

Is President Obama in Denial About Islam?

President Obama has been taking hits recently on the language he's using—or, more pointedly, not using—when talking about global terrorism.

The president is being criticized by the media, lawmakers—Republican and Democrat alike—and terrorism experts for refusing to call the deadly, violent attacks around the world “Islamist terrorism,” rather, glossing over this crucial issue by calling the acts “extremism.” According to Yahoo News, critics say his “reluctance to tie terrorists publicly and directly to Islam shows he does not understand the threat—and therefore cannot adequately respond” and that his language surrounding terrorism “smacks of politically correct naiveté.”

In fact, at the recent White House terrorism summit titled “Countering Violent Extremism,” Obama went as far as to say that job creation could help combat extremism, that the international community needs to address “grievances” that terrorists exploit—including economic and political issues—and that “resentments fester” and extremism grows when millions of people are impoverished, according to Fox News.

Southern Evangelical Seminary President Dr. Richard Land, who is leading the final panel on the security challenges surrounding Islam this week at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention, said the Obama Administration's skirting of the issue won't make it go away.

“The president and his advisers still seem to be in a state of denial about who the enemy is,” Land said. “We certainly need to address the things that are the breeding ground for terrorists, but the answers of a community organizer are not

sufficient. We need a commander in chief. The solutions and answers of a community organizer, so-called 'soft power,' while they may be part of the solution, they are not sufficient by themselves. They must be backed up by 'hard power' (i.e., military force) or they will be futile. We need a strong leader who will coordinate a strategy to combat the violent menace presented by radical Islamist jihad, employing both hard and soft power.

"Osama bin Laden was a rich man," Land continued. "He was driven by a religious ideology, as are many of his adherents, and we must combat that ideology intellectually, culturally, socially and militarily. 'Out-tweeting' terrorists will not stop them. Freedom-loving Muslims must believe that we have their back and are willing to employ military force to protect them when they stand up and risk their lives and their families' lives to oppose the barbarism of the jihadists.

"The reality amply demonstrated by the history of the 20th and 21st century is that unless American leads, freedom, democracy and human dignity do not get defended around the world."

Land added that past presidents didn't shy away from calling out and combating extreme Islamist terrorists.

"In his second inaugural address," Land said, "former President George W. Bush both diagnosed the problem and identified the solution."

In this excerpt from Bush's second inaugural address on Jan. 20, 2005, the then-President stated that violence will always be a result of ideologies fueled by hate. Former President Bush understood, however, that the "soft power" of social change had to be backed up by the "hard power" of military force.

"For as long as whole regions in the world simmer in resentment and tyranny—prone to ideologies that feed hatred and excuse murder—violence will gather, and multiply in

destructive power, and cross the most defended borders, and raise a mortal threat. There is only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment, and expose the pretensions of tyrants, and reward the hope of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom.

“We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

“America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation’s security, and the calling of our time.

“This is not primarily the task of arms, though we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary. ... Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.”

After the National Prayer Breakfast earlier this month, Obama was also criticized for drawing ties between recent violent terrorist attacks and Christianity and the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery and Jim Crow. Reported Yahoo News, “He added a layer of controversy by saying the Jews killed at the kosher supermarket in Paris were ‘randomly’ slain. Aides initially stuck to their guns, then recanted. Conservatives denounced Obama’s reference to the Crusades as outdated and an inappropriate moral equivalence.”

At the NRB Convention, which begins today in Nashville, Tennessee, Land will moderate the session tomorrow that will focus on what Christians need to know about the security threats posed by radical Islamists who are using a strategy of terrorism to wage jihad, understanding that government is ordained by God to use the sword to restrain evil (Rom. 13) and that in representative government, Christians must be engaged as citizens.

Covering the security landscape in America, Europe and the Middle East, the panel, titled "Islam: Cultural & Security Challenges," is set for 4 PM, tomorrow—Tuesday, Feb. 24—in the Delta Ballroom of the NRB Convention host site, the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center.

Other speakers on the panel include: Frank Gaffney, founder and president of the Center for Security Policy; Joel Rosenberg, best-selling author and Middle East expert; and Erick Stakelbeck, host of *The Watchman* on CBN News.

SES will also focus more on Islam at its upcoming conference, "Answering Islam: What Every Christian Needs to Know," set for 9 AM to 4 PM, Saturday, March 21, on the SES campus. Land will address conference attendees in the morning on the topic of "Islam, Sharia Law and Religious Freedom."

The conference will ask and answer such questions as, "What do Muslims believe about Jesus?" and "What are the differences between the God of the Bible and the God of the Qur'an?" The event is aimed at equipping Christians to love and serve Muslims with the Gospel. To register or for more information, visit

Recognizing the importance of understanding Islam, SES is home to the Institute of Islamic Studies, which offers the Certificate in Islamic Studies designed for those interested in increasing their knowledge and effectiveness in reaching Muslims. The certificate prepares pastors, teachers,

missionaries and lay persons for apologetic and evangelistic ministry and outreach to Muslims around the world. Students already accepted into a degree program may add this as a Concentration in Islamic Studies. Courses offered in the Certificate or degree concentration require students to do special research on Islam.

SES is a leader in apologetics education—teaching students to defend their faith and talk intelligently, passionately and rationally about what they believe and why they believe it. Many courses focus on societal issues from a Christian worldview, delve into scientific apologetics or contemplate creation research.

SES's 22nd Annual National Conference on Christian Apologetics will be hosted by Calvary Church in Charlotte on Oct. 16-17, 2015, with the theme, "Ideas Have Consequences: The Bigger the Idea, the Bigger the Consequence." In addition to Dr. Land, confirmed speakers include Dr. Norman Geisler and Dr. Paige Patterson.

Land is featured in his nationally syndicated daily radio commentary, "Bringing Every Thought Captive," which airs on 200 stations on the American Family Radio Network and 100 stations on the Bott Radio Network. "Bringing Every Thought Captive" is also podcast daily on the free SES mobile app and airs locally in the Charlotte, North Carolina, area every weekday. The "Bringing Every Thought Captive" television program, hosted by Land, debuted in January on the NRB Network, and airs on Wednesdays at 8 PM and midnight EST. For more information about stations, times, downloads and more, visit

Land has taught as a visiting or adjunct professor for several seminaries and has authored or edited more than 15 books. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree from Oxford University in England and his bachelor's degree (magna cum laude) from Princeton University. Land also earned a Master of Theology

degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received the Broadman Seminarian Award as the Outstanding Graduating Student. Dr. Land was the 2013 Watchman Award recipient from the Family Research Council for his leadership on moral and cultural issues. He also received the Phillip E. Johnson Award for Liberty and Truth from Biola University in 2010. Land served previously (1988-2013) as president of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the Southern Baptist Convention's official entity assigned to address social, moral and ethical concerns, with particular attention to their impact on American families. In 2014, he was appointed as a Senior Research Fellow of the ERLC's Research Institute.

Southern Evangelical Seminary invites visitors to its web site to join the more than 20,000 people who have already downloaded the SES interactive app for Windows mobile devices and Android and Apple phones and tablets. Those with the app can get the very best news and information in Christian apologetics, including articles, audio, video, blogs and more from today's most able defenders of the Christian faith—William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel, Josh McDowell, William Dembski, Frank Turek, Hugh Ross, Gary Habermas and other well-known speakers, authors and teachers.

Southern Evangelical Seminary has been ranked No. 1 for its General Christian Apologetics Graduate Program by 's "Top 10 Graduate Programs in Christian Apologetics." For more information, visit the SES web site at www.ses.edu or its Facebook page, follow the SES Twitter feed, *@sesapologetics* or call (800) 77-TRUTH.