

More on the “Moderate” Imam

✘ An important American organization that doesn't get the attention it deserves, the Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT), has put out a news release about a speech Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf gave in South Australia on July 12, 2005. The imam, as you know by now, is leading the effort to build a mosque and community center near Ground Zero in New York, the purpose of which, he says, is to build bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Some highlights of what he told his Australian audience – and responses from IPT.

“We tend to forget, in the West, that the United States has more Muslim blood on its hands than al Qaida has on its hands of innocent non Muslims. You may remember that the US-led sanctions against Iraq led to the death of over half a million Iraqi children. This has been documented by the United Nations. And when Madeleine Albright, who has become a friend of mine over the last couple of years, when she was Secretary of State and was asked whether this was worth it, said it was worth it.”

(IPT fact check: A report by the British government said at most only 50,000 deaths could be attributed to the sanctions, which were brought on by the actions by former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein

The imam also says that the United States has supported authoritarian regimes and so it's understandable that people in those nations would take action into their own hands.

“Collateral damage is a nice thing to put on a paper but when the collateral damage is your own uncle or cousin, what passions do these arouse? How do you negotiate? How do you tell people whose homes have been destroyed, whose lives have been destroyed, that this does not justify your actions of

terrorism. It's hard. Yes, it is true that it does not justify the acts of bombing innocent civilians, that does not solve the problem, but after 50 years of, in many cases, oppression, of US support of authoritarian regimes that have violated human rights in the most heinous of ways, how else do people get attention?"

(IPT fact check: This is justifying acts of terrorism by blaming the United States for the oppression of Islamic regimes of their own citizens. This also ignores U.S. aid of Muslim citizens in nations such as Kosovo and Kuwait.)

Asked why Muslims commit suicide bombings, Rauf said:

"But what makes people, in my opinion, commit suicide for political reasons have their origins in politics and political objectives and worldly objectives rather than other worldly objectives. But the psychology of human beings and the brittleness of the human condition and how many of us have thought about taking our own lives, we may be jilted, had a bad relationship, you know, didn't get tenure, failed an important course, there's a host of reason why people feel so depressed with themselves that they are willing to contemplate ending their own lives. And if you can access those individuals and deploy them for your own worldly objectives, this is exactly what has happened in much of the Muslim world."

(IPT fact check: Here Rauf tries to negate that suicide bombings are driven by Islamic religious beliefs and trying to equate terrorist activity to someone who doesn't get tenure.)

On Israel, Rauf said he does not favor the plan to establish a Palestinian state along with Israel. Instead,

"The differences, perhaps, may lie on whether the solution lies in the two-state solution or in a one-state solution. I believe that you had someone here recently who spoke about having a one land and two people's solution to Israel. And I

personally – my own personal analysis tells me that a one-state solution is a more coherent one than a two-state solution. So if we address the underlying issue, if we figure out a way to create condominiums, to condominiumise Israel and Palestine so you have two peoples co-existing on one state, then we have a different paradigm which will allow us to move forward.”

(IPT fact check: A one-state solution is a euphemism for the destruction of Israel, because Palestinian Muslims will quickly outnumber the Jewish resident of Israel. Such a position is advocated by radical groups, such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”

On terrorism:

“And when we observe terrorism, whether it was done by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka or by al Qaida or whoever is behind the bombings in London or those in Madrid, we can see that they were target political objectives.”

(IPT fact check: Rauf again seems to justify terrorist acts by equating hitting civilians with political objectives.)

The imam’s speech was taped, and you can listen to it in its entirety or only the portions highlighted above, by clicking [here](#).