARE GENETICALLY SIMILAR, CONSIDERING EACH OTHER FRIENDS RATHER THAN FOES. IN THE UNITED STATES, THIS HAS ALLOWED GROUPS TO FORM ONE ENORMOUS "SUPER-COLONY," STRETCHING HUNDREDS OF MILES ALONG THE COAST OF CALIFORNIA. INSTEAD OF FIGHTING EACH OTHER, THE INVASIVE ANTS FOCUS THEIR ENERGIES ON CONQUERING OTHER INSECT SPECIES, INCLUDING NATIVE ANTS.

IN 2009, NORMALLY FRIENDLY ANTS WERE TURNED INTO HOSTILE COMBATANTS BY COATING THEM WITH CHEMICALS KNOWN TO TRIGGER AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR. THAT LINE OF RESEARCH COULD BE AIDED BY THE NEW GENOME MAP, HELPING RESEARCHERS UNDERSTAND AND MANIPULATE GENES TO INTERFERE WITH MATING, BREAK UP THE SUPER-COLONY, DEVELOP REPELLANTS OR SIMPLY ATTRACT ANTS TO A TRAP.

THE GENOME SEQUENCE REVEALED THAT ARGENTINE ANTS HAVE A HUGE NUMBER OF GENES FOR SENSORY RECEPTORS, INCLUDING 367 FOR ODOR AND 116 FOR TASTE.

ANTS ARE GROUND-DWELLERS, WALKING ALONG TRAILS, AND FOR MANY, LIVING MOST OF THEIR LIVES IN THE DARK, SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT THEY WOULD HAVE DEVELOPED KEEN SENSES OF SMELL AND TASTE. BY COMPARISON, THE HONEYBEE HAS 174 GENES FOR ODOR AND 10 FOR TASTE, AND THE MOSQUITO HAS 79 GENES FOR ODOR AND 76 FOR TASTE.

THE ARGENTINE ANT GENOME ALSO POSSESSES A LARGE NUMBER OF CYTOCHROME P450 GENES, WHICH ARE IMPORTANT IN DETOXIFYING HARMFUL SUBSTANCES. ARGENTINE ANTS HAVE 111 SUCH GENES, WHILE EUROPEAN HONEYBEES, IN COMPARISON, HAVE 46.

THE RESEARCHERS ATTRIBUTE THE RELATIVELY HIGH NUMBER OF CYTOCHROME P450 GENES IN THE ARGENTINE ANT TO THE LARGER VARIETY OF TOXINS THE SPECIES ENCOUNTERS IN ITS BROAD AND VARIED DIET. STUDYING THESE GENES COULD ALSO HELP RESEARCHERS DETERMINE IF THE ANTS ARE EVOLVING RESISTANCE TO PESTICIDES.

WHEN THE RESEARCHERS LOOKED AT A FAMILY OF GENES ASSOCIATED WITH IMMUNITY, THE ARGENTINE ANT GENOME HAD A RELATIVELY MODEST COUNT OF 90 GENES COMPARED WITH 152 FOR THE FRUIT FLY. THIS WAS SURPRISING, THEY SAID, GIVEN HOW ARGENTINE ANTS ARE PACKED INTO CROWDED, CLOSE QUARTERS, AND IN THE CASE OF INVASIVE POPULATIONS, HAVE A FAIRLY HOMOGENEOUS GENE PROFILE. SUCH FACTORS ARE TYPICALLY CONDUCIVE TO THE SPREAD OF PATHOGENS, YET THE ARGENTINE ANT POPULATIONS HAVE REMAINED ROBUST.

IT MAY BE THAT THE ARGENTINE ANT HAS MECHANISMS TO PREVENT DISEASE THAT ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF HONEYBEES -- WHICH HAVE ONLY 78 COMPARABLE IMMUNE GENES -- SUCH AS FREQUENT GROOMING AND THE QUICK REMOVAL OF DEAD BODIES FROM THE COLONY. THEY ADDED THAT GENES FOR ANTI-MICROBIAL CHEMICALS MAY YET BE IDENTIFIED.

WHILE THE SEQUENCED GENOME PROVIDES HOPE FOR AN EFFECTIVE WEAPON AGAINST THE ARGENTINE ANT, RESEARCHERS CAUTION AGAINST THE EXPECTATION OF A QUICK OR EASY FIX.

IN BIOLOGY, THE IDEA IS THAT ONCE SCIENTISTS KNOW THE GENOME OF A PEST SPECIES, THEY CAN COME UP WITH A MAGIC BULLET OR SMARTER BULLET TO DEFEAT IT. IN REALITY, THE GENOME IS REALLY JUST INFORMATION; THEY NOW HAVE TO PUT THAT INTO ACTION, AND IN ORDER TO DO THAT, THEY MUST GENETICALLY MANIPULATE ANTS TO CONFIRM IF A TARGET GENE DOES WHAT THEY THINK IT DOES. HAVING A GENOME IS LIKE BEING HANDED A BIG BOOK WITH A BUNCH OF WORDS THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND. NOW THEY HAVE TO FIGURE OUT THE GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX.

BUT THE GENETIC CODE PROVIDES VALUE BEYOND THE EFFORT TO COUNTER THE ARGENTINE ANT. THE ADDITION OF MORE ANTS TO THE GENOME LIBRARY ALSO HELPS EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGISTS AND GENETICISTS UNDERSTAND THE SPECIAL CASTE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL INSECTS. ANTS, LIKE THE EUROPEAN HONEYBEE WHOSE GENOME WAS SEQUENCED IN 2006, THRIVE IN A CASTE SYSTEM IN WHICH THE WORKERS IN A COLONY LIVE TO SERVE THE QUEEN, WHO IS THE ONLY INDIVIDUAL THAT CAN REPRODUCE.

THE IDEA THAT THERE ARE FEMALE WORKERS IN ANT SOCIETIES THAT DON'T REPRODUCE WAS HARD FOR DARWIN TO UNDERSTAND. IS THAT DESTINY SOMEHOW ENCODED IN THE ANT'S GENOME? NOW THAT SCIENTISTS ARE ABLE TO COMPARE THE GENOMES OF ANTS AND BEES, SPECIES THAT ARE EVOLUTIONARILY DISTANT, THEY CAN SHOW THAT CASTE IS NOT GENETICALLY DETERMINED AND FOCUS ON HOW DIFFERENT EXPRESSION OF THE SAME GENOME CAN RESULT IN EITHER WORKERS OR QUEENS.

THE MOST RECENT QUARTET OF ANT GENOME PAPERS FOLLOWS THE AUGUST 2010 SEQUENCING OF THE FIRST TWO ANT GENOMES: THE JERDON'S JUMPING ANT AND THE FLORIDA CARPENTER ANT. THE ARGENTINE ANT AND FIRE ANT PAPERS ARE THE FIRST GENOME SEQUENCES OF GLOBALLY INVASIVE ANT SPECIES.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER (1840 –1910) 69 YEARS.

HE WAS AN AMERICAN ACADEMIC AND PROFESSOR AT YALE COLLEGE. FOR MANY YEARS HE HAD A REPUTATION AS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL TEACHERS THERE. HE WAS A POLYMATH WITH NUMEROUS BOOKS AND ESSAYS ON AMERICAN HISTORY, ECONOMIC HISTORY, POLITICAL THEORY, SOCIOLOGY, AND ANTHROPOLOGY. HE IS CREDITED WITH INTRODUCING THE TERM "ETHNOCENTRISM." SUMNER IS OFTEN SEEN AS A PROTO-LIBERTARIAN. HE WAS ALSO THE FIRST TO TEACH A COURSE ENTITLED "SOCIOLOGY."

"THE CRITICAL FACULTY ... IS OUR ONLY GUARANTEE

AGAINST DELUSION, DECEPTION, SUPERSTITION AND MISAPPREHENSION

OF OURSELVES AND OUR EARTHLY CIRCUMSTANCES."