

Michelle Malkin Cooks Up Terrorist Donuts

Even the world of celebrity fashion is not spared by the Islamophobic smear machine.

In May 2008, right-wing blogger Michelle Malkin (see *The Smearcasters* – http://www.smearcasting.com/smear_malkin.html) accused celebrity chef Rachael Ray of sporting a "regular adornment of Muslim terrorists" (**Town Hall**, 5/28/08) in a Dunkin' Donuts ad. In the ad, Ray wore a black-and-white scarf resembling a keffiyeh, a traditional item of Arab clothing. Malkin characterized Ray's scarf as a "jihadi chic keffiyeh" and a symbol of "murderous Palestinian jihad" (**MichelleMalkin.com**, 5/23/08; **Town Hall**, 5/28/08).

Actually, as anthropologist Ted R. Swedenburg of the University of Arkansas noted (**NationalPost.com**, 11/07), "Historically, the keffiyeh was an unremarkable, very conventional clothing customarily worn over the head by Palestinian and other Arabs to protect their head and sometimes their faces from the elements." While it does have associations with the "current Palestinian situation," Swedenburg said, "to say it is a symbol of terrorism is to say that all Palestinians are terrorists."

Yet a symbol of terrorism was precisely what Malkin turned this common article of Arab clothing into (**Town Hall**, 5/28/08): "Popularized by Yasser Arafat and a regular adornment of Muslim terrorists appearing in beheading and hostage-taking videos, the apparel has been mainstreamed by both ignorant (and not-so-ignorant) fashion designers, celebrities and left-wing icons." The blog **Little Green Footballs** (5/23/08) published a post headlined "Mainstreaming Terrorism to Sell Donuts."

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the scarf was not even a keffiyeh, but the campaign still cowed its target into submission. Dunkin' Donuts announced in a statement (**Boston Globe**, 5/28/08): "In a recent online ad, Rachael Ray is wearing a black-and-white silk scarf with a paisley design. It was selected by her stylist for the advertising shoot. Absolutely no symbolism was intended. However, given the possibility of misperception, we are no longer using the commercial."

Malkin responded (5/28/08): "It's refreshing to see an American company show sensitivity to the concerns of Americans opposed to Islamic jihad and its apologists." Others might find a word other than "refreshing" to characterize pulling an ad because it was mistakenly thought to include a clothing item associated with a particular ethnic group.