

The Enemy D'Souza Knows

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Rejecting a thesis.

Editor's Note: Over the course of four days this week, Dinesh D'Souza has been responding here at *NRO* to conservative critics of his book *The Enemy at Home*. Below a number of these critics respond to D'Souza. (Victor Davis Hanson responds in a separate column, which can be found [here](#).)

Dean Barnett

Before offering a brief response (as opposed to a rebuttal) to Dinesh D'Souza's massive "Grievance Tour," I must confess to some confusion over the entire project. D'Souza had an entire book to convince America's conservatives of his "provocative" (cough, cough) thesis. Having failed, it's hard to see how he can remedy the situation with a week-long series of *ad hominem* insults. Nonetheless, I am flattered at having been lumped in with the likes of Victor Davis Hanson, Scott Johnson, Peter Berkowitz, and Robert Spencer on the receiving end of D'Souza's invective. I find this such an honor, I'll gladly suffer the indignity of being momentarily in the company of the perennially insufferable Alan Wolfe.

For the multitudes of you who overcame the temptation to read through D'Souza's "Grievance Tour," I made an appearance in the first stanza of [Book II](#), where D'Souza labeled my criticism "ignorant prejudice masquerading as scholarship." Typical of his rhetoric, D'Souza tossed out this charge without defending or supporting it. From my perspective, it could have been worse. Poor Scott Johnson was accused of being so gauche and bourgeois that he actually reads books available at Barnes & Noble, a charge that, if true, would prove beyond any doubt that Scott is an incorrigible charlatan.

D'Souza's entire "Grievance Tour" seemed dedicated to shouting from *NRO*'s virtual rooftop that he is a serious scholar while his critics are out of their league in criticizing an intellectual eminence such as himself. But let us momentarily grant D'Souza's highly dubious contention that all of his critics, awed by his brilliance, are indeed just lashing out by engaging in "ignorance masquerading as scholarship." Let us further stipulate that D'Souza has read more primary sources and studied matters with more rigor than all of his critics combined.

If so, how did this brilliant and rigorous scholar still conclude in *The Enemy at Home* that Osama bin Laden was one of the world's richest men, an assertion that is stunningly at odds with reality?

Ignorance masquerading as scholarship? Physician, heal thyself.

– Dean Barnett writes for [Hugh Hewitt's blog](#).

Peter Berkowitz

In "[Excommunication for thee...](#)," I gave reasons for agreeing with Boston College professor Alan Wolfe, who, [writing](#) in the Sunday *New York Times Book Review*, concluded that Dinesh D'Souza's *The Enemy at Home* was a deeply flawed and incendiary book. At the same time, I defended D'Souza against Wolfe's call for conservatives to excommunicate him. In the process, I noted the irony that in a post-9/11 [essay](#) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Wolfe himself, like D'Souza, had declared that America was endangered by an enemy at home, except that for Wolfe the enemy within was not the cultural Left but the fascist Right.

It turns out that D'Souza and Wolfe see eye-to-eye on another point, namely, that I am a vicious and clueless critic. As Wolfe, in [responding](#) to my essay in *The New Republic*, contrasted his generous liberalism to my rank partisanship, so now D'Souza, in his four part reply to conservative critics in *NRO*, touts his open-mindedness as against my closed-mindedness.

D'Souza's contention that he is a paragon of intellectual virtue is as self-refuting as was [Wolfe's](#). For a hallmark of open-mindedness and the liberal spirit is the capacity to benefit from disagreement and debate. Yet like Wolfe, D'Souza is for the most part unable to treat his interlocutors with respect, and generally unable to draw insight or instruction from the objections that his arguments have provoked.

I will not trouble *NRO* readers with a response to D'Souza's sneering asides, ad hominem attacks, and caricature of the criticism to which his book has been subject, except to note that his recurring rhetorical excesses belie his boast that he adheres to standards of scholarly excellence.

And my colleagues in this symposium have ably replied to many of the salvos that D'Souza aims at conservative critics of *The Enemy at Home*.

So I'll focus on the chief criticism that D'Souza aims directly at me, which is that, on a crucial issue, I have put words in his mouth:

At one point, Berkowitz accuses me of holding that “the cultural left presents a threat to America as grave as that posed by radical Islam.” What? The Left is as dangerous to America as al Qaeda, the radical mullahs in Iran, the jihadist insurgents in Iraq, and the worldwide network of radical Islam? Nowhere do I say this, and I challenge Berkowitz to substantiate his allegation.

I accept D’Souza’s challenge. Let’s begin with page one of *The Enemy at Home* and its remarkable opening sentences:

In this book I make a claim that will seem startling at the outset. The cultural left in this country is responsible for causing 9/11.

D’Souza’s preliminary elaboration of his thesis carries over to page two:

I am saying that the cultural left and its allies in Congress, the media, Hollywood, the nonprofit sector, and the universities are the primary cause of the volcano of anger toward America that is erupting from the Islamic world.

In his book’s last paragraph, on page 292, D’Souza provides a summation of the “two-front war” in which America is now engaged. It is

a military fight against the radical Muslims abroad and a political battle against the radical left at home. These two forces have formed a strange coalition—a kind of alliance of the vicious and the immoral—and they are now working together against us. We have to recognize this, and take them on simultaneously. There is no way to restore the culture without winning the war on terror. Conversely, the only way to win the war on terror is to win the culture war. Thus we arrive at a sobering truth. In order to crush the Islamic radicals abroad, we must defeat the enemy at home.

The very purpose of D’Souza’s book is to demonstrate that the cultural left is the flame that has ignited and sustained the jihadists’ rage, the source that continues to give life and meaning to the “world wide network of radical Islam.” The cultural left is a threat as grave as radical Islam, on D’Souza’s account, because its conduct drives the jihadists to make war against the United States. But for “the cultural left,” D’Souza says on page two, “9/11 would not have happened.” For readers who are interested in further substantiation, I urge them to consult pages 3-291 of *The Enemy at Home*.

But perhaps I misunderstand the cause of D’Souza’s indignation. Perhaps he threw down the gauntlet not on the grounds that I absurdly inflated the threat that he ascribed to the cultural left but because I significantly understated it. Since on his account the cultural left is the “primary cause” of radical Islam’s rage against America, perhaps D’Souza is aggrieved because I failed to appreciate that he views the cultural left as the *graver* threat.

Indeed, owing to the opportunity that D'Souza has presented to reconsider his argument, I realize that this is a better interpretation of his views. To substantiate it, one need only pay more careful attention than I originally did to the long epigraph that introduces his book.

D'Souza took the epigraph from a stirring address, "The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions," which, in 1838, the 28-year-old Abraham Lincoln gave to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois. Alarmed by the intensifying conflict over slavery, Lincoln warned that the most dangerous threat to America came not from abroad but arose from within:

Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step over the Ocean, and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years. At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

By placing this passage at the front of *The Enemy at Home*, D'Souza could not more forthrightly or effectively have highlighted his belief that the cultural left is not, as I originally put it, a threat equal in seriousness to that posed by the enemy abroad, but a graver threat than al Qaeda, the Iranian mullahs, and the worldwide jihadist networks.

Indeed, thanks to D'Souza's public challenge, which provided the occasion to reexamine his work, I now realize that his central claim is still more extravagant and incendiary than I initially appreciated. Reading his book in light of Lincoln's discerning assessment in 1838 of the surpassing danger that the contest over slavery posed to the nation, it becomes clear that D'Souza believes that in our post 9/11 world the cultural left at home presents the *gravest* danger we face.

I stand corrected.

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Scott Johnson

Dinesh D'Souza titles his four-part, 6,800-word attack on the conservative critics of his new book *The Closing of the Conservative Mind*. Notwithstanding D'Souza's manifest gifts as a writer and polemicist, isn't this just a bit immodest? Among the closed-minded conservative critics of his book, along with me ("a Midwestern attorney who blogs in his spare time"—but one who has on occasion been allowed to leave home on good behavior!) are *New Criterion*

editor Roger Kimball, Council on Foreign Relations fellow Max Boot, and D'Souza's Hoover Institution colleagues Victor Davis Hanson, Peter Berkowitz, and Stanley Kurtz. Is D'Souza alone keeping the conservative mind open at *National Review* and the Hoover Institution?

D'Souza has written a very bad book. If one were to take his *NRO* apologia seriously, his dishonesty would appear to be an issue secondary to his grandiosity. But he is not to be taken seriously and his dishonesty is the primary issue. Thus in his apologia D'Souza fails to address the thesis that frames his book. His thesis, let it be remembered, is this: "The cultural left in this country is responsible for causing 9/11." It is a thesis, he states in the very first sentence of the book, "that will seem startling at the outset." It is startling because he is the first writer commenting on 9/11 to have tumbled to its cause.

In other words, according to D'Souza, al Qaeda attacked the United States because of "the cultural left." In his apologia D'Souza reformulates his thesis to allege that in my *New Criterion* essay I err in "denying the Left bears any responsibility for 9/11." Wrong. I dispute his thesis that the Left is, not in some sense, not a little bit, not somewhat, not partly or mostly, but rather simply responsible for 9/11.

In his apologia, D'Souza chooses not to defend his thesis. Instead, D'Souza rehashes his critique of liberal foreign policy, a critique that he relegates to chapter eight of his book. Is this the "startling" revelation that D'Souza announces in the second sentence of his book? Of course not. Whatever its merits, D'Souza's critique of Carter/Clinton foreign policy is old news. Such thin gruel cannot support the *succès de scandale* to which he aspires with his outrageous thesis. In reviewing the book I therefore addressed D'Souza's more "startling" claim to have discovered the direct responsibility for 9/11 in the American Left rather than the remote theories of causation that leave him defending the proposition facetiously put to him on the Colbert Report that FDR-like Carter, like Clinton—was responsible for 9/11.

The problem with D'Souza's book, as well as his *NRO* apologia, is its fundamental intellectual dishonesty. The dishonesty appears in ways large and small. Here I will cite only one small example of dishonesty—namely, D'Souza's treatment of sources relevant to his attribution of fault for 9/11 to liberal foreign policy. D'Souza is extremely highhanded in his use of evidence, such as bin Laden's 1996 declaration of war, his 1998 manifesto, and his 2002 letter.

Consistent with his thesis that "the cultural left" is responsible for 9/11, D'Souza goes out of his way to absolve Ronald Reagan—a great president who can do without D'Souza's absolution—of any "responsibility" for conveying the perception of weakness that fostered Islamic radicalism:

It is important to recognize that bin Laden developed this theory of American weakness during the Clinton years. It was Clinton, after all, who ordered the withdrawal of American troops from Mogadishu. Islamic radicals had a very different view of the United States during the Reagan years. Although Reagan had ordered the pullout of American troops following the 1982 embassy bombing in Beirut, Muslim radicals recognized that Reagan was a strong leader.

D'Souza does not acknowledge evidence directly to the contrary, such as this statement from bin Laden's 1996 declaration of war:

Few days ago the news agencies had reported that the Defence Secretary of the Crusading Americans had said that "the explosion at Riyadh and Al-Khobar had taught him one lesson: that is not to withdraw when attacked by coward terrorists."

We say to the Defence Secretary that his talk can induce a grieving mother to laughter! and shows the fears that had enshrined you all. Where was this false courage of yours when the explosion in Beirut took place on 1983 AD (1403 A.H). You were turned into scattered bits and pieces at that time; 241 mainly marines soldiers were killed.

Or this statement from the May 1998 interview with bin Laden by ABC's John Miller:

We have seen in the last decade the decline of the American government and the weakness of the American soldier who is ready to wage Cold Wars and unprepared to fight long wars. This was proven in Beirut when the Marines fled after two explosions. It also proves they can run in less than 24 hours, and this was also repeated in Somalia.

And the immediate cause of bin Laden's rage in both his 1996 and 1998 manifestos was the American troops stationed in Saudi Arabia by, well, the administration of George H.W. Bush.

D'Souza asserts, however, that bin Laden's demand for the removal of American troops "must be understood in a metaphorical sense":

This threat to Islam cannot be due to American troops in Mecca, since there are no American troops in Mecca. The American base in Saudi Arabia is more than 500 miles from Islam's holy sites, and the troops there rarely venture off base and have nothing to do with Saudi society.

On the other hand, perhaps Osama bin Laden considers Arabia sacred ground. Perhaps a reader might benefit from taking into account the title of bin Laden's declaration of war: "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places." But D'Souza does not inform the reader of the title of bin Laden's declaration of war. And anyone who reads the declaration for himself will find that its outrage over the American "occupation" of Saudi Arabia appears to be quite literal. D'Souza is simply not a trustworthy guide to the evidence or the issues he addresses in his book.

In addition to the personal abuse D'Souza heaps on his conservative critics, he also pulls rank as a native of India and an expert on Islam. This is an argument from authority that rings as hollow as did Dan Rather's in the Texas Air National Guard story. D'Souza is not himself a historian, not a scholar of Islam or the Arab world, not an expert on terrorism or foreign policy. According to the [self-description](#) he wrote for the Hoover Institution, "his areas of research include the economy and society, civil rights and affirmative action, cultural issues and politics, and higher education."

D'Souza's book seems to have been written for "the front shelf of Barnes and Noble" that he otherwise disparages in his comments on my essay. Shouldn't the modestly well-informed reader of average intelligence be capable of judging such a book fairly on its own terms? In any event, that is what I sought to do in the essay I devoted to D'Souza's book.

– *Scott W. Johnson is a Minneapolis attorney and contributor to [Power Line](#).*

Roger Kimball

"When in doubt, change the subject." I don't really blame Dinesh D'Souza for following that cynical bit of debater's advice. Had I written *The Enemy at Home*, I would be tempted to try it, too. Alas, I fear that his 6,800-word effort to stimulate, er, "civil discussion" has failed. Why? It has nothing to do with "heresy," as D'Souza suggests. He comes much closer when he mentions "massive errors of fact or logic." The problem with *The Enemy at Home* is . . . well, *everything*. (I put this more politely in my [original review](#).) What I mean is that it's not a matter of this or that argument going astray. It's rather that D'Souza's major premise—that "the cultural left in this country is responsible for causing 9/11"—is wildly at odds with reality. Starting out from that mistake, D'Souza takes readers on a fantastical voyage in which white is black, day is night, and a dozen jihadists plowed jetliners into skyscrapers because of Britney Spears—or maybe it was because of Hillary Clinton, America's high divorce-rate, or its lamentable practice of tolerating homosexuals instead of stoning them to death.

Of course, put thus, D'Souza's thesis sounds silly. But is it any less silly when framed in his own words? "Without the cultural left, 9/11 would not have happened"; "the left is the primary reason for Islamic anti-Americanism"; 9/11 was "a special kind of 'reality show' using martyrdom as a form of advertising and real people in the explosion scenes."

I often wondered, when reading *The Enemy at Home* and his extended aria of a response to conservative critics, whether D'Souza was the victim of intellectual Stockholm Syndrome, his effort to understand the enemy nudging him toward sympathy for the enemy, or whether the whole production was just a brazen bid for notoriety. I still am not sure. Perhaps the two are not mutually exclusive.

A few particulars about his first installment: 1) According to my dictionary, terrorism is "the systematic use of terror, violence, and intimidation to achieve an end." If the bombing of the *USS Cole* wasn't an act of terrorism, it will do until the real thing comes along. 2) *Pace*

D'Souza, Osama bin Laden is a Wahhabist. You don't have to have grown up amidst 200 million Muslims to know that: all you have to do is look it up. 3) On Islam's relation to capitalism, modernity, etc., D'Souza is clearly deeply impressed by the criticisms that Sayyid Qutb, a spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood, made about American civilization in the mid-twentieth century; many of his own criticisms sound a similar note. Someday it would be amusing to discuss Qutb's book *The Battle Between Islam and Capitalism* with D'Souza. It is one volume in a library of books and pamphlets explaining why Islam is hostile to capitalism. But you don't need any books to understand that Islam is hostile to modern science and the political and cultural riches of modernity: all you need to do is look around at the wretched intellectual, political, and moral poverty it has fostered. It doesn't matter that Mohammed was a merchant. What matters is that the tradition he inspired has, in social and material terms, been a complete disaster for well on four centuries.

D'Souza doesn't like Jonathan Rauch's formulation that "the root cause of terrorism is terrorists." I find it a refreshing and cant-free expression of a basic truth that is mightily obscured by D'Souza's tergiversations: America is not responsible for the enormities of al Qaeda: al Qaeda is. In other words, when we talk about the war on terror, the issue is not our cultural or moral failings but the behavior of Islamic terrorists.

– Roger Kimball is co-editor and publisher of the *New Criterion*.

Stanley Kurtz

"The cultural left in this country is responsible for causing 9/11." Dinesh D'Souza opens *The Enemy at Home* with this intentionally startling phrase. Sounds pretty mono-causal to me. D'Souza goes on to argue that the cultural Left is "the primary reason" for Islamic anti-Americanism, without which "9/11 would not have happened." And throughout *The Enemy at Home*, D'Souza downplays and dismisses the notion that "traditional Islam" had much of anything to do with 9/11. Put that all together and D'Souza's rejection of the charge of mono-causality rings hollow.

D'Souza's defense against the point that Sayyid Qutb was outraged by even the tame social mores of 1940s America reflects the same problem with D'Souza's argument. In explaining why Muslims only now view Qutb's 1940s musings as prophetic, D'Souza writes as though the decline of American popular culture is the single thing of importance that's happened in the past sixty years.

Actually, recruitment to radical Islam first burgeoned in 1970s Egypt, prefigured by Egypt's 1967 defeat by Israel. That defeat punctured confidence in Nasser's Arab nationalism and occasioned a series of religiously motivated visions and revivals, in which many argued that God had used defeat in war to punish Egypt for its declining morals. Egypt's initial success

in the 1973 war against Israel seems to have been the immediate impetus for the turn to traditional dress among college students, and for increased organization by radical Islamist groups.

Behind these changes lay larger social factors. Expanding higher education brought increasing numbers of traditionalist youth into coeducational contact to which they were unaccustomed. And large numbers of previously home-bound Egyptian women began doing office work. The extended family system gave way to more nuclear arrangements. And as the traditional Egyptian family seemed to come under threat from the demands of modern life, there was a broad reaction against the image of the Westernized Egyptian working woman, then lionized in the secular media.

All this played into the rise of Islamism. Was disgust with American pop-culture part of the mix? Sure. Yet by far the deeper cause was this whole series of tensions between traditional Islamic mores and modern social life. To say that Qutb was revived after being read through the prism of the Vagina Monologues, without also adding that he was revived after being read through the prism of the wars of '67 and '73—and all the profound social tensions between Islamic tradition and modern Egyptian life—is misleading and mono-causal in the extreme. My earlier critique of D'Souza stressed that Muslim objections to Western pop culture serve as proxies for distress over these deeper social changes. D'Souza has not truly responded to this point.

What does Muslim cousin-marriage have to do with modernity? A lot. Cousin marriage (even for non-Arab Pakistani immigrants) is a major barrier to Muslim assimilation in Europe, and clearly distinguishes Muslim immigrants from immigrants of other religious traditions. And traditional Muslims in Europe have kicked off scandal after scandal with dramatic cases of forced marriage and honor killings. Even typical arranged marriages reflect a broader tension between hierarchical and communal traditions, on the one hand, and the individualist mores upon which democracy depends, on the other. Muslim polygamy very much reflects this deeper cultural tension.

Japan and India do indeed showcase successful examples of relatively less individualist democracies. I discussed Japan and India at length in "After the War," and "Democratic Imperialism," highlighting critical differences with the Muslim case. Contrary to D'Souza's claim, I do not assert that Islam and democracy are inevitably incompatible. I've argued that it may well be possible to create a genuinely liberal Muslim democracy. Yet I also warned—before the war—that successful democratization would take far more time and be far more difficult and demanding than many expected at the time. D'Souza, on the other hand, is far too complacent about the illiberal character of the sharia-dominated Islamic democracies he appears to favor.

In response to my critique, D’Souza now concedes that American conservatives and traditional Muslims are “not entirely on the same page.” His case for an alliance remains weak—and his suggested precedent of the World War II alliance between America and the Soviet Union is neither convincing nor reassuring. As D’Souza himself concedes in his book, the difference between Muslim traditionalists and radicals is relatively slight. And unfortunately, instances of open and energetic opposition between these two groups are relatively few.

D’Souza’s plan for an alliance of American conservatives and Muslim traditionalists depends too much on his childhood acquaintance with what appear to be relatively urbanized and Westernized Muslims in a non-Muslim-majority country. The ability of these acquaintances to stand as examples of the critical populations at issue in this debate is questionable. Until D’Souza deals fully and honestly with the many complex factors, over and above American pop culture, that are actually driving Islamic radicalization (and even then, his argument is a difficult one), he will never convince anyone that a culture-wars-based world-wide alliance of conservative American and Muslim traditionalists is either possible or desirable.

As D’Souza notes in his book, there is indeed something problematic about forcing Muslims into an all-or-nothing choice between their religion and modernity. Yet neither American conservatives nor the cultural Left are primarily responsible for this choice. It is the character of Islam itself—of its all-embracing link between the religion and worldliness—that tends to force this choice (another point I’ve made repeatedly, and which D’Souza has yet to answer). That is why Turkey is currently trapped between incompatible secularist and Islamist alternatives.

Contrary to D’Souza’s claim, Samuel Huntington never called for a warlike “clash of civilizations.” On the contrary, Huntington’s awareness of the power of cultural differences led him to warn against overly ambitious plans to spread our own democratic way of life. In general, D’Souza seriously mischaracterizes, and falsely lumps together, a broad array of conservative authors with widely divergent understandings of Islam, democratization, the war on terror, and related issues. What unites this group of conservatives is not so much any single view of Islam or democracy as a shared sense that there is something seriously off-the-mark about *The Enemy at Home*.

— *Stanley Kurtz is a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

Robert Spencer

The essential conflict between Dinesh D’Souza and me is that he believes that we in the West are alienating traditional Muslims by subjecting Islam to the kind of scrutiny that other religions have routinely received in the West, and that we should stop doing so, since we need these traditional Muslims as allies. In this, I believe he is closing off the best hope we

have for genuine Islamic reform. And in any case, if this is a group of people whose beliefs cannot be discussed, even as terrorists use those beliefs to justify their actions, what sort of allies would they be?

In discussing my work, D'Souza has preferred to set up straw men rather than discuss what I actually say. Although I have told him otherwise in debates on radio and in person, as well as in e-mails and in [postings at Jihad Watch](#), he repeats the false claim that "Robert Spencer cannot bear the idea of an alliance with traditional Muslims to defeat radical Muslims because he refuses to believe that there *are* such people as traditional Muslims." Who are these traditional Muslims? In his book, D'Souza offers not a single name, but he does explain that they are "not 'moderates'," and adds: "What are the theological differences between traditional Islam and radical Islam? On the fundamental religious questions, there are none." So who are these people? They are, he tells us, "best understood as those who practice Islam in the way that it has evolved in the centuries since Muhammad," as opposed to the radicals who "believe that Islam has reached a point of crisis and that violent conflict is both the inevitable and desirable outcome of this crisis."

In other words, then, these are peaceful Muslims, who have no interest in waging jihad warfare. D'Souza claims I do not believe such people exist. In *Islam Unveiled* (2002), however, I wrote: "I do not mean...to indict Muslims in general or Islam as a whole....If the seeds of terrorism are found to lie at the heart of Islam, that does not make every Muslim a terrorist." He need not have read far to find that; it's on page five. In *Onward Muslim Soldiers* (2003), I wrote: "Obviously not all Muslims in the United States or around the world—indeed, not even a majority—subscribe to the Islam of modern-day terrorists. Most Muslims, like everyone else, want to live their lives in peace." D'Souza would have found that in the Introduction, on page xiii. In *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* (2005), I noted that "there are enormous numbers of Muslims in the United States and around the world who want nothing to do with today's global jihad. While their theological foundation is weak, many are laboring heroically to create a viable moderate Islam that will allow Muslims to coexist peacefully with their non-Muslim neighbors" (p. 45). Would D'Souza take issue with my assertion that their theological foundation is weak? But he himself observes that his "traditional Muslims" have no theological differences with the jihadists—and that makes them a fertile recruiting ground for jihad groups.

Were the statements I have just quoted *pro forma* acknowledgements of something I effectually deny? No. In chapter eight of *Onward Muslim Soldiers* I discuss at length some historical reasons why the teachings about jihad of the Koran and Sunnah, as well as of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*madhahib*), fell into abeyance in the Islamic world, and in *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*, in a section entitled "But what about moderate Muslims?," I explore some cultural reasons why the jihad ideology is in many areas of the Islamic world deemphasized today, and has been for quite some time.

D'Souza remarks parenthetically: "At one point on a radio show Spencer challenged me to name a single traditional Muslim." What I in fact asked him was to name a single traditional Muslim with whom he thought conservatives should ally. He named the Mufti of Egypt, Ali Gomaa, who is, according to the *New York Times*, a supporter of Hezbollah. Hardly, I believe, a reliable ally.

As for his claim that "Spencer seems to agree with Khomeini and bin Laden that the radical Muslims are the real Muslims—the ones who are actually following what the Koran and the Islamic tradition say," it isn't true either. In my books, I don't just discuss the Islam of Khomeini and bin Laden, but the stages of Koranic development of the doctrine of jihad as delineated by Islamic theologians throughout history. In his eighth-century biography of Muhammad, Ibn Ishaq explains the contexts of various verses of the Koran by saying that Muhammad received revelations about warfare in three stages: first, tolerance; then, defensive warfare; and finally, offensive warfare in order to convert the unbelievers to Islam or make them pay a poll tax, the *jizya* (see Koran 9:29, Sahih Muslim 4294, etc.). Tafasir (Koranic commentaries) by mainstream Muslim thinkers including Ibn Kathir, Ibn Juzayy, As-Suyuti, and others also emphasize that the ninth chapter of the Koran, which mandates warfare against and subjugation of unbelievers, abrogates every peace treaty in the Koran.

In the modern age, this idea of stages of development in the Koran's teaching on jihad, culminating in offensive warfare to establish the hegemony of Islamic law, has been affirmed not only by the jihad theorists Qutb and Maududi, but by the Pakistani Brigadier S. K. Malik (author of *The Qur'anic Concept of War*), Saudi Chief Justice Sheikh Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Humaid (in his *Jihad in the Qur'an and Sunnah*), and others.

While never mentioning any of this, D'Souza claims that I "focus on one set of quotations from the Koran advocating violence, while ignoring or dismissing another set of quotations advocating peace." In fact, unfortunately, it is not I who do this, but the authorities I mentioned above, and others.

"Spencer's animus against Islam is so deep," says D'Souza, "that he seems blind to the fact that traditional Muslims embrace both the idea and the practice of democracy. It confounds his whole worldview, so he has to reject the idea and invent a totalitarian scenario in order to avoid having to change his mind in response to evidence." In reality, I devote chapter five of *Islam Unveiled* to a discussion of Islam and democracy, with particular attention to Turkey. In any case, D'Souza is apparently unaware of the ongoing persecution and harassment of Christians in Indonesia and Turkey, two of his showcase democracies, and the similar treatment of Hindus in Bangladesh. Democracy is more than just head-counting; it is also equality of rights. I ask D'Souza to name one Muslim-majority nation in which non-Muslims enjoy full equality of rights with Muslims, up to and including the right to proselytize enjoyed by Muslims.

D'Souza likewise ignores mountains of evidence when he says that "the claim that the world's Muslims endorse violence against those who are not Muslims" is "a purely made-up accusation that cannot be supported by any convincing evidence." Perhaps he can explain the evidence recently marshaled by Michael Freund in the *Jerusalem Post*:

On the fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks, a survey conducted by Al-Jazeera asked respondents, "Do you support Osama Bin-Laden?" A whopping 49.9% answered: yes. 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. In Lebanon six months ago, the Beirut Center for Research and Information found that over 80% of the Lebanese population said they supported Hizbullah.

D'Souza asks: "If you were a traditional Muslim, would you want to associate yourself with people who were constantly attacking your prophet, your holy book, your values, and your religion?" I ask him in response: If you were a genuinely reformist Muslim who abhorred violent jihad, wouldn't you welcome an honest discussion of the elements of Islam that the jihadists are using to justify their actions and to recruit? How can reform come without an admission that reform is needed?

Finally, when D'Souza notes that Bernard Lewis "even contends that, historically speaking, Islamic societies were *more* tolerant than Christian ones, putting up with Jews and other religious minorities to a degree that no Christian kingdom of the time did, and permitting divergent forms of Islam while European countries were going to war over fine points of theological doctrine," I wonder what point he is trying to make. Even if Lewis is correct that the Ottomans were better to minorities than Catholic Europe, what does that prove? No one is trying to bring back the society of Catholic Europe, but jihadists are trying to re-impose sharia, including dhimmitude for non-Muslims, on the rest of the world. Is D'Souza suggesting that, well, it wasn't so bad after all, and so we shouldn't be resisting it now?

No, thanks.

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