

ORAL QUESTION H-0377/03

for Question Time at the part-session in July 2003

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Lennart Sacrédeus

to the Council

Subject: Report on freedom of faith and religion in the world

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, USCIRF, performs an advisory function for the US Government on issues of religious freedom. In its annual report, USCIRF expresses concern at the fact that the Saudi Arabian regime is investing money abroad in order to disseminate its extreme interpretation of Wahhabi Islam - thereby increasing religious intolerance in other countries. Examples of this are the training of Sharia officials in the northern states of Nigeria, Saudi funding of the construction of Wahhabi mosques, missionary activity and the fact that extreme Wahhabi Muslims chose to travel to Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya and Kashmir in order to wage 'holy war'. This has prompted USCIRF to recommend that Saudi Arabia be included on the list of 'countries of particular concern' drawn up each year by the US Secretary of State.

How does the Council view the information in the USCIRF report on Saudi Arabia and violence and terrorism motivated by Wahhabi Islam? Is it prepared to step up the EU's efforts to defend freedom of religion and faith around the world by introducing a similar annual report and analysis dealing with religious freedom together with a list of countries like that of the US Government?

Tabled: 05.06.2003

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