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# Rudy was right to give back \$10M

By EVA MOSKOWITZ

**M**ayor Giuliani's decision to reject a \$10 million donation to the Twin Towers Fund from a Saudi Arabian prince who criticized American foreign policy has prompted at least one elected official — Democratic Rep. Cynthia McKinney of Georgia — to write a letter apologizing for the mayor's behavior.

As a lifelong New Yorker and an elected official who represents a district where thousands of people are recovering from the loss of a friend or loved one, I would just like to register my formal support for the mayor's actions. As the mayor said himself, the Sept. 11 atrocities were an act for which "no moral equivalent" can serve as justification.

At the very least, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal appeared to be blaming the victim when he suggested that the terrorism should prompt the United States to "reexamine its policies in the Middle East and adopt a more balanced stance toward the Palestinian cause." This is complete and utter rubbish, of course — our foreign policy may not be perfect, but Americans have nothing to apologize for when it comes to this unprovoked attack or the mayor's decision to tell the prince where he can stick his money.

What's even more appalling, however, is the way Bin Talal tried to explain his public relations snafu in an Arab newspaper: "The whole issue is that I spoke about their position [on the Middle East] and they didn't like it because there are Jewish pressures and they were afraid of them."

Could the prince's anti-Semitism be more blatant? The problem isn't U.S. foreign policy or "Jewish pressures," to borrow from the prince's euphemistic language. The problem is that a group of well-organized religious fanatics have decided that the best way to carry out their war on modernity and pluralism is by killing civilians.

They don't want us to change our foreign policy — they want us to be humiliated. They don't want America's leaders to adopt "a more balanced stance toward the Palestinian cause" — they want our government to overreact and plunge us into a global war that, according to their strategy, will make it easier to realize the goal of creating a theocratic state encompassing the entire Islamic world.

Perhaps the only thing more striking than the morally repugnant nature of the prince's comments is their almost total lack of plausibility. Even if there were some willingness on our part to tailor American foreign policy to the preferences of terrorists and bigots, it would be impossible to do so for one very simple reason: You don't negotiate with terrorists. Ever.

This has been the policy of the United States for many years, and we should follow it now with more vigilance than ever before.

With all due respect to the congresswoman from Georgia, the people of New York City stand by the mayor's decision to reject the donation from Alwaleed. Accepting the money would have implicated us all in his highly objectionable views.

*Moskowitz, a Democrat, represents parts of midtown and the East Side, from 14th to 97th Sts., on the City Council.*

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