



Most Muslims Reject Terrorism?

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The controversy over Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week largely centered around the spurious charge that the term “Islamofascism” itself defames all Muslims by suggesting that they are fascists, or support terrorism. Of course, this charge rests on the illogical premise that “Islamofascism” is somehow a different kind of term from “white racism” or “Italian fascism,” which no one has ever taken to suggest that all whites are racists or all Italians fascists. But the real core of the problem is that a discussion of Islamic jihad terrorism and Islamic supremacism in general is supposed to be somehow offensive to the great majority of Muslims who are loyal, patriotic citizens of their respective countries and abhor terrorism.

There is no reason why it should be offensive. What’s more, survey after survey reveals that the attachment of these groups to the global jihad is generally stronger than most analysts assume it to be. In January 2007, [columnist Michael Freund](#) summed up some disquieting recent survey results: 25% of Muslims in Britain approved of the July 7, 2005 jihad terror bombings in London; 30% said they would rather live under Sharia than in a Western pluralistic society. 44% of Muslims in Nigeria thought suicide attacks were “often” or “sometimes” justified, with only 28% rejecting them in all cases. Roughly 14% of Muslims in France, Britain and Spain approved of suicide attacks against civilian targets, and only 45% of Muslims in Egypt considered terror never justified.

And in an Al-Jazeera survey on September 11, 2006, 49.9% of the respondents avowed that they did indeed support Osama bin Laden. Freund adds: "And the July 2006 global Pew survey found that among Muslims, a quarter of Jordanians, a third of Indonesians, 38% of Pakistanis and 61% of Nigerians all expressed confidence in the mass murderer who founded al-Qaida." Freund also notes that "in Israel, the percentages are even more alarming. After Cpl. Gilad Shalit was abducted by Hamas terrorists last summer, a poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center revealed that 77.2% of Palestinians supported the kidnapping, while 66.8% said they would back additional such attacks. More than six out of 10 Palestinians also said they were in favor of firing Kassam rockets at Israeli towns and cities...." And in Lebanon in the summer of 2006, "the Beirut Center for Research and Information found that over 80% of the Lebanese population said they supported Hizbullah."

Some of the results of the Pew Research Center poll of Muslims in America, released in May 2007, were likewise startling: twenty-six percent of Muslims between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine affirmed that there could be justification in some (unspecified) circumstances for suicide bombing, and five percent of all the Muslims surveyed said that they had a favorable view of Al-Qaeda. Given the Pew Center's estimate of 2.35 million Muslims in America, and the total of thirteen percent that avowed a belief

that suicide bombings could ever be justified, that's over 180,000 supporters of suicide attacks (subtracting the number of children).

Poll results are no better elsewhere. Much was made in the international media of a July 2007 Pew Research Center of attitudes among Muslims in 47 countries. [AP reported](#) that "the percentage of Jordanian Muslims who have confidence in bin Laden as a world leader fell 36 percentage points to 20 percent since 2003 while the proportion who say suicide bombing is sometimes or always justified dropped 20 percent points to 23 percent. Other countries where support for bin Laden declined are Lebanon, Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan and Kuwait." Support for suicide attacks dropped sharply in Lebanon, from 79 percent in 2002 to 34 percent in 2007, and in Pakistan from 41 percent in 2004 to only nine percent in 2007. Among Palestinians it remained high, with only six percent affirming that suicide attacks could never be justified.

These declines are encouraging, but the percentages approving of people and practices we have been endlessly told appeal only to a "tiny minority of extremists" are still uncomfortably high. Clearly the Islamic jihad being waged today by Osama bin Laden and his compatriots all over the globe has great appeal among Muslims, and as bin Laden and other jihadists consistently portray themselves as the pure Muslims who are practicing the true Islam, it is clear that that portrayal is convincing to all too many. For these percentages of ap-

proval to drop definitively, peaceful Muslims would have to mount comprehensive efforts to counter the jihad ideology of Islamic supremacism within mosques and Islamic

schools all over the Muslim world as well as in the West.

But no one has made any effort to do that.

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