

**Republican Perspective**  
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**“99.9 Percent” Peaceful**

After every terrorist act by a follower of the Religion of Peace, there are announcements from the media, law enforcement, and government officials. And there's a common thread---a seemingly obligatory disclaimer. Those who comment, regardless of their place on the political spectrum, remind us that only a tiny percentage of Muslims harbor jihadi sentiments. The vast majority, we are invariably assured, are peaceful and reject terrorism.

The President himself, in a February 2015 interview on CNN, made an authoritative statement on the issue: "...there is an element growing out of Muslim communities in certain parts of the world that have perverted the religion, have embraced a nihilistic, violent, almost medieval interpretation of Islam, and they're doing damage in a lot of countries around the world...the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject that...They don't even recognize it as being Islam, and...in fighting this scourge, it's very important for us to align ourselves with the 99.9 percent of Muslims who are looking for the same thing we're looking for---order, peace, prosperity."

Before you take solace that 99.9 percent of Muslims reject violence, let's look at some actual data. Pew Research looked into this issue and reported on it in 2011. With respect to terrorism, Pew found that eight percent of U.S. Muslims believe that suicide bombings against innocent civilians are often or sometimes justified. (The numbers are unchanged from Pew's prior survey in 2007.)

Well, that's about 80 times greater than the President's expressed view, but maybe eight percent who support suicide bombings against innocents isn't too bad. Or is it? The U.S. Census does not report religious affiliation. Independent estimates of the Muslim population in the U.S. range between three and seven million. National Review reports an estimated 4.5 million. Let's just use that.

Eight percent of 4.5 million is 360,000. That's 360,000 in our midst who say suicide bombings against the innocent are often or sometimes a-ok. Enough potential jihadis or jihadi sympathizers to fill four Rose Bowls.

The point here is not that we have amongst us 360,000 potential jihadis. The point is that the obligatory disclaimer issued each time some public figure makes any statement about Islamist terrorists is---to be blunt---hogwash. If they haven't studied the data, they have no idea. They are just mouthing the words because to not do so would expose them to accusations of bigotry and Islamophobia. Or worse---they may be aware of the data and are trying to sell us something they *know* to be false.

Now as to the contention, expressed by the President and others, that the terrorists are practicing a perversion of Islam---not the real McCoy---consider

this. The leader of ISIS is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. BBC reports he is “steeped in traditional Islamic education.” He earned a PhD from the Islamic University of Baghdad. His field of study was Islamic culture, history, sharia, and jurisprudence.

So on the one hand you have al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State, with a PhD in Islamic studies. On the other hand you have our President, a self-professed Christian, who claims the Islamic State is not Islamic and is just a perversion of Islam. Which one has more credibility on the true nature of Islam---Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or Barack Obama?

Your call.