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National Conservative Republican Alliance

Contact: Wayne Long

713-725-0593

wayne@conservativemustunite.org

www.nationalconservativerepublicanalliance.org

Islam Has A Big Problem ...

By “A Common Man”

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The problem with Islam is perception and trust.

Islam is a religion established by Mohammed back in the early 600's AD. People who follow the Islamic religion are Muslims. In today's world, there are an estimated 1.0 to 1.8 billion Muslims, making Islam the second largest religion in the world, behind Christianity.

Since 9/11, my perception of Islam is that it is a serious threat to the civilized world and I do not trust Muslims. I am not a scholar who has studied Islam. I do not know all the details about Islamic faith, laws, groups within groups, rules, etc. I am just a common man and I am fearful of Islam. That is my perception and that is Islam's problem.

When I say, “that is Islam's problem”, what I mean is, that is the problem of peace loving, Muslims who are tolerant of other religions and wish to co-exist with the civilized world. In my mind there are three general categories of Muslims: 1) the peace loving, tolerant Muslims, 2) the violent extremist Muslims, who believe that all non-Muslims must submit to their view of Islam or die, and 3) the Muslims in the middle, who to some degree or other, tolerate, sympathize with and give tacit approval to the activities of the

violent extremist Muslims.. This is a problem for peaceful Muslims, because there is really no way for us to make the distinction. How are we to know who is friend or foe?

Of the estimated 1 billion Muslims, worldwide, how many are violent extremists: one percent (10,000,000), one-half of one percent (5,000,000), one-tenth of one percent (1,000,000)? What if there are only 25,000 to 50,000? How many Muslims are, to some degree or other, supportive of the violent extremist Muslims? A poll in Great Britain suggested that 25% of young Muslim men held some sympathy toward the motives and actions of violent extremist Muslims. To me, just a common man, these imagined numbers are disturbing.

The problem for peace loving, tolerant Muslims is that violent extremist Muslims are defining Islam, in today's world. Are my fears justified? Is my perception of Islam correct? Maybe, maybe not, but it is my perception and therefore, my reality.

What can be done to change my perception? Do peaceful, tolerant Muslims care about my perception? Do peaceful, tolerant Muslims understand my perception? Do peaceful, tolerant Muslims believe that many, many other common people share my perception? Would it be in the best interest of peaceful, tolerant Muslims to consider changing my and others perception, regarding the religion of Islam?

What would it take to change my perception? I need to see peaceful, tolerant Muslims drive the violent extremist Muslims out of Islam. I need to see peaceful, tolerant Muslims turning violent extremist Muslims into the authorities before they launch an attack on innocent civilians. I want to see peaceful, tolerant Muslims, led by peaceful, tolerant Imams, stand up in there Mosques and denounce violent extremist Muslims. I want to see a global demonstration of hundreds of thousands of peaceful, tolerant Muslims marching in the streets denouncing the motives and actions of violent extremist Muslims. I want to see the madrasahs teaching tolerance and acceptance of other faiths, rather than hate and intolerance and "death to the infidels". That is what it will take to change my perception and gain my trust.

Oh well, I'm just a common man, maybe my perception and trust does not matter.