

# JINSA hosts evening with Raheel Raza

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### By Rachel Gross Weinstein

Author, filmmaker and human rights activist Raheel Raza, spoke in Dallas last month regarding Islam's impact in the world today, and how it affects both Israel and America. She discussed the history of the religion and offered solutions on how Islam can be less radical.

Raza, who was born in Pakistan and now lives in Toronto, spoke on behalf of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), an organization that promotes American security cooperation with like-minded democratic countries and engages the American defense com-

munity about the role Israel plays in securing Western democratic interests. JINSA also improves awareness about the importance of a strong defense capability. The event was hosted by Karla and Larry Steinberg who have been involved with JINSA for many years.

Raza said in the late 1970s, Pakistan had nuclear weapons in the hands of extremists, started receiving money from Saudi Arabia and followed a strict Wahhabi ideology. She believes this is when the country began a rapid decline into radical Islam.

"This message of radicalism is

when the downward trend started, and spread to the pulpits of mosques," Raza said. "Unfortunately, it was turned into a place of hate. I have experienced the worst of Pakistani culture and it shattered me when I saw this happening. The warmth and hospitality has been replaced by hate, suspicion and ignorance. Everything that happens there is now part of a conspiracy."

Raza fled Pakistan in 1978 because she felt the country was losing its moral compass and no longer knew the difference between right and wrong.

During her talk, Raza spoke out against radical Islam and said it's not just a Muslim problem anymore, but affects everyone. She also believes the Muslim Brotherhood is dangerous and promotes its agenda around the world.

"Radical Muslims are out in large numbers and they threaten the entire world," she said. "The mandate of the Muslim Brotherhood, which also finds a home in Europe and North America, has a manifesto

and agenda to integrate into the West and destroy from within. This should be of concern to everyone."

Raza showed her support for Israel and said Pakistanis and Palestinians needs to recognize its existence and find peaceful solutions. She has visited Israel in the past and plans to take a trip there soon.

If other countries band together, and more liberal Muslims started to defend Israel, she said, peace talks can be successful.

"My support for the state of Israel is rooted in my understanding of Israel and Pakistan as two countries created around the same time in history on the basis of faith," she said. "Today, Israel is a progressive, vibrant, diverse country and I feel safe there when I walk at night, something I cannot do in my own homeland anymore. There are problems that need to be solved and I believe work is being done."

Raza also highlighted three main solutions regarding radical Islam — grievances, ideology and funding. She believes people need to discuss the problems within immigrant communities and defeat and expose negative religious beliefs.

She added that although there is still work to be done, she believes she is making a difference and creating awareness about the situation in the

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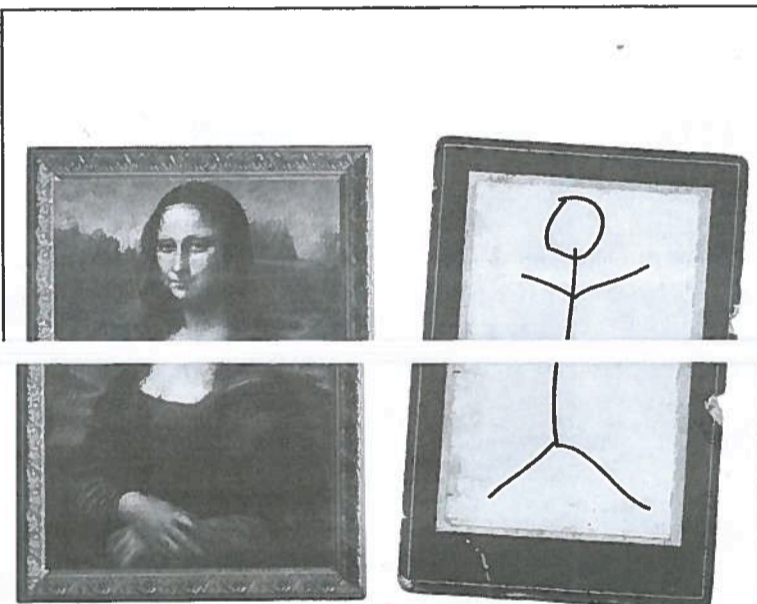
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Photo: Rachel Gross Weinstein

the event last month are JINSA Board Member and event host Larry Steinberg (left), Raheel Raza, Karla Steinberg and SA President David Ganz.

Middle East. The more people listen, the more worthwhile her job is.

“My solution is to promote an emergence of Islam that is moderate, democratic, and tolerant and women, homosexuals, atheists and everyone else,” she said. “This is a political agenda; it doesn’t matter if you are black or white, when the Twin Towers went down, everyone was affected. My ultimate goal is for people to listen and learn that there is a difference between spirituality and radical Islam.”

JINSA President David Ganz said Raza is an effective speaker and it was important to bring her to America to champion her cause.

“She speaks against radical Islam and that’s a voice not heard enough in America or around the world,” Ganz said. “Raza grew up in a Mus-

lim country where women have no rights and are enslaved. She escaped and believes it’s her obligation to state the facts about radical Islam.”

JINSA Board Member Larry Steinberg added that garnering support for the organization is imperative and that Raza’s talk was relevant.

“Raza was extremely timely because she spoke soon after Bin Laden was killed,” he said. “She gave tremendous insight into what’s happening in the Middle East and was informative.”

For more information about JINSA, visit [www.jinsa.org](http://www.jinsa.org). For more information about Raza, visit [www.raheelraza.com](http://www.raheelraza.com).

