



PRESS RELEASE

The Danish Cartoons Issue

- ❖ Although the knowledge of the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad is very widespread (99.7%), only 1% heard about them in September 2005 when they first appeared. A mere 31% have actually seen the cartoons.
- ❖ 24% believe Denmark is a friend of the Palestinians, 42% believe Denmark holds a neutral position, while 34% view Denmark as an enemy of the Palestinians.
- ❖ 7% believe Denmark is friendly to Islam, 34% believe it holds a neutral position, while 59% view Denmark as an enemy to Islam.
- ❖ Only 4% believe that the Danish government has been acting appropriately in their efforts to solve the cartoon issue.
- ❖ Although 86% believe that the reactions that have emerged against Denmark are justifiable, equally large majorities are opposed to the attack on the EU offices in the Gaza Strip (82%) or TIPH in Hebron (88%), while 93% disagree that Western civilians should now become legitimate targets.
- ❖ 37% believe that the most appropriate way to protest against the cartoons is a combination of peaceful means, including boycott of products, stopping diplomatic ties, peaceful demonstrations, refusing Danish humanitarian assistance, and taking the issue to Danish courts. 8% believe the most appropriate way to protest against the cartoons is by using all means, including violence.
- ❖ While 52% believe that the issue of the Danish cartoons will calm down, only 41% feel that the situation should calm down.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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The results will be available in detail and with cross-tabulations by Tuesday 14 February 2006 at 12 noon on the following site:

<http://www.neareastconsulting.com>



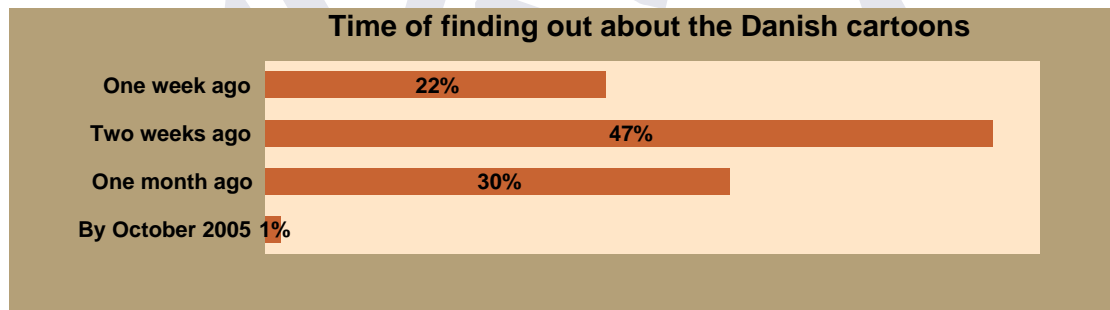
The Danish Cartoons Issue

Methodology

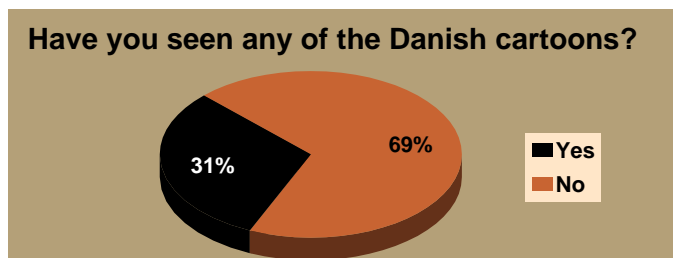
During the period 9-11 February, 2006, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a phone survey of over 1,300 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem of which 702 were successfully completed. The survey covered a number of issues related the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad such as Palestinians knowledge about the cartoons, their opinions about the violent reactions in the Muslim world as a result of the reprinting of the cartoons, the opinions about the Danish government's handling of the issue, and opinions on the most appropriate manner to deal with the cartoon issue. It is worth noting that 60% of households in the Palestinian territories have phone connectivity. Previous surveys conducted by the researchers at NEC do not show much difference in the attitudes between households who own phone lines and those who do not. Finally, the margin of error is +/- 3.7% with a 95% confidence level.

Knowledge about the Danish cartoons

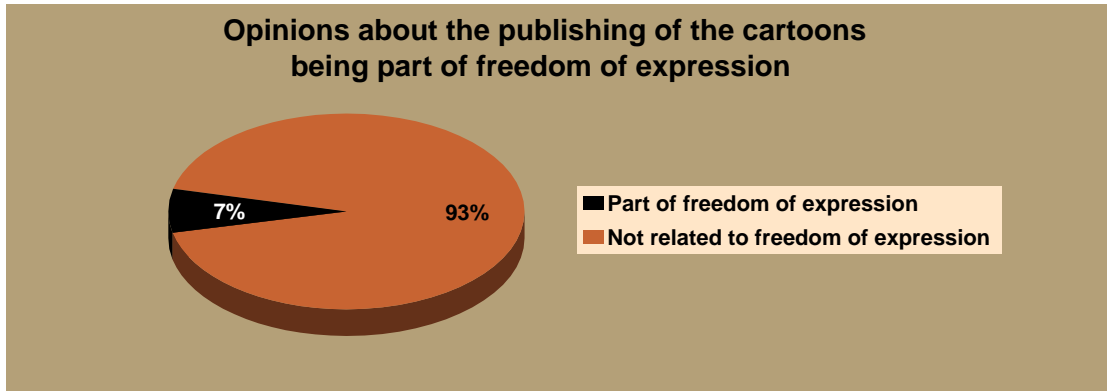
Knowledge about the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad is very widespread as only 2 respondents in the sample had never heard about them. However, very few respondents (1%) knew about the cartoons at the time they actually appeared in September 2005. As indicated in the figure below, most respondents found out about the cartoons recently at a time when the cartoons were reprinted in various countries around the world.



In addition and despite the intense reactions against the publishing of the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, the majority of 69% of the respondents have not actually seen any of these depictions.

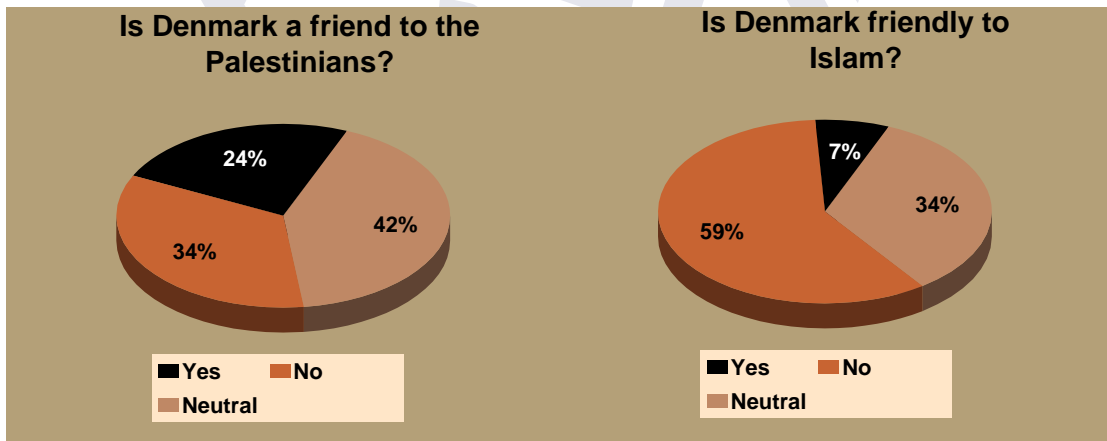


Supporting the argument that the intense reactions against the cartoons are mainly principle-based is the finding that a large majority of the respondents (93%) believe that the cartoons are in no way related to the principle of freedom of expression. A mere 7% acknowledge that the publishing of the cartoons are part and parcel of the right of freedom of expression.

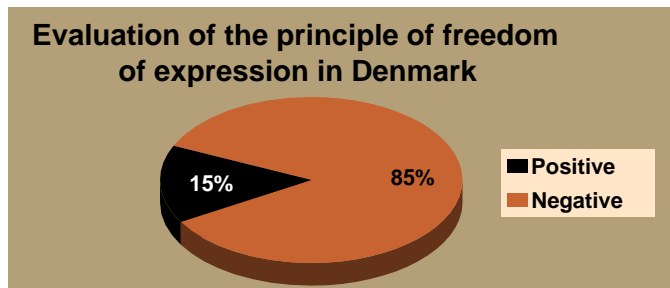


Opinions about Denmark

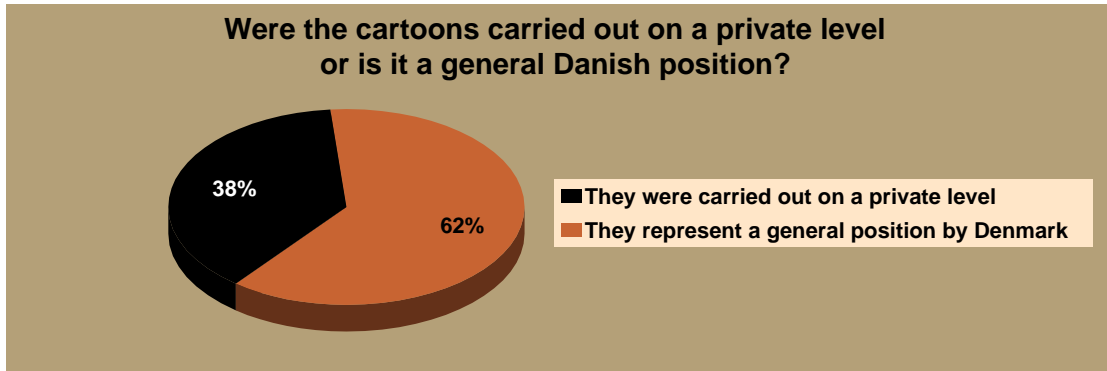
Respondents were both asked if they consider Denmark to be a friend to the Palestinians and whether or not they believe Denmark to be friendly to Islam. The results overviewed in the figure below indicate that a larger portion of Palestinians consider Denmark a friend of the Palestinians (24%) than they believe Denmark to be friendly to Islam (7%). Similarly, a larger percentage of Palestinians believe that Denmark holds a neutral position towards the Palestinians (42%) than it does towards Islam (34%). According to the survey, 59% consider Denmark to be an enemy of Islam.



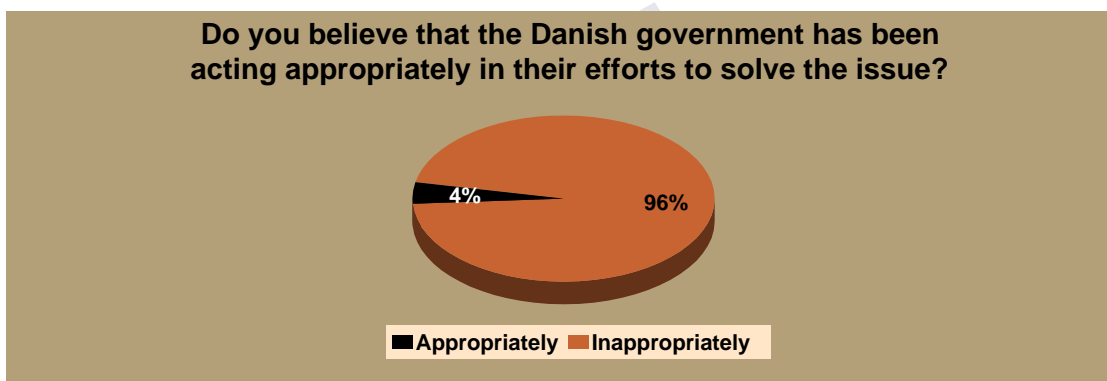
In light of the cartoon issue, the majority of 85% of the respondents evaluate the principle of freedom of expression in Denmark negatively. As indicated below, only 15% of the respondents view the principle of freedom of expression in Denmark positively.



The majority of 62% of the respondents do not believe that the publishing of the Danish cartoons were merely a private initiative by a Danish newspaper, but are convinced that the cartoons also represent the general position of Denmark.

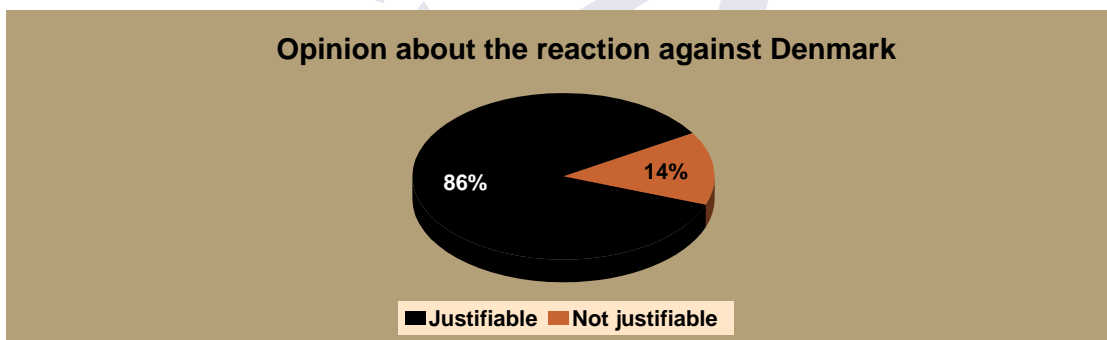


In addition, a nearly absolute majority of 96% of the respondents are of the opinion that the Danish government was unable to solve the cartoon issue appropriately.

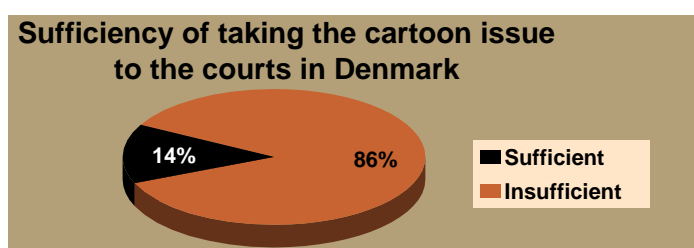


Opinions about the reactions to the Danish cartoons

In general, 86% of Palestinians believe that the reactions that have emerged in the past few weeks against Denmark as a result of the cartoon issue are justified.

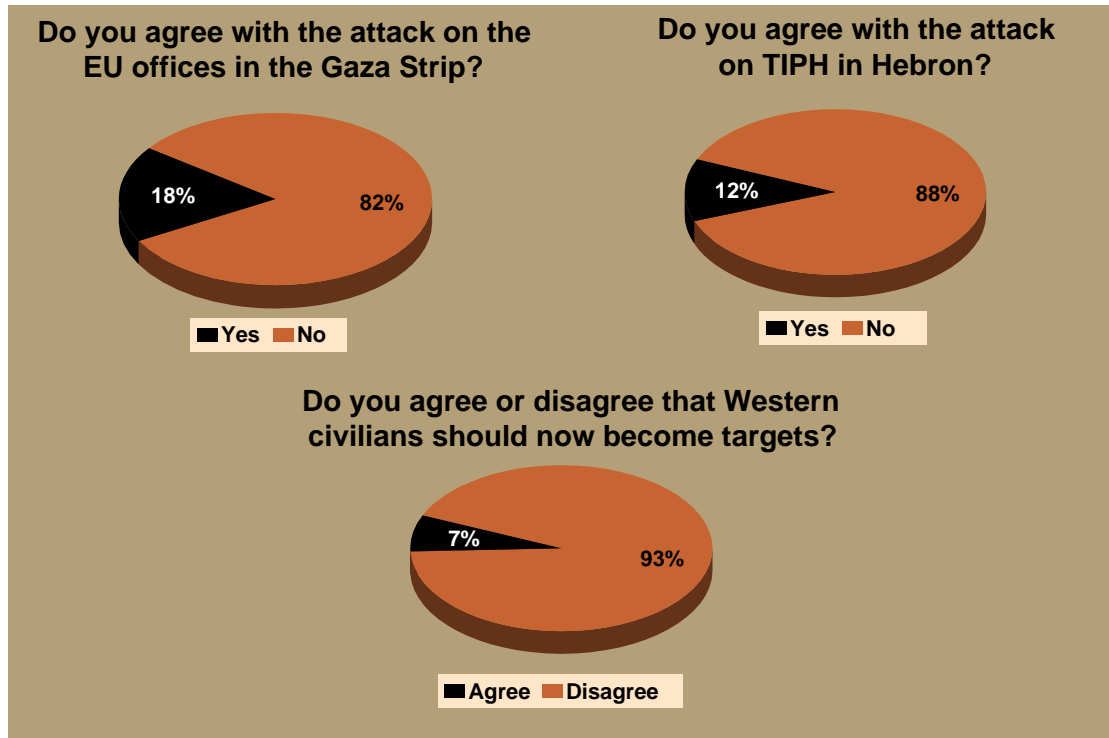


An equal percentage of respondents (86%) believe that taking the cartoon issue to the courts in Denmark is insufficient as a potential course of action with the aim to settle the controversy.

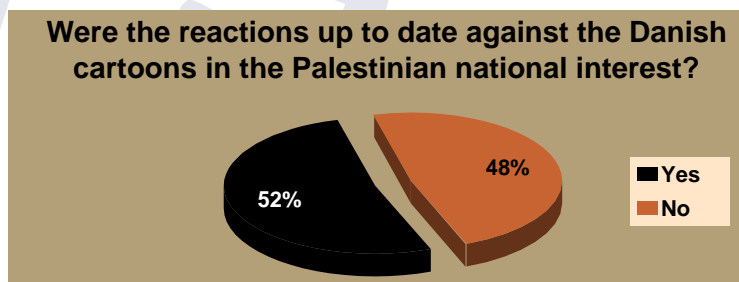




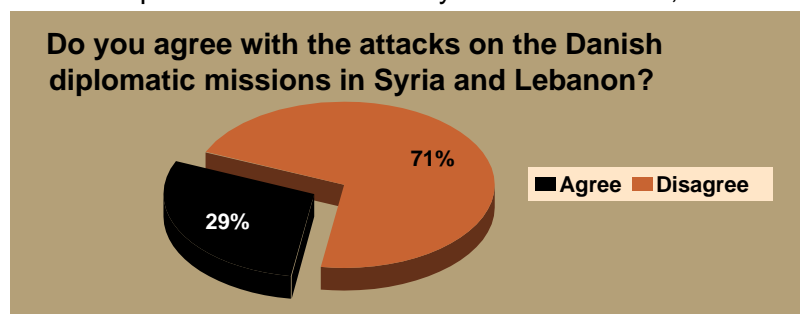
Respondents were also queried about their opinions about the attacks last week on the EU offices in the Gaza Strip and the TIPH in Hebron. As illustrated in the figure below, a large percentage of Palestinians are against the attacks against those offices. In general, 82% are against the attacks on the EU offices, while 88% disagree with the attacks on the TIPH in Hebron. In addition, when asked about whether or not, given the current situation, Western civilians should now also become targets, 92% of the respondents stated that they are against such actions.



Still, when asked about whether or not respondents believe the reactions to date against the cartoons were against Palestinian national interest, a small majority of 52% believe that it is in Palestinian national interest.



As for the attacks on the Danish diplomatic missions in Syria and Lebanon, 29% of the respondents agree with those attacks, which indicates that support for violent attacks outside the Palestinian territories is wider than support for violent attacks within the Palestinian territories.

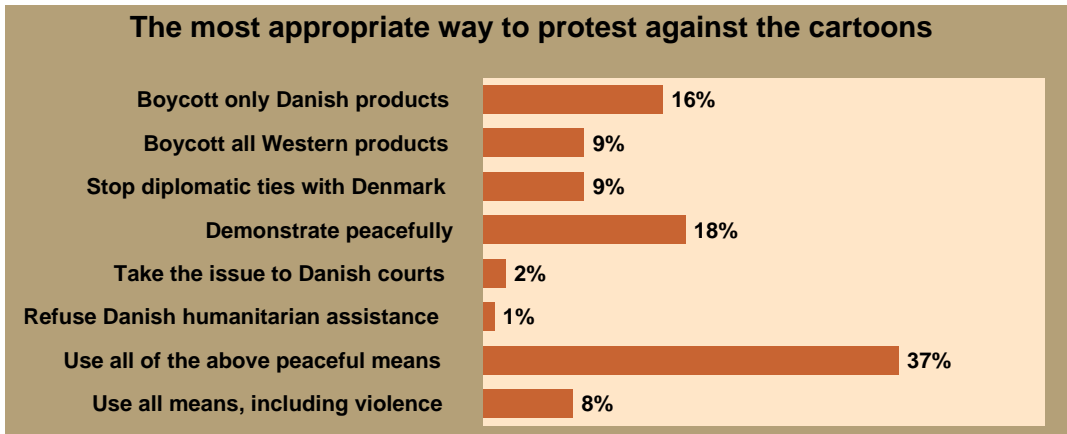


Besides the opinions about the recent attacks on several international offices, interviewees were queried about what in their opinion is the most appropriate way to

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and knowledge into practice.*



protest against the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. As overviewed in the figure below, 37% find it the most appropriate way to protest the cartoons by using a combination of peaceful means, 18% believe it to be most appropriate to demonstrate peacefully, while 16% find it most appropriate to concentrate their protest on solely boycotting Danish products. In addition, 9% want to protest the cartoons through boycotting all Western products, another 9% want to stop diplomatic ties with Denmark, while a mere 2% believe that taking the cartoon issue to Danish courts is the most appropriate way to protest. Lastly, only 1% of the respondents said that the most appropriate way to protest against the cartoons is to refuse Danish humanitarian assistance, while the remaining 8% of the respondents believe that all means should be used to protest the cartoons, including violence.



Opinions about future developments as a result of the Danish cartoon issue

In an attempt to capture in which way the current tension could evolve in the future, interviewees were asked two specific questions: (1) Will the issue of the Danish cartoons calm down or cause a further rift between the Muslim world and the West?, and (2) Should the current situation be calmed down or should it be intensified?. The results overviewed in the figure below, indicate that although a slight majority of the respondents (52%) believe that the issue of the Danish cartoons will calm down, only a minority of 41% feel that the situation should be calmed down.

Intensifying the situation does not necessarily imply the use of violent means as 53% of those who believe the most appropriate way to protest against the cartoons by peaceful means have also stated that the situation should be intensified.

