



*Jehlum Post News Network/Washington/ February 19, 2015/President Barack Obama has said the United States and its allies are not at war with Islam but with people who have perverted the religion, asserting that groups like ISIL and al-Qaeda are desperate for legitimacy by portraying themselves as holy warriors in defence of religion. "We are not at war with Islam. We are at war with people who have perverted Islam," Mr. Obama said at the White House Summit on 'Countering Violent Extremism', on Wednesday. "ISIL and al-Qaeda and groups like it are desperate for legitimacy.*

*They try to portray themselves as religious leaders, holy warriors in defence of Islam. "That's why ISIL presumes to declare itself the Islamic State and they propagate the notion that America, and the West generally, are at war with Islam. That's how they recruit. That's how they try to radicalise young people," he said. Mr. Obama said those outside Muslim communities need to reject the terrorist narrative that the West and Islam are in conflict or modern life and Islam are in conflict. "We must never accept the premise that they put forward, because it is a lie, nor should we grant these terrorists the religious legitimacy that they seek. They are not religious leaders, they're terrorists," he said on the second day of the three-day conference, which is being attended by leaders from more than 60 countries including India. "I also believe that Muslim communities have a responsibility as well. ISIL and al-Qaeda do draw selectively from the Islamic texts," he said. "They do depend upon the misperception around the world that they speak in some fashion for people of the Muslim faith, that Islam is somehow inherently violent, that there is some sort of clash of civilisations," he said, adding that the terrorists do not speak for a billion Muslims who reject their ideology. Mr. Obama said there is need to speak up against violent extremism.*

*"They no more represent Islam than any madman who kills innocents in the name of God, represents Christianity or Judaism or Buddhism or Hinduism. No religion is responsible for terrorism, people are responsible for violence and terrorism," he asserted. Just as leaders like myself reject the notion that terrorists like ISIL genuinely represent Islam, Muslim leaders need to do more than discredit the notion that our nations are determined to suppress Islam. That there is inherent clash in civilisations," Mr. Obama said. "Everybody has to speak up very clearly that no matter what the grievance, violence against innocents doesn't defend Islam or Muslims,*

*it damages Islam and Muslims,” he said, adding that terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIL pose a challenge for the world. He said ISIL is terrorising the people of Syria and Iraq, beheads and burns human beings in unfathomable acts of cruelty.*

*“We’ve seen deadly attacks in Ottawa and Sydney and Paris and now Copenhagen. So in the face of this challenge, we have marshalled the full force of the United States government and we’re working with allies and partners to dismantle terrorist organisations and protect the American people,” Mr. Obama said. Given the complexities of the challenge and the nature of the enemy which is not a traditional army, this work takes time and will require vigilance and resilience and perspective, he added. “But I’m confident that just as we have for more than two centuries, we will ultimately prevail. “Part of what gives me that confidence is the overwhelming response of the world community to the savagery of these terrorists— not just revulsion, but a concrete commitment to work together to vanquish these organisations,” he said. PTI*