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September 30, 2006

Muslim world sees Jewish conspiracy in papal comments

New York, Sep. 29, 2006 (CNA) - A report from the Jewish Anti-Defamation League (ADL) claims that cartoons and editorials published in the Arab/Muslim world are claiming Pope Benedict XVI's comments at the University of Regensburg were part of a Jewish anti-Islamic conspiracy.

ADL National Director, Abraham Foxman, said that conspiracy theorists are claiming that, "Pope Benedict XVI is being manipulated by Jews to attack Islam."

Foxman's ADL website shows several cartoons from Arabic newspapers which make the conspiracy claims based upon the misunderstood words of Pope Benedict in which he recently quoted a 14 th century Byzantine emperor.

The quotes of the emperor, which the Holy Father has insisted do not speak for the Church's stance on Catholic-Muslim relations, came in the middle of an argument the Pope was making for increased dialogue between the West and Islam. Several Islamic clerics and politicians, however, have only quoted portions which seem to show Pope Benedict attacking the prophet Mohammed.

In addition to the cartoons, the ADL says it has found "a growing trend in editorials and opinion-pieces in the Arab/Muslim media that claim the Pope's statements should not surprise anyone, since they are the long-lasting natural discourse of international Zionism against Islam."

"Some maintain that after September 11 a new Rome was erected, one that aims at converting Christianity and God to Judaism under the watchful eyes of the evil American-Israeli alliance that was established by the international Zionism, which eventually seeks to enflame a full confrontation between Islam and Christianity," the ADL press release continued.

The ADL sited Bahraini newspaper, Akhbar Al-Khalij, as the leader in publishing cartoons claiming Jewish control of the Pope and a Jewish-Christian conspiracy against Islam.

But it also acknowledged, "such anti-Semitic, anti-Christian conspiracy arguments" as appearing in widespread daily newspapers, including the Egyptian Al-Gomhuriyya, the Jordanian Ar-Rai and Qatari Al-Watan.

Foxman called on Islamic religious and political leaders of good will to publicly denounce and reject these false assertions of Jewish control of the Pope and to reject violence against Christians and Christian institutions as an unacceptable form of protest. "Religious leaders have a special responsibility to show their followers that there are non-violent ways to express their opinions and disagreements," he said.

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