



## International Politics

The Koran Question

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_/5

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Directions: Read the article and then do the following. Come up with a 3-5 sentence summary of the issues brought up in the article. Come up with a 3-5 sentence explanation of what you think the US should do to fix the situation. Come up with 3 questions you have on the article.

### Afghan Koran 'burning': US apologises

Bbc.co.uk 21 February 2012

US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has apologized to the Afghan people for an incident in which copies of the Koran were reportedly burned.

Mr Panetta said the US military respected the religious practices of the Afghan people "without exception".

The Nato commander in Afghanistan, US Gen John R Allen, has already announced an inquiry into the incident.

Reports suggest the US had confiscated materials that they suspected Taliban prisoners were using to send messages.

News of the incident has triggered angry protests outside the US base at Bagram, north of Kabul.

One person was wounded and five were detained when Nato forces used rubber bullets to disperse the crowd.

"This morning Gen Allen notified me of the deeply unfortunate incident involving the inappropriate treatment of religious materials, including the Koran, at Bagram Airbase," a statement from Mr Panetta said.

"He and I apologise to the Afghan people and disapprove of such conduct in the strongest possible terms.

"These actions do not represent the views of the United States military. We honour and respect the religious practices of the Afghan people, without exception."

Mr Panetta said he supported Gen Allen's decision to launch an inquiry.

"I will carefully review the final results of the investigation to ensure that we take all steps necessary and appropriate so that this never happens again," he said.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai condemned the reports that the Koran had been burnt. The Taliban said the incident would hurt the feelings "of one billion Muslims around the world".

Reports said the Korans had been found in piles of rubbish that Nato had transported in a lorry on Monday night to a pit on the base where waste is burned.

Afghans working at the pit are believed to have seen the religious books and stopped the disposal process.

Two senior Afghan officials told the BBC that religious materials held by Taliban prisoners had been confiscated because US officials suspected they were using them to send secret messages to each other.