

AMERICAN WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

LETTER AND ANNEXURE

To Senator John Kerry

23 January 2006

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Senator John Kerry
The Senate Capital Hill,
WASHINGTON

Dear Senator Kerry

I hope you have reached back safely after a tiring but rewarding trip to South Asia. It was a pleasure to meet you at the dinner on January 14th at the Chairman Senate of Pakistan Mohammad Mian Soomro's farm house and listen to your frank expose on Pak-US relations and related issues. I am happy to share with you my feeling that after listening to you I feel reassured that in supporting you in 2004 Presidential elections the Pakistani and Muslim communities of the USA made a very wise decision. If you had been successful in that election and had followed the approach you shared with us that evening America and the world could have been a better place for all.

You were kind enough to respond to my observations and questions in a very forthright manner. That was no occasion for further discussion and exchange of viewpoints. But encouraged by your frankness and response to differing viewpoints I thought I should take the initiative to share with you a few thoughts, with the earnest desire to at least enable top American policy-makers to be aware of how others look upon these issues.

You will recollect that I raised the issue of the consequences of the American war against terrorism unleashed after the tragic and outrageous event of 9/11 and the need to review whether the world has become more secure as a result of that or much less? To put it bluntly, has it reduced the quantum and intensity of terrorism or has actually resulted in promoting more terrorism?

You were right in acknowledging that terrorism has nothing to do with any religion and those engaged are captivated by some distorted and very exceptional version of religion. You were also right in pointing out that those involved in some of these obnoxious acts during the last four years claimed to act in the name of Islam, although they do not represent the true faith of Islam or the mainstream of the Muslim people.

You also very rightly acknowledged the Muslim concern about terrorism recalling the *OIC Makkah Declaration* (Dec 2005) and the *Speech of the Imam Ka'ba* on the occasion of the recent *Haj* (Pilgrimage) - January 2006.

To put the record straight, I would like to inform you that Islam holds no brief for terrorism in any form and the Muslim leadership has almost unanimously condemned all acts of terrorism, from whatever sources they come: individuals, groups or states, Muslims or others. Immediately after the 9/11 tragedy, 46 leading Muslim scholars and leaders of the Islamic Movements the world over unequivocally condemned it through an immediate reaction on 12th September 2001 (copy enclosed), followed by a more detailed statement on 1st September 2001 released from London. That is not in dispute. However what is to be considered are the following issues:

1. Can terrorism be fought by a war, as is being done by the present U.S. leadership or it needs a very different and multi-faceted strategy?
2. Is it possible to fight terrorism without clearly defining what constitutes terrorism? One cannot fight terrorism without clearly identifying the object; otherwise we would be chasing shadows and adding to confusion. Terrorism and use of force are not synonymous. If genuine liberation struggles are indiscriminately equated with terrorism, then we have to rewrite all history. Even George Washington and Nelson Mandela, would have to be called by some other appellation!
3. It would be a mistake of Himalayan proportion to target terrorism without addressing to the contexts that have led to its emergence, as also the causes and factors that drive some people to use methods that involve violence to achieve their political objectives.
4. There is nothing like terrorism *per se*; terrorism is a complex phenomenon and any one-dimensional strategy to combat it is foredoomed to failure. It may even aggravate the situation, as it seems to be our current predicament.
5. Terrorism did not begin with 9/11. It has a long history going back to the first century suicide mission of the Zealots and the Sicarit, struggling to liberate Judea from the Roman occupation, the play of the Assassins' daggers in the eleventh and twentieth centuries, to over three thousand eight hundred suicide missions of the Japanese pilots (*Kamikazis*) during the final years of the Second World War. Professor Robert A. Pape of the University of Chicago has made a scientific study of all suicide attacks from 1980 to 2003 and had demonstrated that "the presumed connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism is misleading." The theories of Jihad and concept of martyrdom along with the institutions of mosque and madrasah have always been there. Even some "extremist" or "twisted" interpretations have always surfaced in history as is the case with almost all religions, ideologies and socio-political systems. After all what is it that has led to the emergence and escalation of this phenomenon in the contemporary world? Prof. Pape's research establishes as follows:

y "The data shows that there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, or anyone of the world's religions. In fact, the leading instigators of suicide attacks are the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka - a Marxist-Leninist group whose members are from Hindu families but who are adamantly opposed to religion. This group committed 76 of the 315 incidents, more suicide attacks than Hamas.

Rather, what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Religion is rarely the root cause, although it is often used as a tool by terrorist organizations in recruiting and in other efforts in service of the broader strategic objective"

(*Dying to Win* by Robert A. Pape, New York, 2005, pA)

It may be submitted that even "martyrdom" is not an exclusively religious concept dying for any cause, secular, nationalistic, religious, ethnic, tribal, carry very similar flavour.

6. The conceptual, political and humanitarian costs of the present U.S. War on terrorism deserve to be seriously studied and analyzed. How many innocent civilians have been the victims of the terrorist's attacks and how many have been killed as a result of this war against terrorists? Has the war to eliminate terrorists succeeded in weeding them out or it has actually resulted in the production of larger and larger number of "terrorists"? Has America won the confidence, love and respect of the people of the world, even of countries it has attacked to destroy terrorists? Or, has it only led to increase, even explosive increase in discontent and hatred against America?
7. More fundamental issues are agitating minds of the people all over the world including America. What is happening to human rights - particularly the right to privacy, freedom from detention save through the due process of law, right to be treated innocent till proved guilty, right to defend oneself through lawyers of one's own choice? How many people have been arrested and detained without trial? What is the percentage of those convicted by a court of law or even formally charged as against those arrested on suspicion? Has this not eroded the whole fabric of the rule of law and constitutionalism? In the name of patriotism and national security what is happening to civil liberties and the values of equality of all human beings and the right to be treated according to civilized behaviour? *Guantanamo Bay* and *Abu Ghuraib* are not the only festering soars. Rendition and "coercive interrogation" have plagued the entire civilized world.
8. It is also feared that whatever has been achieved in the fields of international law and civilized conduct in war and peace is at stake. Basic precepts of law and international law are being rewritten, at least as far as practice goes, and in an arbitrary manner wherein the powerful are trying to bully and bulldoze others only because they are weak and powerless. Shadows of imperialism and hegemonism are looming on world horizon. National sovereignty is no longer sacrosanct. Borders can be violated with impunity. U.N. is becoming irrelevant. Unilateral interventions and forced or

manipulated regime changes are being sanctified. The very concept of self-defense is being re-written to suite the interest of the powerful. Peace and global equilibrium are being increasingly threatened; prospects of greater and violent confrontations are on the rise.

9. Minorities in many parts of the world, even in countries where there was no history of terrorism, are being subjected to greater state repression. War on terrorism is being used by many states to suppress their own people. The list of 'collateral damages' of this war on terrorism is assuming menacing proportions.
10. There is one extremely fundamental question that must be squarely faced if the world, particularly the U.S.A. wants to get out of this quagmire. Terrorism has to be fought, but can it be fought without taking care of the causes and the factors that breed terrorism? How long we are going to fight the branches while ignoring the roots of the problem? *Resistance to OCCUPATION* is not the real problem - the real problem is occupation which cannot but result in resistance. If we target the resistance without targeting occupation, how can we succeed? Focusing on resistance and ignoring the menace of occupation is an exercise in futility. In fact it is a recipe for promoting terrorism and hatred. It is time to change the focus and address the issue in a realistic manner. Logic and not rhetoric should guide our policies. Only then the world may become a more peaceful place for all of us.

I hope you will spare sometime to reflect on these musings of one who identifies oneself with that part of the humanity which finds itself at the suffering end.

Yours sincerely,

(Prof. Khurshid Ahmad)

STATEMENT
FROM MUSLIM SCHOLARS AND ISLAMIC MOVEMENT LEADERS ON
THE AGGRESSIONS MADE AGAINST
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The leaders of the Islamic Movements who sign this statement were terrified by the Tuesday 11th of September incidents in the USA that includes killings, atrocities and aggressions against innocent civilians.

The leaders express their deep sorrow and sadness, they condemn firmly such accidents that violate all Human and Islamic teachings that forbid any aggression against the innocents.

The leaders draw into attention the unfair media which is targeting Islam and the Muslims, without even waiting for the identification of those who committed these terrible crimes. Even after they are identified, the ones who took part in the crime should alone be accused.

Talking into account, the mystery of the accident, and the number of suspects that might be behind it, we hope that the authorities and media have enough patience and not to pass verdicts before knowing those who committed this tragic accident.

We express our deep condolence to the families of the innocent victims and to the whole of the American people.

12th September 2001

Signed by:

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|--------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Mostafa Mashour | Egypt |
| 2. Dr. Y oussof Qaradawy | Qatar |
| 3. Qazi Hussein Ahmad | Pakistan |
| 4. Dr. Hasan Howedy | Syria |
| 5. Mohamad Mamoun Al Hodeby | Egypt |
| 6. Motieh Rahman Nizami | Banglades |
| 7. Ahmad Yassin | h Palestine |
| 8. Abdala Ali Motawah | Kuwait |
| 9. Abdala Bin Hussein Al Ahmar | Yemen |
| 10. Faisal Mawlawi | Lebanon |

11. Abdel Mageed Zonaibat	Jordan
12. Sadik Abdul Majid	Sudan
13. Ali Sadr Deen Bayanoni	Syria
14. Ossama Takriti	Lebanon
15. Mohamad Abdala Al Khateeb	Egypt
16. Prof. Khurshid Ahmad	Pakistan
17. Yassin Abdel Aziz	Yemen
18. Mahfouz NahNah	Algeria
19. Rached Ghanouchi	Tunisia
20. Fadil Noor	Malaysia
21. Fathy Yakan	Lebanon
22. Ibrahim Al Masri	Lebanon
23. Abdul Rashid Turabi	Pakistan
24. Mohammad Hedayat Noor Wahid	Indonesia
25. Abdul Karim Khatib	Morocco
26. Abdul Salam Harras	Morocco
27. Dr. Hebr Youssouf Noor Dayem	Sudan
28. Khalid Meshall	Palestine
29. Abdul Aziz Ranteesy	Palestine
30. Rachid Haj	Sri Lanka
31. Ahmad Ali Al-Imarn	Sudan
32. Ahmad Raisoouny	Morocco
33. Ahmad Rawi	United Kingdom
34. Mohamad Abdullah AIYadoumi	Yemen
35. Amin Bam	South Africa
36. Salim Sakaf Jefry	Indonesia
37. Raid Salah	Palestine
38. Idris Katany	Morocco
39. Rasool Sayaf	Afghanistan
40. Ahmad Shah	Afghanistan
41. Alif Turabi	Pakistan
42. Helmy Amin	Indonesia
43. G haffar Aziz	Pakistan
44. Tayeb Ozayez	Algeria
45. AbdulHady Awan	Malaysia
46. Abo AIKaiam Mohamed Y oussof	Bangladesh
