

**The Speech Delivered by Imam Tawhidi at the  
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**Title: Threat to Contemporary Australia From  
Islamic Extremism**



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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all.

It can be very challenging to examine the reality of the threat of Islamic extremism and the philosophy behind its existence, along with what motivates a mother to send her young children to a Church or Synagogue to blow themselves up in a suicide attack. Muslims like myself and Non-Muslims alike have sought to understand the reality behind this continuous hate and threat which is directed towards all of us. Today, I would like to examine this serious threat in the following stages:

- 1- The role of peaceful Muslim leaders in general
- 2- Australian multiculturalism and where we are now
- 3- The mind-set of moderate Muslims and how they view terrorism
- 4- The influence of/and direct link between the early years of Islam and today's terrorism – books.
- 5- The foreign funding and infiltration of radicals in our education system and society, along with the special treatment of Muslims in Australia

while proposing realistic solutions to the above matters.

As for the role of peaceful Imams, mine is a world of contemplation, prayer and study. I had begun my road with the belief that this would be the totality of my life's work. The emergence of forces that try to pervert my religion, has compelled me to take a more public role. There is an Arabic saying "silence is the sign of approval", as I do not approve under the current circumstances, I must speak out.

Imam Ali a.s once said: When the people of the truth remained silent, the people of falsehood believed themselves to be truthful.

If only the extremists speak, then understandably our people will suspect that all my co-religionists pose a potential or active threat to this society. Nothing could be further

from the truth, the vast majority of Australian Muslims wish only to live in peace and harmony.

However, there does lurk a dark threat among us, in recent times. I have made it part of my work to address this in a twofold way:

Firstly, to denounce and try to expose those who pose a real threat, and secondly to demonstrate to the larger community that there are Muslims, who understand their fears and will uncompromisingly stand with them.

To neglect the second objective is to risk ceding the growing debate to an extremist influenced anti-Muslim backlash, the social and security consequences of this scenario if it is allowed to develop is frightening to contemplate.

Why does Shaikh Mohammad Tawhidi appear to some as a controversial figure? And what is a Shaikh or Imam? And why a white Turban?

To many of those in the Islamic world, an Imam is a traditionalist with an almost medieval interpretation of Holy scripture, inward looking and non-receptive to the modern world.

As you listen to me today, perhaps you will better understand why this perception of me exists.

Many Muslims, find a figure like myself challenging. In the non-Islamic world of democracy, many find it difficult to believe that I am genuine in my desires for reform and modernisation. Many have learned of the Islamic concept of legitimate deception (Taqiyyah) and assume that I must be pursuing a particular Machiavellian agenda. Hence it is easy to understand that I am seen by some as controversial.

In a world of clashing political ideologies, certain doctrines have been entrenched as articles of faith. Among these is the doctrine of multiculturalism.

In itself, multiculturalism is a practical and humane policy, for any decent society to embrace. I have stated in recent times, during my speeches and appearances on National Media, that Australia does not need to prove to the world that it is a multicultural country. Our strong nation has been built upon diversity.

However, the question here is, is it healthy to pursue an approach of “multiculturalism at all costs”?

I wish to explain what I mean at this point. The tolerant Australian majority has been very accepting of successive waves of immigrants from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds. And almost exclusively within a single generation the newcomers have integrated into the mainstream. While large numbers of Muslims have made this successful adjustment, a large minority have not.

As decades have now passed since large scale Muslim immigration to Australia began, one must ask, what is different about this particular community from all the previous waves of immigrants? I can speak with some authority on this matter.

Why are the “multiculturalism at all costs” supporters silent on the risks to our society? In light of the shocking events of recent times, their silence is perplexing to me. With hundreds of Australians known to be fighting with extremist groups in the Middle East, one must ask how they can pretend that there is not “an elephant in the room”, in the form of a domestic base for radical Islamic extremism.

I have heard a number of explanations for this phenomena of silence. One that seems to have support, is that based on the notion that any criticism of Islamic communities is a threat to the whole doctrine of multiculturalism, this reasoning has led to otherwise sensible people putting forward quite strange arguments. I will give a recent example, of how this reasoning, can lead to quite bizarre attempts to justify support for outdated concepts still alive in the Muslim community. A media organisation actually aired a Sunni Muslim woman, waxing eloquently on how according to her faith, Islam was “the most feminist religion”, I can assure you that in the present structure of the majority of Islam’s denominations, that is an argument that is extremely hard to sell.

If there is a belief that intolerance for Islamic extremism is a threat to multiculturalism itself, one must wonder why there are no loud protests coming from the multitude of other communities. It is obvious that if the protests are not there, it is because no other community has brought to this country a small hard core who wish to destroy it.

Indeed, it is an uncritical tolerance of attitudes and practices within the Muslim community, which might pose a longer-term threat to an otherwise successful multicultural policy.

Integration is vital to maintaining a cohesive society. This cohesion is threatened by the concept of the “hyphenated Australians”. I myself am a proud Australian Muslim not a Muslim Australian.

The doctrine of multiculturalism in Australia is now over forty years old, and was based on a premise of respect and integration. In more recent times it has become obvious that we have allowed cultures to enter this country which show no respect for the host culture and far from assimilating wish only to ghettoise and create a parallel non-integrated community. In my view, blending in is hypocrisy.

Muslims should not blend in, they should integrate. This of course depends on their original intention when migrating to Australia, and whether they wanted to be part of Australia, or just live as strangers amongst us. This doctrine now must be rethought from the base up.

And as for the mind-set of the misguided “moderates”, it is made up of two major factors. The Islamic traditions and ethnic cultures. The Islamic traditions teach principle and discipline, while the ethnic culture teaches what is accepted within the society that they were raised in. This does not necessarily mean that the Islamic traditions and ethnic cultures do not clash. In fact, they clash very often.

I think this may be demonstrated in that there are over 20 Arabic nations in the same broad geographic area today. However, in the early years of Islam, these very countries were all united under one Caliphate (successor of Prophet), forming a large Islamic empire. The main reason that this tradition did not continue was due to the traditionally clashing regional cultures within the Caliphate. These differences may indeed be seen to this day. Some states, such as Saudi Arabia, beheading and hand chopping is taught by the violent version of Sharia Law. Whereas in, Muslim, Kuwait this would be considered illegal horrific behaviour.

In the light of this history, it may be understandable as to why some moderates feel that they must not criticise other Muslims, irrespective of which Middle Eastern cultural tradition they may come from.

This belief has hindered the moderate Muslims in their opposition to radical Muslims, and limited their ability to reclaim their religion of love, peace, and tolerance from radicals. We see lack of condemnation of radicals by Islamic scholars and community leaders, which raises many questions, as to why Muslims are not speaking against the corruption of each other.

I must say, that the mentality of a Muslim living within the west, and among those who their traditions have taught to be infidels, makes it difficult to rise against his/her own brother in faith fearing that it could strengthen the cause of the infidel.

The terrible trap which these people have fallen into as a result of this attitude has meant that the small minority of violent extremists can operate with minimal criticism; while knowing that there are misguided politicians fighting for their radical agenda to have a platform under the law of freedom of speech of a democratic society; this thinking by politicians is fatally flawed because the radical doesn't believe in democracy.

On the other side of the lake, the mind-set of the radical Muslim focuses on what he/she believes is God's expectation from them. Radical Muslims believe their main land is Islamic land, and that their presence in the Non-Islamic land of disbelief, is merely a test from God, and confers a greater responsibility upon their shoulders to spread their faith and ideology. This agenda justifies their long presence within the land of the "infidels". This understanding is of course only a result of wrong teachings such as: Children that are born in Non-Islamic lands are not blessed, or that they would grow to be deviants.

A true follower of God would know that the land, all of it, belongs to God and geographic borders do not make one nation worse or better than the other as human beings.

The total rejection of Western democracy and people of the west is taught to Muslim radicals from a very young age, they are taught that "we are not like them". As a man of religion, I do not support their position.

One may wonder how the rise of radical Islam came to be, and how did it develop. The extremists and the radicals continue to promote the myth that the westerners, for example, The CIA, and Mi6, orchestrate terrorist attacks onto the West. Both common sense and my history as a man of religion, make it plain to me the fallacy of this argument, and I would like to say a few words about the real history of this.

After the demise of Prophet Mohammad *year 632 AD*, Islam witnessed many divisions that lead to the formation of 73 denominations; with some Muslims glorifying the family of Prophet Mohammad more than his companions and vice versa. The battle of leadership after Prophet Mohammad's death was indeed influenced by politics, which lead to the transformation of prophetic succession to kingship.

It is unfortunate that I have to admit to you, as non-Muslims, that the message of Islam was not hijacked decades ago, but centuries ago. All religions emerge seeking peace and love – which is why thousands embrace them. But during the early years of Islam, immediately after the death of Prophet Mohammad, this changed.

Our First Caliph Abu Bakr, ruled from the year *632 AD*, followed by Omar and

Othman. All three spread Islam by the sword, and even though Islamic history refers to the geographic expansion as ‘conquests’, however in the definitions used in political science, those Islamic conquests constitute ‘invasions and colonialism’.

To briefly shed some light on the history of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, two blood brother dynasties were rivals for power to rule.

The Banu Hashim dynasty, ancestors of prophet Mohammad and their stern ruthless rivals the Umayyad dynasty. With time, Madinah became the home base for the Banu Hashim and Damascus became the home base for the Umayyad.

During the era of Yazid, the Caliph of the so called Umayyad Dynasty which began in the *year 680AD* that governed the religion of Islam, the family and successors of Prophet Mohammad were given two options: Either to pledge allegiance to the kingdom of the Caliph, or face death.

Imam Hussain, the Grandson of Prophet Mohammad, in rejection to this call, responded by saying his well-known quote: “Yazid, is a drunkard and the murderer of innocent people? Someone like me, does not pledge allegiance to someone like him”. He said: “Death with honour is far better than life in humility”.

Ultimately, this led to the beheading of Imam Hussain along with his family members in a battle known as The battle of Karbala in Iraq, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 680 AD, where he was forced to defend himself along with only 72 of his family members and followers, and were finally brutally massacred by Yazid’s army of 100,000 soldiers. Imam Hussein’s ill son Ali and sister Zainab were taken hostage along with the head of Imam Hussein raised above a spear, from Iraq to Syria.

Today, over 20 million Muslims including Christians from all corners of the world, continue the yearly march of hundreds of kilometres from south of Karbala to pay respect to his shrine during the annual pilgrimage of Arbaeen (being the 40<sup>th</sup> day post martyrdom), this has been recorded as the largest religious gathering on earth. It is with regard to Karbala phenomenon that Ghandi said: I learnt from Hussain, how to be victorious when oppressed. Indeed, blood can be victorious over the sword.

In Karbala, Imam Hussein lost the battle, but indeed, won the war. This inspires me today to not shake the hand of a radical or terrorist no matter what.

My dear friends, moderate Muslims (I humbly consider) like myself look at occurrences that lead to the killing of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet

Mohammad, and what he stood for, and we derive everlasting lessons that guide us: When the sword goes to war against morals and virtue, morals and good values always win in the long run.

This is one very important aspect from the history of Islam. And we will never be able to move peacefully and positively forward, unless we denounce the actions and condemn the violence that existed throughout the development of this religion and stop its reoccurrence.

If Muslims were erroneously taught the justification to behead the grandson of their own prophet, then it would also be justifiable for them in this age, to behead, Christian, Jew and any other non-Muslims by default. This replica of Umayyad ideology is practiced on Muslims who are strict followers of the ways of the peaceful teachings in their religion, since they are, again erroneously, targeted as non-Muslims.

It is now safe to say that the history of Islam had witnessed radicals infiltrating it from its earliest years, long before the establishment of USA and the United Kingdom; and all others that could be accused of “creating Islamic terrorists”.

The rise of Wahabism founded by Mohammad Bin Abdulwahab, born in 1703, which is a replica of Umayyad ideology, has **revived** the ideological platform terrorists of the Islamic history once had; and has influenced the hundreds of thousands of radicals in joining terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS.

It is true that the majority of terrorists are Sunni Muslims, but Shia Muslim groups such as Hizbullah also need to be treated as a threat; even though they came into existence to liberate South Lebanon.

I would now like to move on to another social point that sheds light on the special treatment of Muslims in Australia. This being, the link between outlaw motorcycle gangs and radical Islamists.

The existing pre-conditions of their respective views means, that such an alliance in some ways is in fact a natural one. Both groups share the same vision when viewing the legal authorities, they are seen as tyrants that need to be brought down.

Both outlaw gang members and radical Islamists believe that their version of justice and governance should be established upon the land. The initial contact between these groups where it seems, forged in prisons. I shall be touching on this matter in more depth, shortly.

Both radical Islamists and motorcycle gang members largely come from a common

economic and socially depressed environment. In both cases, radical Muslims and motorcycle gangs use numbers to inflict terror upon their opponents. They use their numbers also, to send an intimidating message to any would be opponents and the media, each group has their own recognisable “uniform”, for the gangs it is their ‘colours’ and for the radical Muslim: traditional middle eastern clothing, very, very long beards.

The motorcycle gangs provide the radicals with an ally from the mainstream Australian community, and the radical Islamists are a source for potential money and weapons from the radical’s home countries. As only a small percentage of containers entering our ports are able to be carefully searched. It is difficult to cut off the supply of brand new weapons.

Weapons which have been fired might well be detected by trained sniffer dogs, whereas new weapons are simply pieces of metal. And on the subject of money, as we see from time to time, large sums of cash are detected in the process of being sent to foreign destinations.

The gangs and radicals present a potentially unholy two-way trade. Some countries under sanctions, would then be in receipt of western currency. In return, if there is one thing not in short supply within these countries it is weapons.

One assumes that by imprisoning the radical Islamists that they would be safely isolated from the mainstream community. While imprisoning them is certainly a necessary legal sanction, there is a terrible flaw to this idea.

In fact, one of the bi-products of imprisoning them within the regular jails opens a new set of problems.

The non-radicals are being exposed to radicalisation by this particular subset of prisoners. There are prisoners that enter the prison system as thieves, thugs and fraudsters, and emerge as Islamic radicals looking for an opportunity to vent their frustrations upon society at large, while believing that they are doing God’s work, and shall be rewarded for it in paradise. These radical groups, provide a sense of belonging and meaning to persons living marginalised lives.

In this regard, an important question worth asking is, who are the Islamic clerics visiting our prisons? One would hope that the majority of these clerics are moderate and integrated individuals.

However, how can we be certain that there are not a number of radical clerics using

their privilege access to the prisoners to promote their extreme views.

On Friday of last week, a report showed that violent and dangerous inmates are trying to force other prisoners in some of Australia's worst prisons to convert to Islam against their will.

These groups have to be treated as the special category of criminals that they are. The solution must include association laws to prevent them gathering in groups and they must be completely separated from all other categories of prisoners when they are inside the correctional system.

Only Imams with a proven social record of moderation and indeed patriotism should be allowed to engage with them as spiritual advisors.

Radical Muslims are now looking at yet another highly marginalised and vulnerable part of our community, the indigenous people. The increasing number of indigenous people identifying on the census as Muslim is a clear indication that there are inroads being made into this community. As Australians, we believe in freedom of religion.

However, we as Muslim Imams need to make sure that if Islam grows, it grows in the right direction. At the moment, I do not know whether those proselytizing are radicals or moderates, but this is a matter which I believe needs closer examination.

In recent times, indigenous celebrity, Anthony Mundine, appeared on social media supporting the Sharia Law concept of beating your wife. A most troubling development considering the unfortunate levels of domestic violence within the indigenous community.

The external funding of Mosques, Imams and schools is indeed also a security concern.

A study titled "NATIONAL SECURITY: Secret Saudi funding of Australian institutions" revealed that "Many Australian universities, now driven entirely by financial priorities, have uncritically welcomed Saudi sources of funding, even though this creates a major national security problem.

Massive funding is presently being provided by Saudi Arabia to promote Wahhabism, the fundamentalist, exclusivist, punitive, and sectarian form of Islam that is both the Saudi state religion, and the chief theological component of Sunni versions of Islamism, the totalitarian ideology guiding jihadism and most of the active terrorist groups in the world.

Globally, this money is flowing to terrorist groups, political parties and religious and community groups, as well as to universities and schools. In Australia, there is concern that such funding could damage and even corrupt the Australian university system, especially given the existing ideological bias, political naivety, opportunism, managerialism, and the pseudo-entrepreneurial attitudes of many university academics and administrators. The question of how foreign powers and agents are able to influence, direct or even control tertiary education in Australia and other Western countries is vitally important. This is because of the rise of Islamism, and Jihadism”.

With many Islamic government agendas working within Australia, whether it be Saudi Arabia or Iran, a particular desire of mine is to encourage young Muslims to enter the military in the same way I have worked with the police to recruit young Muslims into the law enforcement agencies. It is my belief that, this would be beneficial in a number of ways.

For the Muslim recruits, it will be a path to an honourable career, of service to their country, in addition it will expose them to a broader community. I am told that barracks life is a great leveller, where very different people are moulded into a sense of comradeship and shared purpose.

For the recruits from the wider community, the presence in their ranks of Muslims, will enable them to see that most of my co-religionists are reasonable and moderate human beings, who are prepared to risk hardship and perhaps even their lives in support of this wonderful country, I believe that this will be an important step in the process of integration, and help reduce the current tensions in our society. This will also provide the military with a core of personnel, who will have language and cultural knowledge, of great value.

I would ask you to reflect on what you see as the respective points for and against such a recruitment policy. From a broader national perspective, the sight of Muslim service personnel, can only show that there are indeed many patriotic Australian Muslims. Such a sight could help reduce the suspicions and fears held by some in the wider community, and also show to the Islamic community that all patriots are welcome to bear arms in defence of our country.

I read recently that ISIS has aspirations to obtain radiological weapons, the so called “dirty bomb”. I am certainly no military expert but I can see the attraction, such a weapon would have for those with the mind-set of ISIS. I fear that a renegade regime like North Korea, could provide the materials for such a weapon. ISIS dreams that the Muslims in the west can be drawn en-mass into active support for them, a radiological

attack on a major population centre, could well provoke a massive wave of support for anti-Muslim extremists, and drive otherwise moderate Muslims into the arms of radical Islamists, hence I believe that this is a threat we must guard against as a priority.

The struggle against these terrorists will be a long one, I believe that we will be wise to remember the saying “The price of liberty is eternal vigilance”.

It is worth mentioning in this regard that I myself had proudly applied to join the reserve forces of our country, Australia, as a chaplain in first preference and an Army soldier as second preference.

However, I was forced to withdraw my application due to restrictions with regards to my public speaking as an Imam; and felt that I could serve Australia greatly by not remaining silent.

We are a strong nation, with a strong elected government and intelligence system. We are not dealing with a well organised terrorist movement within Australia, rather they are a number of determined amateurs. This is a challenge we Australians will win.

I cannot presume to know the beliefs that guide your daily lives, for me there is the sure and certain knowledge, that there is a judgement day, where I will be asked to explain my actions and inactions in this life.

What will I be able to say to God who knows all people’s hearts, when I am asked Mohammad Tawhidi “what did you do”? My course is clear to me, and my personal fate is in the hands of God who knows the time of all people’s death.

I leave you all with the statement of Imam Ali: “People are either your brothers and sisters in faith or your equals in creation”.

I thank you for your kindness and attention.

May God Bless you all,  
May God Bless Australia.