Caroline Pigozzi/Jean-Claude Deutsch: Let us touch on the important subject of fundamentalism.

Aga Khan: If fundamentalism means the destablisation of a society, I am certainly opposed to it. We have taken up the annoying habit of linking each sporadic act of terrorism to the Muslim world. It is a painful confusion. The Muslim world is made up of 1 billion believers, living in 30 to 40 countries, speaking 500 languages and dialects, people who come from countries which became Muslim -- some at the time of the Prophet, others three hundred years later -- some speaking Arabic, others that do not. There is no Islamic entity where 1 billion believers interpret and practise their faith in the same manner. The truth is that you from the West, perceive so badly the Muslim world, that you judge it as though it was only one single block. We have a better understanding of you in the West than you do of us, because you colonised and governed us for some period of time. The destabilising activities are a reality, but are minor compared to the mass of silent believers that we are. It is sort of like if I said: “The IRA commits acts of terrorism in England; therefore, all Catholics are dangerous terrorists.” You tend to confuse the religion of people and their political goals. While many fundamentalists have clear and precise political objectives, far less often are their objectives uniquely centred about proselytising. In some cases even, the West has gone as far as peddling their own ideologies by manipulating the Mujahadeen to remove the Soviets from Afghanistan, and have used extremists to counter the communist threat. The free Western World must establish a distinction between political ambitions and the religion of Islam. It cannot be denied that the ideological frustrations of the Algerians, the Jordanians or the Libyans have created extremist movements, but this should not smear the credibility of the entire Muslim world.
His Highness the Aga Khan on fundamentalism and terrorism — www.facebook.com — Readability

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