Wilders short film also uses the images of a cartoon of the prophet Muhammad, wearing a turban with a bomb in it. This was one of the twelve Danish cartoons that led to violent protests across the Muslim world in 2006. Due to the fact that the original creators of the controversial cartoons did not give their consent for the image to be used in 'Fitna', Wilder's office said the picture would be replaced with another cartoon of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

If he had been allowed to come to London and showcase his film at the House of Lords, where I am sure the numbers of viewers would have been meagre, he would never have been able to attain the extent of publicity he achieved by the ban. Wilder would have come and gone without most of us being any the wiser. As they say, there is no such thing as bad publicity and sadly this whole fracas has given Geert Wilder global recognition.



Geert Wilder, promoting bigotry.

With hindsight, however, the more I think about it, the more I feel it was a mistake to have banned the MP from entering the country. The reason for this sentiment is that a couple of months ago I was blissfully ignorant of the existence of Geert Wilder, nor was I even remotely aware that he had made an anti-Islamic film called 'Fitna' which was already floating around the internet and in all probability neither did most of the people in the UK. If he had been allowed to come to London and showcase his film at the House of Lords, where I am sure the numbers of viewers would have been meagre, he would never have been able to attain the extent of publicity he achieved by the ban. Wilder would have come and gone without most of us being any the wiser. As they say, there is no such thing as bad publicity and sadly this whole fracas has given Geert Wilder global recognition. I think we have seen that the quickest and a sure fire way of achieving a certain degree of fame (or notoriety in this case) is to cause a sensation. For a few weeks the rightwing Dutch MP was in all the newspapers with photographs of him and his quiff gracing the front pages for what is reported to be an ill conceived and amateur piece of work.

Now, people across the country are debating whether the principles of free speech have been encroached upon and whether the UK government took things too far by restricting Mr. Wilder's right as a citizen of the EU and a MP for that matter, to express his views in Britain. What is most worrying is that a man of such narrow minded prejudiced beliefs was actually elected as a Member of Parliament in the Netherlands in the first place.

I am still pondering on the concept of freedom of speech which as we know is a human right. But just because we have the right to freedom of speech, does that give us the right to use it indiscriminately or without giving any thought to potential consequences? Does it mean we should say or act on everything we think just because we can? Surely there must be a point where we have to draw the line. Recently I heard about some fatwa issued by Al Qaeda calling for the death of Geert Wilder and this to me is abhorrent and unacceptable. It is more fuel to feed the flames of hatred against Muslims and Islam that people like Wilder would so desperately like to propagate. You can almost imagine him telling the media "I told you so". Although he maintains that he is exercising his right to free speech, the Appeals court in Amsterdam thinks otherwise and Mr. Geert is to be prosecuted in the Netherlands for hate speech and inciting discrimination. That on the other hand is an outcome I can definitely live with.