

BBC MUSLIM SAYS ISIS ROOTED IN ISLAM



Bill Donohue comments on remarks made this week by Aaqil Ahmed, the head of the BBC's religious programming:

In 2009, when Aaqil Ahmed was appointed the first Muslim to direct religious programming at the BBC, he was looked upon with some suspicion. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, wasn't happy that the "Christian voice is being sidelined." Now others are looking askance at Ahmed; his remarks made this week at a London gathering of journalists are raising some eyebrows.

Ahmed, who is a professor at Middlesex University, was asked about the phrase "so-called Islamic State." His answer was enlightening: "I hear so many people say ISIS has nothing to do with Islam—of course it has. They are not preaching Judaism. It might be wrong but what they are saying is an ideology based on some form of Islamic doctrine." He added that the Islamic nature of ISIS is "a fact and we have to get our head around some very uncomfortable things."

Those who work at the State Department have an ethical responsibility to discuss Ahmed's position. The same is true for those who teach multiculturalism on American college campuses.

Clear-minded persons know that ISIS is rooted in an interpretation of Islam that is widely shared in Muslim

communities, even if it is not embraced by most Muslims. This isn't being bigoted—it's being honest.

President Obama bears much of the blame for closing down an honest discussion on the religious roots of ISIS; his constant denial of any relationship between the teachings of Muhammad and terrorist acts conducted in his name is absurd. We can't make progress in any area without robust freedom of speech, untainted by political considerations.

Professor Ahmed has done us a service. It is up to others to grab this opportunity.