NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Appeasement Is No Answer to Terrorism



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WHY WOULD anyone think that in a war — and we are at war with Afghanistan — there would be no civilian casualties?

The Taliban gives sanctuary to Osama bin Laden. His spokesman has seemed inadvertently to acknowledge al-Qaida's responsibility for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11. Listening to the statements of Taliban officials carried by American media, you would think our military response to the attacks on our country was unprovoked.

The American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker group, took a full-page ad in The New York Times listing names of supporters reading, "Dear President Bush: . . . Now is the time to break the cycle of violence and retaliation. Do not respond to these terrible acts with military action. Such action will only lead to additional deaths and to suffering for more families in the U.S. and abroad."

Do the ad's signers have amnesia?

On Sept. 11, bin Laden's terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon, murdering more than 5,000 innocent civilians. The groups that denounce a United States military response, preferring that we appease bin Laden, represent a very small minority of Americans. Those who would appease him mention only one bin Laden demand — that the United States end its support of Israel and surrender to the demands of the Palestinians led by Yasser Arafat. They avoid acknowledging that bin Laden demands the United States withdraw from Saudi Arabia. Indeed, that has been his primary demand for years.

Arab governments in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan are threatened by bin Laden because their leadership is seen by fundamentalists as heretical and accepting of Western culture, particularly the equality of women. Bin Laden, threatening the existence of Israel, knows that France and other European countries would shed crocodile tears if Israel were to be overwhelmed by its Arab neighbors.

Bitter experience has taught us that appeasing terrorists only leads to more demands. Over the weekend, bin Laden added a new demand, against "U.S. support to Hindus against the Muslims of Kashmir."

Did the American Friends Service Committee issue a statement on the murders that occurred last weekend in Nigeria, where Muslim rioters killed fellow citizens simply because they were Christians?

We are told by our government that we must assure Muslims, a billion people around the world, that this is not a war against Islam. But a significant minority among Muslims — particularly members of the Wahhabi sect, to which bin Laden adheres and which is the official religion of Saudi Arabia — are waging a holy war against the Judeo-Christian world. We who live in that world are described as infidels and enemies to be killed, and the United States is referred to as the Great Satan. Don't we have the right of self-defense?

According to many reports, the Sept. 11 terrorist attack took more than two years to plan. We took no military action in 1993 after the first World Trade Center bombing, nor after last year's bombing of the USS Cole. If we knew then what we know now, would it not have been wiser then to pursue bin Laden, offer rewards for his apprehension or assassination, and use force against any country that harbored him?

Aren't we foolish to protect the Saudi princelings and government who have been revealed by The New York Times as major funding sources for bin Laden's terrorist activities?

Some in this country oppose our military operations, calling them unconscionable reprisals. Fortunately, 89 percent of Americans are thinking clearly and believe military reprisals are justified to punish and deter.

Some call our reprisals "revenge," which they denounce even more heatedly, because "revenge" conveys a feeling of satisfaction. Some shy away from the use of the word "vengeance." I say what's wrong with avenging our innocent dead?

I ask the appeasers how many innocent American civilians must die at the hands of terrorists and their supporting governments in bombings or by the use of chemical or biological weapons before they accept the use of military force by the United States. For most Americans, that moment came on Sept. 11 at 8:48 a.m.

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