

BURNING KORAN IS DEADLY WRONG

Leading up to September 11, the media was buzzing about a Florida pastor that was planning on burning a copy of the Koran on the ninth anniversary of the terrorist attacks. When we heard what his plans were, we fully condemned them.

Minister Terry Jones wanted to show his anger at radical Muslims by burning a copy of the Koran but he was wrong morally, and he was literally endangering innocent lives.

The Koran is embraced by Muslims who are law-abiding men and women, as well as by terrorists. Jones knew this to be true, but somehow in his twisted understanding of Christianity, he thought he had the right to insult and smear all Muslims.

Furthermore, he was endangering innocent lives—including Americans—as Gen. David Petraeus warned. Jones' threat alone led Muslims to take to the streets in Afghanistan and Indonesia.

While it would be wrong to sustain the “heckler’s veto” by giving in to those who seek to veto free speech by heckling, in this instance the “heckler’s veto” was moot: no one was in jeopardy of losing his free speech rights. What was being requested was a plea not to inflame passions needlessly by assaulting the sensibilities of Muslims worldwide.

In 1998, Bill Donohue criticized gay radicals who burned a copy of the Bible at Syracuse University to protest an appearance by Pat Buchanan. In Jones, we had an extremist on the right seeking to stoke the flames of bigotry against Muslims. It, too, had to be criticized.

Minister Jones was acting in a disgraceful manner by engaging *inagitprop* and needed to be unequivocally condemned.

Thankfully, in the end he seemed to come to his senses and

decided to call off the Koran burning. Hopefully he realized that there are plenty of legitimate ways to protest the wrongdoing that took place on September 11, 2001. But burning the Koran is certainly not one of them.